Home at Last

THE CHURCH ON this side of the veil at the present time is like a ship drawing near to the port of its destination. It has crossed the main ocean of life with its numerous vicissitudes—its storms, setbacks, delusions, and disappointments. It is now nearing port. Eager anticipation prevails.—Luke 21:28

Before reaching port, however, there is a long and tedious channel to negotiate. This channel is fraught with danger to the ship. There are rocks, sandbanks, shifting sands, and other invisible dangers. But these are well known to the one in charge of the ship, the skillful Pilot. We must trust him implicitly. Any of these dangers could cause the shipwreck of our faith, which now, with home in sight, would be tragic.—Eph. 6:10-18

PRECIOUS PROMISES

There are buoys which mark out the channel, or way of approach, to the port. These would include Divine warnings given against taking a course contrary to the Holy Scripture; also, exceeding great and precious spiritual promises, together with stated conditions, so necessary to their fulfillment. And there are those principles of Christian character—Christlikeness—all of which lead to immortal

life and our eternal heavenly home.—Acts 20:28,30; Rom. 2:7; 8:28-31; I Cor. 15:57,58

Our hearts glow within us as we think of the promise made to us years ago: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off." (Isa. 33:17) Now, the fulfillment of this is almost within sight.

We pass buoy after buoy, diligently observing each one. We begin to see the radiant beauty of the city of glory. It has been revealed to us that the king has prepared a special place there for us, and that in the king's palace there is exquisite beauty and glory—wonders so marvelous that human language could not describe it.—John 14:1-4; I Cor. 2:9-14

TRUSTING IMPLICITLY

The haven of rest is approached. Eventually we arrive off the shore of the celestial city. The only way for us to get nearer our heavenly abode is through the waters, and these, we must wade. Faith (through which our Father's mighty power has done great things for us) has brought us thus far. Now we must trust implicitly. We are lowered into the waters. Then we confidently call to the Father, "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Then we reflect upon the words of comfort: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me."—Ps. 69:1,2; 23:4

Immediately we are on the shore of the celestial city. We feel that we have undergone a great and

wondrous transformation. Now, we are full of exuberant life, abounding in energy, glowing with vitality. We feel as though a spring of life is rising within us.—I Cor. 15:42-44,52-55; John 4:14

A glorious heavenly being awaits us, so beautiful in every way that his glory could not be described. He directs our vision to the exquisite palace of the king, where we are informed a great convention is shortly to be held—"The general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." In the distance, this great palace looks brilliant, standing upon a lofty eminence.—Heb. 12:23

We move along swiftly as the wind. Arriving at the base of the hill we hear a voice saying, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—Ps. 24:3-5

VOICE OF THE BELOVED

We hesitate at the foot of the hill. Then we hear another voice of inexpressible sweetness speak to us. Our hearts leap within us, for this is surely the voice of our Beloved saying, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Come to that place I have prepared for you.—Matt. 25:21

Then we are ushered along to the sound of exquisite and harmonious music, magnifying and praising the name of the great God of love. We reach the beautiful palace, the king's palace, where

a large number of victorious saints are already assembled. It is a wonderful company, each one shining with the same resplendent glory as their beloved Bridegroom. We behold his dear face, full of joyous love, exultant and triumphant.—Ps. 45:13-15; I John 3:2

WELCOME HOME

He leads us to our great Heavenly Father, who is majestic, sublime, pure, and holy; whose effulgent glory and impressive grandeur we hardly dare behold. He looks upon us with a Father's look of tender love, as though his great heart is full to overflowing, as he says, "My jewels; my inheritance; my children, welcome home."—Jude 24,25; Mal. 3:17; Eph. 1:18

For a while he remains silent in his great love, and joy; then he breaks forth into singing. (Zeph. 3:17) The grand refrain is taken up by the Bridegroom and bride, and all the heavenly hosts, "A voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."—Rev. 19:5-7

These beautiful words of the Revelator will have a glorious fulfillment. The completed church—the bride—then having been proved faithful unto death, will be duly glorified with her Lord. Today, however, some of the last members of the true

church are this side of the veil, giving diligence to make their "calling and election sure." (II Pet. 1:10) They are growing in grace and heavenly knowledge; denying self, taking up their cross daily, and following the Master.

THE OVERCOMERS

They are shining as lights in the world, faithfully witnessing to the Truth. They are encouraged and stimulated by the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." It is realized that this reigning with Christ will establish God's wondrous, long-prayed-for, everlasting kingdom in the earth.—Luke 9:23; Phil. 2:14,15; Rev. 3:21; 20:6; Matt. 6:10

Meanwhile, within the heart of each fully consecrated child of God here below, there is a longing to be gathered home. ■