

"Beautiful Isle Of Somewhere"

Rev. 22.3-5

Revelation 22:3-5 - There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Introduction:

- A. Many of the songs we find in our hymnals have interesting stories as to how they came into existence. Beautiful isle of somewhere is no different. It is a song that expresses faith in the existence of that land where the tree of life is and where there shall be no night.
- B. The text was written by a lady named Jessie H. Brown Pounds (1861-1921). One Sunday morning shortly after her marriage, Mrs. Pounds, not feeling well, stayed home from church services, began meditating on heaven, and when her husband returned from worship had set down these words.
- C. This song reminds us of things that are lacking here on earth, but we can look for in heaven

I. According To Stanza 1, Heaven Will Be A Place Of Joy

"Somewhere the sun is shining, Somewhere the songbirds dwell; Hush, then, thy sad repining, God lives, and all is well."

- A. Clouds and gray skies often represent sadness, but in heaven, "the sun is shining" because the light of God will always be there - Rev. 21.23-25

Revelation 21:23-25 - And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed;

- B. "The song-birds" would represent the fact that heaven will be filled with the singing of eternal praises to God - Rev. 15:1-4

Revelation 15:1-4 - Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished. And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they *sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty; Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations! "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

- C. Therefore, we should hush our "sad repining," because our hope, given by God who lives and causes all things to be well with our souls, is in a place where there will be nothing to cause sadness - Rev. 21:4

Revelation 21:4 - and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

II. *According To Stanza 2, Heaven Will Be A Place Of Reward*

"Somewhere the day is longer, Somewhere the task is done; Somewhere the heart is stronger, Somewhere the guerdon won."

- A. Here on earth, the day of life eventually comes to an end for each of us, and we may have to leave various tasks unfinished, not only because of lack of time but also sometimes because of lack of strength - Jn. 9:4

John 9:4 - "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work."

- B. However, in heaven, the heart will be stronger, and we will have unlimited time to do whatever it is the Lord wants us to do there ("and His bond-servants shall serve Him," Rev. 22:3) because we shall be granted eternal, never-ending, life - 1 Jn. 2:25

1 John 2:25 - This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

- C. Therefore, it will be heaven that the final reward will be won - 2 Tim. 4:6-8

2 Timothy 4:6-8 - For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

1. The dictionary defines "guerdon" as "poetically, a reward, recompense."
2. Shepard and/or Stevens in Hymns for Worship changed it to "Somewhere the crown is won." I have never seen this change in any other book.
3. Let me editorialize for a minute. On the one hand, I understand the need for songs to be written in language that those who sing them can understand. On the other hand, there is something in me that rebels against the "dumbing down" of many of the great hymns of faith just to cater to people who do nor or will not take the time to understand perfectly good English words. Oh, well.

III. *According To Stanza 3, Heaven Will Be A Place Of Welcome*

"Somewhere the load is lifted Close by an open gate; Somewhere the clouds are rifted, Somewhere the angels wait."

- A. The load that we carry throughout this lifetime will be lifted in heaven because at death, those who die in the Lord enter into rest from their labors - Rev. 14:13

Revelation 14:13 - And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

- B. This will occur "close by an open gate" which is figuratively pictured as being made of pearl - Rev. 21:21

Revelation 21:21 - And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

- C. And upon the gates of this eternal city, the angels are said to be waiting to welcome the redeemed of all ages - Rev. 21:12-13

Revelation 21:12-13 - It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.

Conclusion:

- A. The chorus continues to look forward to that "Somewhere" in which all of the longings of God's people on earth will be completely fulfilled. "Somewhere, Somewhere, Beautiful Isle of Somewhere! Land of the true, where we live anew, Beautiful Isle of Somewhere.
- B. "This song, reportedly the favorite song of President William McKinley, has been popular at funerals through the years and was sung at McKinley's funeral following his assassination in 1901. Many years ago I recall reading a satirical article, which made the rounds in church bulletins then being published, about a death notice for "Sister Prayer Meeting." At the funeral, it was said that the audience sang "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere," but no one really quite knew what or where that land might be. The point was that much of what passes for religion today is more "this worldly" than "other worldly."
- C. I have also read articles which criticize this song in particular for being too "other worldly" by implying that we should do nothing but just look forward to heaven. However, for all true Christians, while we should strive to live the life that God has given us here on this earth to the best of our ability and be thankful for it, we still need to set our affections above on that "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere."