

A consideration of the eternal inheritance of the saints in light – the celestial blessedness, the final state of God's elect – otherwise called the life which is to come in the world to come.

Sunday, October 8, 2006

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which... hath begotten us again...to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”
1 Pet. 1:3-4. “That...they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Heb. 9:15. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Col. 1:12. “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” Eph. 1:11.

1 Tim. 4:8 – “For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” Heb. 6:5 – “Those who... have tasted...the powers of the world to come.”

Ancient Israel was assigned an inheritance – the large and fertile land of Canaan – which was material and temporal – which was a type of the inheritance of the saints – which is spiritual and eternal. Following the conquest of Canaan, Joshua assigned each Israelite a place in the Promised Land – marked out by landmarks which could not on pain of death be tampered with: “Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it...Cursed be he that removeth his neighbor's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.” Dt. 19:14 and 27:17. A clear and compelling type of Heaven – the final state of good men – a state which, beginning with the general resurrection, is to continue unchanged, except by indefinite progress, for ever and ever: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Mat. 25:34.

Naboth vs. Ahab (900 B.C.): Spiritual-minded Israelites understood the symbolism, and would rather die than give up their inheritance: “And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.” 1 Kgs. 21:3. (Joshua divided the land c. 1450 B.C., some 550 years earlier). Read 1 Kgs. 21:1-14. A microcosm – universe in miniature – of the wars of the Lord in all ages.

Jacob vs. Esau (1800 B.C.): A similar microcosm: “And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him; and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esau

despised his birthright." Gen. 25:30-34. His light regard for Heaven marked him as a "profane person." Heb. 12:16.

From what God has thus far revealed, we can form correct – but inadequate – conceptions of Heaven, our inheritance, the world to come.

John Brown: What is figuratively termed "the inheritance" (1 Pet. 1:4) is literally described, ver. 5, as the "salvation ready, or prepared, to be revealed in the last time." Of that state we can form but very inadequate conceptions, for it has not yet been "revealed." "It does not yet appear what we shall be:" 1 Jn. 3:2. It will be fully unveiled by and by, but not till "the last time" – the period of "the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." But we may form CORRECT conceptions, so far as they go; and it is of the greatest importance that we should do so.

It is a state of complete freedom from evil, both moral and physical, in all its forms, and in all its degrees; and it is a state of perfect holy happiness, suited to a spiritual nature, endowed with intellect and affection and active power, united to a material frame, every way suited to minister to its progressive improvement and enjoyment; a state in which every capacity of blessedness shall be filled to overflowing, and in which the growing capacity shall never outrun the increasing blessedness.

Knowledge and holiness are the two great elements of the celestial happiness. The holy spirits of the just made perfect, clothed upon with their house from heaven, the immortal, incorruptible, powerful, glorious resurrection-body, shall be perfectly conformed to God, so far as their limited capacities admit, in knowledge and purity and happiness. God's mind shall be their mind; God's will, their will; God's happiness, their happiness. They shall "know him as he is; and they shall be like him." 1 Jn. 3:2. This is, I am persuaded, the JUSTEST view we can take of the celestial happiness. This is "the inheritance." Walked through walls, rose in the air.

1 Jn. 3:1-2. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God...Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." "Yet in my flesh – powerful, beautiful, agile, spiritual, impassible (not subject to pain) – shall I see God." Job 19:26. "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." Phil. 3:20-21. Walked through walls and rose in the air.

2 Cor. 12:2-4. "I knew a man in Christ...such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." The economy of the world to come is so vastly different from the corrupt economy of "this present evil world" ("Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from *this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever" Gal. 1:4) as to render communication impossible. Economy: a system of producing and distributing the material needs of society, the interaction of the parts and functions of a society.