



*Thro' death into life everlasting  
He passed, and we follow Him there;  
Over us sin no more hath dominion—  
For more than conqu'rors we are!*

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face;  
And the things of earth  
    will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Helen H. Lemmel

**T**HE VENERABLE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE uses the word “mansions” to describe the Christian’s dwelling in heaven:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

*John 14:1-3 kjv*

But the Greek word (*mone*) can refer to just about any kind of an abode—from a shack, or a hut in a field, to an apartment or house. There is no guarantee that the believer in heaven will be living in a 100-room manor house. On the other hand, a “hut” by heavenly standards just may be the equivalent of an earthly mansion! I have a feeling that none of it will matter anyway. There is nothing at all to indicate that in our heavenly state we will be the least bit interested in the socio-economic level of our neighborhood. We will have other more pressing matters with which to occupy our time.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

*Revelation 5:11-14*

## INCONSEQUENTIALS

When I was a child, the minutia of life was an endless fascination. In detail I knew the texture of the bark of the hackberry tree that bore my tree house. The nooks and crannies of our garage’s attic were a catacomb of discovery and imagination, in which I fashioned forts and caves, and secret dwellings. I knew the aroma of the first day of spring, and the excruciating cold of delivering newspapers on a winter’s eve. I was familiar with every bend, every tide pool and miniature cataract of the tiny creek that meandered behind Franklin School.

As I grew older, the objects of my fascination changed. I discovered cars, and sports—and girls. But I still had the time and luxury to know them all in lingering detail: It was important that I knew the various models and types of cars. I read books about baseball, played in Little League, and knew the rich, leathery smell of my glove's palm, and the comfortable feel of swinging my own bat. And, of course, by a certain age the fairer sex became a powerful distraction from just about everything else. Suddenly my clothing, the cut of my hair, the scented liquid I applied after a shower, the popular songs playing on the radio—all became very important to me.

Even when I went off to serve in the navy, I became intimately acquainted with the mirror-like shine on my shoes, the perfect crease in my trousers, the brevity of my haircut. During my stint as a mess cook, I memorized the smell of a walk-in reefer filled with vegetables, and the wilting steam coming off a serving table. Overseas I knew the cloying aromas of a Hong Kong marketplace, the smell of gray paint on a steel deck, and the sweet feeling of freedom when on liberty after a month at sea.

Life, during my youth, consisted of all these small things—absorbed and memorized, pigeon-holed, categorized—that became the catalogue of everything important. Small things were important because youth experience life by minutes and hours. Time passes slowly for the young.

When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things.

1 Corinthians 13:11

Time for adults, on the other hand, passes at breakneck speed. During some hazy, unrecorded point in my adult life, small things became less important—almost invisible. Youth experience their life through a microscope, down to every tiny detail, while adults experience life through a wide-angle lens. The teenage girl knows the eating and grooming habits of the very latest pop heartthrob, but the adult woman already has her attention filled to capacity with the raising of her children, management of house and husband, or the daily rigors of the workplace.

I no longer have the luxury of studying the bark on each tree; I must do my work, then move on. The vehicle I drive is no longer selected for its appeal to others, but for its low price, and its reliability in moving me from Point A to Point B. I no longer listen to the popular music of the day; I listen to the news and the weather.

## ETERNALS

Time and its activities change between childhood and adulthood because of the necessary maturity of responsibilities. Most adults have had the opportunity to sift out of their life that which is inconsequential; adults have prioritized out of their lives much of the nonessentials of childhood to make room for the essentials of surviving in a hard world. Much of the contrast, therefore, can be explained by the need for basic time-management. But that does not explain it all.

Once we are born, we immediately begin our journey to the eternity of our choice—we begin the journey to whatever lies on the other side of our ultimate earthly demise. The only difference between the youth and the adult, is that the adult knows this; the misguided youth considers himself immortal.

The unbeliever shrugs off eternity as either myth, or an inevitable fate outside his capacity to change. In either case it becomes something to disregard. The believer, too, has a choice in how he reacts to what (for him) will be a more pleasant end. Many a Christian thinks of heaven with the same disregard as unbelievers: *It is out there; it is inevitable; it is a good thing, but there is nothing I need to do about it. Therefore, I will not think about it.*

Other Christians, however, have taken the next transitional step. Just as they left behind the minutia of childhood, in favor of the substantials of adulthood, they are now leaving behind the inconsequential of this world, in favor of the eternals of the next. They have already taken that “first step up toward heaven.”

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

1 Corinthians 13:12

*Show me Thy face—one transient gleam  
Of loveliness divine,  
And I shall never think or dream  
Of other love save Thine:  
All lesser light will darken quite,  
All lower glories wane,  
The beautiful of earth will scarce  
Seem beautiful again.*

*Show me Thy face—my faith and love  
Shall henceforth fixed be,  
And nothing here have power to move  
My soul's serenity.  
My life shall seem a trance, a dream,  
And all I feel and see,  
Illusive, visionary—Thou  
The one reality!*

*Show me Thy face—I shall forget  
The weary days of yore,  
The fretting ghosts of vain regret  
Shall haunt my soul no more.  
All doubts and fears for future years  
In quiet trust subside,  
And naught but blest content and calm  
Within my breast abide.*

*Show me Thy face—the heaviest cross  
Will then seem light to bear;  
There will be gain in every loss,  
And peace with every care.  
With such light feet the years will fleet,  
Life seem as brief as blest,  
Till I have laid my burden down,  
And entered into rest.*

Unknown