

the faith of Abraham who with Sarah was said to have desired "a better country that is an heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city" (Hebrews 11:16). Peter in his last epistle, facing death, writes in similar vein. He writes in order to encourage the Christians to keep steadfast after his departure. He declares that they do well to take heed to the prophetic word the scriptures, to help them (2Pet. 1:19). He urges a holy life (1:5-10) and gives as the result "for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (5:11). Peter was expecting heaven for himself at death and encouraged his readers to have the same wonderful hope.

Probably the clearest section on the subject in the whole New Testament is II Cor. 6-8 "always full of courage, then, and knowing that while we are in the body we are exiled from the Lord--for we walk by faith and not by sight--we even have the courage to prefer to be exiled from the body and to be at home with the Lord." The footnote in the confraternity Edition says "The apostle means to say, if death is necessary before we can be with Christ, then welcome death." Very true. Death for the Christian has been robbed of its terrors. Why? Because the Christian at death is "at home with the Lord." What clearer denial of the alleged pains of purgatory could be found. "At home with the Lord" expresses it all. On the last night of Christ's life on earth He said "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I am coming again, and I will take you unto myself; then where I am, there you also may be" (John 14:2-4) (Confrat. ed.). "At home with the Lord"--that is bliss. Whether heaven has literal streets of gold or not we perhaps can not be sure. And what difference does it make? The place where we are at home with Jesus Christ our Lord is heaven by definition. This was David's understanding years before "In Thy presence is fullness of Joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. 16:11). "Asleep in Jesus," precious words engraved on many a tombstone declare to a living world that the veil separating us from heaven has been rent by Christ our Saviour. And we by His matchless grace will be received at once into His blessed fellowship when our earthly walk is over. Now "we walk by faith not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7) "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor 13:12). And in that day we shall have rest in Christ.