

Your Mansion is Ready - Are You?

By Robert C. Veil, Jr.

I've been thinking lately about mansions and castles. Grand homes of the past which I love to read about, study and tour. I'm not sure why this has been on my mind lately, unless it's because several of our members have made recent trips to the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina. A Chateausque-styled mansion built by George Washington Vanderbilt, II between 1889 and 1895, it is the largest privately owned home in the United States, estimated at 135,000 square feet and having 250 rooms. If you have never seen that mansion, it is well worth the trip.

Or, my recent preoccupation with mansions may be because of our Community Clothing Giveaway, to which someone brought a book about castles to be given away. I don't know who donated this, but immediately recognizing that this was not suitable for children, I protected them by taking it myself! It features beautiful color pictures of many of the famous castles around the world. I am enjoying reading about these amazing structures. Castles and similar structures were often built as imposing havens of refuge in times of war and siege. They were a place of safety, often for entire families and communities. They were designed and built with great care and expense, and many of them have endured for centuries. Some are open for sight-seeing and tours.

"In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you," (Jn. 14:2). I am looking forward to touring that mansion, aren't you? It will not likely be of the medieval style, or Gothic, or Renaissance, or the amazing Chateau. This one is planned and prepared by the Lord, especially for us. It will surpass in its beauty and grandeur anything this world has ever seen.

Jesus said to his disciples that he was going to prepare a place for us. But he talked extensively about how we are to prepare ourselves to go there. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people, people who have been longing and readying themselves to go. Getting to heaven will be no accident, preparations have been underway by every faithful Christian.

A number of things will not be there: no tears, no death, no mourning, no crying, no pain. You can search through your heavenly mansion from top to bottom and never find any trace of sadness or loss. Never a trampled or broken heart. No jealousy, no envy, no strife. All the impurities of sin will be conspicuously absent!

And certain people will not be there either: the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars. Imagine a place with no hatred, no evil desires, no hidden agendas, and no immorality of any kind.

I notice in the grand estates and castles of Europe, invariably they are built on solid foundations. Often situated on massive rock outcroppings, or high atop earthen strongholds, their moorings are safe and secure for hundreds of years. Yet, these structures pale in comparison to that heavenly mansion. They have their imposing strongholds, but truly, this is the one who *has the foundations!* Its builder and maker is God, (Heb. 11:10). It will last throughout eternity.

Unlike houses of this world, our heavenly mansion will not be subject to decay and corruption. After thousands of years it will be as bright and shining as ever, for it is built and preserved by God, (Mt. 6:19-21). And it will be inhabited by those whose bodies have been changed and "fashioned anew" by our Savior, (Phil. 3:21). "The first man is of

the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven," (1 Cor. 15:47).

Our mansion will be ready - but will we? Jesus consistently taught the need to be ready, prepared for heaven. "If thou wouldest be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven," (Mt. 19:21). There is an godly lifestyle which leads to "treasure in heaven." Having followed in the footsteps of our Lord, we look forward to being ushered into that heavenly mansion, and indeed finding within, as we tour its inviting rooms and corridors, beautiful "treasure in heaven." All will be in place, properly prepared, all will be ready. Let's make sure we are ready to move in to that glorious mansion in heaven.