

## **HOMESICK FOR HEAVEN      by Stan Mitchell**

What do these beautiful songs have in common?

“An Empty Mansion” (1937), “Beyond the Sunset” (1936), “Heaven Holds All to Me” (1932), “Never Grow Old” (1930), “I’ll Live in Glory” (1936), “In Heaven They’re Singing” (1937), “No Tears in Heaven” (1935). “Paradise Valley” (1935), “This World is Not My Home” (1937), “Won’t it Be Wonderful There?” (1930).

First, it is easy to see, they are songs about heaven. They express the deepest longing, anticipation and hope of the Christian heart. Second – did you see it? – these songs were all written at about the same time period, about 1929-1939. Are you following this still?

These beautiful songs of heaven were written during the Great Depression. Have you seen those black-and-white photos of mothers wearing threadbare dresses, children in rags, hunger etched in the bones of their faces? When the nation suffered economic collapse, businesses were boarded up, millions of workers laid off, when hunger and destitution ravaged the land: In those desperate times, it seems, people turned their thoughts to the hope of heaven.

Heaven, a place of permanence, hope and plenty. Can you see them in your mind’s eye singing in simple church buildings, eyes closed, singing of their homesickness for heaven?

Interestingly, we hear far fewer songs written these days about heaven. Is it because we feel more secure economically? We have it so good in the present that we don’t long for heaven as we once did.

We should probably not put such stock in the current good economic times. Experience and Scripture tell us how faulty such a premise that is!

The greatest missionary who ever lived would say that “to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). And the writer of Revelation could exult in a place where there were no more tears, the Lord was the light, no hurtful, mean or violent person would be present, and where the sweetest people who ever lived would sing in exultation to their God (Revelation 21:1-10). In times of distress, I suppose, it’s easier to remember that this world is distinctly not our home. It’s when times are good that it is harder to draw this distinction. And yet, beloved, our hearts should still long for heaven.