

## A MANSION, ROBE & CROWN

In December of 1984, I was called aside by my father at our family Christmas gathering and asked a special request. He wanted me to write songs for his funeral. He was not ill but said he wanted me to not wait until his death in order to do it. I was honored by the request and said as much.

What my father did not know was that I was in the process of writing a hymnal of original songs that would be suitable for congregational singing. Upon receiving his request, I wrote four songs that were included in the hymnal, **Songs of Faith**: “God Is Gonna Take Us Home”, “My Heavenly Home”, “We’ll Live Again” and “A Mansion, Robe & Crown”. But it was the latter that was written specifically as a tribute to my father’s life using the promises of three things that Christ has said that his saints would enjoy. The three verses of the song refer to each of those things.

I first considered the homes that my father had lived in. Because he had twelve children, by necessity they were always of substantial size. However, I knew that they would not compare to the new house that he would have after death. And so I wrote: *I’m gonna trade my earthly home for a better one bright and fair...*

Although the family had lived in the north for many years, my father had returned to his home town in the South after my mother died. It was there that he boasted of the better weather than what we had in the north and his preference for the warmth and sun.

Therefore verse two speaks of that love: *The weather there is always fair there is sunshine day and night...* The reference to the *heavy garment* was his fleshly body which would be left behind on earth: *“I’ll need no heavy garment I’ll just wrap my robe around”*.

The third verse was very personal in that it described the difficulties that my father had in ministry. He had been scorned and rejected by many throughout the latter years of his preaching, but without resentment or bitterness, he remained steadfast and faithful to God and His church. Thus I wrote: *My head is bowed and bloody now from the work that I’ve tried to do, but one day I’ll be rewarded with a crown so bright and new. I’ll wear a smile so bright for there’ll be no cause for a frown...*

Not only was the book printed almost ten years before my father’s death, but the most popular song in the entire book that was sung throughout the country was the one written to his honor, “A Mansion, Robe and Crown”.