



## A Trip to Paradise

A parody is a comic caricature, a ludicrous likeness, an absurd analogy, a ridiculous representation which exposes a particular reality by comparing it to another of a different order. Parodies can be a useful literary tool to expose the “red herrings” of diversions which distract attention from real issues. By the use of parody one can be direct yet subtle at the same time.

**A** Trip To Paradise—Just Sign Up Here! Extolling the many virtues of the island paradise of Tahiti, the promoter explained that this was truly where the “good life” was to be found.

His listener was intrigued by the prospect of living in this island paradise. Convinced that he would like to go there, he was advised by the promoter about the necessary procedures required for receiving an “open ticket” to Tahiti.

As the precise date for departure was indefinite, the aspiring traveller spent the majority of his meditative moments dreaming of what it would be like when he arrived there. His thoughts so dwelt upon his destination that he wrote many a sonnet and put them to music to express his hopeful joy.

Over and over again he engaged in a repetitive review of the details of the flight—the lift-off into the clouds, the scheduled intermediary stop and the eventual landing. “I’ll fly away, O Lordy, I’ll fly away,” was the tune in his heart.

Expectations for the trip were so high that the hopeful traveller began to eagerly solicit others to join him on the trip. Convinced that such life in paradise was in the best interest of all, he accepted this as his *cause celebre*.

He, himself, became a promoter, waving his ticket before those who would look and listen, advertising the “good life” that he had discovered, albeit so distant and yet to be realized.

Is not much of Christian teaching today parodied in this parable?

Is that the good news of the gospel—a ticket to paradise? Is the *raison d’etre* of the Christian simply to be an itinerant travel agent to convince others to take the trip?

Is it any wonder that Christians today seem to have such a difficult time dealing with their present lives here on earth? Their past is forgotten; their future is expected; but the present is but the edgy monotony of waiting on “stand-by.”

Christians have “checked-out” of their present situation. They have “checked-in” their baggage of sin at the baggage-counter (altar), and they are holding onto their redemption coupons while waiting for the flight.

Huddled in the waiting-lounge of earthly existence, they sing together, “This world is not my home; I’m just a passing through; My treasures are laid up, somewhere beyond the blue.”

The good news of the gospel is that the dynamic life of Jesus Christ affects us and is effective in us *today!*

We look not just for a future realization, but we rejoice in the restoration of humanity as God intended, since God has come to dwell in us (2 Corinthians 6:16). We have Christ in us, the expectation of manifesting the glorious character of God on earth today (Colossians 1:27).

The evangelicalism which relegates the spiritual life only to heavenly expectation, and the futuristic eschatology which fails to account for present realization and participation in the life of Christ, have fostered the inability of Christians to deal with the trials and tribulations of life on earth.

Such misrepresentation of the gospel has failed to instill an awareness of the importance of Christian growth and development today.

Now is the time and here is the place for godly Christian living, in order to demonstrate the glory of God for which we were created (Isaiah 43:7). □

—Jim Fowler



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