

# Lecture 9 — The New Jerusalem.

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*Rev. 21: 9-27, Rev. 22: 1-5.*

## **Behold the Bridegroom!**

*Ten lectures on the second coming and kingdom of the Lord Jesus.*

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We were looking, last Lord's Day evening, at the earthly side of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. There passed before us the testimony of Scripture as to what the nature, and character of that day would be, with every foe, and every adverse power, subjugated to the Lord Jesus, Satan in the bottomless pit, and "neither adversary nor evil occurrent." We saw that those, under that beneficent reign, will be indeed blessed. We saw that death is to be a rare thing, the curse to be removed, the earth to be fruitful, the earthly Jerusalem to be rebuilt, and re-established in more than her pristine glory; the temple to be rebuilt, the sacrifices re-established, and Jerusalem to be the metropolis of a renewed, and absolutely blessed earth. The Jew — now despised, looked down upon, and often treated with contempt — in that day will be "the head, and not the tail" (Deut. 28: 13). Jerusalem will be the joy of the earth, and from Zion will come out streams of deepest blessing, and all the earth will rejoice under the sway of Jesus. And where shall we Christians be in that day? I believe the scripture, which I have read this evening, answers that question most distinctly. What I desire to bring before you now, is, what I may call, the heavenly side of the kingdom of the Son of Man, the heavenly side of the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus, and to show how the Church — it is a wonderful thing, and an unspeakable favour, to belong to the Church of God, the Body of Christ — will be in distinct relation to the renewed earth. In the scripture which I have just read, God gives us much light and information, of an exceedingly interesting, and very blessed character, upon this point.

Before I touch this subject, bear with me a moment, while I point out that, which I think may help some students of Scripture, in regard to this passage, and its position in the book of Revelation. I can easily understand a person saying, Are not the subjects of these chapters in Revelation consecutive? I believe they are not. The book is, in a certain sense, a book of drama, and you find, every now and then, the curtain drops, and something entirely new will come before you — a new scene. Commencing with Revelation 19, we find the marriage of the Lamb, — the Bride, the Lamb's wife, gets herself ready, and the marriage takes place. The next thing is this, the Lord Jesus comes out from heaven, as King of kings, and Lord of lords, attended by the armies of heaven, on white horses; the heavenly saints attend their Lord; the Bride is with the Bridegroom, when He comes to deal with the earth. The next thing is, that every foe is put down; the beast, and antichrist are cast alive into the lake of fire, and their armies overwhelmed, and Satan bound, and cast into the bottomless pit. Then (Rev. 20) the reign of the Lord is established;

the heavenly saints, and two martyred companies, live, and reign, with Christ, a thousand years, and, at the end of that time, Satan is let loose.

Gog and Magog come to his hand, fire comes down from God, their destruction follows, and then the great white throne is set up. Time is over, the judgment is set, and you are carried, in the first few verses of Revelation 21, into the eternal state, the description of which closes with the 8th verse of the chapter. We have here, then, a consecutive, descriptive account of events, commencing with the Lord's appearing, and coming to earth, with His people, right on, through the millennial day, to the great white throne; and then into the eternal state; and with the 8th verse of chapter 21 the prophecy of the book of Revelation closes, for you cannot get further than the eternal state. We have the history of God's dealings, with man upon the earth, absolutely closed in chapter 20, and in the first eight verses of chapter 21 we have the relationship of God, to man, in eternity. The eternal state is there most fully, and beautifully described, and the curtain, so to speak, drops. The question before us tonight is, Why does it rise once more?

Why does the Spirit of God commence an altogether new subject in Revelation 21: 9, which is carried on to the close of the 5th verse of chapter 22? Because He would give us, and, in order to do so, turns back again, into time, to give us, details about a certain being — a certain company of people if you like the expression better — who will be in relation to the Lord of the earth, in the millennial day, and who will be in relation to the earth itself, in that day. In the verses read, I have no doubt we get the distinctive relation of the Church, — the heavenly people of the Lord, that belong to Jesus now, — to the renewed earth in that day. Some one may say, That is a very arbitrary way of dealing with Scripture. No, it is the way of the Spirit of God. You will find in numberless places in Scripture, that God's Spirit will, first of all, give you a little summary, and then turn back again, and give detail. Revelation 21: 9-27, 22: 1-5, is not any exception, because you will find that, in another part of this same book, you have absolutely the same line of descriptive treatment by the Spirit of God, not with regard to the Church — the true Bride of Christ — but with regard to what calls itself the church — the false bride — Babylon, the Mother of Harlots.

Turn back, for proof of this, to Revelation 14 where the Spirit of God brings out seven distinct points, of, as yet, unfulfilled prophecy. The first thing that John sees is the one hundred and forty-four thousand, the earthly company. That brings us down to the end of verse 5. Then in verse 6, we get a second point, the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. In the 8th verse, we get the third point, "Babylon is fallen." Now Babylon's fall comes here, as the third of the seven, and you will see what follows. Next, we get what will be the judgment of those who worship the beast (verses 9-12). That is the fourth point. The fifth point is how blessed it will be then to "die in the Lord" (ver. 13). Then (sixth), in verses 14 to 16, Christ comes, with a sharp sickle in His hand, and we have the harvest of the earth — discriminating judgment. Then (verses 17 to 20) another angel comes out, and we have (seventh) the vintage described — the unmistakable vengeance of God, upon a guilty, blood-stained earth. Here, then, we see a summary of earthly events, commencing with the manifestation of the Jewish remnant, and closing with the final pre-millennial judgments. Now observe, Babylon was mentioned there in one verse (the 8th), but we do not get Babylon portrayed, and her fall described, till chapters 17 and 18, where you will find her characteristics delineated, viz., idolatry, corruption, worldliness, and persecution, as well as her destruction, given in detail.

The same mode of treatment is found in the part of Scripture before us tonight. We have first a summary of events, and then, for a particular purpose, the Spirit of God turns back, and gives us an immense amount of detail — not about the false bride, but about the true. Babylon is the false church; the new Jerusalem is the real thing. We have only to read these two scenes to see how strong, and doubtless purposed, is the analogy between the two passages. Nay more, if we observe the way, in which John is invited to behold the glory of the new Jerusalem, you will find, it is exactly similar to the way in which he is invited to look at the fall of Babylon. "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21: 9). Again: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth upon many waters" (Rev. 17: 1). Do not suppose that Babylon is a built city, or the New Jerusalem either. Both are figures. They have an immense meaning to the student of Scripture, and "the new Jerusalem" teems with thoughts of the Bride's glory, and happiness, to any one who understands the meaning of the term. I say this to show, that I am not taking unwarrantable liberties with the Word of God. I rather wish to show how absolutely the Scriptures hang together.

How beautiful that the Spirit of God should turn back then, in this 21st chapter, and show, that in the millennial day of the reign of the Lord Jesus, those who have followed a despised Saviour, those who have known an earth-rejected Saviour, those who have shared in His loss, and shame, and contempt, and scorn, during the long night of His rejection, and absence, will be identified with Him, in His glory. The Spirit of God delights to spend almost a whole chapter, in describing, and unfolding, what will be the beauty to the eye of God, what the joy to the heart of the Lord, and what the displayed glory to the eye of the world, in that day, of those, who have followed Jesus in the time of His rejection, and, hence, share with Him in His glory, and shine with Him, in the day, when the whole earth basks in the sunshine of His blessed favour. In figurative language here, the Spirit of God is bringing out that which had already fallen from the lips of the Saviour Himself, when He was here upon the earth. He shows us the moment of incomparable glory for the Church.

But who is the Church, the Bride? "I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." To see the Bride, I invite you, dear fellow-Christians, to look at yourselves tonight. I do not often do so. It is very rarely that I ask a Christian to look at himself, or herself — I always say, Look at Christ. But God is going to let us look, this evening, at ourselves, not as we are, but as He is going to make us, in Christ, in a day yet to come. Who, then, will compose that Bride? Let me ask you a question Do you think you are a part of the Bride? I know, through infinite grace, that I am, so also are all sinners saved by grace; sinners of the Gentiles, sinners of the Jews, called by the sovereign grace of God, touched by His blessed Spirit, converted, and brought to know the Saviour, in the night of His absence. I can see before me tonight scores that I know form a part of that Bride. Are you, however, sure that you belong to it? If not, I would most strongly urge you to come to Jesus at once. Come as a sinner, as you are tonight, and You will find, that He will give you a title to glory, that will never fail. Come to the One who died, and rose again. Cast yourself upon the mercy, and grace of that blessed Saviour, and He will not cast you out, because "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1: 15). The passage before us shows that we are saved, gloriously, grandly

saved. I would not miss it for ten thousand worlds, ten thousand times told. I shall have yet to show you what will be your portion, if you do miss what God now offers, but I say, with all the love, and energy of my soul, Do not miss it. Get washed in the blood of the Lamb, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will find that you are a stone in this city, so to speak. I see a great many of the stones before me tonight. The Lord will have them all beautifully polished by-and-by — the same stones that are sitting down here tonight, will form part of this holy city, in that wonderful day. You have only to come to the Saviour, the Living Stone, and believe in Him, and you will find yourself a living stone also (1 Peter 2: 4, 5), a member of the Church, the Bride.

By the Church, I mean sinners, brought to know the heavenly Saviour, since the day of Pentecost, born of the Spirit, washed in the blood of the Son of God, indwelt by the Spirit of God, baptized into that "one body," of which Christ, in glory, is the head. The Church is the body of Christ. He went into death for it. He has made it His own by dying for it, as it says, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish" (Eph. 5: 25-27). The Church, then, is composed of poor sinners, washed in the blood of Jesus, and led through grace to believe in Him. Anything down here, that man may call the Church, is neither here, nor there, in this respect. Being baptized, or a communicant, is utterly useless, for what I am speaking of tonight. These ordinances, most valued, and blessed, as they are in their place, never did, nor can, put a soul into Christ. The only real Church is composed of sinners, saved by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you can truly say, I believe in Jesus, I rest upon His blood, then I believe, I shall see you, by-and-by, shining in the very glory of God. You may have many a doubt, though you ought not to, for the Lord leaves no room for such, when He says to every simple believer in Him, "Where I am, there ye shall be also."

Well, now, this Church, formed by the Holy Ghost, is united to her living Head in glory, and she is to appear, with Christ, in the character which is unfolded here. "Come hither, I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife." It is not the first time she is brought before us, for we saw (Rev. 19: 7) that she got herself ready for the marriage day. In the 2nd and 3rd verses of Revelation 21, where she is again seen, the moment is really later on, in the ways of God, than the 9th verse. John is carried away in the Spirit now, to a great and high mountain, and is shown "the holy city, Jerusalem." The word "great" should be left out. It is not there as God wrote the verse. Babylon is called "that great city," Babylon, "that mighty city." Yes, man always wants something "great," but God does not call His Church great. No, another adjective suits her better — "holy." Babylon loves greatness, but we read of "the holy *city, Jerusalem*, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." In the 9th and 10th verses, she is seen descending out of heaven from God. She is descending, but she has not got down to earth, whereas in the 3rd verse you find that she is resting on earth, for "the tabernacle of God is with men." In eternity it will be God and men together, and the tabernacle of God, which is the Church, is with men. By His Spirit, God has tabernacled in the Church from the day of Pentecost, but the world has not believed it. In the millennial day God will compel the world to believe, that He has been dwelling in the bosom of the Church, all through the long dark night of the absence of Jesus; and, further, He will make the world in that day to rejoice in the light of His glory. But in verses 10 and 11, she is only descending — it is, in fact, the position which the Church holds in the millennium. She is between heaven and earth, over the earth, clearly connected with Christ, but

linked to the earth. What the character or extent of the communication between the heavenly Jerusalem, and the earthly may be, I do not know. Scripture is silent, and therefore we must not speak. This much we know, that we shall judge, both angels, and the world. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. 6: 2, 3.) What, then, do the angels do? They will be uncommonly happy to be the doorkeepers of this holy city, because "unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come" (Heb. 2: 5) — the future habitable earth. It is Man who is going to reign over the new earth, Man, in the person of Jesus, and His Bride in association with Him.

When the lowly Nazarene reigns over the earth, and blesses it, those who belong to Him in the day of His rejection, will reign with Him, in the moment of His glory. In the 10th verse, the city is not again called the New Jerusalem, because there is no necessity. She is the *new* Jerusalem, that is her nature and character, and there is no need to emphasise that again. She comes down from heaven. Her origin is divine, her nature, her character, is heavenly — "out of heaven from God." One is reminded of the scripture, "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. . . . We shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15: 48, 49). Do you not know that the Christian is a heavenly being? Yes, he belongs to heaven, he is taken out of the earth. The world says now, of a devoted, unworldly, Christ-loving, and Christ-serving saint, What a fool that man is! but it will alter its judgment, in the day, when it sees the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the holy city "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God."

Turn to the 17th chapter of John for a moment, to which this scripture necessarily carries one's mind. The Son is there unbosoming Himself to the Father, and we find Him saying in the 20th verse — "Neither pray I for these alone." He was not only praying for the apostles, but He was likewise praying for us — for all them that believe. There may be a very great difference between the members of the family of God, but there is one feature, which marks the whole family of God — that is identical, — they all believe. The Lord says therefore, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Blessed Lord! He was thinking of you and me, and He unfolds what belongs to us. "That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may *believe* that thou hast sent me." If the Church had been one, the world might have believed, but now it thinks it has very good ground for its unbelief because Christians are not one, but split into endless sects. But listen, he goes on — "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they maybe made perfect in one: and that the world nay *know* that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (John 17: 20-23). That will be the day, when the world sees the Church coming down, out of heaven from God, and it will then say, Ah! those Christians were right after all. We thought they were only deluded when they talked of being one with Christ, and the possessors of eternal life, but we know now they were right. The world will know it when too late to believe it. What the Lord prays for in the 21st verse is that the world might believe, but in the 23rd, He asks that the world may know, "that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me," and the world will know, then, that the believer in Jesus now, is accepted in, and is one with, God's beloved Son.

In that day the world will know this wondrous fact, that "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." It is the glory which God gave His Son, as man, not the incommunicable

glory, which belongs to the Lord Jesus, in the Godhead, — this never can be given. But the glory which the Son of Man has acquired, on the ground of redemption, He can, and, blessed be His adorable name, He does, share with His loved, and blood-bought Bride. But He says more. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17: 24). We shall see that glory; we shall be like Him, in that day of His glory, and more than that, we shall also appear with Him, in glory. Little wonder that the Spirit of God says here, "I saw the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." You and I, as sinners, are unfit for that glory, for "All have sinned, and *come short* of the glory of God," we read, in Rom. 3: 23. Then in Rom. 5: 1, 2, we get, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice *in hope* of the glory of God." Revelation 21 says John saw the city "descending out of heaven from God, *having* the glory of God." We are now made perfectly fit for it, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, then we shall possess, and enjoy it.

"And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal" (verse 11). The jasper stone is used in Scripture, for that which is expressive of the glory of God (Rev. 4: 3), which can be seen by the creature, for He has a glory, which no man can approach unto. "The building of the wall of it was jasper" (verse 18). That which is used to express the glory of God Himself, this city is seen to have. Her wall (verse 18), and first foundation (verse 19), are jasper. The glory of God is the foundation, and protection, as well as the light, and beauty of the heavenly city, for the Church is glorified, with Christ, in the glory of God. She belongs to God. The Christian is born of God, and has the divine nature imparted to him, through the new birth. There is only what is the fruit of grace visible in this chapter, all is "clear as crystal."

The city is divinely secure also, for it "had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. . . . And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (verses 12-14). Another has said:\* "It has twelve gates. Angels are become the willing doorkeepers of the great city, the fruit of Christ's redemption-work in glory. This marked the possession too, by man, thus brought, in the assembly, to glory, of the highest place in the creation and providential order of God, of which angels had been previously the administrators. The twelve gates are full human perfectness of governmental administrative power. The gate was the place of judgment. . . . There were twelve foundations, but these were the twelve apostles of the Lamb. They were, in their work, the foundation of the heavenly city. Thus the creative, and providential display of power, the governmental (Jehovah), and the Church once founded at Jerusalem, are all brought together in the heavenly city, the organised seat of heavenly power. It is not *presented* as the Bride, though it be the Bride, the Lamb's wife. It is not in the Pauline character of nearness of blessing to Christ. It is the Church as founded at Jerusalem under the twelve — the organised seat of heavenly power, the new, and now heavenly capital of God's government."

\*"Synopsis of the Book of the Bible," Vol. 5, 2nd edition.

The place which angels hold here is interesting. They are now, and have ever been, the servants of the saints, as we read: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1: 14), and when the Church is seen, by-and-by, in effulgent glory, they will be delighted to be the doorkeepers of the heavenly city. God, too, does not then forget His earthly people (Israel), nor the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The world is not to forget that the twelve apostles who served the Lord, and suffered in the earthly Jerusalem, are they, who, by their ministry, founded the heavenly Jerusalem, and thus it is only seemly, that the names of the apostles should be found in the twelve foundations of the city. In Ephesians we are told that we "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2: 20, 21), which has its full answer, I apprehend, in the new Jerusalem.

The city is alike vast, and perfect, and measured, and owned of God. "He measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal" (ver. 16). It was a cube. Now a cube is the most perfect figure, being equal on every side — finite perfection. It has what you call finality, it is the most comprehensive, and holds the most — nothing contains as much as a cube — and therefore, it is given here, as the expression of perfection. Observe, it is finite perfection, divinely given. I do not say it is divine perfection, because that is God Himself; but it is divinely given perfection, and therefore it is spoken of as a cube. The Spirit of God delights to show, the absolute perfection of the place in glory, which the saints have before God, on the ground of Divine righteousness.

"And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (Rev. 21: 18-21).

To again quote the words of another, "The city was formed in its nature, in divine righteousness and holiness — gold transparent as glass. That which was now, by the word, wrought in, and applied to men below, was the very nature of the whole place (compare Eph. 4: 24). The precious stones, or varied display of God's nature, who is light, in connection with the creature (seen in creation, Ezek. 28: 13; in grace, in the high-priest's breastplate, Ex. 28: 15-21), now shone in permanent glory, and adorned the foundations of the city. The gates had the moral beauty which attracted Christ in the assembly, and in a glorious way. That on which men walked, instead of bringing danger of defilement, was itself righteous, and holy; the streets, all that men came in contact with, were righteousness, and holiness — gold transparent as glass." (Synopsis, J.N.D.) Gold all through Scripture is Divine righteousness. White linen is practical human righteousness. When the Bride puts on the white raiment (Rev. 19: 8), it is her practical righteousness. If you were to put a little bit of white linen into the fire, it would soon be destroyed, but put a bit of gold in, and it stands the test. That is the whole point. Gold is Divine righteousness, and you, and I, stand before God, on the ground of Divine righteousness, in Christ.

"And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." As we have seen, we have these precious stones in Scripture three times. In the garden of Eden they are seen in connection with creation; then in Exodus 28, where they are seen in the breastplate of the high-priest, it is evidently a question of grace for a failing people; but, when we see these same stones, in the foundation of the heavenly city, the thought suggested is permanent glory. Those many-hued stones bring out the varied qualities of God, made known through His people. There will be different rays of His glory reflected through them, illustrated by these different precious stones, which are the emblems employed, to set forth the lustre of God's saints, in heavenly glory, and the way, in which He displays, the beauty, which He sees in them. Put a light through an emerald, and it is quite different from that of the ruby, and although we are all partakers of the grace of God, that grace will shine through each differently, and no two are alike. It would be an immense pity if all the saints were like a cart-load of bricks — all the same shape, and colour. just as there are not two leaves of the forest alike, so there are not two saints of God alike. All are alike in being saved by grace, but all are different in the expression of that grace.

"And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl." Why was every gate a pearl? You remember the heavenly merchantman, in Matthew 13, "seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (ver. 46). You may say, That is a sinner seeking the Saviour. Indeed! a sinner selling? What has a sinner got to sell but his sins? Nay, the pearl of great price is not Christ, but the Church — the Church in its unity. Christ went and sold all that He had, truly, and gave up all for the Church. The pearl is the Church in her unity, beauty, and completeness as viewed in God's mind, that so fascinated the Lord Jesus, that He parted with "all that he had," to get that pearl.

"And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." When you walk through the streets of man's city, you get your feet defiled. But what do I find there? Nothing to defile; nothing of that sort can by any possibility enter. We are there on the ground of Divine righteousness.

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (verses 22, 23). There being no temple is a great thing. There is no concealment of God's glory. A temple would speak of concealment, or of a special place, where God could be known, by those who drew near to worship. All this has gone by. Even now, we Christians, have fullest access to the holiest (Heb. 10: 19-22). In the heavenly city God is fully displayed. The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple. They are approached in their own nature and glory, as another has sweetly sung —

"The Lamb is there, my soul -

There, God Himself doth rest,

In love divine diffused through all,

With Him supremely blest.

God and the Lamb — 'tis well,  
I know that source divine,  
Of joy and love no tongue can tell,  
Yet know that all is mine.  
But who that glorious blaze  
Of living light shall tell,  
Where all His brightness God displays,  
And the Lamb's glories dwell.  
God and the Lamb shall there  
The light and temple be,  
And radiant hosts for ever share,  
The unveil'd mystery."

There will be a temple in the earthly Jerusalem. Any architect, with a fair knowledge of his profession, might go to Palestine, and build Ezekiel's temple today; God has given the measurements, and plans, so plainly, that Ezekiel's temple could be easily built. But there is here no temple — oh, no, because a temple always implies the thought of God being hidden, being in an inner place. In a certain sense it is all temple — *i.e.*, the Lord God and the Lamb pervade the city, and the saints are in the nearest contiguity to the Lord, in the closest relationship to the Lamb, enjoying the light, and basking in the sunshine, of the presence of the blessed Lord. Oh, what a contrast to the darkness of that eternal hell, which is the lot of the man who dies in his sins. God save you, if you are yet in your sins. Do not miss this scene of blessedness, and rest, and joy. There is no need for the sun, and the moon in that day. Why? Because "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" The glory of the divine nature illumines all, and the Lamb is the Lamp — the Light-bearer. God, fully displayed, supersedes all created light. The sun at mid-day was put out by a brighter light, when Saul was converted (Acts 9). Even so will it be in this city. "The glory of God did lighten it." It comes, shaded for us, through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although this city is the Church, brought out for millennial view, and gives our relationship to the millennial earth, it is the Church really in her eternal state, though the figure of "the city" ceases in the eternal state. What she is, she is going to be for ever, but, first of all, set in relation to earth, as a visible and glorious object over it. Therefore we read, "And the nations shall walk by the light of it." Only the redeemed nations will enjoy that privilege, and blessing I apprehend. Suspended above the earthly Jerusalem, the holy city will transmit the rays

of the glory of God, by which it is absolutely permeated, and encompassed. The light which it will then transmit, and shed on to the earth, will render it a magnificent luminary, of an altogether unknown quality, and the nations will walk in, and enjoy its light. This wonderful glory of God shines among, and through His own people. The city enjoys the direct light within, the world gets the transmitted light of the glory, and "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour *unto* (not *into*) it." They thereby acknowledge the heavens, and the heavenly kingdom, to be the source of all they possess, and enjoy; they render homage to Him, who is the Source.

"And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there" (ver. 25). The poet has said, —

"And sing of Thy glory above,

In praises by day and by night."

I never sing that, for there is no night there, and the gates are ever open. Evil cannot enter in. Blessed thought. Divine security guards against this. No falsehood, no idol — "whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (ver. 27), no defilement can ever enter. Neither Satan's deceit, nor man's evil, can again produce corruption.

This glorious description of the New Jerusalem, forcibly reminds us of a passage, before quoted, in the Old Testament (Isa. 60), where the earthly Jerusalem is addressed: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (ver. 1). Again, — "Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night: that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought" (ver. 11). If the nations of the earth will not bow down to Jerusalem they will perish. But further, — "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (verses 18-20). What is the meaning of that? The light that streams through the heavenly city — having God's glory — would appear to irradiate the earthly, and we have the heavenly, and earthly, Jerusalem, in touch one with the other. You have reached "the dispensation of the fulness of times" when God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1: 10). Jacob's dream is realised — "A ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven" (Gen. 28: 12). The two spheres are in intimate relation and accord. The night of evil has passed away, and the day of glory has set in. The affections of the soul are moved, as one also reads, that "only they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" enter in to the city. Sovereign grace is at the bottom of all blessing for man.

The first five verses of chapter 22 give us yet lovely details, as to the connection of the holy city with the earth, although not on it. "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and

yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22: 1) The city is refreshed by the river of God, and the fruits of the tree of life — always ripening — are for its inhabitants. The fruit, only the glorified saints eat, whereas the leaves — that which is visible without — are for the blessing of those on earth. Observe there is only one river here, and only one tree. You recollect in Genesis 2 there were four rivers, and two trees — the tree of the knowledge of good, and evil, and the tree of life. When man sinned, he was driven out, that he might not touch the tree of life. But when driven out of the earthly paradise, God opens a heavenly one to him. In Eden there were four rivers, and with two of them, Hiddekel, or Tigris, and Euphrates, are connected some of the most sorrowful passages of the history of God's earthly people. On the Tigris, was built Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, which carried captive the ten tribes. On the Euphrates, Babylon was built, whither the two tribes were taken. When we come to the last chapter of Scripture, we have but one river, the river of life, and one tree, the tree of life, and that seen on both sides of the river. The tree of the knowledge of good, and evil, is for ever gone. The day of man's responsibility, and testing, is, for ever, over, and everything is settled absolutely according to divine sovereign grace in Christ. There may be trouble on the earth, to begin with, but the Lord will put all right, in that day, for "the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." It must be borne in mind that these are only God's figures of fullest blessing. There will not be any real river, or visible tree, I take it, but, the river of water of life symbolises the superabundance of life, and blessing, which will flow through the city — *i.e.*, the Bride, the Lamb's wife — and, clearly, we are on millennial ground, in this chapter, for, in eternity, there are no nations or kings.

Then comes the climax. "There shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him" (Rev. 22: 3). Sometimes we are hindered here, but, thank God, there will be no hindrance in that day, nothing to hinder the heart going out to the Lord, to the fullest. "And they shall see his face." Yes, we are going to see the face of the blessed One, who died for us on the tree. "And his name shall be on their foreheads." On the forehead, of many a man on earth, will the name of the beast have been imprinted, but here, everybody delights to own, I belong to Jesus. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 22: 5). There is no night, nor need of light, for the Lord God gives it. The "candle" man makes, and the "sun" God has made, but neither are required there. All that suits, and is needed in, this world, is past, for the heavenly saints, — the Bride, the Lamb's wife, — and they "shall reign for ever and ever." We shall pass into eternity, in the unclouded enjoyment, of that which the Spirit of God brings before us in these verses. Oh, what a day for the Church, what a day for Christ, what a day of unmingled, unparalleled glory, and what a great mercy for you, and me, if we can say now, "I belong to the Saviour." If you are His now, then you will be most certainly His, in that day