

The Apocalypse — part 3, Rev. 18 - 22.

(Part 1 is found in the file apoca1.doc, part 2 in apoca2.doc.)

The Visions of John in Patmos:

being Notes on the Apocalypse.

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Contents

REVELATION 18, 19: 1-4.....	2
REVELATION 19.....	6
THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.....	6
(vv. 5-10.).....	6
CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS COMING OUT OF HEAVEN.....	10
(vv. 11-21).....	10
REVELATION 20.....	14
THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.....	17
(Rev. 20: 11-15.).....	17
REVELATION 21.....	21
THE ETERNAL STATE.....	21
(vv. 1-8.).....	21
THE HOLY JERUSALEM.....	25
(Rev. 21: 9-27.).....	25
REVELATION 22.....	31
THE PURE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE.....	31
(vv. 1-5.).....	31
CLOSING WARNINGS AND ADMONITIONS.....	35
(vv. 6-15.).....	35
THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.....	39
vv. 16-21.....	39

REVELATION 18, 19: 1-4.

ANOTHER vision opens out now before the mind of the apostle. In the preceding chapter the judgment of the great harlot was announced, and the instruments of its execution are revealed; whereas now we are permitted to see the disappearance of wicked Babylon, and the effects upon the various classes of the empire who had been in relation with her. But, as has been more than once pointed out in these Apocalyptic visions, the result is anticipatively proclaimed. John thus writes: *"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."* (vv. 1, 2.) Twice before the judgment of Babylon had been mentioned (Rev. 14: 8; Rev. 16: 19), and now the providential governmental instrument, the angel, descends to earth for its accomplishment, working, however, as we have learned from the previous chapter, through human agents, the beast and his vassal kings. But it is rather the accomplishment announced by the angel, revealing, at the same time, what Babylon, that which once bore the name of Christ, has become — the dwelling-place of demons, and the prison of unclean spirits, and of every form of Satan's power.* The grounds, or one ground (see Rev. 19: 2), of her judgment is stated. Balaam had taught Balak how to seduce the children of Israel to eat things offered to idols, and to commit fornication. (Rev. 2: 14.) Jezebel in Thyatira followed in his steps (Rev. 2: 20); but Babylon seduced the nations and the kings of the earth with the golden cup of her abominations and her fornication.† (Rev. 17: 4.) She, moreover, who had professed to belong to Him, who when here had not where to lay His head, made the merchants of the earth *"rich through the abundance of her delicacies."* (v. 3.) Not only therefore had she become false to Christ, but she was the practical denial of all that He was and is, and, in fact, utterly apostate, completely ruled as she was by the god of this world.

*The reader may compare Isaiah 21: 9; Jer. 50: 39; Jer. 51: 8, 37, as to the destruction of the historical Babylon.

†The reader may instructively compare Ezekiel 16: 15-34.

Another voice is now heard *"from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."* (vv. 4, 5.) This appeal to the people of God has occasioned considerable difficulty, inasmuch as on the surface it leads to the supposition that saints might still be found in Babylon. It must be remembered then, in the first place, that Babylon represents a spiritual system, and that this system, in its main moral features, has been in existence over since the days of John. Thyatira and Laodicea, in fact, contained the root of all the evils which are afterwards seen fully developed in Babylon. *The instruction therefore is for*

all ages, calling upon God's people to come out, and to be separate from that which can be spiritually discerned as Babylon, in which, as in Ezra's and Nehemiah's days, so many saints are enslaved. (Cp. Jer. 50: 8; Jer. 51: 6-9.) And they are also reminded that, if they continue to be mixed up with such a system, they will become partakers of her sins, and be governmentally subject to her plagues. Was there ever a day since these words were written when this solemn, urgent call needed to be more persistently sounded out through the length and breadth of Christendom than now? For what do we behold? Babylon plainly manifesting herself, and boldly rearing her head with her arrogant claims, as well as insinuating herself into popular favour and acceptance by her subtleties and flatteries. Let God's people therefore everywhere be obedient to this heavenly voice, and come out of her; for her sins are fast reaching up unto heaven, and the cup of her iniquities is already nearly full.

The question still returns, Is there no application to the eve of Babylon's destruction? That there can be no Christians in Babylon, at this period, is seen from the fact that the church is already in heaven. There will be Jewish saints on the earth, and, as Rev. 7 teaches, also Gentile believers, who will have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; but we have no information as to whether any of these, wearied out with their persecutions, may be tempted to seek shelter within the precincts of Babylon. If so, the call would be also addressed to such; yet the main significance of the cry is to all who may have become at any time mixed up with the principles that will finally concentrate and express themselves in Babylon.

The following verses need careful attention. The voice continues: "*Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.*" (vv. 6, 7.) The question is, To whom are these words addressed? It would seem to be a continuation of the address to God's people commenced in verse 4; but this is scarcely possible on two grounds; first, because the saints are not the executors of judgment upon Babylon; and, secondly, because we know that the beast and the kings, the ten horns, are the appointed instruments for this purpose. This has led some to suppose that the address is to the latter. This, however, would scarcely be in accord with what is found in this book; and consequently we regard these verses more in the light of an annunciation of the judgment, and the principle upon which it will be executed, than as a summons to those chosen to be the vessels of God's vengeance. The principle of the judgment is a known one in Scripture. God dealt in the same way even with Jerusalem (Isaiah 40: 2); and in Babylon being "rewarded" as she had "rewarded" God's people, we have a direct reminiscence of the manner of the judgment upon Babylon of old. (See Psalm 137: 8, 9; Jer. 50: 15-29.)

Then, after the principle of the judgment is explained, we have a striking presentation of the moral character of Babylon. She had "glorified herself, and lived deliciously." What a revelation! And what an unfolding of her utter apostasy! Self-exaltation, the perfect antithesis to the life of our blessed Lord, had been her sole object! And, moreover, her "life" expended itself in her own gratification. Morally she was in the desert, and yet she deceived herself into the belief that it was a paradise, and lived deliciously. Even more than this; "for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." This language corresponds, almost exactly, with that used by Isaiah, when denouncing judgment upon the "daughter of

Babylon" (Isa. 47); and it teaches us therefore that the mystic Babylon of the future is the moral descendant of the city of Nebuchadnezzar, embodying the same moral features, and drawing down from heaven the same vengeance. A still more striking thing to be observed is, that Laodicea's boast, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," is the moral root of all the evil here portrayed as existing in Babylon. While, however, man in his vain self-confidence may shut God out, seek his happiness in his own resources, and vaunt himself upon his own acquisitions and their stability, the time will come, as in the case before us, when God will interpose and exact a strict account according to the standard of His own holy requirements. Hence it is, as following upon the statement of Babylon's pride, self-glorification, and self-sufficiency, that it is said, *"Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."* (v. 8.) It is the beast and his horns (Rev. 17: 16) who are the seen executors of the judgment, but they are but the blind servants of the will of God.

In the next place, down to verse 18, a description is given of the effect upon various classes of the destruction of Babylon. It will suffice to specify one or two features of the picture. It will be noted, first of all, that the kings of the earth, those who had committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, are loud in their lamentations over the destruction of "that great city Babylon." This is by no means inconsistent with the fact that they, or some of them, had united with the beast to despoil her of her possessions. Many a gigantic abuse has often been judged in great popular movements, or even by peaceful legislation, and yet the framework of society has been shattered by its removal. Babylon, with its wide-spreading roots, will have interlaced itself with almost every social fibre of the life of the nations; and her fall, therefore, will spread universal dismay and confusion as well as render human governments unstable and powerless. This will account for the wail of these kings, as they stand *"afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come."* (v. 10.) The other mourners over Babylon's fall are commercial, *"the, merchants of the earth"* (v. 11), those who had been *"made rich by her"* (v. 15) in their traffic in all the various articles, for which the demand had been created or stimulated by Babylon's needs and influence; and *"every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea"* (v. 17); for all that had ships in the sea had also been made rich *"by reason of her costliness."* (v. 19)

All this description, it will be at once understood, is symbolical, the import of which is that the whole commercial system of the empire is utterly deranged, if not destroyed, by the judgment upon Babylon. The blow that falls upon her destroys with her the prosperity of the habitable world; and hence the universal sorrow; for men are ever ready to bewail the loss of the means of their comforts, wealth, and affluence.*

*A striking example of this is seen in the fact that, after the healing of the demoniac, and the consequent destruction of the swine, the Gadarenes prayed the Lord Jesus to depart out of their coasts. They preferred to have the demoniac, and their swine, to the presence of Jesus, because He had interfered with their earthly possessions.

There is ever an utter contrariety between God's thoughts and man's. All classes of the people sorrow over Babylon's fall; and now we are permitted, in contrast with this, to hear the

estimate in heaven of this event. *"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."** (v. 20.) What thus causes universal sorrow and widespread dismay on earth is the occasion of joy to heaven, and to those who had been witnesses for Christ, and some of these martyrs for His name's sake (v. 24), on earth.

*Literally it is, "For God hath judged your judgment upon her."

We have thereon a symbolic action to describe Babylon's destruction. *"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."* (v. 21.) So was it with ancient Babylon. Jeremiah "wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon," and he directed Seraiah, who accompanied Zedekiah to Babylon in the fourth year of the latter's reign, after he should have read the book in the very presence of Babylon's prosperity and magnificence, to bind a stone to it, and to cast it into the midst of Euphrates; and as he did so, he was to say, "Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her." (Jer. 51: 60-64.) The meaning of the action is the same, therefore, in both cases; it betokened violent, complete, final, and irreversible destruction. Never more was either to rise again; and thus we have in our chapter the solemn declaration that henceforth all strains of music, all mechanical activities, the sound of millstones, should be for ever silenced, that nevermore should shine within her the light of a candle, or be heard the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride. The desolation was to be complete; *"for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."* (vv. 23, 24.) Combining the several grounds of Babylon's judgment it will be seen that they are four — "idolatry, corruption, worldliness, and persecution." God had borne long with this wicked system which had profaned His name, and falsified His truth; but now His mighty hand has descended upon it, taking vengeance for all the iniquities which had filled the earth with defilement and corruption.

The first four verses of Rev. 19 give the celebration in heaven of the destruction of Babylon. John *"heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments: for He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."* (vv. 1-3.) It is an interesting question as to who are these that, with "a great voice," raise this song of praise. They are a class, evidently, outside of the twenty-four elders, and they are as clearly not angels. The inference is, therefore, that they are those who had been martyred on earth after the church had been removed, called up on high. The ground of their celebration of Jehovah-Elohim, their God, is the character of His judgments — they are "true and righteous," as displayed in the destruction of the great corruptress of the earth, and in avenging the blood of His servants at her hand. They repeat, in the intensity of their joy, their Alleluia.* Then the solemn statement, in contrast with this burst of joy in heaven, is given, as significant of the everlasting judgment that has fallen upon the harlot: "And her smoke rose up for ever and ever." (Compare Jude 7.)

*This means in its Hebrew form, Hallelujah, Praise ye Jehovah, or Jah. The last five Psalms commence and end with this word, this note of praise.

Following upon this, the four-and-twenty-elders (seen as the twenty-four elders here for the last time), and the four living creatures, who had been the spectators of the joy of the "much people," themselves "*fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.*" (v. 4.) The mind of heaven is one, both in praising God, and in rejoicing over the vengeance that has overtaken Babylon; and that mind, while in full communion with, indeed the expression of, the mind of God, is, let it be repeated, in direct opposition to the mind of man. God and all heaven rejoice over that which man esteems as his greatest calamity. What an exposition of the alienation of men "from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart!"

REVELATION 19.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

(vv. 5-10.)

IN this section the marriage of the Lamb, the event for which He had so long waited, now takes place. To possess the pearl of great price, He "went and sold all that He had, and bought it"; but although He loved the church, and gave Himself for it, and even though He had the church in heaven with Himself, He waits in patience for the presentation of His bride, until Babylon, the harlot, the false bride, should have been judged and utterly destroyed. The marriage of the Lamb does not then take place for some little time after the church has been caught up to be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4)

It would seem that verse 5, while following upon, and, it may be, connected with the worship of the elders and the four living creatures, is really introductory to the universal joy of heaven consequent upon the marriage of the Lamb. The "*voice came out of the throne,*" and this shows us that the event about to be celebrated is associated with God's ways in government, that is, as presented in this book. It must be remembered, indeed, that both the judgment visited upon Babylon, and the marriage of the Lamb in heaven, are preparatory to the appearing of Christ with His saints, to make good His title an earth, both as against evil and in taking possession of His kingdom. Having made good all that God is, borne the whole weight of His glory on the cross, He is in this scene about to vindicate also His name in government on the earth. The command that issues from the throne is, "*Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great.*" It is a "voice" that gives the command; whose voice is not said; but it is charged with the authority of the throne, and the speaker, inasmuch as he uses the words "our God," associates himself with those addressed. (Compare verse 10.) The character, moreover, in which those called to worship are viewed, is noteworthy. They are simply "His servants, and ye that fear Him," terms therefore which would include all the saints of all dispensations, as well as perhaps all the angelic host. There will not be one among all the multitudes of heaven that is not embraced under these appellations. (Cp. Ps. 103: 20-22; Ps. 118: 1-4.)

The response is as instant as it is overpowering in its grandeur: "*And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself*

ready." (vv. 6, 7.) There are two grounds given for the praise rendered. The first is, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, showing that the kingdom is regarded as already established. In fact, God has only waited for the vindication of His name, and for making good His power in government, until He had set aside for ever in judgment the great harlot who had corrupted the earth. Thereon, after the marriage of the Lamb, the heavens would open for the issuing forth of Christ to put down all the rule and authority wherewith the beast and the false prophet had deceived the habitable world, and to establish His own sovereignty over the nations of the earth. The names under which God is here celebrated are remarkable; they comprise the several characters in which He was revealed to the saints of old, viz., Jehovah, the self-existent One, the One who is, and was, and is to come, the name in which He was pleased to reveal Himself in relationship with Israel; God, the expression of all that He is in His own being, viewed absolutely, the One with whom man has to do as a responsible creature; and, finally, Almighty, or Omnipotent, answering to Shaddai in the Old Testament. (See Gen. 17: 1; Ex. 6: 3, and cp. 2 Cor. 6: 18.) The reason for the introduction of these names, the names of the One whom Christians know as their God and Father, is found in the fact that He is here brought before us in relation to the kingdom and to the earth. The "reigning," which is here celebrated, is connected with His kingdom in display on earth, not in heaven, and hence with the overthrow of all and everything that had exalted themselves against Him and His Christ. It is, in fact, the substitution in this world of God's power for that of man's, and consequently the introduction of the era of righteousness, peace, and blessing.

The second ground of heaven's joy is the arrival of the time for the marriage of the Lamb, His wife having made herself ready. As before noted, this event does not take place until after the false bride has been judged; and now we also learn, that in heaven there was a necessary preparation for the marriage: the wife must "make herself" ready. The character of this "readiness" is seen in the following verse, where we read, "*And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness [or, righteousnesses] of saints.*" (v. 8.) This will help us to determine the meaning of "making herself ready" as well as to fix precisely the time of the marriage. It must be observed, first of all, that the righteousnesses are those of the saints, and not what we know as God's righteousness according to the teaching of the Epistle to the Romans. (See also 2 Cor. 5: 21.) We read in 2 Cor. 5 of the judgment-seat of Christ, before which we must be all manifested, when every one will "receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" Whatever good any of His people have done, although it was by the Spirit and through His grace that it had been accomplished, will then, in the same grace, be imputed to the vessel which He had deigned to employ for the purpose, while every work of the flesh, whatever its outward appearance, will be traced back to its root, and its real nature exposed. And we shall thus learn of the grace that had borne with us in our failures as much as in using us in His service, and in reckoning to us what He had given us to do. But we are now concerned only with the latter; and we see then from this scripture, that all the good put to our account, when we are manifested before the tribunal of Christ, will constitute, not God's righteousness which in Christ we have already become, but, our righteousness, and it is these righteousnesses which are here symbolized by fine linen, clean and white. Not only therefore will the bride be beautified with God's own beauty, His righteousness, but she will also be robed in what He is pleased to call her own righteousnesses, and it is as so arrayed that she is here seen as ready for the marriage,

"prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"; made meet, but only through unspeakable grace, to be the companion of Christ throughout eternity.

Moreover, this, as has been said, fixes the time of the marriage. When the Lord descends from heaven with a shout, etc., it is to receive His people unto Himself. The dead saints raised, and the living changed, all will be caught up together to meet Him in the air, and we shall then be for ever with the Lord. His first act will be to introduce us into the Father's house. (John 14) Beyond this we have no revelation until we come to the judgment-seat of Christ, which would seem, from what takes place in heaven in this scripture, to immediately precede the marriage. Consequently the Lord, who had long since espoused His bride, does not take her in marriage until upon the eve of the appearing.

The question still remains as to the significance of the marriage. To understand this we must borrow the light of another scripture. In Ephesians 5 we read, "Husbands, love your wives, even as 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." (vv. 25-27.) This scripture travels far beyond our immediate subject, showing us, as it does, how Christ, in His surpassing love and grace, and at what a cost, possessed Himself of His bride; how that, in the same love, He cared for, and prepared her for her destination, making her worthy of the place into which His love was calling her, and bestowing upon her the moral fitness to enjoy His companionship and affection. The marriage itself is contained in her presentation to Himself, and it is this presentation which is signalized in heaven in our chapter.* Two things in connection with this should be noted; first, that it is the heavenly bride, and not the earthly bride, of which our scripture speaks;† and, secondly, that the heavenly bride is composed, and composed entirely, of the saints of this dispensation; that is, of all the saints from Pentecost onward until the return of the Lord to receive His people unto Himself. The saints of other dispensations, both before Pentecost and after the Lord's coming the second time, will have their own special place of perfect blessedness, but they are not included in those who form the bride, the Lamb's wife. This fact explains another thing; that the twenty-four elders are seen here for the last time. The elders, as before stated, comprise all who share in the first resurrection (excepting those afterwards added as found in Rev. 20: 4, 5); all the saints of Old Testament times, as well as the Church. Inasmuch, then, as it is only the church that has been sovereignly chosen to be the bride of Christ, the elders disappear since they could no longer be representative of all the saved. The church from this moment is apart, taken apart, to enter into her special relationship with Him who had purchased, redeemed, and fitted her to be the sharer of His exaltation, His affections, and His joys throughout eternity.

*It should rather be said, perhaps, that the presentation of the church to Christ is preparatory to the celebration of the marriage, that the latter is the public announcement of the private presentation.

†The earthly bride is Jerusalem, but Jerusalem as the expression of Israel; and this is the bride of the Song of Solomon.

In the next verse, the two classes of the redeemed, all those who had hitherto in this book been represented by the twenty-four elders, are clearly distinguished: *"And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."* (v. 9.) Here, then, we have the Lamb, the Lamb's wife already specified, and those who are invited to the wedding feast; the last class being all those outside of the church, who had been exhibited under the symbol of the elders. Even in regard to the earthly bride, the same distinction is made. When the disciples of John were somewhat jealous for the reputation of their master, he said, "Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." (John 3: 28, 29.) All these, therefore, who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, are, like John, friends of the Bridegroom, and, while not in the intimacy of the bride, will have their own special portion, and will rejoice greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice.

It is to be observed that, while the fact of the marriage is stated, and the wife is seen as made ready, also the guests as invited, the joys of the feast are not exhibited. The reason is that no one could be permitted to enter into that which must for ever remain a blessed secret between the Bridegroom and the Bride. The Bride, later on, shall be shown out in all her magnificent beauty, "having the glory of God," but no stranger could "intermeddle" with the joy of the Lamb's union with His wife. But its significance and importance in the counsels of God may be gathered from the universal joy it occasions in heaven, and from the place it occupies in His ways in relation to the earth.

And what a relief, and indeed encouragement, it is, beloved reader, to turn our eyes away from all the confusion and discord presented in the spectacle of a broken and divided church on earth, to the perfection of that day when the church, now fully answering to the mind of Him who had loved her and given Himself for her, enters upon her long-looked and waited for union* with her Lord. It is for this moment He also had been waiting for ages, and now His joy is displayed at the marriage feast, in His resting in His love, in His joying over her with singing, and in the consummation of her hopes, as well as in the fruition of her joy.

*We speak, not of union with Christ as members of His body, for that is true of the believer as soon as he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, but of the union of the bride with the Bridegroom.

John is overwhelmed by the character of the revelations vouchsafed to him, and after the solemn affirmation of their truth in the words, *"These are the true sayings of God,"* he says, *"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* (v. 10.) However exalted the personage, the angel, who had been commissioned to make to John these communications, he was yet but a fellow-servant, and of all who had the testimony of Jesus; and that testimony, now that the Church was on high, was the spirit of prophecy. (Cp. Rev. 1: 2; Rev. 12: 17.) The angel's place, therefore, equally with that of John and all other servants, was obedience to the will and word of God. Worship was due to God alone.

CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS COMING OUT OF HEAVEN.

(vv. 11-21)

Until this point, from chapter 4 and onwards, we have been occupied with actings and events, whether in heaven or on earth, which take place between the rapture of the saints at the coming of the Lord, as described in 1 Thess. 4, and His public appearing in glory. The time of His patience has now ended; and heaven opens for Him to come forth in judgment, when "every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. 1: 7.) It may also be remarked, as helping to understand this section of the book, that from Rev. 19: 11 to Rev. 21: 8, we have a consecutive history, beginning with the appearing of Christ, and closing with the eternal scene in the new heaven and the new earth. Thereafter the Spirit of God returns, and exhibits the displayed glories of the heavenly Jerusalem during the thousand years, together with her relation to the earth during this season of millennial blessedness.

The particular aspect of the appearing of Christ is thus described: "*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war.*" (v. 11) This is the fourth time the opened heavens are mentioned in the New Testament. When the Lord had been baptized "the heavens were opened unto Him," and, together with the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, there was "a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3: 16, 17.) Here the heavens opened upon Him, as the object on earth of God's own heart. All heaven's delight centred in the One, the lowly Man, who had identified Himself with the remnant who responded to the preaching of the Baptist, and of whom He had said in the Psalms, "In them is all my delight." God's delight was in Him, and His delight was "in the saints that are in the earth, and the excellent." (Psalm 16) In John 1 He Himself speaks of the opened heavens, and of angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man, the complete fulfilment of which will be in the thousand years, wherein also He is heaven's object on earth. Passing to Acts 7 we read that Stephen saw the heavens opened, and Jesus, as Son of man, standing on the right hand of God. In this scene, He, who had been God's object on earth, is now the believer's object in heaven. Coming to our scripture, the heavens open for Christ to come out, surely the object of all heaven as well as the object of all His glorified saints, as He issues forth to have His enemies made His footstool.

The first thing noted is the white horse on which He sits. The symbology of the white horse has been explained in Rev. 6. It signifies triumphant power, and here as there, in conflict. When Christ, therefore, issues from heaven seated on the white horse, it is the precursor of His victorious conflict with His foes, when, to use the language of the Psalm, His arrows will be sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people (peoples, it should be) fall under Him. Next, follows a description of the glorious Rider. He is called "Faithful and True." These characteristic names are familiar to the readers of this book in other connections. John terms Him "the faithful witness" (Rev. 1: 5); in the letter to Philadelphia He is called, "He that is holy, He that is true" (Rev.: 7); and in that to Laodicea both terms are conjoined: "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." (Rev. 3: 14) In Isaiah, moreover, we read that "faithfulness [shall be] the girdle of His reins." (Isa. 11: 5.) The combination of these scriptures introduces us

at once into the meaning of the words. Faithfulness to God, both inward and outward, marked Him in all His earthly pathway, and when He comes forth to establish His kingdom, to make God's character good in government as against the power of evil, and the rebellion and usurpation of man, He will be governed in all that He does by a single eye to the requirements of the glory of God, as He was also in His death on the cross. Faithfulness to Him, as already seen, will be the girdle of His loins. Truth in the inward parts, which God sought for, but never found in man until Christ came, will also distinguish Him, so that He will be the perfect expression, and thus a true witness, of all that God is as revealed in His righteous government of the earth. "Faithful and true" reveal, therefore, what He is both to God and for man when He comes forth to assume His rights in this world.

And now mark the contrast with the object of His first coming. *Then* "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn [judge] the world; but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3: 17); *now* "in righteousness He doth judge and make war." Grace characterized His first appearing in this world; and righteousness, and consequently judgment, will mark the second, the period of which our scripture speaks. Every one will then be tested by the unerring standard of God's righteous requirements from man, for the day of grace will have closed, and the era of righteous government will have commenced. Christ must, therefore, then "make war" upon everything that opposes itself to, lifts itself up in rebellion against, a holy God.

We read farther: *"His eyes were as* a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God."* (vv. 12, 13.) It is striking to observe that His eyes are represented by the same symbol as when seen by John in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Fire is always the emblem of judgment, and hence His eyes, being as a flame of fire, sets forth its all-searching penetrating character. The "many crowns" speak of His all-various and universal dominion, of His absolute supremacy in every circle of His headship and authority. Satan had proffered for His acceptance the power and glory of the kingdoms of the world; and, on His refusal, Satan afterwards bestowed them on his vassals and slaves, the beast and the antichrist. The true Heir waited till the time determined by His Father, and now, after His long session at the right hand of God, He comes forth, crowned with the many crowns, to take His inheritance, and to reign until His enemies be made the footstool of His feet. Concerning "the name written," concealed from all but Himself, it is the expression of the glory of His person. Whatever His dignity (and He is ever the eternal Son, whatever the relationships He may assume) He comes forth from heaven as Man; but, while this is the aspect here presented, the impenetrable character of His person abides. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." "Name" in Scripture is the expression of what the person is as revealed — and as revealed in what He is for God. It will consequently express the secret relationship of this glorious Personage to His God and Father, into which none can penetrate, and which none can understand but Himself. The next feature, "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," is explained for us by the prophet: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? . . . Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." (Isaiah 63: 1-4.) The "vesture dipped in blood" betokens, therefore,

the avenging character of the judgment He is about to execute. His name is also called the Word of God. It is the Word of God that reveals God; and hence this name teaches that Christ, as thus coming forth, is the revelation of God in His righteousness in judging, and in making good His character as such in the government of, the earth. (Compare Psalms 96 - 98)

*The word "as" is omitted by many editors, but whether adopted or rejected, the sense remains the same.

A pause is now made in the description of Christ to introduce His followers: "*And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.*" (v. 14.) Who are these? Two considerations will give the answer. As noticed in the earlier part of the chapter, the twenty-four elders are never seen after verse 4; and the reason is that the marriage of the Lamb immediately succeeds; and the elders on this account could no longer represent the Church.* We are told, moreover, that it was granted to the Lamb's wife to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Now the armies that follow Christ, on white horses, significant of their association with Christ in His victorious judgment, are also clothed in fine linen; and this at once reveals that the saints who had participated in the first resurrection, and who as with Christ in glory had been represented by the elders, are those who compose His armies. When Christ appears, they follow Him, and are spectators of the glories of that day.

*We do not mean that Old Testament saints are not included in the representation; only if the saints of this period [the Church] are separated, the rest could no longer be exhibited in the twenty-four elders.

Returning now to Christ, John says: "*And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.*" (vv. 15, 16.) In these few brief sentences the coming of Christ in judgment, the execution of God's vengeance, the establishment of His throne, the subjection of all kings and all nations to His sway, and His supreme exaltation in the earth, are all comprised. It is the complete fulfilment of the second Psalm. The sharp sword, as the reader already knows, is the word of God, according to which the nations will be judged, and with which they will be judicially smitten. "The rod of iron" expresses the absolute and inflexible character of His government, while the winepress, as the connection shows, as well as the vintage judgment of Rev. 14 speaks of the unsparing and unmitigated vengeance which will be poured out upon that awful day. It is through judgment, because of what man is, that the Lord will establish His kingdom and sovereignty over the whole earth, when He will be publicly and universally owned as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The next two verses are preliminary to the awful conflict which closes the chapter. An angel stands "in the sun," the place and seat, according to the symbology of the book, of supreme authority, and, crying with a loud voice, summons all the fowls that fly in the heaven to "*the supper of the great God.*" The flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, and the flesh of horses, as well as of their riders, is to form the horrible repast of these ravenous birds of prey. The flower of Europe in men and arms will be gathered together, and in anticipation of their dreadful fate

this angelic summons resounds in the heavens. Thereupon John proceeds: *"And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army."* (v. 19.) The beast, it must be remembered, is the head of the revived Roman empire, as has been seen in Rev. 13 and Rev. 17, and the kings of the earth will include, if there are other sovereigns also, the monarchs of the ten kingdoms, who will be confederated under the leadership of the beast. (See Rev. 17: 11-18.) We can therefore at once understand what a huge host will be brought together by the beast and his vassal kings, a host seemingly invincible; and the object of the assembling of which must be connected with the Holy Land, as it is there they are found when Christ comes forth from heaven. It is possible, as hinted, that there may be other nations represented in the armies of the beast; for we read in Rev. 16 that the unclean spirits which proceed out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, the spirits of devils working miracles, go forth unto the kings of the earth, *and of the whole habitable world*, to gather them to the battle of that great day of Almighty God; and, further, that they will be gathered into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. (vv. 14, 16; see also Rev. 17: 14.)

Before going further it should be pointed out that this gathering of the nations is entirely distinct from that found in the siege against Jerusalem at the time of the Lord's appearing, as described by Zechariah (Zech. 12 - 14), and in other prophetic scriptures. If the latter are under the leadership of the Assyrian, of whom we find frequent mention, especially in Isaiah, the former are marshalled, as we have seen, by the head of the Roman empire. If, moreover, Armageddon is derived from Megiddo, a place so well known in Jewish history, connected as it is with some of their brightest victories, and also with two of their saddest disasters, and means the Hill of Megiddo, these two armies might well be in Palestine at the same time, that of the Assyrian besieging Jerusalem, and that of the beast on its way to attack the Assyrian; but, as is possible, on hearing of the destruction of the Assyrian and his confederates, he proceeds to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. Human thoughts under the inspiration of Satan were governing the objects of the assemblage of this vast army; but God, working behind the scenes, had His thoughts; and hence it is that the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies are described as being gathered together to make war against the King of kings, and Lord of lords, and His "called, and chosen, and faithful" followers. What daring audacity! And what a display of the corrupt depths of man's heart, rivalled only by what was seen in the crucifixion of Christ! Then, however, it was in outward guise a lowly Man whom they hated and rejected; now it is Christ appearing in glory, together with His heavenly army, against whom man would dash himself in the inveterate enmity of his heart. What other issue could there be than his overwhelming destruction?

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." (vv. 20, 21.) It will be observed that there is no conflict with almighty power. Christ "takes" these two impious instruments of Satan, and at once executes judgment, casting them alive into hell. (See Psalm 55: 15.1) Two men in the Old Testament, as frequently noticed, pass alive into heaven, and these two arch-enemies of God and His Christ are cast alive into the lake of fire.* The remnant. the armies of

the beast and the false prophet, are all slain with the judicial sword; and all the fowls are filled with their flesh. The pious remnant of that day, when they hear of the mighty deliverance which their expected Messiah has wrought for them, may well exclaim, in the language of Deborah and Barak, "So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

*In 2 Thess. 2 we read only of judgment upon antichrist, the false prophet. The Lord is said to consume him with the spirit (breath) of His mouth, and to destroy him with the brightness of His coming. This description will include all the consequences of antichrist being cast alive into hell.

REVELATION 20.

IT may be well to recall that the events of this chapter form part of a continuous narrative, which commences with Rev. 19: 11, and closes with Rev. 21: 8. The binding of Satan therefore follows immediately upon the judgment visited upon the beast and the false prophet, together with their armies, as described at the close of Rev. 20: *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season."* (vv. 1-3.)

It should be carefully noted that this is not the final judgment upon Satan — that is found in verse 10; but it is the effectual curbing of his power by his removal from the scene as introductory to the establishment of the kingdom. When the Lord was about to cast out the demons from the poor Gadarene "they besought Him that He Would not command them to go out into the deep." (Luke 8: 31.) The word "deep" in this scripture is that which is given in our chapter as the "bottomless pit," literally, in both places, the "abyss." There Satan will be bound and entombed, that, during the reign of the glorious Messiah, man may not be exposed to his deceitful influences and power. Cast down from heaven to earth, as seen in Rev. 12, he will be expelled from the earth, and thrown into the abyss, where he is bound as a slave by the mighty hand of the angelic executant of the divine will. Two things in the description may arrest our attention. The dragon of this book is the old serpent of Genesis, as well as the devil and Satan of the other books of Scripture. It is the enemy of God and of man, and especially of God's people, as expressed by Satan (the adversary) and the devil (the slanderer). He is both a murderer and a liar, and has ever been so from the beginning. (John 8) What a mercy it will be for this poor world to be delivered for a season from such a foe! And how vast the moral change thus introduced in connection with the last trial of man under the righteous reign of Christ!

It is also to be remarked that not only is he bound and shut up, but a seal is set upon him; that is, as we understand it, a seal is set upon the mouth of the abyss. If God seals there is no power on earth or in hell that can break it. After that the body of our blessed Lord had been deposited by the pious hands of Joseph and Nicodemus in the sepulchre, Satan instigated his servants to make the sepulchre sure by "sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matt. 27: 66.)

Impotent attempt! for he had to do with the Son of the living God. But he himself is now in the omnipotent hands of the One whom he had thus sought to detain in the grave, and must there remain until he shall be loosed again for a brief space, to prove anew what man is even in the presence of divine goodness, administered under a perfect government, expressed in every kind of favour and earthly blessing.

The era of the thousand years is now presented: "*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and [I saw] the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and [those] which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*" (v. 4.) The first thing that attracted the attention of John was the thrones and they that sat upon them. In Daniel the thrones are introduced, but only the Ancient of days is seen as seated;* whereas here, although we know from Rev. 19 that Christ is the supreme and central figure in the scene, those who sat on the thrones are chiefly indicated. But even these are represented by the word "they," and the question therefore at once arises, Of whom does John speak? Following the narrative back, it will be perceived that the "they" can only refer to the "armies" which followed Christ out of heaven (Rev. 19: 14), who, as already seen, are composed of the saints represented by the twenty-four elders of this book, the saints of all ages up to the coming of Christ, albeit the church is most prominently displayed. (Rev. 19: 7-9.) On earth they had in their various degrees suffered with Christ, and now the recompense of grace is vouchsafed to them of reigning with Him. They are therefore beheld upon thrones, and as Christ's first act in connection with the establishment of His kingdom will be judgment, they share in its exercise. (See 1 Cor. 6: 2; Jude 15.)

*This scripture is obscured in our translation by the rendering, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down." (Rev. 7: 9.) It should be given, as in the *Revised Version*, "Till thrones were placed." It is so rendered also in a well-known French version, "Je vis jusqu'a ce que les trônes furent placés."

But there are two other classes joined with those who had been symbolized by the twenty-four elders: those who had been martyred during the rule of antichrist, and those who had refused his behest to worship the beast or his image, and to receive his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. These would be mainly of the faithful remnant described in the Psalms, who, under the frightful terrors and persecutions during the iron despotism of this man of sin, maintained their faith and hope in God, and waited for the coming of the Messiah. They lost everything on earth through their fidelity to God, "for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," and now they obtain the glorious recompense of the first resurrection, and of association with Christ in the glories of His kingdom. They "lived and reigned" with Christ a thousand years, and if our interpretation of these two classes who are added to those who had been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, be correct, the first would be raised and the second changed after the pattern of the two similar classes in 1 Thess. 4.

Their special place and reward are emphasized by the following statement: "*But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.*" (v. 5.) In what plainer language could the pre-millennial return of Christ with His people, to take His kingdom, to reign over the earth during the thousand years, be stated? Or how could the truth of

the first resurrection, as distinguished from the final resurrection of unbelievers, be more distinctly unfolded. It is only an inconceivable perversity that can seek to contend for a "resurrection of spiritual principles." If, indeed, this simple and unambiguous language be thus explained away, it would be impossible to maintain the truth of the great white throne and the final judgment at the end of this chapter. Take the scripture as it stands, and all is plain, as well as in complete harmony with the dispensational teaching of the whole book.

Before proceeding with the description the Spirit of God turns aside to pronounce, as it were, a eulogy upon these favoured saints: "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.*" (v. 6.) All such are blessed indeed (see Rev. 14: 13), and they are holy, conformed now to the image of Christ, and thus answering to the claims and nature of God Himself. As risen out of death, or changed, and mortality swallowed up of life, they are for ever beyond the region of sin, death, and judgment; and it is therefore added, that on them the second death, God's just penalty upon the unbelieving and impenitent, will have no power, no title or right; for the last enemy, death, has for them been for ever destroyed. Moreover, they will be associated with Christ in His royal priesthood, and thus as priests they will enjoy access into the immediate presence of God and of Christ, and they will reign with Him a thousand years. Having, through grace, overcome the power of Satan through the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony — and they loved not their lives unto the death — they are now exalted into the enjoyment of this glorious recompense. Well might the apostle say, when speaking of the glorious prospect of the believer, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in [or "in respect of"] us." (Rom. 8: 18.)

From verses 7-10 we have the account of the loosing of Satan, his last permitted activity, and the judgment inflicted upon him and his deluded followers. The character of the reign of Christ throughout the thousand years is not found in this scripture; for that the reader must search the Old Testament, especially the Psalms and the Prophets. Here the millennium is introduced upon the completion of the first resurrection, and immediately after the statement that those who have part in it reign with Christ a thousand years, it is added, "*And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*" (vv. 7, 8.)

During the whole period, therefore, of the reign of Christ over the earth Satan is confined, and men will be free from his temptations. The nations will have the same evil nature as ever, but man's adversary will not be present to entice, to waylay, and to entrap him into sin. What an immense change! Now, all the influences of the scene are against, then, all will be in favour of, the Lord's people. Now the temptation is to depart from God, then it will be to profess allegiance to His Christ. At the close of this happy period, during which all kings will fall down before THE KING, and all nations serve Him, God will once more demonstrate the incurable evil of man's heart by permitting, through the loosing of Satan, one last and final trial. Nations in every quarter of the globe are deceived, spite of the manifested glory of earth's rightful Sovereign. As man had rejected Him in His humiliation he now rebels against Him in His glory. Several traces of these rebellious nations are found in the Old Testament. We read in Psalm 18, "As soon as they hear of

me, they shall obey me: the strangers shall yield feigned obedience." (Margin, v. 44; see also Ps. 66: 3, Ps. 81: 15.) As when some mighty conqueror subdues a country the people submit to his rule through fear of his power for vengeance, so will it be when Messiah establishes His kingdom. Striking through kings in the day of His wrath (Ps. 110), His enemies, through the greatness of His power, will proffer their submission (Psalm 66: 3), lest they also should be destroyed. When therefore Satan is loosed, with rebellion in their hearts, they fall an easy prey to his devices, and, listening to his voice, they allow themselves to be gathered together as the sand of the sea for number, under his leadership, to earth's last battle.* Drawn together, Jerusalem, as so often in the history of the earth, is the point to which they converge, and the object of their attack. *"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city."* (v. 9.)

*The reader must not confound the Gog and Magog of verse 8 with "Gog, the land of Magog," of Ezekiel 38. The latter refers, as can easily be demonstrated, to Russia, the Russia of the future; while Gog and Magog in the former indicate, as stated, the nations in the four quarters of the earth. There is another difference. The invasion of the land by Gog in Ezekiel is immediately after the establishment of Messiah's kingdom; whereas the apostasy of the nations in our scripture takes place at the end of the thousand years.

A remarkable feature of the case is, that Christ Himself is not seen in this conflict. The kings of the earth and their armies gather together, as seen in the previous chapter, to make war against Him; but now the object of their hostility would seem to be the saints and the beloved city. It is God in heaven who is here displayed as the Defender and Avenger of His people; for *"fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."* (v. 9.) So perished the enemies of God's Christ and His people; God arose, and they were utterly and for ever destroyed. Last of all, Satan that deceived them receives his final doom; he *"was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."* (v. 10.)* It was the dragon — that is, Satan — who had given the beast "his power, and his seat, and great authority" on the earth, who had inspired the false prophet (and the three together had formed a mock trinity of diabolical evil), and now we are permitted to behold them submerged in one common woeful doom God thus in His righteousness vindicates His throne, and the throne of His Christ, and reveals at the same time the sure and certain retribution that must overtake all who persist in their enmity to Him and to His beloved Son.

*As bearing on the question of the duration of future punishment, we cannot forbear calling attention to the words here employed. They are *eis tous aionas ton aionon* — *"unto the ages of the age."*

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

(Rev. 20: 11-15.)

The judgment described in this scripture forms the conclusion of all God's ways with man. The kingdom of Christ on earth has been brought to a close; all enemies have been put under His feet; the devil himself has received his final doom; and there remain only the wicked and unrepentant dead to be dealt with, before the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth. It

is this last session of judgment that John here portrays: *"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."** (vv. 11, 12.)

*The word "throne" must, it is generally acknowledged, be substituted in the text for "God."

The character of the throne itself is the first thing to attract the attention. It is said to be "great" — great, either as befitting the dignity of the Judge, or as suited to the magnitude of the judgment; and it is also given as "white." It is not here, probably, the colour known as white — as, for example, white linen — but rather, as the word really signifies, clear or bright; that is, the "whiteness of light." "This is the expression of the dazzling purity of holiness, whether of the Judge Himself, or of the standard on which His judgment would proceed; for everything connected with Him, the throne on which He sits, or the sentence He pronounces, must be in accordance with what He is in His own essential nature. Who the Judge is, is not here stated, although John saw Him that sat upon the throne; but we know from other scriptures that it is Christ; that the once rejected Jesus, the Son of God, is He into whose hands all judgment has been committed. (See John 5: 22-29; 2 Timothy 4: 1, etc.) As everywhere, indeed, in this book, it is He who ever makes good God's character in government as against evil; and here, as this scene shows, against those who have died in impenitence, as well as against the living rejecters of His authority. The awful nature of this judicial session is revealed by the statement that the earth and the heaven fled away from the face of the Judge. In what manner they disappear we learn elsewhere (see 2 Peter 3: 10-12); the fact only is here stated; and it is given to teach the final character of the judgment. What a close to the history of this poor earth! And what a contrast to the record in Genesis 1, when God looked upon His new work day after day as it sprang forth from His creative hand and pronounced it very good! And to enhance the solemnity of the scene, it may be recalled that He who sat on the throne, in John's vision, is the One by whom all things were created; and now this poor defiled earth, and the heaven that belongs to it, the witness of, and the sharer in, its defilement, are seen fleeing from His face!

*A comparison of Matthew 17: 2 with Mark 9: 3 shows that this, too, was the whiteness of our blessed Lord's garments in the transfiguration.

Before the judgment commences, therefore, time is no more. The times and seasons have for ever passed (Genesis 1: 14), and the great white throne is raised in eternity; and it is connected, as will be hereafter seen, with the destruction of the last enemy, death, as introductory to the blessedness of that eternal state in which God is all in all.

The dead only, it is plainly stated, appear before the great white throne. Already, in many acts, the living have been judged; and hence, for instance, the judgment of Matthew 25: 31-46 belongs to another period. The living are judged at the appearing of Christ and during His kingdom, and consequently only the dead remain. And yet, it may be necessary to affirm, not all the dead. As we have pointed out in Rev. 19, an immense army follows Christ out of heaven, and this is composed, as there explained, of all the saints who in every age and dispensation had died, and who had participated in the first resurrection, and of those who, living on the earth at the time of the Lord's return, had been changed and caught up with the risen saints to meet the Lord

in the air. During the thousand years (Rev. 20: 3, 4) there are no deaths, except of rebels against the authority of Christ. The conclusion then, as also from the scriptures before us, is irresistible, that only the wicked, the unconverted dead, are seen in this judgment. There is therefore no foundation in Scripture for the popular conception of a general judgment — for the teaching, so prevalent in religious books, that all alike, the saved and the unsaved, are reserved to be judged at the same time. Such a thought could only spring from ignorance both of the word of God and of the nature of redemption.

All the vast multitude of the unregenerate dead, from the earliest ages down to the termination of the kingdom of Christ on earth, will be raised by the mighty power of God, and be brought before the great white throne to receive the award of their eternal doom. And to show that not one sinner who has ever passed away, wherever he may have died, shall escape, it is added in verse 13, "*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [hades] delivered up the dead which were in them.*" At the mighty voice of the Son of God, just as the fish came at his bidding into the nets of His disciples, and Lazarus came out of his tomb, so will all this countless throng "come forth" out of their graves, or from their last resting-places, unto the resurrection of judgment. (John 5: 28, 29.)

We have, in the next place, the principles of the judgment: "*And the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is [the book] of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*" (v. 12.) Again we read, "*And they were judged every man according to their works.*" (v. 13.) The first ground of judgment then is the actual works, the deeds of every soul while living on the earth. And, let it be remarked, that positive evidence as to these is adduced from the "things which were written in the books." All the "works" of men are therefore recorded, and recorded by Him, before whose omniscient eye the nature of every action is revealed. Deeds long since forgotten, sins which, apparently trivial in human estimation, have faded away from the memory, all will be produced as the ground of condemnation. Not only so; but the book of life will also be opened, and if the names of those arraigned before this solemn tribunal are not found in it (v. 15) the sentence is passed, and the judgment executed. There are thus two kinds of evidence — positive and negative, both condemnatory, and both alike precluding all ground of appeal.

In connection with this, it is worthy of notice, as illustrative of God's ways in judgment, that He, while answerable to none, is ever careful to vindicate, even in the eyes of men, the rectitude of all His judicial acts. When thus He was about to destroy Jerusalem, through the instrumentality of Nebuchadnezzar, and to send His people into captivity because of their persistent transgressions, He was careful first to present the bill of indictment to prove their guilt. (See 2 Chr. 36: 11-21) So here before the great white throne, unmistakable proofs of the guilt of those on trial are shown from the "books" of works; and then, as a conclusive demonstration of their having no title to be spared, it is added that their names were not found written in the book of life. Thus every mouth will be stopped, and will have to confess that He who sits on the throne is justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges.

The doom of this countless throng is next revealed: "*And death and hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. * And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*" Taking it in the order, given, we have, first of all, in figurative

language, the destruction of death and hades. (Cp. Hosea 13: 14.) The meaning is, that the power of both will be for ever abrogated under the judgment of God. Death had held its sway over all these souls. Their bodies had been until now in corruption, but called out of their graves for this resurrection of judgment, death could claim them no more. When the saints are raised, death for them is swallowed up in victory (1 Cor. 15); but here there is no victory, for the hitherto prisoners of death receive the same sentence as death itself, both being condemned to the same final doom. The last enemy, death, is thus destroyed. Hades, the prison of the spirits of the dead, shares the same fate, for it has no further use in God's economy. Defiled by the character of those it had detained as captives, it passes away to the punishment of the defiled, the judgment of the eternal fire.

*Most editors add here the words, "Even the lake of fire."

The nature of this judicial doom is explained to be the second death. The first death pronounced, as the penalty on Adam's transgression, meant far more than the death of the body. The moral use of the word in the phrase "dead in sins" proves beyond a doubt that it signifies, in its essence, the separation of the soul from God, together with the state of the soul as being without a single movement of life towards God. This interpretation is confirmed by the statement in Romans, that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" for it is clearly the state of man which is thus indicated. (See also 2 Cor. 5: 14.) This, rightly understood, throws great light upon the term here employed — "the second death." "Death," then, will keep its meaning — the absolute separation of the soul from God, its total exclusion from the source of all light and life, and its confinement for ever in the region of darkness; for as light and life, so darkness and death are in their very nature indissolubly connected. Then we have the additional element, "the lake of fire." "Fire" in Scripture is the symbol of the holiness of God as applied in judgment. This may be easily traced through the various books of the Bible, as, for example, in the fire that consumed the sacrifices, and, as again, in the statement that "our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12: 29.) The second death therefore is the moral exclusion of the soul for ever from God, or rather, it should be said, the separation of the *whole man* (body, soul, and spirit) from God, under the infliction of His judicial wrath. This is the lake of fire, God's eternal judgment, according to the standard of His own immutable holiness, as visited upon those who refused His grace, rebelled against His authority, and chose death rather than life. It is into this "lake of fire" that every unconverted one, as this scripture plainly teaches, will be, if dying impenitent, finally cast; for it is there that all this multitude find their doom.

Nothing is said here as to the duration of the lake of fire; but, as has been seen in verse 10 of this chapter, and as many other scriptures indubitably teach, there is no ground whatever for supposing that it is less than eternal. Prophets prophesy smoother things, and dreamers dream according to the imagination of their own hearts; but the word of God abides, and it teaches that the punishment of the wicked, as the blessedness of the saved, is for ever and ever.

REVELATION 21.

THE ETERNAL STATE.

(vv. 1-8.)

AFTER the solemn scene of eternal judgment, unfolded at the close of the preceding chapter, a vision of the unclouded beauty of the eternal state of blessedness is displayed before our eyes. The contrast is as abrupt as magnificent. No sooner had John recorded the doom of those who appeared before the great white throne than he proceeds: "And *I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*" (v. 1) Isaiah is the first to make mention both of new heavens and a new earth. He says, speaking in the name of Jehovah, "Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." (Isa. 65: 17.) And again, "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." (Isa. 66: 22.) While, however, the words, new heavens and new earth, appear in the prophecy, it is yet evident, from the context of the passages cited, that they do not contain the same significance as in our chapter. In Isaiah, indeed, scarcely more is meant than that the heavens and the earth shall be morally new during the millennium, that, as the heavens will be cleared from Satan and Satan's power (see Eph. 6: 12; Rev. 12: 10, etc.), and the earth will be freed in large measure from the effects of the curse (see Psalm 67 and 72), they will be in this sense new. The apostle Peter supplies the link between Isaiah and Revelation. Taking up, as led of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah's prophecy, and giving to it a deeper meaning, he says, after describing the dissolution of all things, "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter 3: 13.) This, as will be at once perceived, goes much further than the kingdom during the thousand years, the characteristic of which is that righteousness will reign (see Psalms 96 - 99; Isaiah 32, etc.); inasmuch as Peter speaks of a scene wherein righteousness shall *dwell* . This could be no other than the eternal state, telling of a scene without and a scene within which answer to all that God is, a scene which is in fact the consummation of the new creation.

The first heaven and the first earth are thus for ever displaced;* and it is specially noted that there was no more sea. This fact may have a twofold significance. The first and most prominent thought is, since the sea interposes a barrier to intercourse, that there will be then no more separation. Then, as we remember the symbolic meaning of earth and sea in this book, that the earth speaks of ordered government, and the sea of insubject and unorganized masses of people or nations, it teaches, that every part of the new earth will be in ordered subjection to, and under the governmental control of, God. All will be the perfect expression of His own will; and then will be fulfilled that far-reaching petition in the prayer the Lord taught His disciples, "They will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." It was so done by our Lord Himself; but in these "new and blessed scenes," it will be also so done by every one among all the countless throng of the redeemed.

*In fact, as we learn from Peter, they will be destroyed by fire. (2 Peter 3: 10-12.)

Another event is now introduced: *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."* (v. 2.) It may be necessary to point out at once, for the sake of those who have not hitherto considered the subject, that the scene in verse 10 of this chapter is prior, by the thousand years, to this in verse 2. This will be more fully explained when verses 9 and 10 are reached; but it may be said now, that in verse 10 John sees the "holy city, Jerusalem" (as it should be read) in her millennial glory, and in relation to the millennial earth; whereas in verse 2, the millennial kingdom has for ever passed away, and the "holy city" is seen descending from the position occupied during the kingdom, to take up her appointed place on the new earth, of which verse 1 speaks. It is the "holy city," holy according to the nature of God (compare Eph. 1: 4); and it is "new Jerusalem," not the old described in the Old Testament Scriptures. Paul speaks of it in Galatians as "Jerusalem which is above," and as "our mother."* It cannot be doubted, moreover, that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews refers to the same city, when he describes Abraham as looking "for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11: 10; see also v. 16.) It is thus a figure of the church, the church as seen from the next verse, as the tabernacle of God, God's habitation through the Spirit as known even now. (Eph. 2: 22.) Three things are predicated of her: her origin is "from God"; she comes "out of heaven," she is heavenly in her character;† and she is "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The marriage of the Lamb has long since taken place, and then His wife made herself ready; but, notwithstanding the centuries that have elapsed, she is still seen arrayed in all her bridal beauty, as much without blemish or wrinkle, and as holy, as on the day of her presentation to her glorious Spouse.

*So it should be read, and not "the mother of us all."

†Compare 2 Cor. 5: 1, 2, as to the resurrection body, the body believers will receive in the resurrection.

Together with her descent to the new earth, John hears *"a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, [and be] their God."* (v. 3.) There are then three things; the tabernacle, the men, and the relationship which God sustains towards the one and the other. The tabernacle is the holy city; and the holy city, as already explained, is the church; and, inasmuch as it is God's tabernacle, it is presented to us as His dwelling-place. The reason for the use of the term tabernacle will be afterwards seen. Then there are men, and these are all the saved from Adam down to the first coming of the Lord, and all the saved from the rapture of the saints, as described in 1 Thess. 4, until the close of the thousand years; and these have the blessed position of being God's people, of having God with them, and having God as their God. They are not, as the church, the dwelling-place of God, but their place and blessing are as perfect in their relationship as are the church's in hers. There are differences which God in His sovereignty has been pleased to make, but all these are but illustrative of His own perfections and grace; and all the redeemed, whatever their special relationships, will be eternally blessed, according to God's thought, in the several positions in which by His grace they are found.

There is a special reason for the use of the word tabernacle in this place. The tabernacle was God's first dwelling-place on earth amongst His people Israel, after their redemption out of Egypt. "Let them make me a sanctuary," He said to Moses, "that I may dwell among them."

(Exodus 25: 8.)* The tabernacle was erected, and, as we find in the first chapters of Numbers, the tribes were arranged round about it, Jehovah's dwelling-place forming the centre of the encampment. While still in the wilderness, giving instructions concerning their conduct when His people should be in the land, Jehovah gave this promise, a promise conditional upon their obedience, "And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." (Lev. 26: 11, 12.) This promise, owing to Israel's transgressions, was never entirely fulfilled; and hence it is repeated (for God never allows His purpose to be frustrated) through Ezekiel, and applied to the time of Messiah's kingdom during the millennium: "My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." (Ezek. 37: 27, 28.) Coming to our scripture, we have the reproduction of almost the same words, only now not in the form of promise, but as a statement of fact and accomplishment. Connecting the three scriptures we learn, therefore, that it was ever God's thought to surround Himself with His redeemed people; also, that His tabernacle was a figure of the church as His habitation through the Spirit; and, finally, that the encampment in the wilderness, and the sanctuary during Messiah's glorious reign — which He Himself will build (Zech. 6: 12, 13), even as He is now building the church (Matt. 16) — are but foreshadowings of the eternal state, as portrayed in this scripture.

*We do not cite Exodus 15: 2, as there is considerable doubt as to the exact reading. The first thought of the sanctuary came from Jehovah Himself.

In the next place John describes the eternal consolations of the redeemed: "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death., neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*" (v. 4.) Speaking exactly, this language applies to the "men" of verse 3. The church forming the tabernacle is not in view save as the dwelling-place of God, but as such in the enjoyment of her own special blessedness. Two things may be noted in this description. It is God who wipes away all tears from the eyes of His people. The tears recall the sorrows of the pilgrim life; and now God Himself, in His infinite grace and tenderness, wipes them away from their eyes — a figure of the eternal consolation ministered to them by God Himself. Then, secondly, death, and all the trials, pains, and griefs associated with human life in this world are gone, for ever abolished. Sin has now been taken away (John 1: 29, Heb. 9: 26) — the final result of the death of Christ on the cross; and hence death, together with all the other bitter fruits of sin, is removed from the scene, swallowed up in the victorious scene of life. It is not the positive side of eternal blessedness, but the negative. But where is the heart which is not relieved at the glorious prospect of freedom for ever, in the immediate enjoyment of the presence of God, from all the burdens that often bow us to the dust while treading the sands of the wilderness?

The last clause of verse 4 may be considered in connection with what follows: "*And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.*" (v. 5.) In 2 Cor. 5: 17 we read, "If any man be in Christ, [there is] a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* The correspondence between these scriptures cannot be unobserved. The difference is that in 2 Cor. v. the old things have passed away, and all things have become new *for faith*, whereas in our scripture the change is actually wrought, the former things having disappeared for ever. In 2 Cor. 5 all who are in Christ belong to the new creation; they are by

faith introduced into this sphere — the sphere where Christ is as its Head, Centre, and Glory. In Revelation the old creation has for ever passed out of existence, and only the new remains. We wait for the latter; but it must not be forgotten that it is the privilege of the believer to anticipate this glorious scene — yea, even now to dwell in it — as well as to expatiate amidst its blessedness, inasmuch as in Christ he belongs to, and is himself a part of, it.

*Some prefer the reading, "New things have come." The authorities are divided.

Thereon we read, "*And He said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful.*" (v. 5.) This command must, we judge, be regarded as accomplished before the record of the following words: "*And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.*" (v. 6.) "It is done" may refer to the conclusion of the revelation, the natural close after the exhibition of the eternal state. It is the completion of the scene, followed by the solemn affirmation of the eternity of God. He is the commencement of all existence, and He is the end; and all duration is embraced in the two terms, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Grace still flows out; but the question is sometimes raised, Can there be still thirsty souls in eternity? This is to miss the significance of the announcement. If the words, "It is done," are preparatory to the eternal scene opened to our view, we have in addition a solemn setting forth of God's ways in grace and in judgment while this eternal state is in prospect. There are, in fact, three principles of His actings in regard to man. The first is before us: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." God is a giver (compare John 4: 10-14), and He will give to every thirsty soul; and He will give him not only of the water of life, but of the fountain itself; for the announcement is made in view of the full issue of receiving it, viz., eternal satisfaction and blessedness. And, lastly, He will give it freely, gratuitously — without money, and without price. Truly our God is the God of grace!

We have next, "*He that overcometh shall inherit all [rather, these] things; and will be his God, and he shall be my son.*" (v. 7.) All God's people must be overcomers, for they are passing through a hostile world, and are exposed to all the arts and malice of a powerful adversary. We have a glimpse of a faithful remnant in conflict in a former chapter, and of them it is said, "They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." (Rev. 12: 11) As to the world, John writes, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John 5: 4, etc.) In these two scriptures are given the means of victory; and in the passage before us we have encouragement ministered, while engaged in the conflict. First, the overcomer shall inherit these things, all these forms of eternal blessing unrolled before our eyes; and, moreover, God will condescend to enter into relationship with him. "I will be his God, and he shall be my son," and this, as it is again the final issue of the wilderness path, in its full apprehension and enjoyment. Such will be the eternal tie existing, according to the good pleasure of His will, between God and him that overcometh. Finally, the various classes are enumerated, in their moral aspects, who will not only be for ever excluded from this blessed and eternal portion, but also whose part will be "*in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*" (v. 8.) The devil, the beast, and the false prophet have already found their doom in this place, where they "shall be tormented day and night for ever" (Rev. 20: 10); and now we learn that all such as are depicted here will have

their eternal home in the same prison of hopeless woe. How awful the contrast to the state portrayed in verses 3, 4!

THE HOLY JERUSALEM.

(Rev. 21: 9-27.)

Great mistakes have been made by many expositors, on this portion of scripture, from failing to perceive that the first part of the chapter presents the eternal state, and that here the Spirit of God takes us back to a description of the heavenly city in relation to the thousand years. From Rev. 19: 11, to Rev. 21: 8, as before shown, we have a consecutive narrative of events, from the appearing of Christ to the introduction of the state of eternal blessedness, wherein God is all in all. Then, commencing with 21: 9, a new section begins, the object of which is to set forth the glories of the bride, the Lamb's wife, the holy city, as the metropolis, the heavenly seat of administration, of the earth, during the millennial period. This will become clear to the reader as we pursue the details here given.

John thus introduces the last section of the book: *"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."* (v. 9.) It was one of these seven angels who had shown John the judgment of Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. The parallel, or rather contrast, is designed. Babylon had claimed, but falsely, to be the bride of Christ. The angel had exhibited her in her true character, and the judgment from God with which she should be finally overwhelmed. (Rev. 17) Consequent upon her destruction the marriage of the Lamb took place in heaven (Rev. 19: 1-8), and now the true bride, the Lamb's wife, is shown in all her beauty — the expression of the thoughts of God, as Babylon had been the expression of the thoughts of man. To view Babylon, John was transported in the spirit into the wilderness — a scene of moral drought and desolation; to behold the holy city Jerusalem* he was carried away in the spirit to a great and high mountain. As Moses surveyed the promised inheritance from Pisgah; so John is permitted to behold the fulfilment of promise and prophecy in this glorious city, from the lofty eminence on which he was placed by the angel. Thence he saw her *"descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal."* (vv. 10, 11)

*The correct reading is probably, "The holy city, Jerusalem," and not, as in our version, "That great city, the holy Jerusalem."

Three features are marked; it was divine in its origin, and heavenly in its character; it had also the glory of God. As another has written: "It might be of God and earthy. It might be heavenly and angelic. It was neither; it was divine in origin and heavenly in nature and character. It was clothed with divine glory; it must be as founded on Christ's work." We learn from 2 Cor. 5 that all these features are true also of the individual believer, in respect of his resurrection body. It could not indeed be otherwise, inasmuch as the result for the whole church is but the collective expression of what is the result for the saint of the work of redemption. Let it also be remembered, that while the glory, the actual glory, is yet future, the church is now as divine in origin, and as heavenly in nature, as she will ever be. To understand this is indispensable for the

faithful occupation of her place on earth as God's witness, and for her preservation from the contaminations of the world around. It is owing, alas! to the forgetfulness of this blessed truth, that she has sought and found (we speak of the whole church), like Pergamos of old, a home in the place where Satan dwelleth.

Her light, or her shining, was moreover like a jasper stone; and hence proceeds, as may be gathered from the significance of the jasper in Rev. 4: 3, from the glory of God. (Compare Isaiah 60: 1.) The word translated light, or shining, is that found in Philippians 2: 15, as applied to believers, — "among whom [a crooked and perverse generation] ye shine [or rather, appear] as lights in the world." It is the word used of the heavenly luminaries; and we therefore learn that what believers should be now morally, the holy Jerusalem will be actually in the coming age; and that all the light in testimony that proceeds now, whether from the saints or the whole Church, comes from the same divine source as the "shining" of the holy city in the future day of glory. (Compare 2 Cor. 4: 6.) And the "shining" of the holy city will be like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, transparent and unclouded, and it will illumine the earth with its bright, blessed, and perfect rays. But while the natural eye will be able to perceive it, the heart, even as now, will need to be divinely opened to receive, and bow to its blessed testimony.

We pass now to another feature: *"And 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: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb."* (vv. 12-14.) Before dwelling on the significance of the wall, it may be well to call attention to the recurrence of the number twelve in this description. It has the fixed meaning in Scripture of the perfection of governmental administration in man, that is, in Christ, and this in connection with Israel. Hence there were twelve tribes and twelve apostles, both mentioned here, and both connected in the words of our Lord to His disciples: "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. 19: 28.) This at once explains the force of the number twelve, and, at the same time, the character of the holy city as here presented; that the church, the Lamb's wife, is displayed, not in her intimate relationships to Christ, as seen in Paul's epistles, but rather in connection with the government of the earth in the hands of Christ during the thousand years. Blessed and perfect as all is, as thus exhibited, it yet does not present to us the more intimate joys and affections of the Father's house, nor our highest associations with Christ in heavenly blessedness, as, for example, set forth in the promise to the overcomer in Philadelphia. And yet, who that is acquainted in any measure with Christian literature and hymnology, can doubt that the "golden city" occupies a larger place in the minds of saints than the Father's house?

The symbolic meaning of the wall will be security; and this is assured, as may be seen in verse 18, by the fact that "the building of the wall of it was of jasper" that is, the glory of God. Clothed with, she is also protected by, the divine glory, even as Isaiah speaks, "The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward." All that God is, and all that God is in display, is the wall round about the New Jerusalem. But, as we may see further on, the wall not only encloses and secures the holy city, but it also excludes all evil; for "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that

defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (v. 27; compare Rev. 22: 15.)

In the wall there are twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and written thereon the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. The gate of a city in Scripture was always the place of judgment, and inasmuch as there are twelve here, three on every side, it will denote the perfectness of the administration of justice in the government of that day. The kingdom character of this administration is denoted by the names of the twelve tribes on the gates, and indicating also, perhaps, at the same time, that it is through Israel as a centre that the administration in government will be conducted. Twelve angels are stationed at the gates: in the dispensations previous to Christianity they were God's providential agents in His governmental order; but they are now "the willing door-keepers of the great city" which will be the heavenly metropolis of Messiah's glorious kingdom. They are therefore subordinate, in the purposes of God, to the glorified saints of which the heavenly city is formed. There were, moreover, twelve foundations to the wall, the character of which is declared by the fact that they contained the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; for, as we read in Ephesians, those who are the fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, "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: 19-21) But the mention of the twelve apostles of the Lamb shows again that the church is not here "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 assembly as founded at Jerusalem under the twelve — the organised seat of heavenly power, the new and now heavenly capital of God's government."

In the next place the city and the gates and the wall are measured. (vv. 15-17.) The meaning of this symbolic act has already been explained in Rev. 11. There is a difference, however, to be noted in the measuring rods. There it was "a reed like unto a rod"; here it is "a golden reed." In both cases the measuring betokens owning on the part of God, with the added idea of appropriation. The thing measured is according to His mind, and He thereby owns it to be so, and claims it as His; while the measuring rod being golden will testify that it is in righteousness He thus stamps the city, its wall and gates, with His approval. The result of the measurement is given. "*The city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.*" Like the holiest in the tabernacle and the temple, it is a cube, twelve thousand furlongs on every side — the symbol of finite perfection. That it is a given perfection needs scarcely be said, inasmuch as it had its origin in the counsels of God, and owes its existence to the death and resurrection of Christ. In all its perfection and beauty, the heavenly city is the expression of the grace of God.

The measurement of the wall is an hundred and forty-four cubits, twelve times twelve; so that in every detail the governmental character of the city is exhibited, and seen as divinely perfect.

Following upon the measurement, the composition of the various parts of the city is given. That of the wall has been anticipated; it was of jasper, the symbol of the glory of God. Happy city to be surrounded with, and guarded by, the divine glory! And such will be the lot of the holy

Jerusalem. *"The foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones."* (v. 19.) The names of the stones are then given, beginning with the jasper and ending with the amethyst. The list may be compared with the twelve precious stones on the breastplate of the high priest (Exodus 28); and it will be observed that the jasper which comes first in our scripture, is the last on the high-priestly breastplate. There may be the significance in this, that whereas the church begins with the glory in the person of the Head, it lies at the end for Israel. To speak generally, "the precious stones," as has been well said, "or varied displays of God's nature, who is light, in connection with the creature (seen in creation, Ezekiel 28; in grace in the high priest's breastplate), now shone in permanent glory, and adorned the foundations of the city." Morally they exhibit, therefore, the history of souls — as creatures, then as subjects of grace taken up and put upon the heart of Christ, and finally as seen displayed in all His various beauties in the glory.

"The twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl." (v. 21.) The symbolic force of the pearl may be gleaned from the parable in Matthew 13 — where the church is seen under the emblem of a "pearl of great price," the preciousness and beauty of which led the merchantman (Christ) to sell all that he had, and to purchase it. The pearl speaks, therefore, of what is attractive to the heart of Christ — a beauty which, as seen in the counsels of God, ravished Him, so that He loved the church and gave Himself for it. (See Ephesians 5: 25-27.) And every gate of the holy city shone with this resplendent beauty, the fruit and issue of Christ's love and His redemption work.

Moreover, *"The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass."* The street represents the place wherein men walk, and it was of pure gold, divine righteousness, righteousness as suited to God's nature, as befitted the place where He dwells, even as in the tabernacle and the temple all inside the holy place and the holiest was overlaid with gold. But the gold here is pure, and as transparent glass, speaking of fixed and accomplished holiness — a purity answering to the nature of God Himself, and, blessed be His name, a purity that could never more be defiled.

Up to verse 21, we have had the nature, character, and composition of the holy city, but so far there has been no reference to its inhabitants. The reason for this is that the saints themselves form this heavenly structure, though, as will be seen in the next chapter, they are briefly introduced to set forth the nature of their eternal blessedness. But even here their existence is implied, as, for instance, in the next verse of this scripture: *"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."* (v. 22.) For as soon as the absence of any temple is stated, the thought is necessarily brought in of saints enjoying the presence of God without let or hindrance. A temple, whatever the privileges of access and worship connected with it, speaks of distance between God and the worshipper, as was the case in the temple of the kingdom. Jehovah indeed dwelt in it between the cherubim over the mercy-seat; but the worshippers remained outside while the priest was burning incense in the holy place. (See Luke 1: 10.) When therefore we read that there is no temple in the heavenly Jerusalem, but that the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, we at once understand that all distance is abolished, and that the presence of God and of the Lamb, filling the whole city, is enjoyed by all in the full measure of its display. It could not be otherwise, seeing that all the saints forming the city are there, according to the purpose of God in divine righteousness, conformed to the image

of His Son. The fact of there being no temple is thus the expression of the perfect blessedness of the redeemed, all of whom are now holy and without blame before God in love. (Eph. 1: 4.)

It will, however, be observed, that the highest blessedness of the saint is not indicated; for the names of God here given are those found in the Old Testament — Jehovah-Elohim, Shaddai; all that God is, as so revealed, now made good in government in relation to the earth. This at once explains why these names are employed, inasmuch as the holy city is here connected with the government of the earth in and through the Lamb during the millennium. That the redeemed enjoy another relationship, into which they have been brought by the revelation of the Father in the Son, is known from other scriptures; but this character of blessedness is confined to the saints who compose the church, and consequently will not be known in the age to come. On this account it is that the Lord God Almighty is found in this scripture; but the Lamb is also introduced as the One in whom this state of blessedness has been secured, and in whom God has been revealed, and His character made good, first in the cross, and now in the kingdom, the epoch before us in His righteous government. A comparison of this statement, that there is no temple in the heavenly city, with Rev. 7: 15, abundantly confirms the interpretation that the blessing of the Gentile multitude, however excellent, is earthly — and not heavenly.

The presence of God and the Lamb fills the scene, and thus it is that John adds, *"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 light [the lamp] thereof."* (v. 23.) Created light, as we learn from Genesis 1, is for earth; but after Adam's fall the only light morally, even for the earth, was what came from the revelation of God. The Psalmist thus wrote, "With Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light" (Psalm 36: 9); and when the Lord was down here on the earth He said, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9: 5.) Where God is fully revealed, therefore, there could be no need of created light; and "the glory of God" is but the expression for the display of all that God is as revealed in redemption before His redeemed. The statement in connection with this, "And the Lamb is the lamp thereof," is most significant. Does it mean that while the glory of God illumines the whole city the Lamb is the medium of its display? Stephen saw through the opened heavens the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and here the glory of God and the Lamb are the beatific source of all the light that forms the blessedness of the holy city.

The next three verses are important as affording a distinct clue to the interpretation of the whole vision. Many expositors see nothing here but a description of the blessedness of the eternal state, and this view is generally adopted by popular preachers. But these verses show beyond contradiction, that the heavenly city is here presented in connection with the millennial earth; for there are no "nations" in eternity, and no "kings of the earth" to bring their glory and honour into (unto) it. If this had been observed the mistake would have been avoided, and a valuable key would have been acquired to the understanding of the dispensations. We may therefore call attention to the force of these verses: *"And the nations of them which are saved* shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."* (vv. 21-26.) Although the words, "of them that are saved," must be omitted, the meaning will be unaltered, seeing that the nations existing during the millennial kingdom will be those that have been spared in the judgments connected

with the day of the Lord, introduced at the appearing of Christ. These nations recognize that the glory of God, which streams down from the holy city, is for their blessing and guidance, and they accordingly walk by it. Morally the light which proceeds, however imperfectly, from the church in this age, is the only light the world possesses; and this fact will help the reader to understand the statement before us. To borrow language, "The city enjoys the direct light within; the world [that is, the nations], the transmitted light of glory." (Compare John 17: 22, 23.) The kings of the earth, moreover, bring their glory and honour into (unto) it. † If we translate eis, unto, instead of into, the meaning will be that the kings of the earth will recognize "the heavens and the heavenly kingdom" to be the source of the authority under which they are placed, and of the beneficent blessings they enjoy under the sway of the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and they will bring of their wealth, like the Queen of Sheba when she came to Jerusalem, as offerings in token of their submissive homage. In what way these offerings will be presented is not revealed; but it is clear from many scriptures that a connection will be maintained between the heavenly capital and the earthly kingdom.

*The words, "Of them which are saved," have been inserted without sufficient authority.

†As to the earthly city in the day of its glory, Isaiah 60 may be read with advantage, as similar expressions are there found. The periods will coincide.

Following upon this, we are told that the gates of the city will be perpetually open, and that there will be no night. The significance of this may be best explained by a contrast. After Nehemiah had built the walls of Jerusalem, we read, "Now it came to pass when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters, and the singers, and the Levites were appointed, that I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them." (Neh. 7: 1-3.) During the night, and even while there was the least trace of darkness on the scene, the gates were to be kept closed, lest evil with evil men, who ever love darkness rather than light, should steal in and corrupt the city. With the same object later on, Nehemiah, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, "commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath"; for there were servants of the enemy always on the alert to enter unawares to seduce the Jews to violate the sabbath day. In the light of this contrast we learn then, when we are told that there will be no night in the heavenly city, that there will be the absence of all evil, and hence that the gates will never be shut. As typically in the days of Solomon, there will be "neither adversary nor evil occurrent"; and thus it is not only that evil is for ever excluded, but there is also the impossibility of its ever finding entrance into that holy and blessed place.

In v. 26, it would seem to be the repetition of the statement in v. 24, which has already been considered. There is however a difference. In v. 24, it is the kings of the earth who bring *their* glory and honour, whereas in v. 26, it is the glory and honour of the nations that are brought. The same distinction is observed in the millennial kingdom, when it says, speaking of the honour to be rendered to the Messiah, "All kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." (Psalm 72: 11) Both the monarchs and their peoples will be of one mind, and will respectively own that the "heavens do rule," and will offer their willing homage to the King of kings in His glorious heavenly capital. *Now* kings and nations serve and exalt themselves; but

then, as we read in Zechariah, "every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles"; and it may well be on these occasions that sovereigns and their subjects will present their glory and honour to the heavenly Jerusalem, thus owning their allegiance, and rendering their tribute to the exalted King of kings, and Lord of lords!

Next, we are told, "*And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*" (v. 27.) No doubt must be left upon the character or qualifications of those who shall enter into this city of pure gold; and hence it is put in two ways, negatively and positively, the disqualification being given in the first place, and then the absolute and indefeasible title. No one with the guilt of sin still on him, for it is sin in its manifold forms and expressions that defiles; no one who possesses an evil nature, for it is sin in the flesh which, breaking out, works abomination; and no one who is morally of the seed of Satan, who is a liar, and the father of it (John 8: 44), will ever pass through those gates of pearl. As the apostle has written, "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 6: 9, 10.) So too, in the next chapter of our book, it is said, "Without are does, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (v. 15.) Those only who are written in the Lamb's book of life will have the privilege of entry, even as all whose names will not be found written in the book of life will, at the session of the great white throne, be cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20: 15.) This, it will be at once observed, is only the title; but there will be a moral qualification answering to the title, as stated in the next chapter: "Blessed are they that have washed their robes,* that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."† (v. 14.) It must necessarily be so, for the inhabitants of the holy city must themselves be holy, according to the nature of its Builder and Maker; but the title only is here given to remind us that it is due alone to grace, God's blessed and sovereign grace, that any will find themselves within these gates. It is moreover the Lamb's book of life; and this teaches us that if believers were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, these purposes of grace could only be accomplished in and through the death and resurrection of Christ — of Him who, as the Lamb of God, is the taker away of the sin of the world.

*This is the right reading, and is accepted by the *Revised Version*.

†Having washed their robes, according to the usage of this figure in Scripture, indicates that their practical state corresponds with their title.

REVELATION 22.

THE PURE RIVER OF THE WATER OF LIFE.

(vv. 1-5.)

THE subject of the heavenly city is continued in this chapter; but, as the reader will notice, there is a distinct feature here introduced, and this is shown by the words with which it

commences, "And he showed me." We pass, indeed, now more especially to what characterizes the interior of the city, both in relation to its inhabitants and to the nations on the millennial earth.

John thus proceeds, "*And he showed me a pure* river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.*" (v. 1.) The tabernacle in the wilderness was made, as we are distinctly told, after the pattern of heavenly things; and it would seem that the earthly Jerusalem also, in the coming day of her glory, will in some respects be the counterpart of the heavenly city. We thus read in Psalm 66, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High." (v. 4.) And so too Ezekiel speaks of the waters that will issue "out from under the threshold of the house eastward", and of the fact that the waters become a river; and he further says, "And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live . . . and every thing shall live whither the river cometh." (Ezek. 47: 1-9.) In both cases, therefore, it is a river of water of life; only, it must be remembered, that in the heavenly Jerusalem it is vivifying and refreshing rather than life-giving, inasmuch as all there are in the possession and enjoyment of eternal life. It proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it will thus represent the blessed streams of grace, of life, which will for ever flow out from God and the Lamb, in the "heavenly kingdom," to gladden the hearts of the redeemed in glory. This river is secured for them through the eternal government of God on the ground of accomplished redemption; for this would seem to be the purport of the words, "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

*This word should probably be omitted, as it is not found in the best MSS.

In connection with this river of the water of life it is added, "*In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve fruits,* and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*" (v. 2.) A similar feature is also described by Ezekiel as marking the earthly city, "And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." (Ezek. 47: 12.)

*The words "manner of" are omitted because they misrepresent the fact stated. It is not twelve manner of fruits, but, as the succeeding clause shows, twelve fruits, one crop gathered every month, a figure of perpetual fruitfulness.

The tree of life in the holy city is, of course, a symbol, a symbol which immediately carries us back to Eden, and which as plainly speaks of Christ. Both the trees in Paradise indeed, that of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree of responsibility, as it is sometimes termed, and the tree of life, find their answer and conciliation in Christ; for it was He who took up and settled for ever, according to the claims of God's glory, the question of man's responsibility on the cross, and then, as risen out of death, became the tree of life for all His people; of life, it may be added, in a new condition, as shown out in Christ's own risen state in glory.

The tree of life then, in the heavenly Jerusalem, is Christ in glory, and Christ in glory as the life of the redeemed; and we are thus reminded that in the glorified state, even as here, the saints do not possess life independently of Christ. This is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son, and this will be eternally true. The character of the heavenly life, the proper portion of the saints of God, will thus remain the same; only it must be added that in our perfected condition, as entirely conformed to Christ, it will be enjoyed to the full, without let or hindrance of any kind. We shall then know what it is, in full measure, (to borrow the language of the bride) to sit down under His shadow with great delight, and find that His fruit is sweet to our taste.

The leaves of the tree will be for the healing of the nations. This statement very plainly teaches that the heavenly city sustains, during the millennial period, a relationship to the earth, and that the nations will receive of the healing virtues of the Tree of Life. As has been written by another, "Only the glorified ever ate the fruit of constant growth; but what was manifested and displayed without, as the leaves of a tree, was blessing to those on earth." In some way, therefore — in what way is not revealed — grace, either mediately or immediately, will flow out from the assembly in glory. What an insight is thus afforded into the heart of God! And what an expansion is given to the conception of "the riches of His grace" even outside of the assembly!

The next three verses go together: *"And 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: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. 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."* (vv. 3-5.) Everything being constituted in the holy city according to God's righteousness, there could be no more curse; for God will repose in the whole scene with infinite delight, for all His people, through the riches of His grace, will be there according to His own mind. Curse belongs to a state of sin and transgression, and that now has for ever passed away. The reason, however, here given is in the fact of the throne of God and of the Lamb." being in it, in its absolute supremacy and recognition, and thus securing in its perfect government a state according to God. God's holiness as expressed in His throne will be the eternal guarantee of the happiness of the redeemed, even as His love, and that of the Lamb, will be their eternal and satisfying portion.

It is for this reason that we pass at once in our scripture to the positive character of the blessedness of the redeemed, the inhabitants of the heavenly city. When considering the eternal state, as described in Rev. 21: 1-7, we pointed out that there it was the negative side of this blessedness which was prominent, that is, it was rather the absence of the evils that afflict us here, that was indicated;* but here it is the positive side, what we shall do, enjoy, and be. The first thing noted is, "His servants shall serve Him." As often in John's writings the Father and the Son — here God and the Lamb — are so completely one in his mind that he does not pause to distinguish. Hence here it is "His" servants, although he had just spoken of God and the Lamb. Here then at last His servants shall serve Him. They had by His grace done it here, though very imperfectly, even according to their own standard. Unprofitable servants they had been, even when they had laboured to the utmost; for mixed motives had often contended within their hearts. But now at length, when Christ will completely possess and control their hearts, when no other object but Himself will ever be before their souls, when His will shall find in them a full

and complete response, and when they themselves will not have a thought, desire, or interest outside of His own, then they will serve Him perfectly according to His standard, for in all their obedience and activity they will be the perfect expression of His own most blessed mind.

*We refer to v. 4; in the fact that the new Jerusalem becomes the tabernacle of God is a very positive aspect of the blessedness of the redeemed.

They shall moreover see His face. We read of Moses that the Lord spake unto him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend; and, on the other hand, David commanded respecting Absalom, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." To see the Lamb's face in glory therefore betokens intimacy of approach and the enjoyment of His presence, a place of nearness as well as of honour and blessing. This of itself tells of the saints' perfected condition, even as John writes, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." This character of blessedness has been well expressed in the following lines:

"For ever to behold Him shine!
For evermore to call Him mine
And see Him still before me
For ever on His face to gaze,
And meet the full assembled rays,
While. all His beauty He displays
To all His saints in glory."

Also, His name will be in their foreheads. The primary thought in this characteristic feature is that of ownership; as it is likewise in the case of the followers of antichrist in Rev. 13. But there is also another thing indicated. Name, as constantly in scripture, is the expression of what a person is; and so interpreted here it will signify that full likeness to Christ will be told out on every brow, that all His redeemed will be the reflection of Himself, in accordance with the purpose of God that they should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

It is repeated in the following verse (5th) that there shall be no night there, for all evil has been for ever done away, and together with it the darkness which is its moral symbol. Nor will the glorified need either light of the lamp, or of the sun, either artificial or created light, for the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) giveth them light. In this state and condition there could not be a single want which the presence of their God does not meet. They will then know, what we so feebly apprehend while in the wilderness, His all-sufficiency, that He alone is the source of all their blessedness, that with Him is the fountain of life, and in His light they see light.

Lastly, it is said, they shall reign for ever and ever. During the thousand years they will reign with Christ; but, as we know from 1 Cor. 15, at the close of that period Christ will deliver up His mediatorial kingdom "to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." (vv. 24-28) It is evident therefore that the words "reign for ever and ever" cannot refer to the association of the saints with Christ in the glories of His millennial sway; but that they point rather to the eternal kingdom of God, and to the exaltation of saints as belonging to Christ, as being the Lamb's wife, in its administration throughout "the ages of the ages."

This forms the conclusion of the description of the new Jerusalem, and, in fact, of the whole book. There are warnings added, and special intimations of the relationship of Christ to the assembly, and of the church's suited attitude, and of what produces it, while awaiting the Lord's return; and these form the suited close to these solemn communications which the Lord has made for the guidance and instruction of His people whose lot is cast in dark and difficult days.

CLOSING WARNINGS AND ADMONITIONS.

(vv. 6-15.)

The prophetic character of these Communications is shown in every possible way. In Rev. 19, as we have seen, John is told, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"; and here again the angel, who was sent to signify unto John the things that must shortly come to pass (Rev. 1: 1), says, "I am ... of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." (v. 9.) It is needful to bear this in mind, in order to understand the nature of the book, and the application of the revelations made. It is because this has been forgotten, together with the fact that the church is not the subject of prophecy, that so many mistakes have been made in the interpretation of the apocalyptic visions. These closing warnings and admonitions are therefore of great importance, as affording abundant confirmation of the view taken in this exposition, that the whole of the book after chapter 3 is yet future; and as demonstrating the untenability of what is termed the "historical view," viz., of regarding all the visions up to chapter 19 as already fulfilled in past historical events, and of the consequent contention, that we have now only to wait for the appearing of our Lord as described in Rev. 19: 11. This theory could not be accepted by those who understand the true character of the church as the body of Christ, and of the church's hope as given by the apostle Paul in 1 Thess. 4: 15-18. These know that the church's immediate prospect is the coming of the Lord to receive His people, and that the judgments and woes revealed in this book (whatever premonitions of these there may have been in past ages) cannot be visited upon this poor world, until the church has been rapt away from the scene, and is on high with the Lord. To miss this distinction is to lose the true nature of the dispensations, and especially of the church period, which embraces the time from Pentecost until the coming of the Lord.

We may now with greater intelligence pass to the consideration of this portion. The exhibition of the holy city, and the blessedness of its inhabitants, having been concluded, the

angel solemnly affirms the truth of his communications: *"These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets* sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done."* Three things in this short statement confirm the view already given. The names "Lord God," Jehovah Elohim, carry us necessarily back to the Old Testament ground of prophecy; and the reason is that the faithful remnant of this book, after the church is gone, will be Jewish, under law, and sustained by Jewish hopes. It is, indeed, the remnant, so often found in the Psalms, looking for the advent of their glorious Messiah, and the restoration and blessing of Zion. The same conclusion is indicated by the term "the holy prophets," and still more strikingly, if we adopt the reading mentioned, "the spirits of the prophets"; and lastly, it is expressly stated that things made known are those "which must shortly be done."

*A preferable reading would seem to be "of the spirits of the prophets."

The following verse presents a point of great interest: *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."* (v. 7.) The angel speaks in verse 6; and now the Lord Himself, it being His own testimony, speaks through the lips of the angel. This transition from the prophet to Him, whose angel (messenger) the prophet was, is often found in the Old Testament. A striking illustration of this is found in Zechariah 11, where Jehovah takes up the word His servant was uttering, and so distinctly, that He says, "If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." (v. 12.) So here the Lord Himself, His communications now drawing to a close, announces His speedy return; not, if our interpretation is correct, His return for the church, but His return to the earth. For this annunciation, as we understand it, is made for the cheer and the encouragement of the suffering remnant in the period between the rapture of the saints and the Lord's appearing, during the period therefore of Jacob's trouble, and of "the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." (Rev. 3: 10.) And it is evidently made in view of the fearful temptations and seductions which will then beset the saints to surrender their testimony; for it is added, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." It is this that will delight the heart of the Lord, not achieving great things or rendering splendid service, but simply keeping His word, His word for that time. "Keeping" here is observing, carrying out, and this involves another sense of the word, viz., "treasuring up," and even another, "holding fast"; for it is not until the Word has been treasured up in the heart, and retained there, that it moulds the life, and, is thus observed. And it may easily be perceived what an immense encouragement this message will prove to those who will be hemmed in on every side by the powers of darkness. To be assured that the Lord's eye is upon them, and that He is speedily coming for their relief and deliverance, and that what He desires and approves, beyond all, is their fidelity to His word, will be an unceasing source of sustainment and consolation to their souls. In principle, it is scarcely necessary to say, this is applicable to saints now, although the special announcement for them is lower down in the chapter. The fact of His coming quickly is true for both the one and the other, and of His approbation, during His absence, for those who keep His sayings.

In the next place, the effect on John's mind of these divine revelations is given. *"And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See [thou do it] not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings*

of this book: worship God." (vv. 8, 9.) Once before John had been so overwhelmed by the visions opened out before his soul that he fell down to worship the angel (Rev. 19: 10), and it might occasion surprise that he should do again what was then prohibited; but it must be remembered, as has been pointed out, that the Lord Himself had spoken in person through the angel, and the apostle might have been so absorbed with this one voice, "Behold, I come quickly," as to forget for the moment the medium, the angel, through whom He had spoken. But even if so, it could not be permitted; and the angel seizes the opportunity to declare his own true character, and to enforce the truth that worship is due alone to God. It is only the more wonderful, with this on record, that the worship of angels crept so early into the Church, long indeed before the writing of this book. (See Col. 2) It is possible therefore that the mistake of John, twice made, is recorded for the purpose of condemning a prevalent practice, as also with the view of affording the plain instruction that no beings, however exalted, must ever be allowed to intrude between God and the souls of His people. Well would it have been for the church if this lesson had been remembered.

The angel now gives the closing words of his message: *"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."* (vv. 10, 11) Some of the communications made to John were not to be divulged. When, for example, the seven thunders uttered their voices, and he was about to write, a voice came to him from heaven, saying, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." (Rev. 10) Here, on the other hand, all that he saw and heard was to be recorded for the instruction of the saints down to the end; and for the reason that the time was not exactly "at hand," but "near."* In the prophetic view everything was closing up, and the end was fast approaching. It was for this reason important that all should be warned; and hence the solemn cry of verse 11. When the end arrived, and the prophetic eye already discerned it, the state of souls would be for ever fixed and unalterable. The unjust and the filthy must remain so; for nevermore would they have the opportunity of passing out of their sinful condition; and so, in like manner, the righteous and the holy would for ever retain the blessed characters they had through grace received. Would that this divine warning, still proceeding from this page of the written word, might rouse the careless and the indifferent on every hand, and constrain them before the final close of the day of grace, to humble themselves before God, with true repentance, and with faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

*The word is *eggus*, as in Philippians 4: 5, translated there also, in our version, "at hand," but it really means "near," or "nigh."

The Lord Himself interposes, and speaks again in His own person in the next two verses — *"And* behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* (vv. 12, 13.) As the warning in verse 11, so this second proclamation of the Lord's speedy coming, is in view of the end. And it is made with a twofold object — to encourage His servants, and to warn the wicked of the rapid approach of judgment. The former, however, we apprehend, is the predominant thought in the announcement, from the mention of His reward being with Him. Even this is, however, capable of a twofold construction, and the idea of recompense to the wicked, in the judgment of the living at the appearing of the Lord, must not be excluded. In the

first annunciation of His coming quickly (v. 7), the Lord points out wherein the blessedness of His people would be found while waiting; here He encourages them with the prospect of recompense, reminding them that the day was swiftly coming when every work done for Him, every act done, and every testimony borne, should be abundantly rewarded. What unspeakable grace! First, He Himself produces in the hearts of His people what is according to His mind; then He enables them to bear witness for Him amid the moral darkness of this world; and finally He imputes to them, and recompenses, what His own grace has wrought. Blessed for ever be His name!

*The word "and" should be omitted.

Who it is that announces that He is coming quickly is now declared, and declared as its solemn affirmation and certainty. He is the One who *was* before anything had its existence, who *will be* after all created things in this scene shall have passed away, and who exists through all time and all eternity, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all existence, the eternally self-existent One, who comprehends all being in Himself, for it is in Him that all live and move and have their being. The last two titles are found in Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (Isa. 44: 6.) No terms therefore could more distinctly convey the truth of the Person of our blessed Lord, or more clearly assert His true and proper Deity. And the significance of this, coming immediately after the promise of His coming, will, when their eyes have been opened, be at once understood by the tried and persecuted remnant of the last days. They will learn from it that the Messiah, for whose advent they long, is Jehovah Elohim, their Lord and their God.

It may be doubted whether verses 14, 15 are spoken by the Lord Himself; they would seem rather to be a parenthesis, in which the Spirit of God calls our attention to the essential qualification for admission to the holy city, and to the moral character of those who are for ever excluded from its portals; and He does this in prospect of the speedy coming of the Alpha and Omega, which has just been proclaimed. He says, "*Blessed are they that do His commandments,* that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*" (vv. 14, 15.) Accepting the reading, "wash their robes," in the place of "do His commandments," our attention is once more, and for the last time, directed to the importance of being in moral correspondence with the title possessed through the precious blood of Christ. The fact then is here emphasized, that none but those who have washed their robes, will be entitled to the fruit of the tree of life, and to entrance within the holy city. All who enter must thus be blood-bought, and have their robes washed. There is danger in this day of this truth being ignored or denied; and it is well, therefore, to observe the prominence given to it in these closing words of inspiration.

*Few now question that we should rather read, "Blessed are they that wash their robes."

And what a contrast is presented in the succeeding verse. Doubtless many a reader, even if unconverted, would object to be included in any of the classes specified. Let such an one, however, reflect that the very first word used ("dogs") comprehends all that are unclean, and that,

according to the teaching of scripture, all who are not under the value of the blood of Christ before God *are* unclean. Whatever, therefore, any one may claim to be, on the ground of moral character, he has no qualification for entrance through the gates into the city, unless he has washed his robes.

THE BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR.

vv. 16-21.

After the parenthesis of verses 14, 15, the Lord Himself resumes His address to John, if it be not rather a new commencement, forming a solemn appendix and conclusion to the whole book. He says: "*I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, [and] the bright and* morning star.*" (v. 16.)

*This word ["and"] is not found in some important MSS., and, if omitted, the passage will read, "The bright morning star."

The One who had just spoken of Himself as the Alpha and Omega now introduces Himself as, "I Jesus"; and the full force of this is only apprehended when it is observed that the "I" is emphatic. It is "*I Jesus*"; that is, "*I*," the One known on earth as Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth, *I am He* who has sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches; it is I who am the beginning and the end, the first and the last. It is the assertion therefore, as will also be seen in what follows, of the Deity of Him who, as down here, and as glorified on high, was, and is, known as Jesus. (See Phil. 2: 10.) This emphatic "I" is carried on in the succeeding clause: "*I*, that is, *I Jesus*, am the root and offspring of David, etc.

This twofold character of presentation must now be considered: (1) *As the root and the offspring of David*. This is the character in which He will be the source of blessing to the earth, through making good all that God is, as revealed in righteousness, in government. For it is as Son of David that He will reign; but He who, as born into this world, was of the seed of David, was also He from whom David sprang, for He was also David's Lord. He, who comes to establish His kingdom, is thus also Jehovah; and hence we read, "Say among the heathen that Jehovah reigneth"; and again, "Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before Jehovah: for He cometh, for He cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His truth." (Psalm 96: 10-13.) (2) *As the bright [and] morning star*. It is as such that Christ presents Himself to the church as her special portion, while waiting for His return. It is the third time that He is so named; and it will aid the reader if we briefly consider the previous passages in which this title is found. In 2 Peter we read: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy" (the word of prophecy made more sure, or confirmed), "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter 1: 19) The day star in this scripture is really the morning star, as Peter uses the word which always designates it — its proper appellation, whereas in Revelation the term employed points rather to the time of its appearance. It was no part of Peter's commission to unfold the truth of the church, nor, consequently, that of the coming of Christ for His people. For him it was ever the appearing of our Lord in glory as introductory to the kingdom; and it is of this he speaks when he describes the glory, the majesty,

of our Lord on the mount of transfiguration. Still he was aware of another glory, as the herald of the kingdom, which our Lord possessed as the morning star, and which would cheer the hearts of the saints, while awaiting the Lord's glorious appearing. The morning star shone, if but on the edge of the night, and as the presage of the day. Passing on to Revelation 2, we find that the Lord, in encouraging the overcomer, says, "And I will give him the morning star." The morning star shines in the heavens while the world is buried in slumbers; but the lonely watcher is cheered with its bright and silvery rays, for it tells him that the night will soon wane, and that the sun will speedily arise and introduce the day. But the believer knows something more, when he is occupied with Christ as the morning star, even that before Christ ascends the heavens, and rises upon the world as the Sun of Righteousness, he and all the saints, will be caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air, to be with Him, before His return in glory. When the Lord thus says to the overcomer in Thyatira, "I will give him the morning star," it means that he shall possess Christ in this character, with the promise of association with Him in heavenly glory, as his sustinment and cheer amid the night of corruption that had set in among the professing people of God.

So, in our scripture, Jesus discovers Himself to the church in this aspect of His heavenly beauty, to attract her heart to Himself, to remind her that her period of waiting will soon be over, and to assure her that He is waiting, as she also is waiting, for the moment when He will present her for ever to Himself. To know Christ, then, as the bright* morning Star, the church, and individual believers, must be watchers; and just in proportion as this position is maintained, will be the joy of occupation with Him in this character.

*The addition of the word "bright" will probably mean that, for the waiting soul, His shining will be all the brighter as the darkness deepens around.

In the next verse the effect of this presentation, of Christ is given: *"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."* The connection with the previous verse is of the most intimate kind. It is in fact the disclosure of Christ to the assembly, as the bright morning Star, that awakens her affections, and produces in the power of the Spirit her longing desire for His return. This were not possible, unless her relationship with a heavenly Christ had been previously known and enjoyed; but assured of her union with Him, and of her own eternal portion in His love, even while still in the wilderness, the moment she perceives Him, as so presented, the holy ardour of her affection breaks forth in the cry, "Come." Nothing could more distinctly show that the church is not of earth, but of heaven — heavenly in origin, and heavenly in character; and nothing more could more plainly reveal that the secret of waiting, waiting with desire for the coming of the Lord, is entirely a question of heart. Where the treasure is, the heart will be also; and that Christ is the treasure of the bride is seen here in the intensity of her utterance of the word "Come."

It is however the Spirit *and* the bride who say, Come; that is, the cry is produced by the Spirit in the church. She raises it, but it is He who has called it forth; and we are thus permitted to see, in this place, the church as the vessel, the willing vessel of the Holy Ghost; for it is He who directs her gaze upward to the bright morning Star, and constrains the expression of the desire for His coming. It follows that this is the normal attitude of the assembly. Moreover,

everyone that heareth is invited to join in the entreating appeal. This should include every believer; for the attitude of the church should be that of the saints individually. Wherever therefore this cry is raised, every child of God, however defective his knowledge of the truth, is urged to turn his face upward to Christ, as the morning Star, and to say, Come. Would that it might be so; for it would be the sign of a blessed revival, making ready a people prepared for the Lord. The Spirit in the assembly directs her attention, in the next place, to every thirsty soul, to all who are in spiritual anxiety, and who are longing for satisfaction; and, as herself possessed of the living water, and possessing it, as the representative of Christ on earth, she invites every poor thirsty one to come, to come, drink, and be satisfied, even as the Lord cried in days of old, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (John 7: 37.) Still more widely must her invitations go forth, or she would not be the true exponent of grace, of the heart of God; not a single soul on the face of the earth must be omitted; and hence she cries, lastly, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

We have thus here, as often observed, the whole circle of the church's affections, and, it may be added, of these affections in their divine order. Christ himself occupies the first and supreme place; believers individually come next; then thirsty souls are cared for; and finally sinners are invited. To borrow words: "The church can look up and say to the bridegroom, Come; she can look down or around her, and say to the thirsty soul, Come, yea, to whosoever will, Come and drink of the water of life freely. It is a most lovely picture of her whole position."

The integrity of these divine communications is now solemnly guarded and affirmed: "*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book* of life, and out of the holy city, and [from] the things which are written in this book.*" †

*There is scarcely a doubt that "tree" should be here substituted for "book."

†If the word "and" be omitted in the last clause, as also the inserted word "from," the true reading will be, "the things which are written in this book" — the reference being to the tree of life, and the holy city. (vv. 18, 19.)

The importance of these revelations could not have been more jealously protected. In Rev. 1 it is said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy"; and now in conclusion the Lord Himself testifies to every one that heareth the book read, that the most fearful judgments shall fall upon the man that shall add, and so corrupt by adding, to what has been communicated; and, in like manner, if any man shall take away from it, he shall suffer the penalty of exclusion both from the tree of life and from the holy city. (Compare Deut. 4: 2, Deut. 12: 32.) The word of God is perfect, and to attempt to amend it, whether by addition or diminution, is not only to betray the folly of the human mind, but also to expose the one who attempts to do so to the just judgment of God. Rationalism in its many forms, is thus at once, and for ever, condemned. And, while fully admitting that these warning words apply to the book of Revelation, it is yet not a little significant that they occur at the close of the canon of inspiration. As God placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned

every way, to keep the way of the tree of life, so He who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, sets His flaming two-edged sword, which also turns every way, to guard against any assault upon the perfection of His sure and holy word.

One word more, and His testimony is completed: *"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."* Such is the last announcement of our blessed Lord; and it is a solemn affirmation of His speedy return. True that nearly twenty centuries have elapsed since these words were uttered; but this fact increases rather than diminishes their importance. They warn the church for all time that her proper attitude is that of hope and expectation, and encourage her by the assurance that the consummation of her blessedness is at hand. That she has forgotten her bright and blessed hope is only too patent; but the Lord is now seeking in many ways, and with increased urgency, to recall her to her true portion. The cry, "Behold the Bridegroom," raised many years ago, and then, alas! for a time, almost silenced, is again being sounded forth from many revived hearts. Let His people therefore both watch and pray, pray while they watch, that many who are now buried in sleep may be awakened to the enjoyment of the same blessed hope, so that it may be apparent to all that they are waiting for God's Son from heaven. And let those who are especially connected with the testimony in these last days, be themselves so under the power of the expectation of Christ, that they may proclaim continually, as the Lord's messengers, these blessed words of consolation and hope, "Surely I come quickly."

John, used of the Spirit to express what should be the response of every true saint, replies to this closing declaration, *"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."** (v. 20.) When the Lord's coming in the clouds, at His public appearing for judgment, is proclaimed in Rev. 1, John also says, "Even so, Amen." It betokens not only a heart in subjection to Christ, but one also in communion with His mind and object. What Christ announces, John accepts as the expression of His perfect will. But there is more than this in our scripture; it is the delighted answer of his own heart to the prospect of soon seeing the Lord face to face, and of being for ever with Him. In the attitude therefore of John, as here given, is seen what should be the attitude of every believer, and what will be the attitude when Christ Himself possesses the heart's affections. We may well therefore challenge ourselves, when we read these words of the apostle, as to whether they express our own feelings and desires. It is surpassingly beautiful to behold, at the very end of the Scriptures, the attitude of Christ in relation to the church, and the attitude of the saint in relation to Christ, as so produced.

*In some Bibles, it would seem, from the punctuation, as if the "Amen" were spoken by the Lord. It is, we judge, uttered by John.

The apostle himself, as led by the Holy Spirit, concludes his work and mission with the message, *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. * Amen."*† Adopting the emendation, "with all the saints," what an insight is thus afforded, as the book of inspiration closes, into the heart of Christ, indeed into the heart of God. All His saints are remembered, and it is His desire that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be with them. May the hearts of God's beloved people be increasingly enlarged to apprehend and enjoy it! And may the hearts of the readers, and of the writer of these lines, never move in a narrower circle than that of God's own affection!

*Or rather as many authorities prove, "be with all the saints."

†The "Amen" is omitted by some as an ecclesiastical addition.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

BEFORE closing our study of this book, it may be helpful to the general reader, in his further examination, to present a brief outline of its contents. After the introduction and salutation (Rev. 1: 1-6), the announcement of what is really the subject of the book, the appearing of our Lord in glory, as Judge of all the earth, together with the affirmation of its certainty as bound up in the revelation of all that He is as the eternally self-existent One, we have the vision, vouchsafed to John, of Jesus Christ, as Son of man, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, surveying, judging, and pronouncing upon their condition as estimated by Him whose eyes "were as a flame of fire."

In this connection is found the key to the book, in the threefold division, which the Lord Himself communicated to John, when He commanded him to "write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter" (after these). (Rev. 1: 19.) The things which John had seen comprise the vision of the first chapter; "the things which are" relate to the church period, as set forth prophetically in the letters to the seven churches (Rev. 2, 3); and "the things which shall be after these" refer to the events which will take place, after the church has been rapt away from this scene, preparatory to, and including, the returning of the Lord with His saints, the destruction of hostile powers, the millennial kingdom, the great white throne, and the eternal state; in fact, all that is recorded in Rev. 4 - 22.

In Rev. 2, 3 we find a prophetic outline of the church period, the public course of Christianity as seen in this world, mingled with instructions, warnings, and encouragements for the saints of God in every age.

Rev. 4, 5 have a special character as introductory to what follows. In chapter 1, John was in the isle of Patmos; in chapter 4, he not only sees a door opened in heaven, but he is called up thither, that from thence, the place of the church now, the only true place of vision, he might view "the things which must be after these." God as Creator, in covenant with creation, with the twenty-four elders on thrones, surrounding His throne, the seven Spirits of God, tokens of judgment proceeding out of the throne, the sea of glass before, and the living creatures around the throne offering their perpetual praise, accompanied by the worship of the elders — such are the subjects of the chapter. But it is Jehovah as Creator that is celebrated. (v. 11) In Rev. 5 the song is that of redemption, in which, according to their respective positions, all created things unite; and it is called forth by the introduction of the Lamb "as it had been slain," who alone, as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, had prevailed to open the book of God's counsels as to the earth, and to loose the seals thereof, unfold those counsels, and in their accomplishment make good all that God is in government on the earth.

The opening of the seals is then detailed. (Rev. 6: 1-17.) After the first six there is a pause, and in Rev. 7 a remnant from the twelve tribes of Israel is sealed for preservation through the judgments which are about to follow, and a multitude of Gentiles are seen as destined to be brought through the great tribulation, and to occupy a special place of blessing before the throne of God, and to serve Him day and night in His temple, while He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, and they themselves will be under the special shepherd care of the Lamb, and in the enjoyment of divine consolations. After this interval the seventh seal is opened, and is followed by the seven trumpets. (Rev. 8: 2 - 11: 18.) But between the sixth and seventh trumpets the episode is introduced of the "mighty angel," with a little book in His hand, taking possession of the sea and the earth, as He utters the solemn oath, that there should be no further delay (Rev. 10); and also of the measurement of the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein, together with the testimony. and the death and resurrection of the two witnesses. (Rev. 11) The seventh trumpet ushers in the end, and the world sovereignty "of our Lord and His Christ."

There are, it will be remarked, seven seals and seven trumpets. The distinction between them would seem to be that made by our blessed Lord, in Matthew 24, between the "beginning of sorrows," and the "tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." The first six seals introduce, therefore, preliminary judgments: these ended, there is a pause in heaven before the severer judgments, heralded by the trumpets, and which issue in the establishment of the world-kingdom of Christ.

Before the "seven angels, having the seven last plagues," appear, several distinct, though related, subjects are interposed, in order to unfold the causes and the object of God in thus dealing in judgment with the earth and its oppressors. In Rev. 12 there is "a brief but all-important summary of the whole course of events, viewed, not in their instruments on earth or the judgment of these, but the divine view of all the principles at work, the state of things as revealed of God." Hence we have the vision of the "woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (v. 1) — Israel, as seen in the purpose of God, and of the birth of the "Man child," whom the dragon seeks to devour, but who is caught up to God and His throne. War in heaven follows, and Satan and his angels are cast out into the earth, to the joy of heaven, and to the sorrow of the earth. (v. 12.) This event is celebrated in heaven as the earnest of the end and the establishment of the "kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ." (v. 10.) Satan, cast out of heaven, turns all his enmity against the woman and her seed, but they are preserved by God's providential care. In Rev. 13 Satan's two great instruments for the execution of his designs appear upon the scene — the first beast, the head of the revived Roman empire, who receives from the dragon "his power, and his seat, and great authority"; and the second beast (v. 11), the antichrist, who acts as prophet to the first beast, and "causes the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed." (v. 12.)

Coming to Rev. 14 the curtain is lifted, and the Jewish remnant, the 144,000, are seen with the Lamb on mount Sion. The issue of their suffering path is exhibited before they have passed through the time of Jacob's trouble. This scene of light and blessedness is succeeded by three angels with their several proclamations: the first preaching the everlasting gospel; the second announcing the fall of Babylon; and the third proclaiming the penalty for those who should

worship the beast and his image, or receive the mark of his name. (v. 11) Then, after the revelation from heaven concerning the blessedness of those who should die in the Lord "from henceforth," we have the harvest and vintage judgments. Rev. 15 opens with another sign in heaven, "seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." (v. 1.) But before these angels empty their golden vials, the blessed dead, referred to in Rev. 14: 13, are seen in heaven, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. (vv. 2-4.) The vials are then poured out. The reader must refer to the exposition to learn their character; but attention may again be called to two things: first, the similarity of the judgments, if intensified, to those connected with the trumpets; and to the fact that they must be, to a large extent, inasmuch as the trumpets, equally with the vials, reach to the end, contemporaneous with the trumpets.

From Rev. 17: 1 to 19: 4, we have the description and the judgment of Babylon, together with its consequences on earth. The contrariety between the mind of man and the mind of God is forcibly depicted in the universal lamentation on earth, and in the burst of joy in heaven, over the destruction of the "great city Babylon." (18: 9-20.)

The rest of the book is easily deciphered. There is direct sequence in the events recorded in chap. 19: 5 - 21: 8. First, the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven; then He comes forth on a white horse, followed by the armies which were in heaven on white horses, to victorious judgment. It is Rev. 1: 7 in fulfilment. His enemies, led by the beast and the false prophet, are taken and destroyed, and the two leaders are cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone (Rev. 19: 20, 21); Satan is thrown, bound, for a thousand years, into the bottomless pit; those who had been martyred, and those who had resisted the seductions and the power of the beast and the false prophet, are added to the first resurrection, "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." (vv. 4, 5.) At the close of this period Satan is loosed, and man is put to his final test. The nations are deceived, and gather themselves together once more against the Christ of God, only to be consumed with divine fire, while Satan is consigned to his eternal doom in the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are. (vv. 7-10.) The great white throne follows, with the judgment of all the wicked dead, and forms the close of all God's ways with man. Next we have the, new heavens and the new earth, and the tabernacle of God with men — in one word, the eternal state. (Rev. 21: 1-9) Following upon this, we are fed back to view the glories of the heavenly city in relation to the millennial earth (Rev. 21: 9 - 22: 1-5); and then the book closes with warnings, encouragements, and exhortations, and is sealed by the announcement, "Surely I come quickly." May the reader and writer be able to respond with John, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."