

# “THE COMING KINGDOM:”

BEING AN

## OUTLINE OF THE REVELATION.

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NOTES OF THREE LECTURES,

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## LECTURE I.

[1 COR. XV. 20-28; HYMN 140 (VERS. 2, 3, 4); PRAYER;  
HYMN 179.\*]

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### REVELATION I—III.

I HAVE been asked to lecture here on "The Coming Kingdom." I do so gladly, depending upon God, in His grace, for ability, and for guidance and power. A first remark, however, may be, that I dread lest we should forget *the unity of truth* whilst examining any portion of it, and so be misled by having taken a part out of, and away from, its place of connection with the rest. To explain what I mean, I will give an instance of this, and one which has led to many practical evils.

Some have spoken about the gospel, and written about it, merely as it bears upon a sinner when he first believes, as though the forgiveness of sins were all that it contained. To look at the gospel in this way takes up but one *point* connected with it, and that in itself a little one, namely, how it suits the sinner dead in trespasses and sins, if he receives it; and this, too, is on its *lowest* and least

\* From "Hymns for the Little Flock."

important side of blessing, that is, guilty man's side ; and, further, I may ask (if I speak of what suits a fallen man), has the gospel no other blessing for such an one? God's side of it presents it as *a whole*, in its own proper importance (not to *me*, or any individual sinner, in his or her selfishness, all-important as it is to such, but) to God, and to the whole universe under Him; for thus it reveals God in His eternal being and character, His joy in the Son of His love, in three displays of Him; *firstly*, in humiliation unto death, the death of the cross—He suffering; *secondly*, in heaven now (between the suffering and the glory yet to come), forgiver of sins, and giver of eternal life and the Holy Spirit to all who own and bow down to Him—He now in patience, while waiting for His foes to be made His footstool; and, *thirdly*, He in displayed glory when He comes a second time as Son of man; coming out from the glory of God to take the kingdom, and bring forth new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell. No suffering to Him then, nor to those that are His—no more need of patience then! He will reign first in the kingdom; whether His court, and the bride (now become the Lamb's wife), be looked at as on high, or whether the kingdom upon earth be considered. Reigning, He will put down all enemies—Satan (and rebellious men with him, their chosen head and master) must go into the lake of fire—death be swallowed

up in victory, and finally the new heavens and new earth come into being.

This (God's display of His Son in humiliation, and then in patience, and then, as resulting from these, in glory) is God's gospel. And here the humiliation, and the patience, and the glory of Him, who is God manifest in flesh, stand out as a unity. It is the revelation of the being and character of God Himself—shews His delight in Christ, into which delight the believer can enter, through faith and by the Spirit, but the believer only. No other man's works, or doings, or sufferings have been from or for God, or have a claim upon God; none other than He has shared, or ever can share, the throne of God; none other has been endowed with authority to forgive sin, to give eternal life, even now; none other has waited to be gracious. But to Him, Jesus, all power in heaven and in earth is given, and all glory shall be given.

To turn now to my thesis — “The Coming Kingdom.” I might separate the coming kingdom from that which leads into it, and from that to which it leads. I should then have to give you from every part of scripture such portions as refer to it, and to fix each portion in its right place. This would take for granted that I had a very thorough knowledge of the Bible, and that you all likewise had so mastered its contents, as to be able

to say whether or not my application of these scriptures shewed that I had been taught of God. Instead of supposing so much to be true, it will be more humble and happy to choose some one portion of scripture, and endeavour to examine what it says. That scripture remains always open in our hands, and before us, and if, instead of attempting to explain every verse of it, God gives me to help you as to the meaning of some one or two only of the more important parts, you will each of you be a gainer, and any mistake that I may make be more easily perceived by you.

I have selected, therefore, the last book in our Bible—the Revelation—as that which we may look at together.

Read with me the first three verses of the first chapter, and verses 6 and 7 of the last chapter. (1) “The Revelation\* of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (2) Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, [and] of all things that he saw. (3) Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and

\* “The Revelation” is in the singular number, and not, as some are wont to say, “The Revelations,” which is plural. This at least marks *the unity* of the whole, though that whole may contain subordinate parts. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave, &c.

keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand." And chapter xxii. 6, 7. "These sayings are faithful and true : and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly : blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

Observe how these five verses bear upon those who do not study this book. Can I say, as their practice implies, it is not a revelation, or uncovering of things (which man's mind never could have discovered), which God gave unto Jesus Christ to shew unto His servants, things which must shortly come to pass. Surely, if there be a covering anywhere, it must be over the hearts and minds of those who cannot, and will not, see what God says He has uncovered, and revealed, and given to Jesus to shew to His servants. It is the book that shews part of what Jesus has been doing since He went to heaven, and what He is about to do, and Himself is the One to shew it all to His servants. Care you not for such divine grace? despise you such service of Christ? If so, are you a servant of His?

God has shewn that which will shortly come to pass. Now, man is naturally a great planner for what is to be the future down here, and the knowledge of *God's plan* for the future is a fine *antidote* to man's planning and plans; and "shall I hide

from Abraham the thing that I do?" (Gen. xviii. 17) contains one of God's ways in His actings with the members of the household of faith, as much as with the father of the faithful. If the things which must shortly come to pass are known to you, and abide with you, the flesh will be judged; the world spoilt to you, and its engrossing power over the natural mind broken by the very hopes of the coming glory, and the vista of grace which leads up to it. John in Patmos, outcast from his much-loved sphere of work among saints, was the first who enjoyed the privilege of this book; and his exile was the Lord's time for giving to all His people the chart for the troubled wilderness which lay between John, when in Patmos, and the new heavens and new earth. A troubled wilderness it is, but with bright illuminations of God's ways, and of Christ's presence with His people right on to the end—an end whose bright and gladdening light may be seen all through the journey, and by each individual who makes it.

And notice the peculiar blessing to the student: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear . . . and keep (or treasure up) the sayings of the prophecy of this book." See also chapter xxii. 7, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

Note it, He does not say, "Blessed is he who understands," &c., but blessed is he who reads, or hears read, and keeps the sayings of the book. *He,*



if there be but one, as in John's case when in Patmos, has the blessing.

As we look through the book together, you will, I trust, see with me that the Revelation is no trackless ocean, nor is it without some of the most blessed springs of sweet water, nor without fruits of the tree of life, for our use!

The book, as given by God, and as spread out before us down here, is divided into parts, or sections. The leading truth in each part naturally (according to God) was according to the actions of Christ during the times it treats of. What more according to God than that His beloved Son, and the actions of His Son—the Christ—should be treated of in each part of the stream of time, from Patmos to the new heavens and new earth being set up! And, consequently, in the account given of these actings, the places or scenes of such actings are brought before us. And what more natural (in the new nature, and to the Spirit of God) than that the servant's mind should be there where the Master is acting! “The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.”

The three-ply thread of gold, which is to faith its clue through the book, is the blessed Lord Himself in His actings, and the scenes of these, and the mind of His servant there, through the Spirit.

The Revelation contains God's chart, or stream of time, for John, from Patmos to the end of time.

The Christ is seen in it in action ; whether *first* in judging the seven candlesticks, from chapter i. to iii.—which was seen by John in a vision, as if all was in Patmos—and the Lord there as *Son of man* in the glories of the Ancient of Days.

Or, *secondly*, when in spirit John was caught up into heaven, and found that the Lamb, who had been hidden in the midst of the throne, was opening out all that He upon the throne would do in providence to prepare for Israel's getting back to the land, and the *power* of the Gentiles being set aside. From chapter v. to the end of chapter ix. in heaven, Himself acting, though unseen by men, and nothing that mere men on earth could understand, it being seen as flowing from Him. From chapter x. to xix., verse 10, there is a description of the things upon earth for which He had been so acting, but at the time when they will stand out to man's eye upon earth ; and both these parts—the preparation for the end, and the beginning of the end (visible to man)—all of it, so to speak, and understood by John ; ending with the triumph in heaven.

*Thirdly*, Himself comes out of heaven to put down His foes openly, and to set up a kingdom upon earth. He brings His court with Him, and (wondrous word) *the Lamb's wife* in the court above of the kingdom, which is to be upon earth below (compare Isa. iv. 4-6 and Rev. xxi. 2, 3, 10) ; and finally sets up the new heavens and new earth,

wherein righteousness is to dwell, pure and unmixed, for ever.

If the Revelation were printed on one side of a large sheet of paper, and I then divided it into three parts—

The *first* part (A) would end with chapter iii.

The *second* part (B) would end with chapter xix. 10.

The *third* part (C) would end with the book.

(A)\* would contain both the introduction to the book, and the actings of the Son of man seen by John, as if He had come down into Patmos, and was seen by him there as judging the churches. (B) would embrace the whole period in which the Lord (His resting-place in patience still in heaven) is acting, first, in providence, to remove barriers out of the way; and then openly, to bring out to light and sight on earth the beginning of the end, and the actual preparations for earthly glory; and (C) would contain the open manifestations of Himself; the kingdom in its twofold parts, heavenly and earthly; and after that, the eternal state; and then the conclusion of the book, or prophecy.

Peter, James, and John saw the transfiguration of the Lord on the mount. Peter wrote about it as an eye-witness. (2 Pet. i. 16–21.) They saw it *for us*. In like manner John, when in Patmos,

\* (A). This really contains the things which are and the things seen. (Chap. i. 19.) (B) and (C) contain all that shall be hereafter, or after those things which John saw.

had a stream of time—God's stream about the Son of man and the Lamb, and of that which would roll out under the hand of Christ, as Son of man, or the Lamb. John saw it all in broad outline, and John wrote it down for us. And the Holy Spirit, who inspired John to write it, is with us, to enable us to profit from it, each for him or her self. But in order to do this we must be simple and childlike, and not carry our own thoughts into the book, but bring forth God's mind as expressed in it.

Keep your eye upon Christ Himself, and see *where He is*, and *what He is doing*, as you read the book. This will give light to your intelligence, and will give warmth to your heart, as well as strength to your conscience, and purpose of heart to be a doer of His will. Christ a living person, in whatsoever glories shewn, for me as sole clue through the book! Take seals, or trumpets, or vials, &c., as clue—if I see the *Living One* who gives all these their power, I can be satisfied to wait till many of the details explain themselves by their accomplishment; for the word of God accomplishes itself. But I live upon Christ now.

I take, then, now this roll of the stream of time, as to the revelation of Jesus Christ as Son of man, and as the Lamb. It has three cords across it, binding up its length into three parts. I loose the first of them, and it unrolls down to the end of the third chapter. I read it prayerfully, and say

the golden thread that runs through it is my Lord, as Son of man, in the glory of the Ancient of Days, come down from above, and standing in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. And there He expresses His unfailingly correct estimate of how far they had answered the purpose He had in lighting them. His mind comes out to and in His servant John. All this in a vision in Patmos. And (may I not add?) gracious the love which shews me the Lord in this, to me, His new position; surely Himself therein, will give me the light of intelligence, and feed my soul with His glory. The apparent nearness of the One in action to that about and on which He is acting, and the full entrance of the mind of John into all this, should be noticed.

But remark verses 4 and 5—"which is, and which was, and which is to come"—(or the existing one, and the was, and the coming One). How different from the title, Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our Father and God through Him! (John xx. 17.)

Again, "the seven spirits which are before the throne." How different from the titles of the Spirit, the Unction, Life-giving, the Seal, the Earnest, and Comforter, as we know Him!

And again, and "Jesus Christ, as the Faithful Witness, first-begotten from the dead, and Prince of the kings of the earth." How different from that which John's faith gives out the moment he

sees Him, according to the glories in Christ, as displayed in the eternal redemption and everlasting salvation of a people for heaven! "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood:" the enjoyed fruits of His love acting in mercy and compassion. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father;" rich grace to us, in having set us in relationship with Himself, who is Head of all government and worship! And, lastly, the privilege and power of praise; "to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, amen," expressing both the mind of the Holy Spirit, and the desire of the disciple's heart.

Verse 4, and the first part of 5, give us glories divine of God, and of the Spirit, and of Jesus Christ as connected with *earth*. But John (latter part of verse 5, and verse 6) takes up glories divine, but as connected with himself, and those that are for heaven and eternity—known and enjoyed blessings.

The Emperor may have been allowed to stop John's work in the churches, and was allowed (led by Satan) to thrust him into solitude, to the very point where the Son of man meant to meet him, and to give to him the new service of writing the guide-book for His people, through time, until the end. The glories of the Son of man, here as the Ancient of Days, are awe-inspiring; but they are not difficult to understand, at least not the titles or the insignia. John fell (ver. 17) at His feet as dead! But He graciously laid His right hand

upon him, saying, "Fear not;" and then He names some of His own glories, as the answer to all that His servant could fear. "I am the first and the last; the *Living One*, and who became dead; and, lo! I am living for evermore, and have the keys of death and of the unseen world." And then (ver. 19) he claims John's service for Himself and the churches. To John, and to everyone that serves, how precious that *service*, and the *love* that formed it!

The mind of man works upon the things of man, but where the Spirit of God is, there that which God's word reveals is received in simplicity, just as "it is written." And sure I am that any-one of us that has the Spirit and mind of God can receive what He has written, and if we compare scripture with scripture, we shall soon discover thus more than we can find time to communicate one to the other.

In chapters ii., iii. we have the seven churches named, in the *midst* of which John had seen (chap. i. 13) the Son of man. They were seen as around Him, Himself in their midst: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. Seven churches selected as embodying all those failures which the Lord knew were contrary to His own mind, and all that would be found in any church, unto the end of there being any such on earth. These seven churches, I do not doubt, give all the phases of carelessness, weakness, haughti-

ness, evil in false doctrine, and in false profession, dependence, and independence, of all parts of the whole nominal church.

If I sit down and read ecclesiastical history, and study all the phases that have appeared in the churches, from the beginning down to the present time, as near the end, I find then the value of the Lord's wisdom in having selected the above *seven*, and the order of the moral evil in the church, as a whole, upon earth is marked by the *order* in which the seven candlesticks are placed.

Each of these addresses has *insignia*\* in which severally the Lord appeared.

1, He that holds fast the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. (Chap. ii. 1.)

2, The First and the Last, which became dead, and lived. (Ver. 8.)

3, He which has the sharp sword with two edges. (Ver. 12.)

4, The Son of God, who has His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass. (Ver. 18.)

5, He that possesses the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars. (Chap. iii. 1.)

6, He that is holy, He that is true, He that has

\* Study the string of these precious insignia and characteristics of your Lord and Saviour till you can go with intelligence through them. They are goodly beads to tell over.



the key of David, He that opens, and no one shuts, and shuts, and no one opens. (Ver. 7.)

7, The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. (Ver. 14.)

Seven insignia or signs about, or in Him, possessed by Himself alone ! Precious glories of the Son of man, here in the glory of the Ancient of Days !

Each assembly has the Lord's estimate of it given.\* Each has words of caution, consolation, and admonition, rebuke, warning, comfort, &c., fitting to its state, given. Each too has promissory communications made to it, calculated to make any believer become a victor or overcomer (who of *you* are overcomers ?) Works, whether good or bad, are noticed.

There is to each of these addresses an internal consistency in all its several parts, one with the other, which makes it impossible to transfer one part from one address to another, without disturb-

\* Every one, if he speaks, writes, or acts, will let out, at all events, what is in himself. Let this make us swift to hear and slow to speak. And, mark it, Christ also speaks, and acts truthfully according to what He is. Thus, if there be any thing that can be praised, He speaks of that *first* and afterwards of what is evil. Men usually find fault first, and few believers know how to praise another. I remember one saying once to me, "Nobody ever praised me before !" I had noticed to him how much Christ had wrought patience in him in the preceding year.

ing the internal harmony of both. The promises are as full as such a Giver might give.

The one that is an overcomer:\* 1, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Chap. ii. 7.) 2, Shall not be hurt by the second death. (Ver. 11.) 3, To him will I give to eat of the hidden manna; and a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no one knows, saving he that receives it. (Ver. 17.) 4, To him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father and I will give him the Morning Star. (Ver. 26-28.) 5, we shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels. (Chap. iii. 5.) 6, Will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and my new name. (Ver. 12.)

\* "*He that overcomes*" is tame in English, and is ambiguous, for it might mean he that may gain the victory in the end. "The overcomer" is he that has overcome, does overcome and will overcome. A title attached to a person and characterizing him, he has overcome the wicked one, himself, and the world. Reader! am I, are you, an overcomer?

7, To him will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne. (Ver. 21.) What a giver He ! and how gracious the way in which he cheers on to victory.

1. *EPHESUS*, the *primitive* church left her first love. (Chap. ii. 4.) No diligence in candlestick duties (and there was much therein which He praised) could compensate to the Son of man for the want of personal love to Himself. It was Paul's freshness of love to the Lord, which, from the beginning to the end, so characterized him, amid all his much service ; and which alas, had waned in His beloved Ephesians ! "Thou hast left thy first love." This was the church in her first declension.\*

\* 1, *EPHESUS* may, it has been said, mean *beloved* ; 2, *SMYRNA*, *preserved* ; 3, *PERGAMOS*, *elevation* ; 4, *THYATIRA*, *rend or tear the sacrifice* ; 5, *SARDIS*, *feigned* ; 6, *PHILADELPHIA*, *brotherly love* (if so as exhibited in the Lord) ; 7, *LAODICEA*, *judgment by the people*.

Introducing Himself as Son of man in the glories of the Ancient of days to the churches, He uses some of His various official glories and personal characteristics in their wide range, if haply He may act upon those under the responsibility of their testimony, and lead them to repentance ; or to be strong ; or to fear ; or to take forth that which is precious from that which is vile ; or to be real ; or to use Him as their responsibility-bearer ; or to be ashamed of themselves. And all this more connected with the *beema* (2 Cor. v. 10) ; than with the great white throne. (Rev. xx. 12.)

2. SMYRNA had most taste in her experience of fellowship with Christ in His rejection by the world, though the reason of the experience was different. As to the church it was by persecution that the Lord preserved a weak people from the world which crucified Him (the Lord) because He was unwavering, strong and true to God alone. This was the second estate of the church.

3. PERGAMOS, the third experience of the church, brought with it Constantine, the emperor, usurping a place of power over the church.

4. THYATIRA, the fourth phase, gives us Jezebel's history over again. She who had no right to any place in the kingdom usurped power to establish false worship.

5. SARDIS comes next as a fifth, when the kings of the earth took the place of being nursing fathers to the church—a name to live, but no life.

6. PHILADELPHIA, the sixth is fully filled up by the Lord Himself.

7. LAODICEA had a very good opinion of itself and its attainments; very like what we see now.

Study Christ as He set Himself forth in Patmos and amid the seven churches: John saw it all, and wrote it all for all his fellow-servants that they might know it.

The Christ,—born of a virgin, and growing up, and seen to have been in retirement from youth till about thirty years of age; in testimony and

teachings, and in all the beauteous ways of His own, amid the activities of His life here below; on the cross, in His marvellous death, and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa; but who burst the grave and came forth leading captivity captive,—is the Christ whom I commend to you. That Person first in those circumstances of humiliation. Yes, but stop not thou in those circumstances, He is not there *now*—the mosque of Mahomet has supplanted in that land the temple of Jehovah. Nor is He still lingering on earth as He once did forty days, to shew that He marked well the state of all things in the beloved city, and to counsel and cheer His apostles: for whom when He was risen from among the dead, He yet lingered forty days, but then ascended, while they saw Him go up; and after that (Phil. ii. 6–11) He took His seat on high. Mark the “wherefore” of verse 9, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, “*wherefore*” God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus (which was His name as known among men) every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and on earth, and infernal: and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!

Study Himself *there*, in His actings at Pentecost (Acts ii.), Forgiver of sins, and Giver of the Holy Spirit to repentant sinners in Jerusalem. Study Himself in the martyrdom of Stephen (chap. vii.),

and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus (chap. ix.) and his mission (chap. xiii.) at Antioch, and his apostleship as Paul. Study Him in the Hebrews, in the heavenly calling, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, in the mystery : study Him where you will, *but* whatever you do, do not forget to study Him in the Apocalypse, book of His glorious power, and coming, and of the glorious manifestations to come, on earth and in heaven ; first, as suppressing all evil, and reigning over the earth ; and finally, in the new heavens and new earth. For God will have this twofold glory as fruit of the humiliation, patience, and power of the Son of man, Jehovah's fellow. (Zech. xiii. 7 ; xi. 13.)

I beseech and entreat each of you to have and to hold Christ Himself as the test of yourself, and all your ways : as the touchstone by which worldliness can be discovered ; and (as He is in the book which we are studying) the great responsibility-bearer before God, as to the profession of religion on earth, and as to the fulfilment hereafter of all promises to the Jews, and the Gentiles, as well as to the church of God. (1 Cor. x. 32.)

It may not be amiss to add a few remarks now upon the light which this first part of the book sheds upon some of the leading ecclesiastical notions of the day.

Man from the time he lost his innocence, with it lost his first estate, he was turned also out of Eden

a spoiled thing. From that time downward, his tendency and business have (alas!) been to spoil everything he can; and this often through the delusion that he is competent to improve upon what God has done!

Men tell us that the church as set up round Peter, apostle of the circumcision, at Pentecost, is to stand for ever, and to bring in a spiritual millennium; and that nothing in it may be altered *until* the Lord takes the great white throne. The Jews held much the same thoughts about the Mosaic economy; and were stumbled by the Lord's coming first in humility, ere He came in glory; just as now, men are stumbled by the statement of the truth that the churches—Christendom—will certainly be judged by Him, because of its failure as to the truth entrusted to it, and the position in which grace placed it as to heavenly truth, as much as Jewdom failed of old, as to truth about earthly things.

But, if the church at Jerusalem was everything, and the source of all power, and was to abide continually—why was there to be another apostle (Paul, apostle of the uncircumcision), and another site, Antioch, set forth? Who transgressed man's notions, even with a Philip in Samaria, and as to the eunuch of Candace of Ethiopia (Acts viii. 5, 27)? It was the Lord Himself. Who used Peter, as to Cornelius and his household (chap. x.) contrary to his own, and Jerusalem Christians'

prejudices? It was the Lord! Who chose a new witness, a Hellenist, chosen to be apostle of the uncircumcision, endowed him, and sent him out from Antioch without his deriving any one thing through Jerusalem? It was the Lord. And Paul was witness, not of Christ risen from the dead merely, but of Christ ascended up on high and giving gifts to men! Christ Jesus on earth formed Peter, and (when risen from the dead) sent down from heaven the Holy Spirit to him. Christ ascended up into glory, turned Saul\* into Paul, and the Holy Spirit sent him out from among his praying brethren, and fellow-servants at Antioch, together with Barnabas, who afterwards dropped off from Paul.

Paul, be it remarked, had to modify, after that failure had set in, the conditions of fellowship here on earth. At first, himself full of faith, and of the Holy Spirit, and preaching (what he had learnt in his own conversion) an ascended and glorified Christ as Son of God,—those that seemed to cleave to Him and walk with Him Paul owned, and fully associated himself with them. But when evil had set in, and become established, we find him writing to Timothy, after telling of Hymenæus and Philetus (2 Tim. ii. 17), he adds, Nevertheless

\* The name *Saul* may perhaps mean "interrogated," as man is by the law; but has no answer to give. And perhaps also *Paul* may signify "wrought" or "formed." This our apostle was certainly, a vessel well fitted for the Master's use.



the foundation of God stands firm (or fixed) having this seal, The Lord knows those being His; and let everyone that names the Lord's name stand aside from iniquity. (2 Tim. ii. 19.) How is a man to be meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work? "Flee youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." And this is confirmed in chapter iii., in which he bids Timothy: Turn away from those who have the form of godliness but deny the power of it; just as Protestants did *en masse* at the Reformation.

John's line of truth differed from Peter's or Paul's, though the doctrine of all of them concurred together to form one whole. The Father's family, possessing the eternal life in and through the Son of God, in John's epistles; the Son of man as Ancient of days in the Apocalypse judging false profession in chapters i. to iii.; and the Lamb in the midst of the throne of the Lord God Almighty in chapter v. &c. And, note it, it was God who, without reference to Peter or Paul, opened the fresh truth in the Apocalypse!

Again, the man-made religion of fallen human nature denies that pardon and acceptance can be known\* until the great white throne has been sat

\* A most unfortunate view. For no one that stands there will be saved: all these are judged according to *their own works*. On the other hand, one thousand years before that, the saved through faith in Christ will be made mani-

upon ; but John (chap. i. 5, 6). knew his own forgiveness and that of the "us," knew also our relationship with and under Christ, as part of the royal priesthood. And so, naturally, he and we cease from occupation with our leanness, our leanness, to be occupied with praise and ascription of glory and dominion to the Lord.

Again, *ecclesiastical* views never see the tender faithfulness of the Lord, as towards John, when he fell at His feet as dead. Nor the solemn and awful truth of judgment of false profession being in the Lord's mind, however long He may linger in long-suffering patience.

Again, as Protestants did well to escape from the evil of the nominal church at the Reformation (though many nowadays are inclined to turn back to it and traditional religion, so building again the things which they had destroyed) yet we have two very remarkable things in each of the seven churches. First, Christ's estimate of it as a thing He had examined ; and secondly, His command, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Did they, or any of them, repent and get restoration ? Which of the seven ? And where is it ? If none escaped, faith in me, if I have an ear to hear, knows that the Lord's visitation of them ends in His spuing

fest before His *beema*, or judgment-seat ; none but the saved to appear there, where the question is about rewards for works done since they believed.

them all out of His mouth. I am, we are, under Christ who has judged the churches and Christendom and given us His estimate of them.

Compare Israel in Moses' or Solomon's days with Israel in the Lord's days,—alas! the contrast is not so fearful as that which the comparison of the Pentecostal church (Acts ii., iv.) and Christendom of our own day gives us.

God's counsel and plan and the value of the work of Christ stand for ever, and those who through faith and the Spirit are connected therewith most surely *have* as individuals *everlasting life now*: for they are part of the espoused, the bride expectant of Christ. But, as to the present enjoyment, and standing upon earth of anything like a candlestick, such a thing cannot be found anywhere. But there is One, who is faithful amid unfaithfulness, and who can, and will keep that which we have committed to Him.

He remembers who wrote, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Mal. iii. 16, 17.)

And He did remember His Zacharias and Elizabeths; His Annas and Simeons; His Marys too,

and Josephs: just as He had remembered His Enochs and Noahs. We may be assured of this, and count upon Himself as John did. Yea! may I not say, such a meeting as this is the proof that He has not forgotten to be gracious in our day?

May the Lord be with you and bless all that God knows to be His; bless them in the knowledge of this book of the Revelation, and help us to profit from it!

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## LECTURE II.

[1 COR. XV. 35-38; HYMN 106; PRAYER; HYMN 179.]

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### REVELATION IV.—XIX. 10.

LAST week we were occupied with the vision given to John in Patmos. Being in the Spirit, he saw Jesus Christ in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, but with all the glorious insignia of the Ancient of days (yet Son of man) examining the churches. The whole scene was brought before John's mind as if it were on earth and in Patmos.

In our study to-day, the scene is laid in heaven. John is in the Spirit, and as caught up thither finds the same Jesus Christ, but *here* as the Lamb that had been slain and in the midst of the throne of the Lord God Almighty.

I made last week, a prefatory remark or two upon the importance of every one remembering *the unity of God's truth*; and pointed out that the revelation of the sent One involves His life and sufferings in *humiliation* here on earth, as now past; His *patience* and gifts, as now at God's right hand on high; and hereafter, His coming *glories* whether in heaven or on earth. Without seeing these three subdivisions in the service of the Lord,

neither can its connection with His Father and God (of whom and to whom and through whom that service was, and is, and will be), be enjoyed, nor the fulness of the gospel be at all rightly understood.

To-night I desire to add to those prefatory remarks, a few words in answer to the question:—Who is this Lord—who in humiliation, patience, and glory works such wondrous things in behalf of God and His saints, and before men and angels?

“Worship God” (said the angel in Rev. xix. 10) *“for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy,”* or, *“the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.”* This is always true, as to every part of scripture, for no scripture is of any private interpretation, though truth might be ministered in a fragmentary way at one time, and at another time in a more comprehensive form;\* yet the centre and end of all scripture is Jesus Himself; it is of Him the Spirit testifies in the word, and in us: the scope of no context is seen till its connection with Jesus is seen.

Evidently this book of the Revelation includes an immense range and has divine and heavenly depths and heights in it. For Jesus Christ is spoken of in it as the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end; and,

\* See for instance Hebrews i. 1, and its contrast to verses 2, 3.

though not enlarging upon it, yet "His Father" is from time to time referred to. (Chaps. i. 6; ii. 27; iii. 5 and 21; xiv. 1.) He is in *the midst* too of the throne, of Jehovah Elohim Shaddai (chap. v. 6); and the Lord God Almighty, *and* the Lamb, are the temple in the templeless city of glory (chap. xxi. 22); the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof (ver. 23); the throne is the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Chap. xxii. 1; &c., &c.)

Moreover, past eternity was evidently His who is the First and the Last. A being who never had a beginning, self existent, is not a description of mere man, but is true of God alone—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Son was only begotten in deity and He was the object of worship to heavenly intelligences (even ere man existed); then too all the counsels and plans (referred to in scripture) as from before the foundation of the world (that is, ere *this* creation had existence) were in Him and for Him. (See Eph. i. 3–10.)

Again *creation*, *providence*, and *government* are three kingdoms in which the Son's power and glories have been manifest. (See John i. 3; Col. i. 16, 17; Rev. i. 5.) So again, though much more fully testified of) as to eternal redemption and salvation; these had and have no *being* save through and in Him. Study *Himself*, beloved friends, in Philippians ii. 5–13; and Colossians i. 12–20; and ii. 9, 10, &c.; and own the infinite majesty of this.

Jesus Christ, who knowing all things, said of Himself, "No one knows the Son but the Father; neither knows any one the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." (Matt. xi. 27.)

I will speak yet more freely and do you judge what I say.

Jesus—who is He? Matthew says they shall call His name Emmanuel, that is, God with us; thou shalt call His name Jesus (Jehovah a-saving), for He shall save His people from their sins. (Chap. i. 21–23.) The name of Jehovah is not a creature's name, and Jesus is the man that is Jehovah's fellow (Zech. xiii. 7); and God manifest in flesh. Before any angel or creature of any kind was formed, He was in the beginning and He was with God, and He was God; and without Him was not one thing made that was made. One that never had a beginning can only be said of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to the newly revealed divine name; I say this as to *now*, because in the old scriptures, we read of Jehovah, Messiah, and Ruach (or the Spirit). God never began to be:—and the Son was with the Father and the Spirit in eternity, God. The first Adam in Eden pointed like a finger post to Him that was to come, was a type of Him as the *last* Adam, and yet He who was the last Adam existed before the first, even in eternity. In the garden of Eden, Adam was created first, and out of a crooked



rib taken from his side while he slept Eve was formed. In its separation from the human body, such a thing would be in itself most unsightly, yet God built it up into Eve as a companion and helpmeet for him. The last Adam will have a bride, the *confidante* of His love, the church formed by the Holy Spirit a new creation in Christ Jesus.

When *creation* got under the power of sin, it became a wreck, and the earth was judged for man's wickedness at the deluge. Yet creation has still a voice to man, as Psalm xix. and Romans i. 19-23, shew us power from everlasting and divine glory are both stamped upon it. Men own that: that even in nature there are proofs that but one being made it all and He of power self-existing. But, what if I say, Yes, there is but one God and He very good, as I judge from natural religion, but has *He* always been *my* first object in life? Alas no! and so, according to the testimony of natural theology I am lost. But God who is rich in mercy gave His Son, and in Jesus was life, and the life was the light of man; as lost in myself I bow to Him in whom there is a new creation.

Then as to *providence*; we see how in the first creation every tree and plant had seed; so also as to the fowls of heaven, and the fish of the sea, and animals; there had been provision made for procreating the species. But when sin had come in, God made a covenant in providence and took care

to have the rainbow as the sign of it. For wicked as man might be, He would continue the seasons, and give crops while the world stood: and He declared that it should not again be destroyed by water. How blessedly, too, does the Lord proclaim this truth as to the sun shining upon the evil and upon the good; and the rains descending likewise; as to the lilies of the field and the grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; and as to not one sparrow falling to the ground without our Father which is in heaven, &c., &c. Moreover, providence is used by Him in His dealings of grace; as in Psalm cvii. for sinner and for saint. When I look round me on the earth and see the fruits of sin on every side, what could I do if I did not know that there was the blessed One above and behind it all? Affliction, hunger, sickness are all around in this groaning creation. I should be sorrowful unto despair, but I see by faith the God of providence, above and behind it all, using it all for His own glory and to draw and force men to come to Him.

Then, too, there is a kingdom of *government*, God governing all down here. Once He made Himself king, as well as God, of a nation, Israel. When Israel would not own Him, either as their God or their king, he called a Nebuchadnezzar to take the kingdom; and, when *he* was heedless as to his thoughts and words, he too was judged. By whom but Himself do kings reign and princes decree

justice? He raised a Darius and an Alexander and a Cæsar and told out what He meant to do, hundreds of years before He did it. Under Cæsar our Lord was crucified, and that He foretold. And, that we might know Him and own Him in government, He has told us how all the glory of the great image of Gentile imperial power, shewn to Nebuchadnezzar, will pass away through man's wickedness; and the gold, and the silver, and the brass, and the iron mingled with clay become as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, before the Lord Messiah coming to take up Israel; the king that is to come in the name of the Lord.

Then, last and most important, there is the kingdom of *eternal redemption and salvation*. Until the fulness of time came, there was no seed of the virgin born by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit: no Son of the Most High that could be laid in the manger; or, as a youth, go and hear and answer questions in the temple; that could afterwards go about in Almighty power, doing good and teaching; and then be crucified, put to death and be buried. *He is the one of whom and to whom the Holy Spirit always bears witness*. Are your spirits occupied with that with which the Holy Spirit is occupied?

The sum of these two sets of prefatory remarks, that of last week and that just given,\* might be

\* This latter is anything but an exhaustive list of His glories. For instance, I have not referred to Him (as set

thus stated. The beauty of the character and ways of Jesus, as displayed in His past humiliation; in His present patience; and in His coming glories (when He is looked at as Redeemer and Saviour

forth in John i. 14-18) as only-begotten Son of the Father, &c.; nor as the image of the invisible God (Col. i. 15; 2 Cor. iv. 4), nor according to John's epistles, &c., &c. All I have sought to do was to refer to such varieties of glories as would suffice to leave on the mind the consciousness of the innumerable eddies circling outwards from Himself.

I must here make another remark and that is of importance. The connection of that which is found in each book of the scriptures, with the subject treated of in it, *and the aspect in which the subject is being looked at*, is much more stringent and distinctive than most are aware. For instance, as the four gospels give us four different *aspects* of the life of the Lord, when down here on earth, so do the epistles give us different aspects of Him, and what is His now, where He is; and of Him, and what will be His hereafter. For instance, Ephesians and Corinthians both treat of Christ as in Headship of the church. But, in Ephesians, it is the church as body and bride of Christ; in Corinthians, it is the church as the church of the living God.

Again in John's gospel, we have the Lord doing everything down here needful for the many sons to be brought to glory. When risen from the dead, a supplementary chapter is added, in which the millennial glory on earth is first pictured, and then that which treats of the continuance of what characterized John's beyond Peter's day. In John's epistles the eternal life in the children is first treated of. Then in the second epistle, the solemn responsibility of holding fast the truth; and in the third, life and grace

for eternity, and His actings therein), do not exhaust, are not equal to, the aggregate of the testimony which the Spirit and the written word give to Him. Himself is ever one and the same ; but the displays and manifestations of God through Him—who shall count, who can tell ?

To turn now to our study of the Revelation, pressed ; and Diotrephes made to be of no comparative importance.

In the Revelation, the Lord, where He now is, is shewn as the Head of all government and religion. The Son of man, &c., and the Lamb. This produces certain *contrasts*, as well as, occasionally, correspondences in what is found in the various epistles. As one result, you will find that verses often quoted as equivalent the one to the other, are very different one from the other, when each is studied in its context. In reading, I desire to read what is before me, and to study it in its context, and to note the aspect in which the subject is looked at in the book.

The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ &c. has its own lessons to teach. It is more like Daniel than any other book in scripture, and has large connections with the contents of Daniel's prophecies,—though its own line is peculiar to itself and distinctive. There is a spiritual propriety in Peter's entering into many things which are not found in John's writings, and resting in detail upon them. They were according to the line given to Peter, and not according to that given to John. So likewise as to Peter and Paul, and the differences between their lines. And so as to John and Paul, their lines may often approximate, and meet at various points, but the aspect of their subjects is different, and so a fuller and more comprehensive communication of truth is the result. This ought to be carefully attended to.

or Apocalypse. Last Tuesday we loosed the first band round the roll of John's stream of time. The roll soon stopped unfolding itself, and the close of what lay open before us was at the end of chapter iii. We examined the introductory chapter and the two succeeding ones. The scene was laid in Patmos, isle of John's exile. There, in vision, John in the Spirit saw the Ancient of days as Son of man in His *visitation* (to use an ecclesiastical term) of the seven churches.

I now loose the *second* band; and the roll of John's stream of time runs out to the middle of chapter xix. Verse 10 is the last visible. The scene is here laid in quite a different place from where it was before : for (says John) "After these things" (those in chaps. i., ii., iii.) I looked and behold a door was opened *in heaven* : and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, saying, Come up hither\* and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Then we find John was in the Spirit and saw things in heaven. In chapter v. 6, the Lamb is discovered in the midst of the throne ; and in chapter vi. and onward to chapter ix. He begins teaching His servant the things which were to come forth from Him on the throne. There seems to be a change, a blank, between chapters ix. and x.

\* Many suppose that John's transit, here, in spirit to heaven ("the things which are hereafter," of chapter i.) corresponds with the rapture of the saints. (1 Thes. iv.)

Down to the end of chapter ix. John was in heaven in spirit and vision, learning from what went forth from the Lamb in heaven. But there was nothing come forth to the earth which when seen in itself, such an one as John could read and understand. In chapter x., as I judge, it is the messenger of the covenant who comes forth, and then there is a testimony for John and His servants to give upon earth and among men; and the things on earth assume the forms predicted in prophecy, as in Daniel and the Psalms, the preparation for, the beginning of, the end.

With chapter xix. 11 the Lord lays aside His hidden privacy, leaves heaven, and comes out Himself, and with Him His armies from heaven; there is no longer a testimony to be given by servant or prophet, for the King of kings and Lord of lords is openly displayed as openly taking vengeance upon His foes. This we hope to study next week, namely, on the 25th.

The throne in chapter iv. is that of the LORD God Almighty (or Jehovah, Elohim, Shaddai). Observe the name used in creating (in Gen. i.—ii. 3) is Elohim, God. At verse 4 of chapter ii., that is, when man's settling in Eden is in question, the name is LORD GOD. This word LORD is often used in scripture and the Psalms as marking relationship between God and man; as "the LORD said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country," &c. (Gen. xii. 1.) Abram was to become a specimen

of one in *relationship* with the true God. So this name was that which marked God's *relationship* with the descendants of Abraham, the Jews (Exodus iii. proves it). As to Shaddai, we read Genesis xvii. 1, "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, I am the *Almighty* God [El *Shaddai*], walk before me and be thou perfect." (Look, friends, at the word "walk before me," I pray you. It is a fresh version of the old truth, "Enoch walked with God.") Shaddai means rather *almighty in resources* than almighty in the abstract; and that was well proved by Abraham, by Israel, and may be by each homeless pilgrim now. "Almighty in resources:" is He *your* God? (source and stream and end? and in known relationship with yourself, each of you?) The word Jehovah is a title *never* given to any save the self-existent One. Not so the word Lord or lord, possessor or master.

There are a variety of thrones referred to in scripture as the seats or resting-places of God: do not hastily assume that there is but one. This one,\* in chapter iv., has emblems of creation, providence, and government, about it. The four living creatures, the rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald, and the four and twenty seats round about the one grandest seat of all—seat of Him who to look upon was like unto a jasper and a sardine stone, suffice to prove it. The four living:

\* The word *throne* is the same as the word *seats*, verse 4.



creatures lead the praise in verses 8, 9 ; and then (ver. 10) the four and twenty elders, in the glory of their royal priesthood, worship Him that sits on the central seat, and give back, in adoration and worship, the blessings they have received : they fall down and worship Him, casting their crowns before Him, while (with the music of a thankful heart) they sing, "Thou art worthy to receive glory and honour and power," &c. (Chap. v. 11.) The signs of judgment (ver. 5) and the seven lamps of fire now burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God, and (ver. 6) the sea of glass like unto crystal (purity in fixed abidance), should be noticed.

But where is the Lamb all this while ? none such is to be seen there as yet. Now I ask your particular attention to this. John saw, in the right hand of Him who was on the throne, a little roll, written inside and out, sealed with seven seals.

And a mighty angel heralded the challenge, "Who is worthy to open the little roll [it contained secrets reserved till then] and to loose its seals ?"

No one in or of the universe could be found able to open it, or even to look upon it. John wept. But one of the elders bids him not to weep, for there was One (not a mere man nor to be found in the range of this creation), and He had **OVERCOME** to open it and to loose its seals. Yes ! the Nazarene, in whose face men spat, the One despised and

rejected on earth, mocked with a crown of thorn and a reed sceptre, has *prevailed*, is the One that *has overcome* all that stood against Him ; and, among other fruits of His service to God, He must have this of being the One who, in the midst of the throne, is to be the *communicator* to those whom He has bought, and who serve Him (even now down here) of the things which were shortly to come to pass. And we know this.

And “lo ! in the throne [which must have opened to let Him be seen, as He is not seen in chapter iv.], and of the four living creatures,\* and of the twenty-four elders, stood [the central object of all] a Lamb as slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent forth unto all the earth.” Mark this, the Lamb once slain, but now with the perfection of power and intelligence, and both of these *communicative*, because inseparably connected with the seven Spirits of God sent forth unto all the earth. And mark, too, thus discovered and made manifest (God’s own rich resource) His bearing ! “He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”

Thereon (vers. 8–10) the four living creatures and the glorified royal priesthood fall down now before the Lamb and worship Him. The harps mark melody in the scene. And the golden vials full of incense shew, amid the glory, how God, in

\* The word is *living creature* and not *beast*.

the whole pathway to it, had put all the tears and cries of need of His poor people here below into His bottle. Remembered by Him they are, remembered by us too, they will be, in the glory.

Verses 9, 10\* shew us how far what John had learnt to sing in Patmos when he saw his loving Master there, was identical with the mind of heaven and the song of the twenty-four elders in glory.

The angelic host around (vers. 11, 12) worship too ; but they cannot touch the note of redeeming love and salvation through the blood, as we poor sinners saved by grace can. The song circles out and around to the whole universe, below the throne. (Ver. 13.) The four living creatures say Amen ; and the twenty-four elders worship. It is a rich scene to have before us ! The feeblest and least, all there, can and do give back in praise that which they have received.

Observe the difference between the blood as of

\* If the critics upon the evidence of the best Greek manuscripts are right, and that it should be "redeemed to God" in verse 9 (*instead of* "redeemed us to God"), and in verse 10 "made them" (*instead of* "made us"), then John, instead of only hearing his own wilderness-learnt song (as in chap. i.), repeated here in heavenly glory, found out how the glorified royal priesthood have a sort of precentorship place in leading praise for blessings of redemption and salvation as extended to others than *us* (chap. i. 5). That as *now* called in humiliation to pray and give thanks for all men (1 Tim. ii.), so *then* in glory to praise for all the extensions of redeeming and saving love.

atonement (in Rom. iii. 25 ; 2 Cor. v. 21 ; and Heb. x.), and the blood, as applied to the conscience, and setting the heart free to sing as with John in chapter i. 5, and the blood (Rom. iii. 26) ; and the blood, as in a wider range, connected with salvation and redemption as here.

That the Lamb is the communicator to His own of knowledge and light is the blessed instruction given in this portion. A fresh token of His worthiness and love to us, and of God's rich grace.

In chapter vi. the opening of the seals begins.

The first four, introduced by one or other of the living creatures (ver. 2), an all-conquering power ; (ver. 4), one that takes peace from the earth, and causes men to kill one another ; (ver. 5), famine of the necessities of life, not of its luxuries ; (ver. 8), destruction over one-fourth of the earth by means of the sword, hunger, death, and wild beasts, God's four plagues ; verse 9, souls beneath the altar of those slain for the word of God and for the testimony given, come into remembrance and are cheered ; verse 12, a terrific earthquake eliciting from the wicked on earth the confession of their alienation from and distrust of God. For their hearts and ways were not right with Him. The unreconciled always expects destruction because he deserves it and thinks God will be against him, for he is against God. Injure any man, and you will naturally expect that he will injure you if he can.

Our thoughts too often are the expression of our own selves.

Chapter vii. is a parenthesis—in the midst of judgment, mercy is remembered. *First*, 144,000 : that is, 12,000 of each tribe of Israel sealed, that no judgment for the earth may reach them (vers. 1-8); and, *secondly* (vers. 9-17), an innumerable multitude, gathered from all nations of the earth, stand before the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white and palms in their hands. How precious these rays of mercy are ! At the destruction of Sodom, God remembered Abraham and spared Lot according to the yearning that led Abraham to intercede. Lot, wife, and two daughters, were spared. One turns round when she ought not, and meets with judgment. Brethren ! remember Lot's wife ! God is merciful and compassionate, often in the midst of judgment, but He looks for immediate obedience as the result. God anticipates ; and He said, " Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do ? " That was in judgment. Here in purest mercy 144,000 of Israel which had crucified their Messiah are guarded from grief ; and then from among all nations an innumerable multitude are rescued for God and the Lamb.

In chapter viii. the last seal is opened. But ere the seven trumpet-angels can begin to call forth griefs, verses 2-5 shew that the Mediator must lay aside His intercession ere the griefs can come. The censer which in His hand carried up the prayers of

saints (ver. 4) to God became, when filled with coals from off the altar and cast to the earth, the signal of judgments come. The seven angels sound, one in each of the verses 7, 8, 10, 12, and *limited* judgments follow. At verse 13 it is said that the three last are woe trumpets.

These three are the *fifth* angel in chapter ix. 1-12; Abaddon, *destroyer* (in Hebrew), and Apollyon, *destroyer* (in Greek), seem to mark the extensive range of the action here of the pit; and the *sixth* angel, verses 13-21; and the seventh hereafter.

All is shewn thus far in heaven by the Lamb hidden in heaven; John is there too. Notice the distance from height above of the Lamb on the throne and the sphere on which the action tells, from chapter vi. to end of chapter ix. Most of it too is aggressive for the removal of what is evil, or the keeping of it in check.

But with chapter x. the "messenger of the covenant" comes out; a mighty Messenger He. Weigh the description of Him, and see whether it is not, though under another display, the same person who appeared to John in vision in Patmos, as the Son of man of Daniel (chap. vii. 7-14, 22), though with the insignia of the Ancient of days upon Him too; the same person who in Revelation v. is the Lamb in the midst of the throne and then opener of the seals; the same person who is the *ONLY Mediator* between God and man to offer up prayer, as found

in chapter viii. 3-5. This is His description : a mighty angel or messenger come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, a rainbow upon His head, His face as the sun, His feet as pillars of fire. A very little roll in His hand, open ; who set His right foot on the sea and His left on the earth, and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars, whereon seven thunders uttered their voices. John (who somehow was found come down to where sea and land were) was about to write, but a voice from heaven said, "Seal up the seven thunders and utterances ; write them not." And then the one standing on the sea and earth lifted up His hand to heaven, and swore by Him that lives for ever and ever, the Creator of everything, that there should be no longer any delay, but in the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when He begins to sound, the mystery of God shall be completed, as declared to His servants and prophets. (Compare chaps. xi. 15 and xii. 10.) And the voice which I heard from heaven (query, that in Patmos and, that which afterwards said Come up into heaven, chapter iv.) said, Go, take the very little roll which is open in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the earth. John went and said to him, "Give me the very little roll." Take it, said he, and eat it. Embitter it will thy belly, though like honey it sweetens thy mouth. John obeyed and found it so. Thou must prophesy again, said he, before many peoples, and nations, and tongues.

When the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" &c. (Gen. xviii. 16), He referred to His own visit of inspection of Sodom and Gomorrah. His confidence as to Abraham and the making him the *confidant* of His secrets, must have been very sweet to Abraham. But, in result, when Abraham found out what was at stake, Lot in the city threatened to be destroyed, it was bitter. But God remembered Abraham and saved Lot out of it. When John was told he was to be the one in whom the contents of the very little roll in the hand of the Messenger (Rev. x.) was to be deposited, that must have been very sweet; but when he came to bear testimony about the new truth he had had revealed to him, he got the full taste of bitterness. Just so it was with the apostles, the privilege of having the Lord's instructions to them was sweet, the testimony about it brought very bitterness into the inward parts. See this also in Jeremiah.

Who is there of us who has not tasted the sweetness of the truth newly recovered since the Reformation? but when that was carried out into practice, even the privilege of having the scriptures, of justification through faith, of being under the condition of "Live and do," instead of being under that of "Do and live," it led to bitterness and trial.

Have *you* not found the enjoyment and sweetness to yourself of truth newly brought out *for to-day*,



say of the contents of the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ? Well! sure I am, if you are trying to share it out to others, and avow you are trying to walk in this truth (as old as John's writing is, but revived anew in these days) and to be maintained by you as bringing truth to you which you must walk in and which lays its claim over all, you will know something of the bitterness referred to. Men do not get troubled by truth that is in creeds, &c. "Everybody," say they, "knows *that*, and each man must have his own opinion." But when truth is drawn first from God and His book—truth, too, perhaps, that involves the condemnation by God of the ways of the professing church and of the routines down here, it leads (as it always has led) to conflict; and, if we have and walk in the Spirit of Christ, to trial of heart within us..

From this onward we shall find that the vision is as to things upon earth, such as men's senses will be able to recognize when they take place and to read according to the prophets. For they are the subjects of divine interest on earth, until the judgment of the whore, &c. (Satan's wife and city); for Christ had been supplanted in what was nominally His holy habitation and espoused, and Satan, world, and flesh are openly to be judged in the corrupted thing. Then shall come the manifested presence of the Lamb in courts above, when the espoused, having first become bride, becomes the Lamb's wife. For Christendom is not Christianity. *This*

was the religion of Christ and of His anointing power. Christendom is man's corruption of Christianity, such as there was previous to the Reformation. How far are *we* escaped from it, is a solemn question.

For instance, chapter xi. In the city, where also our Lord was crucified (ver. 8), John has to take accurate notice of the state of professing religion (as men speak), of the temple, altar, and worshippers; and of the Gentiles treading down the holy city forty-two months; of two witnesses for God, with the power and acts of Elias and Moses, prophesying in sackcloth twelve hundred and sixty days. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." (Ver. 4.) The wild beast from the bottomless pit slays them, to the delight of the nations, but they are called from heaven up into heaven, and ascend on a cloud in sight of their enemies, and an earthquake follows.

There is something here to take notice of as to the seventh trumpet: verse 14 states, "The second woe is past; behold, the *third* woe comes quickly." (This refers to chapter viii. 13: "Woe, woe, woe to the dwellers on the earth, by reason of the voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound." This warning, too, had been given in a way to command universal attention, even by an angel (some read an eagle) flying in mid-heaven.) "And (ver. 15) there were great voices in heaven,

saying, The kingdoms of the world have become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the twenty-four elders which sat before God on their thrones, fell on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, Jehovah Elohim Shaddai, the existing one, and the was (and who art to come, or the coming one),\* because thou hast taken thy great power, and reigned. And the nations were wrathful, and thine anger is come, &c. And the dwelling-place of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of his covenant was seen, and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail." Nothing, as it seems to me, could mark more strongly the awful state of earth, and those who in spirit were dwellers on it, than that the announcement of God's kingdom being just set up, should come out under the last woe-trumpet; nothing could mark more strongly the contrast between God's people and the citizens of this world. "Who art to come," if it stands, would mean *just about to come*. We get the same contrast confirmed, though in a somewhat different way, on the casting out of the heavenlies of the arch-foe and his angels (chap. xii. 12): "And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the

\* The best manuscripts leave this out. The Lord is, at the time spoken of, come, and not still the one about to come.

kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. . . . Therefore rejoice, heavens, and ye that tabernacle in them. *Woe* to the earth, and to the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time."

Let me remark also here the need which there is for you to study the *ways* of God. Many, from want of this, suppose that in the same moment that God takes a matter in hand, it is accomplished and ended. Whatsoever He takes in hand He is able to accomplish, and will do so, *but* in His own time and way. But where His word takes the form of promise, there must be hope, and patience, and suffering for us to pass through. He acts thus, and forms in us a character and ways in accordance with His own and Christ's, which Christ displayed in His life. The wild-ass character (which was ours by nature) is not the character which will do for the glory; it was not Christ's character either. In the eternal redemption and salvation, God, so to speak, never makes haste. And in which of the temporal deliverances and salvations did He make haste? His own word, once given, is sure. But He will accomplish it in His own way and time (the very best) to those that receive and stay themselves on it.

Chapter xii. An old nation appears anew

upon earth. Her origin was seen in heaven.\* Her symbols there were according to what Joseph had dreamed. (Gen. xxxvii. 5-11.) He who is now on the throne was owned as her son and king of Israel, though the red dragon sought to destroy him. The hosts of light, Michael and his angels, fight with the dragon and his angels, and he is cast down. (The great dragon was that old serpent, called devil and Satan, deceiver of the whole habitable earth. He is cast down with his angels. He had been in heavenly places with his principalities and powers. For as soon as Christ was there, Intercessor, and Anchor, and Forerunner, within the veil, he must needs be there antagonistically as accuser, day and night, before God. The accuser of "*our* brethren" may be the recognition of those whom grace owned as such relatively to Christ and His heavenly saints. But they were among the victors, for the sake of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony; and they had not loved their lives unto death.) He persecutes the woman and her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.

The scene shifts now, out of heaven to earth, to where sea and land are.

Chapter xiii. A wild-beast kingdom appears,

\* This portion of the word seems to me to be the acting out in a figure a counsel of God, so as to bring it vividly before the mind of John. Mary's Son, the Son of the Highest, is about to act as king of Israel.

denying God as ruler over all, and as sole object of worship, and blaspheming all in heaven. Verse 11 : A lamb-like beast, with two horns, comes in to assist him—an idol-maker, murderer, and forbidding to buy or sell save to those that had the mark, or name, or number of the wild beast.

Chapter xiv. The Lamb appears on Mount Zion with a remnant of Israel. Beautiful and bright is this parenthesis of mercy, verses 1-5. "And I looked, and lo ! the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand, having the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice out of heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as of a great thunder : and the voice I heard of harpers, harping with their harps ; and they sung a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the elders ; no one could learn that song save the hundred and forty-four thousand bought from the earth. These are they which have not been defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. These have been bought from among men, a first-fruit to God and the Lamb, and in their mouth no lie was found," &c.

If any one asks me, To what detail does this refer ? I should answer, I know not. If any one added, Then it is no use your reading it, or my hearing it ; I should reply (as lately to one), The portion is full of blessed instruction to my soul.

First of all, the Lamb is in the scene ; and so, to one espoused to Him, it must be of interest. Secondly, He is on Mount Zion, and with Him a hundred and forty-four thousand of the nation who declared it would have no king but Cæsar. Thirdly, (His name and) His Father's name is borne aloft by each upon his forehead. What grace, what rich love is here ! Again, hark, the voice is out from heaven, loudly sounding as the sound of many waters, and of mighty thunders, yet withal the melodious, gladsome, joy of harpers harping on their harps. An unknown song is sung, but it is before the throne, and royal priesthood, and living creatures. The power to sing it is a distinctive privilege of a class redeemed from the earth. Without any mark of creature enjoyment, even of the providence of God in nature, pure, they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes ; a kind of firstfruits from among men to God and to the Lamb ; guileless they and true.

And is it not a scene (as indeed all of these) on which we *shall look down* from heaven when it takes place ? And we are told of it now !

The wretched elder brother, in the parable in Luke xv., was angry when he heard music and dancing. The returned prodigal was the subject of the joy in which Abba's heart and his slaves' joy (in having such a master) found its vent. It is selfishness to turn from such scenes ; poverty in grace ! not to know how to glory in the expression

of the Lamb and His Father's character, because we find a scene wherein their grace outsteps the knowledge and understanding we possess. Peter, with all his prejudices against mercy to the Gentiles, and the saints of Jerusalem likewise (after they had heard of what God had wrought) preferred welcoming those that had obtained like grace with themselves to the turning from it. But, alas! the narrow-heartedness which cannot rise above self, to joy in the joy of others, even when Abba and the Lamb are seen blessing the undeserving. Amid the black darkness around (ver. 6), the everlasting gospel;\* verse 8, the fall of Babylon; verse 14, the Son of man, and a sickle in his hand, reaped the harvest of the earth; and, verse 17, then an angel gathers the vine of the earth for judgment.

Chapter xv. Seven angels, with the seven last plagues; verses 2-4, the victors over the beast stand on the sea of glass before God, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb! How blessed! And what of the song of Moses and the Lamb? Ere the seven angels who had the seven golden

\* The everlasting gospel is the gospel (or *glad tidings*) of the existence and character of God toward fallen man, apart from its form as varying according to times and dispensations. "God is and is a rewarder of them that seek him." Hebrews xi. 6 is an instance, though the form of the glad tidings might be modified in Isaiah's or David's day from its form in Peter's or Paul's.



vials, full of the wrath of God, emptied out their vials, John writes :

“I saw a glass sea, mingled with fire, and those who were overcomers of the wild beast and its image, and the number of its name, standing on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses, servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and wonderful are thy works, Jehovah Elohim Shaddai ; righteous and true are thy ways, O King of nations [the best manuscripts read *nations*, and not *saints*]. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? for all nations shall come and worship thee, for thy righteousnesses have been made manifest.”

The sea in the temple was for cleansing and purity; the one here, being of glass, shewed that it was fixed and abiding, mingled with fire, as expressing judicial trials. But the victorious overcomers of the wild beast, blasphemer of God, as king and object of worship, had their stand upon it—and harps, and they sung the song of Moses, the servant, who brought Israel triumphantly with the outstretched arm of Jehovah (see Ex. xv.) and of the Lamb, who, through His own obedience unto death, and His resurrection, was the author of *eternal* redemption and salvation. Wonder-struck with the works and ways of Jehovah Elohim Shaddai, King of nations, to be feared and glori-

fied, as holy; for all nations should come and worship before Him, they sing.

Subjection to God, patience, and God's power, will work temporal deliverances even in that time. But for eternal redemption and salvation, when the arch-foc's power is filling the wild beast, the death and resurrection of the Lamb are needed for victory. It may be that both millennial and eternal blessing are present to the minds of these overcomers who have, through fire, gotten their rest where the purity of God will be their safe rest.

Chapter xvi. The seven vials of God's wrath, verses 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12 (the Euphrates, and the three unclean, frog-like spirits out of the mouths of the dragon, and of the beast, and of the false prophet, &c.) ; verse 17, it is done, &c.

Next comes Babylon's destiny. What is Babylon? is a question common enough. I would say a few words upon it, according to the measure of my light. The city and tower built in the plain of Shinar, where the Lord confounded their language, and scattered them abroad, were the first things called Babel, or confusion. (Gen. xi. 1-9.) The confusion in their conduct was in the pride which led them to seek to make themselves a name, and to make a centre for themselves on earth, mistrusting God, lest they should be scattered. Their speech confounded, they were scattered.

Nebuchadnezzar's strange confusion of mind

and actions, when God had raised him up, and set him in supreme power above Israel, is easily seen in Daniel i.—iv., and his confounding, in chapter v. 18–21.

But in the Revelation Babylon is, to the system in connection with which it is found, as Babylon of Daniel was to the system in connection with which it stood. The church found in the Apocalypse as the bride and wife of the Lamb, is also looked at as the city of habitation of God and the Lamb. Babylon also is previously looked upon as a corrupt, lascivious woman, and as a city of habitation. That it will have in the end a connection with the nations on earth, which, until overthrown, will do what they can to hinder Jerusalem and Israel, is clear to anyone reading chapters xvii. and xviii. But, as I judge, these hindrances will be from that in which Christendom results, after that which is Christianity ceases to be on earth. “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (chap. xviii. 4), is to be noted. Christianity broke down ere Paul died (see 2 Tim.), &c. The evil of Christendom appeared very early (just as did the sins of Israel in the calf), even in apostolic days. This was in mercy, for it enabled God to give us, through Peter, James, Jude, Paul, and John, instruction for ourselves as to the evil. In Christianity, the church which was in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, dwelt in spirit in heaven,

and walked in the Holy Spirit down here as Christ had walked.

The most fruitful and least suspected root of evil corruption, was in confusing civil power in the world (that is, Cæsar not bearing the sword in vain), and the power in the church (that is, Christ acting in the church, through faith and the Holy Spirit). The systems are two, and not one: government of God on earth, and Cæsar the ruler, on the one hand; and, on the other, worship of God in heaven, and the Holy Spirit, the vicar of Christ, among the heavenly saints down here. The nominal church became worldly and selfish, and claimed the world; but Constantine came in with imperial power, and (though Pontifex, chief priest of heathenism) took the place of being head of the bishops and the church. The bishops watched their time, and got for themselves and their world-church the upper places in the world. Their language then became, "I sit a queen, and am no widow (which she should have been, 1 Tim. v. 5, 6), and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 7.) This went on till the Reformation, when kings and princes threw off the tyranny, and professed to become "nursing fathers" to the church. These are *facts*, at all events; and as results have told out through centuries the ruin of the professing church. Civil power is of God, for time and on the earth. Christ set up at Pentecost a church for eternity and heaven; and therefore, as it had commenced, it

was to be *now* (that is, in time) that which lived in heaven. To blend, or try to blend, the two distinct and opposite things in one, was to make a new system, and a system of *confusion*. The Greek and Roman churches apply Babylon to all that is not of themselves; for instance, to all sects and heresies, *and to Protestantism*, with its subdivisions innumerable. Protestants return the compliment, and apply Babylon to the Romish church. I dare do neither. But of this I am sure, that the so-called religion of 1876 is part of Christendom, and is not of Christianity; *if so be* that this was formed through Peter, and Paul, and John, and is described by them in the scriptures written since Pentecost. "The church" now is an honourable profession in the world, doomed by the word of God to be destroyed. But the principles, as given by God, and a heavenly people to be formed by Him for the new Jerusalem as city and bride have not dropped out of His mind; and if the professing church and the churches have become worldly, sensual, and devilish, there are yet those *as individuals* who are victors and overcomers, who walk with God, and are led by Him to own, and seek to act upon, all the principles of truth, as laid down through Peter, and John, and Paul. And I beseech you, be you, beloved hearers, among the number of such.

Who of you, my hearers, could tell me, What is the last link with the world which you severed?

or what was the last piece of the world which you gave up?

In chapter xvii. we have Babylon as the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, and her judgment as a woman.

In chapter xviii. her judgment as a city; the lament of kings, merchants, &c., small and great on the earth; but (ver. 20 onwards) as subject of joy to apostles and prophets and to the mind of heaven.

Immediately upon her fall we have chapter xix. praise for her judgment, "I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Alleluia (praise ye Jah!), 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." (Vers. 1, 2.)

And verse 3, a *second* time they (in heaven) said Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

*Then* verse 4, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures take their distinctive parts, and fall down and worship God, who sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia.

*Next* verse 5, a voice came out of the throne: "Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great."

And *then*, responsive, the voice of a great multi-

tude (ver. 6), adding to their praise for the judgment on the whore and those corrupted by her. Two other subjects of joy. First, "For the Lord God Almighty has taken to himself the kingly power," (this underlays the judgment); and, *secondly*, the second part of this (His actual reigning): "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready." (Ver. 7.)

What words are these? "The Lamb and his wife\* who has made herself ready!" Once (as *now*) the espoused; at His coming the bride expectant; and then, in the scene before us, owned as His wife. With what severity of simplicity as to attire is hers when thus looked at, as about to be presented to Himself by the Lord. Habited according to Himself, such then His taste for her; and her taste for His sake. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, *clean and white*; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of saints."

As the city she will have what is glorious to those below, and to those around her, but as the

\* The Lord Jesus Christ's first public action after He had ascended up on high and sat down, was the call of the church by the preaching of Peter and John, through and with the power of the Holy Spirit sent down at Pentecost. His last action, ere He comes forth from heaven, as here given, is His marriage with the church, she become the Lamb's wife.

wife how severely chaste her dress, and how it tells out His mind !

The marriage supper of the Lamb\* is announced and the blessedness of all called there as guests.† *These are the true sayings of God* : let God be true and every man a liar, is what John (in his simplicity, in which even then he would ignorantly have worshipped an angel, and we in our condition still lower than he) may well say, each for himself. Poor things ! to be so blessed already in Him and to have such prospects securely ours for hereafter : yes, securely our own. *For these are the true sayings of God.* Amen and Amen.

To close—the outline of this second section of the book seems to me to be very simple. It is about the Lamb in the throne in Heaven and His servant in spirit in heaven too. First the Lamb is hidden in the throne. (chap. iv.) Then chapter v. He is displayed in it, and takes the place of

\* Strange contrast with the supper of the great God. (Ver. 17.)

† *Guests !* who are they ? The resurrection in 1 Thessalonians iv. and the rapture includes *more* than the church. And, again, Enoch and Elias were translated without seeing death. Abraham and David had promises made to them, and not yet fulfilled ; as it is written, “that they without us were not to be made perfect.” (Heb. xi. 40.) We should neither attempt to explain what we do not know, by limiting scripture to what we do know ; nor stand in doubt of what we have been taught of God, because (blessed be His name) He has much more to teach us.



communicating to His servants things about to come to pass: namely, first the checks to sinful men on earth and displays of mercy in the midst of judgment, and repressive actings as to evil, chapters vi. to ix. With chapter x. more light is given, for His servant has a testimony to render. And chapter xi. the state of religious profession on earth in the Holy Land, and the wickedness of the Gentiles come out to light. In chapter xii. how a nation, known of old but which had ceased to have a land, is suddenly found again. The twelve tribes—whence come they? In chapter xiii. a wild beast kingdom and a false prophet are in open and avowed opposition to God and His rights. Chapter xiv., xv. tell of mercy (and, through it of victory) amid judgments. In chapter xvi. we have warnings; and in chapters xvii., xviii. judgments on the whore and city of the earth. And in chapter xix. the joy of heaven and the marriage of the Lamb.

Plainly, we His people shall be with Him, the seal and witness of His love. We shall have Himself in courts above, win Him when the outside circle of wickedness is broken, and ere the heads of evil are removed.

Hearers! may I ask what principle is now regulating *your* lives? How clear is the golden thread of God's purposes and plans about Christ! But are we *walking* according to them. Could I, could you, be in the company of a Peter, a John,

a Paul, as they were when on earth, without any fear of being as a speckled bird in their society? Can you heartily invite Christ to come? Would the life you are leading amalgamate with His in the glory, and if He came to-night would nought cease but the difficulties with which you are in conflict? If so, you can say, *Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

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## THIRD LECTURE.

[HYMN 153: PRAYER; HYMN 179.]

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### REVELATION XIX. 11—XXII.

ON entering upon our *third* lecture, I would remind you of the three divisions into which the book of the Revelation divides itself, according to the three scenes and actings in which our Lord presents Himself in it; and, consequently thereon, the differences to His servant John, and servants who (attached to Himself personally), in mind live with Him and are the medium through whom His mind is expressed. These I have ventured to call the golden thread of three plies—our clue through the book.

The *three* divisions are *first* (chaps. i.—iii.) where He is seen as Son of man though Ancient of days, in His visitation in Patmos of the churches; *secondly* (chaps. iv.—xix. 10), where He is as the Lamb on the throne ruling events in the distance down here; and *thirdly* (chap. xix. 11 onwards) where He is coming forth from heaven to set up “the coming kingdom,” &c.

At the close of the second lecture, we saw the effects of the overthrow of Babylon, mother of all corruption, and of her seat, the city of all mixtures; sorrow upon earth, but joy in heaven ushered in

the marriage of the Lamb. What follows we have here; the Lord coming forth against an infidel empire that denies God as the alone head in government and object of worship; his infidel lie ministered to and enforced by a deceiving mediator, inflated by the dragon. Both go up, in the delusion of their own lie, followed by their armies against God's champion. And all this was written long beforehand! They meet their reward. Let me entreat all you here present, to examine and see whether the future which God reveals to us of that which may now only lie *a little* a-head of our times, accords with the estimate which your minds have formed and act upon as to what man is; what man may do; what God says man *will* shortly do. If the estimate which any of you have of man is not according to God's estimate, it is the estimate of your own or of another's wisdom. If any lean to their own understanding, delusion is not far off: nor will the door be guarded against the adversary. Men think not so; men will not admit, till taught by grace, that every thought and the imagination of the heart of man is only evil continually. Do you know that sin within man is as the maniac's frenzy, whose fancies rule with him, but have no power to rule aught else?

The main principle of man's action ever is that of combining circumstances for himself, and not "thus saith the Lord." Combining things for self will lead, in the time set for it, to a centralisation

of everything for self under Satan and through the world, and to open rebellion against God and Christ; and men will then rush on to destruction. The notion that humanity has now cast off its infancy state, grown into vigour, and knows how to improve itself and guide its own circumstances, is a common notion to-day. Let the wild beast and the false prophet—their madness and their destruction—be the proof to you of what the dotage of the world will produce. He that trusts to man is indeed a fool, when God's word is so clear as to what is coming from man's trusting to himself. And this, be it remembered, is not the last or worst display of what man's madness, when in boastful independence of God, will lead to.

If the old serpent deceived and misled our first parents, when in innocency they forgot God's word and thought of self, who can deliver himself from the old serpent now? One there is, and but one, who is a match for him all through his course and at the close of it; even He who is the Seed of the woman.

The portion, chapters xix. 11—xx. 15, must be carefully examined by us.

Here is a digest of its contents. First: for the repression of the evil on this earth. John saw heaven opened, and a white horse; whose rider, called "Faithful and True," judges and wars in righteousness. (Ver. 11.) With eyes as a flame of fire; on His head many diadems; He had a name written

which no one knew save Himself. (Ver. 12.) Arrayed with a garment dipped in blood, His name The WORD of God. (Ver. 13.) The armies of heaven follow Him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, clean and white. (Ver. 14.) As implements of war, out of His mouth a sharp, two-edged (*literally* double-mouthed) sword proceeds; with it to smite the nations, ruling them with a rod of iron, and treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God Almighty. (Ver. 15.) He has a name written on His vesture, and on His thigh, King of kings, and Lord of lords. (Ver. 16.)

Then from the sun, an angel's call bids to the supper of the great God, all the fowls of the air. (Ver. 17.)

And the wild beast, and the kings, and their armies gather to make war against Him that sits on the horse and His armies. (Ver. 19.) The wild beast, and with him the false prophet deceiving with miracles those that had taken the mark of the wild beast and the worshippers of his image, are taken as in a snare and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Ver. 20.) And the rest, slain with the sword proceeding out of the mouth of Him that sits on the horse, glut the fowls with their flesh.

Next, a messenger descends from heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain (chap. xx. 1): lays strong hold on the dragon\* (his name as con-

\* How entirely is God above all circumstances! Who

nected with the nations of Daniel, the Gentile dynasty), the old serpent (subtle deceiver of old); which is the devil (railing accuser), and Satan, (adversary of God and man), and he binds him for a thousand years (ver. 2); casting him into the abyss, he shuts and seals him up there from deceiving the nations till the thousand years are ended; when "he must be loosed for a little season." (Ver. 3.)

Here I pause for a moment to notice the order of events, and how it is linked on to what preceded. The corrupting harlot and her seat of luxury and pride were first judged (chaps. xvii., xviii.) Then came the bursts of joy from heaven, followed by the marriage of the Lamb, and the supper; the Lamb *in heaven*; as we saw last week. Next, as we have just seen, the champion of God appears (Seed of the woman, He, who was to bruise the head of the serpent, Genesis iii.), He comes out from heaven leading the armies of heaven. The wild beast and the false prophet (deceiver) go up with their armies against Him. The two leading powers receive, then and there, their final punishment—cast into the fiery lake, even before the

but He who made the abyss has the key either to open or to shut it? And he knows [to what extent are you taught it from the written word?] the varied names and manifestations of the foe—the dragon, the old serpent, the devil, the accuser and adversary. Each name has its own distinctive peculiarities.

devil is. But their armies (deceived) are slain—their bodies glut the birds of the air—judged and slain, as alive in the body, themselves will yet be judged before the great white throne. Last of all, the spiritual being (arch-foe), instigator of it all, is confined in prison for earth's sabbath.

Thus supreme, judicial, and restrictive power of God in heaven means to express itself hereafter in these three cases, even on this earth where Christ suffered. And thus the way will be cleared for light to shine on earth below, the atmosphere having been cleared by these divine actings. I proceed now with the digest. (Ver. 4.)

Secondly: the kingdom come. "And I saw thrones and sitters on them, to whom judgment was given." Those beheaded on account of the testimony—

of Jesus;

and the word of God:

and such as had not done homage to the wild beast, nor to his image;

neither had received his mark on their forehead and on their hand,—

and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

But the rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. (Ver. 5.) Blessed and holy is he who has part in it: on such the second death has no power;



but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.\* (Ver. 6.)

I pause again. These three verses are the only ones in the chapter which speak of the kingdom being come. And observe, 1, neither they, nor any other part in the Revelation give us a detailed sketch of the *earthly* side of the kingdom; for that and descriptions of it, you must turn to other scriptures than those in this book, which, so far as the coming kingdom is concerned, treats of the *heavenly* side of it, *the court* in heaven of the kingdom upon earth to be ruled over; however blessed the kingdom itself may be in having such a court.

2. How many classes are therein? (Ver. 4.)

3. As the marriage of the Lamb took place (chap. xix. 7) these appear to be a distinct class added to the church, in her royal priesthood and judgment, at least after the judgment upon the wild beast and false prophet, and after the arch-foe's suppression for a time. Are they the fellow-servants and brethren of those whose souls were seen under the altar? (Chap. vi. 9-11.)

4. The first resurrection seems to me here to be

\* Note the four blessings spoken of here. In character, felicitous and holy; freed from danger of the second death; priests of God and Christ, and about to reign *with* Christ. Compare this "*with*" and the "*withs*" in Luke xxiii. 43, and in 2 Corinthians v. 8, and 1 Thessalonians iv. 17, &c. "To be with Christ" is the blessing of all blessings to faith and hope.

in contrast with the gathering up of the wicked dead (vers. 12, 13) before and to the great white throne to which they have to come.\*

5. All the blessed details of the court in heaven we shall find soon brought before us elsewhere. But here, in the conscious solemnity of the subject He has now in hand (as in 1 Cor. xv.), the Spirit of God goes on to the close. (Ver. 7.)

Thirdly : then comes the putting down once and for ever all evil.

The thousand years ended, Satan (the adversary) shall be loosed from prison. (Ver. 7.) Deceived and deceiver, and corrupted and destroyer, he goes out to gather Gog and Magog ; and from the four corners of the earth to battle in countless swarms. (Ver. 8.) They went up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the (query earthly) saints (or Israel) and the city beloved above it (Isaiah iv.) ; and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. (Ver. 9.) The devil their deceiver (now no longer the dragon of the nations) was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (into which the wild beast and false prophet had been cast) to be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Ver. 10.) The arch-foe and his avowed followers had thus no trial. The heavens and earth (which now are) fly from before the face of Him†

\* Christ comes not to them, but they stand before the great white throne, brought up to Him thereon.

† From John v. 22 ; Acts x. 42 ; Acts xvii. 31, &c. ; Christ

sitting on a great white throne, and no place was found for them. (Ver. 11.) The dead, small and great, stand to be judged according to the books and things written therein. But the book of life was open too, a check book on the other. All were judged according to their works, each man according to his work. (Ver. 12.)

The sea gave up its dead, and so did likewise the prison house of death and the unseen world (hades, not hell); and they were judged each man according to his works. (Ver. 13.)

The prison house, death, and the unseen world (now emptied of the wicked) were cast into the lake of fire. (1 Cor. xv. 26-54.) This (the punishment after the resurrection and judgment of the wicked) is the second death. (Ver. 14.) And if any one was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire. (Ver. 15.)

To turn back a little: some who know they have been plucked by God from under Satan have said (on chap. xx. 3), "One might almost say, what a pity that such a foe, once imprisoned, should ever be let loose again." Malicious, destructive, deceptive he is, but neither he nor men are the chief objects in the divine mind. The Lord has no counsellor (Rom. xi. 34), but the last Adam was the centre and end of all His counsels.

is the Judge of the dead as we have seen Him to be Judge of the living.

and plans. I cannot meet the sigh expressed by some as if I were inspired; yet I would do so as one following the Lord and guided by '*it is written*,' and, I trust, led therein by the Spirit, and I say, Your sigh is not fully according to that which is wisdom among those who are taught of God. How close, ere eternal salvation and redemption are fully displayed!—*The end was not come.*

Man was yet to be tried once more. He had been tried in Eden; tried under the experiences of being an outcast; tried in a world of which Seth and Cain were heads of two systems; tried under tradition (when man handed down what he knew of God without any scripture); tried under verbal promises, under law and in weakness on earth; tried under grace and the power of Christ present on earth; under Christ in heaven and the Holy Spirit sent down at Pentecost; tried under the patience of God ever since; tried under judgments, as after the deluge. But, if tried under the display of earthly and of heavenly glory in the millennium (Christ Himself reigning), man as man remains just the same. Nothing will do but a creating him anew. The creature cannot, will not, deliver himself from creature dependence; must be plucked as a brand, be wrought upon as lifeless clay by the potter, and when wrought upon be kept; or the creature will turn from the Creator to the creature. For myself as a creature, I judge, I should never have seen the unmendableness of man as a creature,

or the virulence of the enemy's evil, or the sovereignty of divine grace, without that last trial at the close of the thousand years. But I am a fool, and can yet say through grace, "Let God be true and every man a liar." As to the adversary himself, too, God's wisdom is perfect.

The devil was a murderer and a liar from the beginning. (John viii. 44.) Like other liars, apt to believe his own lie; delighting too in destruction, he thought to mar creation down here which was the expression of eternal power and Godhead (Romans i.), and man the head of a system. He tried, and succeeded (Genesis iii.), yet to his own ruin. For there had been a counsel and a plan divine, from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians i. 10; Colossians i. 19, 20), and these could not be frustrated. In the garden, and after the fall, he was told (in the hearing of Adam and Eve, now ruined in themselves) that he was degraded; and that though he might bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman, that Seed should bruise his head. (Gen. iii. 15.) His ruining man led (wondrous our God!) to the serpent's own overthrow. Through that bruising of the heel, redemption has come in and the believers are told (Rom. xvi. 20), "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The Seed of the woman (Genesis iii. 15; Isaiah vii. 14) is He the Lamb of God, who is to take away sin out of the world? (John i. 29.) His work began in humiliation and the cross, goes

on now in patience, and will end hereafter in glory, but not until, in the new heavens and earth, will no trace of sin remain.

This setting down and putting out of all evil is to God a matter of much moment; it is the vindication of Himself and the blessing of the whole universe depending upon Him. And so, the overthrow of all the evil is rested upon here, and the steps toward it are traced. The kingdom has this character connected with it: He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet; then the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (1 Cor. xv. 24-28), and God shall be all in all. Then He, Jesus, will no longer retain His place as Mediator, but as Son, with the Father and the Spirit hold His own place everywhere, even as He does in heavenly places during the thousand years.

The eternal redemption and salvation are not accomplished at the beginning, but after the end of the thousand years, and they include not only the full development of good, but the putting down and out of all evil into the place prepared for the devil and his angels, and those who choose to live in subjection to him.

In verse 7 he is let loose, and Gog and Magog, and teeming swarms from all quarters of the earth (spite of having lived under millennial blessing, wherein obedience brought its own reward, and

rebellion its present punishment), are gathered but too willingly, to go up against the place on earth most connected with God, and against heaven, where God displays Himself present with His people : fire comes down, and devours them. Their deceiver is cast at last into the place prepared of old for him. The earth and heavens flee away. The great white throne appears. The dead are raised ; at the throne they stand, unchanged in character, to have it made manifest how they had loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. All are judged according to their own works ; and none whose names are written in the book of life were found in the book of men's works. It (that is, the book of life) contains only those who rest upon the life, and sufferings, and faithful love of the Lamb.

Let there be no mistake. None that appear before this throne *to be made manifest*, but will find wrath never ending, for it takes place in God's own proper eternity. I know the (GNAD L'GNAD in scripture) durations of time going on *until* something else takes place in time, and these dispensations and economies are changed, and I know the gno-lems, the *hidden periods*, in such economies. But *this* scene is past all such subdivisions of time, and the question of duration is marked by the presence of God, and of Christ, and of the Spirit, and of the duration of the blessedness of those who are with God and Christ ; marked, too,

by the power that brings them up out of their graves.\*

This, as I judge, is the closing up by God Himself of all questions on the subject: *now* time runs on, and man in it, with responsibilities to God and to himself, *till* it ends in God's own proper eternity. And then and there, so far as the word of scripture goes, all remains in its *then* fixed state for eternity.

Everything is said and written which can form and leave the impression upon the mind of man of eternity without end, to each class, from the great white throne onwards; and not one scripture to the contrary. If God has spoken, if God has written a book, man is responsible to read it, and to wait upon God as to the meaning and bearing of its contents. Is God, that made man, the only one who cannot use human language? Search the scriptures. When you do not find light therein upon any subject connected with religion, do not pretend to have knowledge. Be not wise above what is written, but be wise up to and according to what is written. Take care, too, not to take your own thoughts, or those of other men, into scripture, but only to bring out from it what God has put in it. Do not form theories, as though *you* had to take care of God's character, for that is arrogant presumption. If God is taking care of you, you

\* *Resurrection* came in with the last Adam, as death through the first Adam.



will be afraid of every notion and view for which you have not His word; and be not surprised if you find out your own ignorance, and that you have as much, or more, to *unlearn* of what you thought was God's mind, as to learn what truly is His.

Europe and America are now sown with foolish and vain doctrines, which have no root in scripture, nor ever were found in the mind of Christ or of His apostles. I refer to such follies as the doctrines of the annihilation of the wicked, universal salvation, &c., &c., doctrines which sap the foundations of the gospel of God, and are totally incompatible with that which scripture teaches about the blood of atonement and cleansing, and the eternal life, blessings which are through faith invrought by the Spirit.

And (observe it) there is another judgment-seat beside the great white throne, even the *BEEMA* of Christ. (2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. xiv. 10.) But none appear *there* but the saved and already glorified saints; and the question as to these is not as to what our own works as creatures deserve at the hand of God, but, having been saved as sinners, through the death, and blood, and life of the Lord Jesus, what our lives have been since. Have any who believed in Christ walked after the flesh since they knew Him? They will receive no reward, yet be saved, but so as through fire. (1 Cor. iii. 11-15.) Have any since conversion lived the life that they

lived in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God, who loved them, and gave Himself for them? (Gal. ii. 20.) They will receive a reward. The life of the unbeliever, when he becomes a believer, is lost, crucified with, dead with, buried is he with Christ. Nevertheless, the life down here of each believer, as such, is tested, and what it has been *practically* down here will be made manifest at the *Beema*.

None but the saved will appear at the *Beema* of Christ; none but the lost will stand at the great white throne to be judged. Study John v. 21-29, and you will see much on this subject, and, on the one hand, of the resurrection which is *of life*, and, on the other, of the resurrection which is *of judgment*.

The way that this scene of the great white throne forces home upon us God's everlasting eternity, as the abiding state of each party, is very solemn and awful. The church had been as such recognized and owned as the Lamb's wife more than a thousand years before. Into each member of it eternal life had entered the moment each believed, and as individuals they had known it (for the way good men talk foolishly about a believer's entering into eternity at death is *not* scriptural; eternal life is in me who am in the body now; if my body die, I am absent from the body, present with the Lord at once, because I have already now eternal life).

Chapter xxi. gives an outline of the final and

eternal state of the earth, with some of the most marked characteristics of it, together with a few important remarks following (verses 1-8). I would look at this a little in detail. John says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first (those now present) were passed away. The sea exists no more. (Ver. 1.) And I saw the holy city, new\* Jerusalem ['he provides perfection' might be the meaning of the word Jerusalem] coming down [or in the act of descending; it is not said, note it, come down, or descended], out of heaven from God, ornamented as a bride for her husband." (Ver. 2.) Such was her beautiful manifested glory before angels and men. At the marriage inside of heaven, her attire was for God and the Lamb. (See chap. xix. 8.)

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven (it

\* Called here, and chapter iii. 12, *new Jerusalem*. Some speak of the revelation made in 1 Thessalonians iv. 15-18 as the rapture of "*the church*." This is inaccurate: 1 Thessalonians iv. gives us, first, the order of communicating of resurrection up to that date to *all* saints whose bodies then are sleeping in the dust, even to all those to whom death was (by virtue of the Lord's death and resurrection), not merely the wages of sin, but the door into rest, and (secondly) of entrance into glory, as to their bodies, of those who are then alive waiting for their Lord.

I have thought that the Abels, and Abrahams, and Davids, &c., may not only be there, but *may possibly* be the *guests* at the marriage supper of the Lamb. But I do not venture to teach that they are so.

cried from above and within), saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God with men, and he will tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God. (Ver. 3.) And God shall wipe off every tear from their eyes; and death shall not exist any longer, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall pain exist any longer : for the first things are passed away." (Ver. 4.)

God had had a tabernacle while Israel journeyed through the wilderness, and a fixed temple when they were settled in the land. Here (ver. 3) it is *a tabernacle*; Israel will have, during the thousand years, *its temple* in Jehovah Shammah (Ezek. xl.-xlviii.); and, according to Isaiah iv. 5, 6, the tabernacle of God, which is, I judge, the holy Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. 10), the city dwelt in by the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb; His wife. In the new state no sin will exist then—nor on earth, nor in heaven : therefore no longer the need of mediation, nor of the services of a mediator, as such, as though His service had not been effectual, and done its work. The Son—Son of the Father and of God, seed of the woman—has now, as to earth, taken His place in God, and God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is all in all. God can dwell with man down here. To this the voice out from heaven calls attention. It is a new kind of nearness from that which man, Adam the first, as placed in Eden, had—new, too, from what Israel had in the wilderness. God, as God and King,

dwelling in a tabernacle in which there was a mediator, and in which a priest had to serve, because of sin, and the people kept at a distance. Yet the pillar of fire and of cloud, where God's presence was in a fuller sense, accompanied them. But God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) means to tabernacle as God with an eternally saved and redeemed race. The resting upon it, in verse 3, shews that the truth was, is, will be, pleasant to Him Himself. "Behold the tabernacle of God (His name in Genesis i. as Creator) is with men, and he will tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, their God."

The negation of the remaining of anything evil follows. (Ver. 4.) In man's present state men want both the *positive* side of a blessing—which may be called God's side—and, by way of contrast, the *negative* side, that is to say, the absence of the evils under which man now may groan, to be brought before them. This was the way of the Master's teaching when He was down here. (See, for instance, in John's Gospel, chap. v. 24, and chap. iii. 15, 16.) "And he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall exist no longer, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor shall pain exist any longer; for the first things are passed away." (Ver. 4.)

Men's eyes have oft been, and often are, and will be, down here, bedimmed with tears, for sin is in the world; but God will remove sin, and remove

His own people to the place where there shall be no sin. And, as shewing how He enters into all the marks of their present distress, He here puts their then exemption from the presence of evil in this way, "of Himself wiping every tear from every eye;" and so, too, as to the grand proof of sin, namely, death; and as to the present causes and expressions, within and without, of what leads to the tear, all is done away as a part of the first things.

"And he that sat on the throne (able to do what He will) said, Behold I make all things new." (Ver. 5.)

This I read (just as it is written), as spoken by Him to John, "I make" (not I am about to make), but spoken according to His own divine glory, to whom time is not, "I make." "And he said to me, write; for these things are true and faithful." (Ver. 3.) Here we have His desire that we should know the grounds of the certainty of the blessing: "It is written," and 'the truth and faithfulness of the words.'

Then comes, as confirming this in us (ver. 6), "And he said to me, It is done, or accomplished." (How so? It is guaranteed by Him who is the Alpha and Omega, Himself the beginning and the end; and He adds three more blessings:)

1, "I will give to him that thirsts" (that is, has craving needs as yet unmet, as to the things of God and of his own soul) "of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Ver. 6.)

Himself the rock that has the spring of life eternal in Him, once smitten, now pouring forth the endless streams, without money and without price, will cause rivers of living water to flow from within us.

2, Himself, the inheritor of all things, means them to know how through Him, one way or another, they have their ample portion under Him.

"The overcomer shall inherit (all, or, as the better manuscripts read) these things" (ver. 7) ; and

3, "I will be to him God, and he shall be to me son." (Ver. 7.) Then follows a warning.

"But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, their part is in the lake burning with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death." (Ver. 8.)

Let this be noted well. Those that fear God in a proper way, as dependent upon Him, are afraid to mistrust Him, or to make Him a liar, which they that are afraid of Him in a wrong way, as not having believed in Him, are not afraid to do. Fear of Him in a wrong way, and disbelief of His word, lie at the root of all sins, and are worse than the sins they produce—the condemnation of both is the same. To be afraid of God, who is good, denies His character. To disbelieve Him makes Him a liar. Love and truth, as being God's, are thus renounced by the wicked, and condemnation follows on men.

Supplementary matter follows (from chap. xxi. 9 to xxii. 6); for the bride, the Lamb's wife, and her splendour as the city of glory—displays of which began with the millennial reign—follow, as I suppose, a never-ending heavenly glory.

It was one of the seven angels which had the seven vials who, in chapter xvii. 1, &c., had shewn to John the judgment of the wicked woman who committed sins with the kings of the earth. Here, verse 9, it is likewise.

“He talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in spirit, and set me on a great and high mountain. (This site of his observation marked proximity to the earth and Holy Land.) And he shewed me the city, holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” (Ver. 10.) To the mind of Christ it was work for God, which was the one thing expressive of fellowship with Him. So to these plague-vial angels, to shew Babylon at one time, and to shew Jerusalem on high at another, were both work for God.

The city was seen a-descending (and remained so), from God and out of heaven; descent, Maker, and origin are thus marked.

Verse '11. Her “*having* the glory of God” is to be noticed: as Moses' face had the glory after he had been with God, so “her light (*or shining*)” was as a most precious stone, as a crystal-like jasper-stone;” for God was to look upon like a



jasper and a sardine stone (chap. iv. 3) ; so that the similitude was in part like unto that of Himself that was upon the throne, greeted by the living creatures (ver. 8) as the Lord God Almighty.

Verses 12-14. Her aspect as a city was as "having a great and high wall ; twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names inscribed of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Twelve months, tribes, apostles, &c., mark the number twelve as one of order and rule.

Verses 15-17. But all of it is to be taken definite notice of. "He that spoke with me had a golden (*divine*) reed as a measure, to measure the city, and its gates, and walls" (that is, the place as dwelt in by many, its access, and egress, and defences). Its form was "four square ; its length as much as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs ; the length, and breadth, and height of it are equal. And he measured the wall, a hundred and forty-four cubits, a man's measure, that is, the angel's."

The repetition of the reference to the *jasper* is remarkable.

Verses 18-21. "The building of its wall was *jasper* ; the city itself pure gold (altogether divine),

and pure glass (perfect transparency). And the foundations of the wall of the city adorned with every precious stone. The first foundation *jasper*; the second sapphire; the third a chalcedony; the fourth emerald; the fifth sardonyx; the sixth sardius;\* the seventh chrysolite; the eighth beryl; the ninth topaz; the tenth chrysoprasus; the eleventh jacinth; the twelfth amethyst. And the twelve gates (or rather perhaps gateways) twelve pearls, each one severally was of one pearl; and the street or broadway of the city, pure gold (altogether divine, as transparent glass" (divine in character, and with perfect fixed transparency).

Much research upon the stones has left me, as to details, no light to communicate. While the account makes all that has been seen or thought upon earth look poor and meagre—even the temple of Solomon itself—and so makes an appeal to man, as man, down here (who, with all his craving, cannot even picture such a glory as that here given), I doubt not that spiritual and moral glories will be found there by us hereafter as the things pointed to by the description.

Verses 22–27, and chapter xxii. 1–5, may well occupy us a little, namely: the temple (ver. 22); the light (ver. 23); the metropolitan character of the city (ver. 24); its accessibility for the honour

\* As some manuscripts read, "sardine stone"—chapter iv. 3.

and offerings from what is below (ver. 25, 26); its exclusiveness as to all evil, and its inclusiveness as to the good. (ver. 27.) Then, chapter xxii., its river and fruit-bearing trees (vers. 1, 2); freedom from all curse (ver. 3); and the distinctive characteristic mark of its inhabitants (ver. 4), and (ver. 5) of the place itself.

“*I saw no temple-dwelling in it,*” for the Lord God Almighty is its temple-dwelling, and the Lamb. (ver. 22.) The temple on earth restricted worship to itself; thither the tribes went up, and therein was the divine dwelling, yet with many restrictions as to how far in it people and office-bearers might go, and when. With a better dwelling-place, here in *our* city there is no such restriction, nor could be, for the place will be made up of worshippers—ourselves the living stones, the place; and the object of worship, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb—themselves were the temple. “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” So spoke the Lord (John iv. 23, 24) when He spoke of a child’s portion in worship. Worship in glory (where God and the Lamb will be the temple, and the place of their indwelling the church; the bride and wife of the Lamb fulfilled with the Spirit) will be in spirit and in truth too, though in a scene pe-

cular to itself. No action in the worshipper but what is the truthful expression of the Holy Spirit in the heart of each and of all.

Verse 23. *The light.* "Nor sun nor moon will be needed there, nor their shining missed, for the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb its light-bearer."

Light is pleasant to the eyes. It is the medium too through which we see things. *Now* the light given to us is Christ Himself, the purest light; but as the sun's rays down here get obscured by clouds and exhalations from earth and bad soils, and men's cities in which we may sojourn, and our sight too is neither perfect in itself nor unaffected by that which affects the rays descending towards us, so, alas! with our spiritual perceptions; the power of Satan, worldliness, and selfishness greatly mar the medium through which we see that which in its very substance is presented to us on high. But when we have arrived at home, and when the citizen of heaven is a worshipper at home in heaven, there will be none of these obstructions.

We shall know as we are known, no longer see as through a glass darkly, but then face to face. And God and the Lamb in perfection of outshining will, when faith is changed to sight, and where the Spirit is all pervading, be seen and known in the pure light of redeeming, saving love. How blessed the foretaste now of such a portion yet to come!

Verse 24. *The metropolitan character of the city.\**

Jerusalem on earth was to be the joy of the whole earth, for Jehovah's dwelling-place as God and King of Israel was there. But as Isaiah shews us (chap. iv. 2-6), Israel will find a larger blessing yet, through grace divine. The city, whose builder and maker is God, will be heavenly, and a shelter even to Jehovah-Shammah (Ezek. xlvi. 35) upon earth; for the glory of the heavenly is to be an augmentation to, not diminution from, the glory of the earthly; even as the names and displays of the glory of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are greater than, but yet part of, the glory of Jehovah in Jehovah-Shammah. A kingdom without a court

\* The word '*Metropolis*' means *mother city*. God's purpose and counsel about the Son of His love from before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 3, 4, 10; Col. i. 18-20), may without violence be called the mother of us all, that is, of the redeemed. It includes companionship with Christ in the heavenly glory. The church will then be "the Lamb's wife." On earth the land will be called *Beulah*, married to Jehovah. (See that beautiful verse in Isaiah lxii. 4.) The Lamb upon the throne will be the eternal link, missing in the first creation, which, in the second, will link the new creation to God in the highest. Then, from the highest, even God, there will be in the redeemed creation, down to the very lowest, a gradual descent, according to the capacities of all in it. It is well to begin with God *where* God began with us, even in His own eternity ere time was—in Christ; and to see the end proposed by Him ever conspicuously before Him. It is ever before us too. It were well for us ever to have it conspicuously so too.

is poor and would be defective. The glory celestial is one and the glory terrestrial is another; yet not necessarily disconnected, though each distinct in itself.

Verses 25, 26. *Its accessibility for honour and offerings from what is below on earth.* "And the nations shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory to it." (Ver. 24.) "And its gates [or gateways] shall not be shut at all by day, for night shall not exist there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations to it."

Nightless day! what a painful thought to man while in a mortal body and under an arrangement of sun to rule the day and moon to rule the night, and the stars also! How blessed a truth as to our looked-for city and our company, then quickened with eternal life, body as well as soul and spirit—all, in the power of the Spirit, a medium fitted to display God and the Lamb as their life. Kings and nations on earth will honour it and send up the expression of their glory and honour to it.\*

Verse 27. *Its exclusiveness as to all that is evil; its inclusiveness as to the good when justly accredited.*

"And nothing common nor that makes an abomination and a lie shall at all enter into it;" (thus every evil thing is shut out) "but only those who

\* The translators of our authorized version evidently had not received, through grace, intelligence in this book.

are inscribed in the book of life of the Lamb." This is limited to persons washed in the blood of Christ, accepted in Him the Beloved. The Lamb's book of life their approving register.

Chapter xxii. 1, 2. *Its rich supply in water of life and fruits and healing.* Oh! the superabounding stores of the water of life and fruits of the tree of life, and of the leaves of the tree for the healing of the nations!

"*And he shewed me a river of water of life;*" its fulness flowing as a stream is marked, and the distinctive nature of it, 'the water of life,' taught to each of us down here in the drought-full wilderness, where death and dying characterize all around. Death (wherein we ourselves were once held) and dying all around. The poor woman of Samaria was taught and afterwards enjoyed an eyelet of water springing up within her, the gift of Christ in humiliation, unto everlasting life; ever bearing on its mirror surface God and His Christ. He that thirsted and came to Christ, out of His inward parts should flow rivers of living water. The apostles, at Pentecostal preachings, were proofs of it. But ah! the scene to which these blessings lead, as thus sketched by John. In glory, "*a river of water of life, flowing out from the throne of God and the Lamb.*" The 'throne of God and of the Lamb' (emblem embodying redemption power)—thence came the stream. His individual humiliation and patience had brought the Lamb to the throne of

God, and the time of the glory (His glory and the Saviour God's) was come.

*"In the midst of its [the city's] broadway."* (The narrow pathway had now become as wide as were the principles of affection and love which, dwelling in the hearts of His people down here, filled them to overflowing. But the taste through faith now of the love of God and Christ to them, makes the pathway of their feet straight and narrow while here. But above there will be the broadway, when we no longer want for ourselves any pathway, having reached the city of our God.) And "in the midst of the river, on this side and on that side, the tree of life." (The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with its dangerous nearness, *not* there; for through Christ (the Tree of Life), notwithstanding the loss of all that Adam had in his Eden, we shall have got into the paradise of God, possessed by and possessing eternal life.) But then the *fruit-bearing*! ministered to richly by the river from the throne, the tree growing in abundance there, on this side and on that side of the river, in the midst of the city and its broadway—that will be ours. "Producing twelve fruits; in each month yielding its fruit." Always in season there—every month of the year—with its twelve fruits.

It will be a city with plentiful supplies of eternal life, in water and fruit, far better than the land flowing with milk and honey. So far for the heavenly citizens; "and the leaves of the tree for the



healing of the nations on earth :” this too, surely, to the joy of those above.

Verse 3. *Freedom from all curse.* “And no curse shall be there.” That which would have hindered the very existence of the place, namely, sin and sins in the people that will form it, have been laid by God on the Lamb; the judgment had been borne by the Lamb on Calvary’s cross. No sin will be there, for it is the city of God and of the Lamb. Where sin is there is death and anathema from God. “*But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.*” It is wonderful to me how believers now-a-days are slow of heart to hear God’s truth and to receive it. The city where God and the throne of the Lamb will be, necessarily is one of the fruits of mediation, atonement, and righteousness. But it is perfection in itself—a fruit, and neither root nor anything between the corn of wheat fallen into the ground and the much fruit brought forth by it. Otherwise Christ would be perfect as the Rock, the Root, the Shoot, which He brings forth, but having no fruit of glory after all. “It is finished” would never be sung—a saved people glorified He would never have around Him. Alas! many deny the atonement to have been perfectly made on Calvary—deny the full value on the throne of God of His presence there, so making it the mercy-seat; deny Him there as the one in whom we become God’s righteousness, in a present and perfect and well-known acceptance; deny too

Peter's preaching at Pentecost to have been present forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit to those that repented ; deny Christ as the Anchor and Forerunner fixed within the veil ; and deny the full assurance of hope which belongs to those who have been begotten again to a lively hope by His resurrection.

But "no curse shall be there, but the throne of God and of the Lamb," in the place of which we shall be the living stones.

Verse 3. *The distinctive characteristic marks of its inhabitants.* "And his servants shall serve him." We seek to do so now. We disallow in ourselves and other believers any and every thing which we find either contrary to the walk which Christ walked in when Himself was here below, or which is superfluous to it. For the allowance of such a superfluity by us would be practically saying that His walk down here was not a perfect standard of what our walk should be. But how blessed amid all our known and confessed shortcomings is the firm and sure promise, "*his servants SHALL serve him.*" I say it not as making any allowance for shortcoming now, but I surely judge that now I must glory in His being the only perfect servant of God, perfection's height secured by Him every step of the way ; and till I see Him and am made like Him, my conscience, my mind, my heart, will, can, never be satisfied with my service. May He be able to say of each of

you as He did of one, "*She has done what she could !*"

Verse 4. "And they shall see his face." But when I see His face, still the light of the knowledge of the glory of God will be found in His face then, and I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is. And then He will have changed this my body of humiliation and fashioned it like unto His own body of glory, by that mighty inward power of His own, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself. And more than that, for, "*And his name shall be in their foreheads.*" Borne aloft on the brow, that which is one of the most striking parts of the human face, Himself, and Himself in the power of the display of that day, telling out its own tale of the success of all His sufferings, doings, care, patience, prayers, workings, for us the people given to Him from before the foundation of the world. His name, the name of God and of the Lamb, will stand out aloft on each fellow-citizen. Blest distinctive mark this!

Verse 5. *Mark of the place.* "And night shall not be any more." Mark the repetition of this—it had been named (verse 25 of preceding chapter) in connection with the readiness at all times for the nations' glory and honour brought to it. Here there is more. It is noticed here as a characteristic of the place and people dwelling there. All these things should be observed.

"*And no need of a lamp.*" Uncreated light is

there—the light natural to the place is as the light of eternal life by means of which they who will find themselves there came. The constituent parts of the city were made new creatures through grace in Christ Jesus. The company of these, in that day of glory and display, will need no lamp, candle, or other helps, for sight. The city will be the city of light, fulfilled with all that we need here. Again,

“*And light of the sun*” will not be needed. That (the light of the sun) is in and for this nether creation, and for our material needs and guidance as to times and seasons down here, while we are where they are. But once in the city of God and of the Lamb, once there as the wife of the Lamb, human needs exist no more, for God’s desires and purposes will have wrought that which He proposes for Himself, the Lamb and ourselves as the complement of Christ—Son of His love, through the Spirit.

Thus shall all the inhabitants of the city (themselves then so striking a display and realization of Him as love) have the same perfect expression of Him in light as here noticed. “The Lord God shall shine upon them.” Then in this light we shall see light, fully and completely. This in our renewed bodies. When we shall know good and evil, and only hate the evil and love the good, sinful self thoroughly renounced and gone for ever, all independence and disobedience eradicated as supplanted by Christ in us, and ourselves, fully par-

takers then of His subject, dependent and obedient character, He will have rendered us fit for the next distinctive mark—

*“And they shall reign to the ages of ages.”*

I add the following so as to see the end of the book.

Then comes the confirmation of it all—

“And he said to me, These words are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets sent his angel to shew to his servants the things which must quickly come to pass. Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” (Vers. 6, 7.)

This (ver. 6) was calculated to tell searchingly on John’s conscience; not that he had failed in keeping the sayings of the book, for they were only just communicated to him, a servant for the servants; but the appeal was and is made to faithfulness of the servant. If any of us is called to turn and to measure and weigh his own service in any respect, or power of faithfulness in service, the sense of its poverty in us may well humble us down to the dust; for what was even Paul’s service when seen in the light of perfection in Christ? yet resting as he did upon the perfection of Christ’s love to him, he was so enabled to be occupied with it as to live to Christ and Christ alone. Let no one say that I degrade service or the servant. Not so; but, oh! the poor thing that even a John was to the end! He would a second time (chap. xix. 10) have mistakenly fallen

at an angel's feet and paid to him what was due to God alone—worship. (Vers. 8, 9.)

Verses 10–15. The book was not now to be sealed; it spoke of what was *near*. In Daniel things were sealed up, for the time of which he spoke was *far off*. Alas! (ver. 10) though nigh, the time would suffice for Christendom to be developed. This is a state of mixture of unjust and filthy, righteous and holy together. (Ver. 11.) Such a state of things had been among men before Pentecost, but then a separation took place and holiness of discipline was to maintain holiness and order in the house of God. Two things follow. First, as to the mixture itself, let each go on in his own way. “Behold I come quickly” with a reward for every man’s work.

So far as the mixture is concerned, each man in Christendom is put back upon *his own works* as a believer, and to consider *the next work of Christ* (namely, the coming to judge, with which of the two the life of each most accords). (Ver. 12.)

But then there is the blessing of the reward to those who, in the light of this, purge themselves and become practically fit through Christ, not to be shut out of His city, but to enter into it through the gates. (Ver. 13–15.)

These plain statements are sent to the churches. (Ver. 16.)

Yet the Lord had higher relationships to fulfil

than those of the responsibility of winding up the results of the pentecostal testimony. And so—

“I am the root and offspring of David”—that was for the earth, and is a reason why He must leave the place where He is, and—

“The bright and morning Star.” His relationship here is with God who is light, and means to let His light and love be fully displayed ; but first (ere Sun arises) *for* a people who had watched through the dark night for His coming again—*for* His own separated ones who wait for the star, har-binger of day. (Ver. 16.) This announced,

The Spirit and the bride invite Him with the little word, “Come.” (Ver. 17.)

Three supplementary words follow in the verse ; the last of them is, “and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” Grace ready till the last moment.\*

Verse 20 is a response on Christ’s part to the invitation to him, “Come.” “He testifying these things, says, Yea, I come quickly.” To which faith responds, “Amen ; even so, come Lord Jesus.”

\* Verses 18, 19 seem to me a parenthesis. They contain, as two seals, the most solemn sanction both to the free grace up to the last moment of verse 17, and to the contents of the book.

