

TRUTH *for the* LAST DAYS

NO. 13.

Christ Glorified in His Church.

. . . BY . . .

HAMILTON SMITH

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CHAPTER I.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

Revelation xix. 1—9.

IN Revelation xviii. we are permitted to see the final overthrow of the corrupt Papal system. For long centuries it has claimed to be the Church of Christ, and representative of God upon the earth. As to fact, it has, through the ages, deceived the nations, corrupted the world, and drenched the earth with the blood of saints.

The outstanding characteristics of this corrupt system are summarised in the closing verses of the chapter (23, 24).

(1) There we read, "Thy merchants were the great men of the earth." While professing to be the Church—the Bride of Christ—it entirely falsifies the truth of the Church, being marked by "merchandise" and "earth," instead of faith and heaven. It professes to confer every spiritual blessing in return for money paid to the Church, in place of preaching faith in the living Christ, salvation, pardon, and heaven itself, can be purchased with gold. It traffics in the souls and bodies of men. (13).

(2) Then we read, "By thy sorceries were all nations deceived." Instead of being the pillar and ground of the truth, and proclaiming the grace of God to sinners, it has deceived with error, and bewitched the world with music, art, and every possible device, to appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

(3) Finally we read, "In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." Instead of protecting it has persecuted the saints. Instead of holding forth the word of life to dying sinners, it has carried death among the living saints.

Here then we have a system professing to be the Church of God, that is characterised by money instead of faith; that is earthly instead of heavenly; that deceives with error rather than enlightening by truth; that persecutes instead of protecting, and brings death instead of life to men.

For long centuries God has borne with this corrupt Church, but at last there comes the day of her judgment—the hour of her desolation—in which she is overthrown with swift and overwhelming destruction, "For strong is the Lord God who judgeth her" (8).

Following upon her judgment there is weeping and wailing upon earth; but heaven, with all the saints, apostles and prophets, are called to rejoice (20 N.Tr.). The response to this call is given in the opening verses of chapter xix. John hears "A great voice of much people in heaven saying, Hallelujah: salvation, and glory, and power, unto the Lord our God." The salvation, glory and power, which Babylon had arrogated to herself, are ascribed by heaven to the Lord our God.

Moreover the judgment of this false system is the vindication of God. His judgments are seen to be "true and righteous" (2). The judgment of Babylon is the public demonstration that through the long ages God has not been indifferent either to the corruptions

of this system or the persecution of His saints. The judgment will be according to the truth of all the corruptions and persecutions as seen by the all-searching eye of God; and, being according to truth, will be in perfect righteousness. Heaven rejoices that it is so. Heaven adds its Hallelujah to God's judgments. And God will have a perpetual witness to the overwhelming judgment of this false Church, for we read, "Her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (3). The Papal Church looms large in the eyes of men to-day, but in the years to come the only trace that she ever existed will be the smoke of her torment that, throughout Millennial ages, will bear witness to her irrevocable doom and God's holy detestation of her corruptions.

All heaven responds to the call to rejoice over the fall of Babylon. Then a more limited circle—the twenty four elders and the four living creatures—take up the praise. They say nothing of the judgment of the great whore. It is true they add their Amen to all that God has done, but they are occupied with God Himself. Hence they fall down and worship God that sits upon the throne saying, "Amen; Hallelujah."

Then at last one voice speaks from the throne saying, "Praise *our* God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him both small and great." The first call to praise had been to "Saints, apostles and prophets" to rejoice over the judgment of the great whore: this second call is to all heaven to "Praise our God." There had been a glad response to the first call, it is however far exceeded by the overwhelming volume of praise that is called forth by the voice from the throne, for,

says John, "I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord our God the Almighty has taken to Himself kingly power. Let us rejoice and exult, and give Him glory; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready" (N.Tr.).

In this great burst of praise we have the celebration of two transcendent events for which the ages have waited:—

1. The establishment of the kingdom of Christ,
2. The marriage of the Lamb.

These great events awaited the setting aside of that false Church that for so long had dishonoured Christ while professing to act in His Name; that had set aside His work, while parading the symbol of His cross; that had deceived the nations, while pretending to give salvation; that had corrupted Christendom with error, while professing to maintain the truth; that had hounded the saints to death, while professing to show the way of life. As a great city she had reigned over the kings of the earth. As the great whore she had masqueraded as the Bride of Christ. Her reign being ended, her false claims set aside, the way is at once prepared for the reign of Christ and the marriage of the Lamb.

The heavens are about to open for Christ to come forth and reign over the earth as King of kings, but before the reign on earth there is the marriage in heaven. The marriage of the Lamb must precede the reign of the King.

Here we may well pause and contemplate the wondrous story of the Lamb. Patriarchs, prophets and apostles had at different times, and in varied ways borne witness to the sufferings of the Lamb. Abraham, in the day of the offering up of Isaac, foresees the coming of the Lamb provided by God to suffer as the burnt offering. Isaiah, in his day, with nearer and clearer vision, speaks of the perfect submission of the Lamb in the day of His suffering. And when at last the Lamb is come to earth, John, the forerunner, looking upon Jesus as He walked, can say "Behold the Lamb of God," and foretell the far reaching effect of His sufferings. And when those sufferings are accomplished, the apostle Peter can assure the elect that they are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." Later when Peter has put off his tabernacle, John, from his Patmos prison, will carry us into the future and shew us things to come. In company with him we pass through the door opened in heaven, there to view the great host of the redeemed, the thousand times ten thousand of angelic beings, and "in the midst of the throne...A LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN." And yet a little later John, having shewn us the glory of the Lamb, conducts us to the marriage of the Lamb.

Moreover, if patriarchs, prophets and apostles, had foreseen and dwelt upon the sufferings of the Lamb, so too many a bridal scene had pictured the marriage of the Lamb. The marriage of Isaac speaks of the *satisfaction of love* that he finds in his bride (Gen. xxiv. 67). The marriage of Joseph will tell of the *recompense for toil and loss* that he found in Asenath (Gen. xli. 50-52).

The marriage of Boaz speaks of *the fame he acquires* on the occasion of his union with Ruth (Ruth iv. 11).

Thus in prophecy and picture God has ever kept before us the Lamb, and the marriage of the Lamb, the sufferings and the glory that shall follow; for all these bridal scenes will have their glorious answer in the great day of the marriage of the Lamb. For that day Christ, the true Isaac, is waiting in glory, and to that day we like Rebekah, in company with the servant, are moving across this wilderness world under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And when at last the marriage of the Lamb is come, then indeed the suffering Lamb will find in the Church—His Bride—an object that will satisfy His love, recompense Him for His suffering and toil, and one through whom He will acquire fame, for on the day of the marriage the great multitude, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, will declare His fame and celebrate His praise.

Here then we are permitted to look beyond the present moment in which the Bride is being sanctified and cleansed, and nourished and cherished, to the day when the Church will be presented to the Bridegroom a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Then we are told that "she hath made herself ready," indicating that the judgment seat of Christ is passed. All that in her wilderness journey which was contrary to Christ has not only been met by the atoning sufferings of Christ at the cross, but has been

reviewed in the presence of Christ at His judgment seat. There every question has been solved, every difficulty removed and the Bride fully learns His mind about every detail of the path; henceforth to think with Him about it all. Thus all that was not of Christ has been dealt with and only what is of Christ remains for His approval and delight. Nothing in the past will rise up to cast a shade upon that fair scene, or mar the fulness of joy on the marriage day.

Furthermore we are told of the adorning of the Bride, for we read, "It was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and pure, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints" (8 N. Tr.). The false woman had also clothed herself with fine linen (xviii. 16) but how different to the Bride of Christ. With the harlot her fine linen was acquired by "merchandise" (xviii. 12); with the Bride the fine linen was "given." If the Bride's adornment speaks of her own acts yet they were all the outcome of grace given. Outwardly many acts of righteousness may look alike, whether done by believers or unbelievers, and yet the motive be very different. The acts of righteousness of the false woman had a legal and selfish motive. The righteousnesses of the saints are *acts done for the love of Christ*. And Christ will delight to see His Bride invested with a robe that speaks of the love of His Bride for Himself. Happy for us to realize that every act that we do out of love to Christ, is a stitch in the robe in which we shall appear in glory for the delight of the heart of Christ. What a joy to know that though we may be of no account in the world, unnoticed, despised and misunderstood, yet every little act that is

done out of love to Christ, will at last come into display in a day of glory. Not a cup of cold water given to one of His little ones will be forgotten by Christ. All that has been done for Him; all that has been expended upon Him; all of this world that has been refused for Him, all will be remembered in the day of glory. The thoughtful act of some loving heart that provided a pillow for His comfort in the day of His lowly service; the feast that was spread at Bethany for His refreshment, and the ointment poured upon His feet in the day of His rejection; the confession of the dying thief, in the day of His suffering; and the love that constrained Him to enter the house at Emmaus on the day of His resurrection, will all be remembered in the day of His glory. The tears that love has shed for Him, the prayers that have been uttered for His sake, the sufferings that have been borne for His Name, as well as every true answer to His last request to "Do this in remembrance of Me," will come up for remembrance in the day of glory, "For the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." Yet again, let us remember, all will be the fruit of His own grace for "*it was given to her* that she should be clothed in fine linen."

The garment we shall wear then is being woven now. The robe we shall put on with gladness in the presence of Christ in the day of glory, is being woven amid the sorrows of earth in the day of His rejection. The sorrows of earth, the trials by the way, the rough ways, the dark days, the weariness and weakness are being used for the trial of our faith, to call forth the graces of Christ. The meekness and lowliness, the

patience and gentleness, the grace and love of Christ, which the trial of faith calls forth are being wrought into the warp and woof of the garment that will be worn on the day of the marriage of the Lamb. Well may we sing,

With mercy and with judgment
Our web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.
We'll bless the hand that guided,
We'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Thus our hearts are carried on to the day of the marriage of the Lamb. The scene indeed, as one has said, is only intimated and not described, for it is no part of the Revelation to unfold the inner scenes of glory. In the Paradise of God there are things unspeakable and incomprehensible to those who are yet in mortal bodies. Enough has been told to set the heart longing for the day of the marriage of the Lamb: the day long purposed in the counsels of God, fore-shadowed in many a bridal scene, and foretold by prophets and apostles: the day to which the Bride on earth is journeying and for which Christ in heaven is waiting: the day of the gladness of His heart.

When at last the day dawns it will be celebrated with feasting: for there will not only be the marriage, but the Marriage *supper* of the Lamb. It will truly be the day of the gladness of His heart, but others will be called to share in the joy and gladness of the feast. They will not be present as the Bride of the Lamb, but as the guests at the feast. They are

not angelic hosts for they are "called." Angels that have kept their first estate are not characterised as "called." The "call" comes to fallen men from the God of glory to call them into the glory of God. Of such there is a great host called by the grace of God throughout the ages before the cross. They will not form the Bride of Christ but, like the companions that follow the King's daughter, they will be brought unto the King. "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace" (Psa. xlv. 13-15).

Whether, however, it be the angelic hosts, or the Bride, or the guests that are called to share in the supper, all will unite in homage to the Lamb, as with the voice of many waters, and as with the voice of mighty thunderings they say, "LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE, AND GIVE HONOUR TO HIM."



CHAPTER II.

THE GLORY OF THE BRIDE.

Revelation xxi. 9—xxii. 5.

INTRODUCTORY

THE Revelation closes with the vision of the holy City—the New Jerusalem. To realize its meaning we must, at the outset, rid our minds of a thought fostered by sentiment, that the holy City is a *literal* description of the eternal home of believers. In a book where all other visions are symbolic it is unlikely that, in this vision, symbols should give place to literal description. The City is expressly said to be “the Bride the Lamb’s wife;” hence it is clear that the City is a symbol of the Church in glory. Yet we judge, from many a detail, that it is not solely a symbol of the saints themselves, but rather a *symbolic description both of the Church in glory and of her eternal home.*

Moreover while all that characterises the City will surely abide for eternity, yet it is a vision of the Church in relation to the earth during Millennial days. The mention of the nations, the kings of the earth, and the necessity for healing, would prove that the City is the figure of the Church as the heavenly centre of government for the world to come.

Before seeking to interpret the vision it will be well to remember the distinction between the truth of the Church as presented by the Apostle Paul and the Apostle John. Paul in his doctrine always takes us to heaven; whereas John brings heavenly things to

earth. Thus the ministry of Paul sets the Church before God in heaven; and, if he speaks of the Bride, he does not go beyond presenting her to Christ all glorious. John carries us a stage further and tells us, not only of the marriage of the Lamb—when the Church will be presented to Christ for His supreme satisfaction and joy, but, of the glory of the Bride when she will be displayed before the world for the glory of Christ. Being satisfied with the Church at the marriage of the Lamb, Christ will be glorified in the Church before the world. Only that which satisfies Christ can glorify Christ.

Thus the heavenly City presents the Church, not in her intimate relations with Christ as the Bride, but, in her glories as displayed before the world as the centre of blessing and government for the glory of Christ. Further we may add that though John presents the Church "descending out of heaven," he does not see it descending to earth. It will be displayed in relation to earth as a testimony to God, for the glory of Christ, and the blessing of the nations, who will walk in the light of it, but it is not said that the Church will be on the earth in Millennial days.

Further in reading this description of the Church in glory, we cannot fail to realize the solemn contrast that is presented by the Church, in her passage through this world, as presented in Revelation ii. and iii. In the addresses to the seven Churches, at the opening of the Revelation, we see the ruin of the Church under the responsibility of man: in the holy City, at the end of the Revelation, we have the glory of the Church according to the counsels of God.

It is significant that the ruin of the Church, in responsibility, commenced at Ephesus, where the labours of the Apostle culminated in unfolding the highest doctrines of Christianity. Two great objects were before the Apostle; first, to link up the hearts of the saints with Christ in glory, as he can say, "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 2). Second, that the saints on earth should be a faithful witness to Christ, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation among whom ye shine as lights in the world: holding forth the word of life" (Phil. ii. 15, 16). Thus the Apostle laboured that the saints should be marked by "love" and "light." Love to Christ, and light before the world. The words "love" and "light" are, indeed, characteristic of his Epistle to the Ephesians. He seeks that we may be rooted and grounded in love, and know the love of Christ which passeth knowing; then he says we are "light in the Lord," and exhorts us to "walk as children of light." In the first address to the Seven Churches, in Revelation ii., we learn how entirely the Church at Ephesus had failed in maintaining love to Christ, and light before the world. The Lord has to say to Ephesus "Thou hast left thy first love," and warns the Church that, unless they repent, He will remove the candlestick. If their first love to Christ is lost, their light before the world will cease. Here then we have the commencement of the ruin into which the Church has fallen—the loss of bridal affection for Christ, with the consequent loss of light before the world.

Admitting the ruin, at once we see the grace that has given the vision of the City, so that we may be

encouraged to look beyond the ruin and see the Church presented to Christ in the fulness of love at the marriage of the Lamb; and, yet a little later, behold the Church as the holy City, shining in the light of the Lamb—resplendent with the glories of the Lamb, the nations walking in its light. Then at last “love” and “light” will be realized in perfection in the Church displayed in glory according to the counsels of God.

Furthermore let us remember that these visions are not unrolled before us simply for our encouragement, nor only to engage our minds with that which is supremely blessed, but also that the light of what is to come may be thrown upon our pathway in the present. In the City we see *actually* set forth in perfection what God would have *morally* set forth in the Church during her passage through this world.

I.

THE ANGEL AND THE MOUNTAIN. (9)

IT is not without reason that the Spirit of God has specially recorded that it was one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, who was deputed to show John the glory of the Bride the Lamb's wife under the symbol of a city. Turning back to Revelation xvii. 1, we learn that it was also one of these seven angels, who showed John the judgment of the great Whore, under the symbol of Babylon. Thus God calls our attention to the contrast between Babylon the great and Jerusalem the holy. In one city there is everything of man and nothing of Christ; in the other everything speaks of Christ. It is

a solemn consideration that everybody in Christendom is either working for great Babylon—the city that is going to be judged by Christ, or for the holy Jerusalem—the City that will display the glory of Christ. Nor is it difficult to discover for which city we are working. Is Christ our object or man? If man, whether in self or others, is our object—if we are seeking to improve, elevate, please, and exalt man—we are helping to build great Babylon. If Christ is our object we are working in the interests of the New Jerusalem. Alas! the great mass of Christendom are definitely and avowedly working only for the improvement and elevation of man, to make, as they say, "a better and a brighter world," and thus are erecting a vast system, without God or Christ, which God calls Babylon. We do well, however, to remember, so subtle is the flesh, that, though by grace we may be citizens of the New Jerusalem, we may in practice be lured into helping on the interests of Babylon by adopting the methods and aims of the religious world.

Further the different view-points of the two cities are instructive. The fact that Babylon is seen from a wilderness, in contrast to the great and high mountain from which the holy city is viewed, would indicate, that for the detection of evil no great moral elevation is required. The man of the world, though he falls far short of God's estimate of evil, can go far, as history has shewn, in recognising and condemning the corruptions of Christendom. To enter, however, into the blessedness of the Holy City is utterly beyond the capacity of the natural mind, while even in the saint of God it calls for the moral elevation of soul, and

separation from this world, symbolised by the great and high mountain. It may be we make slow progress, in entering into the deep things of God, because we are not prepared for the separation and elevation of the great and high mountain. To reach the height, with its vast view and heavenly atmosphere, entails more labour than our easy going Christianity can put forth, and hence we at times find it more congenial to live at a lower level, in more contracted surroundings, breathing the atmosphere of earth. But if, like John, our affections are set on things above, the Spirit is ready to carry us away to the great and high mountain, to have unrolled before our vision the vast counsels of God for Christ and the Church.

II.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CITY. (9-10)

THE first view of the City discloses to the Apostle its outstanding characteristics.

First we learn it is "the *holy* city Jerusalem." The words "that great city" are not in the original. The word "great" is only once used in connection with the City, when the walls are described. In contrast, the city of Babylon is seven times described as "great," but is never called "holy." Greatness appeals to man and marks his city: holiness is the characteristic of God's city. It must be so; the City which displays the glory of God must be according to the nature of God.

Secondly, the City is seen "descending *out of heaven*," not only proving that the rapture must have

taken place, but indicating that the Church is heavenly in character. In its passage through this world how entirely the heavenly character of the Church has been lost or obscured; when, however, the Church comes into display in the Millenium, what is already true to faith will become manifest to all,—that the Church is composed of believers taken out from the Gentiles and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Thirdly, the City comes "*from God*." If the Church is heavenly in character it is divine in origin. In contrast to the City the great religious systems of Christendom, finding their extreme expression in Babylon, not only stand condemned by their earthly character, but by their obviously human origin.

Fourthly, the City descends out of heaven from God "*having the glory of God*." The glory of God signifies the display of God in all His attributes. Babylon "*glorified herself*." In the great city of Babylon all the wisdom, intelligence, power and skill of man is seen in full display. In the heavenly city all the attributes of God are in display. The city is resplendent with the glory of God.

Here then we have the outstanding characteristics of the Church in glory. Comparing the religious systems of Christendom we are at once arrested by the solemn contrast they present to the heavenly City in its four leading characteristics. The City is holy in nature, heavenly in character, divine in origin, and for the glory of God. Alas these great systems are corrupt

in nature, worldly in character, human in origin, and for the glory of man. If we would answer to God's mind, and order our path according to His Word walking in the light of the City, the practical effect of the vision would be to separate us from every religious system which, by its principles or practice, makes the maintenance of holiness impossible, which is earthly in character, which has its origin from man, and the object of which is simply the glory and benefit of man rather than for the glory of God.

If the world in a day to come will walk in the light of the city it surely becomes the believer to do so now.

III.

THE SHINING OF THE CITY.

THE Apostle proceeds to speak of the "shining" of the City, for thus it should read, "Her shining [not "her light"] was like a most precious stone, as a crystal—like jasper stone" (N.Tr.). The word "shining" is only used in one other passage—Philippians ii. 15. There we read, "Ye *shine* as lights in the world." No figure could more fitly express the truth as to the light of the Church than the shining of a precious stone. However precious, the stone has no light in itself; it can only shine by reflected light: placed in darkness it ceases to shine. So the Church will shine by reflecting the light of Christ. "The Lamb is the light" of the City, and the City shines by

reflecting the light of the Lamb. Let us remember that what will be true in glory should be true on our way to glory. We are set to "shine as lights in the world. Hence it is that in the early part of the second of Philippians Christ is set before us in all the perfection and beauty of His lowly grace. As we walk in the light of all that He is, we shall, in that measure, exhibit the graces of Christ. We shall only shine as we are in the light, and this shining will be reflected light. It will not be self but Christ that will be seen. Babylon displays the glory of man; the heavenly City will reflect Divine glory, for her shining is "like a jasper stone"—the stone which, in Revelation iv. 3, is used to set forth the glory of God.

IV.

THE WALLS OF THE CITY. (12)

THE City "had a wall great and high." The wall speaks of security and exclusion. The wall is "great," and thus the City is secured against every assault of the enemy. It is "high," and therefore all evil is excluded. The "great" wall cannot be broken down; the "high" wall cannot be scaled. Had the Church on earth walked in the light of the Church in glory, it never would have become likened to a "great house" in which there are vessels "to honour and some to dishonour." No vessels to "dishonour" will be found in the holy City for "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." The wall separates the City from all outside: had the Church maintained a holy separation from the world it would

have been proof against the attacks of the enemy and the intrusion of the evil. The apprehension of the truth symbolised by the walls great and high would, in practice, lead us to depart from iniquity, and separate from vessels to dishonour. Every departure from the principle of exclusion of evil has led to a corresponding departure from the truth.

V.

THE GATES OF THE CITY. (12-13)

THE City has twelve gates, four on every side; at the gates twelve angels, with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written upon the gates. Gates are for entrance and exit, and thus speak of reception and outflow. If the walls symbolise exclusion from the City of all that is not of Christ, the gates symbolise the reception of only what is according to Christ. In Scripture the gate of a city is well known to be the place of governmental judgment, and angels are the heavenly executors of judgment. The angels are there to bar the way to all that is contrary to the divine judgment passed upon the flesh, even as of old Cherubims with a flaming sword kept "the way of the tree of life." The names of the twelve tribes would indicate the outflow of blessing from the City and the direction it would take. In earthly cities men often call the main streets of their cities by the names of the towns to which they lead. So in the heavenly City the gates bear the names of the Tribes to which the blessings of the City flow. This blessing will flow to every quarter of the globe, and in equal measure, for there are three gates on each of the four sides of

the City. Had the Church walked in the light of the City she would have received only what is of Christ and thus become a testimony to Christ—a source of blessing to the world around. Alas! the professing Church, having become Laodicean, has closed the door against Christ and let in everything of man,—things that appeal to nature and gratify the lusts of the flesh, and thus has become a source of corruption to the world.

VI.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CITY. (14)

THE wall of the City had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The names of the twelve apostles connect the City with the foundation work of the apostles at Pentecost. By their work, under the control of the Spirit, the Church was formed on earth as the House of God where God dwells, God rules, and God blesses. A sphere of heavenly blessing and rule was thus formed on earth. This work, commenced on earth through the instrumentality of the apostles, is seen in its completion in the City in glory. This would indicate that the City does not set forth the Church as presented by the apostle Paul in its intimate relations to Christ as the Body of Christ; nor in its privileges of access to the Father's house. It is the aspect of the Church presented by the twelve—the vessel for the display of the glory of God before the world.

VII.

THE MEASURING OF THE CITY. (15-17)

JOHN records that the Angel that talked with him "had a golden reed to measure the city." It is not only that certain measurements are given but that the City is *measured*; as we read, "he measured the City," and again, "he measured the wall." This indicates that the City is tested by being measured, and all answers to the Divine test. All is found to be exact, nothing falls short of perfection, nothing is out of place, "the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal."

Gold is the well known symbol of Divine righteousness, and the City being measured by the golden reed would set forth that all is tested by Divine righteousness with the result that the City, the gates, and the walls entirely meet the requirements of Divine righteousness. The City is thus the display of the righteousness of God in Christ—the answer to the Cross of Christ (2 Cor. v. 12).

VIII.

THE MATERIALS OF THE CITY. (18-21)

THE *wall* of it was jasper." From Revelation v. 3, we learn that jasper is a figure of the Divine glory of Christ. It is His glory that excludes all evil from the City. With a deeper sense of the glory of the One who dwells in the Church we

should realize how impossible to connect evil with His Name. The glory would secure the exclusion of all that defiles.

"The *City* was pure gold like unto clear glass," setting forth the absolute righteousness and holiness that characterises the City. We know the new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, but there is now often much that speaks of the "old man" and his ways about believers. In every child of God there is the real gold, but with some alloy of baser metal. In the City the dross will be gone. There the gold is pure without alloy. There too all will be transparent like clear glass. There will be no obscurity—no hidden motives.

The *foundations* were "garnished with all manner of precious stones. There is variety in the stones but all are precious. The stones are not a source of light but they reflect and refract light, and thus exhibit the beautiful colours of light. Christ is the light; in Him all excellencies are combined in perfection to form the light. In His people every excellency is set forth in detail to exhibit, as it were, the colours of the light.

The gates. It is not without significance that the description of the gates follow the foundations. For if the commencement of a city is set forth in laying the foundations, the completion of the city is seen in setting up the gates (Josh. vi. 26). In this city there is no diminution in perfection: the gates are as perfect as the foundations. Not only are the foundations adorned with precious stones, but every gate is a precious stone.

The one pearl of which each gate is formed may set forth the preciousness of the Church to Christ. This we may gather from Matthew xiii. 46, where the Church is alluded to under the figure of "one pearl of great price." From every point of approach the City will exhibit the preciousness of the Church to Christ. It is true that everything in the City speaks of the preciousness of Christ. To-day He is precious to those who believe (1 Peter ii. 7). In a day to come all the world will see in the Church how precious Christ is to God; but they will also see how precious the Church is to Christ. Then will be fulfilled the Lord's own words to Philadelphia "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I [have loved thee."

The street of the city was pure gold. The street of an earthly city is the place of public resort where men came in contact with one another, and where we have to be on our guard, speak with reserve, and walk, as it were with girded loins for fear of defilement. In the heavenly City there will be no need for the girded loins—there will be nothing to defile—the street is pure gold. There will be no need for reserve, for there will be nothing to hide from one another—all will be transparent.

IX.

THINGS THAT ARE NOT IN THE CITY. (22-27)

No temple. "I saw," says John, "no temple therein," The temple hid God behind a veil. It concealed His glory, involved a special priesthood by which men could approach to worship, though not immediately draw nigh to God. In the City there is no

temple—nothing that will conceal God. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. They fill the City; and access to God is immediate. How little Christendom has walked in the light of the City is evident inasmuch as again temples have been set up after a Jewish pattern, with priests between the people and God. Thus the true conception of the Assembly with Christ in the midst, has been entirely lost.

No light of the sun nor of the moon. The sun and moon are natural lights symbolic of the natural mind of man. Such light will not be there, and, where all will have the mind of Christ, will not be needed. "The glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the lamp thereof" (N.Tr). God is the light and the Lamb is the "Light-bearer" through whom the light reaches the City. The City reflects the light of Christ, and the nations walk in the light of the City. Thus the prayer of our Lord, in John xvii., will have its perfect answer—"I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world *may know* that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." God will be perfectly revealed in Christ, reflected by the Church and seen by the nations. As a result "the kings of the earth do bring their glory to it" (N.Tr). They will own that the heavens do rule, not by the light of the sun, but by the light of the City, and that all their glory is subject to the rule of the City.

No closed gates. The gates of the City shall "not be shut at all by day." There will be no cessation of the out-flow of blessing. To-day alas, the professing Church, with Laodicean indifference, has closed its doors

upon Christ, and, as a result, Christ has closed its door to the world. He has ceased to use it as a channel of blessing to the world. In the heavenly City the Lamb is the light thereof, and thus blessing will flow to man, and that unceasingly for the gates will not be shut.

No night. "There shall be no night there." If the light of the City will never cease, neither will it ever grow dim. Darkness is ignorance of God even as light is the knowledge of God. To-day our light is often hindered by our ignorance. Our ignorance largely results from seeking to walk in the light of our own reason, rather than by the light of Christ, thus having His mind. Had we always a single eye to Christ and His glory our whole body would be full of light having no part dark. In the City no shade of darkness will obscure the light that shines upon the world, for there will be no night there.

No evil. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." There will be no intrusion of the flesh to defile; nothing that can raise an idol between the soul and God—no abomination; nothing that deceives —no lie. Moreover it is not only that the flesh, with its defilements, abominations, and lies, is not there, but it shall in no wise enter there. This was never said of the garden of delights on earth. There indeed all was perfect as created by the hand of God, but of Eden it was not said evil "shall in no wise enter." In the City we have, not only a City of perfection but, a City beyond the possibility of defilement. They alone will enter who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

X.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE CITY. (xxii-1-5)

WE have seen that the things of nature and the fall are not there, are not needed there, and will never enter there. Now we are permitted to delight our souls in the positive blessings that are there—blessings that provide for the well-being of the City.

First, there is "*a river of water of life*" (1), a symbol of the fulness of life in the Spirit flowing from the throne. In an early part of the Revelation, when John was rapt to heaven, he records that "out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices," fit symbols of the holy judgments of God that were about to proceed from the throne. Here we have passed beyond the judgments and learn that the throne that dealt out judgment to the nations has become the source of unceasing blessing to the City. For the City, the judgments of the throne were exhausted at the Cross. The fulness of blessing in the City by the Spirit, is the glorious answer to the Cross.

Second, we learn that in the midst of the street of the City and on either side of the river is *the tree of life* (2). The River speaks of the Spirit, as the water of life; the Tree speaks of Christ as the food of life. The City will be sustained in perennial freshness by drinking of the river of life and feeding on the tree of life. The river will never fail, the tree will never wither, and the City will never grow old. At the end of Millennial days

John sees "the holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband*" (Rev. xxi. 2). A thousand years have rolled away but the bridal freshness of the City remains.

Thirdly, we have the *fruits* of the tree, for we read that the tree of life "bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month" (2). The fruits speak of the varied glories of Christ. It is not enough to know, and feed upon, Christ in one aspect. We need Christ in His fulness, and the City will be sustained in perennial freshness by successive unfoldings of His graces and excellencies.

Fourth, the *leaves* of the tree will be for the healing of the nations (2). If the City will find in Christ a source of perennial vigour, the nations will find in Christ the source of healing. The judgments of the nations will be over. It will not be the Lord Jesus revealed from heaven in flaming fire dealing in destruction with those who know not God; but Christ in the midst of the City as the tree of life bringing healing to the sore stricken nations. The nations, that for long centuries have been torn with strife and violence, will find healing in the appreciation of Christ in His beauty, for the leaves would set forth His outward beauty. Strife and conflict, jealousy and distrust, will be ended by a leaf from the tree of life. Christ seen in the perfection of His way will end strife among the nations; even as Christ apprehended in His graces, would bring healing between the Lord's people to-day.

Fifth, the *throne* of God and the Lamb shall be in it (3). The seat of God's righteous judgment for the Millennial earth will be established in the City. The curse will be gone and hence the throne will dispense

blessing rather than judgment. It will be the happy privilege of the saints to serve in dispensing the blessings of the throne.

Sixth, *His Name* shall be in their foreheads (4). They will see His face and He will be seen in their faces. Even now if we looked more steadily in His face we should more truly reflect His graces. Gazing upon the glory of the Lord we should be changed into the same image from glory to glory. In the City we shall no longer see through a glass darkly but then face to face. And when we see "no man any more save Jesus only" then only Christ will be seen in the saints. The names we have borne on earth will have passed for ever. No more will "thief" be written on the brow of the saved malefactor, nor "sinner" upon the woman of the seventh of Luke: nor will "Pharisee" be seen on the face of Saul of Tarsus. These names will have passed with the lives that earned them, and the Name of Christ will alone be written on every sinless brow.

Seventh, "The Lord God giveth them *light* (5). Not only will the City be filled with life, for the river of life and the tree of life will be there; not only will it be the home of love, for "JESUS," the Name of love, is written on every brow; but it will be filled with light, "for the Lord God giveth them light." No trace of darkness—no clouds, no shadows—will the City ever know, for "there shall be no night there." The prophetic lamp will no longer be needed to guide us through the encircling gloom. The night will be gone, the lamp put out, and the brightness of the sun be dimmed, and the City bask for eternity in the light of the Lord God.

Moreover through Millennial days these blessings will never fail for "they shall reign for ever and ever." We shall find in the Paradise of God a river whose waters never run dry, a tree whose fruit never fails, with leaves that never wither. There too will be a Throne that will never be shaken, a Name that will never lose its lustre, and a light that will never grow dim.

No soil of nature's evil,
 No touch of man's rude hand
 Shall e'er disturb around us
 That bright and blissful land.
 The charms that woo the senses
 Shall be as bright as fair,
 For all, while breathing round us,
 Shall tell of Jesus there.

What light, when all its beaming
 Shall own Him as the Sun!
 What music, when its breathing
 Shall bear His Name along!
 No pause, no change of pleasure,
 No cloud to dim our view,
 The draught that lulls our thirsting
 Shall wake our thirst anew.

