

THE REVELATION

THE EXPOSITION

Paragraphs 110-135

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The frightfulness of the persecution of the Antichrist, according to the Revelation, will be manifested not so much in its supreme intensity as in its supreme extensity. Happily, there is a limitation in human nature as related to suffering, the point being speedily reached where the mortal frame can bear no more; and modern Armenia--not to speak of other martyr nations--probably saw in the individual life as much physical pain and spiritual anguish as will ever be seen in the days of the Man of Sin. But there is, nevertheless, an essential difference between the days which are past and those which are to come. The Antichrist will be a European ruler (17:3, 7, 11-13) and also a world ruler (13:1-8), and what the cruel venom of some Attila or Sultan has been in a small area will be his in a much larger one. This is the evident and sure prospect which is before the peoples of the earth. One came in the Father's name, and men would not receive Him; another will come in his own name, and him they will receive (John 5:42, 43). One came as a Man of Peace to bring peace on the earth (Isa. 9:6; Luke 2:13, 14) and Him they rejected and crucified (Matt. 27:22; Acts 2:22, 23); another will come as a man of war to bring war, and him they will crown and deify (6:3-8; 13:1-8). And so the divine edict will, at last, go forth: "If any man is for captivity, into captivity he goes; if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword must he be killed" (13:10). In short, the ancient truth of God which Job expressed has place here as elsewhere: "If I have spread my couch in the darkness, if I have said to corruption 'Thou art my father'--where then is my hope" (Job 17:13-15)? What a man is he chooses and what he chooses he obtains. Nor is there a law in heaven or earth which may ever make it otherwise. Man is indeed the arbiter of his own destiny, for God will never force a soul to make any other choice than that which it is pleased to make. So it is then, that men finally and fully secure the things which have been their heart's desire. They have chosen self-will, and they get it personified in the Man of Sin (13:5, 6); they have chosen the lusts of the flesh, and they get these in the false liberty and foul license which the Antichrist grants (18:1-4, 15-19); they have chosen wealth and all the sin and sinning which go with it, and this they obtain under the Antichrist's rule and patronage (13:16-18; 18:1-5); they have chosen ways of greed and war instead of unselfishness and peace, and these become theirs in full measure under the lead of the red horse warrior (6:3-8). But at last they have to pay the price for all these things, in full measure and down to the last detail (18:5-21). In these seven years of the Antichrist, the nations are made to drink of the cup of their iniquity till they reel and stagger as drunkards do. It was a fair morning which broke over the world there at Pentecost, when through the gift of the Holy Spirit all of the benefits of Christ's death were offered to a needy world. But here in these last of the last days, the sun sinks down blood-red and the world is suddenly plunged into the gloom of a fearful night. The age began in the peace and promise of grace; it will end with the cataclysmic shock of a world-wide judgment.

The nineteenth chapter begins with a great "Alleluia!" on the part of the saints in heaven in view of the triumph which Christ has secured over Babylon, spiritual and commercial (19:1-4). These holy ones in the heavenlies see, from their high vantage place, that the way has thus been prepared for further judgments, and that this will lead to Christ's final victory and enthronement. They also perceive that all of the judgments which have taken place, especially those of the two Babylons, have vindicated the persecuted and martyred servants of God, and that the time is at hand when these will share in the triumph and exaltation of Christ (19:2, 3). As the song of praise voiced by these adoring hosts of heaven ascends, the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fall down and worship Him that sits upon the throne, saying, "Amen, Alleluia" (19:4). And as this combined chorus of rejoicing and praise is heard through the heavenly courts, a voice comes out of the throne which calls for even further adoration of God. At this there is a fresh outburst of praise, "the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigns" (19:6). The heavenly hosts, according to these last words, foresee the time of Christ's conquest over all His followers [*sic*; enemies?]; and--turning a future tense into a present one--they anticipate by faith what Christ is about to accomplish. All of this is most significant. That the saints in heaven regard devastating judgments with such calm and make them the cause and basis of such praise is almost beyond our understanding. Yet the fact of this is here set before us. We are thus instructed that God is as clearly revealed in the thick darkness as He is in the clear light; for it becomes manifest here that His ways of judgment are as truly the occasion of heart satisfaction to the heavenly denizens as are those of mercy and peace. Earth, generally, does not afford us just views of God. To obtain such, we need to stand in heavenly places and look at things from a heavenly standpoint.

Verse seven of chapter nineteen brings us to the event toward which every revealed episode in the Revelation has been moving, namely, the second advent of Christ (19:7-9). Indeed, this is the climax for which God and all His new-born creatures have waited since sin made a Redeemer and King necessary. Tennyson spoke more truly than he knew when he sang of, "One far-off, divine event, to which the whole creation moves," for the conflicting course of life, its joys and sorrows, its gains and losses, its hopes and disappointments have all prefigured the coming of One who should be God's Vicegerent on earth and who should reign gloriously. But above all, it is the moment for which the bride has waited, she having been a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth (1 Pet. 2:11), having walked through trying and dangerous places, and having had to watch through many a long night-vigil for Him who having not seen she has loved, in whom, though she has seen Him not, yet she has believed (1 Pet. 1:8). At last, then, the days of her waiting are over, for as the record says, "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready" (19:7). Thereupon, there follows the judgment of the saints. This, no doubt, takes place in heavenly places, at the first instant of meeting between Christ and His own (19:8, 9). At once each saint is given his true place before God; and, from this time on the redeemed, in resurrection bodies, are forever with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:13-17; 1 Cor. 15:51-57). This priceless privilege will bring to the saints their highest bliss and their chiefest recompense (John 14:3). As to the return of Christ, the following facts have been derived from our studies and may be held as true. The second advent of our Lord

is personal (1:7; 2:5, 25; 3:11); it is literal (1:7); it is for the rewarding of the faithful saints (2:16, 17, 25, 26; 3:11, 12); it is for the judgment of the unfaithful saints (2:5, 16; 3:3, 11); and it is for the judgment and punishment of the wicked (19:11-21).

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The judgment of Christians revealed in the nineteenth chapter and which takes place at the coming of Christ for His saints is the third one in order (19:6-9; see the Analysis). It is not in respect of sin, but service and rewards (1 Cor. 4:1-5). Sin for the redeemed was judged once and forever at Calvary's cross, in and upon the person of Christ (John 19:30; Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26; 9:24-28; 1 Pet. 3:18). Incidentally, this truth reveals the heinousness of the sin of the Roman and Greek Catholic mass, not only because it is flagrant idolatry, but also and particularly because it professes to reincarnate Christ, repeat His sacrifice and add to what He perfectly accomplished, which leads to the ensnarement and condemnation of multitudes of souls and also impugns the work, the word and the very character of God (Heb. 2:14-18; 3:12-15; 4:14-16; 5:5-10; 7:11-17, 26-28; 8:8-13; 9:11-15, 23-28; 10:10, 18). But believers who understand God's truth know that sin has forever been put away and that they are saved to the uttermost (Luke 19:10; John 6:47; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:1; 1 John 2:1; 3:1, 2; 4:15-17). Nevertheless, Christians will be judged, the Word making this entirely plain (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). This judgment is in regard to the Christian's service, and the purpose of it is the divine determination of his rewarding. Even in the extreme scriptural case of the one whose works are entirely burned, the man himself is saved (1 Cor. 3:10-15). Another Scripture, however, makes it clear that each will have done something for Christ for which he will receive His praise (1 Cor. 4:5). At such a time, the great question of Christian fidelity is entered into and determined upon (1 Cor. 3:8, 14; 4:1-5; Rev. 11:18; 22:12). It is true that there is the possibility, at this time, of the saint's being ashamed before Christ at His coming (1 John 2:28). But it is also true that there is the possibility of his being gloriously and eternally recompensed (Luke 14:14; Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:7, 10, 17, 25-27; 3:5, 12, 21). The Holy Spirit, therefore, warns the servants of Christ against indifference lest they should lose their crown (3:11), and He urges them to watchfulness so that they may run and win the prize (1 Cor. 9:24-27; Heb. 12:1, 2). It is here then, in this nineteenth chapter, that Christ gathers His people to Himself (19:1) and that the betrothed bride is made the wife and thus prepared for heavenly and age-lasting fellowship with the Lamb (19:6, 7). Here at last she is seen in garments not spotted by the flesh, but bright and pure (19:8), and here it is that she sits down at the bridal feast, the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:7, 9). All these things being so, it is no surprise that the record tells us that heaven suddenly reverberates with praiseful song. Now for the first time and before the throne of God there is heard the true and full Hallelujah Chorus (19:1-8).

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The judgment of the Antichrist and the false prophet constitute, in the series of judgments, the fourth one (see the Analysis). This is described in the nineteenth chapter (19:11-21). It reveals Christ coming as a great white horse warrior, bearing the name of "Faithful and True," and judging and making war "in righteousness" (19:11). His eyes flash as a flame of fire (19:12); on His head are many crowns (19:11); He bears a secret name known only to Himself (19:12); He

is clothed with a vesture dipped in His enemies' blood (19:13; Isa. 63:1-6) and His name is called, "The Word of God" (19:13). That this is the coming of Christ with His saints is made plain by the fact that this white horse warrior is followed by the armies of heaven, themselves seated upon white horses, and all of them clothed in fine linen, white and clean (19:14). That the Christ comes in judgment against His enemies is revealed by the fact that it is declared that out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, which is used in smiting the nations; and by the further fact that He is to rule these nations with a rod of iron (19:15). All of this is preliminary to His judging the nations. But before He does this last, He takes issue with His arch-enemy, the Antichrist, and also the false prophet, these two being the cause of the sin and destruction which fall in the last days upon mankind. Both of these monsters of iniquity are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire, which burns with brimstone (19:20). These are the first two personages who are committed to that place of torment; and it is evident that they are placed there for eternity, for they are seen there a thousand years after (20:10), and the Spirit declares that the Antichrist is the "son of perdition" (2 Thess. 2:3) and goes into perdition (17:8, 11), which phrases indicate his unchangeable character and unalterable destiny. Antichrist is the last great head of the human race and, as such, he is the greatest enemy of Christ which the race has produced. It is for this reason that he is dealt with in advance and so drastically. His strange and tragic reception in the underworld is revealed by Isaiah, that world being greatly moved to meet him at his coming (Isa. 14:9-11).

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The judgment of the nations, following that of the saints, is the fifth judgment (see the Analysis). It differs, apparently, from all other judgments in that it covers a prolonged period of time. It begins with the coming of Christ with His saints (19:11-21), but it is continued through the whole of His millennial reign, and its climax is reached in the "little time" at the end of the thousand years (20:1-3, 7-9). The judgment is divided, therefore, into three times and kinds: first, immediately before the millennium, when it is specially related to the course of the nations in the period of the Antichrist and to their treatment of the Jewish Christians of that time (Joel 3:1-17; Zech. 14:1-5; Matt. 25:31-46); second, during the millennium, when the uppermost question is the relationship of the nations to the divine law (Isa. 2:1-4; 42:1-9; 65:17-20; Mic. 4:1-5); and third, immediately after the millennium, when the subject at issue will be the attitude of the nations toward Satan and the revolt which he successfully fosters and impiously leads (20:7-9). It is clear from the Scripture, as it may also be concluded in the nature of the case, that God in all these conflicts and judgments comes off supremely and eternally a victor, the nations finding out in each time and circumstance that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:30, 31). As a deduction from the above, it becomes plain that the millennial reign of Christ is not simply one of beneficent grace and peace. It is this--for His spirit will be poured out in that day upon all flesh, and men will not need to say, "Know ye the Lord, for all shall know him from the least unto the greatest" (Isa. 61:1-11; Jer. 31:31-34; Hos. 14:4-8; Zech. 9:9, 10; 12:10-14; 13:1)--but, in addition to this, it will be the period in earth's experience when law, as such, will be perfectly proclaimed and administered so that justice may always be secured and penalty will always be executed (Ps. 72:1-19; Isa. 11:1-10; 12:1-5). The peace which will be enjoyed, therefore, will result from two causes: first, in connection with the righteous as a result of law-keeping; and second, in connection with the unrighteous as a result of law-execution. In this last respect, Christ and His people will rule with a rod of iron, and sinners will be

dealt with according to their deserts and immediately following any transgression (Ps. 2:1-12; Isa. 11:1-5; 1 Cor. 6:1; Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5). Thus, for the first time in the world's history, "a King shall reign in righteousness and princes shall rule in judgment" (Isa. 32:1, 2). But in spite of a visible Christ and a perfectly adjudicated law, no sooner is Satan loosed from his prison than men rebel against the law and the Law-giver and administrator. Then, finally, will be manifested the fact, by the sad token of climacteric proof and tragic demonstration, that man is incorrigible in sin and that none is good save one, even God (Luke 18:19).

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There is a difference of opinion among students of the Word in respect to the time of Christ's return, that is, as to whether He will come before or after the millennium. There is little difference between such in regard to the major details of the advent--as to the fact of a return, as to its being personal, and as to there being a millennium of some kind. The difference is in reference to process and result, namely, as to whether the present age will head up into a general state of iniquity, calling for the coming of Christ in judgment, this being followed by His millennial reign; or as to whether the world will gradually develop into a state of conversion, the millennium being thus produced and this being followed by the coming of Christ. It is to be noted, in passing, that a decision between these two views is not to be reached, as is sometimes done, by saying that the advent must be premillennial since the saints could not look for Christ's coming if it could not occur until the thousand years are over. This is the fact for two reasons: first, because many post-millennial Christians in effect do look for the second coming, ardently longing to see and be with the Lord, thus indicating that the test of watchfulness is not a certain scriptural conception but rather a heart and life attitude; and second, because Peter makes it plain that saints may look for an event which is far away, though many prophesied incidents may stand before it, the one being looked for through the others (2 Pet. 3:1-13). The question, then, is to be settled by a more careful and larger study of the prophetic scriptures. And many persons of sane temperament, large scholarship and ripe spirituality have given such attention to the prophetic Word and have reached the conclusion that the second advent is pre-millennial. The following scriptural evidences have brought them to this conclusion. First, Jesus, in the days of His flesh, asked the question whether when He came He would find faith on the earth, and evidently intimated by so doing that He knew, comparatively speaking, that He would not (Luke 18:8). Second, Jesus, while He was on earth, portrayed the condition of the world at the time of His return and compared it to that which existed in the days of Noah and Lot, and it is to be remembered that at that time the state of mankind was one of general indifference and sinfulness (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30). Third, Christ made it plain in His various parables addressed to the Jews--Peter and Paul afterwards confirming the thought--that many Jews and Gentiles, at the moment of His arriving, would be not His friends but His enemies, and this to such an extent that He would be obliged to deal with them in bitter judgment (Luke 19:12-27; 1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Heb. 10:12, 13). Fourth, the Holy Spirit in several passages presents a scene, at the time of Christ's arrival, not of joy, as would be the case if the world were converted, but rather of woe and lamentation (1:7; Zech. 12:10-14; Matt. 24:30). Fifth, Paul and Peter give long and detailed descriptions of the conditions of the world in the last days and these are altogether contrary to the thought of a state of general conversion at the end of the age (1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 3:1-7). Sixth, the Scripture sets forth the fact in many passages that one

of the purposes which Christ has in coming back to earth is that of dealing with the nations at large because of national transgressions, which indicates that there is at the time of His appearing a widespread and almost universal departure from Him and His law (6:12-17; 9:20, 21; 11:17-19; 19:11-21; Isa. 13:6-11; Ezek. 30:1-19; Joel 3:9-16; Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Thess. 5:1-3; 2 Thess. 1:3-9). Seventh, Paul specifically states that there is a mystery of iniquity already working, that this will go on developing until it heads up in the Antichrist, that subsequently there will be a general adherence to that person and that it will be against him and his followers that Christ will come (2 Thess. 1:1-12). Eighth, John confirms the thought of Paul by connecting the appearing of Christ with descriptions of a destroying judgment upon Antichrist and his adherents (14:9-11; 19:11-21). Ninth, Christ prophesied in respect to this present age, in spite of His provision and longing for the salvation of men, that, comparatively speaking, only the few will be saved and the many will be lost (Matt. 7:13, 14, 21-23; 24:5, 12; Luke 12:32; Acts 15:14; Rom. 7:5-7; 11:5; 1 Cor. 1:26-29; 1 Pet. 4:17, 18). Tenth, the Holy Spirit makes the order of events unmistakably plain in two passages of Scripture: first, in that one where James at Jerusalem declares that first God would gather out a people for His name, that after this Christ would return, and that then would occur the millennial restoration of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles (Acts 15:13-18); and second, in that one where John describes the coming of Christ and portrays in consequence of this event His millennial reign (19:11-21; 20:1-6). Eleventh and lastly, it is manifest that the millennial conditions, even though the Gospel has been freely and widely preached for nearly two thousand years, are not as yet in any sense fulfilled; for Christ is in heaven upon the throne of His Father (3:21; Heb. 8:1; 12:2) instead of on earth upon the throne of David (Matt. 25:31, 32; Luke 1:31-33); Christians are not sitting upon thrones and are not ruling over Jews and Gentiles (2:26, 27; 3:31; 20:4; Rom. 8:16, 17; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29, 30); the Jews have not been restored to their land and are not worshipping and serving God (Isa. 11:1-9; 12:1-6; 14:1-3; 35:1-10; 40:9-11; 52:1-15; 60:1-22; Zech. 10:1-12; 13:1-9; 14:1-11); the world, though many men are crying "Peace," is still engaged in deadly wars (1 Thess. 5:1-3; Isa. 2:1-4; Hos. 2:18); and finally, it is not as yet the case in any part of the world--in any continent, country, city, town, village or hamlet--that Satan is bound and his satanic temptings and conquests are at an end (20:1-3). For all these reasons it seems reasonable to conclude, while it is evident that God is doing an effective and large work in gathering out a people for His name, that the development of the world is increasingly toward a lawlessness and anarchy which will one day call for divine interposition and retribution. In short, it appears certain that this age will end, as previous ages have done, in rebellion against God, and hence, with cataclysmic judgments, and that only after this will come upon this earth the beneficent, millennial reign of Christ.

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It should occasion no surprise that so few details are given in chapter twenty concerning the millennial reign of the Lord. One would naturally look for these here, since that reign is spoken of as being for the long period of a thousand years (20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). But consideration of the subject will remind us of the fact that there was no divine need of a detailed description being given in this place, the same having been presented in many passages in the Old Testament (Gen. 49:8-12; Num. 23:7-10, 18-24; 24:3-9, 15-19; Ps. 2:2-12; 46:1-11; 67:1-7; 72:1-19; Isa. 11:1-16; 12:1-6; 32:1-20; 35:1-10; 42:1-16; 52:1-15; 60:1-22; 61:1-11; 62:1-12; 63:1-16; Jer. 23:1-8; 31:31-40; 33:1-26; Ezek. 37:1-28; 47:1-12; Dan. 2:44, 45; Zech. 14:1-11, 20, 21; Mal. 3:1-12; 4:5, 6). It cannot be kept in mind

too fully, and therefore cannot be said too often, that generally God does not repeat what He has once revealed, for the simple reason that He deems one revelation, since it is absolute and infinite truth, to be sufficient. He may speak of the same subject again and again. But a study of the passages so given will disclose the fact that each added revelation is not a repetition but a new and larger one, it being an amplification of what has been previously given. So it is with this twentieth chapter. A comprehensive description of the millennium had been presented in the Old Testament, and what had been stated did not need to be repeated. However, there were several important items which had not been previously mentioned. One was that there should be both a first and second resurrection (20:5, 6). Another was that Christians exclusively would be granted a place in the first resurrection (20:6). Another was that these Christians, whether saved before or during the tribulation, would sit on thrones and reign with Christ during the whole millennial period (20:4). And another was that Christ would reign on and over the earth for exactly one thousand years (20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7). It is important to note this last item in the connection given. For many interpreters, whose reverent loyalty to the Word may not be doubted, have affirmed that the thousand year rule of Christ and His saints is not to be believed in since "it is only once mentioned in Scripture." But it will be seen that the statement made, whatever the spirit of the interpreter, is not a correct one. For first, the millennium is mentioned frequently in the Scripture, it being described in many Old Testament passages, and also, it being specified in this New Testament one not once but as many as six times over, a fact in other scriptural connections which is unprecedented in the whole course of Holy Writ; and second, it would be, even if it were true, without point as an argument, for, as said, it is often the case that important prophetic items are only once mentioned, and a single affirmation in the divinely inspired writings is as full of force and as worthy of credence as if it were stated a thousand times. Moreover, it is to be kept in mind that the Word is a unit, and that this twentieth chapter is a part of a great whole. Its testimony, then, is to be considered in connection with what is elsewhere written, and to be interpreted by and with all that is otherwise given.

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The twentieth chapter brings us into the realm of God's earthly politics. For we see here Christ as His vicegerent, the nineteenth chapter designating Him, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (19:16), and this one definitely stating that He will reign on earth for a thousand years, His saints being co-regnant with Him (20:4, 6). To some minds this seems to reduce both Christ and the saints to a low-level order of things, bringing them down from the heights of heaven to the depths of earth and from the refinement of the spiritual to the sordidness of the physical. But it is to be remembered, before one reaches this conclusion, that it is not a case of what we might naturally imagine would be true, but rather and only what we discover God has supernaturally revealed. And in respect to the latter, there can hardly be more than one opinion. Again and again in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit prophesied that the Messiah would come to earth as a King and reign in person over the Jews and Gentiles, and always in such language as forbids spiritualizing away the details given, or conceiving of them as having been fulfilled or as being in the process of fulfillment in the history of the church (Ps. 46:1-7, R.V.; 72:1-19; Isa. 11:1-16; 12:1-6; 35:1-10). Again, the angel who announced to the Virgin Mary the conception within her by the Holy Ghost of Jesus, the Christ, specifically stated that He would inherit and occupy the throne of His father, David, which, be it remembered, was not in heaven but on earth, and at

Jerusalem, this meaning that the messianic reign will be here below with its center at the city of the great King (Luke 1:30-35). Again, the fact that Christ has been on earth does away with all difficulty with His being here a second time, especially as He was here subsequent to His resurrection in the same body as He will have when He reappears (Acts 1:11). Again, past and present political experience calls loudly for the coming and reign of Christ, for up to the present, human government, whether it has been that of a monarchial or republican kind, has been a lamentable failure so far as divine ideals are concerned, kings and presidents not having succeeded, in spite of notable strivings, in obtaining divine righteousness or in dispensing exact and full justice. And again, both human amends and divine requital demand that Christ shall be greatly honored where once He was greatly dishonored, He having come to His own and His own having received Him not (John 1:11), and having come as a King and having been crucified as a slave (John 1:10; 19:8-16). For all these reasons it is not strange but rather most reasonable that God, before the end of earthly experience, should interpose in governmental affairs and demonstrate to men not what government "of the people, by the people, and for the people" should be, but rather and better, what government by God, through Christ, and in behalf of men is and ever may be. For the millennium will be the presentation, from the standpoint of rulership, of God's ideals of law and justice; and Christ, according to the Scriptures, will be set upon His holy hill of Zion to be the formulator of the one and the administrator of the other (Ps. 2:6; 72:1-19).

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Those who have read history broadly are conversant with the fact that not all rulers have been bad, and indeed, that some have been very good. England can proudly point to some of her kings and queens as persons of high minds and altruistic thoughts; and America can thankfully remember not a few presidents who have sought to fulfill the responsibility of their high office both in the wisdom and fear of God. But those who have read history, not only broadly but also perceptively, have discerned the added fact that no such kings or presidents, in spite of intention and effort, have attained to their ideals. Even the best rulers, not to speak of men of lower and lesser breed, have failed to reach the heights which they visualized and strove after. And the reason is not far to seek. They found their first hindrance to attainment in themselves, and their second in mankind. As for themselves, they discovered that it is one thing to have visions and another to turn them into realities; and as to others, they finally realized that it is impossible to bring regenerate acts out of unregenerate spirits. As a result of this, many good rulers in solitude have eaten out their hearts in the face of their unfulfilled longings; or--which is one of earth's saddest spectacles--they have finally compromised with truth, have become content to seek for a good which was not the best, and have found, with sorrow, that the "middle path of practical affairs" leads downward and not upward, away from God and not toward Him, and thus, is to the despoiling and dishonoring of the soul. History at its best, therefore, is sad reading, it being one long story of disappointed hopes and blasted ideals. It presents altruistic progress in thought and action of a real and abounding kind; and for this one may and must be devoutly thankful. But it is almost if not altogether a platitude to say that God's standards of law and action, governmentally speaking, are not yet even in sight, not to speak of their being reached. If one wishes to demonstrate this, let him read God's ten commandments and Christ's sermon on the mount, and then the first page of the average English or American newspaper. It is a patent fact, everywhere, that man is endeavoring to rule himself apart from God. Thus, while

he is advancing humanly, he is not doing so divinely. What, therefore, is needed and must be obtained, if heights are to be reached and ideals are to be realized, is a human subjectivity toward God and a divine enabling toward men. It is just here that God, one day, will see both man's great need and His own opportunity, and thus will bring to pass what rulers have failed to secure. For in a time to come He will do two new and notable things: He will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh in preparation for His rulership (Joel 2:28-32; Zech. 12:10-14); and also, He will send His beloved Son in order that He may crush out the wrong and lift up and enthrone the right (Ps. 72:1-4, 12-17). And the Christ who will do this will have, inherently, the divine prerogative and power to bring these great results to pass; for in the long days of His being despised and rejected of men, He has never compromised with divine idealism or eternal truth. He, in contrast with all other rulers, has stood steadfast in righteousness, patiently waiting until His enemies should be made the footstool of His feet (Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Heb. 10:13) and until every knee should bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2:5-11). This then is the background of this twentieth chapter; and one day, as surely as God is God, it will be its bright and beautiful foreground. And the glory which will then be Christ's will, by His gracious gift, be also the portion of all those who have remained steadfastly true to Him, and have chosen humbly and lovingly to follow Him in His lamblike character wherever He has gone (14:4; 20:4, 6).

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Criticism is sometimes expressed in respect to the thought of a possible millennial reign of Christ, especially as related to the almost universal soul-saving which prophetic students say will then take place. It is asked, must this world wait to be saved till Christ returns in person? Will He be more powerful when He is ruling at Jerusalem than He is now on the throne of heaven? Is He not able to do at present, through and by the Holy Spirit, all that He will be able to bring to pass by dwelling personally among men? These are questions, the asking of which is but reasonable and right, and, therefore, they call for an answer. And the answer is plainly and positively that Christ will not be able to do in the millennial age, in regenerating souls, any more than He is able to do in the present age, He having now all authority both in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-20; Acts 1:8). It needs to be added, however, in order to correct misunderstanding, that sane students of prophecy have never spoken otherwise than this. They have declared that the millennium, beyond anything the world has ever known, will be a time of soul-saving. But this statement has never been based upon the thought of change in the character or power of God. Their opinion has been founded simply upon the divine record and has been given without explanation of any kind. It has been recognized that God's ways never need apology or even explanation, and it has been thought quite sufficient to say that the Scripture makes it clear that one work, in soul-saving, is done in this age and another and greater one in the age which is to come. For our satisfaction, we may reasonably conclude that for some cause men will more freely and universally accept Christ then than now. But we may be sure that the difference, as between the two times, is not in God but in men. In addition to this, the criticism referred to entirely misses the mark of the position held by prophetic students by not recognizing the explanation which they do give of Christ's personal reign on earth. This, in substance, is as follows: First, it is just that Christ should be vindicated by kingship and enthronement in the world where formerly He was humiliated and crucified (Phil. 2:5-11). Second, it is reasonable to expect that Christians, who have met the scorn and derision of the world, should be justified before that

world by being manifested as Christ's followers and co-heirs (6:9-11; 16:4-7; 18:20; 19:1, 2; 20:4-6; 2 Thess. 1:3-10). Third, it is in the right and purpose of God to judge Israel and the nations through the person of Christ because of their crime in rejecting Him, and in doing this to bring many to repentance (1:7; Ps. 2:7-12; 34:1-8; Zech. 12:10-14; Matt. 21:33-41; 25:31-46; Luke 19:11-27). Fourth, it is plainly the case, according to the Scripture, that God's grace is so great and comprehensive as to lead Him, in the face of the failure of men in the present age, to give them another and even more favorable opportunity of accepting His rule and government, bringing this to pass by the revelation of the person of Christ with power and great glory (1:7; Zech. 12:1-13; Matt. 24:29-31; Mic. 4:1-5). And lastly, it is Christ' prerogative to take glory unto Himself by fulfilling His ancient purpose toward Israel in exalting them among the nations and by thus bringing the nations throughout the world to acknowledge Him as King of kings and Lord of lords (17:13, 14; 19:11-16; Ps. 67:1-7; Isa. 2:1-4; 4:2-6; 11:1-10; 40:1-11; 41:8-16; 42:1-9; 60:1-22; 61:1-9; Ezek. 37:1-28; Joel 2:15-32; Zech. 10:1-12; Mal. 3:1-6; 4:1-3; Luke 1:31-33; Phil. 2:5-11). As touching the truth of these last statements, the book of the Revelation gives ample confirmation. In every instance in the record where the second advent is immediately in vision the heavenly throng bursts forth in praise, and in every such case this adoration looks forward to the kingship of Christ, His judgment over the wicked, and His reign and rule not only over but also actually on the earth. Some of these words of praise are as follows: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (5:9, 10). "And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever" (11:15). "And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and was, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth" (11:16-19). "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints (nations). Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest" (15:3, 4). "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, 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" (19:1, 2). "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great" (19:5). "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready" (19:6, 7). It is always safe to side with the angels and other heavenly beings, for they have the mind of God; and here is a case where it appears that their thoughts are beyond misapprehension.

The tenth verse of the twentieth chapter brings us to the sixth judgment, namely, that of Satan and his fallen angels (see the Analysis); and, in doing so, it presents to us a great mystery. The Bible at large introduces us to many mysteries. But possibly none is greater than the one which finds expression in the person of Satan and God's dealings with him. We question, Why did God create the Devil? and, if he was at first sinless and then fell--which is the case (Isa. 14:12-20)--and was doomed by his fall to merited judgment, why has not God dealt with him already as He will do by and by? and, why does God even at the end mete out judgment upon him in progressive stages and not at once and finally? These are indeed mysteries which remain hidden in the infinite and eternal counsels of Deity. But a mystery does not do away with the fact which lies behind it; nor does it cast even a shadow of doubt upon its reality and certainty. Indeed, scripturally speaking, a mystery makes sure the fact and confirms to us its authenticity, for it lifts thought and faith into the realm of the unseen and eternal, where verities are most veritable (2 Cor. 4:17, 18). We may believe, therefore, that Almighty Wisdom has dealt with this personage of Satan both in his origin and permitted activities, and that He will deal with him in his final destruction. In spite of what the chapter has to say of Satan, therefore, our faith need not waver, but may remain steadfast even though we may not understand the divine methods or purposes as related to him. Moreover, we may be assured of this: that God's dealings with the Devil will make infinitely for His glory and for the good of the saints. And these are great ends to be conserved, even though it be at a great cost. Let us understand then the chapter's teachings: Christ will bind Satan for a full thousand years (20:1, 2); He will hold him fast in the abyss during the whole of His millennial reign (20:1); when He releases him at the end of the millennium, it will be only for a "little season" (20:3); and finally, He will put him beyond tempting the saints and defiling God's fair world by casting him into the lake of fire and brimstone (20:10). This will be his final abiding place. There, the adversary of Christ (Matt. 4:1-11) and the accuser of the brethren (12:10) will be held captive throughout eternity, the personified evidence of the fact that the Nazarene has at last and forever conquered every foe (12:9-12; Luke 10:18; Phil. 2:9-11).

122

The twelfth verse of the twentieth chapter introduces the scene of the judgment of the wicked dead (20:12-15), which is the seventh and last one (see the Analysis). It is to be remembered that the Spirit specifically stated in a previous verse (20:5) that there was a "first resurrection," which implied that there was to be a second one; that only those whom He could term "blessed and holy" had part in this resurrection (20:6), which Christ called the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:4) and the "resurrection of life" (John 5:29), and that the "rest of the dead," namely, those who were not blessed and holy but the contrary, that is, the wicked, "lived not again" (in bodily form) "until the thousand years were finished" (20:5), Christ calling this the "resurrection of damnation" (John 5:29). It would be impossible for language to make facts clearer than this, so we may confidently assert that this seventh or last judgment is exclusively that of the unrighteous, and is, as the fourteenth verse states, not unto life but unto death, it being designated "the second death" (20:14; 21:8). We may affirm, therefore, that the term, "the general judgment," is a misnomer, for there is no such event recorded in the Scripture. There is, as we see, a judgment of the "last day," as named by the Lord (John 12:48) and as here described by John (20:11-15). But this judgment is, as we have said, not general but special, being exclusively that of the wicked

(20:11, 12). A close study of the Word reveals the fact that the various judgments differ from one another in their time, place, persons judged, character and result. For instance, note the following: The judgment of the saints is previous to the millennium (20:6-9; 21:4), before the judgment seat of Christ in heaven (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17), of Christians only (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10) and as to service and for rewarding (1 Cor. 4:1-5; Rev. 11:18; 22:12). The judgment of the nations is previous to and during the millennium (Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:7-9), before Christ's throne of glory on earth (Matt. 25:31)--national judgments, in the nature of the case, must be on earth where alone nations have place and standing--of governments and peoples, as to the divine law (Ps. 2:8-12; Isa. 32:1-20), and for life or death (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 19:19-21). And here in the record, the judgment of the wicked is at the end of the millennium (20:7), before the throne of God in heaven (20:11, 12), of individuals who are lost (20:12-15), as to their works (20:12, 13) and unto condemnation and eternal punishment (20:14). The fact that "death" (the grave) and "Hades" (the then place of punishment in the center of the earth) give up their dead indicates that the souls of the wicked are here brought up from the underworld and their bodies raised from the grave (Dan. 12:2; Acts 24:15). In Old Testament times the souls of the righteous went to a place of comfort and bliss in the underworld (1 Sam. 28:15; Luke 16:25), which was Paradise (Luke 23:43); but they were taken from this location at the ascension of Christ and brought to heaven (Eph. 4:8-10), which is now Paradise (2 Cor. 12:1-4). The unrighteous, however, were left in a place of torment in the same underworld (Luke 16:23-25); and this place has remained and will remain their prison house until they are brought up before the great white throne for final judgment (Luke 16:9-31; Rev. 20:14, 15). It is to be observed that the passage in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew (25:31-46) does not refer to the last judgment, namely, the one described in this twentieth chapter of the Revelation (20:11-15). That judgment is of the nations (Matt. 25:32), this is of individuals (20:12, 13); that is before the millennium (19:11; 20:1, 2), this is after it (20:7-15); that is concerning the treatment given in the days of the Antichrist to the King's brethren, namely, Jewish Christians (Matt. 25:37-45), this is concerning works (20:11-13); that is before the Son of man as King (Matt. 25:31, 34, 40), this is before God as the final and universal Judge (20:11). It is to be kept in mind further that the individuals before this last judgment are those who did not have part in the first resurrection (20:5); that they are those who are under the power of the second death (20:6); that they are called the "dead," in signification of the fact that they had died physically and were dead spiritually (20:12, 13); that, though they are then both physically and spiritually dead, they are alive in spirit and are made to "stand" (in resurrection bodies) before the throne to be there judged; that hence, they had not become extinct but are alive (20:12); and finally, that no second chance is given to them, but all are condemned and hence are consigned to the lake of fire and brimstone (20:14, 15).

123

The English word judgment, either in the singular or plural form, occurs in the Revelation some seven times (14:7; 15:4; 16:7; 17:1; 18:10; 19:2; 20:4). There are three words in the Greek, however, in these various places where the one English word is found. The majority of these words are either *krisis* or *krima*. The first of these words (*krisis*) means a decision, and by extension, a tribunal; and the second (*krima*) means a decision, and by extension, a pronounced judgment. It is clear from the definitions given that neither of the words indicates the kind of tribunal established, the process of inquiry, or the sort of judgment

pronounced. And the use made of the words in the New Testament at large emphasizes this indefiniteness, that is, it indicates that the words may signify judgment, either, on the one hand, of blessing and rewarding (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 John 4:17; Rev. 14:7), or, on the other, of condemnation and punishment (Rom. 2:3; 5:6, 18; 2 Thess. 1:15; Heb. 10:27; 2 Pet. 2:3, 4, 9; 3:7; Jude 6, 15; Rev. 16:7; 17:1; 18:10; 19:2). In other words, the central idea of the two words is that of securing, through judgment, absolute justice whether it be for approbation or condemnation. What will be done, then, in the day of judgment is this: God, as has never occurred in earthly and human courts, will bring out the right of the case, according to His perfect knowledge of it. The good and the evil will be unitedly before Him. Hence, He will make all necessary allowances, give every known credit, and grant all possible rewarding; or He will impose the required degree of penalty and punishment. The prominent factor of future divine judgment, therefore, will be its righteousness (Ps. 45:7; 48:10; 72:2; 96:13; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 19:11). This, manifestly, will imply the acceptance of some persons and the rejection of others, which will produce not only the two classes of saved and unsaved (Matt. 25:46), but also varying degrees of treatment within the one class and the other, according to each man's deserts (Matt. 10:15; 11:22, 24; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:12, 14). The choice which men may and must make in preparation for God's judgment is, objectively, between grace and law, and, subjectively, between faith and works. And the Word makes it plain, on account of sin, that the only hope of salvation which a man may have is in grace and faith (Rom. 3:24; 4:5, 16; 9:30; Eph. 1:7; 2:5; Heb. 11:6). To attempt to be saved by law and works, on account of broken law and incompleted works, is to condemn oneself completely, the divine sentence at the throne legally and openly confirming what the man himself, by his choice, has brought to pass (Rom. 3:27; 4:2, 5, 6, 15; 9:11; 11:6; Gal. 2:16; 3:10; Eph. 2:9; 1 Tim. 1:9). It is this latter class of persons, namely, the lost, who are in this last judgment before the "great white throne" (20:11). These are they who have rejected grace and faith (21:8) and who have appealed to law and works (20:12, 13). In spite, therefore, of divine love, compassion, consideration, and allowance, and all because of absolute justice, they are utterly and forever condemned and so cast into the lake of fire and brimstone (20:15). This much is plain and we may see thus far. But here, in the revelation, God mercifully hangs before our eyes--except for one more brief vision (21:8)--the veil of undiscoverable knowledge. And where He has placed it, we leave it (Deut. 29:29).

124

The twenty-first chapter begins a new period, which is the seventh and last, and is that of the seven new things (see the Analysis). There is no introduction to this period, the Spirit proceeding at once to His description of it. In this section the time element gradually ceases, merging into and finally becoming absorbed in that of eternity. It is to be observed, however, that the eternal conditions are placed first (21:1-8) and the temporal second (21:9-27; 22:1-5). This inversion of order is according to a common law of arrangement in the Revelation, the heavenly and unlimited things being shown before the earthly and limited. Thus it was in the first chapter (1:9-20); and again in the seventh (7:9-17); and again in the twelfth (12:1-5); and again in the nineteenth (19:6-9), all of these passages, while chronologically placed, being heavenly in character and facing toward eternity. Here, therefore, we meet with a heavenly scene and an eternal one (21:1-7), the outlook being toward a new heaven (21:1), a new earth (21:1), a new city (21:2), a new tabernacle (21:3), a new fellowship (21:3), a new experience (21:4), and a new prospect (21:5-8). All of these conditions follow

the statements in the twentieth and twenty-first chapters to the effect that the present earth and heaven--there are four heavenly and earthly creations (20:11; 21:1) recorded in Scripture, the first mentioned in Genesis (Gen. 1:1), the second in Genesis (Gen. 1:6-10), the third in Revelation (20:11), and the fourth in Revelation (21:1)--flee away from the face of God, there being found thereafter no place for them (20:11). This transmutation and transfiguration were foreseen by Isaiah (Isa. 65:17; 66:22). But judging by the context, the prophet's view was more upon the changes which will take place at the beginning of the millennium (Isa. 35:1-10) than at the end of it (21:1), though here we may have a case of double fulfillment. However this may be, a new heaven and earth, after the white throne judgment, take the place of the old, the new earth becoming the abiding place of the redeemed throughout eternity (22:5). And it will be in this new environment and under these new conditions that God will undertake to make "all things new" (21:5). The meaning of this last phrase in outstretch, creative production, splendor of achievement, and glory of result, no mortal mind can now conceive. All that we may know is that God will be the creator, that we shall be workers together with Him, that the conditions and results will be soul satisfying, and that the experience will be both timeless and measureless.

125

There are two distinct visions in the twenty-first chapter. The first is that of the "new Jerusalem" with all that it contains (21:1-5); and the second of the "holy Jerusalem" with all that it contains (21:10-27; 22:1-5). These two visions concern the same city. For the "new Jerusalem" (21:2) is also called the "holy city" (21:2), though it is to be noted that the "holy Jerusalem" (21:10) is not called the new Jerusalem. These statements imply that there is a connection between the two descriptions of the city though the distinction mentioned suggests that there is not a full identification. And the distinction is this: the first description gives to us a vision of the city in its heavenly and eternal aspect, connected with the new heaven and earth when the "former things," such as death, sorrow, crying and pain, have passed away (21:4); while the second description presents to us a vision of the city in its earthly and temporal aspect, connected with the present heaven and earth when the "former things," as enumerated, are still in existence. In other words, the first vision is of the city in its unending state, as the abiding place of the redeemed for all eternity; and the second vision is of the same city in its millennial state, as the abiding place of the redeemed for the one thousand years. That these differences are not imaginative but actual may be proved as follows: in connection with the first city there is no more sea (21:1); in connection with the second there is a river and therefore a sea, since all rivers flow into a sea (22:1, 2); in connection with the first city there is no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain (21:4); in connection with the second there is each of these, for there is disease (22:2); in connection with the first city there is no physical healing, the saints being in resurrection bodies (20:5, 6; 21:4); in connection with the second there is physical healing and by common remedial means, the leaves of the tree being for the healing of the nations (22:2); in connection with the first city there is no food, since resurrection bodies do not require such (20:5, 6; 21:2); in connection with the second there is food, since the tree of life bears twelve manner of fruits for, of course, the purpose of physical sustenance by eating (22:2); and finally, in connection with the first city there is no suggestion of national life, the former things having passed away (21:4); and in connection with the second there is such life, the nations bringing their glory into Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16-19; 21:24-26). These are distinctions of a radical kind, and they confirm

the thought which has been expressed, namely, that the twenty-first chapter contains two distinct visions, one heavenly and eternal, and the other earthly and temporal; one connected with the new heaven and earth, and the other with the present one; one belonging to the perpetual and perfected state, and the other to the millennial and unperfected; and the first envisaging the new and permanent, and the second the old and temporary. But, once more, the two visions of the one city are connected, the one finally merging into the other, for the "holy Jerusalem" of the millennium becomes, at the end of that time, the "new Jerusalem" of eternity (22:3-5).

126

The Spirit, having given in the early portion of the twenty-first chapter the vision of the new Jerusalem (21:1-7) and having added to this, in sharp and awful contrast, that of the lake of fire (21:8), proceeds from the ninth verse onward to present a large and detailed view of the "holy Jerusalem," that is, the city of the millennial time and condition (21:9-21; 22:1-5). This view had been hinted at in the twentieth chapter--where the thousand-year rule of Christ and the saints is specifically spoken of (20:4-6)--by setting forth the fact that the "beloved city," namely, Jerusalem, was to be so glorious during the millennial period as to excite the cupidity of Satan and the nations (20:7-9). But all details of the city were then withheld; and this, manifestly, is the reason why they are now given. It is thus that we come at the ninth verse to a new experience on the part of John, the Spirit granting to him the privilege of beholding the consummation of God's promises and purposes as these are related to this present earthly order of things (21:9). As to the divine promises, these had been clearly set forth. Jehovah had definitely and unconditionally offered to Abraham, and thus to his seed, a city which should come from heaven to earth, be located in the land of promise, and be his and his people's home. It was, among other reasons, because such an earthly prospect was in view that Abraham was willing to leave the magnificent and enticing Ur of the Chaldees, go forth to a foreign land, be a stranger and pilgrim there, and pass through the long discomfort of living in a tent. These statements seem to be made clear and certain by the manifest fact that the patriarch, if he had thought that the city would not be brought from heaven to earth, would have preferred, so far as comfort is concerned, to stay in Ur and go to his heavenly dwelling place not from a tent but from that city. They also seem to be made clear and certain by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, where he speaks as follows: "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8-10). As to the divine purposes, these had been partly made plain in the Old Testament and now are made plainer in this portion of the New. The prophet Zechariah had foretold that Jerusalem, in the last days, would be surrounded by all of the nations; that it would be taken; that the houses would be rifled; that the women would be ravished; that half of the city would go forth into captivity and that the residue of the people would not be cut off from the city (Zech. 14:1, 2). He had further prophesied that the Lord would go forth and fight against those nations; that His feet would stand upon the Mount of Olives; that the Lord His God would come and all the saints with Him; that in that day living waters would go out from Jerusalem, half of them toward the former sea (the Dead Sea) and half of them toward the hinder sea (the Mediterranean); that the Lord would be King over all

the earth; and that in that day there would be one Lord and His name one (Zech. 14:3-9). He had then set forth the fact that the city of Jerusalem would be the dwelling place of the King, the Lord of hosts; that the nations would come up from year to year to worship Him; that those nations which did not so come would be punished; and that everything in Jerusalem in that day would be holy unto the Lord (Zech. 14:16-21). And now John gives much the same, and yet a more amplified description of Jerusalem. He declares that the city will descend out of heaven from God, which means that it will descend from heaven to earth; that the nations will walk in the light of it; that the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honor into it; that the nations also will bring their glory and honor into it; and that nothing will enter into it that defiles, that works abomination or makes a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life (21:9, 10, 24-27). He also declares that a pure river of water will proceed from the throne of God and of the Lamb; that in the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river there will be a tree (or, wood, grove) of life; that the tree will bear twelve manner of fruits and will yield her fruit every month; and that the leaves of the tree will be for the healing of the nations (22:1, 2). And finally, he describes the construction of the city, telling of the magnificence of its walls, its gates, its foundations, its light and its glory, all in language which transcends human thought and imagination (21:10-23). This then is the city which God had promised to faithful Abraham and his faithful seed, it being the city which has foundations--that is, is stable and unshakable--and whose builder and maker is God--that is, is glorious beyond compare (Heb. 11:10). This also is the city which God will yet place in Palestine, at Jerusalem, for the space of a thousand years and which will be to the praise of His glory throughout the whole earth (Isa. 62:1-12). This city Abraham, in the days of his flesh, was not permitted to see. But he and his spiritual seed, in resurrection form and state, will both see and inherit it during the thousand years; and his natural seed, in bodies of flesh and blood, will have the same experience through the same space of time. Afterwards, it will be the dwelling place of each and all of the saints throughout the long aeons of eternity.

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Over against the picture of the city of God (21:1-7), the Spirit sets forth that of the "lake which burns with fire and brimstone" (21:8). If we shrink to pass from the one to the other, we may know that God did, for His compassions and sorrows are infinitely beyond our own. And yet He did what He did. It must have been then, that He was constrained to add the one vision to the other for the sake of truth, and in order that He might give solemn and, if possible, saving warning of the danger which confronts sinful and impenitent men. If there is one thing beyond another which commends the Bible as the book of God, it is this fact that, from first to last and at whatever cost, it is resolutely and uncompromisingly honest. And here is a notable example of this. How soothing to our souls it would have been, especially after picturing the city of light and love, if the Holy Spirit had remained silent concerning any abiding place of another kind; and how in pity--we speak from a natural standpoint--He must have longed to have it so. But openly and frankly He lifts the veil which hangs over the abyss and shows us its unrelieved darkness and suffering. And it is a startling sight that He gives us of the persons who are in that place of punishment. According to our estimate of things, we can have some understanding of the fact that the "abominable" and "murderers" and "whoremongers" will be there. But we shrink from placing besides these, "idolaters" and "sorcerers" and "liars." And as for God decreeing that the "fearful" and "unbelieving" should spend an eternity in the

company of those who are incorrigibly wicked and loathsomely vile, our spirits start back from the thought with horror. But it is evident that God does not look upon sin as we do. To Him, sin, as such, is punishable, whether, for instance, it is the sin of unbelief or that of murder. And sin of any kind must be atoned for through the meritorious sacrifice of Christ and be pardoned through faith in Him, if the wrath of God is not to fall upon it and thus upon the sinner (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:1, 2; 2 Cor. 5:21). We see then, that sin of the minor sort is as damaging to the soul, so far as separation from God is concerned, as that of the major (Rom. 1:18; 2:9; 3:10-20; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 15). This does not mean that all sin and sinners will be punished alike, for God is infinitely just even in the exhibition of wrath and will dispense punishment according to each one's deserving. But as we see here, there is only one abiding place for those who are not within the city of God; it is outside of that city (21:17; 22:15) and in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone (20:15; 21:8).

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Verse five of the twenty-second chapter is the last of a series of verses in the Revelation which contain either the Greek noun *aion* or the adjective *aionios*. The second word (*aionios*) is used only once in the Revelation (14:6) where it is translated "everlasting" in the Authorized Version and "eternal" in the Revised. The first word (*aion*) is used in fourteen places (1:6, 8; 4:9, 10; 5:13, 14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 14:11; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5), and, with one exception (1:18), the phrase in which it occurs is always translated "forever and ever," both in the Authorized Version and Revised. The latter word (*aion*) in the fourteen passages mentioned is always duplicated, the full Greek phrase being, *eis tous aionas ton aionon*--there are no articles in 14:11--which signifies, to the aeons of the aeons. In reviewing the fifteen passages, it is seen that they refer to different, and in some cases, entirely opposite things or persons. In one case the gospel is in mind (14:6). In ten cases God or Christ is in vision (1:6, 18; 4:9, 10; 5:13, 14; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7). In one case the saints are in sight (22:5). And in three cases the wicked are in view (14:11; 19:3; 20:10). Thus it appears that the words *aion* and *aionios* do not in themselves suggest the thought either of goodness or badness, they being used in both connections. Thus also, it appears that whatever the phrase means in one case it must mean in other cases, it being inconceivable that the Holy Spirit would use it in the same book with one thought in mind in some connections and a different one in others. Since, therefore, it is manifest that the words in some of the passages, such as those which refer to God, express infinite time, we may conclude that they do in all of them, inclusive of those which refer to the gospel, the saints, and the wicked. For instance, the adoration and praise given to God and Christ (1:6; 4:10; 5:13, 14; 7:12) are ceaseless, and also the existence and reign of God and Christ (1:18; 4:9, 10; 5:14; 10:6; 15:7) are unending. But it is to be remembered that the phrase which the Holy Spirit uses to express, in these connections, infinitude of time, is the one already mentioned. We conclude, therefore, that the phrase as connected with both the saints and wicked presents the same thought of unendingness. We do not mean by the above that the words *aion* and *aionios* never predicate limited time, for a statement to this effect would be far from true (Matt. 13:39, 40, 49; 28:20; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:12; see Greek). We are referring to the combination of words mentioned (*eis tous aionas ton aionon*), and as found in the book of the Revelation. In referring to the inherent meaning of the words *aion* and *aionios*, the definition of Aristotle (*De Caelo*, lib. 1, cap. 9) is to be kept in mind. This is to the effect that the two words signify ever-existing, that is, time-infinitude. This, scripturally

speaking, is the longest possible period of time which can be conceived of in connection with the subject which is in view. In a temporal matter, therefore--such as a given age--it is from the utmost of its beginning to the utmost of its ending. And in an eternal matter--such as the life of God--it is again from the utmost of its beginning to the utmost of its ending. In the case of God's life, manifestly, it is a beginning which has no beginning and an ending which has no ending, that is, it is eternity. It follows from this, be it noted, that the Revelation phrase, *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, is not to be translated, as is so often done, by the words, "to the ages of the ages," as if each aeon were limited in duration; but rather to the eternities of the eternities, each aeon being unlimited. In other words, the phrase here in the Revelation presents the thought of eternity in a greatly intensified form, just as in the case of the English phrase "forever and ever," where one "ever" expresses eternity, yet another is added to it in order to emphasize the fact that eternity is to be thought of as infinitely unending in duration.

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The sixth verse of the twenty-second chapter begins the general conclusion (see the Analysis). This portion of Scripture has much the same relationship to the Revelation as the general introduction has (1:1-8), that is, it is related to the whole book (22:6-21). There is, however, a distinct difference: the introduction prepares the way for the long revelation which is to follow; and the conclusion gathers up the details of that revelation, emphasizes its important statements and gives prophecy a practical application by making it pressingly personal. This last is accomplished in various ways: first, there are the conclusion's explanations (22:6, 16); second, there are its exhortations (22:7-12, 17-19); third, there are its promises (22:7, 12, 16, 20); fourth, there is its prayer (22:20); and fifth and last, there is its benediction (22:21). The personal element is inclusive of the apostle John, who, in the rapidly changing and overwhelmingly large visions of the prophetic portion, has been almost lost to sight since the introduction of the first chapter (1:1, 4, 9), but is now suddenly brought into view as the one to whom the revelation is first given, and the one, therefore, who is first affected by it (22:8-10, 10). Hence, the movement of the whole book is from Patmos to Patmos and from John to John. But this, clearly, is representative. That is, it is, as related to us, from our habitation back to our habitation and from ourselves back to ourselves. And God would have it so in reality and practically (1:1, 4; 22:16). This book of the Revelation is not to be understood through private interpretation and its blessings are not to be possessed as a private inheritance. John's Patmos is ours, wherever we may be; and John is ourselves, whoever we may be. This illuminating and searching conclusion, therefore, is for us, that we may look up, uncover our ears, listen to the Voice, prepare our hearts to be and do, and then watch, wait, and work even as John the beloved disciple did (1:10-20; 22:8, 16, 17, 20, 21).

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It is always an act of infinite condescension on the part of God, as occurs here in the sixth verse, to say that His utterances are "faithful and true" (22:6). Jesus did this, during His life on earth, again and again in the use of the Jewish court formula, "Verily, verily," or--as it is in the Greek--"Amen, amen" (John 1:51; 3:3; 5:11; 5:19, 24, 25; 6:26, 32, 47, 53; 8:34, 51, 58; 10:1, 7; 12:24; 13:16, 20, 21, 38; 14:12; 16:20, 23; 21:18). And the motive on the part of God

and Christ is the same. In each case it is indeed an act of infinite condescension, and it is intended that it should be understood as such. But being this, it is also an act of infinite assurance, wherein God designs to satisfy our souls and thus put all possible doubts to rest. Just here (22:6), He knows that there is special need of faith being strengthened. He has spoken, not of sinful man's spiritual evolution, but devolution (20:7-9); not of his following the Christ, but the Antichrist (13:4-8); not of meriting a heavenly throne and crown, but judgment and punishment (19:19-21; 20:12-15); not of unending enjoyment with Himself, but of eternal suffering in separation from Himself (21:8, 27). These are not comfortable and comforting thoughts for us to have, even though we understand that the application is related to others than ourselves. It is no small wonder, therefore, that our hopeful minds and ever-imaginative spirits recoil from the man-dishonoring truth thus forced upon us, and that we are tempted to disbelieve what God would have us believe. In other words, we meet here the radical difference, spiritually speaking, between evolution and revelation. The one is man's doctrine and makes for the natural man's exaltation; the other is God's doctrine and makes for the natural man's debasement; and it does not take the natural man long to decide which of the two he prefers and chooses. As to the natural man, whether he be called philosopher, psychologist, biologist, or just scientist, he is incurable since he rejects inspiration and revelation and cleaves to reason and discovery. The more humble-minded saint, however, is not so. He welcomes all scientific truth. But in doing so, he sets the Holy God and the Holy Word above all men's interpretation of truth, even in the world of nature. And it is to this saint that the Lord draws near with His quieting word of assurance, graciously affirming that His revelation, in spite of all the things in it which are hard to be understood, is absolutely and unalterably "faithful and true" (22:6). In chapter nineteen Christ had been designated as the "Faithful and True" (19:11). And now this same title is given to His sayings (19:9; 21:5; 22:6). Thus God would have us understand that the One and the other are inseparably identified (19:13), and that each is impregnable and imperishable (Heb. 13:8; Matt. 24:35; Rev. 19:16; 2 Cor. 13:8).

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God has no cure for the social evils of this present age; not in philosophy, nor in science, nor in socialism, nor in altruism, nor in Christianity, nor even in Christ Himself. These evils may be ameliorated, especially by Christianity and Christ. The cure, however, does not pertain to this age but rather to the one which is to come (Ps. 72:1-19; Isa. 32:1-18). In the present dispensation God is dealing with individual and church life, and thus it is only in comparative measure that He undertakes for the community, the nation and the nations. This, most persons will judge, is bald and bold pessimism. The question, however, is not as to pessimism any more than optimism; it is only as to what is the Scripture, and, therefore, the truth. In regard to this, it is to be observed that God has different purposes in different dispensations; that these purposes are formed and fulfilled in view of what He foreknows men will or will not do with His dear Son; and hence, that His forward movements, dispensation upon dispensation, are according to what He foresees in man, and according to the divine plan and program which accordingly He formulates. As to the present age, He purposes to work, and that gloriously, in the salvation of individuals and in the building up of the body of Christ (Acts 15:14; Eph. 2:1-22); and it is plainly true that He designs that the effect of these purposes upon men at large will be both to restrain them from a measure of evil and constrain them to a measure of good (1 Tim. 2:1-4). At the same time, He clearly states that the end of His

present working will not be the salvation of all and thus for the eradication of evil (2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:1-14). On the contrary, He prophesies that the general course of events will be toward a departure from Himself and His laws and an ultimate choice of the Antichrist and his satanic ways (2 Thess. 2:1-12; Rev. 13:1-9; 19:17-21). This is the reason why this book of the Revelation ends as it does, not in a gradual development among men of spiritual goodness, but in a gradual heading up of spiritual evil, until Christ has come in order to judge and destroy (2 Thess. 2:6-12; Rev. 19:11-21). And this also is the reason why the closing emphasis of the book is not upon the conquests of the church, but upon the coming and appearing of Christ (22:7, 12, 20). While then, it is well for men to give themselves to the righting of life's wrongs (Gal. 6:10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4), it is better for them to take that course which will most largely result in turning people from impending wrath and in preparing them for a new and more righteous experience in the age and world to come (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-20; Rom. 1:11-18; Rev. 14:6-13; 20:4; 21:1-5). The advent of Christ, therefore, is the great objective set before the church and the world, before the one as an inspiration and before the other as a warning; and, manifestly, it is toward this event that the whole prophecy of the Revelation has faced and its events have moved (1:7, 8; 19:11-16). All this, as evidenced by the conclusion which we are considering, seems to be the very mind of Christ; for in this twenty-second chapter the Lord twice over cries out, "Behold, I come quickly" (22:7, 12), and once, "Surely, I come quickly" (22:20). As for pessimism and optimism, it may be remarked that the man who is most a pessimist, however optimistic his spirit, is the one who seeks to force a spiritual issue which is apart from the revealed will of God; and that the man who is most an optimist, however pessimistic his view may seem, is the man who seeks to conform his spiritual life and service wholly and forever to that will.

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It is a sad commentary upon our human nature that Christians have generally regarded the book most sealed which is the only one which God has commanded should not be sealed (22:10). When Daniel had completed the record of his visions, God directed him to close up and seal his prophecies "till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:4, 9). But it is to be kept in mind that John, when he wrote, was living in the end-time to which Daniel had referred (1 Cor. 10:11), and was describing visions which were to illuminate and irradiate those which Daniel had portrayed. It was not God's purpose, therefore, that these latter visions should be closed and sealed as the former ones had been. On the contrary, He designed that this scroll of the Revelation should be opened and unrolled, its contents read and understood, and its many and great lessons be learned and lived out. This was emphasized at the beginning of the book, in its introduction (1:3). And it is now reemphasized here at its close, in its conclusion (22:7, 10, 16). This does not mean that the Revelation as a whole is easy to be understood, or that it may ever wholly be comprehended until we are at Jesus' feet and know as we are known (1 Cor. 8:2; 13:9-12). But also, it does not mean that it is altogether incomprehensible, and that it must be set aside until Christ comes and is Himself our teacher. Here is a case where amidst darkness there is light; and amidst matters which we may not know there are others which we may and should. Besides this, it is ever to be remembered that the chief revelation of this Revelation is not the understanding, for instance, of the meaning of the seals, trumpets, thunders, earthquakes, locusts and other divine accessories of judgment, but rather the perception of the person, character, work, coming and conquest of Christ, having which, one has almost everything and missing which, one has almost

nothing (1:1, 4-18; 19:10-16). Moreover, we may find peculiar encouragement in meditating upon this portion of Holy Writ from the fact that God said to Daniel that, at the end-time, the wise should understand (Dan. 12:4, 8-10); and from the added fact that time, since Daniel and John wrote, has far advanced and has brought us to what, undoubtedly, is the end of the end-time. Thus we may believe that the word of the Lord, in the conclusion before us, has for us a new meaning and application. When, therefore, we hear Christ say, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand" (22:10), we may understand that His work is peculiarly for ourselves, and thus, we may take heart and believe that we shall understand. But it is to be observed that the person who will perceive will be the one who, like John, will confess himself to be a bond-slave of Christ (1:1); who will not only read but also keep the sayings of the book (1:3); and who will obtain his interpretation as John did his revelation, namely, in and through the Holy Spirit (1:10). If ever there was a place where the solemn words of our Lord were applicable, it is certainly to be found in the studying of this portion of the Scripture: "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear; for whosoever has, to him shall be given; and whosoever has not, from him shall be taken even that which he seems to have" (Luke 8:18).

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There is no place in the Word of God where the soul-saving passion of Christ comes out more clearly than in this closing chapter of the Revelation. Foreseeing that the book would be placed last in the arrangement of the Scriptures, He evidently determined, on the last page and through His last words, to make a final and infinitely forceful appeal to the church to evangelize the world and to the world to be reconciled to Himself. Through eleven verses, therefore, the risen and glorified Lord speaks to His people and to those who are not His people (22:10-20). And He takes a distinctly evangelistic method in order to bring this to pass. First, He sets forth the danger of continuing in sin, pointing out the tendency of sin to produce fixity of conditions and warning souls that the time is at hand when judgment will infinitely and eternally separate between the wicked and the godly (22:10, 11). Second, He incites to righteousness by promising rewards to those who live righteously (22:12-14). Third, He makes it clear to all who may hear His voice that the coming age and world will not be one of haphazard and inconsequential arrangement, but the contrary, and hence, that the great and aeon-continuing city of God would have distinct definements, that it would have its walls and gates, that thus, there would be an inside and an outside, and that those who would be within would be blessed and those without cursed (22:14-15). Fourth, He sets before His church the glorious and constraining hope of His coming, declaring Himself to be both the root--the progenitor--and the offspring--the successor--of David, and likening Himself to the bright and morning star which promises and ushers in the day (22:16). Fifth, He declares--as judged by the context--that it is the office work of the Spirit and the bride to say "Come", not here as later addressing the cry to Christ, but rather, to a sinful world; He beseeches that every one who hears and accepts that "Come" may take up the word and himself cry, "Come"; He himself pleads with the sinner who has drunk at broken cisterns and is still athirst, to "Come"; and finally, like the very Christ of Judea and Galilee but now from heaven's throne, He sends forth one more and final "whosoever," bidding all who are athirst to "Come" (22:17). Sixth, He then gives solemn utterance to the place in His thought which this Revelation has, warning any and all persons, high or low, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, that subtraction from the words of this prophecy will merit and obtain heavy punishment from God (22:19). And finally, as a last, intimate, precious word of love and

encouragement, He reiterates His old time and oft repeated promise to come again, and that in speed (22:20). So it is that this One who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, presents Himself to our view high and lifted up as Son of God, but lowly and compassionate as Son of man, His hands outstretched, His voice vibrant with love's pleading, using every device known to Deity to win saints and sinners, and wishing to be remembered to earth's end as the One who is ever calling, "Come!" What a vision it is! There is not a weary soul anywhere in earth's vast domain which could wish for more or better.

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The cry of John to Christ, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (22:20), is the only prayer recorded in the Revelation and the last one recorded in the Bible. This is deeply significant. There are many prayers, as we should think, which John might aptly have breathed as a last petition in closing his great record. For instance, he might have pleaded for the righting of earth's wrongs; or the amelioration of men's ills; or, certainly, for the salvation of souls and the building up of the body of Christ. But he passed by the expression of all such thoughts and concentrated them upon that event which he knew, according to what the Spirit had taught him, would bring most speedily, largely, and permanently to pass the many and great desires of his heart. For, evidently, John realized as a result of the apocalyptic visions, that what had been true in Old Testament times was again true in New Testament ones, namely, that by God's decree earth's final and full blessings had been connected with and made dependent upon the person and presence of Him who is Son of man and Son of God. Moreover, Christ had but then reemphasized this truth, for His last word had been not of church, or state, or international League, but only of Himself and His appearing. John, therefore, had but one thought. Face to face with the wicked injustice of his own imprisonment, the sufferings of the church, the blighting unrighteousness of heathen Rome, and the unutterable woes of a world, he put his hope in Christ, in His advent to earth, and in His rule of righteousness over the nations of the earth. When, then, Christ cried to his waiting soul, "Surely, I come quickly," at once and eagerly he answered, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (22:10). And the word is recorded for our sakes. The days of earthly pilgrimage for the church have, since then, been many and at time rough and hard and steep. But God would have us understand that the Voice which reached John in Patmos still sounds, and that its promise still prevails. It is for us, therefore, to have our hope where John had his, and to cry as he cried. And as surely as God is God and His word is yea and amen in Christ, so surely some day will the Coming One come. Till that day dawns, it is for us to watch, to wait, and to work.

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We have heard many strange and startling voices as we have passed through the dark valleys of the Revelation's imagery: voices of trumpets breathing out judgments; of angels crying, Woe; of the wicked blaspheming the Holy Name; and of men's groans as they have perished under judgment strokes and amidst judgment fires. But, while God desired us to hear what He hears, in order that we may have compassion, in some measure, as He has compassion, these are not the last voices which He would have reach us. We are not of the night but of the day; we have not been appointed to wrath but to salvation; yea, we are those who are to live together with Christ in beatific vision and in rapturous service, in the world which knows no sorrow and where all things will be made new (1 Thess. 5:1-10; Rev.

21:1-5). One last word, therefore, Christ has for us ere He closes the record of the scroll. It is spoken to us with the tenderness of a word of parting and it is given that it may sustain our weary hands and feeble footsteps "till He come." The word is a benediction, and it is this:

"The grace of the Lord Jesus
be with you all!"