Revelation:

A Complete Commentary

By William R. Newell

Part Two: New Creation

Chapter XXI

The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:9-22:5

And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, who were laden

with the seven last plagues; and he spake with me, saying, Come hither, I will show

thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a

mountain great and high, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem, coming down out

of heaven from God, having the glory of God: her light was like unto a stone most

precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal: having a wall great and high;

having twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names written thereon,

which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east were

three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the

west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve

names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that spake with me had for a

measure a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall

thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the

breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs: the

length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal.

1. It is a literal city, the materials, dimensions, appearance, appointments, inhabitants, divine glory and

indwelling, and eternity of which are all distinctly declared.

2. It descends from God out of heaven. It is that better country and heavenly for which Abraham and the

patriarchs looked. It is that place prepared for God’s saints. “He hath prepared for them a

city” (Hebrews 11:16).

3. It will be peculiarly the home of the Church, the Lamb’s wife (Ephesians 5:27-32); others will be

there, and many will have access (Revelation 21:24-26); but the Church will be as the wife in the home.

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4. It will be vast indeed: a cube of at least fifteen hundred miles each way (Revelation 21:16). Much,

indeed all, of our conception of that city must be in the realm of faith—along with that of our father

Abraham, who “looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose architect and maker is God.”

5. It will be lighted directly by the presence and effulgence of God. This is thrice stated:

a. In chapter 21:11, the city has “the glory of God” with a light (or luminary) in

consequence “like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone clear as crystal”;—

this is its effulgence—its appearance from without.

b. Revelation 21:23—“no need of sun, neither of the moon, … for the glory of God did

lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb.” We are here within the city, walking “in the

light of God,” constantly conscious that Christ is the channel of all blessing to us. That the

Lamb is the lamp is the secret and the source of the unspeakable blessedness of those who

walk there! What a sense of redeemedness; of being beloved even as Christ, and of

fathomless depths of eternal security!

c. Revelation 22:5—“night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun;

for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign unto the ages of the ages.”

Note three elements here:

1. No more dependence on creature or mediate light.

2. The immediate light constantly from God, Himself.

3. Their “reigning” thus forever! That “reigning in life,” which began when they

first believed (Romans 5:17) is now at last consummated; and is eternally

perpetuated.

And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to

the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. And the building of the wall thereof was

jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto pure glass. The foundations of the wall

of the city were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was

jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth,

sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth,

topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the

twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the several gates was of one pearl: and

the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple

therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. And

the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine upon it: for the glory of

God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb. And the nations shall walk

amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. And the

gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): and

they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: and there shall in no

wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but

only they that are written in the Lamb’s book of life. And he showed me a river of

water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,

in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the

tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the

leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no curse any

more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall

serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads. And

there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for

the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

6. It will be a new city—corresponding with a new heaven and a new earth. Many have taught that

during the thousand years it will be suspended over the earth. Many hold also that Revelation 21:8 is the

end of the progress of the Book; while 21:9 on through chapter 22:5 turns us back to millennial times.

They compare this passage with chapter 17:18, which describes in greater detail the character and

overthrow of Babylon the great, although that overthrow really occurred in the preceding chapter (16:19).

Those who hold that Revelation 21:1-8 describes the eternal state while Revelation 21:9 to 22:5 reverts

to millennial times, because we read in 21:24-26 that “the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof” the

kings of the earth bringing “the honor of the nations into it”—seem to overlook several important points:

**a.** In chapter 21:3, where we read that the tabernacle of God is at last “with men,” we also

read that “they shall be his peoples” (Greek laoi). It is amazing to find discerning men

apparently almost wilfully translating the plural laoi, as if it were loos. Alford reads,

“‘they shall be his people’: plural, because as in verse 24, many nations shall now partake

in the blessed fulfillment of the promise.” But for this very reason he should have

translated laoi, “peoples,” faithfully, that is, literally: “peoples,” not “people” Seiss, even

in his “revised text,” reads, “God shall taber- nacle with the men, or mankind (?) and they

shall be his people” etc. The Revised Version, which so many affect to despise, translates

truly and plainly, “They shall be his peoples,” and thus prepares us to avoid the impossible

assumption that 21:9 to 22:5 is a passage that reverts to millennial scenes.

b. We know positively that at least one nation and one seed, ISRAEL, will belong upon

the new earth. In Isaiah 66:22 we read, “As the new heavens and the new earth, which I

will make, shall remain before me, saith Jehovah, so shall your seed and your name

remain.” This is eternity for national Israel, and no escaping it! Because Isaiah 65:17, 18,

which belongs to the new creation, has been confused with the millennial verses (20-25)

men have rushed to the conclusion that all that Isaiah says concerning the new creation is

millennial. But God says Israel’s “seed and name” shall remain, in the new heavens and

earth, that is, in that new order beginning in Revelation 21:1. But in this new order, we are

distinctly told “death shall be no more,” whereas, in Isaiah 65:20, “the child shall die a

hundred years old.”

Now, Israel is God’s elect nation—elect not for the past, or even through the millennial age, but forever.

Yet, if Israel be the elect nation, the existence of other nations is presupposed! You reply, “Were not

nations the result of God’s judgment at Babel?” They were, doubtless. But God, when He acts in grace,

is evermore bringing good out of man’s evil! When Adam sinned, Christ, as the Seed of the woman, was

first announced. When Israel asked for a king, God, after Saul’s rejection, brought in David, in whom He

lodged the royal Messianic counsels for all time to come. When Israel crucified their Messiah—the

highest act of sin—God brought forth “abundance of grace” through Him who “tasted death for every

man.”

At Pentecost, salvation was announced to every nation in its own tongue. Grace came to the nations

without destroying or changing national existence, or even national individuality.

The prophet Zephaniah (3:9) indeed tells us of a coming day, when, saith Jehovah, “I will turn to the

peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one

consent.” The word “language” here is in Hebrew lip, as it is in Genesis 11:1. But that national existence

will not cease, is shown clearly by verse 20 of the same chapter: “At that time will I bring you (Israel) in,

and at that time will I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples (plural!)

of the earth.”

c. Finally, the language of the first 5 verses of chapter 22 of The Revelation, and

especially of verses 4 and 5, is just as eternal in its character as anything at the beginning

of chapter 21. “The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and his servants shall

serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their foreheads … and they

shall reign unto the ages of the ages.” Why should such statements be connected with a

passage that is meant merely to go back and describe millennial conditions? That would be

incongruous. Furthermore, it is not in keeping, we feel, for the Scripture to go back after

the last judgment has been held, and the new creation has come in, to times before that last

judgment and new creation!

7. The new Jerusalem is the capital city of God—the place of the divine presence and government of the

universe. “The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein” (22:3). No other or further throne than

this is described in the Word of God. As we have seen, various phases and aspects of the divine majesty

have heretofore been exhibited in Scripture. Now it is “forever and ever.” Note that it is “the throne of

God and of the Lamb.” Christ, who delivered up the kingdom to God, yet shares that throne, as the One

who redeemed these now blessed creatures unto God. The Redeemer abides in view of His people as the

sacrifice and priest. In each view of the city, the Lamb is named. Seven times does the word occur in

connection with the new Jerusalem (21:9, 14, 22, 23, 27; 22:1, 3).

God’s Eternal Plan Was to Be “With Men”

His “delight was with the sons of men” (Proverbs 8:31). Man was made in God’s “image” and

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“likeness.” Doubtless we will never know all that these terms mean! God was manifest in the flesh in

Christ, the Son of man. Jesus, though crowned with glory and honor, remains man forever.

What the “delight” of God will be in this new earth “with men,” and what their capacity for knowing

God, and progressing in that blessed and only real knowledge, can be measured only by eternity, and the

infinity of God Himself; which is to say, it is utterly without limit! Marvelous and yet reasonable fruit of

“the redemption that is in “Christ Jesus,” who “suffered for sins … that he might bring us to God.” Note

the words “with men,” “with them,” “with them”—three times in one verse (21:3). Pause now, and

consider this long and well.

It is astonishing, and yet should not be so, that there is no mention after Revelation 21, of those blessed

beings previously seen as accompanying the throne of God: cherubim, seraphim, living ones, elders: it is

now simply “the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Not that those others are not there. They are, and are

in ecstatic, eternal delight that God is revealed at last as they could not as mere creatures ever know him:

as the blessed One who is LOVE. Those beings knew His eternity, His power, His holiness, and His

Glory; and celebrated these attributes constantly—as in Revelation 4:8-11 and Isaiah 6. But now God’s

heart goes fully out. He has, through infinite sacrifice, “brought many sons unto glory,” to be

“conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Not only to

these, the “church of the firstborn,” but to the various peoples of this new earth, His love is now, without

limit, extended; and will be extended forever and ever. And in this will all holy beings find endless joy.

“LOVE IS OF GOD.” We can scarcely write here for awe and wonder! How should her Creator say to

the Bride: “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; Thou hast ravished my heart with one look

from thine eyes.” “Turn away thine eyes from me, For they have overcome me.”

Oh, how little do we know our God! How small is our widest thought of Him! Do we not see this great

Bible He has given us going right forward against all obstacles, over all mountains, through all valleys,

yea, to Gethsemane and Calvary—to come to this sweet, eternal consummation, that God may be WITH

MEN, THEIR GOD? that He may wipe every tear from their eyes, that He may banish into the far

forgotten past, mourning, crying, and pain; and say, “Behold, I make all things new”? For GOD IS

LOVE!

Let this thought overwhelm us as we turn to the closing chapters of The Revelation, that while God’s

lovingkindness is “over all his works,” it is never said in Scripture that God LOVED any but man! John,

who writes this closing book of God’s blessed Word, cries, “We know and have believed the love which

God hath in our case. God is love” (1 John 4:16). Let us, too, know it and believe it; and thus enter by

faith this glorious new creation scene; bending low under this weight of glory, though yet we tread this

earth. Let us know this love that passeth knowledge, and, breathing the fragrant air of the city of God,

walk daily through its gates of pearl and walk by faith its golden streets, “giving thanks unto the Father,

who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Note About This Heavenly Jerusalem

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I. It is a Literal City.

II. Its Object and Destiny.

III. Its Relation to the New Earth.

IV. The Blessedness of Its Dwellers.

We do well to return again and again to Revelation 21 and 22, for it is the end of the pilgrim path. The

more distinct the vision to the pilgrim of the beauty and glory of the city to which he journeys, the less

the immediate environments of his journey attract him.

I. It is a Literal City

1. Because of the literalness of its description. If gold does not mean gold, nor pearls—pearls, nor

precious stones—stones, nor exact measurements—real dimensions, then the Bible gives nothing

accurate nor reliable. There is no one on earth who can assure your heart concerning the meaning of

these “symbols”—if they are symbols! Nowhere in God’s Word, for instance, is there any account of the

“symbolism” of precious stones. Twelve such stones are found in the high priest’s “four-square”

breastplate (Exodus 28:15-21): sardius, topaz, carbuncle, emerald, sapphire, diamond, jacinth, agate,

amethyst, beryl, onyx, jasper—“inclosed in gold in their settings. And the stones shall be according to

the names of the children of Israel, twelve... like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his

name, they shall be for the twelve tribes.” No one doubts that these were literal stones, nor do we doubt

that God has a special reason for assigning to each tribe a peculiar stone. Some time it may be revealed

what these stones mean, and whether they have any connection with the foundations of the New

Jersualem; but to deny that they are literal stones in The Revelation, and to admit them as literal in

Exodus, is not only absurd, but unbelieving.121

2. A second reason to consider the city a literal one, is, that child-like faith in reading the account always

regards it as such. As the little girl asked her mother concerning the preacher who said that our Lord’s

words in John 14, “I will come again,” did not mean that He would come back in person: “Mamma, if

Jesus did not mean what He said, why didn’t He say what He meant?”

3. Abraham and the patriarchs “looked for a city”— not a state of mind! The sublime faith of Abraham

led him to leave a city in the most remarkable civilization known on earth, and become a stranger and

pilgrim, caring only for a cave in which to bury his dead; “For he looked for the city which hath the

foundations, whose architect and maker is God”! Abraham will be satisfied with nothing short of a place,

such as he looked for. And God will not disappoint him!

4. In all other parts of the Bible, simple faith in God’s statements is asked from man; why not then in

Revelation 21, of all places, here at the end of God’s book? “Wherefore do questionings arise in your

heart?” the Lord asked, when He presented Himself in a risen body in the upper room. If reasonings and

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doubts of the reality and literal-ness of His body were excluded, then, when the human mind would

naturally be astonished; how much less now can questionings and doubts be admitted as to the literalness

of the marvelous city of Revelation 21, which is to be the eternal home of our Lord’s risen body, and that

of His saints in glorified bodies like unto His!

5. If the New Jerusalem is not to be taken literally, we can not claim that the millennial Jerusalem of

Ezekiel 40-48 and Zechariah 14 can be literal. But to deny these is wholly to abandon faith in the

accuracy of God’s Word!

6. In this book of The Revelation, the former Jerusalem is literal (11:8); and also Babylon the Great

(18:10). Indeed both Jerusalem (the “great city”), and Babylon, were the objects of the last fearful

earthquake of Revelation 16:19. Just as the old earth which disappeared was literal, and the new earth

which takes its place is literal and substantial, so also must the New Jerusalem be.

7. The unfolding of divine things in the Bible is pre- cisely contrary to the idea that in order to have

“spirituality,” material things must be left behind.

God was revealed to the patriarchs’ faith without a definite place of abode or habitation. Then, in the

wilderness, the pillar of cloud and fire accompanied His visible dwelling-place, and both the tabernacle

and the temple were so filled with His glorious presence, that, for the moment, the priests themselves,

“could not stand to minister”! Also we are told that Jehovah chose Jerusalem, and Mt. Zion therein,

because He loved it (Psalm 87:2; 78:68; 132:13, 14).

Then, so far from the progress of God’s revealing Himself to man taking on more and more ethereality,

the contrary is seen, for God “was manifested in the flesh” when Christ came! Immanuel is, God with us:

i.e., God present here, in the Person of that babe of Bethlehem! This of course is what the Devil hates.

“Many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the

flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 John 7).

Even in the thousand years, the children of Israel are told: “Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet

habitation … Jehovah will be with us in majesty … thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall

behold a land of far distances.” How beautiful these things to simple faith, and what a denial of the

vagaries of those deluded souls who connect sin with matter as a necessity! The only logical

“spiritualizers” that I know of are the Christian Scientists—which are neither Christian, nor scientific!

The old Manichaean heresy governs millions who call themselves Christian, though it is a Satanic lie,

and pagan, and utterly anti-Biblical. The Bible leads on to a literal and blessed home of the redeemed,

possessed of bodies like Christ’s body—real and holy, incorruptible, immortal!

8. It is therefore wicked and harmful to permit ourselves to drift into that weak apprehension of future

realities expressed in many hymns, and much loose preaching and speaking of these days. What right

have we to thoughts of “going to heaven,” merely, concerning those who “fall asleep”? God says they

have departed to “be with Christ” (Philippians 1:23), or “to be at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8)

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It is sad to find, from a devoted pen like Cowper’s:

“Then in a nobler, sweeter song

I’ll sing they power to save.

When this poor lisping stam’ring tongue

Lies silent in the grave!”

How much better to sing:

“When this poor lisping stam’ring tongue Hath triumphed o’er the grave!”

But it is even more distressful to hear real Christians using blinded, demoralized, worldly expressions

concerning a believer’s falling asleep: such as “he passed on,” “he is gone into the unknown,” etc.

Now while we may not be certain that the New Jerusalem is yet opened to the saints (for that event,

perhaps, is reserved for Christ’s second coming, and for His saints in redeemed bodies), yet surely we

should have that City constantly before us as a reality; and remember that those that have gone to be with

Christ are simply swelling the great expectant throng, whose eager hope looks forward to that blessed

day of glory and joy when they shall enter in through the gates into that ineffably blessed City!

Meanwhile, the saints are “with Christ.” Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12, “was caught up into Paradise (to the

third heaven) and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

Evidently he was given to taste the infinite joy of what is coming.

What a company is gathering yonder!

Some believe that the marriage of the Lamb will mark the Bride’s entrance into that city.

At all events, remember that it is a literal city to which you are going. There cannot be anything else

meant!123

II. Its Object and Destiny

It is the eternal dwelling place, “habitation,” of God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although only “God

and the Lamb” are named, yet we know from the Scriptures, and from this very book of Revelation, that

the blessed Spirit administers eternally that glorious state of which the Father is the Author and the Son

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the Source.

In other parts of Scripture, as we have noted before, various aspects of God’s throne are displayed: in

connection sometimes with the expression of His character, or being, as the Holy One; sometimes with

the execution of His government; sometimes with the form of His perpetual worship—as in the

progressive perpetual tenses of Revelation 4:9, 10.

But God’s home is never spoken of until the New Jerusalem comes on the scene. Heretofore, it had been

written: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isaiah 66:1). To Israel in the wilderness,

through Moses, Jehovah had indeed said, “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among

them,” and it was done. Yet he dwelt in thick darkness, and judgments had to be executed from time to

time upon that unbelieving and wilful generation: so that finally, as we read in Ezekiel 8:6 (and in all the

prophets) they drove Him away from His sanctuary—as they did afterwards His Son when He sent Him

to them.

But now all is over. Redemption has been accomplished—the thing dearest to God’s heart—that which

for all eternity reveals Him as Infinite. God is love, and yet absolutely righteous; the Lamb slain and now

risen and abiding in that city, becomes throughout the new creation, the eternal proof and utterance of all

God is!

It will also be the capital city of the new creation, for we read, “the throne of God and of the Lamb shall

be therein.” Nor is any other center of the divine manifestation and government hinted at in this closing

book of the things that are revealed. We are indeed told three times in The Revelation, that the New

Jerusalem “cometh down out of heaven from my God” (3:12; 21:2, 10). But this describes its double

character from God—divine in its origin, and also heavenly. “It might have been of God and earthly; or

heavenly and angelic. It was neither: It was divine in origin, and heavenly in nature and

character.” (Darby.) This perhaps is the full meaning of the words: “from God.”

On the other hand, there remains this question: Is there to be a manifestation of the glory of God, and a

seat of His government belonging to heaven, while this New Jerusalem, located upon the new earth,

governs only the affairs of the new earth?

Several considerations lead us toward the conclusion that the New Jerusalem is God’s one eternal resting

place.

1. Immediately we see the new heaven and new earth and the New Jerusalem descending to the new

earth (21:1, 2), we are told, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men”—the former heaven and earth

having disappeared. The object of the new heaven and earth is to bring about this—that God shall

eternally have His home in this capital city of the new creation!

2. No other eternal habitation of God is seen than this of the New Creation’s capital! Always before, God

was in heaven and man upon earth. Now that this city has come down, created by God for His dwelling,

we cannot conceive of His real presence and worship being elsewhere!

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3. This heavenly city has the glory of God (21:11, 23; 22:5). It is the home of Him who “dwelleth in

light unapproachable.” It is not that this city has glory given to it; it has God’s glory: for He is there! The

glory is the effulgence of His Being!

4. It also has the throne of God, and that “service” of 22:3, properly called priestly service, or spiritual

worship—(latreia: Hebrews 9:1; Romans 12:1; Philip plans 3:3; Revelation 7:15).

5. “They shall see his face” Here at last God, who is Love, reveals Himself to the saints of that blessed

city directly. There is no temple, no form, no distance. This, therefore, must be the place of God’s rest

forever!

6. We need only to remember that the dwellers in the New Jerusalem “shall reign unto the ages of the

ages” (22:5). This could not be written of others than the inhabitants of the capital of the new creation!

III. Its Relation to the New Earth

In the thousand years’ reign of Christ and His saints upon the old earth (Revelation 20:46), Christ and

His heavenly saints formed a “camp” above the old Jerusalem (Revelation 20:9), and Gog and Magog,

the hosts of earth, were led by Satan into its final rebellion against the reign of Christ and His glorified

saints in the “camp” above Jerusalem, and the earthly Jerusalem itself, “the beloved city.” It seems

wrong to assume that the New Jerusalem has come down so that the nations “walk amidst the light

thereof,” as in the new earth (Revelation 21:24). For, although Christ and His glorified saints will have

taken over the control of affairs, such as angels now exercise (Hebrews 2:5-8 R. V. margin), yet it is to

the earthly Jerusalem and the nation of Israel that God will directly subject the nations of the earth in the

Millennium (Isaiah 60; 61:4-9; but especially 4:5, 6). This is the glory of Jehovah revealed upon the

earthly Jerusalem, and to it, during the Millennium. The effect of this unveiling of the divine glory in the

thousand years is seen in Micah (7:16, 17): “The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might…

They shall lick the dust like a serpent; like crawling things of the earth they shall come trembling out of

their close places; they shall come with fear unto Jehovah our God, and shall be afraid because of thee.”

Psalm 72:9 declares: “His ene- mies shall lick the dust”! “Kings, kings, kings,” are men mentioned in the

next two verses; while kings will lick the dust of Israel’s feet, according to Isaiah 49:23. It is a day of

iron-rod rule; of compelled subjection. The very atmosphere is different from that of Revelation 21;

when, down to the new earth, wherein righteousness is at home—(2 Peter 3:13 Greek) this New

Jerusalem will come from God to be planted upon her eternal foundations, and to become the glad center

of attraction unto the kings and nations of those happy days.124

It has impressed me more and more that the New Jerusalem will not be in sight of the old earth during

the Millennium, which will be a highly judicial time—a time of military rule, the holding of a position

already conquered. At the Millennium’s beginning, peace and prosperity on earth will be conditioned on

complete subjection. Consequently the heavenly saints constitute a “camp,” evidently above the earthly

Jerusalem. Upon that earthly city and upon redeemed Israel, the glory of God will be seen, Israel’s

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twelve tribes being “judged” by the twelve apostles (Luke 22:28-30) including Matthias (Acts 1:21-26).

When the thousand years, and the last judgment are over, and the new heaven and the new earth have

succeeded the old, then, and not until then, does the New Jerusalem come down to the new earth.

IV. The Blessedness of Its Dwellers

Of the blessedness of those who dwell in that eternal city of infinite beauty and delight, who shall speak!

It is enough to repeat: “They shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads.”

Of even the inhabitants of the new earth, though not of the new city, it is written: “The tabernacle of God

is with men, and he shall dwell with them, they shall be His peoples, and God himself shall be with them

… their God: and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall

there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, anymore: the first things are passed away.”

But to see His face, and to be so wholly His in likeness that His Name shall be on our foreheads—what a

destiny! It is even more eagerly to be anticipated, than the reigning eternally!

“The Jerusalem That Is Above”

Jerusalem the golden,

With milk and honey blest,

Beneath thy contemplation

Sink heart and voice opprest:

I know not, O I know not

What social joys are there;

What radiancy of glory,

What light beyond compare!

For thee, O dear dear country,

Mine eyes their vigils keep;

For very love, beholding

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Thy happy name, they weep:

The mention of thy glory

Is unction to the breast,

And medicine in sickness,

And love, and life, and rest.

O one, O only mansion!

O Paradise of joy,

When tears are ever banished,

And smiles have no alloy!

The cross is all thy splendor,

The Crucified thy praise;

His laud and benediction

Thy ransomed people raise.

O sweet and blessed country,

The home of God’s elect!

O sweet and blessed country

That eager hearts expect!

Jesus, in mercy bring us

To that dear land of rest,

Who art, with God the Father

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And Spirit, ever blest.

Bernard of Cluny—12th century.

Lo! what a glorious sight appears

To our admiring eyes!

The former seas have passed away,

The former earth and skies.

The God of glory down to men

Removes His blest abode;

He dwells with men; His people they,

And He His people’s God!

Isaac Watts—1674-1748.

Jerusalem, my happy home,

Name ever dear to me,

When shall my labours have an end

In joy and peace, and thee?

When shall these eyes thy heaven-built walls

And pearly gates behold,

Thy bulwarks with salvation, strong,

And streets of shining gold!

Joseph Bromehead—1748-1826.

For ever with the Lord!

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Amen, so let it be:

Life from the dead is in that word;

‘Tis immortality.

Here in the body pent,

Absent from Him I roam,

Yet nightly pitch my moving tent

A day’s march nearer home.

My Father’s house on high,

Home of my soul, how near!

At times, to faith’s foreseeing eye,

Thy gates of pearl appear!

Ah! then my spirit faints

To reach the land I love,

The bright inheritance of saints,

Jerusalem above!

James Montgomery—1771-1854.

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122 Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:4, that the Christian’s hope is not to be unclothed, that is, disembodied,

but “clothed upon, that what is mortal” (mortal and immortal always being spoken of the body) “may be

swallowed up of life.” He is simply willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the

Lord (R.V.). It might, indeed did, become Paul’s lot. But it is not the proper Christian hope, which is the

redemption of the body at Christ’s coming.

123 Alford well remarks: “As in our common discourse, so here with the evangelist, the name of the

material city stands for the community formed by its inhabitants. But it does not follow, in his case, any

more than in ours, that both material city and inhabitants have not a veritable existence. Nor can we say

that this glorious description applies only to them” (and not to the literal city).

124 It has been well remarked by Govett: “That the eternal standing of the city is in question, I gather

from 22:3: ‘There shall be no more curse.’ Now at the close of the Millennium comes the most fearful

sin, and wrath of God, with the second death. Again, entrance into the heavenly city would not be

possible during the Millennium; for then the city is only suspended over the earth. It does not come

down upon it. To meet this difficulty, the holders of the opposite view translate Revelation 21:24-26,

‘bring their glory unto it,’ not into it. But this translation is unfounded, for, whenever a verb of motion

capable of signifying penetration, or entrance into, a penetrable subject, such as a river, house, etc., is

followed by the preposition eis, ‘into’—there entrance is affirmed.”