

Revelation - Commentaries by Jane J. Leake

Clay and Stone: Babylon the Great and the New Jerusalem, Chapter 4: Babylon the Great and Her Temple Tower (17:5)

"And upon her forehead a name was written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT." (Rev. 17:5).

It is not with the far past that we are now going to be occupied, but with the present and future. If we have gazed on the great clay city, the Babylon of long ago; if we have listened to the prophecy of her doom, uttered when as yet she was at the zenith of her glory; if we have seen that doom fall upon her so that for centuries her very existence had been doubted it is not for mere amusement or interest that we have gazed, but because she is a figure of God's choosing. Be sure that, if God chooses a figure, He chooses a correct one, and therefore be sure that no more splendid clay city than ancient Babylon has ever been built.

But what will you say to me when I tell you that you and I are even now dwelling in the Babylon the Great of which the ancient clay city was but the picture? The material city has long since crumbled into dust, under God's sweeping judgment; but the great moral Babylon is still building around us, and you and I are either citizens of it, of captives in it. Are you puzzled? I think myself that Babylon the Great is God's name for the great world-system in which we are all living. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof"; and so is the "world" in the aspect of creation; but the world—the moral sphere where men's minds act, and where they build up their plans, and carry out their wills—this present evil world, is Satan's. It is his great metropolis on earth; and is the sphere where he rules, and where he is worshipped as Zeus Belus was in ancient Babylon.

When the clay vessel was ruined in Eden, the great enemy set Self before man, in the place of his Creator; and that Self Satan has dominated ever since. He dominated his will; and took possession of his mental faculties, and he made self-exaltation, self-improvement, and self-gratification his objects. Do not think that he blazed before his victim gross and revolting moral evils.

No; he came as "an angel of light," and made self-advancement, and so-called improvement man's great object. He bade him claim the earth for himself. He filled him with "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Turn the light of God's lamp on the world today, and its fogs and mists will take shape before you, and the walls, the towers, the markets, the colleges, the parliaments of Satan's great clay-built city will rise before your eyes—and more, the great temple tower which men are building higher than ever Babylon rose will loom upon your sight.

Potsherds of the earth, formed out of the clay, dwelling in houses of clay, have wrought with their busy minds to build up a system that is for human exaltation and improvement. Her foundations and walls are laid deep in the clay of human wisdom. Imagination is her busy architect; independence has planned her government; Pride has piled up her towers; Selfishness controls her gates. She claimeth still to be "the Lady of Kingdoms," for the world-system is over every land. She still calleth her temple tower "the Gate of Heaven," for all religions are gathered within its many stories.

It must be plain to all that a great moral force that could never have sprung from a holy Creator is at work in the world today; and because it is the sphere in which we all dwell, I believe God describes it as a city, and calls it Babylon the Great. Babel means "confusion," as you know; and if we take ever so short a stroll through this human-built city, I think we shall see how very aptly it is named.

Let us begin at its market-place. Here every nation offers its produce, but every nation protects itself, shutting out the produce of other lands as far as it can. Take care of yourself, get all you can, and give as little as you can, is the maxim of the World's market. Long, long ago it began, when Eve "saw the tree that was good for food."

Come now to its schools of art. All that is lovely of human structure is here— sculptures, paintings, architecture, gorgeous fabrics, exquisite colorings, all that in which the eye delights. Eve first entered it when she saw that the tree was "pleasant to the eyes."

And now come to its great universities, its colleges, its schools. "Knowledge is power" is the motto over its gates. So Eve thought when she saw that it was "a tree to be desired to make one wise," and took of the fruit thereof.

Self-seeking began in Eden, and lawlessness began there too. Independence is the principle of the city's government, and this it would achieve by association, and thus it creates the most bitter tyranny. Man is doing now in government as he began to do at Babel, attempting confederacy. The masses rule and try to keep order, but confusion increases on every side. Huge companies carry on trade; yet trade becomes more trying and more hazardous every day. Nation talks of joining nation to prevent war; yet armies grow larger, navies more numerous, weapons of war more deadly. Even now men meet in solemn conclave to settle how to kill each other by rule of order; how to take each other's goods honorably, and to decide how they shall use the air, as well as the land and water, as the medium for destroying one another. Great "Trade Unions" become more and more powerful, and more and more avaricious. And business becomes more and more difficult.

I ask you, was ever "confusion" more truly descriptive of anything than it is of Satan's World? And now they are planning a confederacy of religions. They want one religion: one great temple tower, by which man is supposed to climb back to communion with the Unseen World, and raise himself to Heaven. Yet amidst all the so-called progress, men's hearts are failing them for fear of those things which are coming on the earth, and they know not that across all their efforts to exalt themselves, and to spurn all authority, God has written as of old, "BABEL."

It is not, however, with this great world-system as a city that we have to be occupied so much as with its temple tower. It seems to me that, just as Babylon's great temple was of old built out of the clay, so this great conglomerate of religions is built up of men and women formed out of the clay. They are the bricks, so to speak, of which it is composed. The great Enemy has blinded their minds and hardened their hearts against their Creator, and has surreptitiously placed himself before them that he may rule as prince and god of this world. It is good for man, so he says, to be religious, and every kind of idolatry has been set before him. We know that idolatry is demon worship; we know also that it was idolatry and Spiritism which brought the flood upon the world that then was. The same sins wrecked the clay nation later on; and we have but to glance through the religions of our day to see that the same sins, in more refined dress, are around us on every hand.

When Israel failed, God's counsels began to unfold, for He loved this wrecked and sinful race, and a heavenly Stranger entered the world by human birth. He came to undo the works of the Prince of this World: to refute the cruel lie with which he had blinded the minds of men, and to manifest God's love. In the great clay city He was, but never of it; weak as to His manhood, but the Son of God with power as to His person. Thrice He met the great Enemy on the earth in mortal combat, and thrice refused his insidious moral temptations.

There He stood, a solitary Stranger on God's earth. The citizens of the great city "knew Him not." His own nation "received Him not." He stood in weakness and hunger as to His manhood, yet refusing "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Of royal birth as to His earthly pedigree, Divine as to His person, yet with a will perfectly plastic to His Father's mind, there was no moral flaw in that perfect Vessel, and the baffled Tempter fled from before Him.

You know the history well; you have heard the cry of "Crucify! Crucify!" pealing down the ages; you know that the great Enemy who could not corrupt Him 'determined to turn Him off His own earth; that he turned Him out of His great clay city, and left Him with only a grave. Israel did not want a king who would reign in righteousness. Man did not want a Being perfectly plastic to God's holy will. Such a Person was accounted unfit to live in Satan's world-sphere. They cried, "Away with Him," and they hanged Him on a tree, and buried Him out of their sight. They never saw Him again. The Enemy had apparently triumphed once more. He had cast God out of the moral sphere of the world, and now he had cast Him off His own earth. Men were but Satan's ready instruments. In pleasing themselves they wrought his will. He desired, and kept, their worship. What an awful moment was that for both world and earth! Have you considered it? The god of this world triumphant, the Creator of this fair earth in the grave!— death lying upon everything. It was God's just judgment upon the sin which Satan had originated. It was the very strength of his position. He had quenched the strange moral light that for a few short years had shone in his great metropolis, condemning by its heavenly purity the laws, the skill, the religion of his city.

Now man could build according to his will stage after stage of the great temple-tower: every brick of it a human idea of a divine reality; every portion of it an imitation of the truth; and all for the honor and glory of man himself. Stair after stair fitted to raise him in his own conceit. Every creed could be accommodated beneath its tower, and he gave it, as of yore, the proud title of "The Gate of Heaven." The busy builders have been master-thinkers in every age, and, generation after generation, they have reared fresh stories in the one huge temple, even asserting that mind can excel the matter from which it springs, and that out of the broken earthen vessel which cannot retain life, can come forth of itself a perfect being—in short, that the creature may in time hope to turn creator, and evolve life out of death.

So much for the tower in that day. But just at that very moment when Satan's triumph seemed complete, a new and wonderful thing came into view on the earth. A small company of people said that the One crucified and buried was alive again from the dead; and that they had not only seen Him, but had talked with Him, and eaten with Him, and that they had all seen Him ascend in bodily form to the sphere from which He had come, blessing them as He departed. But this was not all. They said that with the rushing noise of wind, and the gleam of fire, God the Holy Spirit had come down to earth, that He indwelt their bodies, that He had welded them together into one body, that He had set up a kingdom on the earth which owned no prince but the One crucified and buried, who was now living and crowned at God's right hand.

The citizens of the clay city might laugh at first at the story, but they were soon dumb with amazement, for all the forces of nature gave way before these feeble men at the mention of the Name of their crucified Prince: the lame walked, the dead were raised, the sick were healed. They said, "We have nothing to do with your great clay city; we cannot build it up or admire it; and as for your temple tower, we cannot enter it or worship in it, or acknowledge in any way the rule of the god of this world." "This will never do," cried the greater than Zeus Belus. "This will never do," echoed his citizens; and straight upon this little company of men and women they rushed with fury and scorn, with fire and sword. "We will soon annihilate it," they cried. "We will stamp it out, we will bury it out of sight," but in vain. Prison gates opened at dead of night. Mad persecutors became mighty evangelists. Where one martyr bled and died, a score of believers swelled the broken ranks; where hundreds fell, thousands rose up and stood. "The gates of Hades" could not prevail against that wondrous company.

Then was formed the masterpiece of Satanic wisdom. It is this great Western dome of his temple tower. Fire and sword, torture and wrong, had been worse than powerless. He changed his tactics. He came as an "angel of light."

In the dead of night, when all was still and hushed in the camp of a soldier-emperor, who lay slumbering amidst his oft-defeated host, the man started from his sleep to behold a vision of the night standing before him, and in its hand it held the figure of a cross. "In this sign conquer," it cried, and vanished from his sight. Up on the banner of that mighty man of war went the once despised symbol of the Cross, and there it rode above the hosts of men, where clarions sounded, where arms clashed, where the dying gasped their last, where the wounded moaned as the chariots crushed them to the earth. There, high above all, it rode, and the warriors hailed it victorious, and the foemen fled in terror from its mystic power, "The Cross! The Cross!" was their cry. "In this sign we conquer." Oh, awful parody! Oh, hideous deceit! Would they believe it, that little torture-worn company? They whispered in wonder, for the great Emperor, the victorious warrior, had bowed his proud head beneath the waters of baptism, and boasted in the name of the One crucified on the Cross.

"You have triumphed," whispered the great Enemy to this suffering company. "You can look for defense to this strong arm of flesh. You shall have the gold, the silver, the glory of my great metropolis to enrich you. We will worship the apostles and prophets whom we ignorantly slew. We will deify that holy woman who bore on to this earth the One whom we murdered. As for the army of martyrs, we will kneel before it. Only accept our contrition; only be one with us."

What a change was this, from shame and suffering and agony to honor and ease and wealth. Alas for the little company, it fell before the wiles of him whose force it had withstood! "The world has become Christian," it cried, and it sat down in ease in the clay city, while up on the

dome of that Western cathedral went the figure of a cross. He decked the wondrous palace within and without with the taste and the skill, the wisdom and the intellect and the oratory of the vessels formed out of the clay. With pealing organs, solemn chants, gorgeous robes, rarest incense, he bade them worship the One murdered on the Cross and buried out of sight. Everything that could appeal to the human senses was to be there, and woe to them who bowed not before the sculptured forms that stood beside the altars! For he had triumphed once more, and idolatry was there. The sacred scroll written by the apostle and prophet was cased in jeweled caskets, and splendidly robed priests turned the key upon it. The little company—where was that? The great Deceiver laughed to see his dupes rearing in the name of Another, the great temple tower where he ruled. He called her the Church, the spouse of Christ! He arrayed her "in purple," the regal power of the world, and scarlet color, the sacerdotal power; he decked her with "gold and precious stones and pearls," the riches and glory of the great world-city; and he taught her to cry in her heart, like Babylon of old, "I sit a queen and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow." Alas! Alas! she hath forgotten that He whom her lips call "Lord, Lord" went out of the world by way of the Cross and the Grave, and she hath turned as an unfaithful spouse to the wealth of the great city for support; to its power for protection; to its wit and learning for advancement; to its glory for adornment; yet all the while, strange but true, she weareth the Cross upon her brazen brow.

There is room beneath that tower for everyone.

Do you ask, Has the little company then been utterly lost to view? To man's view, yes. Yet has it always been seen and known by Him who suffered on that Cross of shame; and ever and anon from the pomp and glory of the city's magnificence an overcomer has stood up, and has raised his voice in protest against the grand imitation tower claiming ever to be "The Gate of Heaven." Then down upon his devoted head fell the thunder of sacerdotal power, and she who once had been the persecuted, turned into a savage persecutor. From dungeon gates, from the stakes of martyrdom, from the chains of slavery, the overcomer bore witness to the triumph of Satan's wiles. Reformers rose, and strong in confidence in human power, and claiming succor from human swords and human wealth, sank deep into the miry clay of independence, and split to a thousand broken sections.

Do you gaze aghast at the gruesome picture of what should have been so unworldly, so unearthly, so chaste, so spiritual? Do you mourn bitterly that you are with the rest captive in Babylon? that from a human point of view the enemy's triumph has been complete once more? and that evil doctrines, wood, hay, and stubble have ruined that which should have expressed Christ? Does the tempter taunt you with the ruin? Does he not boldly flaunt abroad doubts as to the Divine origin of such a confused muddle of sects, of such an utter failure? I am sure he does. No thinking mind in earnest quest for truth but must stand bewildered at all it sees, and hears, and reads, put forth under the name of Christ today. It is to help you, if I can, that I draw this sad but true picture.

I know that many young Christians are looking round at the present time for that which is "the Church," for something that shall unmistakably be of God. Staggered by the babel of voices around them, they forget that confusion is Satan's triumph, and that he is the prince of this world, not Christ; that the doctrine that the One who is the rightful Lord and King is not rejected, is his deception; that the "winds of doctrine" that blow on every hand, are from him.; that imitation of truth is his masterpiece. So once I looked and longed myself. So once I sought amidst the babel of the clay temple tower for that which should be an God's one foundation, for something which should satisfy my soul. Churches, chapels, conference halls, meeting-rooms saw me by turns, but still I sought in vain. I had been reared to despise Rome and its teachings, yet it offered an external unity, and lives of seclusion and devotion. Should I believe all that I had heard, or should I see for myself? I would see for myself.

I was away from home, and free, and I sought and obtained permission to visit a convent in the city where I was staying. On the day appointed I stepped up to that convent door. I heard keys jangle, and bolts withdrawn, before I stood face to face with a nun, who bade me enter, and showed me into a barely-furnished room, with sacred pictures on the white walls, and closely barred windows. There I waited alone for some minutes till a pleasant-looking nun appeared, and told me that the Superior had directed that I should be shown over the building. I remember that we went through many passages, and peered into small bare rooms, with tiny couches, prie-Dieux, for to my shame I say it—

and crucifixes on the walls; that we looked at a little square garden, or court, completely enclosed by the building itself, where the few living green things gave one the sense of the strange contrast they presented to the barren coldness within. Then we visited several rooms where nuns were teaching young ladies in classes; and in one of these I paused behind my retreating guide—paused to look, not at the bare walls, not at the barred window, not at the young scholars in the bloom of youth and beauty, but at the face of the teacher. It rests with me still. Never shall I forget it; ghastly white, with sunken eyes swollen with weeping, the frail frame trembling visibly, she stood teaching those young girls, when the most casual observer would have considered her fit for a hospital and a nurse. She avoided my pitying glance. I dared not speak, and I turned and left her. Was the rule so strict that compassion had no place? How strange it seemed!

Then we ascended a circular staircase, lighted by a skylight, from which the light streamed full upon the life-size figure of a woman. It was clad in gaudy drapery, and on its head was a golden crown. In an instant my guide dropped upon her knees before the figure, and then rising, she hastily signaled me to kneel, and passed on by herself, and disappeared through a door at the far end of the corridor. I ever wonder at myself, for to my shame I say it—for a moment my knee was bending in obedience; the next I straightened it, and the Word of God came to my succor: "Thou shalt not make to thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above.... Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them." (Ex. 20). What then did all this mean? I knew that decorated figure was meant for the image of the most blessed and honored woman who had ever lived or ever would live upon this earth. I knew she was now in heaven; but the direction to worship before her statue in direct violation of God's holy law— whence came that? A sudden revulsion of feeling seized me: I gazed on the figure with disgust, and turned quickly to meet my returning guide, who now beckoned me to enter the door from which she had just reappeared.

It was a darkened chamber, so dark that for a moment I could scarcely see anything but a richly draped altar, on which candles were burning before a small crucifix. Then gradually I saw that I was in a little chapel, and that the black forms of kneeling nuns were before me. Their white bands glimmered in the dim light, and they seemed lost in silent prayer. Again signaling me to kneel beside her, my guide dropped on her knees, and busily told her beads. Alas! it was all so like what Sunday by Sunday I had lately seen in the Church of my fathers; and knowing that He who was supposed to be worshipped there had the deepest right to my adoration, I knelt beside her, while my eyes turned to the crucifix and the altar. A few seconds, and the beads were told, and we were again on our way, leaving the veiled figures still kneeling in the gloom. "It is perpetual adoration," whispered my guide. "Night and day nuns are kneeling there in worship."

What a beautiful idea! I thought. Prayer and praise always ascending from that roof: one batch of nuns relieving another as exhausted nature required rest or food. With my young mind freshly awakened to think on eternal things; full of dislike for the cold formalism that I saw in the Church of my fathers; tired of the objectless existence of a young lady's life; longing for a vocation that should wholly engross me, I was for the moment fascinated. Naturally full of a passion for the ideal, and fully susceptible to the wondrous charm of sacred rite and mystic symbol, I might have fallen an easy prey to that seductive will-worship in the great clay temple tower, had it not been for the startling fact that I would have had to pass by the worship of a woman's image to enter the sacred precincts where stood the crucifix. If I desired, as I did, to fly from the babel of conflicting voices in which I had been reared, I had been too well taught the letter of the Word to approach a life of devotion through the worship of an idol.

On we went, my guide and I, till we reached an outer door. Again there was a portress, again keys jangled and locks and bolts grated, as that door opened. Then we passed a narrow court, and found ourselves in a large hall, where some scores of children of the poor were receiving their education. As we entered, an aged nun approached me. Her bearing was dignified, her features were clearly cut and beautiful, her silvery hair could just be seen under her hood. There she stood, looking pure and calm and happy, and the quiet command in her voice and mien told me at once that I was in the presence of the Mother Superior of the convent. A sweet smile played over her face as she asked, "Would you like to hear the children sing?" "Indeed I should," I answered; and in a moment, at a signal from her, the lessons ceased, the children rose, and in sweet tones they sang. Sang what? "we Maria" was their song. A sadness fell upon my spirit. The melody ceased, the children resumed their seats and their studies, and I turned to leave. I thanked the Superior for her kindness in allowing me to view the convent, and told her how I liked the thought of a devoted life such as hers; but I was not true enough to tell her what barred the way to me. Incidentally I mentioned something of the news of the outside world, and I was quite startled at the eager interest which both she and my guide evinced in what was going on. It was plain that, though they were shut out by their vows from the news of the outer world, the enforced seclusion had not destroyed their interest in such things. I told them all I could, and then returned to the convent door, and passing once more through the unlocking of doors, found myself outside the bars and bolts of that secluded domicile.

"Why," I asked myself, "why, if a life of devotion is so sweet, why those jangling keys, why those fast-locked doors, those closely-barred windows?" It was plain that vows, however sincerely made, could not satisfy the longing soul. The broken, sinful, clay vessel cannot mend itself. Vows and bars and bolts cannot shut out self and sin. Man's effort to elevate himself was here, to fit himself for God by devotion and mortification; beautiful enough it looked at the outset, but well was it for me that my eyes were rudely opened to the idolatry practiced in that section of the great clay temple tower.

Unknown to me, amidst the dreadful chaos of the so-called Christian World, One who loved me drew me on till I found myself a stranger in Babylon, and sat down to weep with those who remembered Zion, who looked for a city whose builder and maker is God; and I heard a voice from heaven crying: "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:15-18).

Come out! But how? Fly! But where? That had yet to be learned. "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubabel (stranger in Babylon). Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6).

Do you remember how we saw the Jewish captives in Babylon, mourning as they remembered Zion? They were each of them shreds of the great clay nation which had turned from Jehovah to Egypt for help, which had worshipped idols, and despised His covenant. They mourned the failure, but they had to suffer for it. They hung their harps upon the willows, and wept when they remembered Zion. Did Jehovah overlook them and forget them? No. He sent them that glorious prophetic song of future deliverance. So now, if you, young Christian, are with those who sigh and who cry for the abominations that are done in this great moral Babylon, and long after the temple of your God, and look for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God-if thus you mourn and trust, there comes for you, as for them, a grand prophetic song. Listen. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.... "(Rev. 18:4).

And now ye who sigh and who cry over the moral ruin which has been wrought on that Church which still bears the name of Christ, and who mourn in the midst of the babel of human creeds, and shudder to find idolatry and Spiritism on every side of you, remember the captives of old in the material Babylon of long ago, and behold the future doom of the great world-system and its religion, wherein the little company of long ago has been so disastrously merged. "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall the great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." (Rev. 18:21). Thus, as of yore, deep under the waters, where no human eye can see it, where no human hand can reach it, lies the doom of the mystic Babylon the Great.

The great world-system around us today must perish forever, the greatest ideals of man are but of clay and must crumble, like their originator, into dust, and even now is sounding from heaven the cry, "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwelleth with the daughter of Babylon." (Zech. 2:7).

Our God is our salvation, our refuge in distress,

What earthly tribulation can shake our

steadfast peace?

The ground of our profession is Jesus and

His blood;

He gives us the possession of everlasting good.

We know no condemnation; no law that

speaks despair;

And Satan's accusation, with Christ

we need not fear.

For us there is provided a city fair and new,

To it we shall be guided—Jerusalem's in view.

Clay and Stone: Babylon the Great and the New Jerusalem, Chapter 8: The City of Stone (21:10-22)

"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like jasper stone clear as crystal.... And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."—Rev. 21:10-22.

WE finished off last evening with those solemn words: "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Are you on the quest? Have you turned your back on the great clay city Babylon, refusing its principles, its glory, and its religion? Do you want to find the city for which Abraham looked? He did not want Babel. He wanted a city that had foundations. He did not want a man-built city; he looked for one whose builder and maker is God. When he looked for it he left country and kindred, and wandered about homeless in the very land which he was to inherit.

Did he ever find it? No. But by faith he saw it, and he will find it, he will see it really. If you want to find it, you will have to seek it as he did. If you want a glimpse of it by faith now, if you want something of the joy of it now in your soul, you must go outside the gate—outside the camp of all that Babylon typifies, escaping, as I have told you, by the death and grave of Christ, coming in spirit to Him where He now is. There outside the city you have found the Temple of Stone—Worship; there you have entered the Kingdom of Stone Rule; and there you will find the City of Stone—dwelling. For the name of the city you will find is "The New Jerusalem"—"Behold, the Tabernacle of God with men."

Will you be in it now? No, but its name will be written on you now. To the overcomer in the dark closing days of the ruined Church's history the Lord says, "I will make him a pillar in the Temple of my God"—that is now—"and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down from heaven from my God; and my new name" (Rev. 3:12). All that is now in the Spirit. The Temple of Stone will be finished, as we have seen, when Christ descends into the air, as the Head Stone—and viewed as the Bride it will rise to meet Him. The Church must go up into heaven before it can come out as the City of Stone, the Holy Jerusalem.

The Apostle Paul says in his Epistle to the Galatians, "Jerusalem that now is, is in bondage with her children." Yes; captive in Babylon, unable to escape, bearing the doom of the broken law, trying to live by ordinances, trying to be justified by the works of the law, trying to improve the great clay city, and coming under the shadow of its doom. Her walls broken down, her gates destroyed, her temple left unto her desolate, a ruin; and the goodly stones, the goodly stones, scattered amidst much rubbish. That is all that is left on man's side. Christ is not there.

Do you say, "But I am young, and the earth is fair, and the world is full of prospects and countless pleasures for me; and to reckon that the death of Christ lies betwixt me and all the glories and joys of the great clay city is such a gloomy idea! Must I turn away from it all for a vision of the far future?" Have you ever been in the Lord's company? Have you ever known the joy of communion with Him? Is there anything—anything—on earth like the joy of that? Is not your heart weary and sick and joyless if you have lost His company? Young Christian, the New Jerusalem is your birthright. Do not despise it. You cannot have both. You must leave the clay city through the death and grave of Christ if you would dwell with Him in resurrection in the City of Stone. "Jerusalem which is above is free." All is of the Spirit there; all is living.

And you whose joy it is to serve Christ now in this day of His rejection—do you ever think what it will be to serve Him in the day of His reign? No weak, failing bodies of clay then; no hindering sin within, no lethargy, no self-conceit, no lack of wisdom. The New Jerusalem comes to reign over the world to come, comes to reign with Christ. You and I may not be counted worthy to rule ten cities or five, but, depend upon it, there will be someone for whom to care, someone to watch over for the King.

And is that all? No; service could never satisfy the heart. The secret new name will be yours—close, deep, perpetual communion with the One Who once loved you unto blood.

Do you think God is content to let this lovely earth of His be forever groaning under the thrall of evil? Do you think that He is going to leave this world alone till it destroys itself in the delirium of evil? No; the King of kings is coming to reign in righteousness, and Babylon's doom is fixed.

Will it be no joy to you to see the Lord Jesus, once scorned and crucified, owned as Lord and King by the whole world? Will it be no joy to you to be with Him in His kingdom, to execute His righteous decrees, to see all the confusion and ruin and lawlessness ended, and "the knowledge of the Lord covering the earth, as the waters cover the sea"? Will it be no joy to you to minister to a bright, happy, rejoicing world, where there are no armies, no navies, no prisons, no hospitals, no cemeteries? Think of it; and you and I are really going to be with Christ, and enter into His joy over all this. That is what it means to be part of the City of the great King—the City of Stone—God's metropolis over the earth.

This is much; but there is more. The reign of righteousness will come to a close; the tempter will escape from his prison-house; and a dim cloud of storm and tempest closes the happy period. Then rises before us the great White Throne, and the earth and heaven flee from the Face of Him Who sits thereon. And then there looms upon the sight a new heaven and a new earth. And what is there for you and me then? Why, then, in that new scene, where righteousness reigns no more, but dwells, there shall the name written on the overcomer on earth in the darkest days of great Babylon's power come into view; for the holy city, the new Jerusalem, comes down from heaven, while a great voice out of heaven cries: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, their God" (Rev. 21:3).

If our eyes are on Christ, our hearts set upon Him, His interests will be dear to our souls; and while He leads our priestly service of adoration to the Father in the unseen Temple of living stones, we shall gladly come forth as Levites to hold forth "the word of life," to "be blameless and harmless, the children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation" (Phil. 2:15, 16) or as porters to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2); worshipping in spirit and in truth in the unseen Temple; serving in faithfulness and love in the unseen kingdom; and looking for and seeking the unseen city which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Farewell, young Christian reader. These object-lessons from God's Word are over. May you and I be preserved unto the Lord's "heavenly kingdom" like the apostle of old, and find our places for eternity in the holy city, the New Jerusalem.

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