

Revelation - Commentaries by Charles Stanley

Things New and Old: Volume 30, Revelation of Jesus Christ, The: No. 21 (21:22)

Chapter 21

Verse 22. "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." How high the privilege! How near the relationship! How deep the enjoyment! How sweet the communion! No temple; nothing to intervene; nothing to separate! No need of sun, or moon, or creature helps: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

Its influence on the world, too, is very remarkable. "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." This shows clearly that this is the heavenly church during the millennium, oh, how blessed; never shall defilement enter there. Nothing abominable or false can ever enter; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. What will it be to be there!

The false church has polluted the nations like a stream or river of poison. What a contrast!

Chapter 22.

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Is it not most blessed to contemplate the church glorified in incorruptibility, and purity, and the channel of blessing to the nations, like a river of life? One with Christ, it stands the tree of life for the healing of the nations, with its fruit ever fresh. Oh, blessed scene! and so near! But even now should it not answer to all this?

Jesus said to the Father, "And the glory that thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." Words seem to fail to describe that glory, and hence these marvelous figures: every one of which is in direct contrast with the great city of iniquity, Babylon the great. The one is the harlot of the kings of the earth; the other the bride, the Lamb's wife. The one proceeds from the polluted city of Rome; the other is holy, descending out of heaven from God. The one ever seeks the glory of this world; the other is seen having the glory of God. The one spreads darkness over the nations like a black cloud; the other has her light like unto a stone most precious. The one has spread wars and devastation on earth; the other dwells in heavenly security, with her walls great and high.

The one has drenched the earth with the blood of the saints; from the other proceeds righteous administration to every part of the earth. The gate in scripture was the place of administration. She had twelve gates: three looking every way. The one was the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit; the other is divine purity—pure gold like unto glass—perfect purity, everlasting righteousness. She is adorned with the precious stones like the stones on the breastplate of Aaron—the Urim and Thummim that sparkled in the radiance of the presence and glory of God.

The sins of Babylon, the harlot—apostate Christendom—had reached up to heaven. But in the heavenly city, the bride of the Lamb, "every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." Every act of government is pure and righteous, and all her intercourse absolute righteousness for evermore, No stain of sin, no spot of defilement. Babylon had her temples, and her so-called saints and intercessors, to hide God from man. But in the heavenly city "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Yes, God will have His delights with the sons of men. The Lamb will have His unhindered delight with His bride, the church.

On earth the harlot seeks the light and help of the supreme government of the world, and, like the moon, all that reflects it. Not so the heavenly: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The great harlot did corrupt the earth: "The waters which thou sawest where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." But the nations that are saved shall walk in the light of the heavenly city. And instead of a black stream of corruption, "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

If the tyranny of Rome has been the curse of the nations, the very leaves of the tree shall then be for the healing of the nations; and there shall be no more curse. No, the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. Oh, blessed reign of God and the Lamb! And His servants shall serve Him; they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. No more night of darkness or obscurity; the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for the ages of ages.

Now the true church, the bride of the Lamb, will not only be the blessed contrast of the false church, or great harlot, but there is also another deeply interesting inquiry: Should not the true church of God, all the holy building built by Christ, have answered even now to what she will shortly be as here revealed? And, further, if the church has utterly failed in this, her heavenly character, ought not then each believer to seek to answer to this heavenly character, in contrast to all that is worldly and carnal around? Is it not the desire of Christ that we should not be of the world even as He is not of this world? If we are found in Babylon, and mixed up with her ways, how can we expect to be found in the holy city having the glory of God? Is it not true that, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him?

It may be asked, Are these things really facts, or are they the mere opinions of men; things that may never come to pass, or if they do, at some far distant period of time, that will not affect us? "And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done." Let it be noticed that both in the introduction

and closing remarks of this book the revelation of God is limited to His servants. It would appear then that none will understand these sayings but those who are His servants. Thus we may ask ourselves the solemn question, Am I seeking my own interest, or am I truly seeking to serve Him? Is it then to be wondered at, that if those who are not His servants seek to interpret or understand this book, all will be, as it is, contradiction and confusion?

Verse 7. Do not say these are far distant events. Jesus says by His angel, "Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book." Three times in these concluding verses does He repeat those three words, "I come quickly." Do we believe Him? Are we really looking for Him? Then this book will be intensely interesting to us. "When God spoke to Daniel he was to seal up the prophecy unto the time of the end—that time of three years and a half, which is so fully brought before us in this book. But to John He saith, "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." May we read these things with this conviction, that the time is at hand! Yes, Jesus is coming quickly. Do you say, How can this be; we have been led to expect a great change for the better before He comes? When He comes will there be such unrighteousness in trade, such prevailing sin and iniquity as there is now? Hear the solemn answer of the Lord: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Do not say, If that is the case it seems to be all in vain to make any effort. Why should we seek to serve Him by winning souls to Him.? Hear what He says, "And, behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me," &c. Thus speaks the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Surely this is a most solemn moment in which we live! Is it a small privilege to have washed our robes in the blood of the Lamb, and thus have right to the tree of life? And is it a small matter to any who may read these lines to be shut out with dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie?

How solemn the warning of this last sentence. How many spend their lives and talents in writing fiction, or a lie; and how many more love to read them! Oh, let such not forget this last warning! Satan is a liar, and fiction is one of his most deadly instruments in the last day in leading souls to destruction.

A few months ago a preacher was holding children's services on the shore of a watering place. Some two thousand souls were listening great numbers of these had been, devouring fiction until the very time he began. They sang a hymn, in which the readers of fiction or lies joined. One line they sang was, "I am following Jesus all the way," and how many might have added, "with a novel on my knees!" It was an awful sight; no sooner had the speaker closed, than the novels were again devoured. The Gospel had been earnestly proclaimed, but there was no wonder that the preacher was discouraged, and said he should probably not be there next year.

Let us, then, not forget that the loving and making a lie is classed with the greatest crimes. Softly mingled the sighs of the sea and the sweet strains of that hymn, but what was it all in the sight of the Lord? We were sorry the preacher did not lift up a warning voice; perhaps he thought if he did hundreds of his hearers would come no more. Thus is drifting the hollow profession of these last clays. Surely—each one may say, "Hold thou me up and I shall be safe." He alone can keep us by His mighty power, through faith unto salvation at the coming of the Lord.

We have still the closing words of Jesus Lord, grant that our ears may be open to hear.

Things New and Old: Volume 30, Revelation of Jesus Christ, The: No. 22 (22:16)

Chapter 22.

Verse 16. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, [and] the bright and morning star." Yes, fellow believer, it is our Jesus, who has sent His messenger to testify these things to us. Surely this will give an interest in these things to which the world must be a stranger. If we think of Him as the Messiah, He presents Himself as both the root and offspring of David. But to us He is the bright and morning star. Yes, it is His own Person that has shone so brightly at the end of this loner dark night.

For long dark centuries it was the church, the church, but for half a century it has been Christ as the morning star. Oh, may He shine so intensely bright that compared with Him all else be dim! What has been the effect of this? The eye of the bride has been lifted up to "Behold the Bridegroom."

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." Yes, again it is known that we have not to pray for the Spirit. He is here on earth. He has awakened the heart of the bride, and touched her inmost affections. Her eye is lifted up; like Rebecca, it is the heavenly Isaac—the bridegroom, not the judge; and, as if with one voice, "the Spirit and the bride say, Come." Oh, what a moment is this. The Spirit on earth, who knows the mind of God, now says to the Bridegroom of the church, Come. Do you hear this? "And let him in that heareth say, Come." Yes, if God has now opened your ears to hear, then lift up your heart and cry, Come.

Do you say, I am only just awaking: a desire has sprung up in my soul to know Jesus, and His coming again; I can only say, I thirst! Oh, precious words of Jesus to you: "And let him that is athirst come." Yes, you say, but I am the most guilty and unworthy. But Jesus says, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Oh, how God delights in mercy—mercy to the last. Whosoever, whosoever, let him take the water of life freely. This verse 17 marks the testimony of Jesus in these very last days. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Yes, just at the last, the coming of Christ, and the full free gospel of the grace of God is fully declared. How great and blessed our privileges.

It is, however, true that no part of the holy scriptures have been, and are being, more perverted than this precious book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We have therefore the solemn warnings of verses 18, 19. Yes, those highly esteemed amongst men, who are adding to or

perverting the prophecy of this book—such as deny the love of Christ to His church, and the certainty that He will keep His saints from the plagues of this book—such may indeed literally be left to pass through these tribulations. Yes, though their names may now be written as Christians, then it may indeed at last be found that they have no part in the book of life or the holy city. It is no light thing for the mere human mind, or the human mind led on by Satan, to meddle with the things of this book.

But now He which testifies these things speaks the closing word. “Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Now it is evident that if all these things we have seen in this book—the judgment of the seals; the plagues of the trumpets and vials; the restoration of the Roman empire; the destruction of apostate Christendom, &c.—if all these have to take place before the coming of the Lord Jesus, then there would be no meaning in the words of Jesus, “Surely I come quickly.” And this is the object of Satan, whoever he may use as the writer. His object is to make the words of Jesus to His saints to have no meaning. Jesus says, “Surely I come quickly.” Let then the reply from the depths of our hearts be, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” Yes, quick as the flash of lightning, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He will come quickly. Our blessed certain future is, “Forever with the Lord.” All is now ready. May we go out to meet Him.

The uniform teaching of the New Testament is that He will come quickly, and unexpectedly. His coming first to take the church makes all simple: without this, the harmony of scripture would be destroyed. At first the virgins went out to meet Him. (Matt. 25.) How could this possibly be, if all the judgments and plagues of this book had to be fulfilled first? Yet from the day when the church was seen going out to meet the Lord, there has not been a single event unfulfilled so as to have hindered the coming of the Lord to take His church. No, it has been the long suffering of God, the patience of Christ with a lost and rejecting world. God had His own to gather out by the preached gospel. But as to all matters of prophecy, absolutely nothing had to be fulfilled before Jesus might come to take them to Himself according to His promise in John 14:1, 2.

The construction of this book is most wonderful in reference to this matter. It is quite true, as we have seen in chapter 1:19, the book is divided into three parts. Things which John had seen in chapter 1., then the things which are, as described in chapters 2, 3; then, the things that should be after these—all the things that should take place after the “things that are” have come to a close. The “things that are” then include the whole history of Christendom up to its close.

Now God chose seven assemblies then existing, in the state thus described. And the addresses are so sent to them that Jesus might have come at once. And yet those addresses were so given, that they describe the seven successive stages of church history, full of deepest instruction to us in these last days. And further, it is only within the last sixty years that this successive application has been fully opened to us. Indeed, this has opened up the whole Revelation.—

We now in this Revelation read the divine order of events from the day God was pleased to give this Revelation to the eternal state.

It is also very remarkable, whether we look at the churches as seen on earth, or at the state of Europe and the world, everything answers to this wondrous prophecy. There is in popery that which answers to Jezebel in Thyatira, running on to the end. There is in Protestantism that which answers to Sardis. There is also that in souls being drawn to the Person of Christ which answers, however feebly, to Philadelphia. And can we for a moment doubt that in the general state of Christendom there is that which answers to Laodicea?

Then as to the state of the world and its politics, can any one deny, that the signs of the times indicate the very state described in this book, after the things that are; that is, after the close and rejection of lifeless profession? The very education of the world is preparing it for these last scenes of human wickedness, when society and government shall be broken and shattered to pieces, like an earthquake. Superstition and infidelity are preparing the world for deeds of unparalleled wickedness. Yes, all is now in readiness like a train of gunpowder laid to a mine, God still waits in mercy, and the world waits until the church is gone, and God no longer “lets” or hinders by His providence or governments: and then when the church is gone, the desolating scenes of this book shall begin.

He who led Jew and Gentile to put to death the Christ of God—Satan—is now drilling armies for these terrible scenes we have seen described in this book. The sun or supreme government is beginning already to be darkened with the black clouds of diabolical anarchy, out of the bottomless abyss, preparing the way for the Roman empire again to arise.

May the Holy Ghost then lead us to meditate on all these things as about shortly to come to pass. Fellow Christians, how soon we shall be forever with the Lord. He who is worthy shall then open the seals of the Book. Then we shall know as we are known. Let us not lose heart now the Lord is so near. Conflicts with the powers of darkness may be very sharp. Oh, unspeakable privilege to be found faithful at the end. No doubt the state described in the address to Laodicea is the peculiar danger of this last hour of these last days. Let us then each beware of the sin of indifference to the interests of Christ. Vast numbers may give up Christ, and in His place seek satisfaction in sports, and service of song, or, as extremes meet, in unbelieving ritual: others in cold, infidel, soul-destroying speculations. Are all to be in earnest except the Christian? The Lord awake His own redeemed people, so that whilst following Him in lowliness of heart, we may be earnest and devoted as those who truly believe “The things which are written in this book.” Blessed Jesus, thy words are “Surely I come quickly. Amen.” Ever may ours be, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” C. S.

Things New and Old: Volume 25, Last Knock at the Door, The (3:20)

“Behold I stand at the door, and knock.”—Revelation 3

Here is the very last state of Christendom before it becomes the Babylon described in chapter 18:2 “The habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit,” &c.

To those who understand these seven addresses to the churches, as describing the whole course of Christendom, there can be no question but that we are now at the very close of that course. Jesus speaks to us just now: "Behold I come quickly," and, "Behold I stand at the door, and knock."

We will, then, suppose the reader to understand that the address to Ephesus described the state of the church in its first decline. The address to Smyrna, its period of persecution; Pergamos, the period when it so sadly mixed with the world; Thyatira, the dark ages of popery, and which is seen to continue to the end; Sardis, the period of the Reformation, or its results in the condition of Protestantism; the last two, Philadelphia and Laodicea, describe the condition of souls at the end of Protestantism. We have the close of Christianity on earth. The judgment of the Lord Jesus, His promises and warnings, what He approves, and what He disapproves. In fact, He speaks to us, and He knocks at the door of Christendom at the moment we read this paper.

In Philadelphia we see what the Lord finds as true. In Laodicea we see that which is false. The more we study these two addresses, the more we shall see it is not here a question of false assemblies and true ones, but that which marks a true christian condition of soul, and false profession, wherever found now at the end. Do these words, then, apply to the reader? "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Surely these are the marks of a true Christian in these days of human boasting, rationalism, and the denial of Christ. Verse 9 intimates that ritualism also will abound, and is declared to be the synagogue of Satan; it does not rest in the word of Christ, but seeks to set up the Jewish principle of a ritual, that can never purge away sins. It is unmistakably of Satan. To all who have kept the word of His patience is the promise given, that they shall be kept from the hour of temptation. (Ver. 10.) This must include all that are Christ's. To all true Christians, then, at this time the Lord Jesus says, "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Oh, let us meditate on these words, morning, noon, and night. Is it not as if we heard His voice from the glory, "Behold I come quickly"? Let us now hearken to the last knock at the door of a false Christendom.

There is something deeply solemn in the thought, that there is not one thing in the last condition of Christendom that the Lord can approve; and He is "the faithful and true witness." Let us read, and may we, by the Spirit, understand that He is the faithful and true Witness of what the state of Christendom is in this its closing state.

Jesus says, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Assuredly this witness is true. Indifference, and utter want of love to Christ, is the first mark of all the false profession of this day, of that which bears the name of Christ, of that which calls itself the church. We read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." (1 John 2:15, 16.) Instead of separation from the world, does not hollow, heartless profession take the very lead in all its pleasures and follies? What are the shameful bazaars of Christendom in the eyes of the Lord Jesus? Is it not going mad after sport and worldliness? Yes, the Faithful Witness says, Thou art neither cold nor hot. Oh, deceived multitudes, sporting on to perdition, hear these solemn warnings of the Lord Jesus. He says, "because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." This is the certain doom of Christendom—to be utterly rejected, and cast out as loathsome.

It may be said, How can this be? Was there ever a time of such religious activity, such wealth in buildings, in able men, in knowledge, in temperance societies, and efforts and works of every kind. Look at our armies and blue ribbon societies; think of the crowds that sign the pledge. Certainly there is very little of Christ in all this; but no one can deny the church never was so rich in all these things.

Hear the last knock, and hearken to the voice of Jesus: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Is not this the condition of thousands of souls? Men must have excitement of some kind, to drown their thoughts—one day the pleasures of the world, another the busy activities of religious or temperance excitements. All this may be, nay, is, whilst those thus occupied are "wretched" If such calmly think of death, they are wretched. If they think of their sins, of a future judgment, they are wretched. Religious activities without Christ leave the soul miserable. These are the words of the faithful and true Witness. He knows the true spiritual condition of the professing masses to be wretched, and miserable, "and poor." Ah, whatever may be the possession of wealth or religious fame, in the light of the solemn fact that Jesus says, "Behold I come quickly" how poor is the soul without Christ! "And blind." What, this highly cultivated, educated, christian world, blind! Yes, He, the faithful Witness, says it. Yes, Christendom, in thy last, boasting state, thou art blind. Like Israel, thou also seest no beauty in Jesus. Do not forget this—that highly-favored, polished nation saw no beauty in Him to desire Him. It is so with unconverted Christendom, with all its polished teachers and privileges. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." What a scene in His sight is the hollow profession of these last days! Blind leaders of the blind. This applies to every unconverted professor, be he teacher, preacher, or hearer. The Lord Jesus testifies of this, the last state of Christendom, Thou art "blind."

"And naked." Yes, with all the effort to make a religious apron. Oh, poor deceived ritualist, or moralist, or half-hearted professor, thou must stand before the face of Him in judgment who says, Thou art "naked." Why dost thou make a profession, since thou art naked? "How earnest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment?" How terrible will be those words, "Take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." God, who clothed Adam and Eve with skins, also gave His Son, not only to bear the sinner's sins, but also to be raised from the dead, to be his righteousness; and yet, Christendom, even now, at the end, thou art declared to be naked. When we remember it is the Lord who thus speaks, nothing can be more solemn.

We shall see all this more than confirmed by the last counsel of Jesus: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich"—the righteousness of God accomplished by Christ passing through the fire of divine judgment. This is neither known nor possessed by professing Christendom. All pretensions to righteousness by law must be given up; and this is just what the natural man will not do. On which foundation are we resting? Are we vainly seeking righteousness in ourselves, or by works of law; or are we resting in the righteousness of God, apart from law, even Jesus, the fine gold that passed through the fire? (Read Rom. 3:19-26.) Yes, eighteen hundred years ago, Jesus thus described Christendom at the end, without this righteousness. Let anyone read the Epistle to the Galatians, and say, Are not all unconverted preachers and people seeking righteousness by works of law? God grant that the last knock of Jesus may be heard.

And what does He further counsel thee to buy? "White raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." What has a believer to give for the white raiment? We learn in Phil. 3 It is very simple when the eye is open to see. Paul had to give

up his own righteousness. Before God he had found all to be filthy rags. He counted all but dung, that he might win Christ. "That I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Yes, filthy rags defiled with sin, or in Christ whiter than snow. If not in Christ, all our efforts leave us naked. If not accepted in Christ, we cannot be accepted in any other way. If He is not made unto us righteousness, we are not Christians. And if we are mere professors, it is to be on the way to apostasy. All this is exceedingly solemn. What a state of soul is here described by the Faithful Witness! We beg the reader not to take refuge in any mere position, but inquire whether this address to Laodicea describes the condition of your unclothed, Christless soul.

Jesus further says, "and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." This witness also is true. If we have not received Christ as our righteousness, if we are not resting in His finished, atoning work, we certainly are not anointed with the Holy Ghost. He bears witness to the value of the blood of Jesus. Thus this boasting Christendom is found wanting in everything that marks a true Christian. It is that state of soul which ends in final apostasy, and eternal perdition. Still, the heart of Jesus lingers, and all He loves He rebukes and chastens. Are any found in Laodicea? He rebukes them, and bids them be zealous, and repent. To repent would be to judge and give up all that the natural man boasts of in these last days—it would be to cease to be a Laodicean. Jesus lingers still, He knocks at the door of Christendom. Soon it will be forever too late. To all who are in that state described in the address to Philadelphia, He will surely quickly come, and take them to Himself: they shall be kept from the storm of judgment about to fall on apostate Christendom.

It may be asked, Is it not written, that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea? Most assuredly this will be the case, but if we examine the scriptures, we shall find this, and all such promises, are not in connection with, or to Christendom; but in connection with Israel, and the kingdom, or reign of Christ, which cannot be set up until after the false apostate Christendom: and the lawless, infidel nations of Europe have been destroyed. (Rev. 17; 18) Then shall He come whose right it is to reign (chap. 19), and shall reign a thousand years. (Chap. 20)

Hark, hark, then, to the last knock of Christ. There can be no question that the true children of God are about to take their flight, like the swallows of autumn, to be "forever with the Lord." Then, for the poor, frivolous, lukewarm, yet boasting apostate Christendom, with thee it shall be forever too late, God shall send thee strong delusion. (2 Thess. 2) Child of God in the midst of this scene, the night is far spent, the day is at hand: "Wherefore, he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Let us boast no more of Philadelphian position, but ask ourselves, Are we in the Philadelphian state of soul? C. S.

The Holy Ghost dwells not in any particular assembly, but in the whole church.

Things New and Old: Volume 28, End of Another Year, The: How Have We Spent It? (3:5)

Whether converted, or unconverted, this is a solemn question. If unconverted, you are hastening on to death and judgment, where every secret thing of another year must be brought out. All that you have said, and all that you have done, will be brought out of the books before that terrible throne. "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works....And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Oh, will you close another year unsaved? You may be weary with the pleasures or sorrows of another year: soon it will have passed away, like a cloud. And will you still turn a deaf ear to Him who, in tender compassion, says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest?" Oh, try Him, come to Jesus before the year is out!

But do you profess to be a Christian? Then how have you spent this year? Take heed that you are not deceived. Remember, Jesus says that out of the mass of profession there are a few names, a few that shall walk with Him. (Rev. 3:4.) And "he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." Have you been an overcomer this year? If not, is it not high time to wake out of the delusive sleep of mere profession? Are you a child of God, and have you neglected prayer and dependence on God, so that you have sinned? If so, come at once, before the year closes, and fully confess your sins to your Father. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Oh, what mercy! "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 1:9; 2:1, 2.) Do not go on another day without confession and restoration to communion with your Father.

Or have you spent the year in contentions and strivings about unprofitable questions? Is this a lost year, both as to spiritual growth and usefulness? Does it need to be thus, if even called to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints"? The Lord enable us to discern between things that differ. Or have you spent the year in spiritual dearth? These are "clouds without water, carried about of winds." (Jude 12.) This is one of the terrible marks of apostasy. Its opposite is stated thus: "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth." (Eccles. 11:3.) Have you spent a year in soaring high in profession, but without giving a single drop of refreshing rain to others? Then surely you will have been driven about by the winds of this year. Oh, what a windy year it has been! enough to blow about the clouds without rain, until they do not know where they are.

But if the clouds be full of rain? Well, how are we to know if they are full of rain? The proof is very real—they empty on the earth—they are a blessing to a dry and thirsty land. Have you been a blessing to anybody this year? Or have you been, with itching ears of quibbling criticism, living in selfish uselessness and vain conceit? You may call this testimony, but has God used you to give a little refreshing rain on the earth?

But do you say, Well, as to the past sad year, all has been failure; but how am I to be refreshed myself, and be a blessing to others? For these two things, we would ask you to look at two scriptures. The figure is changed, but the truth is the same. In John 4 Jesus says, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Now, if you have not received the gift of Christ, all knowledge, and mere doctrine, and so-called testimony, leaves you as thirsty, as dry as a cloud without rain, driven about. What would be the state of a meeting where all are such clouds?

But if you have received the Holy Ghost, and He supplies the water of the word, then are fulfilled those wondrous words of Jesus, "shall never thirst." It is now in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life. There is now in him an inexhaustible source of unchanging satisfaction and joy. The Holy Ghost, ever refreshing him with the water of the word, he knows no drought. His trust is in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. 17:8.) What a contrast to the poor head-knowledge cloud without water.

The other scripture we would look at is in John 7:37-39. Do you say, the end of the year has come, and I am still unsatisfied, still thirsting for something I have not got? I have tried all the feasts of the year, and the various teachings of men; still I thirst, I thirst. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Do you hear His blessed voice, His invitation to you? He knows that man, with all his ritualism and feasts, or all his opinions, cannot satisfy you, so He says to you, "Come unto me." Like the cloud gathering its water from the vast ocean, so you must come to Him, and drink of His infinite fullness. There can be no rain on the earth, no blessing to others, except as you come first to Him, the only fountain of life and joy. He does not say, Let him come to the church, or to the priest, or to His blessed mother; no, Let him come unto Me, and drink.

And what will be the result? "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Rivers of living water are not like clouds without rain, driven about. Then which are you most like, an empty floating cloud, or a river of blessing to others?

"But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But now Jesus has glorified God, and has been raised from the dead glorified. The Holy Ghost has been given, and is here on earth. Have you received Him? If so, your privilege is now to be a river of living water-not the dry bed of a river, needing water merely-but full to overflowing. God grant it may be so with each of us, should we be down here another year.

Many a reader of this little gospel magazine may say, I read this little book to get blessing to my own soul; and many a high and dry cloud may despise it: but you say, What can I do to be a blessing to others, to rain on the earth?

I will tell you what a constant reader told me a day or two ago. He lives in a village where there is no ministry of Christ within reach of his home. He is very aged. Few could possibly have less privileges than he has had. If a few Christians met in any house in the villages around, they would be discountenanced, and probably turned out of their houses. Satan reigns in these dark villages. What can T. F. do in such a place? He receives one copy of Things New and Old. He said, "I always read it twice Then I send it to the village of H. It is read by three or four families there. I send another, the same (I think he said "Word and Work"). It is then sent to the village of C, a village where the gospel is unknown, except it enters in this way. Several families read it there. It then goes on to B. And so, some twenty families have the gospel brought to their doors, and food to the hidden sheep of Christ. Thus one hundred souls may be reached continuously by one copy of Things New and Old.

Now, if every reader of this little magazine did likewise in the coming year, should the Lord in long-suffering tarry another year, nearly one million souls would be reached, in a monthly stream of rain on the earth.

Oh, dear fellow-Christians, will you not earnestly cry to God in prayer that this little paper may be a cloud full of rain, to be thus emptied in blessing on the earth? We only desire to continue in this service, so long as the Lord gives refreshment and blessing by it to His scattered flock in these last dark days. You who are the Lord's can thus help, both in prayers and in seeking the hidden sheep and lambs of Christ. Is it not "high time to awake out of sleep?" We call upon all our readers to awake. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Ah, even yet before the year closes we may be forever with the Lord.

Let not Satan discourage you by the dry clouds driven of winds. Come to Jesus Himself; seek close, abiding, satisfying communion with Him; and then He will show you what to do, so that, as a full cloud, you may be emptied on the earth. Remember, we are in the days of lukewarmness as to Christ, neither cold nor hot. Beware of the chilling stream of indifference. You must either walk close to Him, come to Him, and drink, or be a cloud driven about by the wind. And now, before we bid farewell to 1885, may the Lord revive His work in all our souls. Amen. C.S.

Things New and Old: Volume 31, I Come Quickly (3:11)

Rev. 3:11.

What a message is this. Is it not like a telegram from the Bridegroom to the bride? "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say Come." Have you gone out to meet the Bridegroom? Have you received the message? What is your reply? Is it "Come? Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Surely the bride should rejoice to have such a message from the loving Bridegroom. Once He said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Now He says, "I come quickly." The Spirit applies this tender whisper to the heart of the bride. So that "the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

"Quickly" does not mean in so many years. It does not mean, after you have passed through the great tribulation, such as never was, and never shall be again. It does not mean, after the literal city of Babylon is rebuilt. It does not mean, after the man of sin has been manifested. It does not mean, after the Roman empire has been restored. It does not mean, after you have all been slain for the word of God, as those who shall have the then testimony of God, as in Rev. 6:9. It does not mean, after you have been killed by the man of sin, for refusing to worship the beast, or head of the Roman empire. (Rev. 13:11-17.) No, it just means this, that the coming of Christ for the church is the very

next, the very first event.

These words, "I come quickly," just mean what they would from a bridegroom coming from a distant shore to take his bride. He sends her a telegram. It does not give the day nor the hour, but it says, "I come quickly." In the gladness of her heart, she sends a telegram in reply—"Come, my bridegroom." Yea, one word expresses the desire of her heart—"Come."

Can you say in reply to Jesus, "Come; come now, come soon, come quickly?" These inspired words were written, expressing the hope of the church, eighteen hundred years ago; but for long centuries this hope was lost, and death, or even Christ coming in judgment, was put in its place. Yes, not only was the brightest hope taken away, but the most gloomy fear was put in its place; thus robbing the soul of its chief comfort, and the gospel of its joy.

Suddenly, when least expected, in the midst of the darkness that prevailed in the early part of this century, say fifty or sixty years ago, the midnight cry was heard, "Behold, the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him." Yes, the Person of the Bridegroom has been suddenly again revealed to the church; and the need was felt to go out to meet Him.

The foolish are found without oil in the lamp of profession. Surely it becomes the wise to stand with trimmed lamps, waiting to hear the voice, and to see the coming Bridegroom. But what a moment! How soon the door will be shut. A moment, the twinkling of an eye, the bride is gone; the door is shut.

And then that bitter wail of everlasting despair, "Lord, Lord, open unto us." Will He hear? Will He open? No, no. He says, "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." Long had the door stood open, and you refused to enter. In the days of Noah, the longsuffering of God lingered 120 years. In this dispensation of richest grace, of deepest mercy, the patient long-suffering of God has waited more than 1800 years. But the day for Noah came at last, the hour, the last moment, and "the Lord shut him in." The eight were shut in; the world of violence and wickedness were shut out. Yes, the door was shut, and it was forever too late. Another year of longsuffering grace has run its course; but the door may be shut before another comes to a close.

What a reflection if still unsaved—you may be forever shut out before this year shall close; and then, too late. Not a ray of hope shall ever cheer your dark despair—shut out. "I know you not," Jesus has said. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:36-39.) Every word of Jesus will assuredly come to pass. Did He not weep over Jerusalem? Did He not foretell its utter destruction, and that the Jews would be led away captive into all nations? that it should be trampled underfoot, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled? (Luke 19:41, 44; 21:22-24.) Yes, and every word He has spoken will as surely come to pass.

Is not the moral darkness and wickedness of the world fast becoming what it was in the days of Noah? Restrained at present, but preparing, and ready to break out in universal violence and bloodshed, such as the world never yet saw? And this will surely be, when the redeemed are caught up, and peace is taken from the earth.

Fellow believers, let us then read our telegram—precious words from the Bridegroom—"I come quickly." What a calm this gives to the soul in the midst of the storms of the world. And to the one really walking with God, what peace in the midst of these last of the last days of sorrows in the church. Let us behold the Bridegroom. What love! "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church [or, to himself glorious], not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-28.)

O bride of the Lamb, what scenes await thee! To be presented glorious to Him who has loved thee, and washed thee from thy sins; to be with Him and like Him forever. Nothing can separate thee from His love even now; but thou wilt be with Him—yes, with Him in holy, adoring worship, whilst the storms of judgment are poured out upon the earth, and upon the great Babylon of apostasy: and then shall the assembled multitude of the heavenly host rejoice, and with the voice of mighty thunderings say, "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," &c. (Rev. 19) And still further, one of the seven angels said, "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.....Having the glory of God, her shining was like a most precious stone as a crystal-like jasper stone." (Rev. 21 New Translation.) The bride shall be in every way suited to the Bridegroom.

How sad that so many Christians should be robbed of the enjoyment of this blessed hope. It would even be a terror to some to believe that Jesus really means what He says in those three words, "I come quickly." Would it be terror or joy to you, dear reader, to know that we may now expect Him at any moment? Is there still some dread of judgment? If you are in Christ, there is no condemnation; there is no judgment for sins or sin. He has settled all this when He came the first time. He comes now to us, to all believers, as Savior, yea, as Bridegroom. As Isaac met Rebecca, so will He, the Bridegroom, meet us. What joy to Him to take us into the place prepared. Then will the desire of His loving heart be granted. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24) What words of love then, are these of Jesus.

"I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Whatever may be the perplexity and confusion, and though some may have been discouraged by reason of the difficulties of the path, yet the Lord does not say, Give in, let go; no, but, "Hold that fast which thou hast," if gathered to Him the Holy and the True, and if He can say to us, "Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Oh the privilege then of holding fast the testimony of the Lord. He will not fail to give the crown of reward. Yes, He says, "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Surely our heart's reply, Until Thou come, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." If He tarry a little longer, may we be kept as faithful witnesses of the rejected Jesus, in the midst of the increasing darkness; and to Him be all praise.

C. S.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, Revelation 9 (9:13)

But at last the fifth angel sounds; and men are now tormented in their own persons. The bottomless abyss is opened; hell, as it were, let loose on earth. Gross darkness now covers men's minds. And out of this darkness come terrible locusts. These seem to me to figure wicked spirits, which shall sting men with horrible doctrines; for the angel of the bottomless abyss is their king — and thus are men tormented five months. "The sixth angel sounded" (Rev. 9:13). And the four angels, bound in the great river Euphrates, are loosed. And a vast army of horsemen, a terrible show of human power and strength, pours into the prophetic earth from the east. These seem to me to be possessed by the wicked spirits of the previous woe. Though Satan is the god of this age, yet his power is only permitted so far; but who can conceive the state of the earth when Satan, and the hosts of demons, are thus let loose? And, my reader, if you are not caught up to meet Christ, and be forever with the Lord. You may see all this, and feel it in your own terrified soul!

I do not dwell further on these six trumpets; as my object is only to help the enquirer in reading this wondrous book.

clickbible.org