

Christ the Tree of Life

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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"In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." [Revelation 22:2](#).

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #1233, Volume 31—HEALING LEAVES.]

You will remember that in the first Paradise, there was a Tree of Life in the midst of the garden. When Adam had offended and was driven out, God said, "Lest he put forth his hand and take of the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever, therefore the Lord God drove out the man." It has been supposed, by some, that this Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden was intended to be the means of continuing man in immortality—that his feeding upon it would have supported him in the vigor of unfailing youth, preserved him from exposure to decay and imparted, by a spiritual regeneration, the seal of perpetuity to his constitution. I do not know about that. If it were so, I can understand the reason why God would not have the first man, Adam, become immortal in the lapsed state he was then in, but ordained that the old nature should die, and that the immortality would be given to a new nature which would be formed under another leadership and quickened by another Spirit.

The text tells us that in the center of the new Paradise, the perfect Paradise of God, from which the saints shall never be driven, seeing it is to be our perpetual heritage, there is also a Tree of Life. But here we translate the metaphor—we do not understand that tree to be literal. We believe our Lord Jesus Christ to be none other than that Tree of Life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations! We can scarcely conceive of any other interpretation, as this seems to us to be so full of meaning and to afford us such unspeakable satisfaction!

At any rate, Beloved, if this is not the absolute purpose of the sublime vision that John saw, it is most certainly true that our Lord Jesus Christ is life from the dead, and life to His own living people. He is All-in-All to them. And by Him and by Him, alone, must their spiritual life be maintained. We are right enough, then, in saying that Jesus Christ is a Tree of Life and we shall so speak of Him in the hope that some may come and pluck of the fruit and eat and live forever! Our desire shall be so to use the sacred allegory that some poor dying soul may be encouraged to lay hold on eternal life by laying hold on Jesus Christ!

First, we shall take the Tree of Life in the winter with no fruit on it Secondly, we shall try to show you the Tree of Life budding and blossoming. And, thirdly, we shall endeavor to show you the way to partake of its fruits.

I. And first, my Brothers and Sisters, I have to speak to you of JESUS CHRIST, THE TREE OF LIFE IN THE WINTER.

You will at once anticipate that I mean, by this figure, to describe Jesus in His sufferings, in His dark winter days when He did hang upon the Cross and bleed and die. When He had no honor from men and no respect from anyone— when even God the Father hid His face from Him for a season and He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. My dear Friends, you will never see the Tree of Life aright unless you first look at the Cross. It was there that this tree gathered strength to bring forth its later fruit. It was there, we say, that Jesus Christ, by His glorious merits and His wondrous work achieved upon the Cross, obtained power to become the Redeemer of our souls and the Captain of our salvation!

Come with me, then, by faith, to the foot of the little mound of Calvary, and let us look up and see this thing that came to pass. Let us turn aside as Moses did when the bush burned and see this great sight! It is the greatest marvel that ever earth, or Hell, or Heaven beheld—and we may well spend a few minutes in beholding it.

Our Lord Jesus, the ever-living, the immortal, the eternal, became Man and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and died the death of the Cross. That death was not on His own account. His Humanity had no need to die. He might have lived on and have seen no death if so He had willed. He had committed no offense, no sin and, therefore, no punishment could fall upon Him—

"For sins not His own He died to atone."

Every pang upon the Cross was substitutionary! And for you, you sons of men, the Prince of Glory bled, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God! There was no smart for Himself, for His Father loved Him with an Ineffable love. He deserved no blows from His Father's hand, but His smarts were for the sins of His enemies—for your sins and mine—that by His stripes we might be healed and that through His wounds, reconciliation might be made with God!

Think, then, of the Savior's death upon the Cross. Mark you well that it was an accursed death. There were many ways by which men might die, but there was only one death which God pronounced to be accursed. He did not say, "Cursed is he that dies by stoning, or by the sword, or by a millstone being fastened about his neck, or by being eaten of worms." But it was written, "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." By no other death than that one, which God did single out as the death of the accursed, could Jesus Christ die! Admire it, Believer, that Jesus Christ should be made a curse for us! Admire and love—let your faith and your gratitude blend together.

It was a death of the most ignominious kind. The Roman law subjected only felons to it and I believe not even felons unless they were slaves. A freed Roman must not so die, nor a subject of any of the kingdoms that Rome had conquered— only the slave who was bought

and sold in the market could be put to this death. The Jews counted Jesus worthy to be sold as a slave and then they put Him to a slave's death for you.

Besides, they added to the natural scorn of the death their own ridicule. Some passed by and wagged their heads. Some stood still and thrust out their tongues at Him. Others sat down and watched Him there and satisfied their malice and their scorn. He was made the center of all sorts of ridicule and shame. He was the drunkard's song and even they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. And all this He suffered for us! Our sin was shameful and He was made to be a shame for us. We had disgraced ourselves and dishonored God and, therefore, Jesus was joined with the wicked in His death—and made as vile as they.

Besides, the death was exceedingly painful. We must not forget the pangs of the Savior's body, for I believe, when we begin to depreciate the corporeal sufferings, we very soon begin to drag down the spiritual sufferings, too. It must be a fearful death by which to die, when the tender hands and feet are pierced—and when the bones are dislocated by the jar of erecting the Cross. And when the fever sets in and the mouth becomes hot as an oven, and the tongue is swollen in the mouth, and the only moisture given is vinegar mingled with gall. Ah, Beloved! The pangs that Jesus knew, none of us can guess. We believe that Hart has well described it when he said that He bore—

"All that Incarnate God could bear, With strength enough, and none to spare." You cannot tell the price of griefs, groans, sighs, heartbreaking, soul tearing and rending of the spirit which Jesus had to pay that He might redeem us from our iniquities!

It was a lingering death. However painful a death may be, it is always satisfactory to think that it is soon over. When a man is hanged, after our English custom, or the head is taken from the body, the pain may be great for the instant, but it is soon over and gone. But in crucifixion a man lives so long that when Pilate heard that the Savior was dead, he marveled that He was already dead! I remember hearing a missionary say that he saw a man in Burma crucified, and that he was alive two days after having been nailed to the cross. And I believe there are authenticated stories of persons who have been taken down from the cross after having hung for 48 hours and after all that have had their wounds healed and have lived for years. It was a lingering death that the Savior had to die.

O my Brothers and Sisters, if you put these items together, they make up a ghastly total which ought to press upon our hearts—if we are Believers, in the form of grateful affection—or if we are unbelievers, provoking us to shame that we do not love Him who loved the sons of men so much!

And the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, we must also add, was penal. He died this death of the condemned. Perhaps most men would feel this to be the worst feature, for if a man shall die by ever so painful a death, if it is accidental, it misses the sting which must come into it if it is caused by law—and especially if it is brought by sin and after sentence has been passed in due form. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ was condemned by the civil and

ecclesiastical tribunals of the country to die. And what was more, "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He has put Him to grief." Jesus Christ died without any sin of His own, yet He died a penal death because our sins were counted as His! He took upon Him our iniquities as though they were His own and then, being found in the sinner's place, He suffered the wrath that was due for sin as if He had been a sinner!

Beloved, I wish it were in my power to set forth Christ Crucified—Christ visibly Crucified among you! Oh, that I could so paint Him that the eyes of your heart could see Him! I wish that I could make you feel the sorrow of His griefs, and sip that bitter cup which He had to drain to the dregs. But if I cannot do this, it shall suffice me to say that that death is the only hope for sinners. Those wounds of His are the gate to Heaven! The smarts and sufferings of Immanuel are the only expiatory Sacrifice for human guilt! O you who would be saved, turn your eyes here! Look unto Him and be you saved, all the ends of the earth. There is life in a look at Him, but there is life nowhere else! Despise Him and you perish. Accept Him and you shall never perish, neither shall all the powers of Hell prevail against you! Come, guilty Souls! Jesus wants not your tears or your blood—His tears can cleanse you—His blood can purify you! If your heart is not as broken as you would have it, it is His broken heart, not yours, that shall merit Heaven for you! If you cannot be what you could, He was for you what God would have Him to be! God is contented with Him, so be you also contented with Him and come and trust Him! Oh, now may delays be over and difficulties all be solved—and just as you are, without one plea, but that the Savior bled—come to your heavenly Father and you shall be "accepted in the Beloved."

Thus, then, Jesus Christ hanging on the Cross is the Tree of Life in its winter time.

II. And now let me show you, as I may be enabled, THAT SAME TREE OF LIFE WHEN IT HAS BLOSSOMED AND BROUGHT FORTH FRUIT.

There He stands—Jesus—still the same Jesus—and yet how changed! The same Jesus, but clothed with honor instead of shame, able now to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him. My text says of this tree that it bears "twelve fruits." I suppose that is intended to signify that a perfect and complete assortment of all supplies for human necessities is to be found in Christ—all sorts of mercies for all sorts of sinners—all kinds of blessings to suit all kinds of necessities. We read of the palm tree, that every bit of it is useful, from its root to its fruit. So is it with the Lord Jesus Christ. There is nothing in Him that we could afford to do without. There is nothing about Jesus that is extraneous or superfluous. You can put Him to use in every part, in every office, in every relationship!

A Tree of Life is for food. Some trees yield rich fruit. Adam in the garden lived only on the fruit of the garden. Jesus Christ is the food of His people—and what dainties they have! What satisfying food, what plenteous food, what sweet food, what food precisely suitable to all the needs of their souls is Jesus! As for manna, it was angels' food, but what shall I say of Christ? He is more than that, for—

"Never did angels taste above, Redeeming Grace and dying love."

Oh, how richly you are fed! The flesh of God's own Son is the spiritual meat of every heir of Heaven. Hungry souls, come to Jesus if you would be fed!

Jesus also gives His people drink. There are some tropical trees which, as soon as they are tapped, yield liquids as sweet and rich as milk, and many drink and are refreshed by them. Jesus Christ's heart blood is the wine of His people. The Atonement which He has perfected by His sufferings is the golden cup out of which they drink and drink again, till their mourning souls are made glad and their fainting hearts are strengthened and refreshed. Jesus gives us the Water of Life, the wines on the lees well refined, the wine and milk, without money and without price. What a Tree of Life to yield us both meat and drink!

Jesus is a Tree of Life yielding clothing, too. Adam went to the fig tree for his garments and the fig leaves yielded him such covering as they could. But we come to Christ and we find not fig leaves, but a robe of Righteousness that is matchless for its beauty, comely in its proportions, one which will never wear out, which exactly suits to cover our nakedness from head to foot and when we put it on makes us fair to look upon, even as Christ Himself! O you who would be dressed

till you shall be fit to stand among the courtiers of the skies, come to Jesus and find garments such as you need upon this Tree of Life!

This Tree also yields medicine. "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Lay a plaster upon any wound and if it is but the plaster of King Jesus, it will heal it! But one promise from His lips, but one leaf from this tree, but one word from His Spirit, but one drop of His blood and this is Heaven's court-plaster indeed. It is true that there was no balm in Gilead, there was no physician there and, therefore, the hurt of the daughter of Israel's people was not healed. But there is balm in Jesus, there is a Physician at Calvary—and the hurt of the daughter of God's people shall be healed if she will but fly to Jesus Christ for healing!

And what more shall I say? Is there anything else your spirits can need? O children of God, Christ is All! O you ungodly ones who have been roaming through the world to find the tree that should supply your needs, stop here! This

"apple tree [See Sermon #1120, Volume 19—THE APPLE TREE IN THE WOODS and #3249, Volume 57—UNDER THE APPLE TREE.] among the trees of the woods" is the tree which your souls require! Stay here and you shall have all that you need. For, listen—this tree yields a shelter from the storm. Other trees are dangerous when the tempest howls, but he that shelters beneath the tree of the Lord Jesus shall find that all the thunderbolts of God shall fly by him and do him no injury. He cannot be hurt who clings to Jesus! Heaven and earth should sooner pass away than a soul be lost that hides beneath the boughs of this Tree. And oh, you who have hidden there to shelter from the wrath of God, let me remind you that in every other kind of danger it will also yield you shelter! And if you are not in danger,

yet still in the hot days of care you shall find the shade of it to be cool and genial. The spouse in Solomon's Song said, "I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste." Get Christ and you have got comfort, joy, peace and liberty—and when the trouble comes, you shall find shelter and deliverance by coming near to Him.

He is the Tree of Life, then, yielding twelve fruits, those fruits being always ripe and always ready, for they ripen every month, all being free to all who desire them, for the leaves are not for the healing of some, but "for the healing of the nations." What a large word! Then there are enough of these leaves for the healing of all the nations that shall ever come into the world. Oh, may God grant that none of you may die from spiritual sickness when these leaves can heal you! And may none of you be filling yourselves with the sour grapes of this world, the poisonous grapes of sin, while the sweet fruit of Christ's love are waiting which would refresh you and satisfy you.

III. And now I have to show you HOW TO GET AT THE FRUIT OF THIS TREE OF LIFE.

That is the main matter. Little does it matter to tell that there is fruit unless we can tell how it can be obtained. I wish that all here really wanted to know the way, but I am afraid many care very little about it. Dr. Payson had once been out to tea with one of his people who had been particularly hospitable to him, and when he was leaving, the doctor said, "Well, now, Madam, you have treated me exceedingly well, but how do you treat my Master?" That is a question I should like to put to some of you. How do you treat my Master? Why, you treat Him as if He were not Christ! As if you did not need Him! But you doneed Him. May you find Him soon, for when you come to die, you will need Him then, and perhaps then you may not find Him.

Well, the way to get the fruit from this Tree is by faith. That is the hand that plucks the golden apples! Can you believe? That is the thing. Can you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died upon the Cross? "Yes," you say, "I believe that." Can you believe that in consequence of His sufferings, He is able to save? "Yes," say you. Can you believe that He will save you? Will you trust Him to save you? If so, you are saved! If your soul comes to Jesus, and says, "My Lord, I believe in You, that You are able to save to the uttermost, and now I throw myself upon You." That is faith!

When Mr. Andrew Fuller was going to preach before an Association, he rode to the meeting on his horse. There had been a good deal of rain and the rivers were very much swollen. He got to one river which he had to cross. He looked at it and he was half afraid of the strong current, as he did not know the depth. A farmer who happened to be standing by, said, "It is all right, Mr. Fuller, you will get through it all right, Sir. The horse will keep its feet." Mr. Fuller went in and the water got up to the girth, and then up to the saddle—and he began to get uncomfortably wet. Mr. Fuller thought he had better turn round and he was going to do so when the same farmer shouted, "Go on, Mr. Fuller! Go on! I know it is all

right!" And Mr. Fuller said, "Then I will go on. I will go by faith." Now, Sinner, it is very like that with you. You think that your sins are so deep that Christ will never be able to carry you over them! But I say to you—"It is all right, Sinner. Trust Jesus and He will carry you through Hell, itself, if that is necessary! If you had all the sins of all

the men that have ever lived, and they were all yours—if you could trust Him, Jesus Christ would carry you through the current of all that sin! It is all right, Man! Only trust Christ. The river may be deep, but Christ's love is deeper. It is all right, Man! Do not let the devil make you doubt my Lord and Master! He is a liar from the beginning and the father of lies, but my Master is faithful and true! Rest on Him and all will be well. The waves may roll, the river may seem to be deeper than you thought it to be—and rest assured it is much deeper than you know it to be—but the almighty arm of Jesus—that strong arm that can shake the heavens and the earth and move the pillars thereof as Samson moved the pillars of Gaza's gates—that strong arm can hold you up and bear you safely through if you do but cling to it, and rest on it. O Soul, rest in Jesus and you are saved!"

Once again. If at the first you do not seem to get the fruit from this Tree, shake it by prayer. 'Oh," you say, "I have been praying." Yes, but a tree does not always drop its fruit at the first shake you give it. Shake it again, Man! Give it another shake! And sometimes, when the tree is loaded and is pretty firm in the earth, you have to shake it to and fro and, at last, you plant your feet and get a hold of it, and shake it with might and main till you strain every muscle and sinew to get the fruit down! And that is this way to pray. Shake the Tree of Life until the mercy drops into your lap! Christ loves for men to beg hard of Him. You cannot be too importunate! That which might be disagreeable to your fellow creatures when you beg of them, will be agreeable to Christ! Oh, get to your chambers! Get to your chambers, you that have not found Christ! Get to your bedsides, to your little closets and "seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near!"

May the Spirit of God compel you to pray. May He compel you to continue in prayer! Jesus must hear you. The gate of Heaven is open to the sturdy knocker that will not take a denial. The Lord enable you so to plead that at the last, you will be able to say, "You have heard my voice and my supplication. You have inclined Your ear unto me. Therefore will I pray unto You as long as I live."

May God add His blessing to these rambling thoughts, for Jesus sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: GENESIS 2:1-17; REVELATION 22'

Genesis 2:1-8. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before

it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. Everything was ready for man's use. Every fruit-bearing tree for his nourishment, every creature to do his bidding, for it was the will of God that he should "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." God did not place the man formed in His image, after His likeness, in an unfurnished house or an empty world and leave him to provide for himself all that he required, but He prepared everything that man could possibly need, and completed the whole plan by planting "a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed."

9. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. That Tree of Life in the midst of the earthly Paradise was to be symbolic of another Tree of Life in the Paradise above, from which the children of God shall never be driven as Adam and Eve were driven out of Eden.

10-14. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasses the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; and the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasses the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goes toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. That river in Eden also reminds us of the "pure river of Water of Life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb," of which we read almost at the end of the Revelation that was given to John in Patmos. Thus the beginning and the end of the Bible call our attention to the Tree of Life and the river of life in the Paradise below and the better Paradise above.

15. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it There was to be occupation for man even in Paradise, just as they who are before the Throne of God in Glory "serve Him day and night in His temple." Idleness gives no joy, but holy employment will add to the bliss of Heaven.

16, 17. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden, you may freely eat: but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die. Apparently Adam was not forbidden to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life, though, after his fall, he was cast out of Eden, as God said, "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat and live forever." He might freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden except one—"of the Tree of the

Knowledge of Good and Evil, you shall not eat of it." It was a slight prohibition, yet the test was more than man, even in a state of innocence, was able to endure and, alas, his failure involved all his descendants, for he was the federal head of the human race, and "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men." Happily, there is another federal Head and, therefore, we read, "For if through the offense of one, many are dead, much more the Grace of God, and the gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many."

Revelation 22:1. 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. Rivers partake of the character of the source from which they come. That which proceeds "out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb" may well be "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal." What but good and perfect gifts can come down from the Throne of God? What but pure streams of mercy can flow from the Throne of the

Lamb?

2. In the middle of its street—For Heaven is a place of sacred and hallowed communion—"In the middle of its street"—

2. And on either side of the river, was the Tree of Life, which bore twelve fruits. Every variety of joy and blessedness! 2. And yielded her fruit every month. For the felicities of Heaven are always fresh and always new, we shall never be satiated or wearied with that heavenly fruit!

2. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Everything in Heaven is the very best of the best. The leaves of the trees in earthly gardens are blown about by the wind and we take but little note of them. But the leaves of the Tree of Life are "for the healing of the nations." O happy place, where even the leaves on the tree have such virtue in them!

3. And there shall be no more curse. No more thorns or thistles, no more pangs of child-bearing, no more sickness, or sorrow, or death.

3. But the Throne of God and of the Lamb [See Sermon #1576, Volume 27—THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB.] shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him/They shall have nothing else to do, and it shall be their supreme delight to serve Him perfectly and unceasingly.

4. And they shall see His face.[See Sermon #824, Volume 14—THE HEAVEN OF HEAVEN.] Not through a glass darkly, but face to face shall they behold their God! Surely that will be the very Heaven of Heaven!

4. And His name shall be on their foreheads. Aaron was to wear upon his forehead a plate of pure gold, with HOLINESS TO THE LORD engraved upon it, that the children of Israel might be accepted before the Lord. But the saints in Glory are to have the name of

their God "on their foreheads." In the very forefront of their glorified personalities there shall be the marks to declare that they are the children of God!

5. And there shall be no night there. The saints in Glory will have no need of sleep, so "there shall be no night there," but one perpetual day of holy, unwearying service. There shall be no night of ignorance, of sorrow, of sin, of death—there shall be no powers of darkness there, and no darkness in which they might work their evil deeds.

5. And they shall need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light Directly and distinctly, without using any means, by His own immediate Presence, "the Lord God gives them light"—

5. And they shall reign forever and ever. Earthly kings die, or their empires on earth are taken from them. But as for us whom God has chosen, by His Grace, our Kingdom is like that of our Lord and Savior—it is an everlasting Kingdom!

"They shall reign forever and ever." I wonder that some wise man does not try to prove that this means that the saints shall reign only for a short time! They have whittled "everlasting punishment" down to next to nothing—why do they not try to reduce the duration of Heavenly bliss in the same way? The same words are used concerning the one as concerning the other, so we shall always hold to the eternity both of the one and the other, the bliss and the woe are equally "forever and ever."

6, 7. 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. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this Book. You have the witness of God. You have the witness of the angel of God, you have the witness of Christ you have the witness of John, and all of them agree that "these sayings are faithful and true," and that they relate to facts that shall in due course be established.

8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. And, according to the Church of Rome, he was quite right. But according to the Word of God, he was quite wrong!

9. Then said he unto me, See you do it not: for I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this Book: worship God. Worship none but God! Take care not to break the first two of the Ten Commandments either by worshipping another God or by worshipping the true God under any form of similitude whatever!

10. And he said unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this Book: for the time is at hand. "There is no need to roll it up, and set a seal to it, as it is so soon to be fulfilled, leave it open."

11. 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

The Lord's messenger speaks as if "the time" were so nearly come that there was no opportunity left for any charge to be made. And this is what will happen, sooner or later, to all men. When they die, their characters will be fixed forever. The wax will cool, and the impression that it bears will be retained eternally.

12. 13. And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I

am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. [See Sermon #546, Volume 9—ALPHA AND OMEGA.] These must be the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself! No

mere messenger, however high his rank, would have dared to say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

14. 16. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For outside are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. We thank God that they are shut out of Heaven, for, albeit that we wish all men could be there, yet we would wish none to be there whose characters are of such a kind as this, unless they were washed and cleansed. Heaven would not be Heaven if such men could be admitted there! They shall not be. They must, by Infallible Justice, be excluded from the realms of bliss.

16. I Jesus have sent My 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. So Glory is dawning, for Christ, the Bright and Morning Star has risen,

17. And the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that hears say, come. And let him that is thirsty, come.

And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely. [See Sermons #279, Volume 5—COME AND WELCOME; #1331, Volume 22—THE TWO "COMES"; #1608, Volume 27—THE DOUBLE "COME" and #2685, Volume 46—THE OFT-REPEATED INVITATION.] Here we have the last invitations in the Word of God—may all who have not yet accepted them do so now, lest they should never again be uttered in their hearing!

18-21. For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: and if any man shall take away from the

words of thee Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book. He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. So the blessed Book closes appropriately with Grace, for 'tis Grace that—

"All the work shall crown Through everlasting days; It lays in Heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."