

The New Wine of the Kingdom

(No. 3526)

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1916.

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." [Matthew 26:29](#).

SUCH words could hardly have been spoken at such a time by our Lord Jesus Christ without some deep significance. Let us, then, reverently enquire into their meaning. What thoughts were those that stirred in His own breast? What lessons did He convey to His beloved disciples? And, first, does not our Lord here express—

I. HIS RENUNCIATION FROM THAT MOMENT OF ALL THE JOYS AND COMFORTS OF LIFE?

Putting aside the cup that was filled with the juice of the vine, He said, "I shall henceforth no more drink of this fruit of the vine." Here He bids farewell to social cheer. Whatever little comforts He had enjoyed were now to be quitted. He had never been rich—full often He had not where to lay His head. His clothing had always been that of a simple peasant—"a garment without seam" had sufficed for Him. Scanty the rest He had ever known. Little luxury He had ever enjoyed, but now He does, as it were, solemnly relinquish every creature gratification, "I will henceforth no more drink of fruit of the vine." Not as One who had been satiated with the comforts or surfeited with the pleasures of life did our Lord and Master speak. It is no uncommon thing for the pleasure seekers of the world to feel the strongest aversion to the indulgences for which they once had the keenest relish. The world's joy sours, its sweet honey sickens on the palate, its most fascinating entertainments, by constant repetition, pall the faculty of enjoying them! Our Savior had encountered life in its sterner moods. His main aim was to discharge its duties, not to divert Himself with its amenities. Nor did He put aside that cup out of any ostentation, as though He affected a stoical indifference. We all know that refreshment is needed to recruit the energies of the laborer or the sufferer. Nothing could be less in keeping with our Lord's disposition than a gloomy asceticism. Yet He willingly now, before His disciples, renounces all that there was of this world's good. Taking, then, this wine cup as a symbol, and understanding it to represent earthly cheer, we observe how significantly He puts it aside—He will partake of it no more! We ask the reason why in the presence of so strong a determination, so clear a prediction.

But before I attempt to answer the question, let me remind you that there are occasions in the Christian life when a man is bound to give up all his comforts for Christ's sake. It is by no means impossible or improbable that honest principle and sterling integrity may de-

mand of you or me a total surrender of everything which we have been accustomed to hold dear. A sincere Christian must maintain his conscience, even if he can scarcely maintain himself. He must come down from the broadcloth to the fustian, from the mansion to the cottage, from riding in his carriage to trudging on foot. Our fathers did it and they did it on principle—they did it for Christ's sake. The martyrs did more—they laid down their lives upon the altar when Christ's cause demanded it. The like times may come back to us again. In the competition of the unscrupulous, the righteous must suffer. Business is rotten through and through, nowadays. The whole style of conducting your merchandise is so doubly dyed in deceit, that I should not marvel if a Christian often finds himself a loser by doing the right thing and maintaining a strict integrity! But we must sooner be losers in this way than lose our acceptance with God! We must be willing to sink in the world's esteem and be counted fools for Christ's sake, rather than amass riches and rise to a position of commercial influence through any equivocal dealings or any sort of duplicity! We must keep our consciences from being soiled with the wiles and stratagems of those whose ingenuity is always directed to the promotion of bubble companies, or the practice of some disingenuous finesse whereby they lie in wait to deceive the unwary. Refrain yourselves from every false way! But do not vaunt your own purity or be ostentatious of your own vir-

tue, as if you were better than others. Above all things, do not make a cross for yourselves and then put it on your own back and act the martyr! But when you must take up your cross for your Master's sake, do it as He did—with fidelity, yet with meekness—and say, "I will no more drink of this fruit of the vine. I will no more seek the esteem of my fellows. I will no more cultivate the world's friendship. I will no more foster the affection of those who once loved me in my sins. I will give up anything—I will give up everything—I will give up life, itself, if necessary, that I may glorify God as my Lord and Master did."

Now why did our Lord thus say, "I will no more drink of this fruit of the vine"? It was because now He had other work to do. He must, therefore, forego all that would stand in the way of His accomplishing it. He had to sweat the bloody sweat! He had to stand accused before Pilate and Herod! He had to bear His Cross through Jerusalem's malicious crowds! He had to give His hands to the nails, and His feet to the cruel iron. These were no times for thinking of comforts. And the cause of the Master may sometimes make the same demands upon us. The man who will devote himself to the mission field must be willing to dispense with much of that personal and social comfort and gratification which those who stay at home look upon as the best recompense of their daily toil. The minister of Christ, if he would serve his Master diligently, must deny himself the rest and ease to which he would have a right if he were engaged in secular pursuits. For your Master's work, you must be prepared to forsake all and yield yourself up to Him unreservedly! You are not true to Christ, nor fit to put your hand to His plow, if you pull that hand back because it involves any sacrifice, however heavy. If Christ gave up the wine cup and renounced by that act everything

like the comforts of life—you, too, if you have noble work to do for God—must follow His example and in so doing you shall have your reward!

Our Savior did this, again, because His love to men compelled Him. Giving up the fruit of the vine was not, in itself, a great act of self-negation, but as a symbol it was very significant. As I have already observed, it betokened His putting aside everything that is considered gratifying and joyous in life. Jesus Christ, out of love to us, gave up all. The Heaven of heavens could not contain Him. The adoration of angels fell short of His Glory. He was "God over all, blessed forever." Yet a manger held Him and a Cross upheld Him! What a stoop was that—from the highest Throne in Glory to be a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief—and this out of love to those who hated Him! And they proved their hate by putting Him to death! Most sweetly will this Truth of God refresh us if we remember that it was out of love to us. We deserved nothing of Him. Love to miserable sinners, nothing but pure love, could have led Him to resign His gracious breath. He loved me before I had a thought of love to Him! He loved you when you were struggling against His Grace and defying all His Law. Oh, think of His giving up everything out of ardent love! How this ought to nerve us for toil or suffering! How it ought to inflame us with love to Him! How willing it should make us to give up anything out of love to Him, and love to our fellow men! Alas, that so few of us ever make sacrifices out of love to souls! We can do a little ordinary service which involves but little fatigue and little inconvenience, but oh, to have the old spirit of chivalry burning in our breasts which would make us cast ourselves upon the very teeth of Death out of zeal for the cause of Christ! Oh, that some young men here could be moved by the love of Jesus to give themselves up from this moment to live and die for Him! Oh, that some holy women would renew their early consecration vows and from this very hour be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of none beside! The Church needs some few conspicuous specimens of self-denying holiness, and perhaps those few, like standard-bearers lifting up the ensign, would attract many others—and the Church might lift herself up from the low level of our poor, weak, beggarly profession! We might then serve Jesus a little after the manner that He deserves to be served, and surrender ourselves to Him more after the fashion of His surrendering Himself for us!

I take it that this no more drinking of the fruit of the vine means more than my tongue could ever tell, though I spoke on for many an hour. So I leave the thought with you. It is Jesus renouncing all that makes life happy—giving up everything that cheers and gladdens—sanctifying Himself for our sakes because He is called to a noble work by His Father and by His God. But now, secondly, I would have you think of our Lord—

II. AS TAKING FAREWELL OF EARTH.

He took the cup and, making that the symbol of everything below, He said, "I will no more drink of this fruit of the vine." He bade farewell to His disciples, and to the earth, upon which He had lived for 33 years—and this He did without any repining. He did not say,

"Why am I taken away in the strength of My days? Why, when scarcely 40 years old, must My sun go down at noon? Why, before I have attained the full age of man, must I be laid in the grave?" No, not a word of it, and when your turn and mine shall come to bid farewell to everything on earth, and to part with all below,

may we cheerfully yield to the summons without one single word of repining against God! Oh, Lord, You have called me Home to rest—it was but morning, and my work was scarcely begun, and I had fondly mapped it out in the hope of much service to You and Your Church, but if You bid me come Home, I will thank You that I have not to bear the heat and burden of the day. Or if it is in middle life, just when my work is about me, and I am busy in the vineyard, that my time of departure should come, may I still be content! There are the plants and flowers I have so fondly nurtured! Yonder is a tree that was about to bud and here is what I hoped would be a fruit-bearing vine, but, Master, though I should like to have seen all these reach their maturity, and though my pride may say, "What will the Church do without me when I am gone?" Yet, Lord, You did without me before I was born and so here in the strength of my days You call me to leave these things, and I come, I come! And if the call shall come to you at night, or towards evening—as it will do, I know, to some of you, dear Brothers and Sisters, who are getting gray and old in years—I hope you will feel, "Lord, it is well. Our day's work is over, the shadows have lengthened, it is time to fall asleep. We do not stand so much in the earth as on it—we are waiting to be taken Home, to be gathered into the Garner." Yes, without regret, I say, without any repining against the will of God, may we heave the anchor and go into port! May we just quietly shut our eyes on earth and open them in Heaven to behold the Beatific Vision, without having made our last word on earth to be an act of rebellion by lamenting that the voice says, "Rise up, and come away."

Our Lord did not withdraw from the world as an ascetic. He did not dash the cup to the ground or denounce its contents. He did not put away life, saying, "It is sour. I will taste no more of it!" I think I have heard some people talk about life with very much of that bitter spirit which cannot brook its toils and cares. They want to go Home, they tell us, when in truth there is more infirmity than faith in the wish they express! They are idle. They are not willing to bear their cross. They are weary of suffering for their Master. Oh, shame on us if we are like lazy workmen, always looking for Saturday nights! Such fellows are never worth their pay. Shame upon us if we are courting the grave that we may rest from our labors while there are yet wanderers to be sought, outcasts to be restored, sinners to be saved! Are there not kinsfolk and neighbors of ours that can hear the Gospel from our lips? Are there no children to be taught in our schools? Are there no little ones to be lifted out from the miry clay? Are there not fresh battles to be fought for Christ—new enterprises to be carried forward—regions beyond to be explored? If you have a real interest in the Redeemer's Kingdom, you may well ask for a longer life if it is God's will that you may take a larger share in these

labors of love—and have weightier crowns to present to that dear Savior who has gone before us to prepare mansions for our rest! Thus, without repining on the one hand, or even a tinge of asceticism on the other hand, He puts away the cup with as cheerful an air as He took it! He sets His face towards death. "I will no more drink."

And then notice how He stops, as it were, on the way His composure is unruffled, as though death were to Him but the goal of His earthly career, or rather a station on His journey to Heaven! He knows He is about to depart and yet He deploras it not, for He perceives that it is expedient for His disciples and for Himself that He should go away. Oh, that when our days below come to a close, when we hear the Master's call and feel the symptoms of approaching death, we may not be dismayed or frightened! God grant that we may take leave of this mortal life with peaceful confidence and holy calm! Should our exit be slow and painful, may we be steadfast in faith and full of patience! Or should it be otherwise, sudden and unexpected, may we be no less prepared and ready! Floods of wrath rose high at our Lord's death, but there shall be no such tumult about ours. The curse gathered around His dying head—a blessing shall make a halo around ours! There was no sort of pallet for Him to die upon—the Cross was His couch. The sweet comfort of looking up to God was lacking to Him. "Eli, Eli, lama Sabacthanii" was His dying cry! But we have our Lord to meet us and He has promised that He will make our bed in our sickness. Our third reflection shall be this— III. OUR LORD'S WORDS CONTAINED HIS DYING ANTICIPATION.

Said He not, "I will no more drink of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom"? He knew He would die, but He knew that that was not the end! He expected happier and brighter days, fairer banquets, fresher wine and purer joys. Now, did Christ mean Heaven? I think He did, though that was not all. Yet were it Heaven which He just then anticipated? Follow out the prospect. Does He not picture Heaven to us as a place of festive enjoyment? When He says, "I shall drink no more this fruit of the vine now with you," does He not imply that in Heaven is the meeting place of them that triumph, and the state rooms of them that feast? All the enjoyments that can be imagined, and more, belong to the beatific state of the glorified! Whatever could conduce to make an intellectual

mind happy, whatever could tend to make a refined spirit full of bliss, shall be our portion! At God's right hand there are rivers of joy and pleasures forevermore!

We learn, too, that the joys of Heaven are social, for Jesus says, "Until I drink it new with you." I wonder what those make of Heaven who think we shall not recognize one another there? I rather admire the reply of a good minister to his wife, who, when she asked him whether he would know her in Heaven, said, "Know you in Heaven! Of course I shall! I know you here, and I shall not be a greater fool there, than I am here." We are to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and they will not have golden masks or veils that shall cover their faces! Heaven is a place where they shall eat and drink, and rejoice together, and

I take it that much of the joy of Heaven will consist in seeing the bright spirits whom we shall recognize as being men and women in whom Christ's Spirit dwelt on earth, and in whom Christ's shall dwell above. Oh, I reckon on meeting David, whose Psalms have so often cheered my soul! I long to meet with Martin Luther and Calvin, and to have the power of seeing such men as Whitfield and Wesley, and walking and talking with them in the golden streets. Yes, Heaven would scarcely be so full of charms in the prospect if there were not the full conviction in our minds that we should know the saints and feast with them after a spiritual sort.

But still our Lord's description of Heaven represents Himself as happy, and happy with His people, "Until I drink it new with you." Alas, these earthly banquets are too often so vitiated with revelry and excess, that while using them as emblems of the feast above, I feel as if I half dishonored that feast! In many cases the festivities of earth have become so degraded and wicked that the Christian shrinks from mingling with them. But we shall drink it new—this wine of Heaven. The wine of Heaven shall be nothing that can make us sin, or even think of evil! There shall be in it nothing impure or polluted—

"Pure are the joys above the skies, And all the region peace."

And those joys will not be like those of earth—fickle and frothy, volatile and variable—by reason of which we are often lifted up, only to betray our weakness and presumption! The wine will be new! It will be holier joy, purer, sweeter. It will be a Divine joy in which Christ will have His share and we, His people, shall each one take our portion.

I have been wondering what will be the exhilarating contents of the wine cup that we shall drink with Christ in Heaven. I think it will be partly the joy of hearing that sinners repent on earth. We shall hear about it. The angels do. "There is joy in Heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repents." Oh, how glad we shall be when we hear that after we were dead and gone our dear boy was converted and that in that place where we were once known to assemble, God's Spirit is still resting on the ministry! It will be a joy to hear the angels come and tell of tens of thousands of sinners brought to Jesus weeping, and finding pardon in His blood! There is a grand cup in store for you that love souls, when you shall hear these good tidings. It is Christ's cup, I know, but you, too, shall drink of it!

Another ingredient of the joy will be to see the saints holding on their way and increasing in their likeness to Christ—to see the boy growing up and resisting temptation and all his spiritual faculties developing. It is the joy of Christ to see His saints below growing in Grace and persevering under difficulties, and that is the cup of which we shall drink, too! We shall be cheered by seeing our Brothers and Sisters who will be fighting the battle in this world when we have left it. Shall we see them? See them! Why not? What says the Apostle? "Seeing that we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." Who are the "witnesses" but those bright and immaculate spirits who, from the battlements of Heaven, look downward and rejoice as they see us win the race? And we shall soon take our place among the spectators

and look down and see the race of the righteous whom we have left behind, and rejoice as we see them win their crowns!

Another ingredient of that heavenly cup will be to see the saints come up to Heaven. Oh, what bliss it is to Christ as, one by one, they come up to His bosom—the purchase of His agonies, each one exhibiting the power of His Grace in the change of their nature! If I could get a place hard by the gate, how I would like to welcome one of the younger ones of this congregation who may not arrive till long after we have entered into rest! No, Christ is not losing His reward! He does see of His soul's travail, and how we, too, will clap our hands as we say to one another—

"They come, they come, Your exiled bands, Wherever they rest or roam, Have heard Your voice in distant lands, And hasten to their Home! Thus, though the universe shall burn,

And God, His works destroy,
With songs Your ransomed shall return,
And everlasting joy"

Above all, and perhaps best of all, the wine cups of Heaven are filled with the brimming, sparkling joy of delight in God's Glory. In the latter days the hymn that now breaks on Christian ears shall salute the ear of every savage and barbarian! They that go down to the sea in ships shall sing the name of Christ as they spread the sail! The ranger in Arabia's deserts shall listen to the name of Jesus, the Savior of men! Far off, the swarthy inhabitants of Africa's sunny plains, and up yonder, where the sun scarcely shines on the natives of frosty Labrador, in every region of the earth, prayer shall be made for Him continually and daily shall He be praised! God shall be glorified, the whole world shall become an altar for God's praise! His saints shall worship Him, and sin, death, and Hell shall be overturned! And Christ, if He drinks of this cup new in His Father's Kingdom, will give us who share in His struggle, also partake in His victory!

But surely this is not all. I think when Christ said, "Until I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom," He referred to His Second Coming to the establishment of the Kingdom of God—to the millennial splendor of the Redeemer's reign, and to that which will close it, when He shall deliver up the Kingdom, the mediatorial Kingdom, to God, even the Father, and God shall be All-in-All! I am not going to prophesy. That is not my line. Those brethren who can prophesy succeed so admirably well in duping their followers and also in contradicting one another, that I feel no inclination to enlist in their ranks! But if I can make anything out of God's Word, it is clear that a day shall come when the cause of Christ shall have supremacy, when the Kingdom of God shall be among men, when here on earth the Jew shall acknowledge the Messiah, and the nations of the Gentiles shall come bending before His Throne! There is to be a time when universal peace shall prevail, when the sword shall be beaten into a plowshare, and the spear into a pruning hook, and there is to be a day when

Satan shall be bound and cast into his infernal den in prison—when death and Hell are also to be cast into the Lake of Fire. I take that to mean that there will be a day when good will triumph over evil, when righteousness will vanquish iniquity, when God shall have put beneath His feet manifestly before the sons of men all those rebel bands of demons and men who stood out against Him—and all the consequences of their sin in diminishing the Glory of God shall be forever put away!

Such a day shall come when the great hallelujah shall be sung, when the marriage banqueting table shall be spread, when every elect soul shall sit at it—with Christ at the head—when every soul redeemed by Jesus' blood from among men, every soul quickened by the Holy Spirit and kept by the power of God unto salvation, shall, with his body raised from the dead, being perfect according to the adoption and the promise, stand up with Christ at the head, and—

"Sing hallelujah to God and the Lamb, And sing hallelujah forever, Amen." Then shall this glorious wine cup of the New Jerusalem's best wine be passed from lip to lip! Then shall God be worshipped by all His redeemed! Then shall tears be wiped away and sin and grief shall cease forever! Then shall be fulfilled the saying of the Master, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." Roll on, you wheels of time, roll on and bring the glorious day, and may we be there! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ROMANS8:26-30; REVELATION 21:10-27; 22:1-5.

ROMANS8:26-30.

Verse 26. Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered. Groans, then, are prayers, yes, and prayers which the Spirit of God most certainly hears! And those desires which altogether exhaust language, or which cannot be put into language by reason of the exhaustion of our sorrow, are nevertheless heard of God, for the Spirit of God is in them.

27. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. That is, when the mind lies still and God the Holy Spirit writes His will upon it, He also writes God's will. Hence such prayers are sure to be effectual, for they are but the shadow of God's secret purpose

falling upon the soul as a kind of prelude to the coming fulfillment of that purpose! Saints' prayers are Prophets of God's mercies. We are sure of it! We have no doubt whatever! We know it by experience, as well as by Revelation.

28. And we know that all things work together for good to them who love God. Not yet, "all mankind," but those who "love God."

28. To them who are the called according to His purpose. For they would never have loved God if He had not called them to it, and had not purposed to call them.

29, 30. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-Born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified. One is tempted to linger over that golden chain and examine every link! It will suffice, however, to observe that every link is well fastened to the next. Where there is the "foreknowledge," which is also the "forelove," there is also "elect"—there must be "called"—there shall certainly be "justification," and where that is, there must be "glory."

REVELATION 21:10-27.

Here we shall see a picture of what the Church of God is to be in the latter days. And inasmuch as this vision came out of Heaven, it gives us an idea of what is already in Heaven. Crowded as it is with almost impossible beauties, this description is given to us to let us think, and by faith conceive, of the glories of the future state!

Verses 10, 11. 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 a jasper stone, clear as crystal. But what the Glory of God may be, what mortal mind can imagine? All the imagery which the Apostle uses must fall far short of that simple expression, "Having the glory of God." That Glory is to be upon the Church and upon every individual member of it. The glory of every Believer shall be nothing less than the Glory of God!

12, 13. And had a wall great and high. And had twelve gates, and at the gate twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. From every quarter of the world, God's chosen shall come and find a gate straight before them, an entrance into Heaven! Die at the Equator, or die at the Pole, there is an immediate entrance into the rest of God from any place where we may die. Blessed be the name of God for this!

14-16. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lies foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. This is an idea scarcely to be grasped, to see a city which is as high as it is broad! Such cities cannot exist on earth. They are meant for that glorious future state. They will exist under the new heavens and in the new earth, for which we look for at the coming of our Lord.

17, 18. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass. All these joys are without sediment of

sin. Gold on earth is a dull thing. You cannot look into it. But the joys of Heaven, if compared to gold, must be transparent. "Pure gold like unto clear glass"—all the earth taken out of it, all its earthly grossness. The joy of Heaven is Divine!

19, 20. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. See how lovingly our Apostle counts the foundations. He might have run them all into one, and said, "The foundations were of these twelve stones," but it must be the first foundation, the second, the third, the fourth. He dwells on every one! The joys of Heaven will bear dwelling upon—they will bear reflection. Here our joys, when they are over, leave but a handful of thorns—but a handful of ashes like thorns that crackle and blaze under the pot, and leave little behind them. But the eternal and spiritual joys will bear for us to go into detail, and each one shall be most precious.

21. And these twelve gates were twelve pearls. Whoever heard of such pearls? In what ocean but in the depth of God could such pearls be found? The twelve gates were twelve pearls!

21. The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each individual gate was one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. Streets are used for fellowship. There men meet each other. And the fellowship of Heaven will be golden, bright, clear, perfect. Here, when we meet with one another, we soon display and discover our mutual faults, but there they shall delight each other with their common beauty, all the beauties being borrowed from the Lamb, who is the Glory of the place!

22. And I saw no temple therein. For it was all one temple.

22, 23. For the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. 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. Let us be going that way soon, Brothers and Sisters! Ah, may we all meet there. What must it be to be there?

24-27. 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. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations unto it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

REVELATION 22:1-5.

Verses 1, 2. 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. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Abounding joy, varied joy,

ever changing, yet ever perfect—a tree which bears twelve fruits, and yet fruits every month! Oh, when shall we get away to those golden orchards? When shall we sit under those vines and press the clusters with our lips?

3. And there shall be no more curse—Of labor, of sin, of sorrow, of death.

3. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it. So that we shall all be in the throne room, all beholding the King in His beauty, and ourselves made His courtiers.

3. And His servants shall serve Him—That is Heaven to me, for here we sometimes are unable to serve Him as we would. We are distracted, worried, carried away from holy service by multitudes of cares, but there, His servants shall serve Him.

4. And they shall see His face. What a happy blending—service and communion—the hands busy, but the eyes ravished with the wondrous sight of the face of God! You shall see His face! If any of us could see the face of God on earth, no doubt we would die. The vision would be too bright for us! When one heard this—one of the greatest saints—he said, "Then let me see it and die," and I do not wonder that he said so, for the sight of God, even should we die here, must still be perpetual and it would make us live again! "They shall see His face."

4. And His name shall be on their foreheads. Their faces made like God's face, then—His name, His Character, reflected on their brows—is not this worth having?

5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light; and they shall reign forever and ever. They themselves shall be kings! They shall reign forever and ever!