

SACRED MEMORIES

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A SERMON

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“Let Jerusalem come into Your mind.”
Jeremiah 51:50.

This message from the Lord was written by the Prophet Jeremiah to the Jews who were carried away to Babylon or even to more distant places. They were entreated not to forget the holy city where they had worshipped Jehovah in His Temple. Among all their thoughts, they were bidden to take care that the thought of Jerusalem should often come into their minds. This would keep them from settling down in the places to which they had been carried as captives. They were always far too ready to mingle with other nations and to forget that God had separated them to be a people unto Himself forever. So Jeremiah begged them to keep the holy city in their minds, that they might not judge themselves as having become Persians or Babylonians, but might still remember that they were Israelites and that Jerusalem was their mother city and home.

Besides, this kind of meditation would raise in their hearts ardent longings to get back. “Let Jerusalem come into your mind,” that is, “Sigh for it. Earnestly desire to come back to it and as you cut the various ties which bind you to the distant land, let the links which unite you to Jerusalem become stronger every day.” We know, from the 137th Psalm, that this is just what the captives did—“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember you, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” This was a proof that they regarded the country where they dwelt—and where many of them prospered and became great—as a place of banishment. Their pathetic lament proved that they never could be truly happy till they were back at the place of Israel's solemn assemblies, the spot which was specially dedicated to the worship of the Most High.

This feeling that they were aliens in a strange land and their longing desire to return to their native country would make them quick to observe everything that might work for the good of Jerusalem. If any of them came to be the king's cupbearer, as Nehemiah was, or occupied any position at court, as Mordecai and Esther did, they would be on the lookout for opportunities of working for the good of their beloved city and they would avail themselves of every occasion for protecting and benefiting the race to which they belonged. This was the Prophet's desire and it was also the Lord's purpose, that they might find no permanent satisfaction in Babylon, but always sigh for the city of their solemnities, “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth”—that they might *never* sing the praises of Shushan, but might reserve all their admiration for Zion, where God revealed Himself to His people as He never did to the other nations of the earth.

It is somewhat in the same sense that I beg you, who are the Lord's people, to remember the *spiritual* Jerusalem and, for similar reasons, that you may feel that this world is not your rest, that your citizenship is not upon earth, but is in Heaven, that you may sing, from your very heart—

“Jerusalem, my happy home!
My soul still pants for you.”

I shall use the text in two ways and show you, first, that *there is a Jerusalem here below which should come into our minds. And, secondly, that there is a Jerusalem above which should come into our minds.*

I. First, we will use the text with reference to THE JERUSALEM HERE BELOW WHICH SHOULD COME INTO OUR MINDS, that is, the Church of God on earth. The Church is all one, whether in Heaven or on earth. I may call the heavenly Jerusalem the Upper City where stands the tower of David, built for an armory, and the Temple in all its glory. While here below is the Lower City—but one wall runs around all. There is but one Church of the living God—

*“For all the servants of our King,
In earth and Heaven are one.”*

Still, at present, the division stands good because it is so to our experience. And we still have to say, concerning the “one army of the living God”—

*“Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.”*

So, taking our text as referring to the Church of God on earth, I say to you, first, that if you are a true Believer, let it come into your mind *so that you may unite yourself with its citizens.* Some of you who love the Lord have attended to almost everything except the one thing which you ought to have done as soon as you trusted in Christ, namely, cast in your lot with the people of God on earth. You have made your will, you have kept your business affairs straight and right. You have set your family matters in order. All of that is as it should be, but still, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.” And there are some of you who are Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who, if you *did* think of this matter, would have to say, “I am not an avowed member of Christ’s Church. I trust that I belong to Jesus, but I have not said as much as that by my public profession. I hope that I follow Him, but I am afraid that it is only afar off and that I wear a mask which hides my Christianity. I have not come out boldly and said, ‘I am on the Lord’s side.’ There sits the man of whom Bunyan writes, ‘with a book and his inkhorn before him,’ but I have never said to him, ‘Set down my name, Sir. I, also, belong to Jesus of Nazareth, and I will be numbered with His people.’ They may not be all I would like them to be, but I am afraid they are far better than I am—and if I might but have the lowest place among them, I would be glad. ‘I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.’”

I am not now talking about what is essential to salvation. I have no doubt that there are many true-hearted pilgrims to Zion who steal away to Heaven alone. They do not go on pilgrimage with their fellows and they are not to be commended for this, for they miss many privileges in neglecting Christian fellowship and, besides, they are not so serviceable to their Lord and Master. Let these lone saints seriously think over this question. If all the children of God were to go to Heaven in that fashion, each one, alone, where would there be any visible Church of God on earth at all? How would Gospel ordinances be maintained? How would the war for King Jesus be carried on? But, if one may do it, all may do it—and it is always an evil thing for any child of God to be doing what he would not have the rest of his Brothers and Sisters doing!

I remember that, one night, while preaching here, I told you that some Christians are like rats behind the wall. On the following Wednesday, when I sat to see enquirers, I had several who said that they would not be rats any longer. They could not bear to have such a title as that, so they resolved that they would come out and confess Christ! I was very glad to have barked so loudly as to frighten them out of their holes and I would like to do the same thing again! If you belong to Christ, say so in His own appointed way! In party politics, men are not generally ashamed to show on which side they are. And people of various nationalities, wherever they wander, are not ashamed to be called Britons, or Americans, or whatever they are. Then why should we, who are followers of the Savior, be ashamed to acknowledge His blessed name! Let it not be so, but rather, cry, “If there is a cross to be carried, here is a shoulder, ready to bear it!” Say you not so, my dear Friends? If there is any shame to be borne for Christ, will you stand back there, snug and comfortable, and let others bear it all alone? No. I think I hear you say, “If there is any mud to be thrown at Christ’s followers, let it be thrown at me. If there is any enmity to be shown to the chosen people of God, let me participate in it, for, as I hope to share their glory, so would I willingly bear a portion of their shame.”

Come now, you who have forgotten all about this matter! I beg to repeat my text especially to you—“Let Jerusalem come into your mind.” Let this message be to you like the still small voice of Jehovah was to Elijah. And go and put your name down among Christ’s disciples and let it not be merely a nominal thing, but give your person and your purse, your time and your talents to Christ and to His Church—and may the blessing of the Master rest upon you in doing it!

Taking it for granted that you have done this, I would next say to you, “Let Jerusalem come into your mind” *by praying for its prosperity*. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love you.” I think that in all our prayers, there should always be a petition for the one great Church of Jesus Christ. You know that in David’s penitent cry, in the 51st Psalm, when he bemoaned his sin and sought the pardoning mercy of God, he could not close his supplication without saying, “Do good in Your good pleasure unto Zion: build You the walls of Jerusalem.” So, when your sin and your repentance for it seem as if they must engross your prayer, and you must, with many sighs and tears, seek mercy for yourself, yet, even then, be not selfish, but pray for all who are in a same case with yourself. And pray for that happier band who have found mercy through the bleeding Lamb and are numbered with the people of God. There should be no private prayer—there should be no family prayer—there certainly should be no *public* prayer, without petitions for the prosperity of the Church of God in every place. Take care that you do not forget that important matter—in this sense, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.”

And when this has been done, what are we to do next? Why, then, *let us labor for the advancement of the good cause*. If there is any object in the world worth living for, it is the Glory of the Lord Jesus and the salvation and the sanctification of those whom He has purchased with His precious blood. Now, to this end—that the Church of Christ may be made perfect in Him—there is much to be done in the ingathering of sinners and the helping and comforting and perfecting of saints. And you and I ought to take our fair share of this blessed work! There are some who have no time for any holy duties—from the moment they wake in the morning till they go to bed at night, they voluntarily give up all their energies to making money. I would like to whisper in their ear very softly, “Let Jerusalem come into your mind.” Does not God deserve at least *some* part of their time? And His Church some little effort for her extension? There are some people who are busy, here and there, and rightly so, in all sorts of philanthropic movements, but they seem to forget that the greatest philanthropic organization on the face of the earth is the Church of the living God! And that there is nothing which can so bless the world as Christ in the midst of His own people.

I would like to step up to these friends and say to them, “‘Let Jerusalem come into your mind.’ Give the Lord Jesus some of your help. Consecrate to His cause some of your thought—some of your most tender affection.” It is a great pity when we cannot do anything for Christ—are there any Christians who are in that sad condition? Are they without hands—without feet—without eyes—without tongues—without hearts? Well, then, I do not think they can do much if that is the case. But until they can prove that they have lost all these parts of their body, I shall say that they *can* do something for Jerusalem, even if they only *remember* it! If you cannot preach, you can pray! If you cannot pray aloud, you can plead with God in secret! There are many who cannot preach, but who can *give*—and there are others who cannot give, who, nevertheless, can speak a word here and there for the Lord Jesus Christ! There are plenty of weapons waiting for you if you have a mind to wield them. You know what the Israelites took with them when they went out to fight the Philistines. They had only axes, plowshares and suchlike rough implements, but they seized everything that they were accustomed to use on the farm and employed it as a weapon of warfare! It is well to know how to use all the implements of our service in the house, shop and trade in fighting the Philistines and winning victories for the Lord God of Hosts and for His people! So, while you are diligent and energetic in your various philanthropic and other efforts, I would again whisper in your ear, “Let Jerusalem come into your mind.”

Jerusalem should also come into our minds so that we should *prefer its privileges to earthly gain*. Whenever we are about to make a settlement in any place and have the choice of residence left to ourselves, the first matter we ought to consider is the *religious* advantages or disadvantages. I admire the action of that Jew who, when he was about to select a city in which he could pursue his business, asked his friend, the Rabbi, “Is there a synagogue in such-and-such a place?” The Rabbi replied, “No,” so the Jew said, “Then I will not go to live there, for I will not settle in any place where there is no synagogue, for I must gather with my brethren for the worship of God.” I wish Christian people always thought and acted in a similar way yet, often, for the sake of a trifling gain, they fix their abode where they are altogether deprived of the means of Grace! Now, if you should be *obliged* to go live in such a spiritual desert, that is another matter. And you should feel that you are sent there on purpose to turn the wilderness into a fruitful garden by setting up a synagogue, establishing a House of Prayer and so becoming a light in a dark place! But, wantonly, and without any objective except that of financial gain, to select a residence where there will be no spiritual meat for you looks as if you had but slight regard for Christ, or for His Church. At such a time, “let Jerusalem come into your mind,” and say to yourself, “I must go

where my soul will be fed, or where I can be the means of feeding the souls of others. This must be one of the chief considerations in my choice of a place to live—"Can I be of service, there, to the Church of God? If not, it is better for me to be useful in poverty than to be useless in wealth—better for me to win souls and have a struggle for bread, than to rise into the highest position of opulence and never have an opportunity of bringing a sinner to Christ." Will you kindly think carefully and prayerfully on that matter and, in all your settlements in life, "let Jerusalem come into your mind"?

Once more upon this theme, if you are a member of a Christian Church—if you are working for the Church—if you are praying for the Church, "let Jerusalem come into your mind" in this way, *always act consistently with your relationship to the Church*. I am glad that I was, while only a lad, baptized into the name of the Sacred Trinity. Well do I remember that May morning when I walked into the river at Isleham Ferry and thus declared publicly that I belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ! By that act of immersion, I felt that I had crossed the Rubicon and there was no possibility of ever going back. I had burned the boats behind me so that I could not retreat, nor have I ever wanted to do so! It did not matter to me how many spectators looked on me that day, nor whether they were angels, men, or devils—I wanted them all to witness that, from that day on, I was Christ's servant—that I bore in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus, the watermark which could never be taken out—that I was dead to the world and risen with my Lord, to serve Him forever and ever! And I have often felt, when a temptation has assailed me, that it has been a very blessed check upon me to remember that, perhaps of all men in the world, I am the most known as having declared myself on the Lord's side.

I do not want to be less known, in that respect, but I feel that I must be doubly careful. I must mind how I act, for I have declared, before Heaven and earth and Hell, that I am the Lord's! When I hear a young person say, "I am afraid to be baptized and to join the Church, for I fear that it will be such a bond to me," I ask, "Do you not want to have such a bond as that?" Who wants to be free to sin? I do not, I am sure! No, blessed Master, if You have another chain, fling it round Your servant, for there is no freedom like the liberty of serving God and being bound to do so! You remember how sweetly David wrote upon this matter—"O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant and the son of Your handmaid. You have loosed my bonds"—as if he only felt sure of his *freedom* when the bonds of the Lord were round about him! And then all other bonds were gone.

If you are apt to be very quick-tempered, the next time you are going to boil over, "let Jerusalem come into your mind." Be calm and remember that you profess to be a Christian—that is, one who is like Christ. Then if, in trade, there seems at any time an opportunity of making a dishonest penny, stop, stop, stop! "Let Jerusalem come into your mind." What will men say about the Church to which you belong if they see that you can act as dishonestly as mere worldlings do? This thought ought to hold many a man back from doing what he would have done—"The vows of God are upon me. I am a Red Cross knight. I have enlisted in the army of Christ and it would be shameful for a man who is reckoned to be a Christian—called by that most wonderful of all names that comes from the Divine anointing of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God—it would be shameful for such a man to act as the ungodly would do in the same circumstances." No, no, my Brothers and Sisters, wait a while—pull up till you have thoroughly considered the whole question. Look at it from all points of view and say, with Joseph, "How, then, can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Oh, that the text and our meditation upon it may be a protection to us whenever we are tempted to sin! "Let Jerusalem come into your mind."

II. I have saved a good portion of our time for the second part of my discourse which is to be concerning THE JERUSALEM ABOVE WHICH SHOULD COME INTO OUR MIND.

First, *let it come into the mind of the Believer*. We do not think one hundredth as much about Heaven as we ought to. Most people seem to imagine we cannot know anything about it and they quote half a text, which is almost as bad as telling a lie—"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him." There they stop! But that is not where the Scripture ends, for the Apostle went on to say, "But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." They quote the first half of the passage to prove that we do not know anything about Heaven, whereas the second part tells us that we *do* know a great deal about it! And if we would but turn our thoughts that way, we might become almost as familiar with the inside of the gates of pearl as we are with the streets of this clouded, foggy city! We may learn much about Heaven, even while we are here, if we are but willing to be taught of God.

Why should the Christian let Jerusalem come into his mind? I think, first, because Jesus is there. A little child, who was dying, expressed his intense delight because he knew that he was going to Heaven. And one who stood by said, "But, my dear, what makes you wish to be there?" His prompt answer was, with flashing eyes, "Because Jesus is there." The friend then said to him, "But suppose that Jesus should go out of Heaven?" "Then I will go with Him," replied the child, "for He has prayed that those whom His Father has given Him may be with Him where He is." That is just what we feel! Jesus is the Husband of our hearts—should we not think much of the place where He dwells? If a wife were banished from her home for a while, I know that she would like to look at the portrait of her beloved and at a view of the house where she hoped to dwell with him again. And in like manner should your thoughts go out to your Well-Beloved while you are, for a time, barred from enjoying His company and you should think much of the place which He has gone to prepare for you, as He told His disciples, "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 you may be also." Shall Jesus talk like that and yet shall not Jerusalem come into your mind? Oh, surely, it shall, for His dear sake! Because He is there, our heart instinctively turns that way. We watch for His appearing, with our window open towards that Jerusalem, looking for and hastening unto the day when He shall come to us! And meanwhile, the heavenly Jerusalem comes often into our mind because Christ is there.

Further, the child of God should have Jerusalem upon his mind in all his earthly enjoyments. Sometimes God permits His own dear children to have many comforts on earth. They are not always in great tribulation and then the danger is lest they should begin to love this world and the things that are in it. Are any of you, dear Friends, growing rich? Are you in good health and strength? Has God surrounded you with children? Are you blessed with every joy in this life? Then remember that these are the things that make it hard to die unless you have some counter-attraction to put side by side with them. "Let Jerusalem come into your mind" for, when a man once thinks aright of Heaven, the highest joys of earth become very secondary!

I have heard of a nobleman who lay at the gates of death and his king sent him a new title and fresh honors. He was to be a knight of some noble order. The nobleman looked at the insignia of knighthood and said, "These are fine things for you who are here below and, therefore, I heartily thank His Majesty for sending them to me. But I am going to another country where distinctions like this have no value whatever." So you may say, if you have the comforts of this life, "These are fine things, here, and I heartily thank God who gave me all of them in His kindness. But I am going to a country where these things are nothing at all and, therefore, I will have little or no regard for them. My heart is in Heaven—my heart is not here. My treasure is up yonder and it has drawn my heart away up to itself and there it abides." Oh, yes! In the times of your greatest happiness, still cling to your Lord! In the days of joy as well as in the nights of sorrow, let Him be your All-in-All! When God's light fills your sky with sunshine, still love Him as much as when you are in the darkness and, according to the judgment of the flesh, everything is going ill with you.

But, Brothers and Sisters, let us equally allow the heavenly Jerusalem to come into our mind in poverty and persecution. Ah, then is the time, when it is bleak below, to think how blessed are they who are with Jesus above! Renwick, the great Scotch divine and martyr for the Truth of God, when he was hunted over the mosses and the mountains of the land, said to certain faithful friends who gathered around him, "I have lain two nights on the bleak hillside and they have been wild and stormy nights, and I have had nothing to cover me except the curtains of Heaven. And I have experienced the most intense delight when, between the times of tempest, I have seen the stars shining in Glory—and I have thought how every saint above shall shine yet more brightly forever and ever. And when I have thought of the bliss of those who are before the Throne of God, I have laughed to think how little men can do to hurt any child of God." The good man was right and you may say the same as he did if you are hunted by cruel persecutors. If you can but maintain fellowship with Jesus, you need not fear them! They can but kill the body and afterwards there is nothing more that they can do. But, when the glorified spirit walks the streets of gold and beholds the magnificence of his everlasting inheritance, he looks down on his persecutors and says, "What can you do to me now? I am immortal and you cannot harm me! My heritage is up here and you cannot take it from me." O you who suffer poverty and persecution, "let Jerusalem come into your mind," for this will help you to bear up under the greatest trials!

So, too, should Jerusalem come into our mind whenever we are heavy and downcast. Some of the best of God's saints get into that condition. I know plenty of Christian people who are not good enough to be despondent—I mean that they

do not think enough, for, if they really did think and meditate, they would soon be partakers of that heaviness of which Peter speaks when he says, “Though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold trials.” I believe that most of God’s children sometimes get down in the dumps. There is a coal cellar to God’s house as well as a banqueting hall and, although I should like to always live in the banqueting hall, I have many a time been down in the coal cellar—and I have learned more, there, than I have learned upstairs! Well, dear Friends, whenever you get down there in the very basement of God’s great house, begin to think of the upper stories—of those windows of agate and gates of carbuncle that are up yonder! Think of how you will lean out of the windows of Heaven to look down upon this poor dusky earth. Think of how you will walk up there among cherubim and seraphim, familiar with their joyous sonnets—and then all the sorrows of your mortal life shall seem to have been but as a pin-prick, or “as a dream, when one awakes.” Oh, the bliss of being able, even when you are despondent, to mount up to Heaven by faith and walk with God! Thus, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.”

Further, it is well to let Jerusalem come into our mind in the time of bereavement. Who has not lost a friend, a child, a wife, a husband, a beloved one of some sort? Well, when you take out your handkerchief because the tears flow fast, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.” That eminent man, Mr. Halyburton, when he was dying so triumphantly—and perhaps there was never a death more triumphant than was his—said, “I have 10 brothers and sisters, and a father and mother in Heaven, and I shall make the 11th of their children when I get there. And this is part of the joy that I have in departing, that I shall see my kindred before the Throne of God.” Yes, your dear infant children—you shall see them again! Refrain from weeping, Rachel—you are the mother of immortals! True, their little coffins are beneath the ground, but their *spirits* are not there. Every day they behold the face of our Father who is in Heaven! And some of us have parents or grandparents who have been called up above. Well, we are following them and we shall be there, too, in God’s good time! I would that we might be unbroken families before the Throne of God—our children and our children’s children, all gathered there and not one left out! When you linger at the side of the silent grave, weep not too much, but “let Jerusalem come into your mind.”

I also think it a suitable time to remember this Jerusalem when you are growing very old—when the threescore years and ten are over—when you have taken out a fresh lease for another ten or a dozen years and have almost run that out. Now you are living by the day and are liable to have notice to leave at any moment. Well, certainly, now is the time to “let Jerusalem come into your mind.” There are no furrows on the brows of the glorified, no limping limbs, or failing eyes, or closing ears! The gray old man shall be as young as a child there! “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” You may well say, “What joy is this to think of Jerusalem!”

There was a nobleman, who invited good Mr. Foxe, the man who wrote *The Book of Martyrs*, to come and spend a merry Christmas with him, “for,” he said, “Mr. Foxe, next Christmas I hope to have such entertainment for my friends as you will approve.” Mr. Foxe said, “I do believe that it will be a high day for me next Christmas, for I shall be where they keep holiday forever! What do you think of the state of immortals when they quit their bodies?” His lordship was all at sea when Mr. Foxe talked to him like that—but so it proved, for Foxe had, by that time, gone up to Heaven to see the martyrs whose lives he had written about and I know that he did spend his Christmas far more merrily than they did in the mansion below! What better thing can happen to you, dear old saints, than to get Home to your Father’s House? Here you are, as it were, left out in the cold for a while, but the great Door will soon open and the angel will come to beckon you in. Some who have gone before have been watching for you at the gate and you will have a joyous welcome! Therefore, when your aches and pains are upon you, and all the ensigns of old age are flying, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.”

Do the same in times of sickness. And if your sickness should be unto death, then all the more, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.” I was thinking of the little son of a Duke of Hamilton, a long way back, when there was graciousness in that family. This lad would, in a short time, at his father’s decease, have become a duke. He was a very gracious child and he was taken away very early. When he was near his end, he called his next brother to him and he said to him, “Douglas, in a little while you will be a duke, but I shall be a king!” Oh, that is blessed for you when you are sure of such glory as that! You might well give up a dukedom and go to Heaven in any boat that God might choose to send! I would not have

any choice about that matter. Some people are always dreading sudden death, but, for a Christian, what can be better than to die all of a sudden and to go Home when all is right and ready? But, anyway, whichever way we go, whether in the swift gondolas of sudden death, or in the slower barges of lingering sickness, we shall get to port all right—and that is the chief matter, to sail into the Fair Havens where we shall abide forever! So, in times of sickness, “let Jerusalem come into your mind.”

Now I have to conclude with *a word to those who have, at present, no part or lot in the New Jerusalem*. I should like to be the medium through which the still small voice should reach some of you who do not yet know the Lord.

Listen. What if you should never enter the New Jerusalem? Then, say, “Farewell,” to all the saints, for you will be divided from them forever! Say, “Farewell,” in your heart to all those blessed ones you loved on earth and who, in their death, exhorted you to follow them. Take leave of them, for you shall never sit down with them, or see them again unless it is from such a distance that there will be no communion between you and them, for between them and you there will be a great gulf! O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, must I never see your pearly gates and ruby walls, and never see the King except to hear Him say, “Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire”? “Let Jerusalem come into your mind.” Do not be any longer halting between two opinions! If you do not enter the New Jerusalem, where else can you go? There is but one other place, though even some so-called Protestants, nowadays, seem to be seeking to revive a belief in “purgatory”—yet there is no such place!

I heard of one, the other day, who said to the preacher, after he had been preaching according to Christ’s Word, the doctrine of everlasting punishment, “Sir, I believe that I shall go to Hell for a season, but afterwards get round to Heaven.” “Man,” said the preacher, “even if what you say is true, when there is a straightforward road to Heaven, what a fool you must be to want to go round by way of Hell!” Yet there are still some such foolish folk—they think that they must go round about when there is set before them an open door on which is inscribed, “Believe and live.” There are some who will have no Hell whatever and, as I think of them, I am reminded of a story that I heard of a little boy, whose uncle had imbibed this false doctrine. The uncle had been telling the child the story about the babes in the woods. “Uncle,” said the boy, “where did the little babies go to after the robins had covered their bodies with leaves?” “They went to Heaven, Johnny.” “And where did their wicked uncle go to?” “Oh, to Heaven, Johnny!” Johnny’s looked in utter disbelief. “Why, Uncle!” he said, “then he will kill the babies again!” Just so, if their natures are not renewed, wicked men would do in Heaven the same as they did here! And that cannot be. Do you see the folly of such teaching? Christ’s message is, “You must be born again.” You must be renewed in nature. You must come to Christ and put your trust in Him, or else, into the New Jerusalem it is not possible for you to enter!

Now, in closing, I want each one of you to ask these two or three questions of yourself. “How is my life today in reference to Heaven? Am I living so that it would be safe to let me into Heaven? Am I so living that it would be possible for God to be righteous and to let me be perfectly happy?” Listen to that question and honestly answer it, for God will do no unrighteous thing! Neither will He ever marry Heaven and sin together. There is an eternal division between those two! Mark the next question—“What objection can I possibly have to being saved tonight? What reason can there be against my believing in Jesus Christ while He bids me do so? It will not make me miserable to have my soul saved—it cannot make me unhappy to be made holy! The right way must be the best way and the best way must be the happiest way. Christ will not refuse me if I go to Him tonight. I have no reason to think that He will, but I have every reason to know that He will not, for He has said, ‘Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.’” So may it be! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
REVELATION 21:9-27.

Verses 9-22. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife. 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; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three

gates; and on the west three gates. 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. 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 pure gold, like unto clear glass. 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. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it. The less there is of true religion, the more there usually is of outward ritualism. When true religion shall fill every heart and God shall be the supreme joy of His people, they will need no temple.

23. *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.* Outward means are abolished when their mission is accomplished.

24. *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.* The Church shall be the metropolis of the world. It shall be honored and esteemed among the nations of mankind. When men are godly, then will they reverence the abode of God, namely, the living Church, built up of living stones, upon the one foundation, Jesus Christ!

25. *And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.* There will be no need to shut out enemies at night, for the day shall last right on. The Church's most intimate communion with God, her constant commerce with the skies, will have then begun.

26, 27. *And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* Into this holy city, the graceless, the Christless, the faithless shall never come. Here we have a mixture of light and darkness, but, in those better days, it shall be all light and the darkness shall have fled far away forever.

—Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307

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TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**