

IX

AFTER THE THOUSAND YEARS

Crown Him with many crowns,

The Lamb upon His throne;

Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns

All music but its own.

Awake, my soul, and sing

Of Him who died for thee,

And hail Him as thy chosen King

Through all eternity.

Crown Him, the Lord of Love!

Behold His hands and side;

Rich wounds, yet visible above

In beauty glorified:

No angel in the sky

Can fully bear that sight,

But downward bends his burning eye

At mysteries so bright.

Crown Him, the Lord of Peace!

Whose power a sceptre sways

From pole to pole—that wars may cease—

Absorbed in prayer and praise;

His reign shall know no end,

And round His piercèd feet

Fair flowers of Paradise extend

Their fragrance ever sweet.

Crown Him, the Lord of Heaven!

One with the Father known,
And the blest Spirit, through Him given,
From yonder glorious throne!
All hail! Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me;
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity.

M. BRIDGES.

A SCHOLARLY and lucid exposition of this subject is contained in a book written by Mr. George F. Trench; and from the name of that volume I have borrowed the title of the present chapter.

In the course of these studies we have dealt with seven dispensations of God; and we have seen that in the last of them, the Millennium, men will have in fullest measure all the things which have gone before: Conscience, History, Direct Divine Guidance, Law and Ritual, the presence of Jesus as King, and the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. To understand the events which succeed the thousand years nothing more is needed than an intelligent reading of plain and simple statements in the book of Revelation, commencing at [20:7](#), and ending at [22:7](#):

[Rev. 20:7–10](#): “And when the thousand years are finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beasts and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night unto the ages of the ages” (*margin*).

We have seen that the Golden Age is to be characterized by the direct government of Christ. Sin will still be in the earth; but it will be held in repression and summarily punished as soon as manifested. The nations which Christ will rule with a rod of iron will be, to a large extent, disloyal in heart; so that when Satan is loosed for a little season he will straightway deceive them. True, there will be everywhere those who refuse enlistment under his banners; but the picture here is that of an enormous apostasy, the most fearful ever seen. The armies of the nations will gather together against Jerusalem. Not after the old fashion of patriarchal days will this warfare be waged; but express trains, ocean liners, and all the latest developments of science will be impressed for the service of the armies gathered from the four corners of the earth. There is no doubt that to some who have dreamed of the Millennium as a finality, the outlook afterward is disappointing; but ere the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in all its glory can be ushered in, the unbelief and disloyalty which lurk in the hearts of men must be brought to a final head.

A study of the long list of apostasies—the Fall, the Flood, Babel, the Crucifixion of Christ, the Manifestation of antichrist, and this Revolt of the Nations under the personal leadership of the devil—opens before us an awful depth of human depravity, and should lead to heart-searching in the sight of God as to how far the elements of rebellion and sin still abide within us. A short, swift, burning sentence dismisses the rebellious host, “Fire came down out of heaven and devoured them.”

The second stage of development which claims our attention is found recorded in [Rev. 20:11–15](#):

G. Campbell Morgan, *God's Methods with Man* (New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898).

“I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire. And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.”

What marvellous scenes are these, in the closing drama of evil! They reveal the last stages in its outworking and destruction. First, the rebel nations swept away; and then the dead, small and great, gathered before the throne. Can there be found in the whole realm of literature anything more striking than the description of that great Judgment day? A scholar, discussing the Book of God, as literature, said that while it is wonderful for its vivid imagination and magnificent conception, it is not equal in these respects to some of the old Greek writers. One present in the company where this was said, asked for an example from these writers; and the words were quoted from Homer—“Great Jove frowned, and half the sky was black.” As against that sentence these words from the Apocalypse were given—“I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat upon it, *from Whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*” Surely from the standpoint of magnificent conception the inspired Word is far more wonderful than Homer.

In this scene notice that earth and heaven have fled away, and man is upheld in front of that throne by the omnipotence of God, and has no rock behind which to hide himself. In that final judgment of evil no man is rewarded because of his work. There *are* rewards for work; but they will be distributed elsewhere. The only escape from the doom of that day is a name written in the Book of Life; and those who possess that blessing are not present for judgment. Mark the clear distinction between the *books*, by the writing contained in which the dead are judged, and the *Book of Life*. Names entered in the latter are found there only by virtue of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Then are death, Hades, and all whose names are not written in the Book, cast into the lake of fire. That is the end of evil, and yet it is but the beginning of the glorious condition of humanity.

In [Rev. 21:1](#) we have the third event after the thousand years:

“I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more.”

The former heaven and earth have fled away from the face of Him Who sat upon the throne, for purification and reconstruction, not by water as at the Flood, but by fire. When the heavens and the earth, described by Peter as those “wherein dwelleth righteousness,” are seen, the full purposes of God for humanity will be unfolded.

Next, we read of “the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.” In verses [10–24](#) we have a wonderful description of that city; and any attempt to spiritualize it is out of harmony with the whole proper prophetic treatment of the book of Revelation. It is the city for which Abraham looked and for which we look; and it is not spiritual but material, as far as spiritualized people need material things. We may no more discuss this than the resurrected body of Jesus, which was palpable to the touch of Thomas, yet was spiritual enough to stand in the midst of His disciples without the opening of doors. The city’s dimensions work out at fifteen hundred miles in width as well as in length, large enough to cover the whole of Europe. Making Jerusalem the centre, it would about cover the whole area promised to Abraham. I incline to the idea of a pyramidal rather than a cubiform elevation. Some regard the promise that death shall cease, as applying to the Millennium; whereas the old prophets tell us that in that period the sinner shall be accursed and the child shall die. But in this City of God, the great ultimate place of the Kingdom of the Christ, there shall be no death, pain, nor curse, because there is no sin.

“The nations shall walk amidst the light thereof” (ver. [24](#)).

G. Campbell Morgan, *God’s Methods with Man* (New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898).

In that city, the earthly dwelling-place of a heavenly people, the old Jewish idea of Israel as betrothed and married to God, and the truth of the Church as the Bride of the Lamb, will each find fulfillment. Thus, our fifth point shows the kings and the nations of the earth in the light of the city, bringing into it all their glory and honor.

Now comes a verse ([27](#)) the beauty and value of which are too often obscured by hasty reading.

“There shall in nowise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie.”

It *does* teach that no unclean person and no liar shall be able to pass into the city; but that is the smallest part of its meaning. How came the mystery of sin into Eden? He who worketh abomination made a lie and tainted the brightness of the garden; and the stream of evil outworked into all human history. Into that fair city, Christ’s all-glorious Bride, shall no unclean thing come. No temptation to sin shall ever be allowed to assault the dwellers in that home of the future. This truth reveals a Divine purpose more glorious even than the blessedness of the Millennium.

A seventh point of progression:

[Rev. 22:2](#): “On this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

A difficulty seems to arise here in the sacred story. What can the nations need of healing in the perfect Kingdom, where sin shall be cast out? On the authority of a Greek scholar of repute we may substitute the word *health* for *healing*—“The leaves of the tree were for the health of the nations.” Healing pre-supposes disease, while health does not.

Vers. [3](#) and [4](#): “And there shall be no curse any more: and the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be therein: and His servants shall do Him service; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads.”

Remember that these are only passing glimpses of the glory of a kingdom on earth, *beyond* the Millennium, the great white throne, and the final casting-out of evil. This is a picture of the fullness of the times, when all things shall be subdued to the sway of Jesus.

There are passages in the Epistles which can only refer to this period. [Heb. 2:6–8](#) contains a quotation from [Psalm 8](#), where four facts concerning man are stated:

- i. “Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels.”
- ii. “Thou crownedst Him with glory and honor”;
- iii. “And didst set Him over the works of Thy hands.”
- iv. “Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet.”

Reading further, we find Paul applying the fourfold statement to Jesus Christ. “What is man?” asks the psalmist; and, by inference, the reply affirms that there is no knowledge of man until we see Jesus. “We behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels”; so that the first of the four prophecies has been fulfilled: “Even Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor”; then the second is fulfilled. “But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him.” Therefore the prophecy of that psalm, uttered before Christ came to earth, has only partially been fulfilled. In the Messianic dispensation Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death. Here and now we see Him with His personal crown of glory and honor. In the period of Millennial splendor He shall be set over the works of God’s hands. In the time beyond the Millennium *all things* will be subjected to Him.

There are three other passages in the writings of Paul, which have reference to this period:

[Eph. 1:20–23](#): “... which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come: and He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

This purpose of God stands, though as yet it has not been fully realized, nor will it be during that Millennium in which hearts will be disloyal. It remains, therefore, to be fulfilled in the glorious Kingdom, beyond the destruction of evil and the great white throne.

In the same category is [Phil. 2:5–11](#):

“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

That will never be until the Millennium is past and the great Kingdom comes which lies in the fullness of time beyond.

The last scripture in this connection is [Col 1:13–20](#):

“Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.” *The issues of that deliverance and translation may be traced in the succeeding verses.* “In Whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preëminence. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.”

Jesus Christ will never be defeated. There is nothing of God’s creation which will not be subjected to Him through Christ; no partial fulfillment of the words we have just read can satisfy the Divine heart. Not until Christ shall have banished evil, brought in the new heavens and the new earth, and given the City of God to the earth, will our Lord’s work be complete and His glory at the highest.

Then shall come the time when Christ will hand over the Kingdom to the Father. When? I do not know. Mr. Trench expresses his belief that the period of the Kingdom will be far longer than the whole stream of time past, but acknowledges that nothing may be dogmatically stated on this point. Probably the glorious Kingdom of Jesus Christ, wherein all things are reconciled unto the Father by Him, will extend through ages of which we can have no conception. But there is an end, concerning which revelation was made to the apostle Paul; and apart from his words about this, we have no light upon the subject, as far as I know. He says,

[1 Cor. 15:24](#): “Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power.”

Christ will abolish these things, not merely in connection with evil, but absolutely. When He is supreme Monarch and there is no other power, friendly or hostile, in existence, then shall the Son also be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all.

G. Campbell Morgan, *God’s Methods with Man* (New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1898).

Who shall tell the majesty and glory of God's purpose? Let us cease to have circumscribed ideas regarding God and His Christ. He to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past and as a watch in the night, is moving on, despite our fret and worry.

“For I doubt not through the ages one increasing
purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the
process of the suns.”

Who shall tell what lies beyond the handing of the Kingdom to God? Did you ever dream that there must come in the endless and illimitable time—which is not time, but eternity—a moment of weariness, a sense of monotony? Nay, think also of endless space. The sensitized film reveals stars which no astronomer has ever examined. Reach the furthest limit thus marked, and space is still before you. God is there, as here, limitless and unexhausted; and where He is, is love. All the things of which we have spoken are but the passing of His breath. While God and Love live on, there never can come weariness to the children of His love. “And every one that hath this hope set on Him, purifieth himself, as He is pure.”