

The Glory of the Church in the Latter Day.

by John Gill

The sermon discusses the glory of the church in the latter day, with a focus on the spiritual reign of Christ, the destruction of antichrist, and the reformation of places from popery.

Scripture: Psalm 87:3, Isaiah 11:9, Revelation 21:1

Topics: "The Reign of Christ", "The Glory of the Church"

Description

John Gill preaches about the future glory of the Church in the latter days, emphasizing the significant spiritual reign of Christ and the eventual personal reign that will follow. He highlights the destruction of antichrist, the spread of the gospel, and the large-scale conversions that will occur, including the return of the Jewish people to faith in Christ. Gill assures that the Church, founded on Christ, will endure and flourish, filled with holiness, brotherly love, and divine presence. He encourages believers to remain hopeful and steadfast, as the glorious promises of God will be fulfilled.

Transcript

THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH

IN THE LATTER DAY:

A SERMON,

Preached at a Wednesday's Evening Lecture,

in

GREAT EAST-CHEAP, Dec. 27, 1752.

Psalm 87:3

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God! Selah.

Some think this psalm was written by David, under a prophetic view of the temple to be built by his son Solomon; others, that it was composed by one that returned from the Babylonish captivity, for the comfort of those that wept at the laying of the foundation of the second temple: but let it be wrote by whom it will, or on whatsoever occasion; it is pretty evident that the subject-matter of it is the church of God in gospel-times, especially in the latter-day glory; when there will be abundance of converts in the places

herein mentioned.

The title of the Syriac version is "concerning the redemption of Jerusalem." It begins in a very abrupt manner, as the Song of Songs does, with a relative without an antecedent; his foundation is in the holy mountains: the foundation of the Lord which he has laid, who loveth the gates of Zion, and whose city is here spoken of, which is founded by him; or its foundation, the foundation of the city of God, the church, which comes to the same sense; for the church's foundation is the Lord's, being of his laying.[1] In allusion to the mountains of Zion and Moriah, on which the temple stood, a type of the church; or to the mountains round about Jerusalem, which also frequently signifies the church; this foundation is said to be in the holy mountains, or mountains of holiness, the purposes and decrees of God, those mountains of brass, Zechariah 6:1, particularly the decree of election, the foundation of God that stands sure, and is the source of all true holiness; likewise the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, sure and immovable, and which provides both for internal and external holiness; and is especially Jesus Christ, the rock of ages, the sure foundation laid in Zion, the holy One of Israel, and the sanctification of his people.

It follows: The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob; he loves the church, which often goes by the name of Zion; and therefore he has chosen and founded it, and took up his rest and residence in it; and he loves her gates, or public ordinances, and them that attend them; the work done by them, their prayers and praises, and exercise of graces, and every act of religious worship: and though he loves the dwellings of Jacob, the private habitations of his people, having fixed the bounds of them from eternity, and delighted in these habitable parts before they dwelt in them; though he loves the persons that dwelt there, and what is done in them, their closet and family devotion; yet he prefers public worship and ordinances to them, where he is more openly worshipped, and by more; and which makes more for his manifestative glory: hence follow the words first read, Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God: which is not to be understood literally of the city of Jerusalem, though great and honorable things might be spoken of that; as that it was a magnificent city, compact together, full of stately buildings, the metropolis of Judea, and the seat of the kings of Judah, and above all, the city of the great God; where his temple stood, in which were many glorious things; where God was worshipped, and he granted his presence: and many glorious things have been said of it, and which have been fulfilled; as that the Messiah should come into the temple, and give it a greater glory than the second temple had, which he accordingly has done; here he preached his glorious doctrines, and wrought his glorious miracles; near this place he suffered, died, was buried, and rose again, and ascended to heaven; and here he poured forth his holy spirit in an extraordinary manner; and from hence went forth the word of the Lord, and doctrine of the gospel, throughout all the earth: but rather this is to be understood figuratively of the church of God, which is often in scripture compared to a city, and is a city of God's building, and where he dwells; the name of it is Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there (Ezek. 48:35); of which things may be said: as that it is the city of the king of kings, its foundation is Christ, its walls and bulwarks are salvation, its gates praise; here glorious ordinances are administered, and glorious truths are preached; and so the words may be rendered, as they are in the Syriac version, Glorious things are spoken in thee, O city of God.

There are many glorious things which have been spoken of the church, which have been fulfilled already in the first times of the gospel, when there was an increase of it in Judea, and in the Gentile world; when the gospel was spread, when the apostles triumphed in every place; when Christ went forth in their ministry, conquering and to conquer; when paganism was demolished, and Christianity established throughout the Roman empire: and so likewise many glorious things spoken of the church were accomplished at the time of the reformation from popery; when gospel-light broke forth and spread itself

throughout several nations of Europe; but my intention is to give an account of the glorious things spoken of it, which yet remain to be fulfilled.

In my two last anniversary sermons, at this time of the year, I have touched upon future things. In the former,[2] I took notice of the several revolutions of nights and mornings from early times to the end of the world, and showed you the dark side of the cloud, and what a dismal night we are now entering into. In the latter,[3] I pointed at those things which Israel, or the people of God, ought to do in the prospect of such times; and now I shall hold out unto you the bright side of the cloud, and give you in one view an account of the glorious things spoken of the church of God in the latter day; and which will be accomplished both in the spiritual reign, and in the personal reign of Christ; which two are very distinct things, and lie at some distance from each other, and ought to be carefully distinguished, and not confounded: by help of which distinction, we may better understand many prophecies of the Old Testament, which are to be ranged under these different heads, and to be referred to these distinct periods of time; which are too often huddled and jumbled together by those that speak and write of these things.

And, I shall begin with the spiritual reign of Christ; by which I mean a future period of time eminent for spiritually; for otherwise Christ now reigns, not only in heaven, at his Father's right hand where he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, but also in the hearts of his people, by his spirit and grace; into which he enters as the king of glory, causing the everlasting doors to open to him; where he implants his grace as a governing principle, sets up his throne, and dwells there by faith, and erects a kingdom, which lies in righteousness, peace, and joy in the holy Ghost; and here he reigns in a spiritual manner, and so he has done in all ages, and now does: but this period of time I speak of, will be remarkable for his spiritual presence among his people; when he will come down, in the communications of his grace, like rain upon the mowen grass, as showers that water the earth (Ps. 72:6); when there will be a large and plentiful effusion of his spirit; when his people in general will be more spiritual in the temper of their souls, and in the frames of their mind; and more spiritual and savory in their discourses, and in the whole of their behavior and conversation, and will eminently worship God in spirit and in truth; not that they will arrive to a perfection of spiritually; though there will be a great deal of light and glory break out, yet there will be a mixture of darkness, obscurity, and imperfection; in which this state will differ from the personal reign of Christ in the new Jerusalem; of which it is said, the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, or there shall be no night there (Rev. 21:25); which of this state is differently expressed, thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day or night (Isa. 40:11): it will be only in the personal reign that the church's sun shall no more go down, neither shall her moon withdraw itself; when the Lord shall be here everlasting light.

And the days of her mourning shall be ended (Isa. 40:20). In the spiritual reign there will be the ministry of the word for the conversion of sinners, and the administration of ordinances for the comfort and edification of saints; all which suppose an imperfect state: whereas in the personal reign there will be none of these things, nor any need of them, or use for them; the new Jerusalem church-state will have no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; no need of the gospel, and gospel-ordinances to be administered as now, for the light and comfort of the saints; for the glory of God will lighten it, and the lamb will be the light thereof (Rev. 21:23).

In the spiritual reign the temple of God will be opened in heaven, and the ark of the testimony will be seen in it (Rev. 11:19); public worship will be set up and restored to its primitive purity; but in the personal reign, or new Jerusalem church-state, no temple will be seen there; for the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb are the temple in it (Rev. 21:22). The spiritual reign of Christ will be on this earth as it now is; formed as now,

as eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, procreation of children, carrying on trade and commerce, and attention to the several callings and duties of civil life; neither of which will have place in the personal reign: it is the present earth that will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord; the kingdoms of this world, that will become Christ's, when his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth (Isa. 11:9; Rev. 11:15; Ps. 72:8), as now situated: whereas the seat of the personal reign will be the new heaven, and new earth, in which no sea will be seen (Rev. 21:1): for at the personal appearance of Christ, the earth and the heaven that now are, will flee away.

This spiritual reign of Christ will take place upon the rising, and ascending, of the witnesses into heaven, and denotes a more pure, spiritual, and heavenly state of the church; it will be introduced upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world shall be subjected to Christ, through the power of his spirit, and grace accompanying his word; when the four and twenty elders, the representatives of gospel-churches, shall give him thanks, because he has taken to himself his great power and has reigned (Rev. 11:15-17): this state is no other than the Philadelphian church-state; all that is said of that church perfectly agrees with this, and which will follow upon the Sardian church-state, in which we now are; so that we hope it is at hand: and whereas at the Laodicean church-state is between this and the personal reign of Christ; it appears that they are two distinct things, very different, and at some distance from each other.

But to proceed, and take notice of the glorious things which shall be during this interval, or period of time, And, 1st, The destruction of antichrist is the grand leading event to the glories of this state. This is hinted at in the epistle to the church at Philadelphia, the emblem of the spiritual reign; it will be the last struggle of the beast that will cause the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world to try the inhabitants of it (Rev. 3:19): when the seventh trumpet will be sounded, which will bring on the spiritual kingdom of Christ throughout the world, he will destroy them which destroy the earth (Rev. 11:18), meaning the Papists, who have destroyed the inhabitants of the earth with their false doctrines, superstitious worship, and with those bloody wars, murders, and massacres, they have been at the bottom of.

And till this is done, the spiritual reign cannot, take place, especially in its full compass, and in all its branches; for so long as antichrist reigns, the church will be more or less in an afflicted state: the dates of the church's troubles, and of the reign of antichrist, are alike, and will expire together: the power given to the beast, is to continue forty two months; and so long the holy city, or church is to be trodden under foot; and so long the witnesses will prophesy in sackcloth, even one thousand two hundred and threescore days, which are equal to forty-two months; wherefore there can be no truly good and happy days, till these dates are ended.

The destruction of antichrist will be by the spirit of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming (2 Thess. 2:8); that is, by his coming is a spiritual way; or through the word of his mouth, his gospel, attended by his spirit and power; which will shine out with so much lustre, splendor, light and glory, as will chase away the darkness of popery, and enlighten the minds of people, to see into all the fopperies, absurdities, and wickedness of that religion, and cause them to cast it off; yea even to open the eyes of the kings and princes of the earth, to behold and loathe the abominations of the whore of Rome, they have committed fornication with; and fill them with wrath and indignation against her; as to hate her, make her bare and desolate, and burn her with fire (Rev. 17:16).

This work will be greatly effected by the pouring out the seven vials of God's wrath, or the inflicting the seven last plagues upon the antichristian states, upon the western and eastern antichrist, the Pope and

Turk; who must be both removed to make way for the spiritual reign of Christ. These seven vials will be poured out, or those plagues inflicted by Angels; by whom we are to understand protestant kings, and princes, and generals of armies; and these will be given them by one of the first of the four beasts, or living creatures, the emblems of gospel-ministers; who having some notice of the time of antichrist's destruction being at hand, will stir up and animate the Christian princes and potentates to take this work in hand; and who are therefore said to go forth from the temple, the church, the place of divine and spiritual worship, and where they themselves are worshippers; and from thence they have orders to go forth and do their work (Rev. 15:1, 6, 7; 16:1).

The first five of these vials concern the western antichrist, and his dominions: between which, and the trumpets, there is a great correspondence, though they respect different times and persons. The first vial will be poured out upon the earth, and design those popish countries which are upon the continent, as France and Germany, especially the latter; and as the first trumpet brought the Goths into Germany, so the first vial will bring great distress upon the popish party in the empire, and issue in a reformation from popery.

The second vial will be poured out upon the sea, and may intend the maritime powers belonging to the see of Rome, particularly Spain and Portugal; and as the second trumpet brought the Vandals into these places, so this vial will effect the same, and bring wars and desolations into them, and make a change in their religion. The third vial will be poured out upon the rivers, and fountains of water, which may point to those places adjacent to Rome, as Italy, and Savoy; and as the third trumpet brought the Huns into those parts, so this vial will bring in large armies hither, which will cause much bloodshed, and a great revolution in church and state.

The fourth vial will be poured out upon the sun, which must denote some person, or persons of great dignity and influence; and as the fourth trumpet brought destruction upon the emperor of Rome, the sun of the empire, and upon governors under him, signified by the moon and stars; this vial will bring on the ruin of the pope of Rome, the sun of the antichristian empire, with all his cardinals, bishops, priests, &c. The fifth vial will be poured out upon the soul of the beast, and will produce great darkness in his kingdom; though as of yet it will not be utterly destroyed, which is reserved for the seventh vial.

Now these several vials, as they will be so many plagues on the western antichrist, and make up so many breaches and ruins upon his states and dominions, so they will be so many gradual steps to the advancement of the glory and kingdom of Christ, and issue in the reformation of theses places from popery. The sixth vial will be poured out on the river Euphrates, which designs the Turkish empire, in the midst of which that river is; and as the sixth trumpet let loose the four angels, or the head of the Ottoman family into Europe, so this vial affects the same empire, and brings destruction on it, signified by the drying up the water of that river, Babylon's destruction is expressed by the drying up of her sea, Jeremiah 51:36, which will make way for the kings or kingdoms of the east: the kingdoms of Persia and Tartary, and others, to receive and embrace the Christian religion: This is the second or Turkish woe, which shall pass away; when the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's, and his dominion will be from sea to sea, from the Mediterranean sea to the Persian sea; and from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth.

The seventh vial will be poured out upon the air, the whole kingdom of Satan, in all the branches of it, who is the prince of the powers of the air; and this vial will clear the whole world of all the remains of Christ's enemies, Pagan, Papal, and Mohammedan, which the other vials left or did not reach;^[4] and will Christ's kingdom be in its full glory. Now the Heathens, Papists, Pagans, and Mohammedans, will perish out of his

land, and these sorts of sinners will be consumed out of the earth, and such wicked ones will be no more (Ps. 10:18; 104:36).

It may be observed, that there is a great likeness between these vials and the plagues of Egypt; the noisome sore on men under the first vial, agrees with the plague of boils and blains on man and beast; the sea, rivers, and fountains of waters, being turned into blood, under the second and third vials, are the same with the plague, which in like manner affected the waters of Egypt: the beast's kingdom being full of darkness, under the fourth vial, much resembles the gross and thick darkness the Egyptians were in for some days; and under the fifth vial there is a manifest reference to the frogs that plagued Pharaoh, and his court; and the great hail-storm under the seventh vial, bears some resemblance to the plague of hail.

And this observation may confirm the application of these vials or plagues, to the great city, which is spiritually called Egypt and Sodom: and it may be also observed, that as the plagues of Egypt were very quick one upon another, so it may be thought that those vials, when once they begin pouring, will soon be poured out; God will make a short work in righteousness, upon the enemies of his church: as yet I take it, none of them are poured out, though some great and learned men have so thought; as yet there have been no such devastations on the continent, as in France and Germany, as to produce the above effects; nor in the countries of Spain and Portugal; nor in Italy and Savoy, and the like places near Rome; nor in the seat of the beast, Rome itself; nor on the pope and his cardinals; the river Euphrates is not dried up; the Ottoman empire is yet in being; the Turkish woe is not passed away; and much less the world cleared of all the enemies of Christ and his church; no, before this work is done, the outer court must be given to the Gentiles, and the witnesses must be slain.

Had they begun to be poured out at the time of the Reformation, as some have thought, in all likelihood they would have been destroyed, and better times than we are now in, would have succeeded: but, however, this we may be assured of, that as the plagues in Egypt issued in the destruction of Pharaoh, and in the deliverance of the Israelites, so these vials will end in the ruin of antichrist, and in the salvation of the church of Christ. As soon as these things will take place, nay, as soon as you hear of those seven plagues, immediately you hear of persons on a sea of glass, triumphing over antichrist, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb (Rev.15:1-3); and no sooner is it said, that Babylon is fallen, but voices are heard in heaven, ascribing salvation, glory, honor, and power to God, for his judgments on the great whore; declaring that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; that the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride made ready; and proclaiming them happy that are called to the marriage-supper of the lamb (Rev. 19:1 ,2, 6, 7, 9); all which respect the spiritual reign of Christ, now introduced by the ruin of antichrist. 2ndly, There will follow upon this a general spread of the gospel; for which, way will be made into the several nations of the world by the pouring out of the vials.

The gospel had very great spread in the first times of it. The apostles having a commission to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; accordingly carried it not only into the several parts of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, but into neighboring countries and islands, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and even into all the Gentile nations; the apostle Paul himself went from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum, preaching the gospel of Christ, which he says was come into all the world, and preached to every creature under heaven; and by one or other of the apostles it was carried into all the then known parts of the habitable world;[5] as it seems it was to be before the destruction of Jerusalem; for our Lord says, the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come (Matt. 24:14); the end of the world to the Jews, the end of their civil and church-state, when their temple should be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another.

And ever since it has been preached in one place or another; and sometimes has had a greater spread, and sometimes a lesser; but now it is brought into a very narrow compass, and lies in a very few hands; there are but few persons that preach it in the purity of it; the times are now, or near at hand, which Dr. Owen seems to have had in view; of whom it is reported he should say, "the time is coming when a faithful minister would be more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir;" meaning, they would be scarce and rare; referring to the passage in Isaiah 13:12, and few there are that receive the gospel in the power of it, cordially embrace it, and sincerely profess it, and walk according to it: it looks like the time our Lord speaks of when he should come, and would not be able to find faith, the doctrine of faith, on the earth (Luke 18:8).

But though the gospel is now within such narrow limits, ere long it will have a free course, and run and be glorified. The earth, the inhabitants of it, will be filled with a spiritual and saving knowledge of God and Christ, communicated by it, and of the truth of it; and that not in a superficial way and manner, but even as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9), which are very deep, and large, and spreading; and which knowledge will be communicated to a large number of persons.

This will be, when the angel, not any particular minister, as Luther, or any other, but a set of gospel ministers in the latter day, so called from their office, shall flee in the midst of heaven; discharge their office with great readiness and swiftness, and in the most public manner, in the church of God; having the everlasting gospel; not a little dry morality, but the gospel of the grace of God, the good news of life and salvation by Jesus Christ; which consists of everlasting things, of everlasting love, an everlasting covenant, an everlasting Savior, and everlasting salvation; and which was ordained before the world, as well as will continue to the end of it; having this not in their heads only, but in their hearts and in their mouths, and a commission to preach it to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Rev. 14:6).

These will be very diligent and industrious, spare no pains, be indefatigable in their work; they will be many, and will run to and fro; and by this means knowledge will be increased (Dan. 12:4): this will be the time, even in the Philadelphian state, when there will be an open door set, which no man can shut (Rev. 3:8); an opportunity of preaching the gospel every where, and which will be taken and used; a wonderful door of utterance will be given to ministers of the word, who will open their mouth freely, and boldly, and with great success.

The doctrines of the gospel are the living waters, so called for their refreshing and quickening nature, both to dead sinners and drooping saints, that at this time shall go out of Jerusalem, the church of God; half of them towards the former sea, or the eastern sea, as the Targum; the Persian sea, which lay east of Jerusalem, and so before it: and half of them towards the hinder sea, or the western sea, as the paraphrase; the Mediterranean sea, which lies to the west of Jerusalem, and so behind it; and both denoting the spread of the gospel in the latter day, east and west, for the conversion of the eastern nations in China, Tartary, Persia, &c., and for the conversion of the western nations in Europe; in summer and in winter shall it be (Zech. 14:8).

These waters will be ever flowing, these doctrines will be constantly preaching; nor will the ministry of the word be hindered by any heat of persecution, or by any coldness or indifference to it. 3rdly, There will be large conversions every where, in the several parts of the world: in all popish countries, and antichristian states; even the ten kings, that have given their kingdoms to the beast, have been associates of antichrist, and reigned with him, shall withdraw from him; they and their subjects shall revolt from him, and be

converted, and embrace the pure gospel: as it will be the Christian princes and potentates that will pour out the seven vials on antichrist, they will carry the gospel with them wherever they go; or however, the ministers of it will follow closely at their heels, way being made by the former for them; whose ministry will meet with great success every where, and those that escape the judgments of God in these nations, will not only be affrighted at them, but will be truly converted by the gospel, and give glory to the God of heaven (Rev. 11:13).

In the Mohammedan nations, the Turkish woe being past, and that empire being destroyed, and way made for the gospel to be carried into the eastern kingdoms, great and large conversions will be made by it; there is a most glaring prophecy of this in Isaiah 60:7, which the whole chapter concerns the spiritual and personal reign of Christ; all the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

Now Kedar and Nebaioth were the sons of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13), who settled in Arabia, the country now possessed by the Turks;[6] so that this is a prophecy of the conversion of multitudes in those parts, whereby the interest of Christ will be increased, and his church glorified. Moreover, in all Pagan countries the gospel will make its way, and be successful, the covering and veil of blindness and ignorance, cast and spread over all people and nations (Isa. 25:7), will be removed by it; not only the darkness of Popery and Mohammedanism, but the gross darkness of Paganism shall flee away at the light and brightness of Zion's rising; the Gentiles shall come to it; the fulness and forces of them shall be brought into the church, being converted by the word; and not only vast multitudes of the common people, but great personages also; kings shall be enlightened by it; these shall come to Christ, fall down before him, and worship him; these shall come into his church, and become members of it; kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to his people; they shall bring their riches, honor, and glory into his house; and his saints shall suck the breasts of kings (Isa. 60:1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 16; 49:23; Ps. 72: 10, 11), be enriched, honored, and protected by them.

This will be the time when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High (Dan. 7:27); not that there will be any change or alteration in the form and order of civil government, which will be the same as now; there will be kings and queens then, as at this time, as these prophecies show; it will not be until the personal reign of Christ takes place, that all rule, authority, and power, will be put down (1 Cor. 15:24): civil magistracy, in the spiritual reign, will continue as it is; only it will change hands, it will be entirely in the hands of Christian kings and princes all the world over: and no doubt but it will be better exercised, be more orderly and regular; and that truth and righteousness will prevail every where.

But I must not forget the conversion of the considerable body of people, the Jews, who have been preserved a distinct people for several hundred years, for this purpose; the conversion of these people will be sudden, and of them, altogether, a nation shall be born at once (Isa. 66:8). It looks as if their conversion would be like that of the apostle Paul; and he seems to hint that it will, when he says, that he in obtaining mercy, was a pattern to them which should hereafter believe (1 Tim. 1:16); meaning, perhaps, his own countrymen, that should believe in Christ in the latter day, whose conversion would be similar to his; that as his conversion was sudden, in the midst of all his ignorance, unbelief, and rebellion, and without the word, by the immediate power, and grace of God, so will their be in like manner; nor is it likely that their conversion should be by means of the word, since there is such an aversion in that people to the hearing of it; and a rare thing it is to see a Jew in a Christian assembly.

But, however, all Israel shall be called, converted, and saved (Rom. 11:26). There is a famous prophecy of this in Hosea 3: 4, 5, in the first of these verses it is said, the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince; without any civil government of their own, the scepter having departed from them many hundred years ago; and without a sacrifice; daily or yearly, or on any occasion; they believing it to be unlawful to sacrifice any where but in their own land, and at Jerusalem, and on the altar of God there; and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim; without any manner of idols, or idol-worship; they being not addicted to idolatry, since their return from the Babylonish captivity: and now as all these things are exactly fulfilled in them, so will in like manner that which follows; afterwards shall the children of Israel return, by faith and repentance, from their evil way, from their impenitence and unbelief, and rejection of the Messiah; and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; the Messiah, the son of David, their king, as their own Targum paraphrases it; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day; in the spiritual reign of Christ; and it is hinted at in the Philadelphian state (Rev. 3:9), then will the children of Israel appoint themselves one head, which is Christ, whom they will own and acknowledge to be their head, lord and king; and they shall come up out of the land, or countries, where they are, to their own land, and great shall be the day of Jezreel (Hos. 1:11), and this will make a considerable part of the glory of Christ's spiritual reign. 4thly, There will be at this time a large effusion of the spirit of God: the prophecy in Joel, quoted in Acts 2:17-20, was very applicable indeed to the case of the apostle at the day of Pentecost, but was not fully accomplished then; the Spirit was not poured upon all flesh; nor were those signs in heaven, in full extent of them, seen then, predicted in it; the pouring forth of the Spirit then was only a pledge and earnest of what will be in the latter days; some drops as it were, were only let down then; hereafter the Lord will pour the water out of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters (Num.24:7): it will be owing to this that the above events will have their accomplishment; the destruction of antichrist will be by the spirit of Christ's mouth, which will blow a blast upon him; the success of the gospel every where, and the large conversions of men, must be attributed to the plentiful effusion of the spirit that will attend it; particularly the conversion of the Jews, will be owing entirely to the spirit of grace and supplication (Zech. 12:10) poured out upon them, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn, and it will be in consequences of the extraordinary pouring out of the spirit, that the following things will take place in this reign.

The light of the gospel, both in the preachers and professors of it, will be very great, clear, and distinct; the light of the moon, as in the present dispensation, to which may be compared, shall be as the light of the sun, to which that dispensation shall be like; and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days (Isa. 30:26); as if the light of seven days were collected together, and shone out at once; hyperbolical expressions, setting forth the exceeding greatness of gospel-light in those times: not only the watchman, ministers of the word, shall see eye to eye (Isa. 52:8), all truths clearly and distinctly; their ideas and sentiments shall be regular and uniform; there will be an entire harmony, and agreement between them; but even private Christians, common members, shall all know the Lord, and the things of the gospel in a very clear and comfortable manner, even from the least of them, unto the greatest of them (Jer. 31:34); when God shall lay Zion's stones with fair colors, and her foundations with sapphires; made her windows of agates, and her gates of carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones; then all her children shall be taught of God (Isa. 54:11-13), to such a degree as they never were before, so clearly, fully and universally.

There will be great purity of gospel-worship and ordinances; the temple of God will be opened in heaven; the true worship of God will be restored, and observed according to the primitive pattern: the ark of the testimony (Rev. 11:19) will be seen in it; the ordinances of the gospel will be administered according to

their original institution; there will be no disputes about the form or order of church-government; every thing relating to it will appear evident; the ordinances will be kept as they were delivered; nor will there be any doubts about the manner of performing them, or the subject to be admitted to them, or the ends to be answered by them; all these things will stand in a clear light; and there will be no objector to them, or any division about them; nor will they be ever corrupted any more.

Brotherly love, which is now waxen cold, will be in its height and glory, agreeable to the name of this state, Philadelphia, which signifies brotherly love; there will be no more contentions, animosities, and quarrels: Ephraim shall not envy Judah; on account of pre-eminence of office, gifts, and grace; and Judah shall not envy Ephraim (Isa. 11:13); by any haughty and over bearing carriage, or with wrangling debates, and opprobrious language; the two sticks of Ephraim and Judah, shall be one in the hand of the Lord; there will be perfect harmony and love, nothing to disturb, distress, and make uneasy, or tend to alienate the affections of one from another; there will be no pricking briar, nor grieving thorn (Ezek. 28:24) among them; they will be like the first Christians, of one heart, and of one soul, being of one mind, and of one judgment; all studying to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Holiness, which becomes the house of God for ever, will now adorn every member in it; nor will there be so much immorality in the world as at this present time; holiness will be as common as profaneness is now; in that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, holiness to the Lord:--yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts (Zech. 14:20, 21): Christ therefore takes his titles in writing to the church at Philadelphia, the emblem of the spiritual reign, suitable to its state; as truth and holiness shall then prevail, he addresses it thus, these things saith he that is holy, he that is true (Rev. 3:7); truth and holiness go together; truth influences the heart, and that the life and conversation.

There will be great peace and prosperity of all kinds, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal; in those days of the Messiah's spiritual reign, shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth (Ps. 72:7): as the saints will enjoy great peace of conscience and tranquility of mind, so they will have nothing to disturb them without; there will be no more persecution; there will none to hurt or destroy in all the Lord's holy mountain (Isa. 11:9); as there will be no discord among themselves, so no distress from any enemies; violence shall no more be heard in their land, nor wasting and destruction within their border (Isa. 60:18): O happy, halcyon days!--I go on to observe, The glorious things which are spoken of, and will be done in the personal reign of Christ: Toward the close of the spiritual reign, things will be upon the decline; the Laodicean church-state will take place; there will be great coldness, and lukewarmness, in spiritual things, which will be very offensive to Christ; the Spirit of God will withdraw his gracious influences; and there will be little left but external gifts, and outward riches and honor, on which great stress will be laid; and there will be great boasting and bragging of them, as being rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing; when, as to spiritual grace and the exercise of it, they will be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Rev. 3:15-18); and need the advice that Christ gives them, of applying to him for gold, white raiment, and eye-salve: a general sleepiness will seize professors of religion; the wise as well as foolish virgins will slumber and sleep, when the approach of the bridegroom is near; immorality and profaneness will again spread in the world; and it will be as the days of Noah and Lot; and in this condition will Christ find the world, and the church, when he comes a second time; which is what will introduce the glory of the following state. 1st, There will be a personal appearance of the Son of God, and a glorious one it will be: he will personally appear; the Lord himself shall descend (1 Thess. 4:16); not by his Spirit, or by the communication of his grace, or by his gracious presence, as before; but in person he will descend from third heaven, where he is in our nature, into the air, where he will be visible;

every eye shall see him, when he cometh with clouds (Rev. 1:7); or in the clouds of heaven, which will be his chariot; he will descend on earth at the proper time; and his feet shall stand upon the mount of Olives (Zech. 14:4); on that spot of ground from whence he ascended to heaven.

Job seems to have this descent of his in view, when he says, he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth (Job 19:25); which seems to respect not so much his first coming as his second; since it is connected with the resurrection of the dead. This appearance of Christ will be a very glorious one; it is called the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13); for he will appear under both characters to his people; when he appeared the first time, it was in the form of a servant; he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; but now he will come as King of kings, and Lord of lords: then he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, to bear the sins, and work out the salvation of his people; but now he will appear without sin, to put them into the full possession of the salvation obtained for them: he will come in his own glory, and in his father's, and of the holy angels (Luke 9:26); he will appear in the glory of deity, and all the perfections of it; who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person (Heb. 1:3); it will then be evident, that he is the Lord God, omnipotent that reigneth; and that he is omniscient, the searcher of the hearts, and trier of the reins of the children of men (Rev. 19:6; 2:23); and he will be seen in all the glory of his human nature, and with that glory he has with the Father, as mediator: all which, in some sense, may be said to be his Father's; because his divine glory is the same with his Father's, and his human and mediatorial glory is what he has from him; and he will come with all that power and authority vested in him by his father as the judge of the world: he will be attended with his holy angels, as when on mount Sinai, and as when he ascended to heaven whom he will employ in one kind of service or another, and who will make a considerable figure in this apparatus: to which may be added, that all the saints will come along with Christ; the souls of all that have departed from the beginning of the world, in order to be re-united to their bodies, which will be raised; there will be Adam, and there will be Abraham, and all the ante-diluvian and post-diluvian saints, old and new testament-ones; when Christ will be glorified in them, and admired by them, and they shall appear with him in glory. 2dly, There will be a resurrection of the bodies of the saints; the dead in Christ, who died in union with him, believers in him, and partakers of his grace, shall rise first (1 Thess. 4:16); they will have the dominion over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection, who will not rise until the end of that day; there will be a thousand years distance between the resurrection of the one and of the other; hence the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:14), as that is named in distinction from that of the unjust, it called the first resurrection (Rev. 20: 5, 6).

This resurrection will be a glorious one; it will not only be by the power of Christ, and in virtue of union with him, but in entire conformity to him, as by him will be the resurrection of the dead, and every one will rise in his order, and they that are his at his coming, and because they are his: so they will be fashioned like unto his glorious body (Phil. 3:21): though they are laid vile bodies in the grave, they will rise glorious ones; the body that is sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption; and though sown in dishonor, will be raised in glory; being sown in weakness, it will be raised in power; and from a natural body will be raised a spiritual one (1 Cor. 15:42-44); and the righteous, in soul and body, shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father (Matt. 13:44). 3rdly, The next thing will be the change of living saints: this is the mystery the apostle says he would show the Corinthians; and perhaps he was the first man that was led into it, or however, the first that showed it to others; that we shall not all sleep, or die, but we shall all be changed (1 Cor. 15:51); even those that die: such as will be alive at the coming of Christ, shall undergo a change equivalent to death; their bodies shall be changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible ones; and their souls shall become at once perfectly pure and holy.

I have sometimes thought, that that change which passes upon the hearts of the people of God at the instant of death, or will pass upon living saints at the time I speak of, when hearts so full of sinful lust, pollution, and wickedness, will be at once cleared of all, is a greater evidence and display of the power of God, than the change that passes upon their bodies, either at the resurrection, or at this time. This being done, these living saints, changed, shall be caught up together with the raised ones, to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4:17); where it seems as if he and they should stop a while, until an after-event is accomplished. 4thly, The precious dust of the saints being collected out of the earth, and their bodies raised and united to their souls, and living ones changed, and both taken up from hence, and with the Lord, the general conflagration will begin; the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up, with all the wicked in it; for the heavens and the earth that now are, that is, the earth with its surrounding atmosphere, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, for the perdition of ungodly men (2 Pet. 3:7, 10); when, 5thly, There will succeed new heavens, and a new earth, which God has promised; and which, the apostle Peter says, saints look for according to his promise; and which the Apostle John had a vision of (2 Pet. 3:13).

In this new earth Christ will descend and dwell; here the tabernacle of God will be with men; and he shall dwell with them (Rev. 21:1): this will be the seat of Christ's personal reign; here he will have his palace, and keep his court, and display his glory, and the greatness of his majesty; and here his people will dwell with him, who will now be all righteous, perfectly so, even righteousness itself; for in these new heavens and new earth will dwell righteousness (Isa. 60:21; 2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 21:27); nothing shall enter into this glorious new Jerusalem-state, that makes an abomination or a lie; it will be perfectly an holy city, consisting wholly of holy persons; wherefore blessed and holy is he that hath a part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20:6): nor will there be any enemy to annoy the saints in this state; the wicked will be all burnt and destroyed at the general conflagration; the beast and false prophet before this will be cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Satan will be bound by Christ, and cast into the bottomless pit, where he will remain till the thousand years are fulfilled: for so long will this state continue: so long Satan will be bound; so long the saints will live and reign with Christ (Rev. 20:1-6); this will be the day of the Lord, which is a thousand years, and which a thousand years will be as one day (2 Pet. 3:8). At the close of these years Satan will be loosed again, and the wicked dead will be raised;[7] which, with the whole posse of devils, will make the Gog and Magog-army, who shall be in the four quarters of the world, and go upon the breadth of the earth; and whose numbers shall be as the sand of the sea, being all the wicked that have been from the beginning of the world: a large army indeed, such an one as never was before, consisting of enraged devils, and of men raised with all that malice and wickedness they died in, with Satan at head of them; by whom they will be animated to make this last and feeble and foolish effort, for their recovery and liberty; in order to which they will compass the camp of the saints about, the beloved city; who will be in no manner of pain and uneasiness at the appearance of this seeming formidable army; being clothed with immortality, secured by the power of God, and Christ being in person with them; when fire shall come down from heaven and devour the wicked; the wrath of God shall seize them, distress and terrify them, divert them from their purpose, and throw them into the utmost consternation and confusion; and when they shall be dragged to the tribunal of Christ, and stand before him, small and great, and be judged according to their works, and cast into the lake of fire; where they will be in company with the devil, the beast, and false prophet, and be tormented with them for ever and ever (Rev. 20:7-15).

This will issue in the ultimate glory; when the saints shall be for ever with the Lord; shall see him as he is; enjoy uninterrupted communion with Father, Son, and Spirit; have the company of angels, and be in possession of those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of. But my intention being only to give you an account of the glorious things that shall be in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ; here I stop, here I end, and close all with a word or two.

All this shows and proves, that the church and people of God are the objects of his love; that he loves the gates of Zion indeed; the church is his Hephzibah, in whom he delights, and to whom he is married; and therefore has he said these things of her; and therefore will he make them good: and if the saints have an interest in the love of God, they need not care what the world say or think of them, or what they can do unto them; though they are with them the off-scouring of all things, they are precious in the sight of God.

It is evident from hence, that the church of Christ is lasting and durable, and cannot be destroyed; its foundation is in the holy mountains; it is built on a rock the gates of hell cannot prevail against; its walls, in the spiritual reign, are salvation, and its gates praise; and what a description have we of it, of its wall and foundation, of its security and glory in the personal reign, under the name of the new Jerusalem. It will continue through the age, and come into every state it is said it should, and will endure to all eternity.

Seeing such glorious things are spoken of, and that by the Lord, we need not doubt, but should believe, there will be a performance of them; and should be looking for them, and at the worst should lift up our heads with joy, since our redemption draws near. Happy are those that belong to this city, who are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; whose citizenship is in heaven, and they have a right to enter in through the gates into the holy city, the new Jerusalem; but miserable will those be, that will be without, for without are dogs: and then he that is unjust, will be unjust still; and he that is filthy, will be filthy still; and he that is righteous, will be righteous still, and he that is holy, will be holy still (Rev. 22:11). ENDNOTES

[1] The Jewish writers connected these words with the title of the psalm, and make sense to this; the foundation or argument of it, the psalm is concerning the holy mountains of Zion and Jerusalem. So Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech: the Targum joins them together thus; "by the sons of Korah is said a song that is founded by the mouth of the fathers that were of old."

[2] Entitled, The Watchman's Answer to the Question, What of the Night? On Isaiah 21:11, 12.

[3] Called, The Practical Improvement of the Watchman's Answer. On 1 Chronicles 12:32.

[4] See more of these vials in my Exposition on the 15th and 16th chapters of the Revelation; and Bedford's notes on Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 3, p. 41, 42.

[5] Vid. Fabricii Lux Evangelelii, p. 83.

[6] The Targum paraphrases these words, "all the sheep of the Arabians shall be gathered unto thee," &c., as it does the beginning of the preceding verse; "the multitude of the Arabians shall cover thee round about."

[7] As I do not suppose that the earth, at the conflagration, will be annihilated, or be destroyed, as to the substance of it; only purified by fire, refined and cleared of all noxious qualities, and therefore called a new earth; (so considering the omnipotence of God) there can be no difficulty about the repositories of the ashes of the wicked, or the place from whence they will be raised, any more than about the place where

the dust of Adam, and of all from the beginning of the world, is laid up.

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