

33. DAYS OF HEAVEN UPON THE EARTH

YEARS and years ago a man in England's old Bedford jail had a dream. He dreamed about that wonderful city called the New Jerusalem. He saw some men enter the gate. Then-well, let him tell the story in his own words:

"Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the City shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men, with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal.

"There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, Holy, holy, lioly, is the Lord! And after that they shut up the gates: which when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

This man, of course, was John Bunyan. He was imprisoned for his faith and for many years had to live in a jail. There he had this immortal dream, which we now call *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Yes, when they shut up the gates, he wished himself among them. And no wonder. He wished to see heaven upon earth. That is the subject of this chapter, "Days of Heaven Upon the Earth"-the earth made new, heaven come down to earth, the saints' inheritance, where God's people spend eternity. We may give it many names, but the one general name of "heaven" might cover it all.

As we learned previously, when Jesus comes back to this earth, He takes His people to be with Him in heaven. We read this in the fourteenth chapter of John. There also we read of the places He has prepared for them. And, turning to the Book of Revelation, we read of the glorious city, the New Jerusalem, which is now in heaven.

After the saints have been with Christ in the heavenly places for one thousand years, the glorious city will descend to this earth and will become the capital of the earth made new. The golden dream of the ages will come true: at last there will again be days of heaven upon the earth. That is what this world needs now. There is too much fear, too much controversy, too much strife, too much doubting, too much war, too much pain, too much death. Through the long ages since sin entered the world, we have had anything but days of heaven. Yet, God's plans are always finally fulfilled. The time will come when, according to God's original plan, there will again be such days here on the earth renewed.

What was the Lord's purpose in creating the earth? We find the answer in Isaiah 45:18: "For thus said the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited." And it will be inhabited, inhabited forevermore. We should never worry about the earth's coming to an end as a planet. It is true that God will deal with sin here. But the same fires which destroy the wicked in the "lake of fire," as Jesus calls it, will also purify the earth and prepare it for its eternal destiny.

Jesus Himself said: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5. They do not inherit it now, but they will someday-the earth made new. Some people are pessimistic about the future of this earth, but not Jesus. No Christian needs to be worried about the ultimate future of this earth. It is far brighter than optimists have ever imagined though it is true that the prophecies of Holy Scripture foretell times of trouble and war before the second advent of Jesus. But the ultimate future of this earth is simply wonderful! It will be a privilege to be alive then, for "the best is yet to be, the last ... for which the first was made."

However, some people do not share this optimism. Not long ago a man of learning predicted that the earth would at last plunge into the sun and burn up,. Another declared that the earth would dry up; he described the last man crawling to the last water hole for his last drink. Another described the earth in a head-on collision with some runaway star. Still others speak of the earth's exploding from its internal pressure. And not long ago an article appeared in which a scientific prognosticator declared that the earth will end as a frozen waste with ten-mile-high glaciers covering it. However, he gives us about seven thousand years to get ready for it, and declares that it will be getting really serious in a million times a million years. just what can be done about that, he leaves us to guess.

After all, the only valid information we can secure about the future of this earth must come from the One who made it. The Creator alone knows why He made the earth, and He alone has real knowledge of the future destiny of this planet. In His inspired Scripture it is said that He "formed it to be inhabited."

(Isaiah 45: IS.) Jesus is the creator, for by Him all things were made. (John 1:3.) We can be sure from the Holy Scriptures-inspired by the Spirit of Christ or actually spoken by Christ-that His people will inherit the earth. So, the earth as a planet will not come to an end. It will not burn up, dry up, crack up, blow up, or freeze up in any way that will cause it to come to an end.

According to the teaching of God's Word, after a glorious renewal the earth will go right on as the most wonderful place in the whole universe in which to live. Ecclesiastes 1:4 states that "the earth abides for ever." So why should we not be optimistic about the future of this earth? The Lord's promise concerning the earth still stands. God gave the earth to mankind. Of this we read in Psalm 115:16: "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men." And when God gives a thing, He really gives it.

Dominion was given to men over the earth. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over ... all the earth." Genesis 1:26. Further, God made man to have dominion over the works of his hands. (Psalm 8:6.) Through Adam's failure, however, man lost his dominion to the great usurper, "for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." 2 Peter 2:19.

Three times Christ speaks of Satan as the "prince of this world." (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.) Satan tempted Christ to acknowledge his authority when he showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth, saying, "All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be your." Luke 4:6, 7. But Christ resisted the temptation, and through His infinite sacrifice redeemed not only the souls of men, but also the dominion lost by Adam. In fact Christ is called "the last Adam." 1 Corinthians 15:45. He came "to seek and to save that which was lost (Luke 19: 10), as well as those who were lost. The prophet Micah, foreseeing all this and the final victory of Christ, said, "And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." Micah 4:8.

When man lost his first dominion, the earth brought forth thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:18). When Christ, the Son of man, the last Adam, paid the price of redemption upon the cross, He wore a crown of thorns, showing that His death was not only to save men but also to deliver the earth itself from the dark curse of sin. Our Savior's sacrifice upon the cross, was complete. It covered all our sin and loss.

The Apostle Paul spoke of the fact that "the whole creation groans and travaills in pain together until now." Romans 8:22. All created things in this earth are waiting for the glorious day when God's children shall be immortalized and redeemed physically and spiritually. By God's grace His believers are justified here. They grow in grace and are sanctified. But when Jesus comes, they will be glorified; and eventually the whole earth will be brought back to its Edenic state.

Those who read the Gospels carefully know that Jesus spoke plainly of the restoration of redeemed man's dominion over the earth. "Blessed are the meek," He said in His Sermon on the Mount, "for they shall inherit the earth." Matthew 5:5. This, Jesus called the "regeneration." (Matthew 19:27-29.) The earth itself will be regenerated, or re-created-created again. This is in perfect harmony with the words of Jesus in Revelation 21:5: "Behold, I make all things new." The prophet Isaiah foretells that God will create a new heaven and a new earth. (Isaiah 65:17.)

In Luke 1:32, 33 we read a prophecy of the coming kingdom of glory: "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." All that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ, the last Adam. (1 Corinthians 15:45.) When the gates of the first Paradise closed behind the first man, the dream of Paradise restored was in his heart. God encouraged this hope by definite promises. That is one reason why humanity has never lost hope entirely. The dream will not die out. Down through past centuries, even to our day, that blessed hope has never died. God's finger of promise in the Holy Scriptures keeps pointing to the wonderful future. Memories of Eden's glory seem to rise continually in the mind of man, and he looks forward to a land where dreams come true.

Just over a century ago astronomers observed irregularities in the movement of the planet Uranus, at that time the farthest planet known in our solar system. Acting upon the suggestion of Francois Arago, the French astronomer Leverrier calculated that there must be an other planet outside the orbit of Uranus. On the basis of his calculations as to where the unknown planet might be, a German astronomer named Galle said to those who searched the skies, "Look at that spot!" They looked and, sure enough, there it was! The constant pulling of that unseen planet revealed its existence to the careful thinkers and observers of those days. The strange motions of Uranus said, "There is another planet farther out; there is a world beyond!" And so the tugging at the souls of men has been saying through the ages, "There is a world

beyond. There is something more coming.

If we could find an electronic telescope that would look back through time as well as out through space, we would see this earth of ours as it came from the hand of God. In that yesterday of creation, we would see things we would never forget. Fortunately God's own chronicle of creation gives us a few glimpses of those days. In Genesis 1:31 we read, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." Notice, not only good, but very good. When the world started out in the beginning, it was just as God wanted it to be. Man could enjoy it. But things have changed greatly since then, because "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12. But in the beginning everything was good. Let us mention some of the good things:

1. A new world. From the Creator's hand it came to be the home of man, as we read in Genesis 1 and 2. Said the psalmist, "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm 33:8, 9. According to the Bible statement, the earth did not just happen to come into existence by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms or the explosion of a passing star. It was created by a loving God to be inhabited by happy people. Even in its present condition, it gives proof of the wisdom and power of God. Not only was the earth new, but man also was new in that wonderful yesterday of time. Thus we have a new earth and

2. A new race, as we read in Genesis 1: 26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." No wonder the Lord said that everything was good! There was no worry, no pain, no hunger, no sickness, no war, no death; but only health, happiness, and perpetual life. The tree of life was on earth, and men had access to it. (Genesis 2:9.) Here was a new world, a new race, and men had in that good time

3. Labor for pleasure and enjoyment, as pictured in Genesis 2:15: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Work was not a curse. It was given to man as a blessing before the shadow of evil fell upon the world. Through labor, man co-operated with God in making the earth more lovely still. It was as Jesus said of His Father, "My Father works hitherto, and I work." John 5:17. But God, at the conclusion of His creative works, rested, thus giving to man.

4. The holy Sabbath, a sign of His creative power. We read about it in Genesis 2:1-3: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

Since, according to the first chapter of Hebrews, the Son was associated with the Father in the creation of the world, the Sabbath, being the weekly reminder of that great creative work, is actually a memorial to the power of Christ. At the end of His labor of creation, the Lord, as an example to man, rested, and was refreshed." (Exodus 31:1M And so this day, Christ's Sabbath, Christ's rest, brings blessing to His people. As William Mason sang:

"Again the day returns of holy rest,
Which, when He made the world, Jehovah blest;
When, like His own, He bade our labors cease,
And all be piety, and all be peace."

The last thing we shall mention about that golden yesterday of our race is that man enjoyed

5. Open communion with the Lord. God talked to Adam. See Genesis 2:16. The divine Teacher instructed His children without the darkening veil between.

God talked with Adam when the world was new
His words were loving and His words were true.

When flowers were sweetest and the day was cool,
They walked on together by Gihon's pool.

'Tis beyond our knowing, beyond our ken,
That the Lord of the angels talked with men.
But there in the first garden long ago,
The Teacher and student walked to and fro '
It was a day of beauty, an hour of grace,
When the Lord God and man spoke face to face.
Before all sinning and before all strife,
God talked with Adam by the Tree of Life.

So far, we have been talking about the world's yesterday, but what about today, the world we are living in? In what respects does it differ from that wonderful world of yesterday?

1. That beautiful new earth of yesterday shows its age. The prophet wrote: "The earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner." Isaiah 5 1A It trembles with the palsy of earthquakes. Its surface, changed and broken by the Flood, is scarred with the wounds of war.

2. That new, sinless race has been infected with the disease of sin. Not one has escaped it. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 3:23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." From the tree of life, they have gone into the world. Here every cradle is a prophecy of the certainty of the grave, and "the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now." Romans 8:22.

3. Work for pleasure has changed now, for most men labor in weariness. The words of Genesis 3:17-19 are being fulfilled before our eyes: "And unto Adam he [God] said, . . . Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return."

4. The Sabbath made by Christ in the beginning is almost universally neglected. Attempts have been made and are being made to do away with it entirely. See Daniel 7:25.

5. Sin, like a dark veil, separates God and man. This is true not only of the race of men but of individuals, as we read in Isaiah 59:1,2: "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

How different all this is from that good yesterday that we have read about! But are the conditions in our world today to continue through endless ages as they are now? Are sin and death and trouble to break the hearts and lives of men forever? Here is the answer in the words of Acts 3:19-21: "Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, Which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." This is God's promise. The world's good yesterday will be restored on some glorious to morrow. Jesus came to this earth to accomplish that. (Luke 19: 10.) Through Him the first dominion will be restored to a redeemed race. The prophetic words of Daniel 7:27 declare that 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, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." The kingdom lost by King Adam, the first man, will be restored by King Jesus, the Son of man. The righteous dead will rise; heaven will be theirs; the millennium will pass; the wicked dead will meet their judgment. Then the people of God, the children of Adam born again through faith in the last Adam, will enter Eden restored. Then again there will be

1. A new earth, as we read in 2 Peter 3:13: "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness." There was a new earth in the beginning, and there will be an earth made new in God's tomorrow. What a wonderful world it will be, with every stain

and mark and scar of sin's long reign wiped out forever! There will be no prisons there, for every sin and wrong will be blotted out and forgotten. (Isaiah 44:22). There will be no hospitals in the earth made new, for "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." Isaiah 33:24. There will be no cemeteries or mausoleums, for no one will ever die. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." Revelation 21:4,5.

"O sweet and blessed country,
The home of God's elect!
O sweet and blessed country,
That eager hearts expect! "
Bernard of Cluny.

The Apostle Paul, who refers to the coming of Christ more than fifty times, makes it clear that the physical world, too, will be changed: "To this day [he says], we know, the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain; "the hope being that creation as well as man would one day be freed from its thralldom. to decay and gain the glorious freedom of God's children." Romans 8:22, 21 (Moffatt).

Yes, the wonderful nature that we love so well-the mountains, the sea, the forest, the flowers-beautiful and soothing to man as it is despite the ravages of decay, is to be restored to its Edenic beauty. God's tomorrow will bring not only an earth made new but also

2. A new race. The people of God from all ages of the world, redeemed through the blood of Christ, glorified and immortalized, will be the new race for the eternal ages. They will need no doctors, for they will have no physical deformity or affliction. They will live in perfect fullness. "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." "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Isaiah 35:5, 6, 10. That new race in the new earth, as in the beginning, will again find

3. Pleasure in labor. "And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." Isaiah 65:21, 22.

The glorious New Jerusalem will be the capital of the earth made new, and all will have mansions there. But homes are to be built and plans are to be carried out by God's people over the face of the beautiful new earth. There are great days ahead!

4. Then, too, the holy Sabbath, the memorial of Christ's creative power, which blessed men in lost Eden, will be restored in the Eden of tomorrow. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 66:22, 23.

In the beginning man had open communion with God. Then sin, like a dark cloud, intervened. But

5. When the great tomorrow comes, sin will be gone forever; the redeemed will see God face to face. Again men will have open communion with Him. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall he in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall he no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." Revelation 22:3-5. "And God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation 21:3. As it was in the beginning, so shall it be again at the ending: a new earth, a new race, labor for pleasure, the memorial Sabbath, communion with God.

There is much, very much, written in Holy Scripture about this holy land to come. It would take page after page to describe it all. But let us look into God's Word for some description of the Holy City, the capital of that earth made new. In Revelation 21:2A we learn that the city in the skies, the New Jerusalem, will sometime descend to this earth: "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Notice, this city is called not only the "New Jerusalem- but also the "tabernacle of God." This earth, once bedewed with the bloody sweat of Jesus in the dark garden of Gethsemane, will enjoy so much of God's presence that it is said He will dwell among men.

The New Jerusalem is also called "the bride, the Lamb's wife," in Revelation 21:9. We read on: "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." "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Verses 10-12, 14.

In Galatians 4:26 the Apostle Paul calls this city in the sky, "Jerusalem which is above ... the mother of us all." The church, then, is not the city. In the twenty fourth verse of Revelation 21, we are told that "the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it [the city]." These nations of earth who are saved constitute the church, or people, of God and are distinct from the city, in the light of which they walk. This all goes to show that the city in the sky is a real city, someday to come to this earth.

Old Jerusalem was the old-covenant city; the New Jerusalem is the new-covenant city. They are contrasted in Isaiah 54, where the closing promise is given in almost the exact words of Revelation 21: "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." Isaiah 54:11-13.

SO, under the figure of a woman-a wife whose children were to be multiplied in the New Jerusalem above -the City of God is contrasted with the earthly Jerusalem in Palestine; and of this city, the Lord calls Himself the Husband: "Thy Maker is your husband." Isaiah 54:5.

Now notice something important: This new city is a Christian city, for in its twelve foundations are the names of the twelve apostles of Christ. Do you know those names? Is it not strange that not one Christian in a hundred-or even a thousand-can give the names of the twelve apostles without looking them up?

But there is something else important here, too: The names of the twelve tribes of Israel are on the twelve gates of the city, showing that all the saved, from this dispensation as well as from the other, are reckoned as belonging to one of the twelve tribes. In other scriptures Christians are called "Israel," or even referred to as the "twelve tribes." See Romans 2:28, 29; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 2:12, 13.

Now what about the city's size? Is it big enough? Will it accommodate the millions of the saved? Let us read Revelation 21:15-18: "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 four square, 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 [that is, they are "in proportion"]. 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." Twelve thousand furlongs eight furlongs to a mile -is 1,500 miles. If this measurement is the entire circumference of the city, as some suggest, the New Jerusalem would be 375 miles on each side, about the size of the State of Montana, which contains 145,878 square miles. If we understand the 12,000 furlongs to be the length of one side of the city only, then the walls would surround 2,250,000 square miles. From either standpoint, there is room for all the people who have ever lived upon the earth from the days of Adam to the present. Room enough for all the saved, for the angelic hosts, and for those happy inhabitants of unfallen worlds who shall visit the city.

The twelve foundations of this sky city are precious stones, arranged much like the spectrum. Upon these rest the walls of jasper, transparent to allow the different-colored rays of light to pass through.

The twelve mighty gates of pearl must be wholly for beauty, for they are never shut. Like God's grace and mercy, they open toward all points of the compass. But no one will ever pass through a gate of the city who has not passed through the narrow gate of repentance. Only the obedient, through Christ's abundant grace, will enter there. Truly, we can say with the Apostle John: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.

We are given only a glimpse of the glory of the New Jerusalem; we shall have to wait to see it in all its beauty. There is, however, a partial picture in the Holy Bible: "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. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles, neither whatsoever works abomination, or makes a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:23-27.

There is no night in that city. Just think of the time we spend in sleep! A man who is seventy-five years old has spent at least twenty-five years in bed. But in the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God- (Hebrews 11:10), the redeemed will always feel the "freshness of the morning," as someone has beautifully put it.

The tree of life is there by the river of life. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Revelation 22:1,2.

From the throne of God the river of life flows through the city. What is more majestic than the flow of a mighty river I shall never forget the thrill that came to me when, as a boy, I first saw the Mississippi; and again when, in young manhood, I looked at the sweeping current of the St. Lawrence; and later when I watched the mighty Columbia rolling toward the setting sun. just think what an hour that will be when you first see this mighty river sweeping on to the horizon!-the river of life, "wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." (Isaiah 33:2 L)

Fresh from the throne of glory,
Bright in its crystal gleam,
Bursts out the living Fountain,
Swells on the living Stream.

"River of God, I greet thee,
Now not afar, but near;
My soul to thy still waters
Hastes in its thirstings here.
-Horatius Bonar,

Three hundred years ago Shah Jahan, the "Great Mogul" of India, used to sit with Munitaz Mahall, his beloved wife, in a lovely garden at Agra and tell her of his love. He promised to build her a palace of such beauty that men and women would come from the ends of the earth to gaze upon it. And he kept his word. Twenty thousand men worked for nearly twenty years to build it. A fabulous fortune was spent in its construction. A dream in marble, the famous Taj Mahal is "a thing of beauty and a joy forever." But before it was completed, the beautiful Murntaz descended for the eighth time into the valley of motherhood, and this time death claimed her. As the sorrowing husband and lover sat beside her body, he cried, "O my beautiful Munitaz, you shall have your palace, but now it must be your tomb." Today the two lovers sleep side by side under the moonlight of three hundred years.

Though beautiful, how inferior the Taj Mahal to the eternal memorial prepared by Jesus, who loves us with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3 Through the streets of His city rushes no tide of business, no black-robed hearse creeps slowly with its burden to the tomb. It is a city without griefs or graves, without marriages or mournings; a city which rejoices in having Jesus for its King, saints for its citizens, angels for its guards; a city whose walls are salvation, whose gates are praise. And think of all the people

who will be there from all ages! Men will come from earthly wanderings to celestial homes, from dens and prisons here to joys and mansions there, out through iron doors and in through pearly gates. I lands that have known the clank of chains will strike instruments of heavenly melody and wake harp notes of enduring joy. Brows once grimed with smoke and burning will glow smooth and fair and loyal beneath crowns that never fade. Gazing on the least of all the assembled company, we shall say, "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

What a city! What a world! What a hope! As it is said of the wonders of redeeming grace, so also may it be said of the wonders of redemption's reward: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

This world of tomorrow will be a world of eternal youth. From earliest ages hope has burned in human hearts for some region where men would live forever. Back in the days when knighthood was in flower, Sir John Mandeville discovered a wonderful spring of which he wrote: "I, John Mandeville, saw this well and thereof drank twice, and evermore since that time I feel better and better." Some men called this well the Fountain of Youth. But the gallant Sir John has passed away. He did not live forever.

For real light on the future, the wonderful future, we must open the great Book of God and read more and more of that "divine event, to which the whole creation moves." But remember this: This new world of tomorrow comes not by the power of man, not by the intrigues of world diplomacy. It comes solely and entirely by divine intervention. It will be under the blessed rule of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the resurrected Carpenter of Nazareth, with an appointed cabinet of twelve immortal men. You will find the prophecy in Isaiah 9:6 and Matthew 24:31. It is the Spirit of prophecy's reply to a universal longing of human hearts.

Prophets and kings will meet with gospel workers, all of them victorious after the conflict of the ages. The great controversy between good and evil will be ended. This is the hope of the world and the desire of ages, which shall usher in our Paradise home. As we study our day in the light of prophecy, we see that God speaks to modern men; and we get a vision of past, present, and future which lends new light to our times and their meaning. The drama of the ages is about to be concluded; the curtain is about to be dropped on man's tragedy and is about to go up again on the wonder world of tomorrow.

But how can we today be sure of a place in the earth made new? How can we look at the trials and losses and heartaches and separations of today and still have hope? How can we really know that we shall have a place in that land of heart's desire? How can we know this? Well, in just one way-by trusting in Jesus, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." (Revelation 1:5.) We must believe on Him (Romans 10:10); we must repent of our sins (Luke 24: 47) ; we must confess our faith before men (Romans 10:9); we must obey Him and all the requirements of His Word, according to the light we have (James 4:17; Luke 12:47, 48).

To be in that tomorrow land with those whom we have loved and lost; to meet the redeemed of all ages; to enjoy the companionship of holy angels; but above and beyond all this, to see our Savior, the One altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand-what joy it will be!

Only one thing will remain in that earth made new to remind us of the cruel work that sin has wrought in the world-just one thing-and that will be the marks of the crucifixion, the print of the nails in His hands.

"When my lifework is ended, and I cross the swelling tide,
When 'this mortal puts on immortality';
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me."
-Fanny J. Crosby.

It was with this beautiful thought in mind that Harry Anderson painted his great picture of Christ with the three children gathered about Him. One, pointing to His hand, asks, "What happened to Your hand?" Under this picture, not long ago, I saw the following poem by Eunice Phelps:

`What are those scars, dear Jesus?
What happened to Your hand?
I love You so, I want to know.
Help me to understand.'

Those scars you see, My children,
They nailed Me to the tree.
Twas then those scars were made for you,
I died to set you free.-

When the days of heaven upon earth are come, every overcomer will have the blessed privilege of seeing Jesus and being with Him. "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."
Revelation 22:4.

Do you love Him? Do you belong to Christ? Will you not accept the Lord Jesus and His gospel and promises today? Will you not obey Him and go all the way to fulfill His Word? Then you may look forward by faith in Him to days of heaven upon the earth. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17.