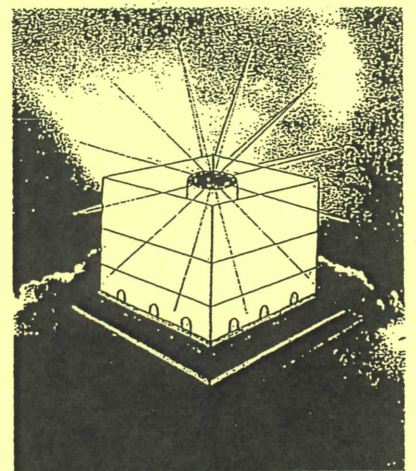
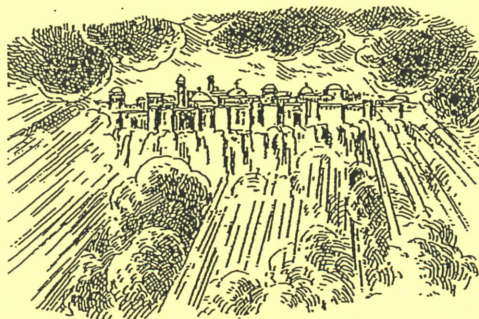
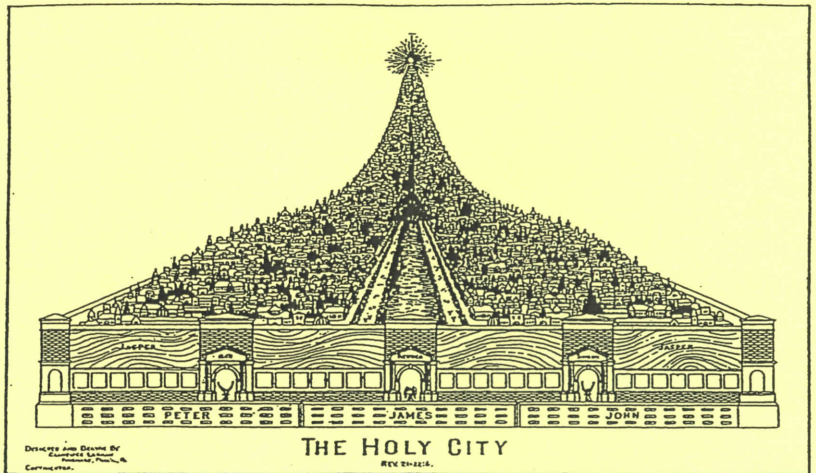
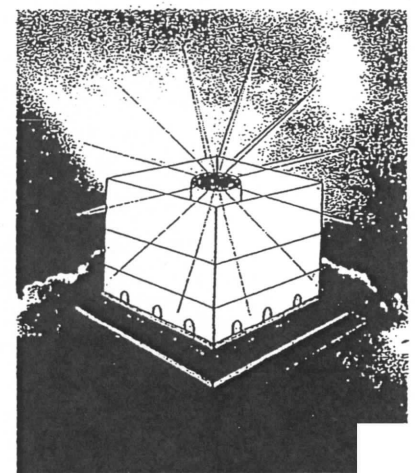
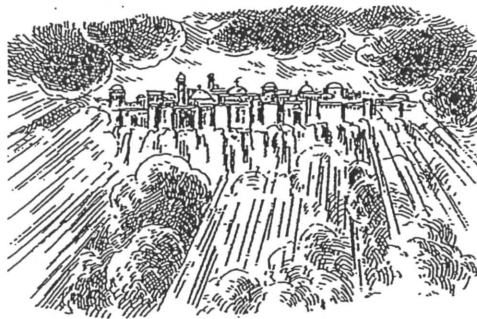
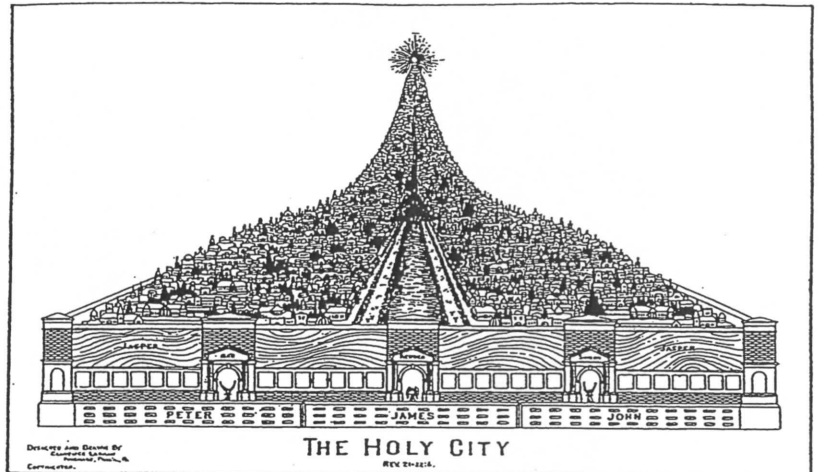


What Do We Know About the New Jerusalem?



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WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE NEW JERUSALEM?

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The believer's hope is a celestial city Christ is preparing as the eternal home for His Bride, the Church. Instead of being burdened with the cares of this life the believer would do well to focus on his glorious future home.



1. The Disclosure of the City: John 14:1-6

a. The climactic announcement by Christ:

On the night before His crucifixion Christ revealed to His troubled disciples that He would depart, prepare a place for them in heaven ("the Father's house") and return to take His own to that place. This is the first biblical reference to the rapture.

b. The current activity of Christ:

While the Bridegroom is absent from His Bride, He is preparing for her a holy habitation for her eternal enjoyment. The place being prepared by the Savior is described in Revelation 21-22 as a glorious city, the New Jerusalem. It took the Savior six days to create the universe and the world. He has been working on our eternal home for almost 2000 years. What a magnificent place that must be!

2. The Desire for the City: Heb. 11:10, 16

a. Patriarchal anticipation of a celestial city.

Abraham, living about 2000 B.C., in faith "looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." As the architect and builder, God not only designed the city but built it as well. Though Canaan was promised to Abraham, he lived in it not as owner but as resident alien. His hope was in a city with permanent foundations in contrast to the temporary abodes on earth.



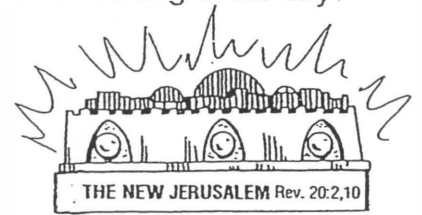
b. Personal acquaintance with the divine designer.

It is not known when this revelation of a future heavenly home was given to the Patriarchs; but in faith, they longed to leave their temporary tents for the celestial city and their endless travels to enter the city of eternal rest. Their firm faith in God was rewarded by Him "Who is not ashamed to be called their friend for He has prepared for them a city" (v. 16). The writer to the Hebrews refers to the city as the **prophetic anticipation** of the Patriarchs (11:16), the **prospective abode**

of the redeemed (12:22) and the **present aspiration** of the saint (13:14). How can the believer “seek [a permanent city] to come,” if he knows nothing of the city?

3. The Description of the City: Rev 21-22

a. The exquisite beauty of the city:



The final chapters of the Revelation provide a description of a city of exquisite beauty, “having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal” (21:11).

The following description pictures the “holy city, the New Jerusalem” (21:1) as a gigantic jewel radiating the glory of God and a beautiful setting for God’s grace to be manifest in those who have trusted in Him. There are those interpreters who would spiritualize the city, who say “there never was, is not now, and never will be such as city” (Homer Hailey, *Revelation*, 412). It is an actual city with a material existence. While there are symbolic aspects to the city and much transcends human understanding, it is best to accept the details of its description at face value. There is a city with streets of gold and gates made of giant jewels.

b. The extraordinary dimensions of the city:

The city is laid out as a square (literally, “four-cornered.”) “The length and the breadth and the heights of it are equal” (21:16). The dimensions, translated into modern terms, are about 1500 miles. It is perhaps best to understand the city as being in the shape of a pyramid, similar to the way Clarence Larkin has pictured it (see below). The dimensions of the city stagger the mind. The land area covered by the city would be in comparison the distance from the Pacific to the Mississippi River or from New York to Houston. Robert Thomas correctly notes, “A city 1500 miles high and 1500 miles on each side is no more unimaginable than a pearl large enough to serve as a city-gate or gold that is as transparent as glass” (*Revelation 8-22*, 467).

4. The Descent of the City: Rev. 21:1-10; Rev. 3:12

a. The foretold descent of the city: Rev. 21:1-2

The city will descend from heaven after the millennium when John sees “a new heaven and new earth” (v. 1). If the new heaven, earth and sea are literal, so must be the new city. In contrast to the harlot woman who appears in spiritual Babylon for everlasting destruction (ch. 17), the Bride, the Lamb’s wife appears in this new city for eternal blessedness.



b. The future dwelling of the Godhead: Rev. 21:3

The stupendous truth is that "the tabernacle of God is with men." God Himself "will dwell with them" (v. 3). Five times this truth is emphasized in this verse. God makes His tabernacle with men, reminiscent of the Shekinah glory that filled the tabernacle in the wilderness. The condition of estrangement between God and man, caused by human sin, has ended. As in Paradise, God can dwell again with men. It is a blessed truth, though difficult to grasp, that the saints will not spend eternity with God in heaven, but rather, God will spend eternity with His own on the new earth. What a marvelous condescension

5. The Designations for the City: Heb. 12:22

a. The varied designations for the heavenly city:

The writer to the Hebrews speaks of the city as "Mount Zion, and . . . the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Paul speaks of it as the Jerusalem above (Gal. 4:26). The resurrected Lord speaks to the church at Philadelphia of "the city of my God, which is the new Jerusalem" (Rev. 3:12). Our eternal home is described with an impressive list of designations:

- (1) Mount Zion, Heb. 12:22
- (2) City of the Living God, Heb. 12:22
- (3) Heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. 12:22
- (4) Jerusalem from above, Gal. 4:26
- (5) City of my God, Rev. 3:12
- (6) The New Jerusalem, Rev. 3:12; 21:2
- (7) The Holy City, Rev. 21:2, 10 (cf. Is. 52:1)
- (8) The Bride, Rev. 21:2, 9
- (9) A Continuing City, Heb. 13:14
- (10) Father's House, Jn. 14:2
- (11) Paradise of God, Rev. 2:7



ירושלם

b. The vital denotation of the term "Jerusalem"

The oldest known form, Uru-sa-lim, has been commonly regarded as meaning "city of peace." At the time of Abraham apparently the name was shortened to Salem = peace (Gen. 14:18, cf. Ps. 76:2). The name yerushalem, in the N.T. as Hierousalem or Hierosoloma, appears to point to the peace which someday will spread from the millennial city to the whole earth. The name Jerusalem further witnesses to the presence of God (Mic. 4:1-3), to authority (Throne of David) and Worship (Temple of Solomon). Someone has well observed, "It is one of the ironies of history that a city which in its long history has seen so little peace and for whose possession rivers of blood have been shed should have such a possible meaning for its name" (ISBE, III, 1960, 1596.)

The earthly Jerusalem will live up to its name in the Millennium, with the presence of the Prince of Peace. Thus it will become a type of the heavenly Jerusalem.



6. The Dwellers of the City: Heb. 12: 22-24



a. The primary design of the city:

In fashioning the heavenly Jerusalem, the Savior is primarily fulfilling His promise to the church in John 14:3, "I go to prepare a place for you." This is why the city is described as a bride adorned for her husband . . . the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:2, 9). The term bride therefore refers to both the church and her abode. The city as the bride expresses God's intimate relationship with it as well as His fellowship with the redeemed in the city.

Dear Friend, if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, the new city will be your eternal home!

b. The principal denizens of the city: Heb. 12:22-24

The inhabitants of the city are listed as "an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly and church of the firstborn. . . and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." The various companies can be listed thusly:

- 1) The holy angels—"myriads of angels"
- 2) The church—"the assembly and church of the firstborn"
- 3) The redeemed of all the ages—"the spirits of just men made perfect"
- 4) God the Father—"God the Judge of all"
- 5) Christ the Son—"Jesus the mediator of the new covenant"
- 6) The Holy Spirit

While the Holy Spirit is not mentioned separately, He indwells church age believers permanently. Christ promised them that the Spirit would abide with them forever (Jn. 14:16). Since the Church will be there, so will be the Holy Spirit.



The New Jerusalem will thus be the eternal home of the holy angels, church age saints, the triune God and the redeemed of all the ages.

7. The Delights of the New City: Rev. 22:1-5

a. Abundant provisions for human enjoyment:

Our eternal home will be a place of paradisiacal perfection, free of the curse (v. 3) and all darkness (v. 5). Jesus will be there, abundantly providing light and life. We will be refreshed by water from the river of life, "clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). We will have access to the "tree of life which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month" (v. 2)

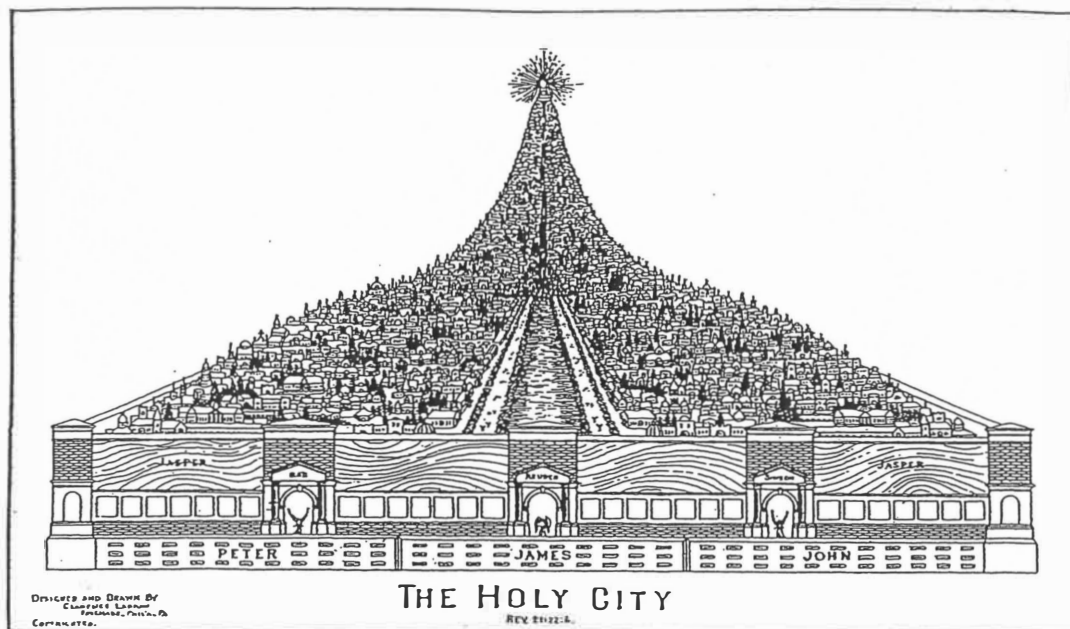
b. Absolute perfection of a holy environment:

The believer, far from pursuing a pedantic eternal routine, will be engaged in rewarding spiritual activity. Two words summarize this activity: service and sovereignty. Our ministry is described thus, "his servants shall serve him . . . and they shall reign for ever and ever" (v. 3, 5). As glorified beings, we will have the privilege of assisting a holy Savior in a perfect environment, free of the encumbrances of sin and enticements of Satan.

The grateful believer concurs with Dr. Ryrie's fitting remarks, "This is complete exaltation and perfect exultation" (Ryrie, *Revelation* [1996], 67).

In anticipation of such a glorious future, one blessing stands out far above any other. **We shall see His face** (v. 4). Eternally we will be in the presence of the One who calls us His Bride. He who redeemed us and resurrected us, regards as His is prized and privileged possession as we cherish His closeness and companionship. Well has the songwriter expressed the believer's blessedness:

*Just to be near the dear Lord I adore,
Will through the ages be glory for me.
Oh that will be, glory for me.
When by His grace I shall look on His face,
That will be glory for me!*





THE PATRIARCHS:

**Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their
God: for he hath prepared for them a city.**

Hebrews 11:16

THE SAINTS' EVERLASTING REST

by Richard Baxter, 1652

(A paraphrase and abridgment by Robert E. Baxter)

"There remains therefore a **rest** to the people of God."
Hebrews 4:9



CHAP. X.

The Saint's Rest is not to be expected on Earth.

§ 1. In order to shew the sin and folly of expecting rest here, § 2. (I.) the reasonableness of present afflictions is considered; § 3. (1.) that they are the way to rest, § 4. (2.) keep us from mistaking our rest, § 5. (3.) from losing our way to it, § 6. (4.) quicken our pace towards it, § 7. (5.) chiefly incommode our flesh, § 8, 9. and (6.) under them the sweetest foretastes of rest are often enjoyed; § 10. (II.) How unreasonable to rest in present enjoyments; § 11. (1.) that 'tis idolatry; § 12. (2.) that it contradicts God's end in giving them; § 13. (3.) is the way to have them refused, withdrawn, or embittered; § 14. (4.) that to be suffered to take up our rest here is the greatest curse; § 15. (5.) that it is seeking rest where it is not. § 16 (6.) that the creatures without God, would aggravate our misery. § 17. (7.) and all this is confirmed by experience. § 18. The Author laments that this is nevertheless a most common sin. § 19-23 (III.) How unreasonable our unwillingness to die, and possess the saint's rest, is largely considered. § 24. The Author apologizes for saying so much on this last head.

§ 1. **W**E are not yet come to our resting place. Doth it remain? How great then is our sin and folly to seek and expect it here? Where shall we find the Christian that deserves not this reproof? We would all have continual prosperity, because it is easy and pleasing to the flesh; but we consider not the unreasonableness of such desires. And when we enjoy convenient houses, goods, lands, and revenues? or the necessary means God hath appointed for our spiritual good; we seek rest in these enjoyments. Whether we are in an afflicted, or prosperous state, it is apparent, we exceedingly make the creature our rest. Do we not desire creature enjoyments more violently, when we want them, than we desire God himself? Do we not delight more in the possession of them, than in the enjoyment of God? And if we lose them, doth it not trouble us more than our loss of God? Is it not enough, that they are refreshing helps in our way to heaven, but they must also be made our heaven itself? Christian reader, I would as willingly make thee sensible of this sin, as of any sin in the world, if I could tell how to do it; for the Lord's greatest quarrel with us is in this point. In order to this, I most earnestly beseech thee to consider,—the reasonableness of present afflictions,—and the unreasonableness of resting in present enjoyments;—as also of our unwillingness to die, that we may possess eternal rest. {181}

§ 2. (I.) To shew the reasonableness of present afflictions, consider,—they are the way to rest;—they keep us from mistaking our rest,—and from losing our way to it;—they quicken our pace towards it;—they chiefly incommode our flesh;—and under them God's people have often the sweetest foretastes of their rest.

§ 3. (1.) Consider, that labor and trouble are the common way to rest, both in the course of nature and grace. Can there possibly be rest without weariness? Do you not travel and toil first, and rest after? The day for labor is first, and then follows the night for rest. Why should we desire the course of grace to be perverted, any more than the course of nature? It is an established decree, *that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*^[298] And that *if we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ.*^[299] And what are we that God's statutes should be reversed for our pleasure?

[298] Acts xiv, 22.

§ 4. (2.) Afflictions are exceeding useful to us, to keep us from mistaking our rest. A Christian's motion towards heaven is voluntary, and not constrained. Those means therefore are most profitable, which help his understanding and will. The most dangerous mistake of our souls is, to take the creature for God, and earth for heaven. What warm, affectionate, eager thoughts have we of the world, till afflictions cool and moderate them? Afflictions speak convincingly, and will be heard when preachers cannot. Many a poor Christian is sometimes bending his thoughts to wealth, or flesh pleasing, or applause; and so loses his relish of Christ, and the joy above; till God break in upon his riches, or children, or conscience, or health, and break down his mountain which he thought so strong: And then, when he lieth in Manasseh's fetters; or is fastened to his bed with pining sickness, the world is nothing, and heaven is something. If our dear Lord did not put these thorns under our head, we should sleep out our lives, and lose our glory. {182}

§ 5. (3.) Afflictions, are also God's most effectual means to keep us from losing our way to our rest. Without this hedge of thorns, on the right hand, and left, we should hardly keep the way to heaven. If there be but one gap open, how ready are we to find it, and turn out at it? When we grow wanton, or worldly, or proud, how doth sickness, or other affliction, reduce us? Every Christian, as well as Luther, may call affliction one of his best schoolmasters; and with David may say, *Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.*^[300] Many thousand recovered sinners may cry, "O healthful sickness! O comfortable sorrows! O gainful losses! O enriching poverty! O blessed day that ever I was afflicted!" Not only the *green pastures*, and *still waters*, but *the rod and staff*, they comfort us. Though the word and Spirit do the main work, yet suffering so unbolts the door of the heart, that the word hath easier entrance.

[300] Psalm cxix, 67.

§ 6. (4.) Afflictions likewise serve to quicken our pace in the way to our rest. It were well if mere love would prevail with us, and that we were rather drawn to heaven, than driven. But seeing our hearts are so bad, that mercy will not do it; it is better be put on with the sharpest scourge, than loiter, like the *foolish virgins*, till *the door is shut*. O what difference is there, betwixt our prayers in health, and in sickness; betwixt our repentings in prosperity and adversity! Alas! if we did not sometime feel the spur, what a slow pace would most of us hold towards heaven? Since our vile natures require it, why should we be unwilling that God should do us good by sharp means? Judge, Christian, whether thou dost not go more watchfully and speedily in the way to heaven, in thy sufferings, than in thy more pleasing and prosperous state. {183}

§ 7. (5.) Consider further, it is but the flesh that is chiefly troubled and grieved by affliction. In most of our sufferings the soul is free, unless we ourselves wilfully afflict it. "Why then, O my soul, dost thou side with this flesh, and complain, as it complaineth? It should be thy work to *keep it under, and bring it into subjection*, and if God do it for thee, shouldst thou be discontented? Hath not the pleasing of it been the cause of almost all thy spiritual sorrows? Why then may not the displeasing of it further thy joys? Must not *Paul and Silas sing*, because *their feet are in the stocks*? Their spirits were not imprisoned. Ah, unworthy soul! is this thy thanks to God for preferring thee so far before thy body? When it is rotting in the grave, thou shalt be a companion of the perfected spirits of the just. In the mean time, hast thou not consolation which the flesh knows not of? Murmur not then at God's dealings with thy body; if it were not for want of love to thee, he would not have dealt so by all his saints. Never expect thy flesh should truly expound the meaning of the rod. It will call love, hatred; and say, God is destroying, when he is saving. It is the suffering party, and therefore not fit to be the judge." Could we once believe God, and judge of his dealings by his word, and by their usefulness to our souls, and reference to our rest, and could we stop our ears against all the clamors of the flesh, then we should have a truer judgment of our afflictions.

§ 8. (6.) Once more consider, God seldom gives his people so sweet a foretaste of their future rest, as in their deep afflictions. He keeps his most precious cordials for the time of our greatest faintings and dangers. He gives them, when he knows they are needed, and will be valued: and when he is sure to be thanked for them, and his people rejoiced by them. Especially when our

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sufferings are more directly for his cause, then he seldom fails to sweeten the bitter cup. The martyrs have possessed the highest joys. When did Christ preach such comforts to his disciples, as when *their hearts were sorrowful* at his departure? When did he appear among them, and say, *Peace be unto you*, but when they were shut up for fear of the Jews? When did Stephen *see heaven opened*, but when he was giving up his life for the testimony of Jesus? Is not that our best state, wherein we have most of God? Why else do we desire to come to heaven? If we look for a heaven of fleshly delights, we shall find ourselves mistaken. Conclude then, that affliction is not so bad a state for a saint in his way to rest. Are we wiser than God? Doth he not know what is good for us as well as we? Or is he not as careful of our good, as we are of our own? Woe to us, if he were not much more so! and if he did not love us better, than we love either him, or ourselves! {184}

§9. Say not, "I could bear any other affliction but this." If God had afflicted thee where thou canst bear it, thy idol would neither have been discovered, nor removed. Neither say, "If God would deliver me out of it, I could be content to bear it." Is it nothing that he hath promised it *shall work for thy good*? Is it not enough that thou art sure to be delivered at death? Nor let it be said, "If my affliction did not disable me for duty, I could bear it." It doth not disable thee for that duty which tendeth for thy own personal benefit, but is the greatest quickening help thou canst expect. As for thy duty to others, it is not thy duty when God disables thee. Perhaps thou wilt say, "The godly are my afflictors: if it were ungodly men, I could easily bear it." Whoever is the instrument, the affliction is from God, and the deserving cause thyself; and is it not better to look more to God and thyself? Didst thou not know that the best men are still sinful in part? Do not plead, "If I had but that consolation, which you say God reserveth for suffering times, I should suffer more contentedly; but I do not perceive any such thing." The more you suffer for righteousness' sake, the more of this blessing you may expect; and the more you suffer for your own evil doing, the longer it will be before that sweetness comes. Are not the comforts you desire, neglected or resisted? Have your afflictions wrought kindly with you, and fitted you for comfort? It is not mere suffering that prepares you for comfort, but the success and fruit of sufferings upon your hearts. {185}

§ 10. (II.) To shew the unreasonableness of resting in present enjoyments, consider,—it is idolizing them;—it contradicts God's end in giving them;—it is the way to have them refused, withdrawn, or embittered;—to be suffered to take up our rest here, is the greatest curse;—it is seeking rest where it is not to be found;—the creatures, without God, would aggravate our misery;—and to confirm all this, we may consult our own and others' experience.

§ 11. (1.) It is gross idolatry to make any creature or means our rest. To be the rest of the soul, is God's own prerogative. As it is apparent idolatry to place our rest in riches or honors; so it is but a more refined idolatry to take up our rest in excellent means of grace. How ill must our dear Lord take it, when we give him cause to complain as he did of our fellow idolaters, *My people have been lost sheep, they have forgotten their resting place?*^[301] "My people can find rest in any thing, rather than in me. They can delight in one another, but not in me. They can rejoice in my creatures and ordinances, but not in me. Yea, in their very labors and duties they seek for rest, but not in me. They had rather be any where, than be with me. Are these their gods? Have these redeemed them? Will these be better to them, than I have been, or than I would be?" If yourselves have a wife, a husband, a son, that had rather be any where than in your company, and be never so merry as when furthest from you, would you not take it ill? So must our God needs do.

[301] Jeremiah 1, 6.

§ 12. (2.) You contradict the end of God in giving these enjoyments. He gave them to help thee to him, and dost thou take up with them in his stead? He gave them to be refreshments in thy journey, and wouldst thou dwell in thy inn, and go no further? It may be said of all our comforts and ordinances, as it is said of the Israelites, *The ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting place for them.*^[302] So do all God's mercies here. They are not that rest; as John professed *he was not the Christ*; but they are *voices crying in this wilderness*, to bid us *prepare, for the kingdom of God*, our true rest is *at hand*. Therefore, to rest here, were to turn all mercies contrary to their own ends, and to our own advantages, and to destroy ourselves with that which should help us. {186}

§ 13. (3.) It is the way to cause God, either to deny the mercies we ask, or take from us those we enjoy, or at least embitter them to us. God is no where so jealous as here. If you had a servant, whom your wife loved better than yourself, would you not take it ill of such a wife, and rid your house of such a servant? So, if the Lord see you begin to settle in the world, and say, "Here I will rest?" no wonder if he soon in his jealousy unsettle you. If he love you, no wonder if he take that from you with which he sees you are destroying yourselves. It hath long been my observation of many, that when they have attempted great works, and have just finished them; or have aimed at great things in the world, and have just obtained them; or have lived in much trouble, and have just overcome it; and begin to look on their condition with content, and rest in it; they are then usually near to death or ruin. When a man is once at this language, *Soul, take thy ease*; the next news usually is, *Thou fool, this night, or this month, or this year, thy soul shall he required, and then whose shall these things be?* What house is there where this fool dwelleth not? Let you and I consider, whether it be not our own case? Many a servant of God hath been destroyed from the earth, by being over-valued and over-loved. I am persuaded, our discontents and murmurings are not so provoking to God, nor so destructive to the sinner, as our too sweet enjoying, and resting in, a pleasing state. If God hath crossed you in wife, children, goods, friends, either by taking them away, or the comfort of them; try whether this be not the cause: For wheresoever your desires stop, and you say, "Now I am well," that condition you make your God, and engage the jealousy of God against it. Whether you be friends to God or enemies, you can never expect that God should suffer you quietly to enjoy your idols.

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§ 14. (4.) Should God suffer you to take up your rest here, it is one of the greatest curses that could befall you. It were better never to have a day of ease in the world; for then weariness might make you seek after the true rest. But if you are suffered to sit down and rest here, a restless wretch you will be through all eternity. To *have their portion in this life*, is the lot of the most miserable, perishing sinners. Doth it become Christians then to expect so much here? Our rest is our heaven; and where we take our rest, there we make our heaven. And wouldst thou have but such a heaven as this?

§ 15. (5.) It is seeking rest where it is not to be found. Your labor will be lost, and, if you proceed, your soul's eternal rest too. Our rest is only in the full obtaining of our ultimate end. But that is not to be expected in this life; neither is rest therefore to be expected here. Is God to be enjoyed in the best church here, as he is in heaven? How little of God the saints enjoy under the best means, let their own complainings testify. Poor comforters are the best ordinances, without God. Should a traveller take up his rest in the way? No, because his home is his journey's end. When you have all that creatures and means can afford, have you that which you believed, prayed, suffered for? I think you dare not say so. We are like little children strayed from home, and God is now fetching us home, and we are ready to turn into any house, stay and play with every thing in our way, and sit down on every green bank, and much ado there is to get us home. We are also in the midst of our labors and dangers; and is there any resting here? What painful work doth lie upon our hands? Look to our brethren, to our souls, and to God; and what a deal of work, in respect to each of these, doth lie before us? And can we rest in the midst of all our labors? Indeed we may rest on earth, as *the ark* is said to have *rested in the midst of Jordan*; a short and small rest. Or as Abraham desired the *Angels to turn in, and rest themselves* in his tent, where they would have been loth to have taken up their dwelling. Should Israel have fixed their rest in the wilderness, among serpents, and enemies, and weariness, and famine? Should Noah have made the ark his home, and have been loth to come forth when *the waters were assuaged*? Should the mariner choose his dwelling on the sea, and settle his rest in the midst of rocks, and sands, and raging tempests? Should a soldier rest in the thickest of his enemies? And are not Christians such travellers, such mariners, such soldiers? Have you not fears within, and troubles without? Are we not in continual dangers? We cannot eat, drink, sleep, labor, pray, hear, converse, but in the midst of snares; and shall we sit down and rest here? O Christian, follow thy work, look to thy dangers, and hold on to the end, win the field, and come off the ground, before thou think of a settled rest. Whenever thou talkest of rest on earth, it is like *Peter on the mount*, thou knowest not what thou sayest. If, instead of telling the converted thief, *this day shalt thou be with me in*

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