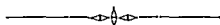


exactly the same position in relation to the second coming of our Lord as was occupied by the Church of the first century. It is possibly very near to us, as it was possibly very near to them. The signs of it are still future to us as they were still future to them. Once they begin to come to pass they will soon elapse, and the coming will soon take place. The same generation will see the signs and the great event they presignify, will see the green shoots on the fig-tree of winter and the glorious summer they promise as nigh at hand.

And as the hope of the speedy coming "dominated the life of Christians" in the first century, so it ought to dominate our life and the life of every generation of Christians to the very end of the age. It ought to have dominated the life of all past generations of the Church. We cannot imagine a more wholesome influence for us to be dominated by, whether as a Church or as individual Christians. It would urge us on to the evangelization of the world, for "the Gospel must first be published among all nations," "in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." It would keep our lives unworldly in the best sense of that word, with our loins girded, and our lights burning, and ourselves as men that wait for their Lord; as those who "love His appearing," and who are therefore "looking for that blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

W. T. HOBSON.



ART. II.—THE THREE ABIDING GRACES, AS EXHIBITED IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS.¹

No. 2.—CHRISTIAN HOPE (IN PSALM LXXXVII).

EVER since there was an inspired Book man's attention has been constantly led onward to the things which God, through Christ, is preparing for the saved.

The Past has always had its sacred history; the Present has always had its seasonable guidance; and the Future has never been unfortold. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written," we are expressly told, "that we might have HOPE."

If, then, the eighty-seventh Psalm be reckoned, as it is generally reckoned, a song of hope for the refreshment of the

¹ The commencement of the series—No. 1, "Christian Faith (in Psalm xxxi.)"—appeared in THE CHURCHMAN for November. The conclusion—No. 3, "Christian Charity (in Psalm cxxxiii.)"—will appear in THE CHURCHMAN for January, 1891.

Lord's people in successive generations, the question at once arises, What did the inspired writer of it mean by "the city of God"—that attractive object in the future of which he declares that "glorious things are spoken"?

Jerusalem, as it is elsewhere in Scripture called, or Zion, after one of its most conspicuous hills, appears in the Bible with two distinct meanings. Sometimes "the city" is merely a metaphor for the true Church of Christ, which will be His privileged companion on the world to come, and which is now being gradually formed of "lively stones," gathered from every nation, people, kindred, and tongue. But sometimes the Bible foretells an actual city, situated, as is the present Jerusalem, so as to be a central metropolis on man's globe. St. Paul was thinking of a metaphorical city when he wrote, "Jerusalem, which is above . . . is the mother of us all."¹ And St. John was contemplating the same figure when, after hearing a heavenly voice say, "I will show thee *the wife* of the Lamb," he saw "*New Jerusalem* coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a bride* adorned for her husband."² But Isaiah was foreseeing an actual city, conspicuous on man's earth, when he wrote, "The Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."³ And the Lord Jesus may have referred to the same material centre of the saints' inheritance when He said, "Swear not . . . by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King."⁴

In which of these two senses did the writer of the eighty-seventh Psalm utter his enthusiastic apostrophe to the "city of God"? Possibly in both. The figurative meaning of Jerusalem may have been uppermost in his thoughts when, as if foreseeing saint after saint, from divers lands, in full membership with the glorious community, he exclaimed in verse 5, "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was *born* in her;" whilst the actual residence of the saints—their headquarters on the world to come—may have riveted his mind's eye as he commenced his rapturous song by declaring "*Her*⁵ foundation is in the holy mountains."

My comments, however, on his hopeful language will refer but very slightly to a physical centre of the saints' everlasting abode; because I can scarcely hope that such an exposition would be in touch with many of those who would peruse it,

¹ Gal. iv. 26.

² Rev. xxi. 2. Cf. also Heb. xii. 22: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion," etc.

³ Isa. xxiv. 3. Cf. also Isa. xxv. 6; xxxiii. 20-22.

⁴ St. Matt. v. 35.

⁵ Rosenmüller defends the translation "her," which is that of the Prayer-Book. See Bishop Alexander, p. 166. If "*His* foundation" is right, the meaning is (Bonar, 259) "*His* founded city." The fundamental passage probably is (Cheyne) Isa. xiv. 32.

inasmuch as Bible students of the present generation rarely realize an earth adapted to perfect human nature as the future residence of the Lord's people. Though such an earth has been the hope of saints in a long succession of past ages; though Apostles in these last days waited for it as eagerly as did the fathers who fell asleep centuries before them; and though it finds a place more or less distinctly in every canticle appointed in our Prayer-Book after the reading of a lesson either from the Old or New Testament, nevertheless so many less Scriptural hymns (which speak of a future for believers "*in the skies*") have somehow come into use in comparatively recent years, that even readers of THE CHURCHMAN might feel themselves on unfamiliar, and therefore unedifying, ground if I said much about a home of the saints hereafter on this earth renewed.¹

I shall therefore confine my remarks almost entirely to the figurative sense of "the city of God:" directing attention to the bright associations by which the Psalmist was refreshed and strengthened, as he contemplated the future community of the saints under that name.

His anticipation in his ancient day was, of course, far less distinct than the latest vision, granted many centuries afterwards to St. John. In the Apostle's forecast of the city we may note nearly twenty brilliant details. He saw, besides other very striking particulars, that the blessed company of the redeemed will have close companionship with the heavenly host; for an angel was at each of the city's gates.² He saw that it will be a community organized in faultless perfection; for the city "lieth four-square."³ But, nevertheless, he saw that individuals congregated in it will have severally their peculiar excellencies; for the foundations of the city were garnished "with *all manner* of precious stones."⁴ He saw that that community will have easy intercourse with every quarter of the globe; for, behold! "on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates."⁵ He saw that Old and New Testament believers will

¹ I have observed, however, with much satisfaction, that the learned and devout Professor Milligan, who in previous publications had not expressed his opinion on the subject so decidedly, has in his "Commentary on the Revelation" (Expositor's Bible) not only made a kindly reference (p. 356) to a paper on "The Life of the World to Come" which I printed in THE CHURCHMAN for December, 1887, but on p. 355 has said: "To St. John 'heaven' is not an abode of bliss in a scene of which we can form no conception. . . . As the seer looks forward to the future, there is nothing to show that he thinks of any other residence for man than that which the Son consecrated by His tomb in Joseph's garden."

² Rev. xxi. 12.

³ Verse 16.

⁴ Verse 19.

⁵ Verse 13.

be harmoniously combined in it; for whilst the gates are called after the twelve ancient tribes of Israel, in the foundations of its walls are written "the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb."¹ He saw that it shall possess the visible presence of the Divine Redeemer; for "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof."² And he saw that it shall be a community respected by, and largely advantageous to, the remainder of the world's human population; for "the nations shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it."³

The Psalmist's foresight was much less comprehensive; though there is rich instruction in the shorter description of the city which he so rapturously penned.⁴

He lived, we may suppose, in a late period of Old Testament history. His remarkable phrase, "Glorious things are *spoken*" (*i.e.*, have already been asserted) "of thee," suggests that the words of several previous prophets were echoing in his ear. Not improbably he was a Korathite⁵ who had shared in the return from Babylon after the welcome decree of Cyrus.⁶ "The Lord God of heaven . . . hath charged me to build Him an house in Jerusalem. Who is there among you of all His people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up."

But, consciously or unconsciously, his song exulted in a temple far more glorious than Cyrus had in mind.

For in his exile he may often have mused on Nathan's prophecy of an heir to David, who should sit in David's city on an eternal throne;⁷ or on Isaiah's predictive call to Zion: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."⁸ More recently he may have listened to the statement of Zechariah, that hereafter "Holiness unto the Lord shall, in Jerusalem, be on the bells of the horses."⁹ And if we may reckon that, besides other sources of information, he was aided by Psalms xlvi. and xlviii., which occur earlier than his Psalm in the ancient arrangement of the Psalter, we may easily trace, in his language, at least five precious particulars concerning the city of the Lord:

I. One of his anticipations must have been that that glorious community will be *thoroughly reconciled to God*. As Isaiah had

¹ Verses 12, 14.

² Verse 23.

³ Verse 24.

⁴ Augustine's pungent epitome of the Psalm is "brief in number of words, grand in weight of thoughts": "brevis numero verborum, magnus pondere sententiarum."

⁵ Bishop Wordsworth notices, p. 169, that "the Korathite author of the Psalm, himself a chief singer in the sanctuary, does not grudge the admission of foreign nations into its sacred choir."

⁶ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 23.

⁷ 2 Sam. vii. 12-16.

⁸ Isa. lx. 1.

⁹ Zech. xiv. 20.

written: "The inhabitants shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity"¹: and as the author of Psalm xlvi. had foreseen that people, in the privileged position of God's acknowledged friends, behind impregnable bulwarks,² so had this Psalmist a forecast of them, as at once pardoned and secure. "The Lord *loveth* the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob" (verse 2).³

II. Secondly, he was impressed, and very deeply impressed, by the thought that the dwellers in the city of God will all be *spiritually renewed*. The truth which the Lord Jesus emphasized to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be *born* again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," was already riveting the attention of this Old Testament seer. For perceiving by prophetic eye the entire renovation of every inheritor of the holy hill, he solemnly recorded, "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was *born* there" (verse 5).⁴

III. Still more remarkably he foresaw that the heavenly privilege of new birth will be possessed by converts to the true Israel from the very nations which had been the leaders in Gentile unbelief.⁵ "I," he sings, "will make mention of Rahab⁶ and Babylon to them that know me. Behold Philistia and Tyre with Ethiopia *this one*" (as if an individual convert from each of these nations was attracting his prophetic gaze⁷) "was born there" (verse 4).

IV. Fourthly, he perceived from his ancient observatory that the saints throughout the perfect community *will praise their Redeemer in anthems of exquisite music*. The actual words

¹ Isa. xxxv. 24.

² "Mark ye well her bulwarks; for this God is our God for ever and ever."—Psa. xlvi. 13, 14.

³ Compare Deut. xii. 5: "The place which the Lord your God shall choose . . . to place His name there."

⁴ Pusey's comment on the end of verse 6 is "Not as a mass only, but individually . . . and since they were already Egyptians, etc., yet were born in Zion, what is this but that re-birth at whose mystery Nicodemus marvelled?"

⁵ Bishop Alexander gives the following forcible quotation from De Maistre: "Nothing strikes me more than the vast ideas of the Psalmists in matters of religion. The religion which they professed, though locked up in a narrow point of the globe, was distinguished by a marked disposition and tendency to universality."

⁶ One of the opprobrious titles of antagonistic Egypt (cf. Psa. lxxxix. 11; Isa. ii. 9; xxx. 7).

⁷ The literal translation of verse 5 is, "a man and a man," on which Bishop Alexander remarks: "*i.e.*, many a man was born in her; men of every race, all written in the catalogue of citizens, each citizen enrolled by an act of new birth. The least poetical of commentators [Rosenmüller] exclaims: 'Læta et hilaria omnia in hac urbe.'" Compare Numb. i. 18: "According to the number of the names . . . by their polls;" and see also Isa. xix. 24, 25.

of their doxology were not anticipated by him, as when a later seer could listen to the choir of New Jerusalem, accompanied by myriads of angels, in singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." But he did, in his measure, perceive beforehand the grand ocean-like roar of many voices amidst the blare of trumpets, the clang of cymbals, and the softer harmony of ten-stringed harps. For he could pen this definite description (verse 7): "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there."

V. He seems, moreover, to have foreseen *the visible presence of Emmanuel* in that glorious assembly. As St. John could afterwards declare: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,"¹ or as Ezekiel, more nearly his contemporary, expressly predicted: "The name of the city from that day shall be, JEHOVAH is there"²—so did this Psalmist declare (verse 5) concerning the future Zion: "The highest *Himself* shall establish her."

No wonder that such a future, even faintly foreseen, was intensely winning. No wonder that it both cheered and purified him. Christians of the present day would say with far more intelligent fervour: "Our Father which art in heaven, may Thy will be done on the earth," if, instead of vaguely expecting an inheritance somewhere among the clouds, they were distinctly anticipating a perfect human community, on a perfectly-adapted human dwelling-place. And this ancient believer, as he confidently looked on to a home fitted for man, boldly declared that his whole heart had chosen it. John Newton supposed that he fairly interpreted the Psalmist's deepest feelings in the familiar lines:

Saviour, if of Sion's city
 I, through grace, a member am,
 Let the world deride or pity,
 I will glory in Thy name.
 Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
 All his boasted pomp and show,
 Solid joys and lasting treasure
 None but Sion's children know.

The Psalmist's last words completely justify the modern hymn-writer's paraphrase, for his closing address to the city is "All my fresh springs are IN THEE."

Such a delightful object, even indistinctly seen, needed only the assurance that when at length possessed it will be eternal to be a supremely "blessed hope"; and that assurance the Psalmist had already expressed when he described the city as having *foundations*—foundations in the *holy* hills. What he perceived, but dimly, was, nevertheless, an inheritance which

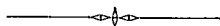
¹ Rev. xxi. 3

² Ezek. xlviii. 35.

would never fade away. The future before his prophetic eye was the very same which cheered and purified the latest prophet who wrote these final words about The City: "There shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be 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 be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and *they shall reign for ever and ever.*"

D. D. STEWART.

COULSDON RECTORY, SURREY,
November, 1890.



ART. III.—THE NECESSARY POSTULATES OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF.

I HAVE often thought that the method pursued by Euclid in writing his elements of geometry might be followed with advantage in the treatment of other matters. He began with definitions, and postulates, and axioms. Certainly, there can be nothing more necessary in every discussion than that both parties should be agreed and consistent in their use of the terms which they employ in common. Not a few controversies in our own and other times would have been cut short if the disputants had not confused themselves and one another in their use of terms, and by a preliminary disregard of definitions. It is always desirable that when two persons are talking or arguing together they should be quite sure that they are speaking of the same thing, and unless this is the case no profitable result can ensue from the discussion.

In like manner it is to be remembered that as there are certain necessary axioms which the human mind does not desire to question because they need no proof, so there are certain points which we must postulate our authority for holding or affirming if we would proceed any way in our treatment of the work in hand, or in the construction of our intellectual fabric. Unless it be granted that we are at liberty and able to add brick to brick and beam to beam we shall make but small progress in the construction of our house or our vessel. Unless it be granted that we can cut stone from the quarry, or hew timber out of the forest, we may as well fold our hands in idleness; and unless in the absence of straw we can wander about the fields in search of stubble which may serve as a substitute, albeit a poor one, it is useless to attempt to make bricks, or to demand that they shall be made by us.

Similarly it must not be forgotten that in dealing with such a