

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE FOLLOWERS OF THE LAMB.

## A Sermon

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1893,

DELIVERED BY

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,

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“These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”—Revelation xiv. 4, 5.

WHATEVER the saints are in heaven, they began to be on earth. There is, no doubt, a perfection of character in the world to come; but the character must be formed here. In the next world there will be no real change; where the tree falls, there it will lie; he that is filthy will be filthy still, he that is holy will be holy still. I am going to talk to you to-night about those who surround the Lamb, and are with him in the blaze of his glory, singing to his honour. I say that what they were in heaven they were in a measure on earth. The life of glory is the life of grace. That life which men have in heaven comes to them in regeneration on earth. When they are born again, they are born for heaven; then it is that they receive the life which lives on throughout the eternal ages. If you do not have that life here, you will never have it. If you die dead in sin, there is nothing for you for ever but the abode of the dead, “where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.” To-day is the only time which we have for character-forming. Earth is the great place for making instruments of music; here they are tuned and prepared; up there, they play them; but they will never play them there unless they have had them made and tuned here.

The subject of my discourse will be, first, *a survey of the outline of character of those who are to be with Christ hereafter*; and then, secondly, *a contemplation of the perfect picture of the saints with Christ in glory*, where I trust we, too, shall be, in the Lord's good time.

I do not know whether these verses describe all the saints in heaven. If they do, then you must be like them, or you can never be among them. If, however, they describe the elect of the elect, the innermost

circle of heaven, if they describe the body-guard of Christ, the immortals that perpetually surround him, nearest to his person, the most divinely like him, if they describe a kind of aristocracy of the skies, the nobility of heaven,—and it seems to me that they do, for they are the firstfruits, and the rest of the righteous may be regarded as the harvest afterwards reaped,—if these words describe some special saints, then we should seek to be like them. I would cultivate a holy ambition to be among the brightest stars of God. Why should we not reach to the highest prize of our high calling? If there be any speciality among the redeemed above, should it not be our earnest desire to attain to that standard?

I. So, first, here is AN OUTLINE OF THE CHARACTER OF THOSE BLESSED ONES WHILE THEY ARE HERE.

And, first, notice *their adherence to the doctrine of sacrifice* while they are here: "These are they which follow *the Lamb*." There are some professing Christians who talk much about the example of Christ, but deny the efficacy of his atoning blood; they are not of those who will be in heaven. There are some who magnify the philosophy of Christ; all his ethical teaching is greatly to their taste; but, as to his being a Substitute offered up as a sacrifice on account of human guilt, they cannot away with it. Very well; they cannot enter heaven, for "these are they which follow *the Lamb*;" not Christ only, mark you, but Christ as the Lamb of God's passover, Christ as the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world, Christ as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. You cannot be of that blessed number, if you reject Christ as a sacrifice. As for me, and I trust for you also, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Christianity without the blood of Christ is a dead Christianity; it has nothing to give life to it, "for the blood is the life thereof." If you take away the doctrine of sacrifice, you have taken away the core, the heart, the pith, the marrow of all Christianity. You have left bones for dogs; but you have not left food for immortal spirits. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he should believe in Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Look, look, look unto him, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for he is God, even the bleeding Saviour, he is God, and beside him there is none else. May it be said of you all, dear friends, that you followed the Lamb by your adherence to his atoning sacrifice!

Many have thus followed the Lamb in spite of fierce persecution. Remember that brave woman, Ann Askew. When they had racked her, and pulled every limb out of its place, so that she ached all over in her exquisitely delicate frame, yet she sat on the stone floor of her cell, and still defended the sacrifice of Christ. When she had an opportunity to write her thoughts, she penned that quaint verse,—

"I am not she that list,  
My anchor to let fall,  
For every drizzling mist;  
My ship's substantial."

She thought that being vexed by Popish priests and torn to pieces on the rack was only a drizzling mist, for which it was not worth while to cast her anchor. She was more than a match for fifty priests. God raise us up a race of such men and women! The devil seems to have taken the backbone out of most people. May we begin to know what we do know, and to believe what we do believe, and to put our foot down, and say, "God helping me, I will not forsake my God, nor turn away from his truth." You remember how Martin Luther, when he stood at the Diet of Worms, closed what he had to say when they bade him recant, and he would not. He said, "Here I stand; I can do no other, so help me God;" and thus, invoking the help of his divine Lord, he committed his body to the flames, if need be, sooner than he would renounce a single Word of the Most High, or sin against the light which he had received.

And, next, it is clear of these people that they followed the Lamb by *practically imitating Christ's example*, for it is written, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They so believed in him that—

"They mark'd the footsteps that he trod,  
His zeal inspired their breast,  
And following their incarnate God,  
Possess the promised rest."

You cannot be with Christ unless you are like Christ. If you have really trusted in Jesus, he will transform you, he will take away from you those evil tendencies and vile propensities which are contrary to holiness, he will work in you to will and to do of his own good pleasure. And the highest holiness for you is to be like Christ. The very noblest possible character to which you could ever reach is to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, in obedience to God, in love to man, in self-sacrifice, in humility, in gentleness, in love. You must follow him whithersoever he goeth, and do what he did, so far as your position makes it fit for you to do it. I mean that you cannot do as he did as God, but you can do what he did as man. Try to put your feet down in the footprints that he has left you. Do aim at complete conformity to Christ; and wherein you fail to reach it, mark that you come so far short of what you ought to be. To be like Christ is that which God intends for you; and unless you have some measure of it now, you will never be with him, for all they who are with Christ above are the people who were made like to Christ here below. Note that very distinctly, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

Will you, dear friends, labour to take Christ for your pattern? Do not come and take his name, and then dishonour his character. There are among you some who are very much like your Master; you are the joy of the church. There are among all the churches some who bear Christ's name, but are not like him. My venerable predecessor, Dr. Rippon, used to say of his church that he had in it some of the best people in England; and then he used to add in a low voice, "*and some of the worst.*" I am afraid that I have to say the same; but I am very sorry that I should have to say it. The worst people in the world are those who profess most and do least. Do not be among

that unhappy number; but do, I pray you, by the blessing of God, and the help of his Spirit, be among those who at least endeavour to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth."

Now, notice in the sketch of these people that *they recognized a special redemption*: "These were redeemed from among men." Christ had done something for them that he had not done for others. They were not redeemed "among men", but "*from among men.*" They recognized the speciality of Christ's sacrifice. They could read, for instance, a passage like this, and understand its meaning, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it," for his church, for his body. "These were redeemed from among men." Come, beloved, do you belong to this company of persons who have been fetched out from the rest of mankind by the power of the Spirit of God, and also by the merit of the precious blood? Do you feel that you are marked with the blood as others are not? Do you belong to a people who are not of the world, even as he that bought them was not of the world? Are you henceforth not of the common multitude, but one who has been bought and paid for by that redemptive price which was found in the veins and the heart of the Redeemer, and are you so redeemed as no longer to be one of the great mass of mankind, but fetched out, called out, chosen, "not your own, but bought with a price"? These are they that will be with Christ hereafter, as specially redeemed ones.

And as they recognized a special redemption, you will observe that *they made a full surrender of themselves to God and to the Lamb*: "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." On a certain day, when the harvest was getting ripe, a man went down to the fields, and plucked an ear here, a handful there, and another handful further on, and he passed along the field, and gathered ears here and ears there, and when he had collected enough for sheaves, he tied them up, and took them to the temple of God, and presented them to the Lord as an offering, to signify that he owed all the harvest to God, and he brought him the first ripe ears as a sacrifice to him. Now, beloved, has the grace of God plucked you out from among the rest of mankind, and do you feel that now you belong to Christ, that you belong to God, that you are not to be gathered with the mass of men for the great condemnation, but that you are presented unto God, and belong to him altogether? It is a very easy thing for me to talk about this; but, believe me, it is by no means an easy thing to carry it out. I see numbers of people who profess to belong to God; but they live as much for money-making as anybody else, they live quite as much for self-seeking as the world does; and it would be difficult, even if you had microscopes on both your eyes, to see any difference between them and worldlings. This will never do. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." If you are the firstfruits unto God, be so; if you belong to yourself, serve yourself; but if, by the redemption of Christ, you are not your own, but bought with a price, then live as those who are the King's own, who must serve God, and cannot be content unless their every action shall tend to the divine glory, and to the magnifying of Christ Jesus. Now this is what all of us who are truly the Lord's have in outline. Oh, that the sketch

might be properly filled up, that we might become more and more the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb!

I must take you a little further. These people who are to be with Christ, the nearest to him, are *a people free from falsehood*. "In their mouth was found no guile." Brethren, if we profess to be Christians, we must have done with all craft, policy, double-dealing, and the like. The Christian man should be a plain man, who says what he means, and means what he says. I know of no worse suspicion against any man who professes to be a Christian than the suspicion of not being transparent. It were better for us to be simple as fools than to be cunning as hypocrites, even though our cunning should place us in the front rank of the governors of mankind. The Christian man should scorn to tell a lie; exaggeration and equivocation should be strangers to his lips. "In their mouth was found no guile." The Lord Jesus Christ was a great speaker of plain truth; and those whom he chooses to be near him, to be his personal attendants in heaven, must also be free from guile. With many a mistake, with many a weakness, yet, beloved, the saints are free from falsehood. They are true, whatever may be their mistakes. Look to yourselves, and see whether it is so; as I would look to my own soul, I charge you to look to yours.

And then, once more, it is said that they are *free from blemish*; "they are without fault before the throne of God." "Oh!" says one, "I am not without fault." No, but there is the outline of that character in you if you are, indeed, one of the Lord's people; you have already got rid of many faults, and you are getting rid of more; you grieve over what remains, and you will never rest till every sin is conquered. Is it not so, beloved? Saints are not only men of honour, but men of holiness; we would not tolerate any known sin in ourselves. Whenever we are carried into a fault by temptation or by inbred sin, we feel unhappy; we bow low in the dust, and we cry to God for grace, that we may not commit the like sin again. But God's people are a blameless people, after all. If you are to find pure and right characters, where will you find them but among the followers of the Lamb? You know and I know many believers in Christ whose lives are blameless; we would not say that they are absolutely without fault, but still, the grace of God so works in them that we may safely take them for examples, and do as they have done. It was so in the olden time, and it is so now; and unless your character is such that your children may safely imitate it, and your servants may tread in your footsteps, and your neighbours may act as you do without going wrong, how can you hope to be where Jesus is? Jesus Christ receives sinners, but he makes them saints. The gospel opens a great hospital, not for sick men to lie in it and remain sick, but that there they may recover health, and may be made strong. He that believes in Christ is saved, saved in this sense among others, that he is saved from the power of sin, and turned from an unholy and godless life into a life of purity, honesty, and uprightness. "Be not deceived," any of you, to-night, "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." If there be not about you a likeness to Christ, if there be not at least the sketch which I have tried to

depict, then, surely, you are not among those who will be for ever where Jesus is. I have seen an artist make his crayon drawing; he just took a piece of charcoal, and marked out what he was going to draw. I am afraid that is about all that is done with us here. There is an outline made with the charcoal; all the lines of beauty and all the glory of character are yet to be laid on as we grow in grace and in likeness to Christ. But, at least, there must be that sketch. If you have not that, come humbly to the feet of Jesus, and pray that he would begin in you his good work which he will carry on and perfect in the day of his appearing.

Thus much upon the outline of the character of saints while they are upon the earth.

II. Now indulge me for just a few minutes while I try to give you A GLIMPSE OF THE PERFECT PICTURE IN HEAVEN. I cannot really show you the picture; that is in the upper gallery in glory, and you must go up there to see it. I can only tell you my idea of what that picture is like when it is finished.

Well, first, those who are with Christ enjoy *perfect fellowship with him*. Up there, they "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." They are always with him. There were certain young princes chosen in certain courts to attend upon the king. Wherever the king went, they went; where the court was, there was their abode; their one business was to behold the king's face, and to abide near him. That is the business of the glorified ones of whom I am speaking. When will the day arrive that you and I shall enjoy this perfect fellowship with our glorious King, never absent from him, never doubting his love, never cold in our affection towards him, but being—

"For ever with the Lord" ?

Shall I go on with the verse ?

"Amen ! so let it be !  
Life from the dead is in that word,  
'Tis immortality !"

Some of you have dear children who have outstripped their mother, and are enjoying this felicity even now. Others of us have mothers, brothers, friends who were very dear to us, who follow the Lamb in glory. How many who once sat amongst us here are now up there, following the Lamb, and he leads them unto living fountains of waters, and all tears are wiped away from their eyes ! Oh, to think that wherever my Lord shall go I shall go ! When he shall descend from heaven with a shout, we shall come with him. When he shall sit upon his throne to judge the world, his saints shall sit with him. When he shall reign amongst his ancients gloriously for a thousand years, we shall reign with him on the earth. When he shall return to the Father's throne,—

"All his work and warfare done,"

we shall partake of his triumph, following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. I vote to cast in my lot with my Lord in life and in death; what say you ? My Master, where thou dwellest, I will dwell; if men put thee to shame, I will be put to shame with thee; if thou diest, I

will die with thee, that I may for ever live with thee in thy glory above. Say you not the same, beloved? Say it deep down in your heart to-night.

Well, now, notice in this complete picture, next, that up there *they are perfectly accepted with God*: "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." God always accepts them; he always looks upon them as his firstfruits, bought with his Son's blood, and brought by his Son into his heavenly temple, to be his for ever. Sometimes here we mar our service; but they never mar it there. Our songs get out of tune, but theirs never know a discord. We praise the Lord, and yet groan, being burdened; but in heaven there are—

"No groans to mingle with the songs  
Which warble from immortal tongues."

We doubt; we fear; we grieve the Holy Spirit; sometimes we get very sadly out of gear with God. It is never so there; fully redeemed from sin, they are accepted in the Beloved, and to the very top of their bent they know it, and enjoy it. Happy day, happy day, when you and I shall be of them and among them!

Observe, also, that *they have perfect truth there in heart and soul*: "In their mouth was found no guile." "No lie," says the Revised Version. Here, dear friends, we do fall into error inadvertently, and sometimes, I fear me, negligently. We say, not knowingly, more than the truth. How often we say much less than the truth, and almost necessarily so when we speak of divine things; but up there they are not only free from wilful guile and deceit, but they are free from all error and mistake. Happy day! Happy day! Do you not long to be there to be rid of every false doctrine, every wrong opinion, every error, every mistake, so that in your mouth there shall never be guile again? This is what they are above, made perfect. He who washed their hearts here has washed their tongues there. As they loved the truth here, they know the truth there. As they sought it here, they have found it there. As they were willing to die for it here, they live in the enjoyment of it there, and shall do so for ever.

One more feature of that perfect picture is this, *they enjoy perfect sinlessness before God*: "They are without fault before the throne of God." That text brings back to my recollection the second sermon I preached to this church, one Sabbath evening, when we were but few: "They are without fault before the throne of God." I had great joy, as a youth, in expatiating upon the perfect blessing of being altogether "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." If there were any fault in them there, they are where it would be seen, for they are before the throne of the all-seeing God; but even there, in that matchless place of light in which there is no darkness at all, they are declared to be without fault, without blemish. Can you think that you will be of that happy number one day? I had to put it very mildly just now when I spoke of saints being without blame here; but you may put it as strongly as you please when you speak of their being without sin there. They were once, perhaps, before conversion, the very chief of sinners; but in heaven there shall be no trace of their

sin. They will bless the grace that came to them when they were up to their neck in the filth of sin; but there will be no trace of their filthiness left. There is no blood stain on Manasseh, there is no brand of blasphemy on Saul of Tarsus now; they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Some of these men were by nature and by practice, too, so depraved that it looked as if they could never escape from their evil habits. We might have said of them, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may these men, who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well." Yet so has the grace of God changed them, that there is no trace of any evil tendency, no propensity to lust, or lewdness, or blasphemy, or any kind of fault.

What a wonderful change it will be for those who were once great sinners to be found without fault; not only without great crime, not only without gross vice, but without fault, and that, too, as I have said, before the throne of God, where, if there were a fault, it would be seen! They are cleansed from all the guilt of sin, and from all the depravity which the habitude of sin brings to men. "They are without fault before the throne of God." Truly, if you had never heard this before, it might make you laugh for joy to think that it should ever be possible that the very chief of sinners, through faith in Christ, might be made so clean as one day to be without fault before the throne of God. I do think that, when we get there, part of the joy of heaven will be a long surprise, an endless wonder; and if we are permitted there to recollect what we used to be, some of you will recall a night of sin, and say, "And yet I am here." You will recall, perhaps, some dreadful passion, some atrocious outburst of foul language, or some terrible occasion of sin, and you will say, "Yet here am I, clean as the driven snow, washed in the blood of Jesus, and renewed by the Spirit of God." Although they always praise God, I think that they must every now and then have a fresh outburst of hallelujahs when they begin to review the past. One says, "I, even after conversion, was a poor, limping Christian, and I was thrown back once or twice with terrible backslidings. My Christian friends despaired of my ever holding on; and yet here I am, without fault before the throne of God. Hallelujah!" Will not a man be obliged to break out like that, and do you not think that all the saints around him will take up the Hallelujah, too, till it goes in swelling chorus all round the choirs of heaven, "Hallelujah to God and the Lamb"? And another one will say, "And I, after I had long known the Lord, fell, oh, so sadly, so grievously! But he would not give me up, he followed me; and by his mighty grace, I was restored, my broken bones were set again, and I was made to sing of free grace and forgiving love. He created in me a new heart, and renewed a right spirit within me; and now I, even I, am here without fault, without a single fault." You can hardly imagine it, can you? You begin to think, "Well, surely that cannot be," for, if you look within, you see so many faults over which you groan; but you will look without and look within, when you once get there, and neither without nor within, in any respect whatever, will you have any kind of fault; for "they are without blemish before the throne of God."

I do not feel inclined to preach any more, but just to shout, "Hallelujah," again and again, at the very thought that I shall be there. Oh, it is hard to go to heaven from such a place as that which I occupy! Your eyes sometimes startle me in my dreams, these thousands of eyes fixed upon one poor mortal man, who has to try to lead you to Christ, and lead you to heaven. Your eyes at times seem to pierce me like so many daggers. I think, sometimes, "What if I am not faithful, if I do not preach plainly, if I do not warn them, if I do not invite them earnestly, if I do not with all my heart cry, 'Come to Christ'?" What shall I do in eternity if six thousand pairs of eyes are for ever seeming to stick, like daggers, into my heart?" Oh, but it will not be so! I believe in him that justifieth the ungodly; and I have fully preached him to you, and all my great congregation. My hope is in the precious blood that cleanseth from all sin; and I have pointed all my hearers to that precious blood; and the day will come when I, with all who believe in Jesus, shall be without fault before the throne of God. The very thought of it makes me cry "Hallelujah," and with that I finish. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Say "Hallelujah," all of you. [*"Hallelujah" from the congregation.*] Hallelujah! Hallelujah to God and the Lamb! The Lord bless you, for Christ's sake! Amen.

### Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

#### REVELATION XIV.

Verse 1. *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb—*

John always writes of Jesus as the "Lamb." His Lord is to him in his sacrificial character always "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" by the shedding of his blood. "I looked, and, lo, a Lamb"—

1. *Stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.*

The Revised Version has it, "having his name, and the name of his Father, written on their foreheads." Now they are known to be the Lord's; on earth that fact was questioned, but his name is written on their foreheads now. Sometimes they themselves had to question it, but now it is apparent to all, the distinguishing mark is stamped upon their brow: "having his Father's name written in their foreheads."

2. *And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

It was very loud, but very sweet. It is not easy in earthly music to blend the two: but in heaven, all the energies of living men shall be thrown into the song; and yet it shall be sweet as the touch of a minstrel when he lays his fingers gently among the strings of the harp.

3. *And they sung as it were a new song before the throne,*

They could not sing any old song there. The songs of earth, sweet as some of them are, are not good enough to be sung in heaven. With a new experience, new delights, and a clearer vision of their Lord, they must have a new song.

3. *And before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

Heaven is not the place to learn that song; it must be learned on the earth.

You must learn here the notes of free grace and dying love ; and when you have mastered their melody, you will be able to offer to the Lord the tribute of a grateful heart, even in heaven, and blend it with the harmonies eternal. Suppose, for a moment, that you could go there, and that you were unprepared to sing the new song, you would have to say, "I cannot join in the chorus, for I do not know the tune." You must learn the song now, the new song of praise unto our God, or you cannot be admitted there. I should not expect, if I went down to the Handel Festival, for the conductor to permit me to take a place in the choir. He would ask me, "Can you sing? Have you ever rehearsed the matchless music of Handel?" and when I answered "No," he would tell me to stand aside ; so you must learn the music of Calvary, you must learn the music of the name of Jesus, or you cannot sing in heaven. No man could learn the song but the redeemed from the earth ; not redeemed, you see, by a general redemption, of which some so loudly talk ; but redeemed from among men by a special redemption, which took them out from the rest of mankind, by a price paid for them, so that they were bought as others were not bought, by the precious blood of Jesus, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

4. *These are they which were not defiled with women ; for they are virgins.*  
They were pure and chaste in the sight of God.

4. *These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.*  
His choice attendants, his body-guard.

4, 5. *These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile :*

"No lie." They were truthful, they were truth-speakers.

5. *For they are without fault—*  
Or, blemish.

5. *Before the throne of God.*

Like him with whom they associated, the Lamb of God, they were without blemish and without spot.

6. *And I saw—*

What wonderful sights John saw ! I do not wonder that he saw them ; he had leaned his head on Christ's bosom, and that qualified him to see what you and I cannot see. Near communion to Christ is the best qualification for a vision of mystery. Get thee into the very heart of Christ, and thou shalt see wonderful things : "I saw"—

6, 7. *Another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him ;*

Is this the gospel ? It is one version, evidently, of the everlasting gospel. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Truly, to worship him as he reveals himself, is true godliness ; and in it lies all the gospel : "Having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him."

7, 8. *For the hour of his judgment is come : and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen,*

This will not happen till the gospel is fully preached. Superstition does not come down unless true religion is set up. One angel proclaims the everlasting gospel ; the next declares that the great system of error is fallen : "Babylon is fallen."

8. *That great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

You know that gigantic system of error which professes to come from God, and to be the only true church; but it must fall.

9, 10. *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

They sometimes say that we talk very terribly about the world to come. Do we say more than the Scripture says? Do we use more terrific emblems than the Holy Ghost uses when he speaks after this fashion? This is a generation that is not to be pleased, neither do we seek to please it. God's wrath is terrible, and our language cannot be too strong to express the overwhelming power of it.

11. *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

Keep you true to Christ; wear his name in your forehead. Follow no system of error; do not be deluded either by Ritualism or Rationalism, by superstition or by unbelief. Keep close to the Word of God, and ask to be taught of the Spirit of God.

12, 13. *Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

Accursed were they who carried the mark of the beast, and went after falsehood; but blessed are they who follow Christ, even though they die. Dying in the Lord, their works survive them, and they themselves live for ever with him.

14. *And I looked, and behold a white cloud,*

One of these days, every eye will look and see what is here described. A little time may elapse, but it will soon be past. How quickly years fly away! Think where you will be in the day when you, too, will say, "I looked, and behold a white cloud."

14—16. *And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.*

This is the gathering in of the godly, who are Christ's wheat. He himself reaps them; no angel, mark you, but himself, with his own sharp sickle and with his own dear hand. These are his sheaves, he sowed for wheat; he himself was that wheat which fell into the ground and died, and brought forth much fruit. So he, into his own bosom, gathers his own sheaves with his own hand. "May I be among them!" Make that your prayer to-night. "May I be one golden ear in Christ's great harvest!"

17. *And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.*

Not this time the King, but an angel; not the Son of man that sat on the cloud, but an angel, the servant of God, deputed to execute vengeance.

18, 19. *And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth,*

This is the gathering together of the ungodly, those wicked clusters that ripen in sin, and that become red with iniquity. Christ does not gather them, you see. That is left to an angel to do; he thrust in his sickle, and gathered the grapes of the earth.

19. *And cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.*

Can you see the clusters flung into the winepress? Will you be there? God grant that neither you nor I may, in that terrible day, be among the clusters of the wicked!

20. *And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.*

So terrible will be even the preliminary destruction of the ungodly. Though they grow in clusters, yet shall they perish. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith" unto each one of us. Amen.