

It is represented, figuratively, no doubt, as a splendid city, prepared of God, and let down to the earth. Its twelve foundations are all precious stones, its gates pearls, its walls jasper, and its streets pure gold, as it were transparent glass. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of that city. Instead of the sun and the moon, the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. From out of their throne proceeds the water of life, clear as crystal, and along its banks grows the tree of life, with its twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month.

Here, then, we have the most splendid and enchanting objects in nature brought before us as representatives of the new heavens and the new earth. Yet we cannot learn from the Bible, or science, what material dress nature will then put on. We are taught, only, that it will far exceed in splendour and perfection, the drapery which she now wears. We may be assured that it will be eminently adapted to a spirit that is henceforth to be perfectly holy, happy, incorruptible, and immortal. Both revelation and geology agree in assuring us that the new earth, which will emerge from the ruins of the present, will be improved in its condition; but the particulars of that condition are not described; probably because we could not, in our present state, understand them.

Such are the views concerning the earth's future destruction and renovation, which appear to me to be taught by a fair interpretation of Scripture, and which harmonize with the teachings of geology. But we are met here by two formidable difficulties. In the first place, if the present earth is to be burned up and melted at the last day, it must require thousands of years before another solid crust shall be formed upon its surface, capable of sustaining organic natures which are material. But the Bible represents the righteous, at the day of judgment, as reunited to their bodies, which they left in the grave, and entering at once into their residence upon the new earth. Where, then, can we find the thousands of years which, by this theory, are essential to prepare this residence for their reception? Into what intermediate place, what new Hades, shall they pass, until verdure shall clothe the new earth, and more than the primeval beauty of Eden take the place of the volcanic desolation which must reign over a world just beginning to cool from incandescent heat?