

John Gill's notes on The Holy Bible, Revelation chapter 22.

This chapter contains a further account of the above city, a confirmation of the visions of this book, and the conclusion of it. The city is further described by the river that ran by it, or through it, called a river of water of life, said to be pure and clear as crystal, and to have its rise from the throne of God and the Lamb; and by the tree of life in the midst of it, situated on each side the river, bearing twelve sorts of fruit, yielded every month, the leaves of which heal the nations, Revelation 22:1 and the happiness of the inhabitants of it is set forth, by there being no curse in it; by the throne of God and the Lamb being in it; by the service of the saints in it; by the pleasure they enjoy, and the honour put upon them; by the light of the place, and the duration of the saints' reign, Revelation 22:3 next follow testimonies concerning the authority of the book, and the truth of things in it; and first, the testimony of the angel that talked with John, declaring that the things in it were true and faithful; and that he was sent from the Lord God of the prophets to show to the saints things that would quickly come to pass; and that Christ himself would quickly come; and that they were happy who kept and observed the sayings and prophecies of it, Revelation 22:6 then the testimony of John who saw and heard them, and was about to worship the angel that declared them, but was forbid by him, and dissuaded from it, by observing to him who he was, a fellow servant of his and of his brethren, and that God only was to be worshipped, Revelation 22:8 who is

ordered, as it seems by Christ, not to seal up the prophecies delivered to him, since the time of their fulfilment was at hand, when men would remain just as they were, whether ungodly and filthy, or righteous and holy, Revelation 22:10 and who declares that he should quickly come to reward every man according to his works;

and that he was the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and that they were happy that did his commandments, since it would appear they had a right to the tree of life, and to entrance through the gates into the city before described, when wicked men, whose characters are given, would be without, Revelation 22:12 and still more clearly and fully Christ asserts himself to be the author of this revelation, and the sender of the angel, to testify it to the church, who is David's root and offspring, and the morning star, whose coming is to be wished for by the Spirit and bride, and every truly gracious soul, Revelation 22:16 and to show the perfection and authority of this book, as well as of the whole Scripture, and to deter persons from adding to it, or taking from it, he threatens to inflict on such persons the plagues herein written, and to take the names of such out of the book of life, out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book, Revelation 22:18 and then he delivers out a fresh asseveration of his speedy coming, to which John adds his hearty "Amen," and earnest request that he would come quickly; and the book is concluded with a benediction usual in the epistles, especially in those of the Apostle Paul, Revelation 22:20.

Verse 1. And he showed me a pure river of water of life,.... Not baptism, which used to be administered in rivers and pools of water; and which engaged to purity of life; and, the power and authority of administering which was from God and Christ; but in this Jerusalem state there will be no use nor need of ordinances; for Revelation 22:1 belongs to the preceding chapter, and is a continuation of the same account, this being not a new vision, but a part of the former, which the same angel, as in Revelation 21:9 proceeds to show to John: nor is the Holy Ghost intended by this river, whose gifts and graces are sometimes, for their plenty, purity, and quickening virtue, compared to rivers of living water; and who is a pure and holy Spirit, and proceeds from the Father and the Son: nor the doctrine of the Gospel, which comes from the blessed God, and is the Gospel of Christ; and, when purely and faithfully preached, is clear as crystal; and is the means of conveying spiritual life to men, and of supporting it in them: nor the ultimate joys of heaven, which may be called a river of pleasure, for the fulness and variety of delight; pure, and clear as crystal, for the holiness and perfect knowledge of that state; and be said to proceed from the throne of God and the Lamb, being the free gift of God through Christ; but this state is not designed here: rather, therefore, by this river is meant the everlasting love of God, which may be compared to a river for its largeness and abundance, its height and depth, its length and breadth; and for the large displays of it in this state, when its waters will increase, and be a broad river to swim in, and be unpassable; and for the streams of it in election, redemption, calling, justification, pardon, adoption, and

eternal life, which make glad the city of God; and for the pleasure it yields, and the fruitfulness it gives to those who drink of it: it may be called a river "of water of life," because in the present state of things it quickens such who are dead in trespasses and sins; revives the saints when dead and lifeless, supports their spirits, and is a cordial that preserves from fainting; it keeps and secures from dying the second death and is the spring and source of eternal life; and that itself will last and flow for ever, it is ever running water, it is everlasting love: and it may be said to be pure and

clear as crystal, it being free from all hypocrisy and dissimulation, being real, hearty, and sincere, both in the Father and in Christ, of which the fullest proofs and demonstrations are given; and being clear of all motives and conditions in the creature, by which it might be influenced; and it engaging to purity and holiness of life and conversation; for the doctrine, which brings the account of it, and the inward principle of grace, which is the fruit of it, and every discovery of it, have a tendency hereunto:

proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; not taking its rise from man's obedience, nor from his love to God, nor from his faith in Christ; for the love of God is prior to all these, and is the spring and cause of them, and therefore cannot be moved and influenced by them; but it has its origin from the sovereignty of God and of Christ, signified by the throne of both, who will be gracious to whom they will be gracious; nor can any reason be given why they love any of the sons of men,

but their own sovereign will and pleasure; this is the sole motive, spring, and cause of their love; and God and the Lamb being mentioned together, shows both the equal dignity of their persons, being on the same throne, and the equality of their love to the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem: and thus, as a river adds to the pleasure, use, convenience, and wholesomeness of a city, this glorious city is commended by such a river running by it, or in the midst of it: there may be an allusion to the river which ran out of the garden of Eden, for this will be a paradisiacal state, Genesis 2:9 or rather to the waters in Ezekiel 47:1 which came from under the threshold of the Sanctuary; though this river proceeds not from the temple, there being no temple in this state, but from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is instead of it.

Verse 2. In the midst of the street of it,.... That is, of the city described in the preceding chapter, which shows that this vision belongs to that, and is a continuation of it, and which street was all of pure gold, Revelation 21:21

and on either side of the river was there the tree of life; not that it stood either in the midst of the street of the city, which being a pavement of gold, a tree could not well stand there; nor on both sides of the river, which is impossible, unless the tree of life is put for many trees of the same kind, as in Ezekiel's vision, to which the allusion is; and so some were on one side of the river, and some on the other, as there; see Ezekiel 47:7 or unless it can be thought that such a solution of the

difficulty is sufficient, that the root of it was on one side, and the branches grew over to the other; though the words may be better rendered, and the difficulty will be removed, and the sense be clear, "between the street of it," the city, "and the river, on this side, and on that side"; that is, the street on one side, and the river on the other, was the tree of life; compare with this John 19:18. So the Jews say {e}, that the tree of life is in the midst of paradise, and its body covers all the garden; and that there is in it five hundred thousand different tastes; and that there is no likeness and smell like it. By the tree of life is meant not the Gospel, nor godliness, nor eternal life, nor any other of the divine Persons, but Christ, who is the author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; See Gill on "Re 2:7" and its situation between the street of the city, where the saints commune and converse together, and the river of God's everlasting love, which in this state will appear in its fulness and glory, shows that Christ will be seen and enjoyed by all in the most delightful and comfortable manner that can be wished for:

which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; not one sort of fruit one month, and another sort another month, and so on, but twelve sorts every month; which is expressive of the fruits and spiritual blessings of grace from Christ, enjoyed by saints in the present state, and of that variety of happiness and pleasures to be had in this glorious state, and of the continuance of them; they being always ever fresh and new, and will be always sufficient for the twelve tribes of the true Israel of God, and for all that

have embraced the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb; whose drink in this state will be the everlasting love of God, and whose food will be the fruit of the tree of life; both which they shall enjoy in great abundance:

and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations; not for the curing of diseases, or repairing of health; which in the present state of things is done by the application of the blood of Christ for the pardon of sin, which is a healing of diseases, and by the discoveries of the love of God; through the ministration of the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, which might be thought to be signified by leaves; for there will be no disease either of body or mind in this state; besides, the nations that will walk in the light of this city will be saved perfectly and completely, Revelation 21:4 but these leaves will be for the preserving and continuing the health of the people of God in this state, as the tree of life in Eden's garden was for the preservation of the health and life of Adam, had he continued in a state of innocence; and it denotes that everything in Christ will contribute to the comfort, health, and happiness of the saints. The Jews interpret the passage in Ezekiel 47:12 to which this refers, of future time, or the world to come {f}; and speak of various trees and herbs of great fragrancy and medicinal virtues, which grow quite round on the sides of a laver that stands in paradise {g}.

{e} Yalkut Simeoni, par. 1. fol. 7. 1. {f} Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 1. {g} Sepher Avodah Hakkodesh, fol. 46. 1.

Verse 3. And there shall be no more curse,.... As there was in Eden, from whence a river came, and where was a tree of life; for there the serpent cursed for his concern in man's transgression, and the earth on account of it; but in this new earth, and paradisiacal state, and on the inhabitants of it, will be no curse; here will be no sin, the cause of the curse, nor pain and sorrow, nor death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal, or the wrath of God, the several effects of sin, and parts of the curse; the curse of the law cannot here take place; for, besides the righteousness of Christ, which all in the new Jerusalem will be clothed with, and so be blessed and secure from the curse, they will be perfectly pure and holy in nature, and constant and complete in their obedience and service; they will always do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven; no accursed person, or anyone devoted to ruin and destruction, will be here; not the old serpent, the devil, he will be shut up in the bottomless pit; nor the blasphemous beast and false prophet, they will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire before this time comes; no cursing, or accursed men will dwell here; not such who curse themselves, or the saints, or such who will be bid to depart as cursed, these will be destroyed in the general conflagration; nor will there be any anathema denounced against any person, for here will be no introducers of another Gospel, nor any that do not love the Lord Jesus Christ; nor will any be an anathema, or accursed from Christ, excommunicated from the church of Christ, for that will have no members deserving of that; none but what are pure and undefiled; see

Zechariah 14:11

but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; God himself will be there, his tabernacle will be among men; the name of this city will be "Jehovah Shammah," the Lord is here; the pure and spotless Lamb of God, the Son of the Blessed, will be here, whose presence will make it an happy state; these will both have their throne, or seat, here; they will sit on one throne, being the one God over all, blessed for ever; this city will be the city of the great King, where his royal glory and majesty will be most illustriously displayed, and which will greatly make for the felicity of this state, and secure it from the curse:

and his servants shall serve him: either the angels, who are ministering spirits, and the servants of God and of the Lamb; or the ministers of the Gospel, the servants of the most high God; or rather all the true followers of Christ, who shall be where he is, and "serve him": both God and the Lamb, who are one in nature, though two distinct persons; wherefore serving them both is not serving two masters: and the service the saints will be employed in, in this state, will not be preaching the word, or attending on the ministry of it, or subjecting to ordinances, which will now be at an end, but celebrating the praises of God, adoring the perfections of his nature, ascribing the glory of every providence, and of all salvation to him, and magnifying the riches of his grace; and this they will perform in the most spiritual, fervent, and perfect manner, and that continually; see Revelation 7:15.

Verse 4. And they shall see his face,.... The face of God, so as he is not to be seen now; they shall see him as he is; not only the angels, who always behold the face of God, but all the saints, risen and changed, being pure in heart, and perfectly holy; they shall see him face to face, they shall have intimate and familiar communion with him; they shall enjoy his favour, and have the freest and largest discoveries of his love; and they shall see the face of the Lamb; they shall behold Christ and his glory both with the eyes of their understanding, and with the eyes of their bodies; and this is a very desirable sight, and will be very glorious and delightful; it will be fully satisfying, and will make the saints like unto him; it will be free from all darkness and any interruption, and will always continue.

And his name shall be in their foreheads; they shall be known to be his servants, as if his name was written and bore on their foreheads; it will be a clear case that they are the children and people of God; now they are, but it is not known, at least not so known as it will be in this state; and they will also in the fullest and freest manner own God to be their God, and the Lamb to be their Redeemer; they will be under no fear of man, nor be under any temptation to be ashamed of Christ, or of his service; see Revelation 14:1. Some think there is an allusion to the inscription on the mitre of the high priest's forehead, "holiness to the Lord," the saints being now openly, visibly, and perfectly holy.

Verse 5. And there shall be no night there,.... This is

repeated from Revelation 21:25 to express the certainty of it, and to observe, that the happiness of this state will greatly lie in the light thereof; it will be one everlasting day, *hmera aiwnov*, "day of eternity," or eternal day, as in 2 Peter 3:18

and they need no candle, nor the light of the sun; neither artificial nor natural light; neither the dimmer light of the ceremonial law, under the legal dispensation, which was like a candle lighted up in Judea; nor the more clear light of the Gospel and its ordinances, under the present dispensation, which now will be at an end:

for the Lord God giveth them light; immediately from himself, without the use of means and ordinances; and in his light the saints will see all things clearly; who will be always communicating it to them, and will be their everlasting light; See Gill on "Re 21:23."

and they shall reign for ever and ever; they are made kings now, and in this state they shall reign with Christ for the space of a thousand years; and when they are ended, they shall not cease to reign; nor will Christ, when he delivers up the kingdom to the Father, for his and their kingdom is an everlasting one, Revelation 1:6 and here ends the account of this glorious state of things; what follows is the conclusion of the whole book.

Verse 6. And he said unto me,.... That is, the angel that talked with him, and showed him the above things:

these sayings are faithful and true; not only what are delivered in particular concerning the new Jerusalem state, in which are many things new, and unheard of before, and which may seem strange, and even incredible, but all that are written in this book, Revelation 22:7 all which are "faithful"; to be believed by all that read them, and in the fulfilment of which the faithfulness of God is engaged and displayed: and they are true; for they come from the God of truth, that cannot lie, and are to be credited, and will have a certain accomplishment: this is said to secure the divine authority of this book against the gainsayers of it, whom the Holy Ghost foresaw would arise in the world; and which is here, and in the following part of this chapter, supported by the testimonies of Christ, of his angel, and of John his servant.

And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done; the "Lord" God is the Lord Jesus Christ, as appears by comparing this with Revelation 1:1 and this is a very glaring proof of the deity of Christ, since he is not only called the Lord God, but the Lord God of the holy prophets; of the prophets of the Old Testament, who foretold things to come, and spake of the Messiah, his person, office, sufferings, death, and the glory that should follow; and of the prophets of the New Testament, who had a gift of explaining the prophecies of the Old, as well as some of them predicted future events; and both sorts were holy men, set part by God for this office, and had principles of holiness wrought in them, and were moved by the Holy Ghost; these Christ

inspired, and qualified with gifts suitable to their work; and he is, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin version, and the Oriental versions read, "the Lord God of the spirits of the prophets"; see 1 Corinthians 14:32 who had power over their spirits, could come at them, and did impress them with a sense and knowledge of divine and future things, which none but God can do: the same sent an angel of his, one of his ministering spirits he has under his command, perhaps the same that here speaks, for so reads the Syriac version, "sent me his angel": to show to John, and by him to all the saints, and to all the servants and followers of the Lamb, things that were in a very little time to begin to come to pass, till all were fulfilled; and even those at the greatest distance were, and are to be fulfilled within a little time, with respect to God, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and in comparison of eternity, and even of the time which had elapsed from the beginning of the world; and these things were shown in the various visions of the seals, trumpets, vials, and others; see Revelation 1:1.

Verse 7. Behold, I come quickly,.... These are the words not of the angel, but of Christ, as is manifest from Revelation 22:12 and which are to be understood not of Christ's coming in his power to destroy Jerusalem, for this was past when John had these visions, and wrote this book; but of the second and personal coming of Christ to judgment, as is clear from Revelation 22:12 which though it will not be sooner than the time appointed, yet will be as soon as that time is come, and sooner than is generally expected by men. The Ethiopic

version adds, "as a thief," as in Revelation 16:15 and because the second coming of Christ is an affair of the utmost moment, and will be attended with events of the greatest consequence and importance, in which the visions of this book issue, a "behold" is prefixed to it, as a note of attention and admiration:

blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book; this book is a prophecy of things to come, and therefore cannot refer to the times of Jerusalem's destruction, which some interpreters make it chiefly to concern, for then it would be a narrative of things past; the sayings of it are the things contained in it; to keep these sayings is to read them with observation, to take notice of the accomplishment of them, so far as it has taken place, to keep them in mind and memory, to meditate upon them, and through the grace of God to steer the life and conversation according to the instructions, directions, and cautions here given; and such are blessed in life, and will be in death; they will die in the Lord, share in the first resurrection, and enter through the gates into the city.

Verse 8. And I John saw these things, and heard them,.... He was both an eye and an ear witness; some things he saw, and others he heard; and to render his testimony the more authentic, he puts his name to it; and he being an apostle of Christ, and a man of great sincerity and probity, is to be believed.

And when I had heard and seen; the things related in this book, being amazed at them, and filled with joy on

account of many of them, and firmly believing the whole as coming from God:

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. This is the second time John did so, though warned of it, and rebuked for it, which shows the proneness even of good men to fall into sin again and again; and what a propensity there is in mankind to idolatry; and very likely this might be suffered, that a second reproof might be given, and repeated instructions be on record, to prevent the worshipping of angels, introduced in the first ages of Christianity.

Verse 9. Then saith he unto me,.... The angel at whose feet John fell down to worship:

see thou do it not; this he said in great haste, and with much vehemence, to hinder him from doing it, as his short way of speaking shows:

for I am thy fellow servant: of God, and of Christ, and am no more the object of worship than thyself; and both of us are, and ought to be, the worshippers of God, whose servants we are:

and of thy brethren the prophets; the apostles and ministers of the word; for prophesying and preaching are the same thing; these were the brethren of John in a spiritual sense, and by reason of their function:

and of them which keep the sayings of this book; see

Revelation 22:7 and this is said to encourage the observation of them, and is the character of private Christians, and shows the great condescension of the angel to put himself, not only upon a level with John, and the ministers of the word, but with common believers:

worship God; and him only, and that in a spiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear, in faith, and according to his revealed will; See Gill on "Re 19:10."

Verse 10. And he saith unto me,.... Not the angel, but Christ, as is manifest from Revelation 22:12. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; as the orders are, when things are intended not to be published, but concealed, at least as yet, because of the distance of the accomplishment of them, which was not the case here; see Revelation 10:4. Christ would have the things John saw and heard, written, and made public, sent in an open book, unsealed, to the churches, that they might be seen and read of all; that so the afflictions and persecutions of the people of God, both under Rome Pagan, and Rome Papal, might be known, and the saints not be offended at them when they came, but be prepared for them, to endure them patiently; and that they might be apprised of the errors and heresies that were to spring up, and of the appearance and wickedness of the man of sin, and his followers, and beware of them; and that they might have some assurance of the destruction of antichrist,

and of the glorious state of the church, both in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ, and so be comforted in the midst of their tribulations, and rejoice in the faith and hope of these things. We may learn from hence, that the Scriptures in general are not to be locked up, and concealed from the common people, but lie open, and are to be read by all; and in particular, that this book is not so dark and obscure as it is thought to be:

for the time is at hand; when the things in this book shall begin to be fulfilled; see Revelation 1:1.

Verse 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still,.... These words are not to be considered as ironical expressions, such as in Ecclesiastes 11:9 much less as an allowance to do injustice and commit filthy actions; nor even as deterring persons from these things, by tacitly suggesting, that should they continue unjust and filthy, they would be severely punished; nor as an anticipation of an objection that might be made against the publication of this book, and the sayings of it, taken from the ill use that some men might make of it, who might be provoked to injure and persecute the saints more and more, or indulge a filthy conversation; but as a prophecy of what would be at the close of time, at the second coming of Christ. The imperative is put for the future, as is usual in the Hebrew language, in which it is said, let such and such things be, when the sense is, that they shall be; see Ezekiel 3:27 Zechariah 11:9 and so the meaning of this expression is, he that is now found without a righteousness, and full of all

unrighteousness, and acts unrighteously, will continue so; there will be no change made in him, no regeneration, renovation, repentance, or reformation; he will remain the same wicked man he ever was; or he that hurts, or does injury to his fellow creatures, will still do mischief; at least he will have the same inclination, though not the opportunity and power, but will attempt it, of which there will be an instance in the wicked dead, when raised; see Revelation 20:8.

And he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: or he shall be filthy still: all mankind are originally, naturally, and universally filthy, or defiled with sin. Some are cleansed from it by the blood of Christ, others are not; and these will continue polluted, nor will the fire of hell fetch out the filthiness of their hearts and nature: or the words may be rendered, "he that defileth, let him defile still"; though he will not be able to defile the temple of God, or corrupt the good communications of the saints, yet he will continue to defile himself; the same evil thoughts, &c. will proceed out of him as ever, which defile the man.

And he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; a truly righteous man is one that is righteous, not by his own righteousness, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; he is one, who by faith looks to Christ for righteousness, and receives it from him, and, in consequence of it, lives soberly, righteously, and godly, and such will continue righteous; not that they will be made more righteous, though they may have a clearer view of their justification, for the sentence of it will be

afresh pronounced upon them; but the meaning is, they will ever remain in a justified state, and never enter into condemnation, their righteousness being an everlasting one. The Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, Syriac and Arabic versions, read, "and the righteous man, let him do righteousness still"; as he will do, for such will ever be before the throne of God, and serve him in his temple day and night, Revelation 7:15. And he that is holy, let him be holy still. They are holy who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and none but such will be admitted into the pure state of things upon Christ's second coming; and such will then be perfectly holy, and without sin, and shall continue so: hence we may learn, that justification and sanctification are two distinct things, and that both are durable. With these sayings may be compared some expressions of the Jewish doctors {h}, as the sense of Leviticus 11:43 "if a man defiles himself a little, they defile him much; the gloss on it is, they let, or suffer him to be more defiled; if below, they defile him above; if in this world, they defile him in the world to come; if a man sanctifies himself a little, they sanctify him much; if below, they sanctify him above; if in this world, they sanctify him in the world to come."

{h} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 1.

Verse 12. And, behold, I come quickly,..... This is repeated, to confirm the truth of Christ's second coming, and the speediness of it, and to point at the time when the above shall be, and to add what follows.

And my reward is with me: which words are taken out of Isaiah 40:10 and which being compared together, furnish out a clear proof of Christ being the true Jehovah, the eternal God. There is a reward of debt, or a due reward, a reward of punishment, which is the just recompense of reward, which, shall be righteously given to wicked men for their sin, Hebrews 2:2 and there is a reward of grace, which is also called the recompense of reward, the reward of the inheritance, which is no other than the gift of eternal life, which God of his free grace bestows upon his people, Hebrews 11:26 and both these are with Christ; they are in his hands, he has authority from God, as Mediator, to inflict vengeance on the wicked, and to give eternal life to his people; both which he will do, for this is with him:

to give every man according as his work shall be; if his work is evil, and he is an unjust and filthy man, and the course of his conversation has been vicious, the reward of debt, or just punishment, will be rendered to him; but if his work is the fruit of grace, and he has had his conversation in the world by the grace of God, and he is a righteous person, justified by the righteousness of Christ, and a holy, good man, sanctified by the Spirit of God, the reward of grace, the crown of righteousness, will be given to him.

Verse 13. I am Alpha and Omega,.... See Gill on "Re 1:8." These characters are all put together here, which are before used in Revelation 1:8 and are very pertinently mentioned in this place, when all promises and prophecies, relating to the glorious kingdom of

Christ, were just finishing, and that itself was ready to appear, in which Christ alone should be exalted, the mystery of God would be completed, and time itself be no more. The Ethiopic version adds, "the beginning and end of days," or time. A testimony this, of the deity, eternity, infinity, and perfection of Christ.

Verse 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments,.... Either the commandments of God, Revelation 12:17 the precepts of the moral law, which are the whole duty of man; which are done either legally in order to obtain life, and then they must be perfectly done, which no man can do; hence none live, and are justified by the deeds of it, and consequently are not blessed, but cursed; or evangelically, when they are done in the strength of Christ, from love to God, in the exercise of faith upon him, with a view to his glory, and without dependence on them, acknowledging the imperfection of them, and looking unto Jesus for righteousness and life, in whom such find both, and so are blessed persons: or else the commandments of Jesus are intended, who is speaking in the context, Revelation 22:12 and is speaking of himself, and his, as the angel does in Revelation 22:6 Christ's commandments are his new commandment of love, and the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper; which are to be observed in the same evangelical manner as the commandments of God, and to be kept exactly as they are delivered, without any alteration, addition, or diminution; and they are to be attended to immediately, and without delay; and such as regard them in a right way and manner are blessed; they have much pleasure

and delight in the observance of them; these commandments are not grievous, especially when they have the presence of Christ, the discoveries of his love, and are under the gracious influences of his Spirit: or it may be rather the commandments in this book are designed, for it may be rendered, "that do its commandments"; keep the sayings of this book, as in Revelation 22:7 such as relate to the worship of God, and forbid the worship of the beast, which caution against idolatry, and exhort to come out of Babylon, and direct to follow the Lamb, and charge not to add or take from anything written in this prophecy; and such persons as keep the words of it are pronounced blessed, Revelation 1:3. The Alexandrian copy reads, "that wash their garments"; and so the Ethiopic version, and also the Vulgate Latin, which adds, "in the blood of the Lamb," agreeably to Revelation 7:13 and such whose persons and garments are washed in the blood of Christ are blessed indeed; they are justified by it, pardoned through it, and both they and their services are accepted on account of it. The instances of their happiness follow,

that they may have right to the tree of life; or "power over the tree of life"; that is, Christ, not of government over him, but of enjoyment of him; a liberty of eating of the fruit of this tree, having interest in it, and so a right to partake of it; which right, or liberty, is not obtained by obedience to the commands of God, or Christ, or of this book, for this is what is due to God, and obligatory on men; and which, when done, is but their duty, and can merit nothing; though a cheerful and evangelical

obedience to the divine will makes such appear to have a right to such a privilege, as the disciples of Christ are not made so, but appear to be such by bringing forth fruit, John 15:8 but to have interest in Christ, the tree of life, and a right, power, and liberty to eat thereof, is a free grace gift, Revelation 2:7 and happy are those who enjoy such a privilege! Proverbs 3:18.

And may enter in through the gates into the city: the Ethiopic version reads, "into this holy city": and which intends not entrance into a particular church of Christ, the way into which is faith in Christ, and a profession of it, and submission to the ordinance of baptism; nor entrance into heaven, which, as a Gospel church, is often called a city, and into which none shall enter, but such who are justified by the righteousness of Christ, and are regenerated by his Spirit, the gates of it are Christ and his grace; but the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is meant, and entrance into that, which is so largely described in the preceding chapter, and particularly its gates; and they must be happy persons, indeed, who enter there; and their right to it is from, and lies in Christ, his blood, righteousness, and grace, under a sense of which they yield a ready obedience to his will, which makes their right to appear. Frequent mention is made of the gates of this city in the book of Zohar; and, says R. Isaac {i}, "when the soul yrevb onkl hkwx, "is fit" (or worthy, or has a right) "to enter through the gates of Jerusalem" that is above, Michael the great prince goes with it, who anticipates for it the peace of the ministering angels, wondering at him, and inquiring concerning it, saying, "who is this that comes

out of the wilderness," &c. Song of Solomon 3:6."

{i} Medrash Haneelam in Zohar in Gen. fol. 77. 1.

Verse 15. For without are dogs,.... That is, without the holy city are such persons who are comparable to dogs for their filthiness, impudence, and voraciousness, as are persecutors, heretics, and apostates, Matthew 7:6. Some think Sodomites are intended, as in Deuteronomy 23:18. So Abarbinel and others interpret the law; and who abound in the Roman jurisdiction, called therefore Sodom, Revelation 11:8 and indeed all wicked men, who will be cast out into outer darkness, may be signified hereby. The Jews say {k}, "when a man dies, if he be worthy (or righteous) he descends in the likeness of a lion to receive "his" soul, but if not, in the likeness of "a dog," concerning which David says, Psalm 22:20."

And sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters; characters of the antichristian party, who will have no place in this city, or glorious kingdom of Christ; See Gill on "Re 21:8."

And whosoever loveth and maketh a lie; who loves both to invent and tell lies, and loves to hear them told by others; meaning more especially the doctrinal lies of antichrist, which are spoken in hypocrisy by him, and his followers are given up to believe.

{k} Raya Mchimna in Zohar in Numb. fol. 95. 2.

Verse 16. I Jesus have sent mine angel,.... As John, the

writer of this book, sets down his own name, who was an eye and ear witness of the things contained in it, that they might be more surely believed, Revelation 22:8 so Christ, the author of it, puts his name Jesus to it, to engage the greater attention to hear and read, and keep the words of it, as well as to make it plain and manifest, who is the person speaking of his coming, Revelation 22:7 and who that has any value for Jesus the Saviour, but will give credit, and pay a regard to this revelation of his, which he sent by his angel, one of his ministering spirits, made by him, and under his command, he being the Creator, Lord, and head of angels: this expresses the dignity of his person, and is no inconsiderable proof of his deity: and this was done, in order

to testify, to bear witness to the truth of the things contained in it; to signify and show them, to set them forth in emblems and visions:

unto you these things in the churches; to the servants of the Lord, Revelation 22:6 to John, and by him to others, to the pastors of the seven churches, who were epi, "over" the churches, as it may be rendered, and to the members of the churches, to all that were in them; for the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read en, "in"; the Syriac version renders it, Mdq, "before the churches." What John saw he wrote in a book, and sent it to these churches, Revelation 1:11. The words may be rendered, "concerning the churches"; and then the sense is, that the angel was sent to show to John, and by him to others, even to all the saints in

all ages, the things relating to the church of Christ, in the several periods of time, represented in succession by the seven churches of Asia. Christ gives a further account of himself, for the greater confirmation of the faith of his people, in the certain accomplishment of the things herein written, by saying,

I am the root and the offspring of David. The former of these is mentioned in the note, See Gill on "Re 5:5"; and the meaning of it is, either that Christ, as God, is David's Lord and head, from whom he had his being, both in a temporal and spiritual sense, and by whom he was supported and sustained; or that, as man, he sprung from the root of David, or descended from him; and so it falls in with the latter, which may be explanative of it, "the offspring of David"; that is, the son of David, according to the flesh, a frequent name of the Messiah; See Gill on "Mt 1:1." God promised that the Messiah should be of the seed of David, and according to his promise he raised up unto Israel of his seed, a Saviour Jesus, the same person here speaking, Acts 13:23 who adds,

and the bright and morning star; Christ is compared to a "star," as in Numbers 24:17 for its light, the light of nature, and of grace, and of the new Jerusalem state being from him; and for its glory, his glory being the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and he having a glory, as Mediator, which his saints will ever behold, and be delighted with; and for its influence, all the blessings of grace, life, and righteousness, being from him; and to a "bright" star, because he is the brightness of his

Father's glory, and so splendid, shining, and illustrious, that he is light itself, and in him is no darkness at all; and to a bright "morning" star, which shows the night is going off and the day is coming on, and is the phosphorus, or bringer of light; as Christ by his first coming, who was then the dayspring from on high, put an end to the night of Jewish darkness, and sprung the great Gospel day, so often spoken of by the prophets, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and showed the way to eternal life by himself; so by his second coming, to which this character refers, he will put an end to the night of antichristian darkness, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; so that there shall be no more night, and shall make an everlasting day, and bring such light into the holy city, that it shall need no candle, nor light of the sun or moon. The dawn of light at the Reformation was a presage of this, Revelation 2:28 called there the morning star. With great propriety and pertinence are these titles here assumed by Christ, as "the root and offspring of David," or David's son, when he was about to sit on the throne of his father David, and possess his kingdom in the most visible and glorious manner; and "the bright and morning star," when he was going to usher in such light into the new Jerusalem, as would make all other light unnecessary. Aijeleth Shahaar, in the title of Psalm 22:1 which is a psalm that belongs to the Messiah, is, by some Jewish writers {1}, interpreted, rqwbnh bkwk, "the morning star," the title of Christ here.

{1} Apud Kimchi in loc.

Verse 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, come,....
Hearing Christ say that he should come quickly,
Revelation 22:7 the Spirit and the bride express an earnest wish, and a most affectionate desire after his coming: by "the Spirit" may be meant the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people, who not only convinces them of, and acquaints with the coming of Christ to judgment, and gives them reason to expect it, but fills their souls with the love of his appearance, so that they look and long for it, and hasten in the breathings of their souls after it: and this in like manner he may be said to wish for, and desire it in them, as he is said to cry "Abba," Father, in them, Galatians 4:6 and to make intercession for them, Romans 8:26. Hence, some interpreters, by the spirit, understand such as have the Spirit, and are spiritual men; either have spiritual gifts, the gift of prophecy, as John, who in Revelation 22:20 expresses an ardent desire that Christ would come quickly; or regenerate men in common, who are born of the Spirit, and bear his name, John 3:5 and so by an hendyadis, "the Spirit and the bride" signify one and the same; namely, the spiritual bride of Christ, who is sanctified by the Spirit of God; even all the elect of God, whom Christ loved from all eternity, and who are espoused to him as a chaste virgin; the new Jerusalem, who is as a bride adorned for her husband, and is the bride, the Lamb's wife: these wait for the bridegroom's coming, and most earnestly desire it, as there is good reason for them so to do, since his appearing in itself will be a glorious one, being in his own glory, and his Father's, and the holy angels; and seeing then will be the solemnization of the marriage day between Christ and his church; it will be

the saints' redemption day; they will then possess full salvation in soul and body; complete grace will be given to them, and glory will be revealed in them, and they shall be for ever with the Lord.

And let him that heareth; what the Spirit and the bride say; or the words of this prophecy; or that has spiritual ears given him, and he hears so as to understand spiritual things, the kingdom of Christ, and the glories of it, let him join the Spirit and bride, and

say, come likewise; or express his wishes and desires in the same earnest and affectionate manner, that Christ would hasten his second coming:

and let him that is athirst come. These seem to be the words of Christ inviting such who thirst after him, his grace and righteousness, after more knowledge of him, and communion with him, to come unto him, by faith, and partake thereof, John 7:37 or who thirst after his second coming, and the glories and delights of the new Jerusalem state, to come into it, and eat of the tree of life, and drink of the river of water of life in it; for the character seems to design such, to speak in the language of the Jews, who use like phrases with this, who hunger, Myyx Mym twtvl Myamuw, "and thirst to drink living water" {m}, as appears by what follows:

and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. The water of life designs the free favour and love of God, and the communications and displays of it in the new Jerusalem state, even the comfort, refreshment,

and glories of that state: to "take" it is to enjoy it, to partake of it, being led unto it, and that being given to them by Christ the Lamb in the midst of the throne, Revelation 7:17 and which is had "freely," without money, and without price, as in Isaiah 55:1 which seems to be referred to; for the happiness of this state, as well as eternal life, is the free gift of God through Christ; and the persons encouraged to partake of it are "whosoever will"; that is, whoever has a will to divine and spiritual things, wrought in him by God, for no man has such a will of himself, Philippians 2:13 though this does not so much regard the character of the person that may take of the water of life, as the free manner in which he may take it: so the Jews are wont to express themselves, when they would signify the liberty that might be used, or the free way in which anything might be taken, particularly when speaking of the law, and the things of it, *lwjyw aby lwjyl huwrx lk*, "whosoever has a mind to take, let him come and take," as it is said, Isaiah 55:1 "ho, everyone that thirsteth," &c. {n} that is, he is free to take, he is welcome to it; which passage referred to, is thus paraphrased by the Targumist, "ho, *ybud lk*, "whosoever "will" learn, let him come and learn, &c.

{m} Raziél, fol. 31. 2. {n} Abot R. Nathan, c. 4l. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 4. & 82. 4. Yalkut Simeoni, par. 2. fol. 54. 3. & 100. 2.

Verse 18. For I testify to every man,.... These are not the words of a scribe, who having wrote out a copy of this book, added the following adjuration to it, to deter

persons from adding to it, or diminishing it; for the book is not yet finished, and both Christ and John speak after this; and to insert such a passage into the text would be a bold and daring action; nor are they even the words of John, the inspired writer of it, but of the Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, as appears from Revelation 22:16 who in a most solemn manner declares to every man, high or low, rich or poor, of whatsoever character, or however dignified, either in a civil or ecclesiastic way,

that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book read or explained,

if any man shall add unto these things. To "add" to the things contained in this book, is not to deliver, or write an exposition of it, in a modest manner, with a sincere view to give light into it, agreeably to the analogy of faith; for to expound Scripture, or to preach from it, consistent with it, is not to add unto it, but to give the sense of it; but then may it be said to be added unto, and so this book, when it is wrested and perverted, and a false gloss is put upon it, as the Pharisees did upon the law; and when unwritten traditions are made to be equal to it, or above it, as the same persons made the traditions of the elders, whereby they transgressed the law, and made the word of God of none effect, and so broke through the precept given, Deuteronomy 4:2 as do the Papists in like manner; and when men pretend to visions and revelations, and make them the rule of faith and practice, and to confirm things that are neither in this book, nor in any other part of the word of God; and when men interpolate it, and set up human fictitious

writings upon equal authority with it; which shows the authenticity of this book, and of all the whole Scripture, and the perfection of it, whose canon is closed with it: the punishment of such a crime follows,

God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; the things threatened to the antichristian party, Revelation 2:22 the seven last plagues in which the wrath of God is filled up, which will be inflicted on the same, Revelation 16:1, the lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast, the false prophet, the devil, and all wicked men will be cast, Revelation 19:20 see Proverbs 30:5.

Verse 19. And if any man shall take away from the prophecy of this book,.... As he may be said to do, who denies the authority of this book, which has been done by some, and which the Holy Ghost foresaw; or takes it away from, or denies the reading of it to the people, as the Papists do with respect to the whole Scripture; and who wilfully pervert the sense of it, and will not have the things in it, relating to antichrist, to belong to him.

God shall take away his part out of the book of life; by which is meant eternal election, which is the meaning of the phrase throughout this book, in which whoever are written shall certainly be saved. The worshippers of the beast, or the antichristian party, who are chiefly regarded here, are not written in it, Revelation 13:8 wherefore taking away the part of such, is only taking away that which they seemed to have; see Luke 8:18 and the sense is, that such shall be cast into the lake of

fire, which is the second death, and will be the portion of all that are not written in the book of life, Revelation 20:15. The Alexandrian copy, one of Stephens's, and the Complutensian edition, read, "the tree of life"; and so do the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; the sense is the same; see John 15:2 and out of the holy city; the new Jerusalem, before described, a part in which is a right to enter into it through the gates, and possess the glories of it: what is mentioned here is only a seeming one, which wicked men may flatter themselves with; and the meaning is, that such shall never enter into it, and enjoy the happiness of it, but shall ever be without, Revelation 21:27

and from the things which are written in this book; the blessings promised to the overcomers in Revelation 2:7 which such as detract from this book shall have no share in. The Alexandrian copy, with some others, and the Syriac version, leave out the copulative "and," and read "which are written," &c. connecting them with the book of life, and holy city, which are written, and spoken of, in this book. The Ethiopic version connects the words with the holy city, only reading them, "which is written," &c. The Jews say of their Talmud, that nothing is to be added to it, or diminished from it {o}.

{o} Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 34. 1.

Verse 20. He which testifieth these things,.... Not the angel, Revelation 22:16 nor John, who sometimes used this way of speaking, John 21:24 but Christ, as appears from what follows; for he

saith, surely I come quickly; who not only asserts the speediness of his coming, as in Revelation 22:7 but expresses the certainty of it, so that it ought not to be doubted of by any, especially by his own people; though it may seem to be deferred, and, upon that account, be derided by ungodly men; and Christ may have some respect, in this strong repetition of it, to the certainty of the punishment that will then be inflicted upon such who add to, or diminish from this book; for he himself will certainly come in person, and execute the vengeance threatened. John next puts his

Amen to it, signifying his assent unto it, declaring his faith in it, and expressing his earnest desire after it, and wish for it: and in words at length adds,

even so come, Lord Jesus; quickly, speedily as thou hast said, and in all thy glory; set up thy kingdom, let that come, introduce thy people into it, and destroy thine enemies; this he said as one that loved the appearance of Christ, longed for it, hastened to it, and was impatient at the delay of it.

Verse 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. That is, let a sense of the love of Christ, shown in all his regards to his church and people, which is always the same in itself, though the saints have not always the same perception of it, abide upon you: may you see your interest in the redeeming grace of Christ, in all its branches, and in his justifying, pardoning, sanctifying, and persevering grace; let the fulness of

grace in Christ be the object of your trust and confidence; may you have a supply from it to enable you to overcome every temptation, to exercise every grace, and discharge every duty. This shows this book was written in the form of an epistle, and sent to the seven churches of Asia, Revelation 1:11 and through them to the churches in all ages. It begins with a salutation of them, Revelation 1:4 and ends with one commonly used by the Apostle Paul in all his epistles, 2 Thessalonians 3:17. The Arabic version, instead of "you," reads "us"; and the Complutensian edition and the Syriac version read, "with all the saints."