**THE HOLY CITY**

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      In Science and Health we read that "the one important interpretation of Scripture is the spiritual" (p. 320), and the illumination of the Scriptures which results from the spiritual interpretation of even one word is of sufficient importance to repay us for hours of careful study, and the hidden treasures thus revealed are found to be of incalculable value to the earnest seeker after righteousness. Throughout the Bible there are many passages in which it is plain that the word city is used in a spiritual rather than a material sense,—such texts as, "He [God] hath prepared for them a city;" "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come;" "I John saw the holy city, . . . that great city, . . . descending out of heaven from God;" and, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." These texts cannot be properly understood until we apply to the word city its spiritual meaning.

On pages 572 to 577 of Science and Health. Mrs. Eddy has given a very clear explanation of the "holy city," showing us that its true significance is "spiritual consciousness,"—a consciousness possible here and now, and coming to us from the divine builder and maker. With this interpretation the passages quoted are not only very beautiful, but entirely reasonable, and Abraham's quest is seen to be such a practical one as fully to justify the great sacrifices involved in the search. "For he looked for a city [spiritual consciousness] which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." He looked for a pure, abiding, and peaceful state of being such as is created and preserved only by the divine Mind, and the assurance is that God "hath prepared for them [for such seekers] a city [spiritual consciousness]."

In the light of this spiritual interpretation, the description of the holy city given by John in Revelation glows with the beauty of inspiration, which is both purifying and healing. "He . . . shewed me that great city [spiritual consciousness], the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. . . . And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. . . . And there shall in no wise enter into it [this spiritual consciousness] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." John further describes this "holy city" as having twelve gates, and "every several gate was of one pearl." Since the pearl is a symbol of purity, and Science and Health (p. 241) tells us that "the corner-stone of all spiritual building is purity," how significant is John's later statement: "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates [purity] into the city [spiritual consciousness]."

With this interpretation of city in mind, how appropriate is the hymn, "I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger," in the Christian Science Hymnal, and which closes with the words,—

There's the city to which I journey;  
My Redeemer, my Redeemer, is its light!  
There is no sorrow, nor any sighing,  
Nor any tears there, nor any dying.

Neither should we "tarry" in our journey, for just in proportion as we approach this "city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," shall we find it to be indeed a "city of refuge" from all the ills of human belief, a "quiet habitation" wherein "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." "Violence shall no more be heard . . . wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. . . . and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."