

# Revelation's Restoration of the Garden of Eden

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## Abstract

The *Revelation of St. John*, sometimes called the *Book of Revelation* or the *Apocalypse*, is the last book of the Bible. It has been a mystery ever since it first appeared about 2000 years ago, because of its obscure and extravagant visions and symbols. Chapter 22 of *Revelation*, which is its final chapter, contains images from *Genesis*, which is the first book of the Bible. For example, just as Genesis 2:10 says, “a river went out of Eden to water the garden,” Revelation 22:1 depicts “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal.” Given that *Genesis* portrays the ancient loss of the Garden of Eden, commentators often interpret chapter 22 of *Revelation* as predicting the restoration of the Garden of Eden at some indefinite time yet to come. In contrast, this article uses an allegorical approach that takes every symbol in chapter 22 as representing an aspect of someone on the spiritual journey. For example, the pure river is seen as signifying the love of God. Consequently, this article construes chapter 22 as portraying how an individual living today can experience the glorious restoration of the Garden of Eden.

## Approaches of Interpretation

Ed Hindson, author of *The Book of Revelation: Unlocking the Future*, summarizes the four main approaches that have been used to interpret *Revelation*:

- The *futurist* view holds that prophetic events will be fulfilled in the future at the time of the end. Christ is viewed as coming in the future to establish His kingdom.
- The *preterist* view holds that prophetic events were actually fulfilled at the time they were written and are now in the past. Christ is viewed as already having come to destroy Jerusalem (A.D. 70) and establish His kingdom.

- The *historicist* view holds that prophetic events have been continually fulfilled throughout church history. Some may still come to pass in the future. Christ is viewed as continually coming.

- The *idealist* view holds that prophetic events have no specific fulfillment in the past or the future but are being fulfilled in the present experience of the individual. Christ is viewed as coming within the individual's own experience.<sup>1</sup>

Which of these four approaches is the most popular? Anthony Garland reports, “Futurism was undeniably the system of interpretation held by the majority in the early church.”<sup>2</sup> For example, Saint Jerome, writing around 390 A. D., refers to *Revelation* as “an Apocalypse containing boundless mysteries of the future.”<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the futurist view is the most popular approach in today's church. For example, James Harman observes, “Today, the most popular approach to Revelation is to view the prophecies as future events at the end of the age,”<sup>4</sup> and Steve Gregg similarly says,

The *futurist* approach is held by the majority of the most popular contemporary evangelical writers and Bible teachers. It has so dominated the Christian media, in fact, that many Christians and virtually all non-Christians are unaware even of the existence of other approaches.<sup>5</sup>

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## About the Author

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This article focuses on the first five verses of chapter 22 in *Revelation*, denoted as Revelation 22:1-5. Robert Mounce, as part of *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, provides the following futurist interpretation of these five verses:

John has been using the imagery of a magnificent city to describe the people of God in the glorious and eternal age to come. While the first five verses of chapter 22 continue that description, they also portray the eternal state as Eden restored, thus “book-ending” the Christian Bible. In Genesis we were introduced to the tree of life planted in the middle of the garden (Genesis 2:9). To eat of its fruit was to live forever (Genesis 3:22); as a consequence of Adam’s sin, therefore, the first couple were banished from the garden to work the ground cursed with thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:17-18). Now in Revelation we see redeemed humanity back in the garden, able to eat the bountiful fruit of the tree of life (22:1-2). The curse has been removed (cf. 22:3 with Genesis 3:14-24), and God’s people are again privileged to “see his face” (cf. 22:4 with Genesis 3:8) and serve him. No greater good or more joyous truth could be imagined than eternal fellowship with God and the Lamb! Truly, the unimaginable blessings of Eden have been restored.<sup>6</sup>

Accordingly, the futurist approach of interpreting Revelation 22:1-5 yields this prediction: The Garden of Eden will be restored during a posited new age that has not yet come. This prediction is so widely favored that several Bible versions assign to these five verses an explicit title that embodies it: “Eden Restored” in the New International Version; and “Paradise Restored” in the Lexham English Bible and the Evangelical Heritage Version.

### **Allegorical Method of Interpretation**

**H**elena Blavatsky (1831 – 1891), a founder of the Theosophical Society, makes a key distinction: “Every ancient religious, or rather philosophical, cult consisted of an esoteric or secret teaching, and an exoteric (outward

public) worship.”<sup>7</sup> Blavatsky also says, “All esoteric truths were given out to the public by the Initiates of the temples *under the guise of allegories.*”<sup>8</sup> James Pryse (1859 – 1942), a theosophist and colleague of Blavatsky, says that *Revelation* is an esoteric doctrine of early Christianity given out under the guise of allegories:

Incomprehensible as the book may seem to the exoteric scholar, however great his intellectual attainments, keen his mental acumen, and vast his store of erudition, to the mere tyro in the sacred science the general meaning of the *Apocalypse* is perfectly clear. It is unintelligible to the conventional scholar simply because its subject-matter, veiled in symbolical language, relates to the Mysteries of the early Christian Society, the esoteric teachings which it was not lawful to reveal.<sup>9</sup>

If *Revelation* were an esoteric teaching given out under the guise of allegories, then deciphering the allegories would reveal the hidden teaching. Roy Zuck, in *Basic Bible Interpretation*, describes the interpretative method of allegorizing scripture:

Allegorizing is searching for a hidden or secret meaning underlying but remote from and unrelated in reality to the more obvious meaning of a text. In other words the literal reading is a sort of code, which needs to be deciphered to determine the more significant and hidden meaning. In this approach the literal is superficial, the allegorical is the true meaning.<sup>10</sup>

Several commentators provide hints regarding the allegorical meaning of *Revelation*:

Blavatsky states: “The fact is ... the whole *Revelation*, is simply an allegorical narrative of the Mysteries and initiation therein of a candidate, who is John himself.”<sup>11</sup>

Edgar Cayce (1877 – 1945), a psychic noted for answering questions while in a trance, characterizes *Revelation* in this way: “For the visions, the experiences, the names, the churches, the places, the

dragons, the cities, all are but emblems of those forces that may war within the individual in its journey through the material, or from the entering into the material manifestation to the entering into the glory, or the awakening in the spirit.”<sup>12</sup>

Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952), founder of the Self-Realization Fellowship, writes: “Certainly in the Revelation of St. John we are led by means of metaphor into the profound insights of the yoga science in which Jesus initiated his advanced disciple John, and others, whose consciousness thereby ascended to the exalted Self-realized state of the kingdom of God within.”<sup>13</sup>

Let us convert the foregoing hints into corresponding principles of interpretation. First, according to Blavatsky’s quotation, *Revelation* portrays the experiences of a typical individual on the spiritual journey. Second, according to Cayce’s quotation, every object in *Revelation* symbolizes an aspect of such an individual. Third, according to Yogananda’s quotation, *Revelation* contains metaphors that signify the insights of yoga science, which is the science behind the yoga practices that originated in ancient India.

This article, which takes what was previously called the “idealist view,” attempts to decipher the allegorical meaning of Revelation 22:1-5 by adhering to the three foregoing principles of interpretation and using clues found principally in three sources:

*Earlier Sacred Scriptures.* Gerhard Krodel, a Bible scholar, reports that the 404 verses of *Revelation* allude 518 times to earlier sacred scriptures.<sup>14</sup> These earlier scriptures include books of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Pseudepigrapha. The latter books are biblical in character but are not considered canonical.

*Alice Bailey* (1880 – 1949), a member of the Theosophical Society before leaving it to pursue her own activities, shows high regard for *Revelation*: “In the *New Testament*, John, the beloved disciple, was privileged to gain a cosmic picture and a

true prophetic vision which he embodied in the Apocalypse.”<sup>15</sup>

*A Course in Miracles (ACIM)*, a modern system of spiritual psychology, describes the meaning of *Revelation* in this way: “The first step toward freedom involves a sorting out of the false from the true. This is a process of separation in the constructive sense, and reflects the true meaning of the Apocalypse. Everyone will ultimately look upon his own creations and choose to preserve only what is good, just as God Himself looked upon what He had created and knew that it was good.”<sup>16</sup>

## Revelation 22:1-5

The biblical quotations in this article come from the King James Version (KJV) unless explicitly stated otherwise.<sup>17</sup> Revelation 22:1-5 is as follows:

1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.
3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:
4. And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.
5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

***1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.***

Each verse is considered separately and is repeated in bold print. In verse 1, the pronoun *he* designates a teacher who is providing instruction. Revelation 17:1 describes an earlier appearance of this teacher: “And there came one

of the seven angels which had the seven vials.” In Theology, an angel signifies “a typically benevolent celestial being,”<sup>18</sup> and “a divine messenger from God.”<sup>19</sup> Here, the word *celestial* indicates that an angel resides in a higher realm than that of a human being, and the word *messenger* indicates the role of an intercessor. A vial of oil was used to anoint both Saul (1 Samuel 10:1) and Jehu (2 Kings 9:1-3) as kings, so a vial is a symbol of initiation. Thus, the teacher in verse 1 appears to be an intercessor from a higher realm with the power to initiate human beings into that realm.

Theosophy promulgates the concept of enlightened beings called “Masters,” who are also known as Mahatmas or Elder Brothers of Humanity.<sup>20</sup> Bailey speaks of “The Guru or Master who leads a pupil up to the door of initiation and who watches over him in all the initial and subsequent tests and processes,”<sup>21</sup> so such a Master is an intercessor with the power of initiation. Accordingly, the pronoun *he* in verse 1 is taken as designating a Master.

In this article, the term *disciple* is used to denote someone on the spiritual journey, without regard to his or her status or attainment; such usage is consistent with Bailey’s statement, “for all are disciples from the humblest aspirant up to, and beyond, the Christ Himself.”<sup>22</sup> The first principle of interpretation, which was described earlier, regards *Revelation* as portraying the experiences of a typical disciple, so the pronoun *me* in verse 1 denotes such a person. Consequently, the first phrase, “And he shewed me,” has this meaning: The Master shows the disciple how to do something.

The next part of the verse mentions “a pure river,” which seems to be based on Genesis 2:10: “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden.” According to the second principle of interpretation, which was also described earlier, the pure river symbolizes an aspect of the disciple. St. John of the Cross (1542 – 1591), a Spanish mystic, poet, and Doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, considers the pure river to be “the inmost love of God.”<sup>23</sup> John Gill (1697 – 1771), the first major Baptist theological writer, provides a similar meaning: “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.”<sup>24</sup> Consequently, let us take the pure river to be the river of God’s love.

Why is this river said to consist of “water of life”? Gill gives this answer:

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.<sup>25</sup>

Why is this river said to be “clear as crystal”? Gill gives this answer:

it may be said to be pure and clear as crystal, it being free from all hypocrisy and dissimulation, being real, hearty, and sincere.<sup>26</sup>

At this point, it is useful to make a key distinction. Blavatsky writes, “‘The Christ of esoteric science’ is the *Christos* of Spirit—an impersonal principle entirely distinct from any carnalised Christ or Jesus.”<sup>27</sup> Bailey makes the same distinction:

A clear distinction should be made between the Christ Principle as indicated above, which is a high spiritual aspect to which each member of humanity must attain, and the same term applied to a personage of exalted rank representing that Principle, whether in the historical reference to the Man of Nazareth or otherwise.<sup>28</sup>

“Jesus of Nazareth” is mentioned in Mark 14:67 and elsewhere, so “the Man of Nazareth” in the above quotation designates Jesus, who represents but differs from the Christ principle. Blavatsky also writes,

Take Paul, read the little of original that is left of him in the writings attributed to this brave, honest, sincere man, and see whether anyone can find a word therein to show that Paul meant by the word Christ anything

more than the abstract ideal of the personal divinity indwelling in man.<sup>29</sup>

For example, Paul, in Colossians 1:27, refers to the Christ principle as “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

Verse 1’s final phrase mentions the “Lamb,” but what does it signify? John 1:36 reports an onlooker’s reaction to Jesus: “And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!” In this account, the title “Lamb of God” could be intended for either Jesus or the Christ principle that he represents. Cayce mentions “the Lamb—or the mind, spiritual,”<sup>30</sup> and the Rose Cross Order says, “the ‘Lamb’ is the Universal Christ-Principle,”<sup>31</sup> so the “Lamb” in verse 1 is taken as the Christ principle.

It is useful to make another key distinction: between *invocation*, which is the act of petitioning for help or support from a higher entity; and *evocation*, which is the subsequent response of help. Bailey clarifies these two activities:

The lesser aspect is ever the invoking factor, and this constitutes an unalterable law lying behind the entire evolutionary process. It is necessarily a reciprocal process, but in time and space it might be broadly said that the lesser ever invokes the higher, and higher factors are then evoked and respond according to the measure of understanding and the dynamic tension displayed by the invoking element. This many fail to realise. You do not work at the evocative process. That word simply connotes the response of that which has been reached. The task of the lesser aspect or group is invocative, and the success of the invocative rite is called evocation.<sup>32</sup>

Verse 1’s final phrase portrays the pure river as “proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* states, “Similarly, ‘to sit upon the throne’ implied the exercise of regal power.”<sup>33</sup> For example, 1 Kings 16:11 reports: “And it came to pass, when he [Zimri] began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha.” Both God and the Lamb must be ex-

ercising regal power over the flow of the river, because they are depicted as sharing the same throne out of which the river proceeds. What are their respective roles?

Bailey mentions “the evocation of Love,”<sup>34</sup> and her Great Invocation contains the passage, “From the point of Love within the Heart of God, Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.”<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the river of love comes as an evocation from God.

John Bunyan (1628 – 1688), the author of the celebrated Christian allegory *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, clarifies the role of the Lamb:

Mark you, here is again a throne; the throne of God, ... out of which, as you read, proceeds a river, a river of water of life, clear as crystal. And the joining of the Lamb also here with God is to show that it comes, I say, from God, by the Lamb; by Christ, who as a lamb or sacrifice for sin, is the procuring cause of the running of this river; it proceeded out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.<sup>36</sup>

In Bunyan’s words, “the Lamb ... is the procuring cause of the running of this river.” John 1:29 mentions, “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Given that the river signifies God’s love, these two statements are equivalent, because procuring God’s love takes away the sense of sin. Both *procure* and *invoke* can have the same meaning, namely, “bring about,”<sup>37</sup> so the Lamb can be regarded as ruling through the invocative process. Given that God rules through the evocative process and the Lamb rules through the invocative process, verse 1’s final phrase, which portrays both God and the Lamb as sharing the same throne, signifies that both evocation and invocation control the flow of the river. In Bunyan’s words, “it comes, I say, from God, by the Lamb,” which means that the river comes as an evocation from God, but it is procured by an invocation based on the Christ principle.

Before considering the invocative process in detail, let us introduce some specialized terminology. According to Theosophy, the universe consists of seven worlds that are often called

“planes” and have the following names: 1) divine; 2) monadic; 3) spiritual; 4) buddhic, or intuitional; 5) mental; 6) emotional, or astral; and 7) physical.<sup>38</sup> These planes are arranged metaphorically in an upper and lower manner. For example, the mental, emotional, and physical planes, which are called “the world of phenomena,”<sup>39</sup> are the three lowest planes; and the spiritual through physical planes, which are called “the five planes of human evolution,”<sup>40</sup> are the five lowest planes.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 – 1882), a popular American essayist and poet, describes the general precept on which the invocative task is based: “Since everything in nature answers to a moral power, if any phenomenon remains brute and dark, it is that the corresponding faculty in the observer is not yet active.”<sup>41</sup> Bailey clarifies the same precept:

We see what we are ourselves; we become aware of that in other forms which is developed in ourselves. We fail to see aspects of life because as yet in ourselves, those aspects are undeveloped and latent. To illustrate: we fail to see the divine in our brother because as yet the divine in ourselves is uncontacted and unknown.<sup>42</sup>

Bailey makes a related statement: “Through separation he finds himself, and then—driven by the indwelling buddhic or Christ principle—transcends himself, and finds himself again in all selves.”<sup>43</sup> This statement has two important implications: first, the Christ principle exists on the buddhic plane; and second, the disciple, when driven by the indwelling Christ principle, recognizes the Christ principle in everyone, thereby illustrating Emerson’s precept. Bailey gives a related definition:

*Spiritual vision or true perception.* This type of vision opens up the world of the in-

tuitional or buddhic plane, and takes its possessor beyond the abstract levels of the mental plane.<sup>44</sup>

Recognizing the Christ principle in someone entails true perception, because the Christ principle exists on the buddhic plane. In addition,

such perception is based on Emerson’s precept, because one must have an active Christ principle before being able to recognize it in another.

Bailey, however, mentions the difficulty of achieving true perception: “Men are still so ignorant of the ‘reality which shines under the envelope which envelops it’—as the *Old Commentary* calls it—that true perception is difficult and at first well-nigh impossible.”<sup>45</sup>

Why is true perception so difficult? Bailey mentions “the release of the faculty of spiritual perception and of intuitive understanding, which involves the negation of the activity of the lower or concrete mind, of the lower personal self.”<sup>46</sup> Consequently, we can have true perception of a person only if we renounce the activities of our lower concrete mind, which include our memories and judgments of that person’s behavior.

How can true perception be invoked? Bailey describes the needed effort:

The task ... is in truth the planned and conscious effort to project the focussed thought of the spiritual man from the lower mental plane into areas of awareness which have been *sensed but not contacted*; it entails using the totality of the awareness already developed ... and (with deliberation) making it increasingly sensitive to the focussed activity of the world of the higher spiritual realities.<sup>47</sup>

She also gives a shorter description of the same effort: “This involves a consequent mov-

ing of the point of individual focus out of the world of phenomena into the world of reality.”<sup>48</sup> Paul, in Colossians 3:2, seems to describe the same effort: “Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Accordingly, through the power to choose the focus of our perception, we invoke true perception by refusing to look upon our memories and judgments of a person, so that all we seek to see is the Christ principle in that person.

Let us distinguish between *descriptive writing*, which creates images of places and people, and *instructional writing*, which teaches how to do something.<sup>49</sup> Verse 1, even though it is in the form of descriptive writing, depicts the instruction that the Master gives to a typical disciple, who represents the reader, namely, *you*. For clarity, this article presents the meaning of verse 1, as well as the meaning of the subsequent verses, in the form of instructional writing that addresses the recipient as *you*.

Consequently, the overall meaning of verse 1 is presented in this manner: *The Master shows you how to bring forth the river of God’s love, which takes away the sense of trespass and sin, and is free from hypocrisy and dissimulation. Your invocation of true perception is to shift the focus of your perception so that all you seek to see is the Christ principle in someone else. God’s evocative response is to transmit the river of love to you, which activates your Christ principle so that you can recognize it in someone else.*

Bailey provides a corroborating account:

The harmony (which the Principle of Conflict produces) causes an alignment, so that the love—streaming forth from the Heart of God—enters the hearts of men.<sup>50</sup>

The last phrase, “so that the love—streaming forth from the Heart of God—enters the hearts of men,” is God’s evocative response. What about the first phrase, “The harmony (which the Principle of Conflict produces)”?

Bailey mentions “the plane of essential harmony, the buddhic plane,”<sup>51</sup> and says, “It is the Principle of Conflict, latent in every atom of substance, which produces, first of all, conflict, then renunciation, and finally emancipation.”<sup>52</sup> Thus,

the first phrase could signify the invocation of true perception, because this invocation is increased sensitivity to buddhic harmony, which the Principle of Conflict produces through the renunciation of memories and judgments.

*ACIM* also provides a corroborating account:

Perception has a focus. It is this that gives consistency to what you see. Change but this focus, and what you behold will change accordingly. Your vision now will shift, to give support to the intent which has replaced the one you held before. Remove your focus on your brother’s sins, and you experience the peace that comes from faith in sinlessness. This faith receives its only sure support from what you see in others past their sins. For their mistakes, if focused on, are witnesses to sins in you. And you will not transcend their sight and see the sinlessness that lies beyond.

Nor do we ask for fantasies. For what we seek to look upon is really there. And as our focus goes beyond mistakes, we will behold a wholly sinless world. When seeing this is all we want to see, when this is all we seek for in the name of true perception, are the eyes of Christ inevitably ours. And the Love He feels for us becomes our own as well. This will become the only thing we see reflected in the world and in ourselves.<sup>53</sup>

The first quoted paragraph provides instruction on invoking true perception. Let us consider the elements in the second quoted paragraph: to “behold a wholly sinless world” is equivalent to recognizing the Christ principle in everyone; “when this is all we seek for in the name of true perception” is when we invoke true perception; “are the eyes of Christ inevitably ours” is equivalent to the activation of our Christ principle; “And the Love He feels for us becomes our own as well” is the evocation of the river of God’s love; and “This will become the only thing we see reflected in the world and in ourselves” shows that true perception is based on Emerson’s precept. Therefore, *ACIM* supplies detailed confirmation of the meaning given for verse 1.

**2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.**

Before considering the overall meaning of verse 2, let us study its principal symbol: “the tree of life.” What are the characteristics of this tree? Genesis 2:9 says that God acted upon it to make it grow:

And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:22 says that the tree of life bestows immortality:

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.

The tree of life also appears in extra-biblical sources. 4 Maccabees 18:16, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), associates this tree with doing God’s will: “There is a tree of life for those who do his will.” 2 Esdras 8:51–52 (NRSV) associates this tree with establishing goodness and perfecting wisdom:

<sup>51</sup> But think of your own case, and inquire concerning the glory of those who are like yourself, <sup>52</sup> because it is for you that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand.

2 Enoch 8:2-4 states that the tree of life has the form of fire:

<sup>2</sup> And I saw the trees in full flower. And their fruits were ripe and pleasant-smelling, with every food in yield and giving off profusely a pleasant fragrance. <sup>3</sup> And in the midst (of them was) the tree of life; at that place where the LORD takes a rest when he goes into paradise. And that tree is indescribable for pleasantness and fine fra-

grance, and more beautiful than any (other) created thing that exists. <sup>4</sup> And from every direction it has the appearance which is gold-looking and crimson, and with the form of fire.<sup>54</sup>

Two classic Hindu scriptures describe the tree of life as *upside down*: the *Katha Upanishad* says, “Rooted above, with branches below, is this immemorial Tree”;<sup>55</sup> and the *Bhagavad Gita* likewise says, “Rooted above, downward-branching, they say, is that immemorial tree.”<sup>56</sup> Bailey similarly says, “It is well known that the tree of life is depicted with the roots above and the flowering leaves downwards,”<sup>57</sup> and gives this explanation:

Upon the Path of Initiation, the monadic will (of which the egoic will is the reflection and the individual self-will is the distortion) is gradually transmitted ... direct to the man upon the physical plane. This produces the higher correspondence of those qualities so glibly spoken of by the well-trained but dense esotericist—transmutation and transformation. The result is the assimilation of the individual will and the egoic will into the purpose of the Monad which is the purpose—undeviating and unalterable—of the One in Whom we live and move and have our being. This is the field of the true burning, for our “God is a consuming Fire.” This is the burning bush or the burning tree of life of Biblical symbolism.<sup>58</sup>

According to the above quotation, the tree of life signifies the projection of the monadic will. This tree is upside down, because its root, which is the Monad, is on the monadic plane, which is above the five planes of human evolution, but its branches consist of the projection that extends down into the planes of human evolution.

The above quotation uses the adjective “burning” three times to characterize the monadic will, thereby emphasizing that it has “the purificatory nature of fire.”<sup>59</sup> 2 Enoch 8:2-4 similarly states that the tree of life has the form of fire. Bailey mentions “the love and wisdom aspect of the Monad.”<sup>60</sup> 2 Esdras 8:51–52 similarly associates the tree of life with establish-



ing goodness and perfecting wisdom. Bailey says, “The monad expresses the same purpose as it exists, unified in the Mind of God Himself,”<sup>61</sup> so the monadic purpose is an expression of God’s purpose. 4 Maccabees 18:16 similarly associates the tree of life with doing God’s will. Bailey refers to the Monad as “the immortal part of man,”<sup>62</sup> and Genesis 3:22 similarly says that the tree of life bestows immortality. Bailey says, “The Monad, acted upon by the Heavenly Man, intelligently forms his ring-pass-not,”<sup>63</sup> and Genesis 2:9 similarly says that God acted upon the tree of life to make it grow. Consequently, identifying the tree of life as the downward projection of the monadic will is consistent with all earlier citations of this tree.

A term in the above quotation needs to be clarified. *Ego* is the Latin word for “I,” so it refers to the “I” or self of any person. Philosophers and psychologists sometimes distinguish between different kinds of self, perhaps saying that a human being consists of both a lower and higher self, so they may use the term *ego* in varying ways, perhaps to denote the lower self, or perhaps to denote the higher self. In Theosophy, the *ego* is synonymous with the higher self, real man, soul, or what the Bible calls “the angel of his presence” (Isaiah 63:9),<sup>64</sup> so the “egoic will” in the above quotation denotes the will of the higher self.

We are ready to consider each phrase of verse 2. The first phrase is: “In the midst of the street of it.” Revelation 21:21, which is part of the preceding chapter, mentions “the street of the city,” so the pronoun “it” in the first phrase must refer to the city. According to the second principle of interpretation, “the street of the city” symbolizes an aspect of the disciple, but what could that be? The *Dictionary of Bible Imagery* gives this meaning:

As a setting in the Bible the street first of all symbolizes open communication and widespread exposure. It is the place immediately outside the privacy and insulation of the home (Genesis 19:2; Judges 19:20; Job 31:32; cf. Proverbs 22:13). To be in the street or the city square is to be instantly accessible, visually and audibly, to the

masses. It is the location for public meetings (Ezra 10:9; Nehemiah 8:1; Job 29:7), public ministries (Luke 13:26; Acts 5:15) and public occasions of honor (Esther 6:9; cf. Matthew 6:2, 5).<sup>65</sup>

Thus, “the street of the city” signifies the disciple’s communication and interaction with the public or people in general. The second phrase is: “and on either side of the river.” The pure river signifies the river of God’s love, as before, so portraying the pure river as flowing along the street of the city has this meaning: the disciple shares God’s love while communicating and interacting with people in general.

Verse 2’s third phrase is: “*was there* the tree of life.” Given that the tree grows in the midst of the street along the river and that the tree signifies the Monad’s projection of its will, the overall picture has this meaning: when the disciple shares God’s love while communicating and interacting with people in general, the Monad projects its will. In other words, verse 2’s invocation is to share God’s love with everyone encountered. *ACIM* illustrates this invocation by saying, “I bless you, brother, with the Love of God, which I would share with you.”<sup>66</sup> The corresponding evocation is the Monad’s downward projection of its will.

Bailey provides a corroborating account:

More and more people will be living as souls and therefore expressing love, and for them the nature of life and of monadic experience will constitute the normal next revelation—one that is, however, possible only to those who do attempt to live as souls, who cultivate love or the sense of non-separateness.<sup>67</sup>

In this case, the invocation is to “attempt to live as souls, who cultivate love,” and the corresponding evocation is “the nature of life and of monadic experience.”

Let us consider the remaining symbols in verse 2, starting with the number *twelve*. There were twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:28), twelve priests bearing the ark (Joshua 3:12-13), twelve administrative districts in Solomon’s government (1 Kings 4:7), twelve apostles

chosen by Jesus (Matthew 10:1), and twelve legions of angels that God could send (Matthew 26:53). Robert Johnston, in *Numbers in the Bible*, concludes:

Twelve is the numeral of manifest sovereignty. It speaks of the administration of Divine government on the earth. Because it is Divine government it is perfect government.<sup>68</sup>

What are the “twelve *manner of fruits*” that the tree of life is said to yield? The Bible sometimes uses the word *fruit* to symbolize the effect of purification. For example, Luke 3:8 states, “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance”; and Hebrews 12:11 states, “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” Accordingly, the fruits in verse 2 signify the purificatory effects yielded by the Monad’s projection of its will. Given that the number *twelve* signifies divine government on the earth, “twelve *manner of fruits*” signifies that the overall purificatory effect is the manifestation of divine government. The tree of life is also said to have “yielded her fruit every month,” which indicates that the purification occurs progressively as a series.

Bailey provides a corroborating account. Her earlier quotation, which explains the meaning of the tree of life, describes the overall purificatory effect as “the assimilation of the individual will and the egoic will into the purpose of the Monad.” Given her earlier statement that the monadic purpose is an expression of God’s purpose, the overall purificatory effect is the manifestation of divine government, because the manifested life is governed by an expression of God’s purpose.

What are “the leaves of the tree”? Our attempt to allegorize this phrase is based on both the second principle of interpretation, according to which these leaves symbolize aspects of the disciple, and the third principle of interpretation, according to which some metaphors signify the insights of yoga science.

Yoga science regards the physical body of a human being as having both dense and subtle

portions. The *dense physical body* contains the muscles, bones, and glands. The *subtle physical body* is called the etheric or vital body in Theosophy,<sup>69</sup> and *prana mayakosha*, a Sanskrit name, in yoga science.<sup>70</sup> The Sanskrit word *chakra* literally means wheel. Yoga science describes seven wheels of energy, called chakras, that belong to the etheric body and have the following locations and Sanskrit names:

1. Head centre—sahasrara chakra
2. Centre between eyebrows—ajna chakra
3. Throat centre—vishuddha chakra
4. Heart or cardiac centre—anahata chakra
5. Solar plexus centre—manipura chakra
6. Sacral or sexual centre—svadhisthana chakra
7. Centre at base of spine—muladhara chakra.<sup>71</sup>

In verse 2, the “leaves” denote these chakras, because yoga science depicts each chakra as a lotus with a varying number of petals, or leaves,<sup>72</sup> so the entire phrase, “the leaves of the tree,” depicts the Monad as projecting its will downward to act through these chakras on the physical plane. Bailey corroborates this depiction by describing the Monad’s effect on these energy centers: “In this we have the secret of the gradual vibratory quickening of the centres as the Ego first comes into control, or activity, and later (after initiation) the Monad, thus bringing about changes and increased vitality within these spheres of fire or of pure life force.”<sup>73</sup>

Verse 2’s final phrase says, “the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.” Given that “the leaves of the tree” signify the vibratory quickening of the chakras, the final phrase indicates that such quickening is for healing. Bailey corroborates this indication by relating the condition of the chakras to healing:

The response of the etheric vehicle of all forms and its capacity to appropriate, to utilize, and to transmit are dependent upon the condition of the centres, of the chakras, as they are called in the East ... It is dependent also upon the quality of the etheric ve-

hicle, upon its aliveness, and also upon the interlacing network in which the centres have their place, and which in its entirety is called ‘the web’ or the ‘golden bowl’. If this is clear of impediments and of sediment, and if its channels are not clogged then the circulating rays, energies and forces can find an easy medium and can circulate unimpeded throughout the entire body. They can then utilise those centres which are responsive to their vibrations, and can be passed on and through to forms in other or the same kingdoms in nature.<sup>74</sup>

The “golden bowl” is how Ecclesiastes 12:6 refers to the etheric body, and the “kingdoms in nature” include the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human kingdoms.<sup>75</sup> The “nations” in verse 2 are taken to be what the above quotation calls “other or the same kingdoms in nature,” because the word *nation* can be a synonym for *kingdom*.<sup>76</sup>

By using the preceding significances and the form of instructional writing, the overall meaning of verse 2 can be expressed in this way: *Your next invocation is to share God’s love with everyone whom you encounter. The Monad’s evocative response is to project its will downward, which yields a series of purifications that progressively manifest divine purpose, and which quickens the vibration of your chakras so that they can heal the human and lower kingdoms in nature.*

Verses 1 and 2, however, have a more profound meaning than what has been discussed, because they are concerned with an inner bridge denoted by the Sanskrit name *antahkarana*, for which Bailey gives this definition: “Technically, and upon the Path of Discipleship, this bridge between the personality in its three aspects and the monad and its three aspects is called the antahkarana.”<sup>77</sup> Here, “the personality in its three aspects” refers to the mental, emotional, and physical bodies. Bailey explains how the antahkarana is built:

There must be a long period of gradual approach of the two aspects of the bridge—the higher, emanating ... in response to monadic impulse, and the lower, emanating

from the personality, aided by the soul—across the chasm of the separating mind. Finally, contact between that which the Monad projects and that which the disciple is projecting is made ... The bridge is now built.<sup>78</sup>

“That which the disciple is projecting” denotes verse 1’s invocation, in which he or she projects the point of individual focus out of the world of phenomena into the world of reality. This projection goes upward, because the world of phenomena consists of the three lowest planes, and the world of reality consists of higher planes. “That which the Monad projects” denotes verse 2’s evocation, and it goes downward, because the tree of life is upside down. These two projections are instigated from the end points of the prospective bridge, move in opposite directions towards each other, and gradually merge to form the bridge. James 4:8 describes a similar process: “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.” Thus, verses 1 and 2 portray the work of building the antahkarana.

Bailey characterizes the stage of consciousness that occurs through building the antahkarana:

The stage wherein the consciousness shifts completely out of the lower personality and becomes the true spiritual consciousness, centered in the real man, the ego or soul. This brings in the consciousness of the Christ nature which is love, peace and truth. He can say now “I have reached my goal. Nothing remains to attract me in the three worlds.” Desire for happiness is satisfied.<sup>79</sup>

In the above quotation, the “Christ nature” is equivalent to what was called earlier the “Christ principle.” Paul, in Colossians 3:9–11, describes a related shift in consciousness:

<sup>9</sup> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; <sup>10</sup> And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: <sup>11</sup> Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

Here, “the old man with his deeds” seems to depict consciousness polarized in the personality; “the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” seems to depict spiritual consciousness centered in the higher self; and “Christ *is* all, and in all” seems to depict the recognition of the Christ principle in everyone. Accordingly, Colossians 3:9–11 describes the inner transformation produced by the antahkarana. By means of the first phrase, “Lie not one to another,” Paul tells the Colossians that their transformation has only been temporary and needs to be stabilized.

**3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.**

Verses 1 and 2, which portray the work of building the antahkarana, depict two processes of invocation and two processes of evocation. Bailey describes the next logical step:

*Stabilisation.* This is brought about by long patient use of the four previous processes and followed by a conscious use of the antahkarana.<sup>80</sup>

Let us note that verses 1 and 2 use the past tense, whereas verses 3, 4, and 5 use the future tense. Given that *Revelation* is an allegorical narrative, what is the meaning of this change in tense? Our explanation is that verses 3, 4, and 5 use the “future continuous tense,” which is “used when we talk about an activity that will continue over a period of time from now into the future.”<sup>81</sup> The use of this tense depicts how to carry out the step of stabilization: after applying verses 1 and 2 to transform your consciousness in the present, stabilize your transformation so that it continues from the present into the future. *ACIM* describes the same method of stabilization:

From new perception of the world there comes a future very different from the past. The future now is recognized as but extension of the present. Past mistakes can cast no shadows on it, so that fear has lost its idols and its images, and being formless, it has no effects. Death will not claim the future now, for life is now its goal, and all the

needed means are happily provided. Who can grieve or suffer when the present has been freed, extending its security and peace into a quiet future filled with joy?<sup>82</sup>

Consequently, this article analyzes the symbols in verses 3, 4, and 5 in the following manner: the nouns depict the transformation of the present, which is brought about by the two earlier verses; and the future continuous tense depicts the step of stabilization that occurs—in the words of the above quotation—“when the present has been freed, extending its security and peace into a quiet future filled with joy.”

Verse 3 consists of three independent clauses. The first clause, “And there shall be no more curse,” indicates that there had been a curse. The word *curse* can mean, “something that brings or causes great trouble or harm.”<sup>83</sup> Thus, Genesis 3:23–24 portrays God as cursing Adam in the sense of casting him out of the Garden of Eden:

<sup>23</sup> Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. <sup>24</sup> So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Joel Goldsmith (1892 – 1964), an American spiritual author and teacher, explains the allegorical meaning of this curse:

All discord, all inharmony, and all error are experienced because of a sense of separation from God. But this sense of separation from God is not your fault personally. It is the universal belief that has come down to us from the allegorical experience of Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden.<sup>84</sup>

Accordingly, the curse in Genesis 3:23–24 is an allegory that signifies a sense of separation from God. *ACIM* says that this sense of separation is the only lack that really needs correction:

A sense of separation from God is the only lack you really need correct. This sense of separation would never have arisen if you

had not distorted your perception of truth, and had thus perceived yourself as lacking. The idea of order of needs arose because, having made this fundamental error, you had already fragmented yourself into levels with different needs.<sup>85</sup>

Consequently, “there shall be no more curse” means that the disciple will not have a sense of separation from God, which in turn means that he or she will not have a sense of having lacks or needs.

The middle clause is: “but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.” As before, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” signifies the power of both invocation and evocation. Given that the pronoun “it” denotes the river of God’s love, the middle clause explains why the disciple will not feel cursed: the power of both invocation and evocation will bring forth the river of God’s love.

Verses 1 and 2 also portray the river of God’s love, so how is verse 3’s middle clause different from the previous verses? Verse 1 depicts the method of bringing forth the river of God’s love, and verse 2 depicts the invocation of sharing this river with everyone encountered. Given that verse 3’s middle clause uses the future continuous tense, it portrays the stage in which this river has become a *stable* experience.

Can God’s love remove a sense of separation from God? Paul, in Ephesians 3:19, indicates that such love can do so: “And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” The Amplified Bible clarifies this verse by explaining the meaning of being filled with the fullness of God:

[That you may really come] to know [practically, through experience for yourselves] the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge [without experience]; that you may be filled [through all your being] unto all the fullness of God [may have the richest measure of the divine Presence, and become a body wholly filled and flooded with God Himself]!<sup>86</sup>

Verse 3’s final clause is: “and his servants shall serve him.” When considered by itself, this clause does not indicate what the servants will be doing as they serve God. Nevertheless, Martin Culy observes, “From beginning to end, Revelation is a carefully crafted message with later parts continually building on earlier parts.”<sup>87</sup> Accordingly, let us presume that the meaning of the final clause builds upon the meaning of the earlier proximate parts. Given that verses 1 and 2 portray the work of building the antahkarana, that verse 2’s final phrase depicts the use of chakras for healing, and that verse 3’s middle clause denotes God’s love, our presumption is that verse 3’s final clause has this meaning: the disciple will serve God through using the antahkarana, chakras for healing, and God’s love.

At this point, it is helpful to consider Bailey’s account of radiatory healing. The first portion of her account is the disciple’s application of divine alchemy:

He must study the laws of transmutation and be a student of that divine alchemy which will result in a knowledge of how to transmute the lower force into the higher, of how to transfer his consciousness into the higher vehicles, and of how to manipulate energy currents so that his own nature is transformed.<sup>88</sup>

Accordingly, divine alchemy transfers “consciousness into the higher vehicles,” so it is equivalent to building the antahkarana, because this bridge was characterized earlier as having the same effect. The second portion of her account is the disciple’s radiation of “buddhi,” which is a synonym for “spiritual love,”<sup>89</sup> from heart chakra to heart chakra:

He will then become a channel for the light of the Ego, and for the illumination of buddhi to pour through for the saving of the race, and the lighting of those who stumble in dark places. He must demonstrate the laws of radioactivity in his own life on the physical plane. His life must begin to radiate, and to have a magnetic effect upon others. By this I mean he will begin to influence that which is imprisoned in others, for

he will reach—through his own powerful vibrations—the hidden centre in each one ... At this stage the man is recognised as one who can speak occultly “heart to heart.” He becomes a stimulator of the heart centre in his brother, and one who arouses men into activity for others.<sup>90</sup>

The foregoing account of radiatory healing satisfies our earlier presumption about verse 3’s final clause, because it involves the antahkarana, chakras, and love, so it is taken as the significance of that clause.

Based on the preceding significances, the overall meaning of verse 3 can be expressed as this instruction: *By stabilizing the transformation brought about by the two earlier verses, you will not be cursed by a sense of separation from God, because the power of both invocation and evocation will bring to you the river of God’s love, which will fill you with the fullness of God; your outward radiation of God’s love from your heart chakra will reach and stimulate the heart chakra in other people, thereby inspiring and arousing them into helpful activity.*

**4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.**

Verse 4’s initial word, “And,” indicates that this verse provides additional characteristics that the disciple will have by stabilizing his or her transformation. This verse consists of two independent clauses. The initial clause says, “And they shall see his face,” but what does that mean? Genesis 3:8 uses the expression “the face of Jehovah God” in Young’s Literal Translation:

And they hear the sound of Jehovah God walking up and down in the garden at the breeze of the day, and the man and his wife

hide themselves from the face of Jehovah God in the midst of the trees of the garden.

The same verse, however, uses the corresponding expression “the presence of the LORD God” in the KJV:

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Accordingly, seeing the face of God signifies experiencing the presence of God. Whereas Genesis 3:8 portrays Adam and Eve as hiding from the presence of God, verse 4’s first clause indicates that the disciple will experience that presence,

but what must he or she do to have such an experience?

Bailey writes: “We are learning that that Presence [of God] can be released in us only by the death of the lower nature, and this is what Christ has always proclaimed to us from His Cross.”<sup>91</sup> Here, “the death of the lower nature” is like an earlier description of using the antahkarana: “the consciousness shifts completely out of the lower personality.” Consequently, verses 1 and 2 bring the experience of the presence of God through the work of building the antahkarana, so verse 4’s step of stabilization extends that experience into the future.

Verse 4’s final clause mentions the “name” of God. According to the second principle of interpretation, God’s name signifies an aspect of the disciple, but what could it be? John McKenzie writes, “It is a widespread cultural phenomenon that the name is considered to be more than an artificial tag which distinguishes one person from another ... but it is thought to tell something of the kind of person he is.”<sup>92</sup> For example, 1 Samuel 25:25 says: “for as his

***All discord, all inharmony, and all error are experienced because of a sense of separation from God. But this sense of separation from God is not your fault personally. It is the universal belief that has come down to us from the allegorical experience of Adam and Eve being cast out of the Garden of Eden.***

name *is*, so *is* he.” Tim LaHaye observes, “In the Bible, a name reveals the nature of the person.”<sup>93</sup> For example, the Bible uses a change in the personal name to indicate a change in the person’s nature, such as the change from Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32:28). Consistent with such usage, *A Commentary on the Book of the Revelation* interprets *name* as “nature,”<sup>94</sup> so God’s name signifies the divine nature.

The final clause also mentions “foreheads,” but what is their significance? The Bible indicates that the human face reflects character and expresses emotions. For example, Isaiah 3:9 says, “The shew of their countenance doth witness against them”; and Daniel 5:6 says, “Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him.”

The Bible also depicts the specific relationship between the condition of one’s forehead and one’s consciousness. For example, Jeremiah 3:3 says, “thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed.” Here, the condition of the forehead reflects the lack of shame. As another example, “hard forehead” appears in the NRSV translation of Ezekiel 3:7, but it is rendered as “impudent” in the KJV translation. In this case, the hard condition of the forehead reflects impudence.

Verse 4’s final clause is: “and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.” Given that “his name” signifies the divine nature, and that the disciple’s forehead reflects his or her consciousness while he or she is experiencing the presence of God, the clause has this meaning: the disciple’s countenance will reflect his or her consciousness of the divine nature. Perhaps the disciple will be like Jesus when he was transfigured, as described in Matthew 17:2: “his face did shine as the sun.”

*ACIM* describes the effect on others from having such a countenance:

In this world you can become a spotless mirror, in which the Holiness of your Creator shines forth from you to all around you. You can reflect Heaven here ... Could you but realize for a single instant the power of healing that the reflection of God, shining in you, can bring to all the world, you could

not wait to make the mirror of your mind clean to receive the image of the holiness that heals the world. The image of holiness that shines in your mind is not obscure, and will not change. Its meaning to those who look upon it is not obscure, for everyone perceives it as the same. All bring their different problems to its healing light, and all their problems find but healing there.<sup>95</sup>

Consequently, the overall meaning of verse 4 can be expressed as this instruction: *And you will experience the presence of God, and your countenance will reflect your consciousness of the divine nature.*

***5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.***

Verse 5 can be divided into five phrases so that each phrase has an associated tense. The KJV translation, given above, renders some phrases with the future tense but other phrases with the present tense. In contrast, the New American Standard Bible, which scholars generally regard as the most accurate, word-for-word translation into modern English that has ever been produced,<sup>96</sup> renders all phrases in this verse with the future tense, so our conclusion is that the original language also renders all phrases with the future tense. As discussed earlier, we consider the future tense in verses 3, 4, and 5 to be itself a symbol that has this meaning: these verses portray the step of stabilization.

Verse 5’s initial word, “And,” indicates that this verse provides additional characteristics that the disciple will have by stabilizing his or her transformation. In the initial phrase, “And there shall be no night there,” what is the significance of “night”? The Bible often equates night and darkness, such as in Psalm 139:12, “Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; But the night shineth as the day”; or in Romans 13:12, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” William Read, in *Lectures on the Revelation*, observes:

Night is a symbol of ignorance. In the darkness, men stumble over every obstacle; they fall into every pit; they mistake friends for foes and foes for friends; they can see no difference between beauty and deformity. Therefore, night is an appropriate symbol of ignorance.<sup>97</sup>

Thus, in the Bible, both night and darkness could signify ignorance. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:12, corroborates this significance by using a related word, “darkly,” to characterize our present ignorance: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” Accordingly, the first phrase means that the disciple will be free of ignorance.

In this context, what is *ignorance*? Bailey writes, “This condition of ignorance, or the ‘state of avidya’ is characteristic of all those who as yet do not discriminate between the real and unreal, between death and immortality, and between light and darkness.”<sup>98</sup> Here, *avidya* is a Sanskrit word whose literal meaning is ignorance. *ACIM* indicates how to gain freedom from ignorance: “The bridge that leads to union in yourself *must* lead to knowledge.”<sup>99</sup> Here, the “bridge” refers to the antahkarana, and “knowledge” is the opposite of ignorance. Consequently, verses 1 and 2 bring freedom from ignorance through the work of building the antahkarana, so verse 5’s step of stabilization extends that freedom into the future.

In the second phrase, “and they need no candle,” what is the significance of “candle”? Let us consider two examples of how this word is used elsewhere in the Bible. Psalm 18:28 states: “For thou wilt light my candle: The Lord my God will enlighten my darkness.” Warren Wiersbe gives this explanation:

Western poetry is often based on rhyme, but not so Eastern poetry. It is based primarily on what we call “parallelism”; that is, the relationship of the lines to each other. In *synonymous* parallelism, the second line restates the first.<sup>100</sup>

Psalm 18:28 is an instance of synonymous parallelism: “light my candle” is equivalent to “enlighten my darkness,” so the unlit candle represents the abiding place of darkness. Darkness symbolizes ignorance, as before. Therefore, the candle can be inferred as signifying the intellect, because, in the words of Charles Ives, “Ignorance ... is a disease of the intellect alone.”<sup>101</sup>

As the second example, Proverbs 20:27 states: “The spirit of man *is* the candle of the LORD, Searching all the inward parts of the belly.” Joe Temple provides this explanation:

Let us search and try our ways with the same candles that God uses when He wants to reveal to us what we are. What is that candle? The intellect as it is illuminated by the Word of the living God ... When God uses the Word of God in connection with your human spirit, causing your intellect to respond to the truth of the Word, the search is made thorough.<sup>102</sup>

Accordingly, “the candle of the LORD” can be inferred as signifying “the intellect as it is illuminated by the Word of the living God.” Bailey similarly mentions the stage “Wherein the intellect is illumined by the light of the soul.”<sup>103</sup>

The candle, when lit, is a small fire. Bailey says, “Fire is the symbol of the intellect,”<sup>104</sup> which corroborates the foregoing inferences that the candle signifies the intellect. If this significance were valid for verse 5, then “they need no candle” would mean that they do not rely on the intellect. This significance appears to be valid, because it supports the overall meaning of verse 5, which Bailey describes as follows: “the super-conscious divine man then transcends his limited self-consciousness and the intuition supersedes the intellect.”<sup>105</sup>

The third phrase, “neither light of the sun,” is like the prophecy in Joel 2:31: “The sun shall be turned into darkness.” According to Acts 2:14-20, the apostle Peter quoted this verse from Joel on the day of Pentecost, because he believed that the apostles’ experience during that day fulfilled Joel’s prophecy. Acts 2:4



gives this account of the apostles' experience: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Thus, the apostles heard and followed their inner guidance, referred to as the Holy Ghost or Spirit, rather than rely on various teachers and teachings.

In the Bible, the sun and stars, which shine bright with visible light, are sometimes figures of speech that represent teachers, who shine bright with mental or spiritual illumination. For example, Daniel 12:3 (Amplified Bible) states:

And the teachers *and* those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness (to uprightness and right standing with God) [shall give forth light] like the stars forever and ever.

The sun turns into darkness when its light is blocked during a solar eclipse. Figuratively, teachers turn into darkness, which means that their influence is blocked, when their students no longer rely on them or their teachings. Consequently, the prophecy in Joel 2:31, "The sun shall be turned into darkness," was fulfilled during the day of Pentecost, because the "sun" is a metaphor for teachers and because of the apostles' lack of reliance on teachers and their teachings. Similarly, "neither light of the sun," which is the third phrase, also signifies the lack of reliance on teachers and their teachings.

Blavatsky quotes Lord Buddha as encouraging a similar lack of reliance:

Our Lord Buddha has said that we must not believe in a thing said merely because it is said; nor in traditions because they have been handed down from antiquity; nor rumors, as such; nor writings by sages, because sages wrote them; nor fancies that we may suspect to have been inspired in us by a deva (that is, in presumed spiritual inspiration); nor from inferences drawn from some haphazard assumption we may have made; nor because of what seems an analogical necessity; nor on the mere authority of our teachers or masters. But we are to believe

when the writing, doctrine, or saying is corroborated by our own reason and consciousness.<sup>106</sup>

In the fourth phrase, "for the Lord God giveth them light," what is the significance of "light"? Paul, in Ephesians 1:17, says, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Both wisdom and revelation are intuitions, so Paul's statement implies that God gives intuitions. Bailey mentions "The light of the intuition,"<sup>107</sup> so we infer that the fourth phrase, "for the Lord God giveth them light," signifies that God gives them the light of the intuition. Bailey corroborates this inference by saying, "the antahkarana ... will bridge the gap between the human consciousness and the spiritual, and make the race eventually as intuitional as it is, today, intellectual."<sup>108</sup>

The fifth and final phrase is: "and they shall reign for ever and ever." Bailey provides a related passage that describes the effects of the antahkarana, or inner bridge:

The bridge is now built ... It must perforce be used, because there is now no other medium of intercourse between the initiate and the One Whom he now knows to be himself. He ascends in full consciousness into the sphere of monadic life; he is resurrected from the dark cave of the personality life into the blazing light of divinity; he is no longer only a part of humanity and a member also of the Hierarchy, but he belongs to the great company of Those Whose will is consciously divine and Who are the Custodians of the Plan.<sup>109</sup>

To *reign* means "to have control or influence,"<sup>110</sup> and a *custodian* is "one that has charge of something,"<sup>111</sup> so "they shall reign" in verse 5 could be understood as referring to what the above quotation calls "Custodians of the Plan." Here, "Plan," because it is capitalized, signifies the divine plan.

Consequently, the overall meaning of verse 5 can be expressed in this way: *Moreover, you will be free of ignorance and will not rely on your intellect or on teachers and their teach-*

ings. Instead, God will give you the light of the intuition, and you will be a custodian of the divine plan.

## Conclusions

As discussed earlier, the futurist approach of interpreting Revelation 22:1-5 yields this prediction: The Garden of Eden will be restored during a posited new age that has not yet come. This prediction, however, remains unfulfilled after about 2000 years, because *Revelation* was written about 2000 years ago. According to several verses in the Old Testament, the standard by which to judge the validity of the source of a given prediction is whether that prediction is fulfilled,<sup>112</sup> so this standard casts doubt on the validity of the futurist approach.

In contrast, our view is that *Revelation* is a veiled statement of an esoteric, or hidden, doctrine of early Christians. Accordingly, our commentary shows that Revelation 22:1-5 can be interpreted allegorically in this manner:

1. The Master shows you how to bring forth the river of God's love, which takes away the sense of trespass and sin, and is free from hypocrisy and dissimulation. Your invocation of true perception is to shift the focus of your perception so that all you seek to see is the Christ principle in someone else. God's evocative response is to transmit the river of love to you, which activates your Christ principle so that you can recognize it in someone else.
2. Your next invocation is to share God's love with everyone whom you encounter. The Monad's evocative response is to project its will downward, which yields a series of purifications that progressively manifest divine purpose, and which quickens the vibration of your chakras so that they can heal the human and lower kingdoms in nature.
3. By stabilizing the transformation brought about by the two earlier verses, you will not be cursed by a sense of separation from God, because the power of both invocation and evocation will bring to you the river of

God's love, which will fill you with the fullness of God; your outward radiation of God's love from your heart chakra will reach and stimulate the heart chakra in other people, thereby inspiring and arousing them into helpful activity.

4. And you will experience the presence of God, and your countenance will reflect your consciousness of the divine nature.

5. Moreover, you will be free of ignorance and will not rely on your intellect or on teachers and their teachings. Instead, God will give you the light of the intuition, and you will be a custodian of the divine plan.

Let us conclude this study of *Revelation* by considering its initial verse: "THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John." Here, *Revelation* provides this important clue: its purpose is to show to "his servants" the experiences that "must shortly come to pass." Our commentary is consistent with this clue, because it interprets Revelation 22:1-5 as portraying the instructions that, when faithfully followed by people living today, must shortly restore the meaning of the Garden of Eden to them. In contrast, the futurist approach of interpreting these verses, which yields a 2000-year-old prediction that a future generation will enjoy the restoration during a posited new age, is inconsistent with the emphasis on immediacy found in the initial verse.

Given elsewhere are similar allegorical analyses of other puzzling parts of *Revelation*: chapter 9, which depicts bizarre creatures called locusts that sting people who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads;<sup>113</sup> chapter 13, which depicts an awesome beast that comes out of the sea and another beast that comes out of the earth;<sup>114</sup> and chapter 17, which features a seductive prostitute described as "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters."<sup>115</sup>

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- 15 Alice A. Bailey, *Glamour: A World Problem* (1950; reprint; New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1973), 137.
- 16 *A Course in Miracles* (third edition; Mill Valley, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 2007), Text, 34.
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- <sup>43</sup> Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 583.
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- <sup>80</sup> Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 512-513.
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- <sup>85</sup> *A Course in Miracles*, Text, 14.
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<sup>109</sup> Bailey, *The Rays and the Initiations*, 495.  
<sup>110</sup> *Random House Webster’s College Dictionary*.  
<sup>111</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*.  
<sup>112</sup> According to several verses in the Old Testament, the standard by which to judge the validity of the source of a given prediction is whether that prediction is fulfilled: Deuteronomy 18:22 states, “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, *but* the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be

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afraid of him”; 1 Kings 22:28 states, “And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me”; Ezekiel 33:33 states, “And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them”; and Jeremiah 28:9 states, “The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, *then* shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.”  
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