

## **The New Jerusalem. No Twenty-two**

The human race was created in a garden but their destination is a city. Cities are exciting places to visit. They are often cultural centres with art galleries, museums and concert halls. But modern cities can be troubled by overcrowding, poverty and crime. Cities have a long history. The first city builder was Cain, a murderer - a man on the run. He built a city for his own security. He was far away from God and refused His protection. The city soon became a place of pride and violence as evidenced in the story of Lamech (Gen.4: 19-24). Jacques Ellul mentions in *The Meaning of the City* the enormous unswerving resentment that the city manifests against God in every human civilization, the struggle between sin and grace. After the flood the descendants of Noah attempted to construct Babel in order to preserve their unity and prosperity. But no human enterprise has ever succeeded in building an eternal city of peace. We are looking forward to a new city which will be built by God Himself (Hebr.11: 10,16). This city is not modeled after cities founded by men. Its origin is in heaven. It is called, Zion, or the New Jerusalem, after the city of David (Hebr.12: 22). The apostle John, in a vision of the new heaven and the new earth also saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband (Rev.21: 1, 2). This new city on the new earth is not a literal but a symbolic city. All that John describes is highly symbolic, trying to express in words things too marvelous to behold. There is nothing strange about the symbolism of the new Jerusalem and the connection of the bride and the bridegroom. A city is more than a collection of buildings and houses. A city is a sociable community. Jerusalem means safety, purity, holiness, peace and light. The city is the church, the new community of God living on the new earth. Dr.Roger S.Greenway described the church on the new earth as heavenly urbanites, drawn by bonds of grace from all races, nations, and language groups, new-city citizens who will live in perfect harmony as God's redeemed people, His new covenant community. One key thought will control all the activities of these urbanites. God will be all in all. He will be the temple and the light and the source of joy, strength, and purpose. His service will be the occupation of God's people. Their hunger and thirst for a living relationship with God will be completely satisfied (Rev.22: 1-6). Today's church should remember her glorious destiny. She can be so caught up in all the cares of this world that she forgets that the Lord has the last word and not the world. He will bring the new Jerusalem down to earth and not us. There is more to life than this life on earth. The twelfth century monk and poet Bernard of Cluny pointed to this hope in these lines:

Brief life is here our portion,  
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;  
The life that knows no ending,

The tearless life is there.