“Open to me the *gates of righteousness*,” says the  
Psalmist, “I will go into them, I will praise the Lord.  
This is *the gate* of the Lord into which *the righteous*  
shall enter” (Ps. cxviii. 19, 20).  
 It was not possible to engrave names on pearls as  
found in this world: they are too frail and too thin to  
bear the tool of steel. Even thus man’s righteousness  
is too frail and imperfect to bear the pressure of God’s  
demands of perfection: but the righteousness of God  
is capable of every perfection.  
 As no pearl could be engraved, onyxes, which are  
precious stones bearing the nearest resemblance to  
pearl in their colour, were chosen by God to foreshadow  
the gates of pearl of His future city. There were  
but two onyxes, each containing six names of the tribes  
of Israel. They were fastened to the high priest’s  
dress, even as the breastplate was. They were set on  
the shoulders of the chief priest, above the breastplate;  
even as the gates of the city stand above the foundations. They were linked to the breastplate by chains  
of gold, even as the foundations and the gates are  
braced together. The onyxes and the breastplate  
were cased in gold; even as the foundations and the  
gates are linked together by the crystal gold of the  
city. The gates of *righteousness* stand on the foundations of *grace*. The moral emblem and the physical  
reality coincide in the city of God.  
 There is no entrance into the heavenly city by our  
works, but by the righteousness of Messiah.  
 How to translate the Greek word rendered by the  
English Version “street” is difficult. There must be  
many “streets” in so vast a city with twelve gates of  
entrance. But there is one “square” (πλατεῖα) or “broad  
space.” It seems that it must be in the centre of the  
city, and at its highest point, where the throne of God  
is set, and the tree of life is planted. To this, as to a