

the emblem of incense as a feature of the heavenly state. The redeemed are represented as having in their hands "golden vials, full of odors, which are the prayers of saints." The meaning is not that the saints in glory offer up prayers to God. Rather, the thought seems to be that earth's supplications rise up into heaven as sweet incense—that while humble believers in this world are engaged in offering up prayers and supplications holy odors are wafted up before God. The picture seems designed to show us the heaven-side of earth's true worship—how our hearts' breathings of desire appear within the veil.

For one thing, it shows that the prayers of believers are not lost. Some people tell us there is no ear to hear when we speak our words of request and desire—that our petitions merely float off into the air, and that is the end of them. But here we get a glimpse inside heaven, and find our prayers caught and preserved in golden bowls. The thought is very beautiful.

In one of the psalms there is a similar hint regarding the tears of God's people. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle," cries David. In ancient times tear-bottles were sometimes used. When a man was in some sore distress, his friends would