

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

BOOK 4

REVELATION 2:1-7

**EPISTLE TO THE  
CHURCH IN EPHESUS**

EDWARD IRVING

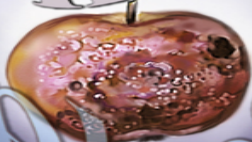
1831



**Ephesus**



*Ephesus*



*Ephesus*

**Source:**

Original 1831 Edition  
London

**Cover:**

Heinrich Halmen, *Ephesus: Losing the First Love*  
Sabbath Rest Advent Church

*Gone after all these  
Edw Irving*

**Fonts:**

FreeSans  
Linux Biolinum  
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December 2023  
practicaprophetica.com  
srac.info

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EPISTLE TO THE  
CHURCH IN EPHESUS

EDWARD IRVING

*Exposition of the Book of Revelation:  
in a series of Lectures*  
1831

Reprinted 1867 (vol. 1) and 1870 (vol. 2)



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## **Revelation 2**

<sup>1</sup> Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things says He that holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

<sup>2</sup> I know your works, and your labor, and your patience, and how you can not bear them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars:

<sup>3</sup> And have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have labored, and have not fainted.

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love.

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from where you are fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent.

<sup>6</sup> But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

<sup>7</sup> He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

## FOREWORD

THE first time I came across the writings of Edward Irving, deep in the back shelves of the Theology Library at UBC (Vancouver, BC, Canada), I was deeply impressed with the unusual treatment he gave to the final book of the Bible. He wrote as one who knew his calling, and knew that he had a message from God for his generation.

Combined with that urgency, Irving had a large sense of the glory of God in Christ, and God's purposes through Christ to reveal himself unto the world through the Church. He also possessed a large gift for language and expression, and apparently was quite an orator, as well as being a man of great compassion and sensitivity.

His work on the book of *Revelation*, which originally comprised two volumes, but only covered the first six chapters, towers above other similar commentaries because of its unique blend of gospel and prophecy.

Coming from a church founded on the Advent movement of the mid-1800's, I was somewhat familiar with books on the prophetic parts of Scripture. Irving's commentary was nothing like those.

Whereas the standard prophetic works tended to get quagmired in historical events and details, thus dwelling on the vessel by which God's purposes were worked out, Irving kept his eye single to the glory of God, and searched into those deep purposes as far as he was able. He rightly dwelt on the treasure that was in the vessel of prophecy. Like Moses, he wanted to see God's glory, or as much as was humanly possible. And he did see much, indeed.

And because most of the treasure he unearthed is practically lost to the Church today, I have for a long time had a strong desire to make these works more widely available.

In this new edition, I have taken only a few liberties: correcting and modernizing spelling and grammar in a few places (including the language in the KJV Bible references), breaking up large paragraphs and sentences, and inserting full Bible references where appropriate. I have separated the original 2-volume work into

smaller books, one for each of the fifteen original lectures. Otherwise it is as Irving wrote it.

This is Edward Irving's parting gift to the Church of Christ. In his own words, from the exposition on Laodicea:

*"But my confidence in truth never fails me. I know that these things are not published in vain. It is not for myself, nor for my flock, but for the church of God, that I write these things, which I pray God for His own name's sake to hasten and bless."*

Frank Zimmerman  
[practicaprophetica.com](http://practicaprophetica.com)

*Gather up the fragments, that none be lost.*





## I. INTRODUCTION

ACCORDING to the method which we have laid down previously,<sup>1</sup> we propose to treat these epistles under three heads:

1. The superscription or designation which the writer takes to himself;
2. The charge to the angel or minister of the Church;
3. The exhortation of the Spirit to the Church itself.

But before entering on each, it will be convenient and satisfactory in a few words to set forth something concerning the condition of the city in which the Church was planted.

Ephesus was a famous city, according to Strabo, one of the best and most glorious of cities, the metropolis of proconsular Asia, situated upon the river Cayster, near the shore of the Aegean sea. Its origin is lost in the fables of antiquity.

Its inhabitants were greatly addicted to the study of curious arts: to magic, sorcery, and judicial astrology; to such an excess indeed that it became proverbial in antiquity to denominate charms or words used in incantation as *Ephesian Letters*. Of this disposition of the place, some striking illustrations are contained in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Acts*, verses 13-21; where also we see the triumph of the name of Jesus, and of His gospel, over the exorcists and magicians, who burned their books to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver.

It was a place also of great superstitions and devotion to the goddess Diana, whose temple there was justly reckoned one of the wonders of the world; as is graphically delineated in the words of the same chapter of the *Acts*.

This city was first visited by St. Paul, about the year of our Lord, 54. He was well received of them, and entreated to remain; but he could not at that time, being bound for Jerusalem. He left behind him Aquila and Priscilla, who received Apollos, a Jew of

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3, Chapter: "His Seven Epistles", Section: "The Seven Epistles."

Alexandria, and instructed him more perfectly. He labored much in convincing the Jews; so that when Paul returned he found disciples, yet only initiated into the doctrine of John's baptism. Upon these Paul laid his hands, and the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied, and all the men were about twelve.<sup>2</sup> These twelve men were the foundation of the Church in Ephesus.

On this second visit, Paul continued with them by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

A third time he visited Ephesus, on his way to Jerusalem; or rather I should say, he sent for the elders of the Church to Miletus, and there delivered to them that noble charge which is recorded in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Acts*.

Some say, though upon what authority I cannot find, and I rather believe upon no good authority, that he visited their city itself a third time; certain it is, that Timothy succeeded to him in the ministry of that Church:

### **1 Timothy 1**

<sup>3</sup> I besought you to abide still at Ephesus when I went into Macedonia.

And the consent of antiquity is, that Timothy continued there until the time of his death, which, they say, he met with in opposing in the streets the profane and obscene festivals of the Ephesians. This event took place, according to some, in the time of Nerva, who succeeded Domitian the last of the twelve Caesars; in whose days John was exiled to Patmos, and received these visions. But others prefer the very time when John was in Patmos.

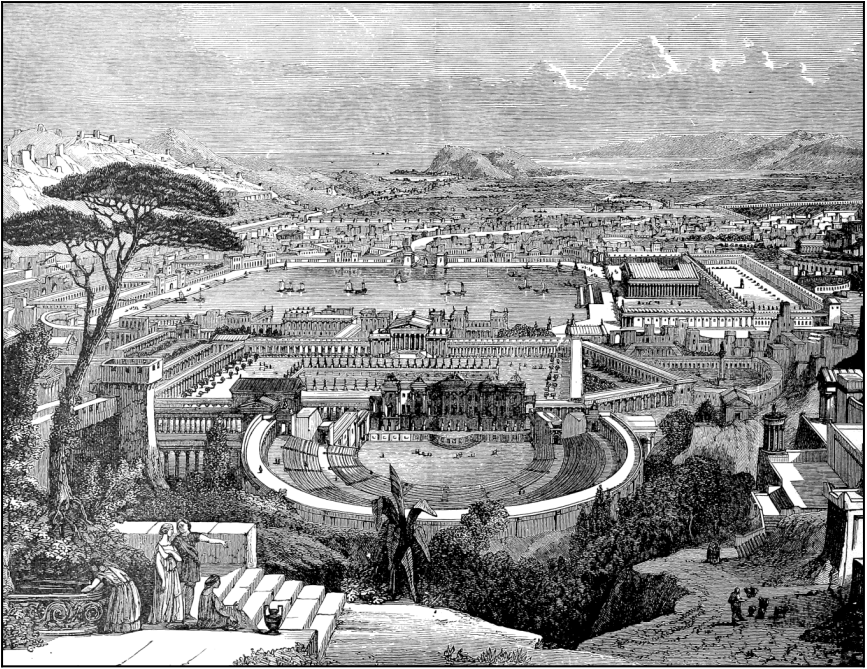
If either of these traditions be correct, and all antiquity is agreed as to the one or other of them, Timothy must have been the very person addressed as the angel of the Church of Ephesus. It is also currently reported among the ancients, that John made his residence at Ephesus, and labored much among the churches

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<sup>2</sup> *Acts* 18:19 to 19:8.

of Asia, before his banishment to Patmos. Still more certain is it, that upon the death of Domitian, he returned to Ephesus, in the year of our Lord 97, and died three years afterwards.

Such are the short notices of Ephesus and the foundation of the Church there, up to the time of the uttering of this epistolary charge. With respect to its after history and present state, they will be more appropriately spoken of at the conclusion of our remarks upon this epistle, which we now take up in order.



Ancient Ephesus

## II. CHRIST'S FIRST DESIGNATION

**A**ND first, we are to treat of the name or designation which Christ specially appropriates to himself in addressing the Ephesian Church:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>1</sup> These things says He that holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

This designation may be considered among the rest as generic; that is, expressive of the general character of Universal Bishop, which He bears to all the churches. I find something of the like kind in the first of the seals, which presents us with a triumphant emperor; triumph over His enemies being the generic character of all the seals which conclude with the triumphant advent of Christ, given in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter by similar symbols of a rider upon a white horse.

So, in writing epistles to the churches, He presents himself to the first, with those symbols of the Universal Bishop, in which He shall be known when the number of His saints shall be accomplished; as it is written:

### **Revelation 7**

<sup>17</sup> The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.

If again, we look upon Him as the High Priest trimming the light of the churches, and holding up the stars to the view of the world during the night, the long night of His absence, until the Sun of Righteousness shine forth in His strength, then it conveys the beginning and continuance of that aspect in which He shall be exhibited in the New Jerusalem as the light of it:

### **Revelation 21**

<sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

This, then, I consider to be the propriety of this first appellation, that being the first, it is the common or generic representation of His office as the Universal Bishop. And what are the particulars of this His episcopal office? These two:

1. He holds seven stars in His right hand; and,
2. He walks about in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

The interpretation of the seven stars we have already enlarged upon in the former lecture<sup>3</sup>, showing that by this symbol is signified the ministers of all the churches: but two points we have not considered:

1. Wherefore they should be likened to stars;
2. What is signified by their being held in Christ's right hand.

### **LIKENED TO STARS**

The reason why the angels of the churches should be likened to stars is, Because they give light during the night. The Apostle Peter says:

#### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>19</sup> We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto you do well that you take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.

This dawning of the day, and rising of the day star, is again referred to by our Lord:

#### **Revelation 2**

<sup>28</sup> And I will give him the morning star.

This is in a connection, which, as we shall show at large, fixes it down to the time of the first resurrection, when He comes with all His saints, in the glory of the new Jerusalem, a time spoken of in all the old prophets, and especially in the Psalms, under the same figure of the morning. For example:

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<sup>3</sup> See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3 "Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church", Chapter: "The Vision", Section: "The Seven Stars," & Chapter: "His Seven Epistles", Section: "The Seven Stars."

### **Psalm 49**

<sup>14</sup> Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning; and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling.

<sup>15</sup> But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me.

### **Psalm 110**

<sup>3</sup> Your people shall be willing in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: you have the dew of your youth.

Of the glorious brightness of this morning the 60<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Isaiah*, at the beginning and ending of it, testifies; and until that glorious exaltation of Jerusalem, there shall be no light, save the light of the stars or angels of the churches, until the closing in of eventide, as it is written:

### **Zechariah 14**

<sup>6</sup> And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark, but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord: not day nor night, but it shall come to pass, that at evening tide it shall be light.

In the firmament of darkness, which now overspreads the earth, there are stars, and there is a moon to rule the darkness. The moon is the symbol of the Church, considered as one, the ruler of the night; the stars are the angels or ministers of the churches. This symbol therefore signifies that all true light is dispensed to the world by Christ's ministers, until the Sun of Righteousness shall arise, and eclipse them all with the glory of His light.

It is indeed a high dignity for any order of men to claim unto themselves. But not the less firmly do I believe that it is the view which we ministers should take of our office, and in which the Church should reverently contemplate us; for Christ himself said to His disciples:

### **Matthew 5**

<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world.

And Paul said in one of his epistles:

## **Philippians 2**

<sup>15</sup> ...among whom you shine as lights in the world.

What the apostle here assigns to all believers, whom in another place he calls children of the light, I may assuredly claim for those whom Christ calls stars, in contradistinction to the churches, which He calls candlesticks.

### **RELATION TO THE CANDLESTICK**

The candlestick is that which holds up the light; but the star is the light itself. It must therefore be proper to the ministers of the churches to have light in them, and to the churches to hold up that light on high; the two together being necessary to the enlightening of the house.

In that same passage to which I have referred above, where Christ said to His apostles, and first disciples,

#### **Matthew 5**

<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world,

–He added:

<sup>15</sup> Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, and it gives light to all that are in the house.

When He had enlightened certain ones with the word of His truth, He found for them a candlestick or Church, upon whom upborn, the light might shine around, and be like the light of a human habitation to a man weary, wayworn, and astray; or like the light of a watchtower to the mariner upon the dark tempestuous ocean.

Let the taper which shines from the lattice of the distant cottage, lightening the bewildered traveler, fall from the candlestick which holds it, and it be extinguished, and he is left dark and forlorn. Let the blazing light of the watchtower fall from that which holds it up, and it is quenched among the waves, and serves no more for a beacon to the weather-beaten ship.

Even so, let the light of the minister be separated from the Church, and his glory departs away. Accordingly, it is so threat-

ened to this very angel, that if he repented not, Christ would come unto him quickly, and remove his candlestick out of his place. This shows us where the place of an ordained minister is: at the head of his Church. It shows us wherefore his light is fed, for the enlightening of his Church; and being there placed, he is like a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid.

Would that these things were more frequently in my mind. Would that I could thus always deem concerning myself and concerning my Church; that we should ever feel formed and fitted for one another, whose common well-being and benefit unto the world stand in the mutual esteem of one another, according to this apt similitude.

A candlestick is for holding a light, and a light is to be upheld by a candlestick, so an enlightened minister is for being upheld by a Church, and a Church is for upholding the light of an enlightened minister. I say again, I earnestly wish to be ever possessed with these divine ideas; and what I wish for myself I surely can never do better than wish for others.

## **IN THE RIGHT HAND**

The second inquiry is: wherefore are these lights of the churches held in the right hand of the Son of man? For several reasons:

First, to show that they are His and not their own; that they are borrowed lights deriving all their power of illumination from Him, according to that word:

### **John 1**

<sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which lights every man that comes into the world

And according to that other word:

### **Ephesians 5**

<sup>14</sup> Awake, you that sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

This is the truth, specially expressed to the Church of Sardis, by these words:



### **Revelation 3**

<sup>1</sup> These things says He that has...the seven stars.

He has them in possession; answering to that declaration,

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>11</sup> And He gave...

“He gave,” that is, Christ, upon His ascension into glory, when He received gifts of the Holy Ghost for men, these gifts which He had received when He ascended up on high, He gave...

<sup>11</sup> ...to some, apostles; and to some, prophets; and to some, pastors and teachers;

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

This great truth, that faithful ministers are Christ’s gift unto the Church, and as such to be regarded, is, I think, taught by the place which is given to the stars in His right hand.

But this is not all which is contained in the expression *holding* the stars in His right hand. The word translated *holding* is a different word from that which is used in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chapters, and denotes *grasp*, as a man uses his sword, or any other instrument for effecting his purpose. And therefore I consider that this expression, in the second place, conveys the idea that the stars are His instrument, which He uses, as Head of the Church, to bring His ends to pass. These stars being the lights of the candlesticks He carries about and about, as He walks in the midst of them; setting one here, and one there, according to His pleasure, and according to the purpose, the special purpose, which He has by every Church.

If I err not, it is the same truth which is taught in Habakkuk’s vision of His glory by these words:

### **Habakkuk 3**

<sup>4</sup> He had horns coming out of His hand, and there was the hiding of His power.

The horn is the symbol of power, and horns proceeding out of His right hand signify powers proceeding out of His right hand.

Now, as we shall see in the details, the office of an angel is as much one of power as it is of illumination; as much for government, as for teaching of the Church. And this great truth of our power and authority is conveyed by our reposing in Christ's right hand; while at the same time it is declared to be power instrumental and not power inherent, power derived from Christ, and not power self-originated.

For the instrument in another's right hand is but a tool, an inactive impotent tool, either for good or evil, until aim and force be given to it by an intelligent active being. Such are the ministers of the churches, powerful through Christ to the pulling down of strongholds, and without Him, helpless as a broken reed.

And the churches ought to look upon their ministers, as representing not only the wisdom, but likewise the power of Christ, according to that promise of the Lord:

**Matthew 16** [see also Matthew 18:18]

<sup>19</sup> Whatsoever you shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.

And that other word:

**Luke 10**

<sup>16</sup> He that despises you, despises me; and he that despises me, despises Him that sent me.

Oh, how little are these things remembered or thought of! I could stay my thoughts, and weep when I reflect upon the dishonored institutions of the Church of Christ, her dishonored persons, her dishonored ordinances. Some will honor our natural talents, others our natural affections, others our conduct; but, ah me! who honors our office as the right-hand men of Christ? who sees in us our Lord? who recalls to our recollections our high vocation of Christ's ambassadors and legates on the earth?

Alas! alas! we forget our own dignity, we cannot carry it through; we seize it sometimes, as it were, by fits and starts, but

we wear it not always. God give us grace, Christ give us unction, that we may rightly fulfill this high vocation.

I cannot omit observing in this place, how, in the constitution of our Church, this prerogative of power invested in a minister is exhibited to view, as a distinct and additional thing to the prerogative of light, or knowledge, or truth, according to our constitutions and practice.

Such persons as think themselves to be possessed of the gift for teaching and edifying the body of Christ, and have completed their studies in the schools of the Church, present themselves unto the ministers of a presbytery to take proof of the same, which they do by examinations and various pieces of trial proper to the function of a preacher; and being satisfied of his fitness, they give him permission to preach among the churches.

This is to recognize him as a star; but he is not put into the possession of power until, as has been said above, some Church destitute of a minister have witnessed their satisfaction with his doctrine, and their desire to have him set over them. Then is he, not without renewed trial, set over them, to hold the reins of ecclesiastical government, in concert with those who are the elders and deacons of the flock.

Now he is invested with power; and the act, the symbolical act, by which this is done, is the laying on of the right hand, which being derived from Christ and the Apostles, continually bespeaks the stars to derive their power from his right hand, the horns to grow out of the right hand, and thus he who already had been recognized as a star of Christ's, is brought as it were under his right hand by the regular succession of ministers, and under his right hand we are expected always to feel ourselves to be.

I cannot tell what sense of awe comes over my mind, as I write these things. They bring before me such a body and presence of truth as I cannot express. I seem to feel and see my Lord continually beside me. These symbols have such a force above words, as I cannot by words express; but yet I ever feel that what I do ex-

press, though but an approximation to the truth impressed upon my heart, is true so far as I can give utterance to it in words.

## **WALKING IN THE MIDST OF THE CANDLESTICKS**

We come now to explain the second attribute of our great High Priest, which He assumes before the Church in Ephesus, expressed in these words:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>1</sup> ...who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Now, as the preceding attribute of our Shepherd refers to the ministers of the Churches specially, so this refers to the Churches specially; each minister of the word has a candlestick which is properly called his own, as is evident from the threatening in the 5<sup>th</sup> verse:

<sup>5</sup> I will come quickly, and remove your candlestick out of his place, unless you repent.

Let us consider what is contained in this threat, that we may have a proper idea, and use proper language in speaking of the relation between a minister and his church. It is called, “your candlestick” because he is responsible for its condition; not that it ceases to be Christ’s, or is less His, but rather more, because He has entrusted it to a responsible keeper.

Yet that Christ may teach the Church to reverence His appointed one, He calls the Church his, “*your*” candlestick, and threatens the whole Church in Ephesus with an entire removal or moving away, if its angel repented not; which is exactly the language used of a kingdom in the Old Testament, and exemplified in the history of Judah and Israel, who were ever visited for the errors of their kings.

This teaches us, that Christ deposes His power ecclesiastical unto ministers or angels of the churches; not for the dignifying or beautifying or accomplishing of themselves, but for the instruction, correction, and edification of the churches under their care: as it is written:

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ.

This is the end of all power, civil or ecclesiastical; the good of all those over whom it is appointed, not the aggrandizement of those who are appointed to it: for God, being himself all goodness, and exercising himself only unto the good of His creatures, cannot for any less worthy end depute that power unto another: therefore Christ well represents himself as ever walking up and down in the midst of the churches.

This He does, to observe their comely order. As heretofore Jehovah was in the midst of the camp of Israel, so is Christ now in the midst of the churches; and for the same purpose, of observing that all things be done according to His mind, and that there be no uncleanness in the midst of us; as it is written:

## **Deuteronomy 23**

<sup>14</sup> For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy, that He see no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you.

So also the apostle, speaking of the saints, says:

## **2 Corinthians 6**

<sup>16</sup> For you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

This promise made unto the children of Israel from the time they entered into covenant with God, God has fulfilled to His Church unto this day. To Him to whom He has given the congregation, to “Immanuel”, “God with us”<sup>4</sup>; to Christ,

## **Hebrews 13**

<sup>8</sup> ...the same yesterday, today, and for ever,

–has it appertained to represent God unto the Church, formerly as Jehovah, and latterly as Jesus. Now let it be understood by ev-

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<sup>4</sup> *Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23.*

ery Christian Church, that the Lord Jesus Christ is walking in the midst of us; in our assemblies is present, and from the meetings of the elders is not absent; whatever is said, hears; whatever is done, marks; yea, and whatever is thought, discerns full well, for:

### **John 2**

<sup>25</sup> [He] needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man.

And this, His unwearied travel in the midst of His churches, is well designated by His feet of brass; of fine brass, which never tarnishes, but ever shines; like the pure metal which flows from the furnace. Oh, but He walks among us, not as the inquisitor-general of God, but as the comforter and upholder of His saints; that they may feel ever encouraged and strengthened in every good word and work. God walked in the camp of Israel,

### **Deuteronomy 23**

<sup>14</sup> ...to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you.

So Christ walks in the midst of the churches. God besought them not to offend Him, and drive Him away from the midst of them; so Christ beseeches us. We shall see in the epistles how loath He is to depart; therefore let the churches not be disturbed by His presence, but comforted and confirmed.

Yet in such a presence of Him whom her soul loves; of Him to whom she is betrothed; of Him who has loved her unto the death, in the lowest pit, and from the highest heavens; in His presence, let her be attired with her beautiful garments; let her be clothed with light as with a garment, and be girded with truth as with a girdle.

This is the substance of the thing conveyed, by His walking in the midst of the churches. He would be known by us:

### **Psalm 46**

<sup>1</sup> God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble.

## Hebrews 4

<sup>16</sup> Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

That we may never be greatly moved<sup>5</sup>; that we may rejoice in the Rock of our salvation<sup>6</sup>; that we may never be afraid of our enemies<sup>7</sup>; and that the shout of a King may be heard among us.<sup>8</sup>

Not for fear, I say, but for the banishment of fear; not for overwhelming dread, but for soul-assuring confidence; not for apprehensive alarms, but for strong and holy affections; in one word, for all those ends of grace, mercy, and goodness, which in His incarnation Christ manifested,—and for those higher ends of power and glory which, since His ascension, the Father has appointed Him to bring about,—Christ makes himself known as He that walks in the midst of the churches.

While thus every saint, while thus every member of the Church, should feel Christ in these attributes of love and holiness, of comfort and sustentation, present with him, inasmuch as he is a member of the Church, and so feels assured of prospering in every righteous way, this knowledge of an ever-present, ever-observant Head, should especially work all carefulness and constancy in the hearts of those in whose hands the ordering of the churches is vested.

For while Christ would comfort His sheep with the assurance that though all should forsake them, He will not: though minister, and elders, and deacons should be found cold or lukewarm and indifferent, heedless of their trusts, and unholy in their lives, still He, the great Shepherd, is with them, is with every solitary believer, is with every handful of sorrowful believers, to do for them all offices whatever which their office bearers neglect.

Though this lesson, I say, of one above all ordinances He taught, yet it is not the object of the ordinance-head to set His ordinance

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<sup>5</sup> *Psalm* 62:2.

<sup>6</sup> *Psalm* 95:1.

<sup>7</sup> *Deuteronomy* 20:1.

<sup>8</sup> *Numbers* 23:21.

of government aside, but contrariwise to bring it forward as the great means of well-being to the flock; and therefore, He desires the flock to look at it, and reverence it, and weigh well whether it be accomplishing its end or not.

If it be, to bless God for the light of His countenance lifted upon them, in His goodly and sufficient ordinance; if not, to mourn God's judgment resting upon them, His hand stretched out for evil and not for good, and under the deep sense of a famine of the word, or of wrath or displeasure of some kind, to be bowed down before the Lord, and to be exercised with prayer and fasting.

But ah me! that I should have to find so much fault. How soon do the rebellious and recreant humors of the flock arise against their rulers if in anything they fail or offend in their duties! Will you not believe, O you members of Christ, that let patrons be what they may, and Presbyteries be what they may, Christ sends you the minister who is sent to you?

A minister comes not by chance. Is he a dumb dog? then Christ wishes that a dumb dog should watch over you. Is he a greedy dog which can never have enough? then such is the pleasure of the Head of the Church, for your chastisement;—but you are not chastened if you murmur and rebel; for your purification in the furnace of trial;—but you are not purified unless you be patient.

“But no,” says the rebel insubordinate spirit of these days, “we will have a minister to our mind; our itching ears shall be tickled; we will dissent from the Church, we will secede and separate ourselves.”

Will you? Then do it at your peril, you impatient of correction; you rebels under the rod, do it, and offend the Head of the Church, and set up a standard for yourselves; evil, sore evil, betides such a spirit in the Church.

Oh, that I might be enabled to set forth worthy discourse on these seven epistles, then shall I have done my poor mother Church, as well as every other Church, good service, in finding and bringing back her people to her in the day of her calamity;



and I will teach the many parishes of poor Scotland, which are grieved with a profitless ministry, how to be exercised under such a dispensation, with prayer, and mourning, and fasting, instead of flying away to an opposite standard, when the battle sets hard against us. I love the Church of my fathers, her breach is great, but it may be made up again; her wound is grievous,<sup>9</sup> but I trust not incurable.

While thus I have beat about, as it were, to touch at many points, some will be accusing me of forgetting the proper object of my voyage. Let me therefore recollect myself, and set forth again. It may be asked,

“But how does Christ, who is at the right hand of God, or how can He who, as the God-man, is limited to space, be everywhere present, carrying on this work of present superintendency?”

The answer often rendered to this question, that He is so present in His Godhead, is in truth no answer at all; for if it mean anything, it is that His Godhead can be active when and where His manhood cannot be active, which is to make His Godhead a separate person, and likewise His manhood.

If they mean to say that Godhead is everywhere, they speak a great truth; but not in the person of the Son, but in the person of the Father, is Godhead’s absolute incomprehensible properties now inherent. The Son, being of the same Godhead, has, for His part, emptied himself, and come into the limited region of the Christ; He as the Christ is ever spoken of, as the Christ He ever acts.

It is a common error, and therefore the more to be denounced, to speak of Him as now acting in His Godhead, and anon acting in His manhood. I indict it, in any theological court, of flat Nestorianism. Besides, to tell me, that Godhead is everywhere present in the churches, is to give me no information whatever, until I shall first know what Godhead is.

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<sup>9</sup> *Jeremiah* 30:12.

Now, it is of the essence, and it is the very essence, of Godhead to be incomprehensible; and therefore, in order to my knowing it, and being comforted by that knowledge, Godhead must come into the comprehensible and intelligible region, which having done in the person of the Son, as Christ, whom I can understand, it becomes necessary to teach me how this person, now limited to the conditions of manhood, can be present in efficient activity, in many places,—yea, in, all places—at one and the same time.

This question to answer, requires the knowledge of the person and office of the Holy Ghost, who being of the Godhead, for the purpose of carrying out that very manifestation of Godhead, which Christ is, condescends out of the absolute and incomprehensible to become the agent for carrying the mind and very life of Christ into every region of creation where God pleases to be known, as He is capable of being known by a creature.

Christ is God comprehensible, God in outward creature life. The Holy Ghost gives himself to be used by Christ, for the purpose of communicating that life of God to the creatures. By means of the Holy Ghost, therefore, acting for the end of revealing and communicating the living embodied Godhead, Christ is present in the churches, in all the churches, how many soever they be.

- He is present as the word of the faithful minister.
- He is present as the life of that word in every faithful hearer;
- He is present with His authority in every faithful ruler; and
- He is present with obedience in the faithful members of the Church.
- He is present, even Christ is present, as a regenerator in baptism to every believer; and
- He is present as a nurse or feeder in the Lord's Supper, to every believer; and
- He is present in every sentence of the Church, to execute the judgment threatened upon the impenitent, and to restore such as are penitent.

He, even Christ, I said, is present, the life and the substance of every ordinance of the Church, and He is all present and not partially in all places. Such is the office of the Holy Ghost: and where Christ is present God is present: present in an intelligible, comfortable form; apprehensive to all our faculties, and sustentative of all our infirmities.

And so, having Godhead with us, and in us, in a comprehensive and comprehensible form, we, possessed, delighted, and ravished therewith, do offer worship, yield homage, and submit ourselves in all things to Godhead, incomprehensible, impassible, standing in the person of the Father, being yet the one Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so that the end of the whole purpose is to make Godhead to be known, to be possessed by, yet not be mixed with, but ever worshiped out of, the creature. This is the answer to the question,

“How is Christ the God-man, now in heaven, the embodied Godhead, limited to place, how is He present everywhere in all the churches?”

It is answered, like every other question, by the exposition of the Trinity; by which, and by which alone, questions in theology, questions in practical, vital godliness, can be answered.

### III. HIS FIRST CHARGE

WE NOW come to the second part of the epistle, which is the charge to the angel, in whom the whole state and condition of the Church is seen as represented, and who is taken as the responsible person by the great Head of the Church.

The notion which I have expressed concerning these churches, that they present seven varieties of temptation and condition, with seven varieties of instruction, to the end of greater completeness in the code of laws and precepts, to be communicated through them to all the churches; this notion will now come to be tried.

The specific peculiarity of the Church of Ephesus consisted, as it seems to me, in a declension of their first love, which ought to grow stronger and stronger according to our longer acquaintance with the unchangeable grace and goodness of our Lord and Master. To this temptation, man's changeableness and love of novelty make him liable. The zeal of a new convert is a proverbial expression, rebuking I know not, whether more our love of novelty, or the diminished zeal of the more experienced.

This falling away from primitive zeal is the temptation before which the angel of the Church in Ephesus had not been able to stand, and against which he is warned and threatened, if he repented not. And the proper retort in the government of Christ for this form of backsliding is, "the removal of the candlestick out of its place;" that is, the total falling away of the Church out of the number of Christian churches, through a gradual decay and consumption of its strength.

While this I regard as the specific peculiarity of the Ephesian Church among the rest, I do not mean to say that this is the only or principal thing to be attended to; for every word of these epistles is full of instruction as to the character of the Universal Bishop, and the duty of His angels, and therefore word by word we shall examine them.

## Revelation 2

<sup>2</sup> I know your works, and your labor, and your patience.

All the charges, without one exception, begin with these words, "I know your works;" which must, therefore, be regarded as a common condition of all the churches to be known of Jesus, our great Bishop. This is the fruit of His walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, that He is thoroughly acquainted with the condition of each; this is the property of those eyes like a flame of fire, that they penetrate to the hearts and reins of the children of men; those seven eyes in the head of the Lamb which are the seven Spirits of God, that they embrace sevenfold or all-inclusive knowledge.

As the Head of the Church, therefore, Christ is omniscient; not merely in the Godhead, but in his Christhead: as God-man, He is, through the communicating Spirit, conscious of all things which pass over the wide bounds of creation. It is vain for any angel of the churches to think of concealment; whatever we do of iniquity, we do daringly under the eye of Him to whom we are responsible; whatever we suffer through negligence, we suffer in the presence of Him who is our Lord, and to whom we shall have to give an account of our stewardship.

Oh that we could bear in mind that He is in the midst of us, continually surveying our churches, knowing all their discipline, and observing all their order; that we are in His right hand, continually known of Him more thoroughly than we are known of ourselves! What jealousy over our thoughts, what heed unto our words, what care of our flocks, what constancy in the truth, what fear of wickedness would not this work within us! What consolation also in our adversity, what upholding in our sore oppressions, what confidence in the midst of trials, what reward in the midst of persecutions, that He knows all our works, of what kind they are!

Having declared His perfect and complete knowledge of all the works of the angel of the Ephesian Church, our Great Bishop proceeds to commend whatever He could in His conduct, which I

likewise observe to be a constant rule in these epistles, bringing to view the tenderness, and charity, and kindness of Him we serve; and proving that He delights not to make mention of the evil, but of the good, grieves to rebuke, and loves to commend.

Thus He teaches to all masters under Him, to all ministers of the word, to all princes of the people and magistrates of the earth, how they should carry themselves at all times with loving-kindness, with countenance and patronage of what is good, with severity, and censure, and chastisement, only when it is called for; with the one cheerfully, with the other reluctantly; with the one joyfully, with the other painfully.

While this kindly and gracious character of our Great Bishop and Lord is taught us by His general rule of commencing His charges, however severe, with commendations of what would bear commendation, the particular good qualities which He commends, of labor and patience in the angel of the Ephesian Church, do confirm the idea, given above, of the specific difference which characterizes this epistle: for labor and patience are the proof of zeal and love in the service of any master. In these He had once abounded, preaching the gospel, and proving the weapons of His warfare, against that stronghold of Satan where He dwelt.

And whosoever would plant or edify the Church of Christ must do it with much labor and patience. It is not a work which will bear to be slightly done, nor to be daubed with untempered mortar. It is not the work of the Lord's day merely, although that is the harvest day of the faithful minister; but it is the work of the whole week ever recurring, and ever prosecuted with unceasing diligence. To relax, is to fall away from our first love, and to stand in peril of seeing our Church decline through our slothfulness.

Then, when such seasons of fleshly oppression or worldly temptation arrive, we do well to attend to this charge, given to the angel of the Ephesian Church, and to meditate the aspect of our Lord, with which it is introduced; as holding the stars in His right hand and walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. And if anything will awaken us from our temporary stu-

por, the belief and the constant remembrance of this truth will do it.

From this general recognition and acknowledgment of His servant's diligence and patience, His gracious and loving Master passes on to distinguish those things which He particularly approved.

## TESTING APOSTLES

### Revelation 2

<sup>2</sup> ...and how you cannot bear with them which are evil: and you have tried them which say they are apostles, and have found them liars.

This opens to us some insight into the condition of those primitive churches, and the trials of those primitive pastors.

It is a common error to think and to speak of the Church as then enjoying great peace and purity of communion, great soundness of doctrine, and undisturbed exercise of wholesome discipline. How this error could arise in the face of the Apostolic Epistles, which open such fearful declensions and apostasies, envies, divisions, and oppositions; how it should have arisen in the face of all ecclesiastical history, which records the most unheard-of heresies and the most abominable practices which disgraced the Christian name, and brought it into dishonor in those early times, I cannot well account for, otherwise than from the idolatrous desire of finding some outward object of infallibility to worship, and from the controversial questions with the Papacy concerning the authority of the Church.

But true it is, beyond all doubt, that in comparison with His wild ragings and unbounded license in the primitive Church, Satan may well be said among us to be bound. And therefore, instead of blindly prostrating ourselves before the authority of the fathers and the customs of the early Church, we do well to observe the canons and commandments of the Lord and His apostles, and bring all things to this, the only test of the truth.

There is a Church whose mouth is opened by Christ, and filled with the testimony of truth in all ages; but this complete witness of the truth is not, by outward signs and tokens, to be so identified as to give us a visible thing upon which we may fix God's incommunicable attribute of infallibility.

This Church was most active in the primitive times to purge off from itself those foul pestilences which Satan bred in its bosom. There was such an exuberant health in its constitution, that it did soon cast off those impure blotches which arose upon its surface. But for the strong and patient testimony and labor of the first faithful pastors, the good and evil would have been so intermingled as to have brought about speedy death. Then is a body healthy when it casts off the impurities which it breeds within itself, and heals the wound of its own accord.

This office of a physician the bishop of the Church in Ephesus had to bear in an especial measure; for, as has been said, that city was addicted beyond others to superstition, sorcery, and magic, which are the proper soil for bearing false doctrine and delusions of the devil.

The first arch-heretic, according to all ecclesiastical history, was Simon Magus, the sorcerer whom Peter had to deal with at Samaria, who brewed in his devil-possessed heart such hideous errors as men in modern times can hardly conceive, but ere long shall see renewed again; and there being many of his diabolical craft at Ephesus, we may well believe how the bishop of the Church would have continual exercise of his gift of trying the spirits whether they be of God.

For we do greatly err, indeed, if we suppose that they came with wickedness in their lips, or with plain and open-faced profession of opposition to the way of truth. They said they were apostles; that is, men sent from God in order to teach some further truth. Generally they professed to come from the Holy Spirit, some of them to be the Holy Spirit, all of them to be messengers from the invisible God. With what cunning artifice of the devil, with what delusions of a corrupted heart and erroneous mind,



with what wresting of the Scriptures to their own destruction they came, let the Apostle Paul declare:

## **2 Corinthians 11**

<sup>13</sup> For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ:

<sup>14</sup> And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light:

<sup>15</sup> Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.

How these false and cunning men, deceivers and being deceived, were to be proved, the Apostle John teaches us in his First Epistle:

## **1 John 2**

<sup>22</sup> Who is a liar but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denies the Father and the Son.

Whether John meant this as a test of all spiritual deceptions, or only of those which existed in his time, I know not; but this I know, that in that word “Jesus is the Christ” is all truth enclosed, and that every heresy denies an essential part of it, every schism cuts off an essential part of it. And being so, such heresies and schisms are mortal sins, and they who hold them are in peril of damnation, if they repent not.

This mother truth, the unit of orthodox faith, consists of two subjects: the one *Jesus*, the other *the Christ*.

The former of these is a fleshly man, a man at all points, a man in flesh, such as I am, tried as I am, conditioned as I am, both soul and body; with all my infirmities; Son of Mary, just seed of David,<sup>10</sup> substance of a fallen woman, made of a woman, made under the law.<sup>11</sup> This subject may be denied, was denied then, and is denied now. It is a fatal error, if persisted in.

Now the other subject, *the Christ*, is that Holy One of God, who was before ages in the Fathers bosom, containing the elect of the

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<sup>10</sup> *Romans* 1:3.

<sup>11</sup> *Galatians* 4:4.

Father, containing every creature, creating, upholding, redeeming, regenerating, and in the end eternally to establish them; without sin, without defect, the fullness of the Godhead, the anointed One of God, God's holy Priest, God's everlasting King, the only-begotten and well-beloved Son, in whom He is ever well pleased.

This is the second subject of that great proposition of truth, which all Socinians, Deists, and Idolaters deny, with all who deny His holiness, His entire holiness, at all times, and in all conditions. Either of these subjects may be denied; and, being so, the great foundation of the faith, "Jesus is the Christ," against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, is subverted.

No spirit but the Holy Ghost, being put to the question, can confess to this proposition: every other spirit will deny it in some spiritual point or other. And therefore it is the only creed, the only sufficient creed; and all creeds are but outworks constructed around this, which is our sacred keep, where are laid up the regalia of the crown, the muniments of the kingdom, the palladium of the city.

How such persons as coming in the name of the Spirit, or of God, pretended to set aside any of His commandments, to discredit any of His apostles, or to set forth some truth or interpretation of truth, as authoritative in the Church beyond what God's finished word contains: how such are to be treated, be they who they may, in respect of place, authority, wisdom, or weight of character, of order for sanctity, of celebrity for charity, of learning, of piety, or with whatever grace endowed, St. Paul again declares, whose declaration strikes himself down if he should be found guilty of the like apostasy:

### **Galatians 1**

<sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

<sup>9</sup> As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.

And when they come with no pretenses of new doctrines, but with a subtle assumption of greater strictness and purity, and affecting to walk close by the apostolic rule; then to distinguish such from true reformers of abuses, let the Apostle of the Gentiles again direct us:

**Romans 16**

<sup>17</sup> Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them.

<sup>18</sup> For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

If they come with the disguises of brotherly kindness, pretending to subvert the honest trades and occupations of life, and to have all things in common, and to go about preaching and teaching from house to house instead of uniting in lovely communion with the churches, and abiding in the callings to which they are called, take these Scriptures as the means of their detection, which, treating all of brotherly kindness, do carefully guard against such an abuse of it:

**Romans 12**

<sup>10</sup> Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another;

<sup>11</sup> Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

Here brotherly love is guarded from the evil tendency to sloth and dependence upon others, to which it is liable by the admonition “not to be slothful in business.” Again still more distinctly:

**1 Thessalonians 4**

<sup>9</sup> But as touching brotherly love, you need not that I write unto you: for you yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

<sup>10</sup> And indeed you do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

<sup>11</sup> And that you study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.

<sup>12</sup> That you may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that you may have lack of nothing.

And such passages abound throughout the epistles, whose chief aim in the sacred canon is to furnish the churches with the means of detecting errors in doctrine and malversations in practice.

I have been the more particular on this topic, having had an opportunity of observing in this city the arts of the devil, and being convinced that by far the largest proportion of dissenterism springs from the polluted source of daring innovation, and restlessly seeking to bring their views to pass.

The licentious spirit of the age, the indifference to the opinions of men, the toleration of all opinions, the credit given to a man for speaking out what his mind is, instead of trying it and proving it first by the orthodox faith of the Church, do cultivate and cherish the spirit of heresy and schism to such a fearful extent, that I am anxious to advertise my brethren, the ministers of the churches, of their duty in this respect, and of the way of discharging it, seeing that such a proper occasion has presented itself in the commendation of this angel for his faithfulness in this part of his duty, which certainly still pertains to us the ministers of the gospel.

## **BEARING AND LABORING WITH PATIENCE**

The Lord, recalling those services which His servant had done against the enemies of the truth, increases in warmth, and commends with a liberal heart, adding these words:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>3</sup> And have borne, and have patience, and for my name's sake have labored, and have not fainted.

This is, I take it, not so much a reiteration of what had been commended in general under the head of patience and labor, as an acknowledgment of the laborious and painstaking way in which he had contended against these wicked persons in the Church, and these false apostles who either came from without,

or set themselves up from within, to disturb the soundness of its faith and the harmony of its communion.

He had borne the toil necessary to repel them and cast them out: their errors he had sifted and searched; their endeavors to pervert the saints he had withstood; their secret undermining arts by creeping into houses he had exposed; and whatever in him lay, had he put forth in the great service of maintaining the integrity of the faith, and the purity of the Church.

It had not yielded to his first endeavors: Satan wrought subtly and strongly to overthrow this Church, which Paul had planted, which John had watered, and which Timothy, Paul's beloved son, did watch over. And God, for the proof of the believers, did permit the heresies to find a root among them, and to endure for a while; but the zealous bishop, whoever he was, had stood to his post of conflict, and maintained the cause of Christ without wavering.

Such patience is most essential to every watchman upon the walls of Zion, to every standard-bearer in her armies. It is a long and a tough battle which we have to wage: like the heads of the Hydra, errors start up on every side, and evils lurk in every corner ready to burst forth. Ours is a wakeful, laborious post, to set the battle ever in array; as men fall, to set others in their stead, and to give to every man his station in the field.

Oh, you slothful ministers, awake! arise to the help of the Lord against the mighty<sup>12</sup>: awake your strength, and do valiantly. Be not dismayed, O you faithful ministers, who have girded yourselves, because you prosper not at the first.

### **James 1**

<sup>4</sup> Let patience have her perfect work, that you may be complete in all things, wanting nothing.

Did Paul faint at Rome when all they of Asia forsook him? He trusted in the Lord, and the Lord stood by him; and he was delivered out of the lion's mouth.

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<sup>12</sup> *Judges* 5:23.

Did Luther faint when he stood alone in the diet of Worms, beaten with scoffs, and shaken by the timidity of his friends? He trusted in God, and said, "I can do no more, God be my help" and God was his help.

So say I to every true-hearted minister who discerns aright the fearful face of battle that is against us, the disheartening divisions that are in the midst of us; be not shaken or dismayed, but stand up and quit you like men, be strong. Only be assured that it is for the name of Jesus Christ, for the truth contained in that great name you labor; and rest assured of its speedy and everlasting triumph against the gates of hell. No weapon formed against it shall ever prosper. To that name every knee, of things in heaven and earth and under the earth, shall bow.

And to assure yourself that it is for His name, and not for some other unworthy and destructible object, that you are contending, give heed to the Spirit witnessing within you to the truth as it is in Jesus. Hear Christ answering to the truth of the word, in the mouth of His Church, with His witnessing Spirit.

For this keep your souls ever calm and placid, peaceful and joyful in the midst of all privations. See God with your pure heart. Dwell with Him ever in the inward part. Be not hustled out of this God-seeing faculty. See God always, otherwise you beat the air. Expect the fulfillment of these two words of the Lord:

#### **John 14**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

The Father is in you, and Christ is in you, both inhabiting you in the person of the blessed Spirit, who is of the one substance of the indivisible Godhead; and if He be in you, He will not be silent concerning the Father and the Son, of whom it is His office to testify, whom it is His only office to manifest; as is declared in that other word of the Lord:

## John 14

<sup>21</sup> He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

These are comfortable words to every Christian, but especially to the minister upon whose shoulders lies the responsibility of a Christian Church. I would fain arise into these unmolested confidences in that arduous conflict with friends as well as foes which I see arising, for the truth as it was once delivered to the saints.

These exhortations some may think beside the office of an interpreter; but why should I hide myself from my own flesh? why should I not comfort my own kindred, the children of my mother? why should I not speak to my fellow-servants of the house, and tell them how to make ready their accounts for the great Head of the house, whom I believe to be near at hand?

O you critical men! Do you cease to be men because you are critical? Let me alone: I want no quarrel with you. Let me alone to open to the ministers and the churches what a summons abides us all, that we may make ourselves ready for that which we believe in. Go your own way, if you will go to destruction; but hinder us not to exhort one another, and to provoke one another unto love and unto good works.

You angels of the churches, my brethren, Christ's servants, give good heed to the false apostles and prophets who are even now in the midst of the Church denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing on themselves swift destruction; setting at nought the precious doctrine that He came in our fallen condition; and weaving metaphysical tissues concerning some difference between his humanity and ours, and endeavoring to cast reproach upon those who maintain their identity, as if we made the Sacrifice for sin a sinner. Resist those men without fear, without doubt; for they are the enemies of the truth, and they pervert unstable souls.

Those men also, who are subverting the foundations of the Church and State by encouraging a national acknowledgment of

the mother of harlots, apostles of the light of liberalism, and in so far forth enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ, resist.

**Matthew 7**

<sup>20</sup> By their fruits you shall know them.

What fruit of reproach for Christ's sake do they endure from the Deists, the Socinians, the Atheists, the Schismatics, in one word, the great congregation of the liberals of this day? They are exalted to the heavens; they suffer no reproach for Christ's sake, except such reproaches as I now indite, wrung from the grieved hearts and disappointed minds of their brethren, who love them, but cannot follow them into their wicked league with iniquity.

**LEAVING THE FIRST LOVE**

These commendations of the angel's past services being finished, the Lord proceeds to the more painful duty of rebuking and remonstrating with him for declining from his steadfastness, and cooling in his zeal and love. Truly his zeal had been great and his devotion noble; and the Lord recalls it with grateful words.

If a man might repose upon his arms in this warfare, if he might lay down his spiritual sword, and say, "Sword, you have devoured enough," it was permitted to this angel so to do: and so he had done, alas! thinking haply that he had gained his object in bravely and successfully withstanding the enemies of the Lord, he thought to enjoy himself with repose; when the Lord gently admonishes him that this love of repose consists not with his former love, and that he must not relax, but proceed towards the goal of everlasting rest and glory, which in due time he should attain if he fainted not.

**Revelation 2**

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love.

<sup>5</sup> Remember therefore from whence you are fallen, and repent and do the first works.

How delicately, how lovingly, this note of censure is introduced, "I have somewhat against you!" It reminds me of our



Lord's dealing with Simon the Pharisee, who suspected evil, because he permitted the penitent sinner to wash his feet with tears, and wipe them with the hairs of her head. Instead of retorting His suspicions with rebuke, He began with the meekness of charity and wisdom,

### **Luke 7**

<sup>40</sup> Simon, I have somewhat to say unto you.

So here being minded to rebuke the angel of the Church of Ephesus, He begins by recounting his past services, and celebrating his excellent works; and then gently passes over to the other strain,

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, I have somewhat against you.

Oh! this pleases my heart well. What a contrast between God and myself! If I am displeased with a servant, how ready am I to forget all past acts of duty, and at once to strike the jarring note of contention! God forgive me, and enable me to copy from your own image!

Oh, how different from the Pharisaical spirit, which makes a merit of remarking a fault, of honestly, as they say, and at once correcting it; this they call coming directly to the point. And certainly honesty is greatly to be prized, but charity far more. It is not the perfection of character thus bluntly to speak: and the proof of it is, that such plain-spoken men are generally proud and vain of their bluntness.

Far more akin to the divine method is that of the well-bred and polite gentleman, who, repressing temper, with courteous language, and sweet disinclination, approaches the painful subject. However much this politeness is abused to hypocritical and evil ends, I say it aims at a good thing, which the Spirit of Christ enables us to realize.

And the same observation I may make of all the polite and civil ordinances of life, that they do embody in themselves a shadow and a likeness of that charitable spirit which the gospel teaches,

and the believer practices. The world wisely considered, the spirit of society looked at in the light of Christian truth, is, with all its faults, a most venerable ordinance for restraining the boundless selfish dispositions of man. And woe be to him, be he Christian or not, who sets it at naught!

The great Master of the house having demonstrated His tender love and true esteem of His servant, by this gentle way of approaching that which was the chief subject of his epistle, and having as much as possible disarmed His mind of resentment and prejudice, brings His charge directly and distinctly, without any windings of speech, in perfect honesty, combined with perfect love: and the charge is,

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>4</sup> ...you have left your first love.

Like a husband who has reason to complain of his wife's diminished affection, or a wife of a husband's, the Lord of glory complains to one of His ministers: how condescending in Him, how honorable to us! He wants love, and nothing less than love can please Him: He is troubled by the falling away of our love: and He laments over it: man all over, even in His glory, He mourns over a brother's weaned affections; and He condescends to remonstrate with him on the subject.

How beautiful, how sublime is such condescension in God's anointed one, who ever has, and ever holds the love of God, and of all elect angels, and of all glorified saints, thus to make His moan over His turtle dove upon the earth! My soul, be lifted up with admiration, and learn thus lowly to entreat the love of the lowliest!

Ah! this marriage of the soul to Christ, the faithfulest, the best of husbands, should yearly grow more close and delightful; and if it does not, it proves degeneracy in us; and such degeneracy argues great ingratitude for the experience of continual mercies. And such ingratitude will bring with it temptations to some other affection, which will insinuate adulterous thoughts, and end in

sore chastisements, bereavements of our children, and in the end utter apostasy.

To guard the soul which He loved from eternity, and for which He died, against such a fearful catastrophe, the Lord interposes with His remonstrance, saying, “You have left your first love.”

If my idea be true, that there is an allusion in this to the married state, then it favors the idea which prevails among our Scottish peasantry, that the union of a minister to a flock is like wedlock, and ordination is like the joining of the marriage tie.

If by the flock be understood the whole congregation of the Church, as the Church of Scotland, or the Church of England, the idea I believe to be a true one, and so true, as conspiring with favorable circumstances, to have given rise in a good degree to the celibacy of the clergy in the Roman apostasy.

But being understood of a particular flock, instead of binding us to the whole Church, of which Christ is the husband, and leaving us at His disposal and direction, it would bind us to a small section, and tend in a great degree to break up the unity of the Church.

Be this, however, as it may, the truth is the same, that Christ considers the soul both of believer and minister as betrothed to Him, according to Paul’s declaration:

**Romans 7**

<sup>4</sup> Wherefore, my brethren, you also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that you should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Would that this, the first form of temptation which is specified in our Bishop’s sevenfold epistle—the epistle universal to His Church—the temptation of a gradual declension of love had been guarded against, and His admonition attended to, then would the fatal apostasy never have been realized, which grew not out of erroneous doctrine, for what Church so orthodox as the western churches, during the first five, yea, seven centuries.

Nor did it grow from the want of rigid and regular canons of discipline, which were multiplied and strictly enforced, but out of a declension of love to Christ, and to His children; in room of which came love of the princes of the world, whom also she seduced, and tyranny over her children, whom she slew.

Love to Christ, manifested in love to His sheep and lambs, is the principle which should ever hold the ascendancy in a pastor's bosom. When Peter, thrice entreated of his Lord if he loved Him, three times protested his love, the Lord as oft replied,

**John 21**

<sup>16</sup> Feed my sheep;

<sup>15</sup> Feed my lambs;

—as much as to say,

“Let your love find its object there, where mine rested; for me the Father loves, because I give my life for the sheep, and you will I love if you feed my sheep.”

Insomuch that in the day of judgment, the destinies of the nation shall turn upon this very question, How they did entreat the least of these, “my little ones.”<sup>13</sup>

If so be that love to Christ is to reign over all affections in the believer's heart, and that love is to be shown in acts of loving-kindness to His children, we may well say, that all things in the rulers of the Church are of secondary consequence when compared with love.

All zeal for the truth, and controversy to maintain it against the error, and wisdom to discriminate between the good and the evil, all learning, which of the ministerial office is an indispensable requisite, ought to have its impulse, and its enjoyment, and its use, in ministering the truth for the love of the brethren, that they may be nourished up in sound doctrine, rooted and grounded in love.

Zeal for sound doctrine, flowing from any principle but love, is bigotry, or rivalry, or contention, or at best blind devotedness to

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<sup>13</sup> *Matthew* 10:42.

good old ways: and all discipline which has any other spring, is the love of power, and works ambition in him that exercises it, bondage in him upon whom it is exercised, and is far from being commendable when proceeding in this arrogant and tyrannical mood. Thus wrought the Papal Church, until by its prodigious influence it engendered throughout the world a system of the sorest thralldom, deepest darkness, and most malignant error.

We ministers of the word would do well to learn of what spirit we are, and to give great diligence both to cultivate in our own hearts, and to practice in our lives, the love of the flock, as the only sufficient way of testifying our love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Behold what fearful issues wait upon the neglect of it!

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>5</sup> Remember, therefore, from whence you are fallen, and repent, and do your first works: or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent.

There is forgiveness with Christ that He may be feared, and plenteous redemption that He may be sought after. He gave it as the great canon of His Church:

### **Luke 17**

<sup>3</sup> If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

<sup>4</sup> And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him.

He who gave this, is the person to carry the canon into full effect. Else were He not prepared for the office of Intercessor, even to the very best of His saints, who more than seven times a day, yea seventy times seven, offend against Him.

In the spirit of mercy and forgiveness He calls upon His servant to consider his ways, and remember how far he has declined from the place of his former footsteps, and to repent, and be such a one as He was heretofore, when He fulfilled so laboriously and patiently the part of the good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep.

He makes no question for the sake of orthodoxy concerning his ability to repent, or for the sake of clearness concerning the nature of true repentance; but in round terms and plain language, commands him to change his mind and course of life. And so did the apostles, in preaching to the Gentiles.

**Acts 17**

<sup>30</sup> The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now He commands all men to repent,

<sup>31</sup> Because He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world by that man who He has ordained, whereof He has given assurance unto all men in that He has raised Him from the dead.

And this is the right way of going to work; because every commandment of God implies in it His will that the same should be obeyed, and He wishes not the suspicion to be raised in men's minds of His willingness to lend the necessary aid.

By adopting the contrary method, of taking men aback in the full career of their purpose, with much discovery of the help necessary to success, it has come to pass at least in our Scotland, that the very will of God to assist all men in a holy life, yea His very will that all should be saved, has come practically to be doubted, if not publicly to be denied, whereby men are landlocked among the imaginary difficulties and impediments to a holy course.

Most true it is that the bitter root of Arminianism, or rather Pelagianism, which destroys men's souls by ascribing to them that power which they have not, did call for some antidote of true doctrine concerning man's total inability; which the Church assembled in the Synod of Dort did timeously furnish.

But methinks the antidote has turned into poison, and needs itself an antidote. For men, through erroneous uses of the great doctrine of election have come to misrepresent God in a fearful way, as if He had no affection of love for all men, and no disposition to keep them in every good course.

But the Lord and His apostles understood it otherwise when they thus take God's willingness for granted, and say little or

nothing about it; but continually apply to men's conscience with discourse of their own guilt, and to men's will with discourse of repentance and regeneration. Whereby they did work in them the sense of sin and the feeling of infirmity.

Unless a man be preached to as responsible for a holy, for a completely holy life, how shall he either know the extent or feel the guilt of his sin? Unless a man be called upon for exertion in the way of all perfection, how shall he come to know the infirmity, the helplessness of his own strength?

But by being addressed as if he stood in Adam's very place, and had Adam's very power, of which the consciousness still survives, though the oppression of a stronger on our breast prevent its use, that consciousness of the Holy One is awakened within us, and the sense of the vile oppressor grows grievous; and we cry out to Him who alone can help us, and we are helped; and we learn to trust in Him, and to depend upon Him entirely,

#### **Acts 17**

<sup>25</sup> ...for life, and breath, and all things.

And thus a religious life proceeds: for it is in the endeavor after what is right, that power from on high descended to our help. This is the reason why our Lord calls upon His servant to repent, and do his former works, without any word of parley concerning the nature of repentance, or the necessity of Divine aid.

And, as in Scripture, reward is ever connected with obedience, so is punishment ever connected with impenitent disobedience. It is not the being found in evil which the gospel denounces damnation against; that God winks at. But it is the continuing therein, after the knowledge of God's forgiveness in Christ, of His gift of eternal life in Christ, and of righteousness and true holiness in Christ, has been preached to us, and we repent not of our sins, nor turn away from our idols to serve the living God: then it is, and upon such obstinacy, that the gospel fulminates the threatenings not only of hell after judgment, but likewise of the wrath and revenge of God in this life, who is risen out of His place to cause the name of His honorable Son to be honored over all the world.

They, who say the preaching of the gospel brings not the good news of pardon to every guilty man, speak against the manifest truth of God; and those who say that it stops here, and brings not present and eternal wrath against every soul which repents not, do just as great dishonor to the holy gospel of our God.

Now, besides the general destruction which the gospel makes sure against every soul of man that believes not for salvation upon the Lord Jesus Christ, it contains a wisely adapted and nicely adjusted code of rewards or punishments, which in this present life reach us or our posterity, according to the nature of our worthiness or delinquency.

And this, though it be not written as in a law-book, forasmuch as we are not under law but under grace, not under the letter which kills, but under the Spirit which makes alive, is righteously enforced upon those, who altogether refuse to stand under grace, or coming under it, are not careful to shelter and shield themselves beneath its canopy, from the lightnings of the law which fly without and all around the ark of salvation.

Now this code is not adjusted upon any artificial system, like that of Moses, or like those of the nations, but has its operation in the seat of life, inducing disease and death, and entailing them upon our posterity, or in the laws of providence bringing on adversity and abandonment of God and men, or in the soul itself, leading it into darkness and delusion and despair.

Deep-seated in the being and constitution of nature is the scheme of God's corrective discipline, and vindictive judgment, which His revealed word does not alter but only reveal, which outward observation and inward reflection likewise can notice and confirm.

And conjecture can go a good way beyond the grave into the invisible regions of our being; which revelation opens and displays, not as a new system in addition to the former, but as the same system carried on by the same unchangeable God.



He who lays down his life for Christ's sake gains a better life in the world to come; he who meekly contents himself with the smallness of his portion, envying not the rich and fretting himself not with worldly ambition, but diligently seeking and quietly waiting for the kingdom of heaven, inherits the earth as a king and a priest.

And in one word, Christ absent from His dominion, and hidden from the sight of men, will, when He comes again to possession, hold exactly such an inquest upon our faithfulness to His name and rights and injured cause, as a just king would upon being replaced upon his father's throne, after having endured exile for a season.

It is all ordered, I mean to say, upon principles of justice, which man well enough apprehends and approves. The knowledge is new but perfectly comprehensible, and the things taught are harmonious with the pre-established laws of the human mind, with the principles of our creation, with the image of God stamped upon us, to which we are still conscious, though deprived of its enjoyment and exercise by the tyranny of sin and Satan.

And what, then, is the righteous retribution which by the laws of the Divine Providence is visited upon a pastor who forgets his first works, and falls from his first love? It is what reason would suggest, the falling away of that charge which he has neglected and forsaken; and with it the falling away of his own glory and dignity, as the divinely appointed head and watchman thereof.

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>5</sup> ...or else I will come unto you quickly, and will remove your candlestick out of his place, except you repent.

This threatening, in as far as the connection between the star and the candlestick, the angel and the Church, is concerned, so as that the one should be, in all points, taken as responsible for all the conditions of the other, we have already explained under the first division of the epistle, its inscription<sup>14</sup>; and it only remains

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<sup>14</sup> See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3 "Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church", Chapter: "His Seven Epistles", Section: "The Seven Epis-

that we should further explain what is the precise nature of the thing threatened; and apply it for the warning of all the ministers, and the instruction of all the churches which are found falling away from their first love.

Now it seems to me to speak its own meaning. The *candlestick* is the Church; *his* candlestick was that Church which had its place in Ephesus: to remove *his candlestick* out of *its place* is to remove the Church from Ephesus. This is the exact and literal interpretation, that the light of His Church which God had set up in that city should go down in that city, and be there set up no more.

How it was to be suppressed is not said: Christ simply declares that He would come and suppress it quickly. By comparing the style of this with the style of the other threatenings, we may, however, gather some information, at least of a negative kind, with respect to the method in which the judgment was to be carried into effect.

That upon the Church of Pergamos is:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>16</sup> Repent; or else I will come unto you quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

This, from the explanation given of the symbol of the sword<sup>15</sup>, conveys to us acts of bloodshed, to the end of rooting up that Church altogether: and as we have often said, that the very use of these several epistles is to give seven distinct characteristic forms of ecclesiastical condition, instruction, and judgment, we surely believe that one of them will not repeal another; but that they will be specific, each of its proper case.

We therefore conclude that this is not the method of proceeding against the Church in Ephesus. By the same method of reasoning, we obtain from the consideration of the threatening against the Church in Thyatira,<sup>16</sup> that it is not by sore and severe tribulations,

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ties.”

<sup>15</sup> See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3 “Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church, Chapter: “The Vision”, Section: “The Sharp Sword.”

<sup>16</sup> *Revelation 2:22.*

and many calamitous visitations that the Ephesian Church is to be visited, nor yet by a sudden and unexpected blow, as in the case of the Church in Sardis,<sup>17</sup> nor yet by intolerable nauseating rejection, as in that of Laodicea.<sup>18</sup>

How then? In my view of it, there remains only one other method, that of gradual consumption, and decline of the Church, until it shall be no more seen. And this seems in unison with the cause which brings on the visitation, namely, the declension of love. As love is the cause both of generation and of regeneration, whereby children are born to men and to God, so the decline of love is made to be followed with the decline of increase: the family diminishes until at length it dies out altogether. This seems to me to be the natural and proper idea conveyed by the removal of a candlestick out of its place, and as such we shall consider it.

Here, then, is the retribution established by the all-wise and all-directing providence of God, upon a pastor whose love to Christ is on the wane, that Christ will cease to send him increase of his flock, will send him decrease of it, until at length it shall waste away to nothing, and be found no more.

This reveals the great principle upon which Christ makes churches to prosper, namely, the love which the pastor bears to the Lord Jesus Christ; which, as we have already shown, is only fully expressed by the love of the sheep. I say fully expressed, because Christ's love to men in general, which was very great is not co-equal nor co-extensive with His love to the Church.

### **John 10**

<sup>11</sup> I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.

<sup>15</sup> ...I lay down my life for the sheep.

<sup>17</sup> *Therefore* does my Father love me, because I lay down my life...

### **John 17**

<sup>9</sup> I pray not for the world, but for those whom you have given me.

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<sup>17</sup> Revelation 3:3.

<sup>18</sup> Revelation 3:16.

And it is so written because the Father's love to the election to the Church is a greater love than He bears to the world. For the world He gives His Son, whom the world rejects; this rejection He forgives in the election, and by His love brings them to receive and enjoy Him, to be blessed and glorified with Him:

**John 17**

<sup>23</sup> That the world may know that You...have loved *them*, as You have loved *me*.

Now, this the Father's love, this love of Christ, love in the highest mood, the pastor is called to bear to the Church, and to propagate through the Church; and as he does so, so shall increase be given to him, and splendor and majesty.

Not the love of the evangelist merely, who proclaims a crucified Redeemer unto a guilty world, who proclaims pardon to a condemned world, with that earnestness of love with which the Father gave His Son, and the Son gave himself; but the love of a pastor who to those in the Church that are lending only a deaf ear to his ministry, and cold of heart, so far from resenting it, goes away and cherishes them in his bosom, and clasps their benumbed feelings; with fond love, bearing and loving, forbearing and loving.

Such affection, I say, even such affection as was manifested on the day of Pentecost by the shedding down of the Holy Ghost upon the thousands of that city which had put Him to death; this, even this, is the diligence in which a Church shall have many sons born unto her, and shall flourish more and more in the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the favor of her great Head.

But if otherwise it be, as otherwise it is in so many cases around me, no matter what be in the stead of love:

- be there eloquence, it shall be like the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal;
- be there learning, it shall be moth-eaten, and turn to pride and bigotry;
- be there zeal for truth, it shall breed controversy and coldness;

- be there honor and honesty, it shall end in the applause and esteem of the world;
- be there state and dignity, it shall issue in resistance and contempt;
- be there social kindness, it shall breed hospitality and charity:

But not one of them shall beget children to God; nothing shall brighten and burnish the candlestick, nothing shall fill the house with light, but love; the love which the Father bears to His own, the love which the Head of the Church bears to the Father's election,—such love let a pastor keep warm at his heart, and let this be the spring of all his exertions, let this make him eloquent, learned, faithful, and unsparing in the truth, honest, and honorable, and dignified, and kind; and he shall not see his flock declining away under his hand, but he shall rejoice in its increase; yea, and of its increase he shall partake.

And if so be that he has come in upon a flock thus declining under the indifference and coldness of a former minister, he shall by this means stay the consumption, restore the life, and recover a congregation from being lost unto the Church.

Oh, what a lesson this is to my brethren and me! God has written it strong upon my conviction. I know it, and I feel it. Now may He give me grace to reduce it to practice, and mercifully forgive my shortcoming and transgression in the times of my ignorance. For never, O God! as you know, till I studied this vision, did I know these things as I now know them; double, yea tenfold will be my guilt, if I do not give to all my brethren the example of a pastor's love.

One word more, before leaving this important topic, upon the extent of that love. Doubtless it begins with our own flock, and has its center and its focus there; but not there has it its boundary. It does, however, gather its oil and its fuel thence, and it rests thereon for its support; but from thence it sends the light of its beams and the radiation of its heat to the widest distances, always

affecting and cheering the Church first, and thence passing outward into the world.

The Church glows with its own inbred heat of love, and radiates forth light and heat upon the cold bosom of the world around. The pastors of the Church are like so many burners, which together constitute the one light of the Church, which is that polar star of the world's course. The pastors of the Church are like so many live coals, which together constitute the furnace of the Church, and melt out the gold from the dross of the world, that it may be cast into the various pieces of the cherubim, whereon the glory of the Lord shall for ever rest:

### **John 17**

<sup>23</sup> That they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that You have loved them, as You have loved me.

Much, much my mind moves me to say upon this subject; but let me never forget that I am doing the office of an interpreter, and not of a preacher. The Spirit of God be the preacher of these great truths to the hearts of my dear brethren, the angels of the churches.

## **THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANES**

Having thus admonished the bishop of the Church in Ephesus, of his shortcoming in love, the cardinal virtue of a pastor, the Great Bishop returns to His more congenial mood of commendation; giving us therein a beautiful example of how much He loved, and with this He ends His charge.

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>6</sup> But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

Who these Nicolaitanes were, has been a subject of no small disputation with commentators. The fathers who wrote on here-sies, as Irenaeus, Augustine, and Epiphanius, distinguish them as those who divided between Jesus and Christ, alleging Jesus to have been a mere man, upon whom the Christ of God descended at His baptism, and removed from Him again before His passion,

enabling and informing him for His words and works, but not abiding with Him forever, nor united in one person with Him forever, as the orthodox Church has always believed.

It was a common opinion, even in the days of Clemens Alexandrinus, as it is not infrequently in these times, that this heresy had its origin from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons, who was a proselyte of Alexandria. Which notion, the father above named, rejects and refutes in these words, which I translate from the Second Book of the *Stromata*, page 413. Where describing some of the sensualities of the Gnostic school of heretics, he thus speaks:

“Such, however, likewise are those who say that they follow Nicolas, wresting something transmitted from that man, to the effect that we ought to exorcise the flesh. But that famous man signified that we ought to forbid pleasures and passions, and by such exercise weaken the impulses and inclinations of the flesh: but they, &c. &c (here follows a picture of their sensuality)....following the dogma of their lust, and not of the apostolical man. In what do such differ from Sardanapalus,” &c.

And in another place of the third book, page 436, he again defends him from all connection in any way with these impure sensualities. And the same do other of the fathers.

From these passages we gather, that like all heretical pravities, it descended from doctrine into action, and brought them into a condition beneath the brutes that perish; of which if you would have a particular description, read it in the *Epistle of Jude*.

There is a curious criticism upon this term *Nicolaitanes*, by Eichhom, a German divine of the Neological school, more remarkable for its ingenuity than its soundness; namely, That the word *Nicolaitanes* in the Greek is a translation of a word in the Hebrew, *Balaamites*,—being derived from the root Balaam, the name of the deceitful prophet, signifying “Conqueror of the People,” the same which *Nicolas* signifies in the Greek; and his idea is, that the term *Nicolaitanes* is not descriptive of any heretical sect in particular, but of the false prophets in general, who, like Balaam, misled the people, and were briefly called, from their great

leader, *Balaamites*, which, rendered into Greek by the word that properly translates it, is *Nicolaitanes*.

This is very ingenious, and also very true in the principle of it; and would, I think, be worthy of all acceptance, as giving a more dignified sense: for the leaders of heresies did infinitely abound, and wonderfully mislead the people. And could I get over the authority of all antiquity, and the circumstance of its being mentioned,<sup>19</sup> in addition to the mention of the Balaamites, I would gladly adopt it. But perceiving that the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is set forth as another thing from the doctrine of Balaam, I think it safer to rest in the ordinary interpretation given above.

What the works of the Nicolaitanes were, we learn from the passages of Clement already referred to; indulgences of the sense in every form: not merely the natural inclinations of the flesh, for such is the condition in which the gospel looks to find all men, but these inclinations perverting the truth of Christ Jesus unto their own use, and sanctifying themselves under the pretense of pleasing and serving God.

In the first ages of Christianity, there was no sense of decorum and decency such as now exists in Christendom; no bounds or moderation either to the sensual inclinations or ambitious revengeful dispositions of men. There was no influence of good custom, nor awe of public opinion, to preserve men from running into all possible excesses and extravagances.

It is one of the benefits which the gospel has conferred upon the world, to have constituted written and unwritten laws, customs of temperance, the sense of modesty, and the feeling of honor; and, in one word, that common sense of what is becoming to every station and office of life, all which influences together working do train us up under their wholesome influence to obedience, and prevent us from those wild and wide excesses into which it is the nature of every passion to carry its unhappy votary.

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<sup>19</sup> *Revelation 2:15.*



Nothing of all this influence counteracted the natural workings of men's minds in those ancient times. Let any one read the form of human character, as it was exhibited in Rome from the days of Marius and Sylla, onward to the days of Domitian, and remember that Rome was for self-command like the Great Britain of the world which then was, being nothing so huge in its vices as the Greeks and Asiatics; or let him study it as it is exhibited in the familiar letters of Cicero, or by any other writer of these times; or let him take it from the strong contrasts which are to be found in the apologies of the Fathers of the first and second centuries; or let him take it from the epistles of St. Paul, which is infallible authority; and he will have some notion of the fearful scope which men gave not to their natural lusts only, but even to those which are against nature.

When such men therefore being brought into the Church outwardly, were not baptized inwardly with the Holy Ghost, their natural inclinations, the will of the flesh, strove against the discipline of the Church with an impetuosity of which we cannot even have a conception. And because an evil heart can corrupt any form of truth, these terrible forms of wickedness to which the hearts of men were familiar in those rank times, did engender most fearful corruptions of the truth, whereof in these Christian times we have not an example or even an idea.

In reading the history of the Eucharist, the most holy of our mysteries, my hair has almost stood on end to know the awful things which certain of the Gnostics were wont to practice; and I have too much regard for the purity of my reader's imagination to give them expression.

Now it was necessary to reconcile these sensual indulgences in some way or other to the name of Christian; for Satan did not bring these servants of his into the Church for nought; for his highest end of dishonoring the name of Christ, and prejudicing men against that communion, under the cover of which such fearful things were transacted. He then began to show himself as Antichrist, or the opponent of Christ.

Now no one could doubt that the Christian religion insists upon self-denial on this side the resurrection; because, till then, the will of the flesh is against the will of the Spirit, but after the resurrection it is as true that the will of the flesh will be conformed to the will of the Spirit, and therefore restraint shall last no longer, because there will be no disposition in the body to sin.

It was one of the chief acts of Satan, therefore, to delude his votaries into the notion that the resurrection was past already; and this he succeeded in doing, as is evident from many parts of the apostolical writings. Nor is it so difficult as some imagine.

How many of our evangelical people do confound the first resurrection with the regeneration of the soul which is promised and assured to the believer in baptism? Do they not all do it? This is the very thing which Satan succeeded in doing for these primitive teachers; and this done, the Rubicon was passed. For then the first resurrection, which in the primitive times was the only resurrection that a believer cared about, being passed, as these heretics imagined, they were living in the thousand years of enjoyment during which they were to possess and enjoy and rule the world.

Add to this the continual declarations made unto faith of our being already risen with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places, where they neither marry nor are given in marriage: the declarations that to the pure all things are pure, and that in the Church there is neither male nor female: translate the truth of faith into truth of sense, and what have you but the sanctification of all indulgences as the highest attainment of the Divine life: and being thus deluded, they contemned as in bondage all who did not go to the same excess of riot with themselves. They had all things in common, they rioted in all excess: they defiled the flesh, despised dominion, and spoke evil of dignities, and followed after a thousand wicked courses, which we cannot enumerate, but refer to, as contained in, the Epistles of *Peter* and *Jude*.

It was in the Church that all these things arose: in the Churches of Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, and I may say in every Church,

for these persons are noticed in almost every epistle. What was to be done?

Our Lord had given the canon, that the ultimate appeal was to the Church herself, and if they refused to hear the Church, then must they be to us as heathen men and publicans. But these perverters of the way of godliness arising, as was most commonly the case, among those who were of chief repute; as, for instance, the excommunicated person in the Corinthian Church, and Diotrefes, and Alexander the coppersmith, and Hymeneus, and Philetus, many angels or ministers would be afraid to take prompt measures against them, and many would by their love be disinclined to take severe ones.

And now love is brought to Christ's own test of obeying His commandments. His commandments are to regard such men as heathen men and publicans, after the first and second admonition to reject them. But hope would linger over them, and charity would be ever construing things favorably; so that no case could occur of so trying and proving a kind as this which did occur in most of these churches.

And therefore no wonder that our Lord in these charges should so oft make remarks approving or disapproving their behavior in this respect. For as it bore upon the prosperity of His Church it was a point of the utmost importance.

- If these persons are retained, the Church loses its character of making a distinction between the evil and the good.
- If Christ's name is to be taken as the sanction of evil as well as of good, how is He to be known as the Holy One of God?
- If His disciples are not to be distinguished by their purity and holiness, their faith of truth, and their rejection of falsehood, then how are they to teach and exemplify the word and worship of God to nations lying in wickedness?
- If darkness is to mingle with the light, then is the light swallowed up; and the Church is no longer the candlestick of purest gold.

On every account, therefore, it was necessary that the bishop of the churches, into whose hands the government is committed, should detect these deep delusions and inventions and abominable practices of the devil. As a star, he must ever shine in the true light of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor suffer these clouds to obscure him. Highly worthy in every point of view was it of Christ's observation, whether His angels hated or tolerated those abominations which Satan sought to introduce into the Church.

The angel of the Church in Ephesus did hate these practices, and he is praised for it. It was not want of discernment of doctrine, nor yet of exercise of discipline he was blamed, but simply for want of love, declension of love; proving, as we have said, that all the outward forms of the Church may be standing in their just and due proportions, and yet the only thing for which these are valuable as containing the soul and essence of love, may be wasting, may gradually decay; profession continue; yea and many apparent followers of the Church: while she is dying away, and soon to be cut off from being a Church, soon to be rooted out from her place, and the place which now knows her, to know her no more.



## IV. THE SPIRIT'S FIRST EXHORTATION

**W**E NOW come to the third constituent part of which these epistles consist, which is a word of exhortation to the churches. That to the Ephesian Church is couched in these terms:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches: To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

In considering this annunciation of the Spirit affixed to our Bishop's charge to His angel of the Church in Ephesus, we shall first treat of that part of it which is common to all the epistles; and, secondly, of that which is peculiar to this one.

The former subject will open to us the general scope and intention of this constituent part of the epistles, and the latter will point our attention to that which is peculiar to each; according to this method we have to consider first, what is to be gathered from these words, with which all the Spirit's admonitions are prefaced:

### **THE SPIRIT SPEAKING TO THE CHURCHES**

#### **Revelation 2** [also ch. 2:11, 17, 29; ch. 3:6, 13, 22]

<sup>7</sup> He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches...

Upon this I observe, first, that the speaker is the Spirit and not the Son of man, nor yet any of the angels who minister to Him in the revealing of these visions. Besides the seven instances of this vision, I find only two other places in this book where any word is put into the mouth of the Spirit; the one of which is:

#### **Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

And the other is:

## **Revelation 22**

<sup>17</sup> And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.

In the former of these two instances we can see, without entering at large into the passage which is an extremely difficult one, that the matter of the Spirit's explanation is the supplement or rather the counterpart of what is contained in the seven texts under consideration.

In these texts His word is of earnest and strong controversy, and promises some excellent reward to every one who overcomes therein; but here His word is of rest,

## **Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> ...that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them.

Their labors are concluded, and their rest is come. It would seem from these texts, that it is the office of the Spirit to encourage the churches in their conflict, and to give them rest when their works are ended: and this answers to the name of Comforter, and the office of abiding continually with us, as the representative of Christ, to teach, and to admonish, and to comfort the Church, until He who is our life shall appear.

In the other passage quoted above, the Spirit and the bride are represented as invoking the Lord to come. Now the bride, or the Church which is the temple of the Spirit, is another name for what in this vision is called the seven churches, or the churches. And the Spirit is represented as a distinct witness from the Church,

## **Revelation 22**

<sup>17</sup> The Spirit and the bride say, Come.

This agrees with the language used of the three witnesses,<sup>20</sup> of whom the Spirit is one: and with the language used by Paul of the Spirit:

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<sup>20</sup> 1 John 5:8.

## **Romans 8**

<sup>16</sup> The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit...

<sup>26</sup> The Spirit also helps our infirmities and makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Gathering, then, from these passages that it is the Holy Ghost who is here denominated the Spirit, and that it is His office to witness in the Church, and also to witness to the Church, we return to our subject with this information in general, that as it is Christ's personal office to inform and instruct His ministers, or to speak unto the angels of the churches, so is it the Spirit's personal office to speak unto the churches. This is a conclusion of which we have already made use, in speaking of the general structure of this vision; and therefore, at present, we do but repeat it with these confirmations.

There is, however, one thing which we ought to add: that this witness of the Spirit in the churches, is that which, more than everything else, constitutes their unity, according to the word of the apostle:

## **Ephesians 4**

<sup>3</sup> Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

<sup>4</sup> There is one body, and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;

<sup>5</sup> One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

<sup>6</sup> One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

And the sin of schism, therefore, cannot but be a great grief to the Holy Spirit, being indeed a direct offense against His unity, and therefore greatly to be abhorred. I do not say that it is the sin against the Holy Ghost; but that it is a way leading unto that fearful abyss is manifest from *Hebrews 11:25*, where the sin of separating from the congregation draws the apostle immediately onward to speak of the irrecoverable fall.

I am not here called upon to say who at present are, and who are not indulging the guilt of this sin. I believe the Reformers were guiltless of it in their great act; that the Church of Rome was

guilty of it in the most violent form; that the Church of England first, and the Church of Scotland afterwards fell somewhat into the same offense, from which they have not yet recovered; and that the spirit which now sways Dissenters and Seceders, and indeed almost all men, commonly called enlightened and liberal, is essentially and almost thoroughly schismatical: and I only wonder, amidst such violations of love as we are guilty of one towards another, that God should continue with us that little of His Spirit which remains.

It is in the power, however, of every private Christian, and minister also, in his soul to escape away from under the influence of this narrow spirit, and to seek, yea, and to have communion with every one who loves the Lord Jesus, and walks after His commandments: and when we are hindered by our duty to the churches, we must submit to the privation and count it a trial from our God, in the midst of infinite blessings which we enjoy at their hand.

But as to separating from them, or setting up another head, see if the hint of such a thing can be found in all these epistles to churches fallen, some of them into the most grievous conditions. According as we are obedient to the Church even in her frowardness, (so that we do not follow her into any denial of the truth as it is in Jesus,) and mourn over her imperfections and violences to her children, so do we demonstrate that the Spirit is speaking in us, and so shall we receive new revelations of His blessed mind.

The next question is: To whom does the Spirit address these exhortations? To the churches. Not now to the seven churches, nor to the Church in Ephesus; but to the churches, to the whole bride of the Lamb, the complete number of the Father's election. This is the scope and range of the Spirit's words, even to the Church universal, in all places and in all times subsisting; and is well fitted to guard against the misinterpretation of the vision, by applying it to a portion of the Christian Church, whether in respect of name or in respect of place.



To teach the Church that all and every one of these epistles are meant for universal instruction and application, though in each one person only be addressed, an integrant part of each has the whole width of the Spirit's voice and influence.

And how wide this is, may be seen from the *Second Epistle of Peter*; in the first chapter of which, having given the saints to understand that there was a subject near his heart, which he would give order the churches should remember, not during his lifetime, but after his decease (verse 15), he informs them (verse 16), what it was,

### **2 Peter 1**

<sup>16</sup> ...the power and coming of our Lord Jesus;

—and maintains its truth and certainty from having seen the form of it on the holy mount (verse 17); and from having it continually set forth in the prophetic word, which by the transfiguration was made more firm.

Thus, being brought to speak of the prophetic word as a witness to the glorious and majestic appearance of the Lord Christ, he not only commends it, as the only light in the darkness of intervening time which had to run, but denies that any part of that prophecy was of private interpretation, so as ever to be worn out and done with, but that it is as precious and full of information to us as it was to those to whom it was delivered, forasmuch as there is no prophecy of the Scripture which does not testify of the power, and coming, and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Now mark the reason assigned for this universal application of the prophecy:

<sup>21</sup> ...[it] came not of old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Therefore, concludes Peter, it is not of private interpretation either to men or to ages, but of universal application to all men and ages. Wherefore? because it is the voice of the Holy Ghost.

If the Holy Ghost could speak any word of prophecy of a narrow range and smaller compass than to all ages, Peter's argument

were wholly set aside. But because it is the office of the Holy Ghost to do nothing else, but to testify of Jesus, it must follow that until Jesus come and testify of himself; or rather, until He come and need no testimony of word, but by sight be apparent, by constituted kingdom be felt all over the world, as the acts and ordinances of a king are seen and felt in those who represent him; until His second coming, the Spirit will occupy himself with no meaner work than to testify of Him to all the churches, to every man who has an ear to hear.

If anyone should think that the Spirit has any lower, or any other object besides or beyond testifying of Christ, let him hear what the Lord himself declares in those promises which introduced the Spirit to the Church, and defined His office in the Divine economy of the world's redemption. It is a most pregnant passage, a very anchor of the orthodox faith:

**John 16**

<sup>13</sup> Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth...

And wherefore may He be relied on as the anointing which abides, and which is no lie?

<sup>13</sup> ...for He shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak.

He shall testify of me, as I testified of the Father, of me who am the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but truth; a listener to me, as the reporter of me shall He ever show himself, whose only occupation is to testify of the Father and the Son.

All the truth which I have taught you, He shall bring to your remembrance; He shall water and fructify the seed which I have sown; and what I dimly set forth in parables, He shall make bright as the noonday.

<sup>13</sup> ...and He shall show you things to come.

Before they come to pass, He shall give you timeous admonition by means of the ministry of the word, and in the observance of my holy ordinances.

## **John 16**

<sup>14</sup> He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

Adding nothing new of His own, for the fullness of wisdom and knowledge is in me, for the fullness of the Godhead is in me. And if any one come in the name of the Spirit, setting aside my ordinances, or superseding anything which I have commanded, or pretending to further revelations (as Montanus, Mohammed, and others), they are liars and blasphemers of the Holy Ghost, and shall perish in the unpardonable sin. For...

<sup>15</sup> All things that the Father has are mine: therefore said I, He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you.

The Father has given all power in heaven and earth to me, all wisdom, all knowledge, and the Holy Ghost has condescended like the Father to exalt me, and to glorify me, and to testify only of me.

Therefore, fear not these false prophets, which will come arrayed unto you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves; even as the same John who recorded this glorious truth declares:

### **1 John 2**

<sup>20</sup> But you have an unction from the Holy One, and you know all things.

<sup>21</sup> I have not written unto you, because you know not the truth; but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

<sup>26</sup> These things have I written unto you, concerning them that seduce you.

<sup>27</sup> But the anointing which you have received of Him, abides in you; and you need not that any man teach you: but, as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie: and even as it has taught you, you shall abide in Him.

These further illustrations of the office of the Holy Ghost will convince every sound-minded, and right-hearted believer, of these fundamental truths:

1. The Holy Ghost never has had, and never can have any other object in inspiring men, or revealing unto men, than to testify of Jesus;
2. All the Scriptures are for this one and only end, and to this one and only use to be applied;
3. The vision of the Spirit is to all generations of men, until the time that Christ shall come and possess the whole world with His presence, and power, and authority: after which the Holy Ghost shall have accomplished His office of ministering to the absent Word; and shall begin to minister to the present King, as the seven Spirits which are before His throne. Concerning which more hereafter in the proper place.

From these premises, I do see a very pregnant significancy, and great importance to these words,

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches,

—which stand between this epistle of the Lord to His angel, and the great promise to every one who overcomes.

Observe that in the first three instances they stand between; in the four last they stand after all, as it were soliciting the heed of all men, and all churches, to what has been spoken in the epistle, and sealing it up with the seal of the Spirit.

This diversity of location has exercised my mind a good deal; for I have gotten such a reverence for the book, as to believe that there is nothing in it accidental, but that it is a perfect device of consummate wisdom.

But before giving my judgment upon this matter, and the grounds of it, I must close these general remarks upon the Spirit as the speaker, and the whole Church of God as spoken to, with a solemn appeal to every believer, of how much importance these seven epistles must be, which are thus awfully attested, and how necessary to the well-being of the Church must they be; how pregnant of matter, how prolific of good!

I cannot enough wonder, nor can I well understand how Christian men and ministers can put these invocations and attestations away from them; I cannot, I dare not. I am sure it is for want of thought, and not for want of reverence of the Holy Ghost: for truly I neither could nor durst call the man brother, be he who he may, my bosom friend, my teacher, my own father, the wife of my bosom, who hearing these solemn citations of the Spirit seven times over, would yet give no heed, and encourage others in the like heedlessness.

I say again, I believe it is want of thought, and not a determined purpose of resisting the Holy Ghost. Be entreated then, O men; be entreated, O ministers; be entreated, O churches; be entreated, O every one that hears, to give good heed to these seven epistles, which in such most solemn wise the Spirit seals. And now with this exhortation to the Church which I love, and for which I believe my God would give me strength any day to die, I proceed upon my way.

#### **PLACEMENT OF THE EXHORTATION**

Wherefore this solemnest of the seals of God, the Holy Spirit's witness, should three times be placed between the epistle and the promise, and four times after all, I have said is a question which has exercised my mind much, though to many it may seem of little consequence: and this is what I have come to as the best account of the matter.

By being three times interposed in the middle, it has the effect of separating the promise, and giving it a universal application to all members of the Church, and to all people that dwell on the earth, and to every creature, who have the faculty of understanding rational speech; whereas, if it had stood last in all the epistles, we should not have been so clear or decided on this point, but have been puzzled between the inscription unto one person, called the angel of the Church, and the conclusion addressed unto all intelligent creatures.

And the likelihood is, that some would have interpreted it as all spoken to the ministers, merely in the audience of the churches, and others would have interpreted it as all spoken to the churches, but merely in the person of their ministers; and so the distinctness of the ministers from the churches would have been lost; which it is the great object of the vision to preserve, and present in its true aspect, and in all its bearings.

Now this confusion is prevented by the first three being in the form and order in which they stand. And what is gained by setting this order aside in the four last? This, I think, is gained, that as well what is spoken to the ministry, as what is spoken to all the people, receives the awful seal and sanction of the Holy Ghost; is sent abroad with heaven's sign manual, and proclaimed with heaven's great trumpet through the peopled world.

Secondly, as has been already hinted, the visions do thereby receive that general, that universal application to all the churches in Christendom, in all time, until the Lord's coming with all His saints, which we have been pleading for all along, and have demonstrated from so many quarters.

Had there not been these four instances in which the Spirit be-speaks and summons the attention of mankind to what had been spoken in the previous epistle, it might have been maintained that there was a portion only of universal application, and a portion of particular application to the angels of the churches, or even only to the angels of the particular Church.

Of such a theory, and of all theories of the like kind, such as that they symbolize seven successive ages in the Church, like the series of the seven seals and trumpets, the very possibility is to my mind set aside by the four instances in which all that has been said is sealed and signed, and directed to all mankind.

Thirdly, while the special application to the ministry of the first, and chief part of each epistle, is not set aside, nor can be frustrated as being specially addressed to us, the ministers, the attention of all the churches, and of all mankind, is directed upon us as occupying this preeminent state, and fulfilling these intermediate

relations between the Universal Bishop and His flock; between the Universal Judge and all mankind, between the Word of God and the ear of man.

I say not of how much importance this is, or how awfully it is now forgotten, despised, and set at naught as rank Papistry. But, O men, it is the truth, and you cannot by your unbelief and gain-saying set it aside. “Let him that has an ear, hear it.”

Fourthly, by this alteration, it is moreover signified, that what place Christ appoints to His members, what words He speaks to them, are not for them as individual persons, but for the churches:

#### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Yea, and that the Church itself with all its ministry, and its ordinances is for the unconverted world a sign whereby they may know that Jesus is the sent of God, and that as God has loved His son, so has He loved us, and will to the share of His glory advance us. And this I may observe also is the reason why not the churches only, but the unconverted world is taken in.

But this is a matter of so much importance, that I must make of it a distinct topic. Let these suffice for the good reasons wherefore the Spirit makes the change of locating these common words: “He that has an ear to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.”

#### **AN EAR TO HEAR**

At the risk of being thought prolix in this introductory matter, which be it observed we shall not have again to go over in any of the other epistles (and methinks a text seven times repeated, is worthy of some minute study and attention), I add another observation upon the verse, to explain why every ear should be summoned to the thing which is spoken to the churches.

This is twofold: first, to give it the form of the most concerning truth which God can utter. For this form, “He that has an ear to

hear,” always is used of radical, and as it were generative truths, great principles, most precious promises, most deep fetches from the secrets of God, being as it were eyes of truth, seeds and kernels of knowledge.

Let me refer to a few instances, first in the Gospels, and then in the *Revelation*. When the Lord would teach the people that they were even at that time to expect no Elijah, but the Baptist, which was the rock they were driving on:

**Matthew 17**

<sup>10</sup> Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?

When He was striking at the great stumbling-block of the nation, he used this expression:

**Matthew 11**

<sup>14</sup> And if you will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come.

<sup>15</sup> He that has ears to hear, let him hear.

When He was laying out, by the parable of the sower, the most concerning truth, that the word of the preacher in his or anyone’s mouth, would not, nor could not of itself, work salvation without the soil of an honest heart, wrought within us by God’s good Spirit, and that for want of believing and looking for this, that generation of His hearers were in peril of being ruined for ever, yea, and all generations to whom that parable should come, He closes with the same words:

**Matthew 13**

<sup>9</sup> Who has ears to hear, let him hear.

And in the continuance of that same discourse, when He comes to speak of the things of reward and judgment attendant upon His second advent, He seals it with the same vehement invocation of all ears:

<sup>43</sup> Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear.

And to quote one other instance from those most venerable lips, which spoke as never man spoke, when He would, with one word, overthrow the whole fabric of outward ceremonies, as a



ground of justification or a proof of sanctification, and set the question of our sinfulness upon its true basis of the wicked heart, the rebellious will, the depraved and the seduced affections, the devil-oppressed soul, behold with what art of a teacher's care He begins it, with what words of a teacher's authority He closes it:

**Mark 7**

<sup>14</sup> And when He had called all the people unto Him, He said unto them, Hearken unto me, every one of you, and understand.

<sup>15</sup> There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

<sup>16</sup> If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Let these quotations from the Gospels suffice to prove, of what authority and weight in the vocabulary of the Spirit these words are, "Who has ears to hear."

And now I will take one from the book of the *Revelation*, which as it is the key-book of the whole Scriptures, is especially the key-book of its own structure. It occurs in the bosom of that fearful vision of the Papal supremacy for the long, long period of time, times, and half a time, or twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, or common years.

To support the hearts of the saints during that long and dreary waste of time, and to carry their attention forward to the sure perdition of the beast and the false prophet their oppressors; and of the king, who at His command did slay them with the sword, (for the magistrate wears the sword,) which twofold doom of captivity and slaughter to the anti-christian beast, false prophet or mouth, and to the kings or horns, is realized in *Revelation 19:20-21*; the Lord holds out for the support of His saints during that fearful day of Papal darkness and oppression, this promise prefaced with the seal of authority:

**Revelation 13**

<sup>9</sup> If any man have an ear, let him hear.

<sup>10</sup> He that leads into captivity, shall go into captivity: he that kills with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

And let these suffice for proof of the importance of every promise or utterance to which these solemn words stand prefixed. But this is only with respect to the form.

And now, secondly, with respect to the substance of the expression here used, and in answer to the question why it should be addressed to the churches, and at the same time all ears be invoked to it, we observe, that as the candlestick has existence not for itself alone, but for the house in which it is placed, and for the people who are therein; so the Church in its collective unity has not its being for itself alone, but for the world replete with God's creatures, for every one of whom it is appointed as a light to lighten every man that comes into the world.

God so loved the world, that He sent His only beloved Son to give His life for the remission of its sin; and on what errand the Father sent Christ, on that same errand Christ sends all who believe in Him. His Church is but the continuation with advantages, the extension and diffusion of that work, for which the Father sanctified Him and sent Him into the world.

And this is not the office of the Church in this present evil world only, but for ever and ever shall we stand to Christ and to all creation in this same middle place, of communicating between them:

- He the light, we the lamp which holds it up, and away from which it is not seen;
- He the Head, and we the body, through the members of which the intelligent Head carries its wishes into effect;
- He the King and Husband, we the queen and wife, who takes charge of the house and the children, teaching them all to call Him Father, the second Adam, and to obey Him as the Head over all principalities, and powers, and dominions, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.

These being the true views of the Church, as a body of men trained in the school of His humility, and brought unto the fellowship of His glory, to be unto God the monument of His grace; and unto Christ the evidence of His unspeakable love; and unto the Spirit for the body of His witnesses to all the other orders of creation, which are, or which are to be; it becomes at once manifest why the word, which is spoken to them, should also be spoken to every one that has an ear to hear.

It is spoken to the Church for their sake, that she, by declaring the same, may testify God's goodness to the sons of men, who may thereby be left without rebuke, if they put not their trust under the shadow of His wings; and by such a method of speech, the Church is at once reminded of her special propriety in the gifts of God, and of the ends of universal communication for which she has them in trust; while the world—that is, every living creature—is reminded of the good purpose which God has towards them in all that He does, and of the Church as the appointed channel through which that good is to be received.

This form of expression, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches," is exactly parallel with these two verses of our Lord's sermon on the mount:

**Matthew 5**

<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world...

<sup>16</sup> Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Oh that the Church thus used the grace of election which she has exclusively received, as Christ did the same dignity of being the chosen one, in giving His life for the world, though a Son, and the only Son, learning the obedience of a servant by the things which she suffers, how blessed a doctrine then would election be!

And how profitable, not only to the dignity and enlargement of our souls, but to the knowledge and profit of the wicked world, saying ever:

"Here are we the chosen ones of God; behold in us what God does for wretched sinners, and what wretched sinners can

through grace be made to do for God. See this, O you sons of men, what for the sons of men He does, and what He enables the sons of men to do for their brethren.”

But when we remember our election, and forget our calling to die for the world, election fosters up the spirit of pride and schism, and towards others the spirit of contempt and contumely, and is punished as the Jew has been punished, who is the standing monument of the abuse of this great principle of the Church, to the ends of self-sufficiency and arrogancy towards others.

The doctrine of election is the formative life of the Church, which being thereby conformed unto life, is bound at all times to lay down that life for the wicked world; to prove how much God ever loves, ever longs over them. Election is the fallen creature’s acknowledgment that he owes his rise again, his life again, wholly to the grace of God. free and unpurchased, sovereign and unclaimed.

Christ acted this principle continually, living by faith on the Father’s unconditionate faithfulness, and through His perfect faith therein, and unconditional compliance to His will, and continual surrender of His own will, did attain to the reward which is of faith to the end it may be of work also. Therefore Christ is the chosen one, the great Election Head: and whoso would walk in His footsteps, must walk in the blessed light of election, every day and every hour, saying evermore:

**Luke 22**

<sup>42</sup> ...not my will, but yours be done.

There is a depth and a simplicity in these great truths which far surpass my utterance; but my soul keeps them company so far as my wing can stretch, and ever I see blessed light and hear sweet harmony.

It is the light of God’s countenance which I see in the face of Jesus Christ; and it is the song of God’s mercy and love which I ever hear in every word which His lips do utter; and the good Spirit has attuned my heart to delight in the knowledge of the Fa-

ther and the Son. For which, glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.



Allegorical Drawing of the Tree of Life in New Jerusalem

## V. HIS FIRST PROMISE

HAVING thus once for all enlarged upon those words which are common to the third constituent part of these seven epistles, “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches,” we now come to treat particularly of that which is proper to the Church in Ephesus, couched in these terms:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> To him that overcomes, will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

This naturally divides itself into two parts: the first, the promise; and the second, to whom the promise is made; of both which we will discourse in order. Concerning the promise, “I will give him to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God,” there are two points chiefly requiring to be treated of:

1. What is this tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God?
2. What is this eating of it, which is promised to him that overcomes?

Now, before entering upon these great subjects I have one observation to make which beautifully connects it with the preceding parts of the epistle, and may serve to revive the memory of what has been said, and to keep up the unity which is observable in the parts of each of these epistles.

The inscription of it, the character under which Christ chooses to write it, is that generic one of the Bishop of the ministers, and the Pastor of the churches, who sets each star in its place, each light in its candlestick, and trims them evermore, as He walks up and down among them.

The body of the epistle again explains the character of the angel, as a pastor commends his diligence and patience, in feeding the flock, his watchfulness in keeping out the wolf, and laments over the declension of his love to the great Shepherd of the sheep, and to the sheep for whom He gave His life, and threatens to

break His pastoral staff and bring dishonor, and decline, and death upon His flock.

But now being minded to encourage every one of His sheep, both pastor and people, he does it by the assurance of an abundant pasture from the source and fountain of life, that He will feed them from the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God; that He will himself be the Pastor of those sheep and of those shepherds, who stand steadfast unto the end, and overcome as He overcame.

And accordingly we have the thing realized:

**Revelation 7**

<sup>17</sup> For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.

If these seven promises of the Spirit to every one that overcomes, be understood to compose the complete reward which Christ will bring with Him for all His saints, then that part of it or rather aspect of it which is preached to the Ephesian Church is the food and nourishment of life. For life never has been without a food.

Adam had the trees of the garden, we have all herbs and flesh also for our natural life; for our spiritual, the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and here is a food presented for our eternal life, even the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God: and what is signified by this the aliment of the use and glorified saints we have now to inquire.

“I desire and pray, O Lord my guide, to enter upon the exposition of these pregnant utterances of your Spirit, with the most deliberate wisdom, which I crave of You. Oh, help your servant to set forth the substance and the excellence of these rewards which You hold out to our faith: for he that comes unto You must believe that You are, and that You are the rewarder of them that diligently seek You. I trust in You through Jesus Christ, and go on my way in your strength.”

## THE TREE OF LIFE

No one can be at a loss to understand what is referred to by “the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God,” for there is only one such tree mentioned in the creation of God. And it is mentioned in these words:

### Genesis 2

<sup>9</sup> 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.

This tree of life God planted *in the midst* of the garden, and the tree of life promised as the nourishment of the victorious is *in the midst* of the Paradise of God. What connection there is between the Garden of Eden, and the Paradise of God, is a future question; that which we draw attention to at present is that in both cases, they are *in the midst* thereof; and so I may observe of the tree of life, the only one in the new earth, is described in the midst of the street of the New Jerusalem, and on both sides of the river thereof:

### Revelation 22

<sup>2</sup> In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Now of this tree of life let us peruse the history, and so furnish our minds for the work of an interpretation. Beside this tree of life which was planted in the midst of the Garden of Eden, there is but one other tree mentioned, which is the fatal tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon which the interdict of God was laid. It was laid on that only, and full and free participation of all the rest was put in his power:

### Genesis 2

<sup>16</sup> Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat,

<sup>17</sup> But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you may not eat.



We conclude that the tree of life was for the food of man, and that he was fully privileged to have partaken thereof. This, together with the effects which the eating of it would have produced upon him, is made clear by what is written:

### **Genesis 3**

<sup>22</sup> 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:

<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.

These verses put it beyond a doubt that man was originally intended to eat of that tree of life; that the eating of it would have conveyed to him the faculty of an eternal life; and that to prevent his eating of it he was thrust out of Paradise; and to keep him out of Paradise God planted the cherubim, with a flaming sword.

And thus I believe things continued until the Deluge put an end to that form of revelation, and made way for another. The antediluvians had a paradise lost before their eyes, and in it a tree of life, to which the way was not yet opened, but prevented by the cherubim: and the cause of the prevention was the loss of original righteousness, these cherubim flaming with destruction against all unrighteousness.

But when to Abraham was revealed the righteousness which is by faith, the barrier was removed, and Abraham by his faith entered into everlasting life, even as we also do. And because death must be endured, God gave the seal of the resurrection in the rule of circumcision—if, indeed, that was not already given in the deliverance of the Church from the Deluge, which I rather incline to believe, from the consideration of *1 Peter 3:21*.

But however this may be, there can be no doubt that, when the new way of righteousness by faith through grace was opened up,

the cherubim could not withstand the believer's approach to the tree of life, and sooner or later he must reach it and feed on it.

Thus things continued till God, to curb the license and wickedness of the chosen people, and to make His grace more precious in their sight, and the way of faith more sacred, did, without altering anything of the promise, introduce new lets and hindrances; making His presence more private, that it might be more respected; as a father does to an irreverent child, or a sovereign to ill-disciplined subjects.

When grace is trampled upon, it must, for its own defense, draw out the law, which it had hidden in its bosom, and let the culprit know what his demerit is, in order that he may know what grace is.

And now, behold, the holy of holies is introduced, instead of paradise; and there is the separated dwelling-place of God; and the cherubim are there also, and for the tree of life there is the pot of manna, incorruptible food of an immortal life.

But the way was not now defended from all approach, for the High Priest, having in his hands the symbols of the righteousness by faith, is permitted once a year to enter in. If indeed the translation of Enoch beyond the bourne of death was, as may be well believed, the receiving him within the garden in consideration of his walking with God, then the antediluvians also had the proof that the way of the tree of life was still open.

When the Man Jesus came, and, having died, arose from the dead in an immortal body, and entered within the heavens, into the presence of God, the thing which, by Enoch's translation, and the High Priest's entering once a year into the holiest, was shadowed forth, became a fully accomplished and realized thing. The fallen, interdicted substance of manhood has prevailed to present itself blameless in the sight of God, and to win its way to immortality; and all who believe in Him that has accomplished this work, have the same access through the veil into God's immediate presence, as it is written:

## **Hebrews 10**

<sup>18</sup> Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

<sup>19</sup> Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

<sup>20</sup> By a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh...

It appears, therefore, that by faith we receive a righteousness which removes the curse and opens the way into eternal life; which introduces into my being an eternal life, instead of this mortal life in which I now subsist.

But still, this is not exactly the point in question; for our inquiry concerns not so much the eternal life which is in us, as that aliment upon which it is supported. Nevertheless we thought it good and useful, to prevent all cavils at the outset of that on which we are now to enter, to allay the lynx-eyed suspicion of our orthodox brethren against us millenarians, by going into that previous question:

“Whence the eternal life is now derived?”

And the answer is:

“It is derived out of Christ’s risen body, by faith upon Him who raised Him from the dead, that He will do so to us also.”

And now we have to inquire into the aliment or nourishment of this life which is the proper thing presented to us in the promise:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> To him that overcomes, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Some may say,

“This is merely a figure for the resurrection of the body.”

But this cannot be entertained; for if we look back to the tree of life in paradise, it was not for the giving of life, seeing God breathed into Adam’s...

## **Genesis 2**

<sup>7</sup> ...nostrils the breath of life; and he became a living soul;

–but it was for the support of that life which had been given. Had man preferred to eat of its fruit, he would have held on in life; but preferring to eat of the other, he fell down into death.

The tree of life, however, did not lose its virtue because the other tree had put forth its poison, but had in it the antidote of that poison; and God, by violently dispossessing man of the garden, and constantly preventing his approach to that tree, did signify, that for man, now mortal, there still existed an antidote to his death; and that in mortal man there ever lived a craving for that healing food of immortality.

But the holy cherubim, interposing, did say, Approach not, till you have obtained righteousness. This is the simple truth declared by these symbols:

“Dead though you be, there is an antidote of life in existence for you, but a righteousness must be found before you can approach it.”

Look also to the new earth, in the last two chapters of this book, and in it we find a city, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven, in the midst of which is this tree of life. This New Jerusalem is for the habitation of the saints; and in most of these seven epistles the Spirit promises a place and preferment therein to him that overcomes.

Now, observe what is said of those that are permitted to partake of this tree of life in the New Jerusalem:

## **Revelation 22**

<sup>14</sup> Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

And compare this with the following verse, descriptive of those who enter not in thereto:

<sup>15</sup> For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

Now, surely men will allow that locality and habitation, not life and death, are presented to us in such language as this. It is the locality and habitation of the righteous, as distinguished from the locality and habitation of the wicked; the one within, the other not within, the city.

And to put it beyond a doubt that this is in the time of the peopled earth, when nations dwell upon it who need healing, let me quote again what is said of the tree of life:

**Revelation 22**

<sup>2</sup> In the midst of the street of it, and of 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.

And the same thing is shadowed forth in:

**Ezekiel 47**

<sup>12</sup> And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Do I mean, then, to assert, that as in Eden there was a tree of life of which men might eat, so in the New Jerusalem, where the saints in their risen bodies dwell, (and somewhere embodied spirits must dwell,) there will be such a tree, whose fruit shall feed immortal life, and whose leaves, borne outward upon the river which makes glad the city of our God, shall be for medicine to the nations of the earth?

I answer, that I believe the things in Eden to have been literally and exactly as they are written; and the things in the *Revelation* to be symbols of things which shall transcend in degree, but correspond in kind, with what is there written. And I believe, moreover, that the verdurous garden of Eden is the type of that habitation which is symbolically described in the New Jerusalem.

But the type is never equal to the thing typified, though, in respect of use and kind and relation, it always occupies the same place. Now, as the object of paradise is essentially to be a place to the newly created man and his wife, so I believe the New Jerusalem to be a place for the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, and His bride the Church, taken out of His bleeding side.

*Place*, and not *life*—place for the complete persons, spirit and body, and not the life either of the one or of the other—is the thing signified by paradise; and the same believe I to be the thing signified by the New Jerusalem. It is not the resurrection of the body, it is not the resurrection of the saints, “the first resurrection,” which is described in *Revelation* 20:4; nor is it the final and general resurrection, which is described in the 13<sup>th</sup> verse of the same chapter; but it is the habitation for the risen saints during the thousand years of the earth’s blessedness.

It is place and locality which is the essence of the symbol, the New Jerusalem; it is not state of being, except as that is affected by place: and if so, then, as the trees of Paradise were for food, and the tree of life above all for feeding life in its fountainhead, and the others as it were for feeding it in the several organs which it works with and wears out: so do I believe that this tree of life, which is the only tree named in the New Jerusalem, is to signify that there would be a feeding and nourishing of life there from the outward world, besides the gift of life itself.

If any one should feel, at this point of our interpretation, disposed to reject the idea of an outward nourishment for the immortal life of the risen body in the New Jerusalem, we ask him to suspend his judgment until we come to the second head of this subject, which will treat expressly of what is contained under the promise of eating; meanwhile, one or two more remarks are necessary to explain the full import of the expression,

## **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> ...the tree of life, in the midst of the Paradise of God.

Man’s food was, originally, in the state of his innocency, of the trees of the garden:

## Genesis 2

<sup>16</sup> Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat.

Among these, no doubt, the tree of life was included. What distinction might entitle it to that name we know not, unless it were that the other trees upbore the wear and tear of the body caused by existence and enjoyment, whereas this one nourished life in its fountain,—had a direct and immediate action upon the life itself.

From the care that God took to prevent man from coming to it after his fall, “lest he should eat of it and live forever,” it seems to be implied, if not absolutely declared, that it had a virtue in it proper to confer immortality, as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had to bring death.

And perhaps the reason, why in the New Jerusalem there is only this one tree of life, and none of the others, is, that, immortal life being then possessed by men, this tree, and this alone, is proper to their food.

If man had eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, even after he had become subject to death from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In order that the curse of death might take effect, it was necessary to prevent access to that other tree. This shows that man had not eaten of the tree of life before he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, although it lay within his reach. He might have joined himself to life, but he chose rather to join himself to death.

The life, then, which he possessed anterior to the eating of the forbidden tree, was not an immortal life, but a life sustained, strengthened, and cherished by the various trees with which the garden was stored: not a life which could have died, nor yet a life which could be pronounced immortal; but a life whose exhaustion was ever supplied with pleasant, fragrant, and exhilarating fruits.

But the life of the body in the world to come is not of this sort: it is an immortal life; and therefore has no proper concert with

any tree, save the tree of life, which is proper to the immortal and eternal life.

This, therefore, seems to me to be implied in the promise of eating of the tree of life, that we shall have, not a nourishment such as Adam had, but a nourishment such as Adam might have had, but from which he was prevented by his sin. And not only was Adam prevented from approaching the tree of life, but he was punished, by being degraded to that food which was originally intended for the cattle of the field:

**Genesis 3**

<sup>18</sup> And you shall eat the herb of the field.

Now, God had given...

**Genesis 1**

<sup>30</sup> ...every green herb for meat to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creeps upon the earth.

But to man he had given...

<sup>29</sup> ...every herb bearing seed, and every tree.

If I err not, there was a degradation and a curse in this change of man's nourishment. As yet he had tasted no flesh; but after the Deluge, when his nature was doomed to undergo a still further degradation, and the length of his days to be curtailed, he received the nourishment of flesh; yet not, as it were, in fee simple, but under a reservation of "the blood, which is the life;" signifying, as I take it, that God might and would reclaim that grant unto himself.

When the carnal ordinances were supplanted by the spiritual substance, and Christ became the parent of the spiritual life by regeneration of the Holy Ghost, that spiritual life was not self-supported any more than it was self-originated; but a support was provided for it in the flesh and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ:

**John 6**

<sup>53</sup> Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you.



<sup>54</sup> Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The great truth contained under these expressions is, that we are nourished upon the offered body of Christ, and do derive from it the sustenance of our spiritual life, and shall derive from it the glorious resurrection. It bespeaks our life restored and supported by His death. It is a part of that “perfection through suffering;” suffering which began at the Fall, and was completely laid upon the creation at the Deluge; and signifies, that through His death all the evil will be put away, and the curse wrought out.

But when the resurrection of flesh, through the death-conquering power of His flesh, shall come to pass, we hear no more of eating flesh, or living upon flesh. All the forms of that suffering state are done away with, and again we have the Paradaisical form introduced, of eating the tree of life.

All which lines of thought converge to this point, that Adam’s being in paradise is the properest type of the being of the saints in the New Jerusalem; but, like all types, greatly inferior to the antitype, occupying indeed the same place, but in an inferior scale of the Creator’s work.

## **THE PARADISE OF GOD**

It remains further, that we examine a little more clearly what is meant by the expression,

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>7</sup> ...in the midst of the paradise of God.

The only question that can occur on this head, is, whether the place designated by these words be the place of the soul between death and the resurrection, or the place of both body and soul after the resurrection. As I have said already, my conviction is that it means the New Jerusalem, in which the tree of life is actually exhibited. And if anyone ask,

“And why is the New Jerusalem not named?”

I answer,

To teach us that Paradise with its tree of life, is the type of the New Jerusalem with its tree of life: it is the antitype expressed in terms of the type; which is the constant custom of the Scriptures: “Christ our Passover;” “the Church, the candlestick,” &c.

But if anyone argue that it is the state of the separate spirit, I first turn his attention to the other six promises of these epistles, and show him that they have reference to and realization in the New Jerusalem, as described in the last two chapters of this book. Then I show him the tree of life, there, and there only, mentioned. Next I show him, that not until the seventh trumpet is blown, and the time for judging the dead is come, is the time for giving reward to them that overcome.<sup>21</sup> And finally I argue, that the expression “eating of a tree,” implies a complete man, and not a disembodied spirit.

If in answer to this last reason he allege, that in the communion we do by faith eat of the flesh and blood of Christ; I answer, That sense is necessary to an act of faith; not in the way of performing or helping to perform it, but in the way of rendering it necessary: the sense to darken, faith to trust where all to sense is dark. An act of faith is the act of one dark as to sense; and the darkness is both the merit and the marvel of faith. If Christ were not in the dark as to His human nature, as we are in the dark, He lived not by faith, as we are called to live by faith.

An act of faith, therefore, is an act done in the fallen body, which darkens and betrays the soul that is not by the Holy Spirit, in answer to its faith, supported. And, therefore, to the partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ in the communion and always by faith, the sense is necessary; not, as the Papists say, to do the act, but to make faith necessary to do the act: and therefore it is in our complete being, body and soul, that we feed on Christ by faith in the Lord’s Supper.

And that nourishment reaches its influence to every member of the body, as well as of the soul, to restrain them from sin; yea, and it carries forward our faith and hope to the time when we

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<sup>21</sup> *Revelation* 11:18.

shall be changed into the substance of Christ's body, and be made fellow-heirs of His inheritance. So that the Lord's Supper, in every way you look at it, is an act of the complete man, and not of the spirit merely.

But the true way of bringing this question, whether Paradise mean the middle state, to an issue, is by examining to what place the word Paradise in Scripture uses to refer.

In the Old Testament, the Garden of Eden is always translated in the Greek by the word of which our word Paradise is the English form, and which is believed to be of Persian origin: and in various other parts of Scripture a pleasant garden is by the same word rendered. And from this the use of the word Paradise in our language is derived.

Now let anyone compare the New Jerusalem of the *Apocalypse* with the Paradise of the book of *Genesis*, and deny, if he can, that the one is described in terms of the other, so far as can be consistently with the preservation of the distinct properties of a garden and a city.

The second Adam and His bride its sole possessors; the tree of life in the midst; the river; the exclusion from it of everything that defiles and makes a lie; the immediate presence of God, and many other things, which can be predicated of no other place than the New Jerusalem, do put it beyond a doubt that this and Paradise are intended by God to stand in the relation of type and antitype.

And I have no doubt whatever, as has been already said, that the name Paradise is used in the text for the very end of marking this relation by a divine sanction. The use of the word Paradise as synonymous with the third heaven, in *2 Corinthians* 11:4, demonstrates the same truth.

Without going into the question, where the place of separate spirits is, we can certainly assert, upon Christ's authority, that He had not ascended unto His Father till after the resurrection; for when He appeared to Mary Magdalene He spoke to her in these words:

## John 20

<sup>17</sup> Jesus said unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.

Now there was no higher or holier place among the Jews than the third heaven, which they believed, as indeed of heaven generally, that it is the special abode of Deity; and Christ's ascension is never otherwise described than "into heaven."<sup>22</sup> We may conclude, therefore, that wherever Christ as a separate spirit was between His death and the resurrection, it was not in the third heaven, or in the heaven at all, otherwise it would have been with God.

No doubt He went where other separate spirits go; otherwise His death would not have been like our death, which consists not in a buried body merely, but in a soul inhabiting somewhere. This place the ancient Church thought to be in the lower parts of the earth; taking that opinion from what is written, *Ephesians* 4:9-10, which is a passage bearing so much upon the matter in hand that we cannot forbear quoting it:

### **Ephesians 4**

<sup>9</sup> Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

<sup>10</sup> He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.

If anyone say that the separate soul is taken at once into heaven, all I can do is to ask proof, and to observe that Christ's soul was not so privileged; and therefore He has not in all things the pre-eminence, but in this His people have it.

Of the New Jerusalem it is never otherwise spoken than as above and in the heavens, and coming out of heaven from God: and it is called the city of God, where God has His habitation, and will ever have it.<sup>23</sup> And seeing Paul identifies Paradise with the third heaven, the dwelling-place of God, and John identifies the New Jerusalem with the dwelling-place of God, what can anyone

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<sup>22</sup> *Mark* 16:19; *Luke* 24:51; *Acts* 1:11; *Hebrews* 9:24; *1 Peter* 3:22.

<sup>23</sup> *Galatians* ch. 4; *Revelation* ch. 2, 3, 21.

say, but that the New Jerusalem and Paradise are one and the same?

There is one text indeed, and only one, in the whole Scripture, which has even the appearance of contradicting these conclusions, and that is the text which represents our Lord as saying to the thief upon the cross:

**Luke 23**

<sup>43</sup> I say unto you, Today shall you be with me in paradise.

In which text, let only the comma be placed after “today,” and it is in harmony with the whole Scriptures:

“I say unto you today, You shall be with me in paradise.

Methinks that this is the best reason in the world for altering the punctuation, which is a thing not of inspiration, but of human invention.

But I hold that besides putting the passage in harmony with every Scripture where mention is made of Paradise, it is more consistent with the grammatical structure of the words, and with the sense of the context, which two things ought ever to give the law to the punctuation of unpunctuated manuscripts, as the originals of the Scriptures are.

Prefacing then these remarks with the declaration that I am a steady believer in the blessedness of the soul in its separate state—concerning which I shall have to discourse plentifully in the progress of these lectures—I observe that the passage in which the promise to the thief occurs has nothing to do whatever with the separate state. His request was:

**Luke 23**

<sup>42</sup> Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

That a Jew understood by the kingdom of Messiah the separate state, no one will even dare to affirm; and this alone ought to lead us into the suspicion of any interpretation which discovers the separate state and not the kingdom in our Lord’s answer, concerning which state of souls I do not find that He ever discoursed

at all; and how He should fall upon the discourse of it when the penitent thief's question led Him to another subject altogether, is what I cannot understand.

Besides that, as we have said above, Paradise never by any chance means the separate state, but always the New Jerusalem, which is at present above with God, and, when it shall come down to the earth, will be the proper antitype of the Paradise of Eden.

These are insuperable difficulties against the common interpretation of the passage, which has nothing in grammar to recommend it, but quite the reverse. The passage being rendered word for word is as follows:

“Verily I say to you today with me shall you be in paradise.”

Now even an English eye, looking at the sentence, would hesitate with which clause to connect the adverb today, and would be guided by the context and the meaning of the words. And if he should be told that Christ was not in Paradise on that day, nor until forty days after His resurrection, he would not hesitate for a moment in saying,

Then surely the “today” must, and cannot otherwise but, be connected with the former clause, “I say unto you.”

And if even an English eye would thus reason and judge, much more would anyone acquainted with the idiom of the Greek language which hardly ever places the adverb before the verb and its adjuncts, but most commonly after; so that it is in the analogy of grammar to connect it rather with the first than with the second clause.

In proof of this idiom, let me refer to these two passages, which is, being translated out of the original:

**Matthew 5**

<sup>11</sup> Our daily bread give to us today.

**Luke 2**

<sup>11</sup> That there is born to you today a Saviour.

And from the Septuagint many passages of the like kind might be quoted. Better in grammar, therefore, I hold it, and absolutely necessary to preserve consistency with all the other Scriptures where the word Paradise is mentioned, is it to change the punctuation, and write it thus:

“Verily I say unto you today, You shall be with me in paradise.”

But how does this bear, when considered in connection with the penitent’s request? It bears a most excellent and appropriate meaning. The thief asks to be remembered at a certain time, when Christ should be clothed with power and glory. Christ answers,

“Now, even today, I remember you.”

The thief thought that Christ’s power was limited by the grievous conditions with which He was surrounded, and knew not of the twelve legions of angels which would have unsheathed their swords at His bidding; and Jesus, to teach him that He was dying a King, as well as about to come again, says to him,

“Amen I say to you today, You shall be with me in paradise.”

Not only shall you be remembered there, but with me shall you be then, where I am, and as I am. And thus, as in all other petitions that were made to Christ, the answer far outwent the thing requested. The petition went into His ear a man’s thought, but it came forth of His lips again enlarged beyond a mortal’s narrow charity.

On all which accounts, I find no difficulty in this passage, which is altogether confirmatory of our four general conclusions, that paradise is the name for the place in which Christ and the believer shall abide when He comes in His kingdom.

Let this, then, suffice for the resolution of the first question, What is to be understood by the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God? It is that which is mentioned in the first three chapters of *Genesis* in the type, and that which is mentioned in the last two chapters of the *Revelation* in the realized antitype.

## TO EAT OF THE TREE

And now we come to the second question,

“What is meant by the promise, to him that overcomes, he shall eat of that tree?”

When we would interpret this promise, like all the others, to signify something which to our glorified bodies shall stand in the same relation that eating does to our present body of weakness and vileness, there arises I know not what feeling of disgust in the mind, as if it were a thing never for a moment to be entertained, but rejected on the instant with disdain.

But a few words will convince us that this is worthy of a more calm and deliberate entertainment. If, indeed, there be associated with eating nothing but the idea of preserving ourselves from death by famine; if it be regarded as a badge of the mortal body; if it be looked upon as necessarily followed by dishonorable and disgusting circumstances, then I wonder not that it should be rejected from our notion of that blessed state into which death enters not, nor flesh and blood, nor anything which defiles.

But if those circumstances which do now accompany it be not necessarily, but accidentally, its accompaniments: if it be not the badge of a mortal and corruptible creature, but is ever found to be as essential a function of man as is seeing or hearing, and exhibited in Scripture as performed by him both before the fall and after the resurrection, without inducing any after consequences of pollution or disgust—if, moreover, it be that only act whereby man possesses the creation, and the vegetable creation brings its offerings of grateful help to man;—and, finally, if it be a commandment and privilege of God to man in his state of innocence and purity; and if, in its after-consequences in and upon the body, it be attended with all that is tasteful, fragrant, and happy to ourselves and others—all which we shall easily show—then I think it will be the duty of my readers to bow to the good arbitrament of God, and to receive as a blessing and a reward that which as a blessing and a reward He has promised unto us.



I began this apology for God's word, and for God's ordinance of a tree of life in the New Jerusalem, with the condition of man above the fall; to whom it was said by God, immediately upon His creation:

**Genesis 1**

<sup>29</sup> Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed: to you it shall be for meat.

**Genesis 2**

<sup>16</sup> Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.

Now, lest anyone should say (for there is no limit to their ingenuity in wresting the Scriptures from their plain and obvious sense) that this is a constitution not given for man above the fall, but for man considered respectively as about to fall, I have these two things to set forth.

First, that the latter of these two injunctions is set in contrast with the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is excepted from the rest. No one will say that this exception was made with a view to the state below the fall, seeing that it was intended to prevent the fall: and if this was clearly for the supralapsarian state of man, then so also for that was the exception, without which it has no meaning whatever.

Take the whole passage together, and say whether it be possible for any honest man to deny that man in his state of innocence was commanded by God to feed upon the fruit of all the trees of the garden, except that one only.

**Genesis 2**

<sup>16</sup> And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat:

<sup>17</sup> But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

Secondly, as I have remarked above, I believe that the substance of man's good underwent deterioration after the fall; for this is part of the curse,

### **Genesis 3**

<sup>18</sup> ...and you shall eat the herb of the field:

—whereas, before the fall, there is a distinction taken between the herbs which were to be food for man and those which were to be food for cattle: which distinction is omitted afterwards. The whole vegetable world is divided into three classes:

### **Genesis 1**

<sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself, after his kind.

Of these, the two latter were yielded for food to man, but in the curse man is doomed to eat the herbs of the field without distinction. This is made more manifest if we look to the annals of Paradise, as they are more particularly recorded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of *Genesis*; for then man has the trees of Paradise for his food from which afterwards he was entirely excluded.

But enough has been said to convince any but reckless gainsayers, of whom there are too many, that man before the Fall, in his state of innocency, beauty, and blessedness, was appointed to eat, and did eat, and for this end had a beautiful and fragrant table spread for him, the fruit of all the trees of Eden.

Does not this prove that the end of eating is not to prevent death—for death then was there none—but to give the body its proper enjoyment, even as knowledge and love are the proper enjoyments of the mind? Does it not prove, moreover, that the painful and disgusting after-consequences of eating and drinking are not necessary to that act of the body? For surely there were no such consequences to that holy man who was meet company for the Lord God.

In truth, all these are the consequences of corruption, which is the consequence of mortality. Instead of which if immortality were present, then do I believe that all the after-effects of eating would be changed in their character, from being painful and unpleasant, to be pleasant and delightful, and to bear testimony to

the purity and the purifying virtue of that body which man then possesses.

But, reserving what I have to say upon this subject until I have finished with the probation of the points I have undertaken, I proceed to the next instance on record of immortal and glorious persons eating upon this earth.

It is that recorded of the three men who visited Abraham on the plains of Mamre—of whom we know certainly that the one was Jehovah the Word of God, who of the three Persons in the Godhead is the only One who has ever been seen or who can be seen: and who the other two were we know not; haply two glorified spirits of mankind, who bore Him company, as afterwards Moses and Elijah did on the Mount of Transfiguration. Now these three persons, men whose feet needed to be washed and their weariness to be rested, did eat and drink of the meal which Abraham provided for them:

### **Genesis 18**

<sup>7</sup> And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it.

<sup>8</sup> And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

Now, whatever view any one may take of these celestial visitants, there can be no doubt that they were of the immortals; the one being the eternal Son of God, clothed in flesh, and the others being either angels, who for the occasion took flesh, or spirits of men, which I rather believe: and, being so, they ate and drank, and thereby taught us that unto the being of a true man, eating and drinking are as essential attributes as seeing or hearing, or any other of our bodily affections.

Now these men did not take it for appearance merely, but for refreshment: they were on their way to Sodom: and when they came to Sodom, they were received by Lot, and hospitably entertained:

## **Genesis 19**

<sup>2</sup> And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and you shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, No, but we will abide in the street all night.

Are not these repeated declarations of God's word sufficient to convince anyone but an unbeliever, that of man's body, in whatever state of the mortal or the immortal, it is an essential property to be sustained by food as to be impressed with light or sound? And ought not this to satisfy us, that to this act of eating there is nothing disgusting in any way essentially appertaining?

The next passage of holy Scripture to which I refer, as casting light upon this subject, is:

## **Exodus 24**

<sup>9</sup> Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under His feet, as it were a paved work of a sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in His clearness.

<sup>11</sup> And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

This company of the nobles of Israel, being introduced to the vision of the glorified Son of God, were not molested of him in any way, but hospitably entertained with meat and drink, which he had provided for them in the solitude of Mount Sinai. This, I think, should reconcile us to the worthiness of these acts to a state of glory, when they were made part of a vision given thus of the glory of the God of Israel.

But all these, and some other instances of the like kind which might be gleaned from the Old Testament, though they might serve to reconcile us to entertain, would not establish the doctrine, that in our spiritual bodies, above the resurrection, there shall be eating and drinking, as there was in the state of innocence; and I do intend them merely as preparatory to two express declarations of our Lord, as distinct as language can make them.

The first is, that declaration constantly recorded by all the Evangelists spoken on the occasion of the Supper, thus given over:

**Luke 22**

<sup>16</sup> For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Now I simply ask, without offering any explanation, if this does not bear upon the face of it, that He was again to eat of the Passover against a future time, when it should be accomplished in His kingdom? If this is not implied in these words, "I will not any more eat thereof, until..." then have I no faculty of understanding words. But still more distinct are the two following verses:

<sup>17</sup> And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

<sup>18</sup> For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.

Now to what time does Christ refer? to what time does He postpone this eating of the Passover and drinking of the fruit of the vine? For that He will do this against some time, I believe Him upon His word, as surely as I believe every other word He spoke. There be many interpretations as to the time signified by "the kingdom of God's coming." That it is a time future, I think the Lord's prayer, in which we pray for it continually, is evidence enough.

No doubt present to faith, and in the believer already come within him "without observation," in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; in patience and in suffering; and so are we also in faith risen with Christ, and seated with Him in the heavenly places, entered within the veil, into the presence of the Father.

But though these things be to faith present, no one asserts that these things are really come, in the full sense in which they shall be hereafter; or that they are come in any other sense than as objects of faith, whose property it is to substantiate things not seen and to make present things future.

But take their own interpretation of a subject which has some difficulties around it, and cannot here be regularly handled—namely, that it came at Pentecost, or at the destruction of Jerusalem—and it equally serves the purpose of proving, that this action of eating and drinking Christ has not yet performed with His disciples; for no one believes that they are yet raised from the dead, but wait for the glorious resurrection of the saints, when they shall be raised in the likeness of His glory.<sup>24</sup>

We conclude, therefore, that against that glorious time, and in that glorious kingdom, it will be as the Lord declares; and that eating and drinking, in some kind or other which answers to these acts now, will be present there. If any man be offended with my Lord's words, I would rather he should vent the odium of his offense upon me than upon Him; but there they are, and He spoke them.

The second declaration to the same purpose is still fuller, and occurs in the same chapter of *Luke*:

**Luke 22**

<sup>28</sup> You are they which have continued with me in my temptations:

<sup>29</sup> And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father has appointed unto me;

<sup>30</sup> That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now I am willing to admit that in this passage there is something of the figurative; that by sitting at His own table He intended to set forth the special place of honor and preferment which awaited His apostles, even as among earthly princes, this is the sign of rank and dignity in the kingdom.

But while I allow this, I will not suffer the express words to be explained away into nothing at all. Whether it shall be a table such as is spread by earthly monarchs, and whether it be covered with such dainties, I stand not to inquire—and if men scoff on this account, I bear their scoff patiently for my faith's sake.

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<sup>24</sup> *Philippians* 3:21; *1 John* 3:1-2.

But that there will be nourishment of some kind presented by the Lord to His faithful apostles, and that they will receive joy and gladness from that which is provided for them, as well as from Him by whose goodness it is provided, I verily believe, because “the Lord has said it.”

Neither do I stand to inquire whether there shall be thrones to sit upon, as now monarchs have; but that there will be the dominion and power of which the throne is the symbol, I fully believe. And so believing of this, I believe the same of the other; that meat and drink, such as are proper to that spiritual body, shall be prepared for it out of the fruit-bearing earth, which shall be pure as our bodies are pure: not indeed at the beginning of the millennium all over the earth, but there where the New Jerusalem is, where alone the tree of life is planted.

In confirmation of this truth, I could bring many corroborations: as, for example, the request of the mother of Zebedee’s children, who desired for her sons the chief seats at His table: this Jesus did not reject as a foolish, sensual, base notion, but simply replied,

**Matthew 20**

<sup>23</sup> ...to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.

When one of them that sat at meat with him said,

**Luke 14**

<sup>15</sup> Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,

He did not rebuke the thought as perverse, and crude and brutish; but straightway constructed the parable of the Marriage Supper, confirmatory of the idea, built upon the idea, and intended to show forth the character of those who should have that blessedness.

And this language is continually kept up to the very end of the *Apocalypse*, where the millennial blessedness, and the state of Christ and His bride in the New Jerusalem, are declared to be the

very thing which is signified in the gospels by the marriage supper:

### **Revelation 19**

<sup>9</sup> And He said unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.

In further confirmation of all these conclusions look at the Lord in His resurrection state ere yet He had ascended into glory, eating in the presence of His disciples a broiled fish and a honeycomb, for the very purpose of convincing them that He was not a spirit.<sup>25</sup> What can be more convincing than this?

Christ having showed His hands and His feet, that they were pierced through, and having desired them to handle His flesh and bones, for the putting away of all possible doubt of His having a real human body with inward life as well as outward appearance and form, did take and eat meat in their presence: which meat, no doubt, thereafter His body did turn into nourishment, without anything offensive following, which offenses come only of present corruption; and this we leave in the grave behind us.

Upon these grounds I desire to leave my testimony on record, that I believe the body, after the resurrection, will have its appropriate food, which in our text is represented by the tree of life.

I know what a stone I am rolling up the hill; I know what a body-despising Puritan (falsely called spiritual) generation I am speaking to; men who, not understanding the question of materialism at all, nor seeing the glory of God in it, have an ignorant prejudice against the whole subject, and a pitiful fear of it, as holding of the materialist school.

Poor wits! what are you afraid of? Has not God made me with a body? and is He not to raise me again with a body? and is there not to be a new earth as well as a new heaven? What make you so much outcry about, you disciples of the shadowy Elysium of the heathens? I would you had more reverence for God's material creation, and for man's body, creation's lord. I wish you would

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<sup>25</sup> *Luke 24:38-44.*



become a little more learned, and read what the ancient Church believed, and what she wrote upon this subject; for example, Tertullian's treatise, *de Carne Hominis*. But,

### **Job 12**

<sup>2</sup> You are the men, and wisdom will die with you.

I wonder truly what hand of God binds me to this unwearied controversy with such unbelieving spiritualists. Were it not that I love His truth, and that I love His Church, I would be silent altogether, or speak my speech in impatient satire, and not in patient discourse. But I must be patient, and patient I will be; I began this topic with prayer, and I trust I shall have to conclude it with praise.

If men would reflect that there is no evil in the act of eating, any more than in the act of seeing and hearing and speaking; and that all the painful consequences of one sense, as of another sense, are derived from the evil in us, which being purged away in the resurrection of the body will exist no longer to make the actings of God's creature painful and disgusting:—and if, moreover, they would remember that the only way in which the earth, the fruit-bearing earth, can minister to man, is through his function of eating and drinking; and that in the New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven there is a tree of life, whereof the citizens eat, (which, if it be symbolical, must yet be symbolical only of nourishment derived from without;)—and if to all these considerations they will add that under the present dispensation the highest mystery of the Christian faith is set forth in the acts of eating and drinking; and that not once, like baptism, but ever and anon, like the receiving of nourishment:—I say, if all these things were taken into consideration, it seems to me that men, even of the slenderest faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, might be brought to believe that the thing will be fulfilled which Christ promised to the twelve:

### **Luke 22**

<sup>30</sup> That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

There is one passage which is generally quoted against all such doctrines concerning the body as we have been maintaining above; the passage is in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Luke*, where our Lord declares:

**Luke 20**

<sup>35</sup> But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

<sup>36</sup> Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

From this, I think some would go the length of concluding that we shall be transformed into the angelic mode of being; for they have come to hold very slight and slippery views concerning the body, and the resurrection of the body, and the visible world altogether.

The history was as follows: Certain intellectual Sadducees, who, like many that are called Christians, would know the how and the why of everything, and would believe only what they could conceive the manner of—that is, believe nothing at all—came to our Lord with a grand puzzle, which no doubt was a standing argument against the resurrection of the body. The puzzle was, that a woman had had seven husbands, one after another: and who should have her for wife in the resurrection? Christ answered:

<sup>34</sup> The children of this world [age] marry and are given in marriage:

<sup>35</sup> But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world [age], and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage:

<sup>36</sup> Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels [angel-wise]; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

But does He say, they eat not anymore and drink not anymore? No: He says merely, that they shall be not male and female there, there shall not be generation of children, nor marrying nor giving in marriage; but that they should be as angels in these respects.

For there is one great difference between the mode of man's being and the mode of angel's being; that we are brought into being through the holy ordinance of marriage, whereas they arose each in their several personalities and independent being at the voice of God's creative word.

Therefore it is He chooses the instance of the angels, in order to explain that from death those whom the Father should count worthy of it would arise each in his separate dignity as a king and priest, to be used by God in His holy government; but not to intermarry with one another, or produce in that way any others.

But this is a glorious passage of Scripture which we have quoted: it teaches us that there will be a resurrection from among the dead, of those that are counted worthy, at the beginning of the age to come; and that those who rise to inherit that age shall never die.

Now, this is the life everlasting spoken of in the Scriptures, of which the immortal food is the tree of life promised in the text to him who overcomes. These are they who, at the coming of the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, shall arise from their graves to meet Him in the clouds; when they who are alive and remain till the coming of the Lord shall be changed. These are they who live and reign with Christ upon the earth a thousand years, before the general resurrection unto judgment.

Not that this judgment makes any let or hindrance, or any way interrupts the continuity, of their blessed being; but rather otherwise. For it is well to be believed, that if this earth has been fruitful and glorious during the thousand years, when death still abides upon the people born and living in the flesh, that it shall be much more blessed and glorious when death shall have been cast into the hell of the second death; when the dust of the wicked shall have been gathered from the substance of the earth; when an end shall have been made of all evil, and possibility of evil, upon the face of the world, and Christ and His saints shall possess, in immortal bodies, an immortal inheritance.

Of what kind then shall be the beauty of the earth; of what brilliancy the aspect of the heavens, or what temper the elements of the world; of what nourishment shall be the fruits of the ground, and of what blessed influence the sun, and moon, and stars; it passes comprehension to know; and if we knew, it would surpass words to utter.

But will man cease to be all-enjoying man, or will the earth cease to be the all-producing earth? No, never. They may mock their fill, and laugh and deride and scoff in their wicked pleasure, because we say that man will eat and drink, and take unto himself the earth's well-pleased ministry; but why should they thus deride the word of God, to their own shame and condemnation? Let them...

**Psalm 4**

<sup>4</sup> Stand in awe, and sin not;

—let them meditate the wonderful things which God has said, and not be offended at His word.

Oh, if man's wicked and corruptible flesh do now, by eating and drinking, change the sweet odors, and decompose the juicy fragrant fruits which God provides for us—proving thereby that all the forms of sin and evil, as they proceeded from man at first, and filled the world, do still from him propagate themselves abroad—why should it not be, yea, surely it must be, that when his body has attained unto incorruption and immortality, it shall by its use of all things bless, beautify, and change into a thousand more excellent forms, all things which it uses; that, receiving from the earth its beautiful, fragrant, juicy nourishments, and possessing them by eating and by drinking, the body will purify, sweeten, and in a thousand unknown ways refine what it partakes, which, flowing forth at every pore, shall ensphere us with incense and with odors and with sweet fragrancy exhaling around, more exquisite than the flower gardens of the summer, and the spices which blow from Araby the Blest?

Oh, what would these low-minded and scurrilous disbelievers of God's word say, if I should affirm that man were to arise from

the grave maimed in his limbs, or without limbs at all, blinded in his eyes, or without eyes at all, his ears stopped, his voice untuned, his sense paralyzed? They would deservedly treat me as a reviler of God's high purpose, and a blasphemer of His holy word.

But is man an outer skin merely, and has he no inner organization? Are those vital organs which most do minister unto the life of man, to be awaiting in the resurrection? And if not awaiting, for what use present, if it be not for some use which to eating and drinking bears the same analogy as the use of the eyes shall then bear to seeing, the use of the ears to hearing, and of the voice to singing?

And if the use of the eye in the world to come is named by the word "seeing," and if the use of the ear is named by the word "hearing," by what word shall we name the use of the mouth, and those inward parts of man, but by the words "eating and drinking," by which our Lord himself names them?

Vile scoffers! I cannot away with their unbelief! And why will they not believe? Because they understand not, that is, because:

### **1 Corinthians 2**

<sup>9</sup> Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

But they are...

<sup>10</sup> ...revealed...unto us by the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Will they not take the word of God for these things? And I am sure I have the testimony of my reader that I have spoken no otherwise than according to the word of God. Everything which I have said, I have authenticated from the word of God: not from single passages, but from many passages; yea, I may say, from the whole tenor of it.

And truly, I see not how anyone in his right mind can refuse these interpretations of the word of God, which are simple, straightforward, unperplexed, and harmonious with each other.

Do we deny any point of orthodox doctrine or of sound morality, that they should speak against us in such unmeasured terms? Are we wicked persons, are we blasphemers, because we interpret the word of God simply and honestly, and believe that which it declares? Or are we now to believe nothing which to man seems impossible?

Then, to take an instance, how should any rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven; for that not only seems to man to be impossible, but by Christ is declared to be absolutely impossible with man?

“But [say these men,] we must not believe anything which looks to us impossible.”

Then, O you weakling! O you wicked one! You exclude all rich men from the kingdom of heaven. But we, who believe that all things are possible with God, and that all things that are written shall surely come to pass, do take you, you rich men, out of the hands of these disbelievers of hard and impossible things, and we do say unto you:

“Be of good cheer! Your salvation, though as impossible with men as to make a camel pass through a needle’s eye, is possible with God, and shall surely come to pass, if you will be willing to make unto yourselves bags that wax not old; to lay up for yourselves treasures in the heavens; to make for yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, which shall be able to receive you into everlasting habitations.”

And let this suffice for the second question, which concludes the first part of our inquiry into the Spirit’s word to the Church in Ephesus.

### **HIM THAT OVERCOMES**

And now for the second inquiry, which is one of a much shorter and simpler kind, namely, the description of the persons to whom the promise is made, “To him that overcomes.”

This promise, though it be directed to the churches and uttered in the hearing of all mankind, is the inheritance only of him that

overcomes; and it is common to all the epistles, and therefore to be regarded as a point of great importance, and worthy of the most careful consideration.

It presents us the aspect of the Church, of all saints, of all churches, as engaged in a controversy and conflict from which there is no escape by change of place or change of condition; one continued restless warfare, wherein we must either overcome or be overcome by those we are matched against.

Most wisely, therefore, do we denominate the Church in its present condition the Church militant, the Church after the resurrection the Church triumphant. These common words with which each charge begins, "I know your works," do mark the period as a season of ceaseless labor: those common words with which each promise commences, "To him that overcomes," do mark it as a season of unremitting strife and warfare.

And with what powers is the controversy and conflict carried on? With the powers of darkness, whose array and number is diversely set forth in Holy Writ. Our Lord enumerates them to be these: our own life, the gain of the world and the shame of man's censure.

### **Luke 9**

<sup>24</sup> For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life, for my sake, the same shall save it.

<sup>25</sup> For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

<sup>26</sup> For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

This enumeration presents us, first, with our own self-love to be overcome; secondly, the world's kingdoms; and, thirdly, the good opinion of other men: which are truly the three most formidable foes to the Christian's progress in the footsteps of the Lord, and make every step to be like the sad and slow step of a condemned criminal, bearing his cross to the place of execution.

Wherefore also the Lord ushers in the enumeration with these solemn words of warning:

**Luke 9**

<sup>23</sup> If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

He himself, in His strife with Satan, had two of these enemies presented to Him,—His own life, which craved nourishment; the world's kingdoms, which lay in their glory at His feet: and for the third, He had a deeper and more perilous enemy,—spiritual delusion, the misinterpretation, misapplication, and abuse of the holy Scriptures; which is the parent of heresy, schism, apostasy, and all the other more deadly sins whose province is the Church, where they lie in wait to destroy unstable souls.

This third field of Christian conflict is occupied by the false and evil spirits, which, taking possession of vain and covetous teachers, become lying spirits in their mouth, whereby whole multitudes are led astray to their own soul's damnation, and to the injury of the truth.<sup>26</sup>

These evil spirits, also, without the help of false teachers, work by their wiles directly upon the souls of Christians, and suggest continual forms of error, which lie around us like traps and gins on every side, to the inevitable ruin of all who are not ever looking to the great Shepherd, who leads and guides His sheep in the right way, and delivers them from their enemies of whatever kind; for He is...

**John 10**

<sup>11</sup> ...the good Shepherd, who gives His life for the sheep.

These our enemies, dearly beloved brethren, we are called by our Lord, in the strength of His ever-present, ever-helpful Spirit, to make constant head against, and evermore to overcome: and to him that overcomes the good Shepherd will give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

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<sup>26</sup> 2 Peter 2:1-2.



Now the Apostle Paul, in enumerating the Christian's enemies, gives a somewhat different reckoning of them, as follows:

### **Ephesians 6**

<sup>12</sup> For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

In this enumeration he means not to exclude flesh and blood from the Antichristian array; concerning whose miserable oppression he well discourses in *Romans 7*, *Galatians 5*, and elsewhere; but, being filled with the thought of the devil's wiles, he hastily runs over the enmity of flesh and blood, in order to dwell upon Satan's confederacy against the saints; which consists of:

1. The principedoms and powers, the lordships, the masteries, and every authority constituted on earth, which were then in combination against the Lord and His Anointed: so that, be Christians conditioned as they may—subjects, servants, wives, children, or in any other inferior condition,—they must be prepared to meet from their kings, masters, husbands, parents, and other superiors, a desperate opposition to the truth.
2. “The rulers of the darkness of this world;” by which, if I err not, is meant, not so much spiritual wickednesses, as the potentates of the earth,—perhaps the Roman emperors and others, whom Satan used as the body and limbs of his raging wrath against the woman's Seed; “the dragon with seven heads and ten horns.”<sup>27</sup> I do not say but that, in a wider sense, all potentates, and perhaps the prince of darkness himself, may be meant by this expression considered apart; but in the present context I rather incline to look upon it as the Roman empire, which under various heads has ruled the ascendant of darkness, and headed and guided the warfare against the Church. And,
3. “The spiritual wickednesses [the spirituals of the wickedness] in high places,”<sup>28</sup> [in the super-celestials]; by whom I

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<sup>27</sup> *Revelation 12:3.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ephesians 6:12.*

understand the fallen spirits, with Satan at their head, who are the spiritual instigators of wickedness; who combine the particles of many men's energies into a whole wicked form, and work them with united strength against the Church.

Men are separate persons, though one substance; and before they can be united, for good or for ill, a spirit must intervene. The Holy Spirit binds the churches; spirits of darkness bind the world:

### **Revelation 13**

<sup>2</sup> The dragon gave him his seat, and his power, and great authority.

These spiritual wickednesses were, when the apostle wrote, still in the heavenly places, Satan having access to the congregation of the sons of God, as the accuser-general of the brethren; but both he and they are afterwards cast down from that liberty, and confined to the earth and the terrestrial regions, as is fully set forth in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of the *Apocalypse*.

And this achievement was wrought, not so much by Michael and his angels, as by the blood of the martyrs of those churches, which are here seven times addressed with the spirit-stirring word of the Holy Ghost, "To him that overcomes I will give," &c. How glorious is the Christian's calling, to be God's champion against the evil powers of darkness: Satan and his angels! God crowns Christ King over all: and He says,

"Deny His right who dare, here are my champions."

And His saints step out into the field of conflict. And Satan, who is never slack to strife, contention, and murder, takes up the gauge of battle, *à l'outrance*, to the uttermost; and he brings forth the marshaled principalities, and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world. And the battle is fiercely joined, and ever and anon we hear the Spirit's voice running along our line, and thrilling to the heart of every soldier,

"To him that overcomes I will give," &c.

And as he finds one portion in one way pressed, and another portion in another, He varies the promise according to their vari-

ous need: until every soul is on fire, and every heart resolved to conquer or to die. Oh, what an honor is yielded to us, my fellow-soldiers, to be the champions for Christ our King!

While thus we derive from different parts of Scripture the number and nature of our enemies, we believe that this book of the *Apocalypse* itself, as it contains in these three chapters our King's instructions to the chief captains, and the Spirit's instructions to every soldier; and again, in the last three chapters, the great rewards of the victorious army; so likewise in the intervening chapters it contains the array of enemies, against whom the Church is marshaled in holy warfare; especially in the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> chapters; towards the end of which the battle is proclaimed to be finished, and the victory won:

#### **Revelation 14**

<sup>13</sup> Yea, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

For immediately after this proclamation Christ comes a victorious King riding on a cloud, and with the sickle in His hand as the great Reaper, the great Head of the reaping angels,<sup>29</sup> He gathers into His garner, into the cloud of His glory, all the faithful ones who have fought for Him and overcome; and with them He proceeds to tread the winepress, and do the other acts of power and judgment upon the nations.

To that word of the Spirit, therefore, quoted above, I attach a great value in the machinery and structure of the Apocalyptic mystery;—as proclaiming from on high the end of the long and laborious work-day; the termination of the gallant conflict of the Church against all the enemies of God and of His Christ.

Now, the enemies enumerated in this book are:

1. The dragon, in open destructive fight against the Church; giving no quarter, and practicing no deception: until, wearied out with the patience of the saints, and finding no end of such havoc as he wrought in those first ages of persecu-

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<sup>29</sup> *Matthew* 13:41.

tion, he betakes himself to wiles, empoisoning certain waters in his foul mouth, with which to deluge and destroy the Church.

2. Not finding this method of the Arian heresy to prosper, any more than the other, he resigns the work into the hand of the confederate beasts of the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter, the Emperor and the Pope;
3. And lastly, he comes from the bottomless pit, all-impregnated with blasphemy, to make a last and desperate effort by infidelity to subvert all foundations; in which awful struggle, at this time proceeding, he is himself subverted.

These are the three general forms of wickedness against which the seven churches, or Church universal, is inspirited by the words of the Holy Ghost. I cannot now describe them particularly, or set them forth with discriminative marks, or show the diverse fountains of our nature from which they flow, or the powers in creation, which Satan embodies and inspires against the truth.

But, whatever they be, they are brought together in the sixth vial, poured forth from the mouth, as a deluge of evil principles, which work opposition to the Lord our God, and gather the frantic nations to battle against the Lamb and those that are with Him. I believe these three spirits to be:

1. Arbitrary, tyrannical, blind Force, as a principle;
2. Damnable delusion and craft of Papal superstition, as a principle;
3. Blasphemous Infidelity as a principle, scornful of Christ's actual rights, trampling and treading upon them, and mocking and contemning, ay, and persecuting and condemning, all who will maintain them.

These forms of enmity the Church has in succession had to stand against; but we, whose lot it is to be in the evil and perilous times of the last days, have now to stand against them all, coming on in one rude shock.

This gives us another beautiful, simple, and true idea of the structure of the *Apocalypse*, as it concerns the Church:

- Her marshaling for the battle, chapters 1, 2, 3;
- The history of her battles, chapters 11, 12, 13, 14; and
- The triumphant entering into possession of the conquered earth, and the rearing of the eternal monument and trophy of her victory, chapters 20, 21, 22.
- For the other chapters, they contain the demonstration of Christ as the Head of kingdoms, and do not so immediately concern the Church.

These views also confirm and illustrate the radical idea which we have given of these seven epistles, as comprehending the whole Church, in all times and places, until Christ shall come again with its collected and triumphant myriads.

One thing remains to complete this long discourse upon the first of these epistles, which has embraced so wide a range, in order to fix and settle several questions preliminary to the whole series. The thing which remains is, to come back to the Church of Ephesus, and show the adaptation of this promise to their case, and the exact fulfillment of the threatening upon that Church.

What method would any parent, having a child whose love had waxed or was waxing cold, take to re-animate the languishing flame? Would it not be, to admonish that child of His continual and increasing watchfulness over its welfare?

“For you, my child, I labor all the day long, that you may enjoy your youth in quietness and peace: for you I meditate in the watches of the night how I may best provide for your well-being; and for you I pray, and am full of care and anxiety always.”

This method Christ takes to re-animate the angel of the Ephesian Church:

“I walk up and down continually among you; I intercede for you; I take upon me your cares; I provide for all your spiritual distresses; I never forget you; you are engraven upon the palms of my hands; your candlestick is ever before me.”

And if the subjects of a king, seeing him not, should grow indifferent to his person and unobservant of their duties of loyalty, what way so good to reanimate their drooping spirits, as to make known to them, that he was employed in continual deliberation for their welfare; sleeping not, resting not, but ever laborious for their prosperity, and weighed down with the cares of state; that, though they saw him not, he was walking among them unknown; knew every widow's widowhood, and provided for every orphan's helplessness; and was the soul of that prosperity which they enjoyed? Such is the method taken by Christ to re-animate the love of the angel of the Church in Ephesus.

But withal, that he might be possessed of the whole truth, He warns him, that, if he repented not and returned not to his former works, He certainly would come and despoil him of that in which his glory stood, his candlestick, upon which he was elevated on high in the sight of men;—working upon him by all the love which He had for the prosperity of His flock, for His own dignity and honor, and for the work which He had well begun, to continue patiently to intend that care which He had so patiently and laboriously entered upon: moreover, teaching him that no care of the flock, that no reverence of the ordinances, that no love of the souls of the people, that no labor in behalf of the outward visible estate of the Church, could avail to any permanent good, unless it proceeded from, was accompanied by, and perfected in, the love of Jesus himself; without whom all ordinances and services are vain, and the reverence of them but a wicked idolatry.

“*Your candlestick,*” that which you love and glory in, and labor for—the object of your heart, the staff of your strength, the sight of your eyes—shall be taken away, “removed from its place, unless you repent.” Well suited, therefore, whether you look to the aspect of himself offered to their contemplation, or to the threatening of His providence held out, was the method which the Lord took.

And so, also, if you look to the promise: for what so welcome to a good shepherd as to know that, according as he fed others he

should himself be fed; that what pastoral care he put forth, that pastoral care he should prove through eternity?

And so, also, how consolatory to the people to know, that in despite of all neglect and contempt, they had a Shepherd who was walking among them, and who should in the fullness of time lead them by the still waters, and make them to lie down in the rich pastures; who should lead them by rivers of living waters, and wipe away all tears from their eyes?

Never was an epistle framed at once with such skill to cover the ordinances with dignity, and to prevent them from being trampled on. Like all the works of God, it is perfect; and, like all the words of Christ, it is such as never man spoke.

But there is something more than mere threatening in that word of the Lord Jesus Christ:

### **Revelation 2**

<sup>5</sup> I will remove your candlestick out of its place, except you repent.

These epistles are not words to that minister and that church, but to all ministers and all churches. They are the oracles which define the eternal laws of ecclesiastical polity. This Church is the exhibition to all churches, of what is the necessary consequence of a decay of first love; it is the exhibition of that particular disease which is engendered by that particular form of wickedness; and its death is the sure prelude of a like death to every Church, and to every person, who takes on that form of wickedness.

The Ephesian bishop did repent, and the Church did rise into very great glory; and for a while, for a long while, its destruction was averted. But still the seeds remained in its constitution, and it came at length to that fatal end here threatened.

The annals of Christendom are not such as to enable us to write the history of the Ephesian Church, but what notices do exist are sufficient to justify the perfect veracity of the Word of God, and the full accomplishment of the threatening in the text. Christ does

not put forth any hypothetical case of evil; He is too charitable to do so; He foresees the evil, and teaches how it may be prevented.

Wherever anything stands in Scripture as a warning, it is not imaginary but real evil that is foreseen; and God shows His goodness in foreseeing it, man his wickedness in disregarding His foresight When God said to Adam,

### **Genesis 2**

<sup>17</sup> For in the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die,

—He put forth that warning which His wisdom foresaw would be necessary; and man, disregarding it, set at nought the good counsel of God, and set up in its stead his own self-sufficiency. The proverb is true,

“A man that’s warned is half-armed;”

—but, alas, with that half-armor how seldom do we defend ourselves against the coming evil! so was it with the Church in Ephesus, and so shall we see it proved with all the churches which were so warned.

Ephesus had Paul, John, and Timothy for its pastors. Perhaps the most complete and profound of all St. Paul’s Epistles was directed to that Church. Nothing remarkable occurred in its history till the year 198, when, Polycrates having called a synod of its bishops to determine concerning the first great question that agitated the Catholic Church—namely, the time of the celebration of Easter—they came to an opposite conclusion from the Roman Church, resting upon the authority of John the Apostle.

It had at this time risen to be a metropolitan seat. It is remarkable that both the Church of Scotland and the Church of England held with the Asiatic bishops in this matter against the Roman bishop: nor could he get the Scottish Church to conform in this smallest matter till the ninth century; a continual source of lamentation to the venerable Bede, who was a strong Romanist.

Here also Chrysostom, in the year 400, held a synod of seventy bishops, for regulating the affairs of Asia. But the fame of these councils was eclipsed by the third General Council of Ephesus,



which was held in the year 431, to give forth decisions against the heresy of Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, who held a twofold personality to be in Christ, and so defeated the Atonement and the Redemption.

This heresy lies at the root of those objections, which are now being made by the unstable and the unlearned, against Christ's taking humanity of the virgin's fallen substance. They think that His human nature is a person; and they cannot conceive it to be under the condition of the fall, without believing that He was a sinner.

But in the year 449, Ephesus lost its character by the council held there in which were approved the errors of Eutyches, with circumstances most disgraceful to a meeting of ecclesiastics; whence it was called *Praedatorium Ephesinum*. Now the city began to fall into ruins; and in the time of the Emperor Justinian, 528-566, its ruinous marbles were transported to Constantinople, and employed in the construction of Sancta Sophia.

Towards the end of the eleventh century it was seized by a Turkish pirate, but again delivered out of his hand. In 1306 it was still of such consequence as to suffer from the exactions of the Grand Duke Roger: but two years afterwards it surrendered to the Turks, who removed its inhabitants to another place, where they were afterwards massacred: so exactly even to the very letter was the prophecy fulfilled, of the candlestick being removed out of its place.

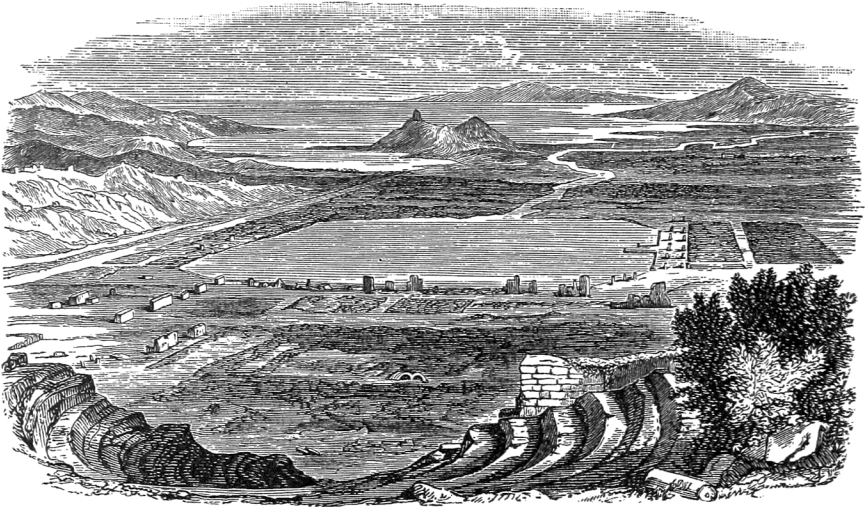
But still more suffering was it destined to endure; for in 1401 Tamerlane employed a whole month in plundering the city and the suburbs around. The description given of it by Dr. Chandler, in his time, is as follows:

“The inhabitants are a few Greek peasants, living in extreme wretchedness, dependence, and insensibility...Its streets are obscured and overgrown. A herd of goats was driven to it for shelter from the sun at noon; and a noisy flight of crows from the quarries seemed to insult its silence. We heard the partridge cry in the area of the theater and the stadium. The glorious pomp of

its heathen worship is no more remembered; and Christianity, which was here nursed by the apostles, and fostered by general councils, until it increased to fullness of stature, barely lingers on in an existence hardly visible.”

A modern visitant says:

“Preserving no vestige of Christianity, except the desolated ruins at Ayasaluck.”



Modern Site of Ancient Ephesus

## VI. CONCLUSION

**T**HUS have I, dearly beloved brethren, set before you the contents of the first glorious vision of St. John, the revelation of Christ as the High Priest and Universal Bishop of His Church with his first epistle. See what a light it casts upon all things concerning the Church. It is, indeed, a very fountain of instruction to every minister, and to every saint.

But to those to whom it was first written, it was more than instruction—it was life and sustenance. They lived in the days of stern persecution: they were just merging into the awful persecutions of the second and third centuries of the Church. These words, therefore, were to the Church as if they had been uttered into the ear of every persecuted man, from the mouth of Christ, on the other side of the veil.

Him whom Stephen saw in glory, the first martyrs seemed to hear uttering these glorious words of promise. More dear to them than other Scripture, therefore, was this book of the *Apocalypse*; dearer than the rest of the *Apocalypse* was this vision of the great Bishop and Shepherd of their souls, pledging to every one that overcomes the glories of this earth redeemed from the curse.

But that anarch, that old hierarch of evil upon earth, that great Antichristian Head, the Pope of Rome, seeks lodgment and honor in our land for his damnable pretensions to the glory and the power of the Universal Bishop. He would claim unto himself the divine prerogative of all that which we have vindicated for Christ alone; and like a wolf upon the fold, he is hastening to the prey: and perhaps it may yet come to pass, that we may look to this vision with the same eyes of earnest consolation with which the first Christians did.

If truly he, with his cunning marches, shall insinuate himself as universal bishop into this land, then between Belial and Christ there will be no agreement. I pray you to be stirred up with zeal

and indignation against the man, who has claimed for himself the primacy of the universal Church.

If there be any honor, if there be any glory unto Christ, in this title of Universal Bishop: if any dignity to the minister, if any consolation to the churches; then upon the Pope, and upon the system that supports him, who claims, who arrogates to himself this honor and consolation of Christ, be your anathemas pronounced.

We cannot love the good without hating the evil; we cannot honor Christ without dishonoring Antichrist. Therefore I pray you be of one mind to resist the torrents of evil, which now threaten the bulwarks of our land.



The Ephesians burning their books of magic

