

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST
BOOK 9
REVELATION 3:7-13

EPISTLE TO THE
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA

EDWARD IRVING
1831



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

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WHY THIS WORK?

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 republication, 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."

Gather up the fragments, that none be lost.

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Revelation 3

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says He that is holy, He that is true, He that has the key of David, He that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens;

⁸ I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name.

⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.

¹² Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

¹³ He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches.

MYSTERY OF THE NAMES OF THE CHURCHES

IN the zeal of interpreters, by all means to cast light upon this wonderful vision of the Seven Churches, recourse has been had to the names also; which, though they be the names of real places of the Lesser Asia, then and still existent, are not therefore to be rejected as devoid of a mystical meaning.

Because the perfect wisdom of God, in making choice, from the numerous Churches, of seven, whose condition should make up the completeness of the condition of the Christian Church both spiritually and historically considered, might so choose them, as that by their names they should contribute to that excellent design.

There is no previous improbability, much less impossibility, that the particular names should be significant, as well as the particular temptations and virtues and vices of the several Churches. And no interpreter has done his duty till he fairly examine this point also, and see what it will yield.

The consideration of this, however, I have postponed till I should have laid down the great cardinal principles by which the vision is to be examined, and the great ends of instruction and warning, of encouragement and reproof, which it serves to the Christian Church in all ages, and to the private Christians of all Churches.

And being now acquitted of this duty, whether as respects the historical or the catholic view, I yield myself willingly to seek what new information can be gathered from the names, and so to introduce the subject of our present lecture.

Now of all subjects, especially such as are more nice and difficult, it is always best to begin with that part which is the simplest and most evident, and so to proceed to that which is more difficult and remote from the common apprehension. This is the best order for teaching and learning, though it may

not be the best for arranging the subject after it has been fully comprehended.

PHILADELPHIA

Taking this method, there is none so proper to begin with as the name of the Church now under consideration; which, beyond any question, signifies “brotherly love,” and can by no ingenuity be made to signify anything else.

If, then, any doctrine be contained in the name, there should be found in this epistle something specially pertaining to brotherly love. Is it so? I think no one, considering the seven epistles, can doubt that it is so.

For if the “brotherly love” be sought for in the relation between the chief Shepherd and the angel, then is there no one of them all to whom He speaks with half the affection and complacency; sheltering him from the evil to come with all the tenderness of an elder to a younger brother, and encouraging his little strength with strong promises and cheerful prospects.

If, again, the “brotherly love” be sought for in the membership of the Church itself, behold how He assures him that those, who were standing apart from him, should be brought into submission to his authority and fellowship with the brethren,—and this through knowing “that I have loved you.”

And finally, if the “brotherly love” be looked for in the substance of the Spirit’s promise, that consists of fellow-citizenship in the new Jerusalem, of domestication together in the temple of God, and of one common name.

Here, then, we cannot choose but observe a wonderful coincidence between the meaning of the name and the substance of the epistle.

LAODICEA

The name which, next to “Philadelphia,” is of the clearest

and most unequivocal interpretation is “the Laodiceans;” which, being interpreted by the name of the place “Laodicea,” is, as we have elsewhere observed, “the popular voice, the judgment of the people, the public opinion;” being taken from the name of the people, by which, in this case as that of Smyrna, it is expressed, then it would more nearly signify “the people righteous, or the righteousness of the people;” coming, in either case, nearly to the same meaning. That the rightness of things is judged in that Church, not by conscience nor by God’s word, not by the rule of charity nor the law of righteousness, but by the tribunal of the people.

And how this agrees with the substance of the epistle, any one can perceive without help of a commentator. It is self-sufficiency and self-righteousness from the beginning to the ending of it; indifference to God’s holy service, independence on Christ’s righteousness; a measuring of themselves by themselves, whereby they become fools.

This instance would lead us to connect the significance of the name with the state and condition of the Church as the direct object of it, and with the style of Christ and the promise of the Spirit, only as indirectly connected through the medium of this.

THYATIRA

The next of these names which we take as being the most obvious is “Thyatira,” which is compounded of two Greek words: the one signifying “scent” or “incense,” the other “to bruise” or “disturb,” and so making together “the sweet savor of labor” or “the incense of contrition.”

Now we have already examined that epistle, and found work or labor to be the characteristic feature, distinguishing it from the rest. It refers to the state of the Church under the domination of Jezebel, “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” for the long season of “time, times, and half

a time,” during which it is said to them, “Here is the patience and faith of the saints;” and at the end of which it is said, “they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.”

To the saints of that time was given the grace to endure grinding oppression, and under it to yield the incense of a broken and a contrite heart; and to them, as their reward, it is promised that they shall break and bruise the nations, and tread them down as the mire of the streets.

Christ is also presented to them with those feet of brass which are never worn with thrashing, and never polluted with the vileness of the tares, and chaff, and dust from which he is separating the precious wheat; with eyes of fire also, to discern every grain, however buried and to all appearance lost in heaps of rubbish. This also answers well to the name “Thyatira,” or “the incense of labor and contrition.”

PERGAMOS

Next in the order of distinctness is “Pergamos,” which has its name from the rocky height or elevation on which it stood; for, according to Strabo, all places built on eminences were anciently called “Pergama.”

Now, that Church is represented as “dwelling where Satan’s seat is.” Satan’s snare is pride, and the airy regions of pride are the seat of that ambitious spirit still; and his last and most glorious servant, the Infidel Antichrist, whose familiar spirit Satan may not disdain to be, shall perish through the daring pride which he shall conceive of “sitting upon the mount of the congregation [Mount Zion], in the sides of the north.” (*Isaiah* 14:13)

To resist pride of place, seated glory, the honor of prelacy, the temptation of the bishop’s see [seat] and the bishop’s throne, into which Constantine brought the Church, as by one stride, from the dungeon of death; this was the calling and controversy of that Church.

To withstand those Balaamite doctors who were selling the Church to the State for riches, as Balaam did, by the adoption of all courtly practices, and seductive oratorical arts; to gain-say these Nicolaitane doctors, who, as is reported of Nicolas, brought the chaste and beautiful spouse of Christ, whom He had wedded, and gave her to be possessed by the powers of the earth, corrupting all her beautiful and chaste order with their inventions of discipline and worship; to sit in the midst of imperial dignity and preferment, of worldly learning and eloquence, of comely manners and enjoyments, as Pergamos sat elevated upon a rock, the “Acropolis of Ilium,” as she was called: this was the vocation and labor of the Church of Pergamos; even to bear the testimony of Christ during that palmy time, which elapsed from the end of the persecution till the Papal domination, a period of four or five hundred years, from Constantine to Charlemagne.

SMYRNA

The fifth, according to our principle of arrangement, is “Smyrna,” which is the Greek word for “myrrh,” an aromatic juice, exuded from the bark of a thorny tree, much prized for its sweet smelling savor, and yet very bitter to the taste, wherefore the bitter waters were called “waters of marah.” [The Hebrew word being the same with the Greek word]. It was brought along with aloes by Nicodemus, for anointing the dead body of Jesus.

Now, the Church of Smyrna was tried with bitter poverty and sore tribulation unto the death, such as none of the other Churches did endure. It dwelt in the shadow of death, and, as it were, lay embalmed in the precious spices of its sufferings and endurances for the Lord’s sake.

Its period was the period of the ten persecutions, from the Apostolical time until the time of Constantine; a period wherein the Church, like the aromatic tree, did sweat out, in

her many agonies, most acceptable incense unto God, and which also has embalmed her during the death-like period of darkness, and preserved her to this day from corruption, the body of a true Church.

Having had such satisfaction in these five instances, we may advance with the more confidence to seek for the less apparent meaning and application of the two which remain.

EPHESUS

Ephesus has its mystical meaning from the Greek, which originally signifies desire, or impulse, sending us upon some object. But it is most commonly applied to the removal of a cause from one court to another: the desire not being satisfied which brought the cause thither, or desire still remaining in the breast of the litigant.

Now, it strikes me, that these do well express the spirit of the epistle, which breathes strong love from Christ towards that Church, but complains of love not satisfied with love in return.

Revelation 2

⁴ Nevertheless I have somewhat against you, because you have left your first love.

It contains also a threatening of removing her candlestick, if she did not repent. God's love to Ephesus, the desirableness of that city in his eyes, is well shown in the history of the *Acts of the Apostles*, wherein He commanded Paul to abide, because He had much people in that city, as also by Paul's Epistle to the Church there, and his two Epistles to Timothy their bishop.

But he was not satisfied with her love, and removed her candlestick to a neighboring village, where it is still found to subsist, though in miserable darkness, compared with its pristine glory.

Ephesus therefore signifies, the first love with which God betook himself to the Gentile Church, and the coldness into which the Gentile Church shall at length fall, when she shall reach her Laodicean state; and foretells the removal of her candlestick from its glorious place to some poor and pitiful remnant, in which its light shall still be preserved: “the remnant of Edom;” (*Amos 9:12*) “the remnant whom the Lord our God shall call.” (*Joel 2:32*)

SARDIS

Finally, there is no such natural origin for the name “Sardis,” as in the Greek word, which signifies a “Sardine stone,” of the color of flesh, and by which the ground-color of the body of Him that sits on the throne in heaven is set forth (*Revelation 4:3*), while its radiant splendor is compared to a “jasper stone,” which is “as the glory of God” (*Revelation 21:11*).

Taking this as the basis of an interpretation, for the want of any other, we will have the Church of Sardis to be that which has:

- the ground-work of the Church without its glory;
- the word of orthodoxy, without the spirit and life which should be in it;
- the form of discipline, without the binding and loosing power;
- the ordinances and offices, without the gifts of the Spirit to quicken the ordinance into life, and to qualify for the office-bearing.

If any one object that this is to take the mystical meaning of the name from an attribute of the glorified Christ, and not of the Church, it must be remembered that the Church also is represented as clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet; and that we are the children of the resurrection, not of the nativity of the Lord,—of the glorified, not of the humbled

Christ,—of the holy First-begotten, not from sinful flesh, but from the dead: and, being so, we ought not only to have the earthly, but likewise the heavenly glory; not only the sanctification of the regenerate man, but also the glory of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

How exactly this corresponded with the character of Sardis,

- which had a name to live but was dead;
- which sought honor of man, but sought not the honor that comes from God;
- which had the garment, but preserved not its undefiledness;
- which had the form, but not the power of godliness.

And if this be so, as that Church applies to our present state, we see what we have to add to that which we already possess.

We possess the ground-work of a Church, its orthodoxy and its order: let us seek to have added the glorious doctrine and the glorious gifts of the true Church, and put forth the same in the sight of this unbelieving world, as the true proof that Christ is the sent of God; He who is about to judge the world, and to cast the devil out, and to glorify His Church from the dust of the earth, to the glory of the new Jerusalem which comes down from heaven.

To one casting these things together, and revolving them in his mind, this subject of the names will appear no vain speculation, but another method by no means to be despised for attaining to the full meaning of this wonderfully prolific vision.

And, though thus briefly touched upon, it does, I think, very much confirm the truth of the conclusions to which we have already come upon other grounds, while it yields a connected view of the manifold wisdom and love of God towards His Church.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To the sweetest of these names, Philadelphia, or Brotherly-love, and to the tenderest of all these epistles, we now humbly address ourselves, with fervent prayer for Divine help, to enable us to bring out the spirit and life of its words, while, in doing so, we are overruled by the same love of the brethren with which and for which it is written by our elder Brother, that Friend who “sticks closer than a brother.” *Proverbs* 18:24.

But while we thus exhibit the truth and fullness of the historical method of interpreting these epistles, and prepare ourselves thereby for a more homefelt and immediate application of that one now before us, we must not by any means forget the real subsistence of those Churches in that age, nor neglect to glean up whatever is left us from the relics of antiquity concerning their state.

The city of Philadelphia is situated about twenty-eight miles east of Sardis, and was built by Attalus Philadelphus, the brother of Eumenes, who held the kingdom of Pergamos for twenty-one years, during the minority of his nephew Attalus Philometer, the same who made the Romans his heir, to whom the kingdom thereafter passed.

Attalus, who founded the city of Philadelphia, is mentioned in the first book of the *Maccabees*, as one of those kings to whom the Romans wrote letters of protection for their new allies the Jews; which took place about 140 years before Christ. This may be taken as about the date of the founding of the city.

It stood on a root of Mount Tmolus, by the river Cogamus, and was fearfully liable to earthquakes, insomuch that the inhabitants were never very numerous, being afraid to congregate close together, and forced to dwell apart, scattered over the adjacent country. It is said that they were almost constantly employed in the repair of their town walls, ever suffering from some concussion, so restless was the ground on

which the place stood. And for all that, they over and over again withstood the Turks, having a tradition that their city should never be taken.

Into the particulars of its history it is not however the time to go, until we shall have examined the prophecies which went before upon it. Suffice it to say, that it still remains under the name *Allah-shehr*, or *the city of God*, a town of good size, like “a column amongst ruins,” preserving within it several places of Christian worship, in number twenty-five, of all sects, whereof five are regular churches; with a resident bishop, and twenty inferior clergy.

Though there be no foundation in ancient history for the supposition of some, that *Quadratus*, bishop of Athens, who wrote the *Apology to Trajan*, was bishop of this city; there is no doubt that, whosoever he was, he was worthy of his office, and an example to all of us who in these days would acquit ourselves of our obligation in the sight of God and of Christ. This will appear in the details of the epistle, to which we now proceed.

CHRIST'S SIXTH STYLE OR DESIGNATION

AS, when He had reproved the Church of Ephesus of a declension of love, He did straightway exhibit Himself and the Church of the Smyrnians, as faithful unto the death to one another, yea triumphing in their faithfulness over death.

So the Chief Shepherd, having pointed out to the Church of Sardis the error of her ways, consisting in nominalism, the cloak of hypocrisy, and man-pleasing, immediately thereafter gives, in this epistle to Philadelphia, the example of a Church sustained against the same temptations, and brought triumphantly through them all, by the simple power of true love, faithfulness to His word, and the testimony of His name.

And if the view expressed in the introduction to our last lecture, that the four former epistles concern the Church from her origin until she became apostate; and these three latter ones, the Church in her condition of Protestantism; we have in the two initiatory epistles of Ephesus and Sardis the forms of temptation under which the Church, in her two states, was destined to fall: the one, primitive love decaying through the temptations of nature,—the other, faith eaten out by the vain-glory of a name, the grace of Christ sacrificed to the favor of the world, the good of heavenly things foregone for the riches and goods of the earth.

The proper victory over the flesh is death: there is no other way of destroying it; and therefore the primitive Church in the Smyrnian age was cast into persecution and death; at once to prove her superiority to that temptation, and to show those sensual ages of the world that there is in the name of Christ a power greater than that which they regarded as supreme.

But now when, not sensuality, but reputation; not pleasure, but honor; not the flesh, but the mind of man, knowledge, invention, and intellectual accomplishments have got the upper

hand in the world, and set themselves up to rule in the stead of Christ, the Church of Philadelphia, wherein is given the example of resistance and triumph over this the spirit of Protestantism, is set forth under other conditions than those of Smyrna, having little strength and no name, and no support from any visible quarter, troubled also with false brethren within, and yet patiently bearing, and gently forbearing, holding on her steady course of trusting in the name of Jesus, and standing for the word of His testimony; receiving the reward of her faithfulness, not in death, but in deliverance from those deadly judgments which the rest of the world prove.

The question which Christ now puts to issue before the world, is not whether the natural man, ministered to by all the pleasures of the flesh, or the spiritual man, deprived of all worldly comfort, and girt with all the pains of death, be the stronger; but whether the natural man flattered by all the approbations, and built up in all the securities, of this world, or the spiritual man cast out with contempt, and left devoid of countenance and support, be the stronger and the nearer to safety and honor.

And the proof consists, not in the triumphant death of the first martyrs, but in the patient steadfastness of the contemned few, their unbroken confidence of honor; and their glorious deliverance at that very hour when all the rest are overwhelmed with ruin and disgrace.

As the faithful witnesses who kept up the testimony for fifteen centuries against the growth of that harlot mother of abominations, were brought forth with a high hand, and with fury poured forth, at that same hour of reformation at which the harlot Church was sealed up to the darkness and helplessness of apostasy, till the judgment of the great day; so in the hour of that judgment shall those faithful witnesses, who have held out against the growing power of the infidel apostasy, and maintained the nearness and the certainty of a com-

ing Lord to judge and make war, be in that day honorably delivered and taken into glory, while the two-fold apostasies of the beast and the false prophet, the infidel and the papal, are cast into the lake of fire which burns for ever and ever.

This change in the form of the controversy, and the consequent form of the trial and victory, is very necessary to be borne in mind, being in truth the key to the three latter epistles, of which that to Sardis exhibits the form and pressure of the new evil; this to Philadelphia the only way of resisting it with success, and triumphing over it; and that to Laodicea the fatal consummation of it, through the heedlessness of the Church to the instructions of her Teacher and Lord.

These things being so, it may be better conceived than expressed, what responsibility I feel in entering upon the exposition of an epistle which contains the only remedy of that disease which is consuming the Church, the only preservative against that awful crisis and consummation which is just at hand. Yet I am not paralyzed, for God will be my strength in testifying to His Son's love for His Church.

The key then to this epistle is the weakness and apparent helplessness to which this Church was reduced in the midst of the fair but hypocritical name of the Church of Sardis, of the temporal fullness of prosperity, yet poverty of spiritual grace, possessed by the Church of Laodicea.

HE THAT IS HOLY

Sanctity of character, and sincerity of faith and truth, together with supernatural help and support, were the resources of this true servant of the lord, the only riches and goods in which he taught his poor church to confide.

To this state of simple faith the Lord addresses Himself by this style, of which every word breathes strength and security to all who will depend upon it:

Revelation 3

⁷ These things says He that is holy, He that is true, He that has the key of David: He that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens.

This title which Christ here assumes to Himself, being that which God so frequently used in the former dispensation, “The Holy One of Israel,” “whose name is Holy,” and that with which the heavenly hosts do celebrate His praise, “Holy, holy, holy” (*Isaiah* 6:3); which vision was a vision of the glory of Christ (*John* 12:41), and is therefore applicable to Him.

It is also frequently used to designate the Messiah both in the Old and New Testament, “Your Holy One” (*Psalms* 16:10; 89:10; *Acts* 3:14); and even confessed to by devils themselves, “the Holy One of God” (*Mark* 1:24). This must contain in itself some essential truth of Godhead, and reveal something very necessary to be believed and kept in memory by men.

When man fell, he came to know the difference between the holy and the unholy; of which till then I think he was incapable. The precept given to him in Paradise was not a moral precept; because, being without the knowledge of evil, morality was for him a science unintelligible. There was no moral evil in eating of, or in refraining from, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was a positive precept indicative of a superior authority under which he was placed, and in rebelling against which consisted the guilt of his transgression; in disbelieving God, or, if he believed, in setting light by His commandment.

In the same manner I conclude that the threatening death was not a moral but a natural penalty, because the moral must be unintelligible to a creature ignorant of the difference between good and evil. Man knew what it was to be blessed with life: to be deprived of those blessings was death; to cease to live, perhaps to cease to be; certainly, to cease to be that living soul which then he was, to forfeit his dominion and his

life.

But so soon as the knowledge of good and evil came, so soon as “he is become one of us [the Elohim, the God-persons], knowing good and evil” the holy and the unholy stood at once revealed to him, and morality became a science, and God the great Master and Teacher of it.

In sign of man’s unholiness, He puts him forth from His presence, and requires to be approached by sacrifice. And in sign of the unholiness of mankind, “death reigned over all men from Adam unto Moses, though they had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.”

But it was by the promulgation of the law and the constitution of Israel as a holy nation, with ordinances all-significant of the difference between the holy and the unholy, by that law whereof the sanction was death, indicated not by words only, but by the sacrifice of blood; by this it was that God did assert His attribute of holiness against a world lying in the wicked one; and now it is that He so constantly takes to Himself His name “The Holy,” “The Holy One,” “The Holy One of Israel:” which attribute and name of God Christ claims to Himself in the title before us: “These things says the Holy One.”

While Christ thus asserts for Himself to be the contrary and contradiction of all sin and sinfulness, and to be the possessor and originator of all holiness, He does this, not as Jehovah the Angel of the Covenant, but as Jesus the Word made flesh, who came to present the soul of man ever faithful unto God its Creator, the body of man ever holy; with sin put to death in it, and ever held in death; present indeed, but impotent; present only that its Conqueror might be known to be present; present in its impotency, that the potency of the Holy One might be known.

This, now, is the meaning of Christ’s being made under the law. The law is not positive, but moral. It is holy to obey it—it is sinful to disobey it. Christ was made under it, for the end of

proving that he was the Holy One. The law is the expression of God's holiness; and he who keeps the law is holy as God is holy. Christ therefore is the Holy One, though in mortal flesh; and He makes mortal flesh to fulfill the law of holiness.

He is God's holiness in action, demonstrating in a life of sorest temptation, what an almighty power of holiness there is in God to cast off, and to cast out, to resist and to overcome all sin, and sin's ministers, within the bounds of the creation of God. Christ's life in flesh made God's holiness from being a word to be a thing. It is no more spoken of, it is done.

And this work of presenting flesh holy, against all the combinations of sin, and sin's ministers, visible and invisible, Christ having accomplished, became the Head, was exalted to become the Head of a new creation, having the Holy Ghost given to Him for the very end of quickening whom, and what, the Father pleases into an everlasting life of holiness which shall prevail for ever against unholiness, quite to expel it from the realm of life, and evermore to restrain it in the lake that burns, which is the second death.

This office of mortifying and crucifying all the members of sin, and quickening them anew unto holiness, of discharging God's creation of its poisonous load, and in its stead infusing into it the glorious life of holiness, Christ puts forth at present in His Church, and by His Church. He does this in them, and by them alone, as His body, given to Him of the Father, for this very end, that through the members thereof Christ the Head might effectually resist, impetuously turn back, and for ever shut out from the creation of God the tide of sin, which had poisoned its life, destroyed its beauty and consistency, and brought it to the foulness of corruption and the dust of the grave.

In the Church, and by the Church, I say, is the work of wrestling against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against spiritual wickedness in the super-celestial places (*Ephesians* 6:12), carried on through the ministry of the Holy Ghost, through Christ, and the inworking of the Father in us.

Every action of the Church, the body of Christ, thus wrought in of the Father, ministered to by Christ, and supplied with the Holy Ghost, is holy, is most holy, if indeed there be degrees of holiness. I mean to say that the actions of the saints which are not holy, are not of God, nor of Christ in them, by the Holy Ghost, but are of themselves; are not of the Spirit, but of the flesh; are in truth manifestations of that awful power with which God has created the human spirit, the power of resisting, and overcoming, and rejecting Himself.

I speak not blasphemy when I say that the Almighty permits Himself to be overcome by the spirit of man. It is not that He cannot, but that He will not, overpower us. He has treated us from the beginning, and He will treat us to the end, as beings whom He made in His own image, and to exercise His own lordship.

The image of God must not be constrained, because He whose image it is, is not constrained, but free. The being whom God has made a lord, must remain a lord; and if he have made himself a bondsman, he must be the actor in making himself a lord again. And so the Son of God, when He came to retrieve man from being a bondsman, became a bondsman in order to do it, and as a bondsman effected man's liberty, and made him to become lord again.

Aye, it is a fearful dignity this in which God has constituted man, a very fearful and awful dignity it is to have the power of "grieving," and "vexing," and "quenching," and "blaspheming" the Spirit of the Almighty God, and of Jesus in whom it pleased the Father the fullness of the Godhead should dwell. But so it is, and let every saint know it, and be aware of it, that though the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Father be in him, he may resist Them both, and does so every time that

he sins; so that sin in a saint is a thing of most awful heinousness, and would be of most fearful consequence if we had not such a God and such a Redeemer to do withal.

Sinful actions of the saints are very sinful: they all draw on to apostasy, and their consummation is apostasy,—a more direful state of being than that of the devils themselves, whereof a sure sign is given in this, that the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire one thousand years before Satan the prince of evil.

But while this is true, it is equally true that the actions of the saints which are done in obedience to the Father and to Christ, and by their inworking in us, are holy as the holiness of God; and are a continuance of Christ's holy work in the flesh, and of His power through a human will to subdue a human body, a sinful world, and all the spirits of darkness. And the more of these holy works, in heart, speech, and behavior a saint produces, the greater is his favor with God now, and the greater will be his reward in the kingdom to come.

And to the end of encouraging the angel of the Church of Philadelphia, who was honest and earnest in the pursuit of holiness, and taught his Church to be so, Christ presents Himself as the Holy One, that he might be of good heart, and of a strong hand in the course which he had chosen.

“I am the Holy One; be not afraid of any power of wickedness in the flesh, in the Church, or in the world around you, or in the prince of the power of the air. Be holy, for I am holy. Your afflictions are all to make you a partaker of my holiness. Go on, go on your way rejoicing; fear not the flesh; I strangled sin in it, and ever since I am its Master. Hold it down: as I put it down, keep it down.

“Be holy, O my son; for I, your Father, am holy. Be holy, my servant; for I, your Master, am holy. I have redeemed you from all iniquity: go on serving the living God.”

And as He spoke unto this faithful servant, so speak I in His

name unto all the saints of God. Yield perfect holiness, submit yourselves unto the mighty power of God: trust in Him, and be not afraid. Do this, and your souls shall live.

HE THAT IS TRUE

Revelation 3

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things says...He that is true.

The word here translated *true* is not the simple primitive word, but a derivative, which is perhaps better rendered truthful or real. It is applied by the Greek classics when they would distinguish the real from the fictitious; as the “real horse,” in opposition to the horse in the picture.

1 Thessalonians 1

⁹ ...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.

Here God is called “the True,” in contradistinction to idols; and in *1 John* we have it, in the same connection, applied both to God and to Christ:

1 John 5

²⁰ And we know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true: and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ.

²¹ This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Now it will be remembered that the main scope of all this *First Epistle of John* is to preserve the Church from impostors, false prophets, false spirits, and false professors of the Gospel; and therefore I think it reasonable to infer from these its last words, that the idea which the Apostle would convey by the word *true*, is real, in opposition to all fiction; true, in opposition to all falsehood; truthfulness, in opposition to every shadow of pretense.

The like conclusion have we from considering the first

chapter of the Gospel by John, where Christ is set forth as the true Light, in opposition to all pretenders, and even in distinction from those who only reflected the light that was in Him, and in particular to John the Baptist:

John 1

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷ The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

⁹ That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.

This adds another thing necessary to complete the meaning of the word true, as a designation of Christ—to wit, that He, and He alone, of all whom God had sent is the real one, the rest being only witnesses of and to Him, representatives as it were of His Person, but not the real Person Himself; and for this reason it is that in the same context it is said...

John 1

¹⁷ ...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

All that had come before being but types and shadows of that truth which in Him came forth full and clear. When it is said therefore in the text, “I am the true One,” I am inclined to comprehend under that word all which is contained in John’s announcement, “Truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Understanding this, I interpret it to signify that in Him the whole truth of Godhead stands bodied forth, that, as God is a Person, He is incapable of being expressed truly, but by a person, and though the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made. *Romans* 1:20. Still over all these things, the Head and Lord was a Person, made on purpose to be an image and likeness of God.

Yet Adam was only an image, and not the reality of God.

Christ is not the image, but the reality of God. He is the Person in the world who sets out completely and truly the Person of God; who is not in the world, neither can be.

John 14

⁹ ...he that has seen Me has seen the Father.

“I am the true One.” Moses is but a representative, and the Jews but the members of that representative head, the shadow of a people, the form and figure of the truth.

“Therefore, O angel of the Philadelphian Church, heed not these troublers of your peace who say they are Jews, but are not, being of the synagogue of Satan. I am the true One; and there is in Me no pretense, no formality, no apparition, no counterfeit. Therefore be free from all pretense, hypocrisy, simulation, and dissimulation. Be true, for I am true. Put away from you the desire of a name: be filled with the love of the truth, for I am the Truth.”

As we have observed, the temptation of his neighbor the angel of Sardis was, to be carried away with the love of a name, which, in the historical aspect of the epistle, is the temptation of the Churches called Protestant, and especially of the Church in this land which is the head of Protestantism; and above all, of the Church in Scotland, which is the most Protestant of all Protestant Churches. And being so, I hold up this designation of Christ to my brethren, the ministers, presbyters, and deacons of the Church, as most worthy of their study and imitation.

Exact truth and sterling honesty do well become men of every name and profession; and without this first quality of a man, the seed of God’s verity will not take root in his heart; but, above all others, it becomes the ministers and rulers of the Church, who represent Him whose name is The Truth.

Be done, O brethren, with your forms and formularies of truth, as if it were enough to have subscribed to these with your hand; be the Truth, embody a living epistle.

- Show your faith in God's sovereign and electing love by living, moving, and having your being in Him.
- Show your belief in Christ's universal atonement, by being gracious unto all, and willing to die for the sake of the most worthless.
- Show your belief in the in-working of the Holy Ghost, by speaking as the oracles, and working the works, of God.
- Be ashamed to have written your faith in these things, so long as you possess not the living substance of these things.
- Show yourselves Christians, by serving Christ; Churchmen, by loving the brethren; ministers of the people, by keeping wisdom in your lips and in your heart.

But you are become either zealots, or mere professors of the truth. Cease from these extremes, and become clean and holy through the truth. Truth is a person—Jesus Christ is Truth, and truth never is until it be alive in a person.

It is idolatry to worship truth elsewhere than in a person; and it is promoting the service of idolatry to uphold truth in any form, save that of a living person. You are a base hypocrite if you merely sign a book, and show not the contents of the book in your person. And what I say to you ministers, I say to all men: become what you believe—live the thing which you believe to be true.

Christ, in thus addressing the angel of the Philadelphian Church, puts a stamp upon honesty in a minister of religion; which I desire devoutly to possess; which the fear of man and the power of public opinion are ever seeking to destroy in my heart, and which nothing but you, O Spirit of Truth, are able to continue there.

O, he that would be true in such a time as this must convict many men of being liars, and should be prepared for the op-

probrious name of insolent and presumptuous fellow, the fate of being cast out and crucified every day in those members of affection and loving-kindness which are dearer to a man than the flesh of his body.

O, it is a feeble voice that I can lift up amidst the whirlwind of the public voice: but for the sake of the multitude, tossed and tempest driven, I will lift it up from the high place where God has stationed me; and some mariners, wiser than the rest, may hear my warning voice.

Hear then, all you people; and give ear, you ministers of the people, He who is holy and true has witnessed that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And without truth there can be no holiness; for He has testified again in His last prayer:

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth: Your word is truth.

And that Spirit who is the quickening principle of the new life is ever denominated by these two names, the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Truth, because truth is holiness in the mind, and holiness is truth in the members: they are inseparable.

To have dared to separate them is one of the infinite enormities of the mother of abominations, who dared to sanctify a lie by maintaining that the end justified the means.

And following her example, the evangelical system is fast bringing religion into the same bondage. I believe in my heart that as foul things, before heaven, have been done for the promotion of our religious societies, as great concealments, yea, and misrepresentations of the truth, as dishonorable and dishonest methods of gaining popular favor, as were ever employed by the regular and mendicant orders of the Church of Rome. And it would have proceeded to much greater length than it has, had it not been resisted by the honest and upright character which the religious and political institutions of this

kingdom had impressed upon that worldly society which our evangelical system is continually affecting to despise.

The way by which you will recover yourselves from this snare of the devil is to resume your personality; and, while you give all reverence to other persons, and all diligent study to natural things, you must remember that in order to constitute a responsible person before God, before the Church, and before the State, you must sit the arbiter of your own thought, word, or act. And only in so far forth as you exercise this sacred right of private judgment are you a man at all.

If you do not, you are a thing, a piece of human mechanism, wrought by some spirit of another man, or of a devil, but a man you are not, neither a member of the body of Christ, nor yet acted on by the Holy Ghost.

For the Church of Christ, if it be a building of many stones, these stones are every one alive. If it be a body of many members, these members are every one made free, and acting by no law, but the royal law of liberty.

The Church's unity stands, not in the extinction of personal liberty, but in the regeneration of it; so as that each man shall show himself to be the work of one God, the member of one Christ, the inspiration of one Spirit, by working to the same one effect in all diversities of time, place, and circumstance.

God redeems man by making him free, and he expects man in his freedom to bring forth the free-will tribute of a whole life devoted unto that Christ who has redeemed him. God overbears no one; the devil overbears every one. Christianity overbears no one; the Papacy overbears every one. They are not men, they are stocks and stones, who will out of any reverence yield up their personal liberty.

It is not religion to be in bondage to any man, or to any system of men: it is religion to be free.

O God! how You have ennobled man.

O with what nobility You have entrusted him,
For You do reverence Your own image,
You do love Your own offspring.
All nature is combined
To chain him down upon the naked rock,
And to tear out the vitals of his peace:
You alone consult for his peace.

Therefore if you would escape out of the region of untruth, into the region of truth, you must first cease from being bondsmen of the Evangelical system, or of any system, Calvinistic, Arminian, Pelagian, Utilitarian, and become free men, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

O what a redemption was needed to make such bondsmen free: being made free, let us not again become entangled with the yoke of bondage. Be all law abolished, but the law of the Spirit, the royal law of liberty.

O man, seek the freedom of the will, and in your free love of goodness behold the present God:

- there is no presence of God, but in the will to do good;
- there is no presence of Christ, but in the way to do good;
- there is no presence of the Spirit, but in the act of doing good;

And goodness in the will, in the way, and in the acting, is man redeemed, man united to Christ, man inhabited by the Spirit, man glorifying his Maker. This is holiness, this is truth, this is dignity, this is blessedness. There is no God like unto our God, and there is no creature like unto a man renewed in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. Well has the wisdom of man said:

“Honesty is the best policy.”

And well has the poet written:

“An honest man is the noblest work of God.”

These designations of the great Head of the Church, convey to man the very essence of God, and constitute Him the great center of holiness in the creation of God, the hope of every groaning sinner seeking righteousness and finding it not, the joy of every seduced, misled, and lost creature, showing him the way back again to truth and honor.

HE THAT HAS THE KEY OF DAVID

From this his spiritual excellency, and his spiritual appropriateness to man's bondage and misery under him who was a liar from the beginning, and the father of falsehood,—we now pass to the attribute of power, of royal power and dominion upon the earth, which he has attained, in virtue of that very holiness and truth, which, as a living creature, he did maintain.

That creature (for it is in His creaturehood that the excellency of His holiness and truth stands, though the origin of them be in His Godhead); that creature who possesses holiness and truth, is well entitled—is in right of God's own being entitled—to the supremacy of things created.

If God Himself be holy and true, then be assured that only such as are holy and true shall attain unto eminence in His creation. He is not the King to respect persons, and to set vile men high in place: His principle of government it is to exalt the righteous, and to establish the true, because he is a God of righteousness and truth; and therefore it is that the supremacy of holiness and truth, which Christ possessed upon the earth, draws with it the supremacy of power; for such I conceive to be the thing expressed in these words:

Revelation 3

⁷ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says He that is holy, He that is true, He that has the key of David, He that opens, and no man shuts; and shuts, and no man opens.

The language is taken from the conclusion of the twenty-second chapter of *Isaiah*, entitled, "The burden of the valley of vision." That vision concerns the city of David, Jerusalem, the upper city that was built around and on Mount Zion, which was in the hands of the Jebusites until David took it, being in respect of its situation, as contrasted with the lower city, the type of the Jerusalem which is above, the mother of us all.

And, because the Philadelphian Church has its promise in terms of this Jerusalem, that comes down from heaven, therefore is it, as I think, that Christ takes this second part of His designation from the burden of the valley of vision.

Now that burden consists of two parts; the former including the first fourteen verses, and taken up with the burden, properly so called, the woeful calamities which were to come upon Zion at the hand of the king of Babylon, and which fell out in the days of Jeremiah the Prophet.

The second part, beginning at the fifteenth verse, is altogether personal, directed to "Shebna, the treasurer," who was over the house, that is, the house of David, occupying the office which we now denominate that of Lord Chamberlain.

To this Shebna, the prophet carried tidings of dismay; foreshowing to him, that, instead of lying down in that sepulcher of honor and of state which he had prepared for himself, he should be violently turned out, and tossed like a ball into a land "large of spaces" [margin] there to die, bereaved of his glory, and covered with shame; in which day of trouble and disgrace to him, Isaiah is further commissioned to foreshow a day of honor to Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, and in the prediction of his glory are found the words which our great Shepherd here appropriates unto Himself.

In order to do justice therefore to the fragment taken out, and presented to us, in the text, it will be necessary to study the scope of the whole, which in all its parts, as well as in this, is evidently prefigurative of Christ, in this character of being

unto God what Eliakim was to David, of being, in God's house, which is creation, what Eliakim was in David's house, having the key of every chamber thereof, to open or to shut according to the pleasure of his own will.

In the very name, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah,—which being interpreted is, “God the strong, or the Resurrection, the Son of God the Gracious,”—is contained the substance of the mystery; which is, Jesus the powerful and mighty one, proceeding forth of Jesus the humble and gracious one; Jesus with power, the reward of His grace.

Of this Eliakim it is said:

Isaiah 22

²¹ And I will clothe him with your robe, and strengthen him with your girdle, and I will commit your government into his hand.

The robe was, and indeed is to this day, in Eastern countries, the gift of a king unto his servants, when they enter into his service, whereto allusion is made in the third chapter of this Prophet:

Isaiah 3

⁶ When a man shall take hold of his brother of the house of his father, saying, You have clothing; be our ruler, and let this ruin be under your hand:

⁷ In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be a healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing; make me not a ruler of the people.

The girdle again, as bearing the sword, the quiver, and other weapons of war, is, throughout Scripture, the symbol of strength, and likewise also because it supports a man who has much labor to undergo.

To be clothed therefore with Shebna's robe, and to be strengthened with Shebna's girdle, is a noble style for expressing installation in his office, investiture in its dignity, and endowment with its power. And therefore it is added:

Isaiah 22

²¹ ...I will commit your government into his hand.

What was the nature of that government, and how Eliakim should fulfill it, we are not left to conjecture, nor to gather from other hands, for it is immediately added:

Isaiah 22

²¹ ...and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

This part of the prophecy sets forth the office of Christ as “the everlasting Father,” or “the Father of the age to come;” as the Jacob and the Israel, the Father of the Twelve Tribes.

It represents Him as the liberal Householder, ever supplying from His stores the nourishment of His people; as the Scribe well instructed unto the kingdom, who brings out of His treasury things new and old (*Matthew* 13:52); as the Bread of Life come down from heaven to give life unto the world (*John* 6:51); as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who shall feed His people, and lead them unto living fountains of water, and wash away all tears from their eyes. *Revelation* 7:17.

Whether the removal of Shebna, to make room for Eliakim, may signify the deliverance of Jerusalem and its people from those hard oppressors who have so long vexed and spoiled them, to give them into the hand of Him who shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from thenceforth and for ever; or whether, in a more eminent sense still, it may signify the casting out of Satan, who now possesses the principality of the world, and from Rome, his chosen seat, that has long wielded a scepter of darkness and cruelty over both Jew and Christian, I take not upon me to determine; nor is it necessary for our present object, which concerns not so much Eliakim’s predecessor, as Eliakim himself.

Nevertheless my idea of the burden, taken as a whole, is

this, That after its grievousness had been fully told out in ordinary prophetic terms, the consummation of the woe, and the conclusion of it, and the deliverance from it, are set forth in a personal transaction towards Shebna and Eliakim; in order to teach us, that in a person the miseries of Jerusalem would be consummated, as they had been begun in the person of Nebuchadnezzar, and by a person the deliverance should likewise be wrought out. Nation after nation should drench Jerusalem in blood and misery; but the hand of a person should determine her final catastrophe, and the hand of a person should deliver her from it.

The burden of the valley of vision is circumstantial to begin with, personal to end with. Now, these persons who are to contend for Mount Zion,—as the Easterns would say, her evil genius, and her good genius, coming into mortal battle for Mount Zion and Jerusalem,—are Lucifer, the son of the morning, and Christ.

Lucifer shall pretend to sit on the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north, who shall plant the tabernacle of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain, the personal Antichrist who shall sit in the temple of God, saying that he is God, and claiming to be worshiped as God; for things very dark, and very evil, the very mystery of hell itself, shall yet be disclosed at Jerusalem; and at such a time when delusion, and deception, and the false glory of the son of the morning seated upon the hill of Zion, shall have all but consummated the world's ruin, and won the allegiance and the worship of almost all the inhabitants of the earth.

Then shall the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Seed of David, the Bright and the Morning Star, come down to fight for Jerusalem, and for His holy mountain. And Jerusalem shall be delivered, and the yoke of every oppressor shall be destroyed together, and the oppressors themselves shall cease out of the earth.

To represent this personal conflict between the Prince of Light and the prince of darkness, which shall conclude these battles of their several servants, is the reason, as I judge, for which this prophecy concerning the valley of vision is concluded in terms of Shebna and Eliakim: who, according to this idea, will stand as the antitypes of the personal Antichrist and the personal Christ: the Papacy being the materials, the members of Antichrist, the mystery of iniquity which has prepared the world for his appearing; as the true Church is the members of Christ, which God does in continuance fashion until the appointed number, and the full form of the Christ, shall be accomplished.

Then shall the personal Antichrist appear, and, gathering his limbs unto him, shall commit himself in open and undisguised controversy for the supremacy of the world.

And Christ, gathering to Himself His members from under the four quarters of the heavens, shall come to withstand and overthrow, and forever chain with linked thunderbolts of fire, in the lake that burns. But to return to our interpretation.

Eliakim being thus instated in Shebna's place, and occupying it with fatherly care over the people, further receives commission from the king, in these words, which our Shepherd appropriates in the text:

Isaiah 22

²² And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder: so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

The key is to this day in our kingdom the symbol of the office of the lord chamberlain of the king's household, who wears it embroidered on his raiment; and denotes his right to open and to shut every chamber, without exception and without reserve.

Our Lord, in the days of His flesh, claimed to Himself the

possession of these keys, and, upon the occasion of His noble testimony, gave them unto Peter, in these words, which cast light upon the subject before us:

Matthew 16

¹⁷ Blessed are you, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven.

¹⁸ And I say also unto you, That you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

¹⁹ And I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

This same power of binding and loosing, of remitting and of retaining sins, He gives to the Church generally (*Matthew 18:18*), and to all the disciples (*John 20:23*). The reason why He gave it to Peter alone is, that Peter alone had as yet confessed Him to be the Christ, and proved himself to be taught of the Father.

The power is one proper to man, so wrought in by the Father as to make him to know the very mind of God; being in truth God expressing through the creature His right to remit sin, or to retain sin; to open the kingdom of heaven, or to shut it.

The Church is the habitation of God's mind, the voice of God's word, the hand of God's power. Peter alone is not this, nor Paul alone; nor what is called the priesthood alone; but any, and every member of the Church is this agent of God, representative of God for knowledge, for judgment, and for power.

I mean to say, not that any one member of the Church is God completely manifested; this honor belongs to the Head only; but that it is of the definition of a member of the Church, that he is an expression of some of the virtues or

powers of God,—as it is written:

1 Peter 2

⁹ ...that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Now God is not in nature, but above nature; and therefore, if the Church in her various memberships is to disclose and discover God, her words and works must be not within but above nature; otherwise, however good they be, they are only works discovering a good man, but not a good God. There is no way of taking them out of this ambiguity, and showing them to be works of the very God, but by the addition to their goodness of the quality of the supernatural.

Goodness belongs to us as redeemed men: goodness, within the limits of nature, and in the course of nature, belongs to us as men, whose nature Christ has redeemed from the law of evil-doing, into the law of well-doing. How shall this presence of a redeemed man be distinguished from the presence of very God in man? They are of God, when, besides being good, the actions are also supernatural.

Their being supernatural would not alone prove them to be of God: for there are two supernatural kingdoms, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, to distinguish between which, there is no criterion of mere power or magnitude of power; for what is above nature cannot be measured in its degrees by natural means: the only criterion is that of good and evil, of which every man should be a judge, of which indeed man is the proper judge, because he is the only creature who has the knowledge at once of good and evil.

These keys of the kingdom of heaven, which Christ endows His Church withal, every member of it, and no member to the exclusion of another, do therefore signify power in the Spirit, through the energy of God to speak the forgiveness and remission of sin to whomsoever we are directed to speak it, and so to open the door of heaven, which only opens upon the

righteous and the clean.

Therein lies the hideous usurpation of the Pope, not in having taken infallibility, but in having taken it all to himself, which is the endowment of the Church in virtue of her being the body of Him who is infallibly true.

Now Christ the Man, Christ as man, has received all judgment in this matter: and He, not Peter, is Porter of the celestial city, to open, or not to open, as seems to Him good:

Matthew 7

²² Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name? and in your name have cast out devils? and in your name done many wonderful works?

²³ And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.

This dignity which the Son of Man has attained unto, He divides with His people, and keeps up, through the discernment of spirits, and the healing of diseases, and other gifts, a continual ministry on the earth of that judgment which shall for ever include within, or exclude the sons of men from without, the celestial city.

And by holding fast in our faith, and full before our eyes, this attribute of our risen Head, we do receive power to exorcise spirits, and to heal diseases, which our Lord taught us to be the same with remitting sins, and otherwise to open and to shut the gates of the kingdom of heaven.

Alas! how little He is honored by His Church, as the possessor and bestower of this power of the keys; and how near upon blasphemy, if not very blasphemy, will these things which I have written seem to many pious minds, whom, verily, I am loath to offend, and would not offend, if I could speak the truth without offending: but ignorance deep and dark, which Satan would now seal for ever and stamp as light, has sat down upon the spirit of the Protestant Church, from which, if she be not roused, there is nothing for it but that she

should part asunder, one portion to infidelity, and the other to the Papacy, which has kept the forms of all truth, and made them the lures and baits to draw wealth and power to Rome, and Rome's hoary hierarch.

I would, as a man of equal orders in the Church with any other man, deliver the truth from such ignominious and diabolical uses, and make it once more to be glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will among the children of men.

This power of the keys Christ claims for Himself, not only over the kingdom of heaven, but also over hell and death:

Revelation 1

¹⁸ I am He that lives, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

This refers, as its connection shows, to the power which by the resurrection and the leading of the captivity captive, He acquired over Hades the place of the separate spirit, and death the place of the corruptible body; and declared His having purchased all men, all mortal men, from the power of the grave, as will be testified when He shall speak unto the grave, and it shall give up; and to Hades, and it shall not hold back.

This is the power of the redemption which is as wide as the captivity; but the other is the power of admitting out of the redeemed, into the kingdom of heaven, those whom the Father has chosen, and called, and justified, and sanctified, for the inheritance of that glory.

THE CHURCH AND STATE

Distinct from both of these I conceive to be the prerogative which He claims for himself in the text; because He there applies it to the particular case of the angel of the church of Philadelphia:

Revelation 3

⁸ I know your works: behold, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it:

Now this being intended for the present use and encouragement of His Church, and the ministers of His Church during His absence, must signify some power even now by Christ exercised upon the earth: which is, the power of the supremacy, both in Church and in State.

David was the king of the Jews, and the Jews are the kings of the whole world: therefore David, and David's throne, and David's horn, and David's lamp, are all symbols for expressing that supremacy upon the earth, which the King of the Jews, reigning upon Mount Zion, shall in the age to come exercise.

This supremacy of the habitable earth, of its persons and of its things, its sheep and its oxen (*Psalms 8*), Christ now has, by having the higher, which is the supremacy of heaven, the Father's throne; though for His own glory, and the good of His Church, He permits the habitable world thus to toss and tumble about amongst the waves of sin, and misery, and darkness, and death.

He gives the angel of this Church, and all possessed of the like faith, to wit, that He has a hook in the jaws of the dragon, and a bit in his mouth; and, king though he be of all the children of pride, uses him and his kingdom alike, to promote the glory of God, in the holiness, patience, sufferings, and triumphs of His Church.

It is as much as to say to every faithful one:

“Go forth into the deserts of Africa and of Arabia, for mine is the key of that chamber of the earth, to open a highway in the desert and to bring forth pools of water from the sandy desert.

“Go forth to the regions of the icy pole; and with my key I will unlock to you its frozen band, and make for you a path amongst its icy mountains.

“Go forth to Rome where Satan’s seat is, for I have the key of that citadel of hell.

“Go forth to the unbelieving Churches of Protestant Europe, those high places of infidelity, for I have the key of their beautiful deceptions, and will make them to disappear before your words of truth, as the frost-work of the night disappears before the rising sun.

“I have the key of David; I open, and none shut; I shut, and none open. There is no region of the earth, but I am there to take possession of it, by the means of my faithful ministers.

“Go, claim it in my name; go, cleanse it with the word of my truth. Face the autocrat of the North: be not afraid of the Turk. Heed not the empires of darkness built in the East; and speak unto the worldly freemen of the West.

“Go anywhere, go everywhere, though little your strength be, only keep my word and deny not my name, and be assured of my safe-keeping, for I have the key of David; I open, and no one shuts, I shut, and no one opens.”

While I thus largely open the noble style of Christ, adopted by Him towards this favored angel of the brother-loving Church, I would not be understood to take away the special consolation which it has to the Jew, even in this dispensation of the Church; and the more, as the epistle has to do with the Jews, and with their conversion from being the synagogue of Satan to become the members of this Church of loving brethren.

Christ having the key of David is surely a Jewish symbol, of which, if we, who are Jews by faith, claim the comfort, it should not be by the bereaving of those who are Jews according to the flesh. I think, therefore, that Christ’s thus setting Himself forth, as it was an encouragement to the angel of Philadelphia to bear patiently and contend earnestly with the unbelief of the Jews, so is it an encouragement to us, who now stand in the historical place of the Philadelphian Church, to be diligent in our labors for the conversion of the house of Israel. But more of this under our next head of Instructions, to

which we now proceed.

THE UNIVERSAL BISHOP'S INSTRUCTIONS, APPROBATION, AND ENCOURAGEMENT

WE now come, according to our method, to the second division of the epistle, which contains Christ's instructions to His faithful servant, and consists wholly of approbation and encouragement.

The topics are four:

1. Assurance of prosperity;
2. Assurance of triumph over his enemies;
3. Assurance of preservation from a time of universal trouble;
4. An exhortation to persevere for the crown which was laid up for him against the day of the Lord's appearing.

These now let us, by the help of God, open in order.

ASSURANCE OF PROSPERITY

After making that declaration, "I know your works," which is common to all the epistles, and therefore not characteristic of any, but merely significant of Christ's heedfulness over all whom He has placed in trust over His flock, He expresses His goodness towards His worthy servant, in terms of that mastery over God's house which He had assumed to Himself, in the style or designation prefixed to the epistle:

Revelation 3

⁸ I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it.

Literally:

"Behold, I have given before your face a door that has been opened, and no man can shut it."

1. The Open Door

It is remarkable with respect to the structure of this epistle that the word "behold" occurs in it four times, which in all the

others put together occurs but thrice. The occasions on which it occurs before are:

1. In the epistle to Smyrna, of their trials, which we interpreted of the ten Pagan persecutions;
2. In the Church of Thyatira, of Jezebel, and those who commit adultery with her, which we interpreted of the ultimate destruction of the apostasy, described in *Revelation 17* and *18*.

Now both of these are conspicuous and most notable events in the history of the Church; and we ought therefore to expect the same of those events in this epistle, which are in like manner introduced.

If anyone should think that two instances are not sufficient warrant for raising such expectation, we refer him to the other places where the same interjection occurs in the Apocalypse, in all of them ushering in something notable to behold.

The more wonderful and the more interesting objects in the vision have attention drawn to them by this device. We refer to these:

Revelation 4

¹ ...*behold*, a door was opened in heaven:

² ...*behold*, a throne was set in heaven,

Revelation 5

⁵ ...Weep not: *behold*, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has prevailed...

Revelation 6

² ...*behold* a white horse...

⁸ ...*behold* a pale horse...

Revelation 9

¹² ...*behold*, there come two woes...

Revelation 11

¹⁴ ...*behold*, the third woe comes quickly.

Revelation 12

³ ...*behold* a great red dragon...

Revelation 14

¹⁴ And I looked, and *behold* a white cloud...

Revelation 15

⁵ ...*behold*, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

Revelation 16

¹⁵ *Behold*, I come as a thief.

Revelation 21

³ ...*Behold*, the tabernacle of God is with men,

⁵ ...*Behold*, I make all things new.

These instances are all amongst the most memorable and conspicuous objects and events of the mystical drama.

When, therefore, this opened door is introduced with this note of admiration, we are surely to expect that it is something which would be as notable in the history of the Church as the Pagan persecutions, or the final catastrophe of Jezebel the mother of harlots.

What then is it? It is something which belongs to Christ to do, in virtue of His having David's key; and it is something also which with David's key He opens, ere yet He sits on David's throne;—power indeed, but power as yet, not of the scepter, but of the word.

The key of David's harp rather than the key of David's house; the key of David the prophet, rather than the key of David the king; the key of knowledge, rather than the key of power.

This idea,—which is pressed upon us by the consideration, that these epistles instruct us concerning our duties in the house of Christ, anterior to His coming, of which house as yet the treasury of words and of knowledge alone has been opened,—is confirmed by the reason assigned for granting this

boon to the angel of the Philadelphian Church, which reason is given in these words:

Revelation 3

⁸ ...for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name.

The word and the name are the attributes of this dispensation of faith, not of that coming dispensation of sight. To these, this man having proved a faithful and true witness, and preferred feebleness and poverty, and a mean appearance before men, to the purchasing of a good or a great name, by ministering to popular favor at the expense of Christian verity; Christ rewards him with a conspicuous benefit entitled:

“I have given you an opened door, and none can shut it.”

Weighing well these things, I see more than mere prosperity and stability as a Church in these words. I see an opening of some dark chambers of the house of David, which before this time had continued shut.

The house of David, like everything else pertaining to David, symbolizes Christ’s attributes as a King. David was a king, and thereby qualified to be the prophet of a king. David’s royal sufferings and royal dignities were but the many-stringed harp on which he prophesied of David’s Lord, Messiah the King. If this opened door be then a door of knowledge, it must be of knowledge concerning the King; and that it is a door of knowledge, I think, for the reasons set forth above.

Here, then, we have it declared, that in the days of the Church of Philadelphia there was to be opened a door into the holy things of David; to the possession of which Christ entered by the resurrection according to the application of that passage:

Acts 13 [Isaiah 55:3]

³⁴ I will give him the sure mercies of David.

David knew well when he took his harp, that he was uttering dark sayings and parables of God; for:

Proverbs 25

² It is the glory of God to conceal a thing.

David knew that God had spoken to him of another King than David, of a better kingdom than David's. But then, it lay closed up and hidden under the sevenfold key of mystery, until the time come, when he who has the key of David should set it open unto the angel of the Philadelphian Church.

Daniel, also, who was the head servant of a king of kings, who had upon his shoulder the key of the house of Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, was another person chosen of God, to give forth mysteries concerning the kingdom, not of the Jews, but of the Gentiles also, which the Son of Man—not the Son of David, but the Son of Man, for that is Daniel's style of Christ—was to inherit.

All his visions are concerning the King of the nations, which Christ is, in virtue of His being Son of Adam, not in virtue of being Son of David; and all these prophecies of Daniel were shut up and sealed, until the time of the end, when it was promised that they should be opened; and that the wise should understand:

Daniel 12

⁹ And he said, Go your way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.

¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.

And when the Apostles, upon the Resurrection of Christ, would have understood from Him concerning that time of the restoring the kingdom unto Israel, Jesus made them answer, that it was not theirs to know the times and the seasons, but to preach the Gospel.

David's lyre and Daniel's calendar were closed and shut up until the key of interpretation should be given, and a time was fixed against which the sevenfold mystery should be unveiled, by Him who has the key of David: that same wonderful numberer who closed the matter up:

Daniel 8

¹³ Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto *that certain saint which spake* ["the numberer of secrets," or, "the wonderful numberer"], How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

And we have here the promise of that key of David being applied to open a door which no one should shut;—and because there is no other mention in these Church annals of such an opening; we conclude with no slight conviction, that this promise has reference to the disclosure of the hidden things of David, which Christ here assures the angel of the Church of Philadelphia that in his times He would show.

While I thus interpret the door opened to the angel of the Philadelphian Church, by the key of David, as signifying the disclosure in those days to those persons whom he represents in the history and progress of the Christian Church, until the coming of the Lord, I include also, and especially, the power of uttering to the Church that which was revealed unto himself: and, being so understood, it answers exactly to that saying of the Apostle Paul in the *Epistle to the Colossians*:

Colossians 4

³ Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

⁴ That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

And with that other declaration in the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*:

1 Corinthians 16

⁹ For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

And that other expression in the *Second Epistle*:

2 Corinthians 2

¹² Furthermore, when I came to Troas, to preach Christ's Gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord.

And that expression in the *Acts of the Apostles*:

Acts 19

²² How God opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Considering all these and other examples of the same form of words, I am inclined to believe that the mind of the Spirit in the passage before us is, not only that to this minister of Christ would be opened a larger and fuller insight into the things which concern our King as the antitype of David; but likewise that, through the full and bold utterance of the same, he should be blessed and prospered in his ministry, and receive into the Church the Jews whom he finds in the state of Satan's synagogue, but receives as devout worshipers at that shrine of Jesus of Nazareth, before which he and his people did offer their sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise: and not only so, but that through this new opening of truth, he should, somehow or other, both preserve himself and his flock from that hour of tribulation which was about to come, to try all them that are upon the earth.

Moreover, that by this knowledge of Christ the King, and faithful discovery of the same, he himself had won, and should wear a crown.

These the strong and striking features of this epistle, I derive as consequences of that opened door which he, for his faithfulness to the name and word of Christ, had received, and entering in did, by his bold, yet reverent foot, obtain all these new honors to himself and to the Church, and to the Master

whom he served.

Christ, in His parable of the Good Shepherd, represents Himself not only as the Shepherd, but likewise as the door of the sheep, saying:

John 10

⁹ I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

He, therefore, is not only the opener, but the thing opened. As the opener, He presents Himself in His designation, having the key of David; as the thing opened, He presents Himself in the epistle as the opened door. I feel, therefore, a strong assurance upon the review of the whole, that the interpretation given is the truth.

2. Little Strength

Now let us a little more particularly examine the reason for which this singular boon was granted to the angel of the Philadelphian Church:

Revelation 3

⁸ ...for you have little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name.

Anyone studying the original, or, not being acquainted with the original, weighing carefully the parts of the verse, will, I think, see the propriety of the alteration which I have made in the rendering from “a little strength or power,” to “little strength or power.” The argument seems to be this:

“Seeing you are weakly, yet faithful and true, I have opened the door to your hand, and shall effectually prevent anyone from closing it. So enter in, and enjoy the rich provision, and expatiate over the beautiful tabernacle of truth and holiness into which I have made you to enter.”

The reason why Christ, the Chamberlain of David’s house, opens for His servant the door into its holiness and truth, is not because he had a little, but because he had little, strength.

It was not the quantity of strength he had, but it was the littleness of that quantity, which moved the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, to gather out the stones and the stumbling-blocks, and to throw open the barred gates, and to make a plain path for his feet, even a highway in the wilderness.

Just as, heretofore, it pleased the Father to reveal Himself not to the wise and the prudent, but to the babes; and to call not the wise after the flesh, nor the mighty, nor the noble; but the foolish, the weak, the base, and the despised; that no flesh should glory in His sight.

This humble and meek servant of the Lamb:

- was not attracted by the honors, nor dependent upon the powers of the present world;
- had foregone the wisdom which is from the earth, and become a fool for Christ, that he might be made wise from above;
- had weakened himself and made himself of no reputation, that he might be strong, and do exploits;
- had made the word of God his daily food, and so starved the flesh, yea, and crucified it;
- had sanctified and cleansed his body with the washing of water, and the word:

In the language of our text, had “kept the word”; therefore Christ would keep him from the hour of universal temptation, and would honor him to set him on high and make him great, and admit him into the secret of His tent, to hide Himself in His pavilion under the shadow of His wings, till these evil days be overpassed.

He had made the Lord his refuge, the Holy One of Israel his habitation, and to him were set open the gates of righteousness, that he and the righteous nation which keeps His law may enter in, as it is written:

Psalm 118

¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go in to them, and I will praise the Lord.

²⁰ This is the gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

3. Not Denying His Name

This good shepherd had also kept the name of Christ; “had not denied Him;” signifying to us that it was a time and a place wherein there was temptation to deny the name of the Lord, that name which is above every name that is named, whether in this age or in that which is to come.

Much as I have discoursed in these lectures concerning the name of Christ, the theme is fresh and ever new, the subject unexhausted and inexhaustible; and new thoughts arise upon the denial of His name, which I perceive to be threefold:

1. The denial of that co-essential, consubstantial Godhead, which being lost to faith, His grace, His love, His Divine condescension, in becoming flesh, cannot be retained. If He be but angel or archangel, then is it but an angel’s, a creature’s condescension; and to that form of creature must the glory thereof be ascribed. What God is, whether He is so gracious, and will so lowly stoop to us, is all unknown, or rather is all denied: for, if Himself would do it, why ask it at the hand of a creature? Nay, but if Christ were anything less or other than God, it is not becoming of God, it is becoming only in a creature to become flesh, and dwell amongst us. Wherefore, I make no doubt that all Arians, Socinians, and Unitarians do deny the name of Christ, and cannot be saved otherwise than by being delivered from that mortal sin.
2. The name of Jesus is denied when they acknowledge His essential Godhead, but confess not that He came in flesh, and our flesh, our sin-possessed flesh, that He might meet sin therein, and condemn and crucify sin in

the flesh. For this is the mystery of godliness; this is the meaning of the name Jesus, that He saved us from our sins; which He did, and not another for Him; which He as man did, and not as God merely, and which He did by bearing them in His own body, and by crucifying that body in which they were borne, so as for ever to kill them, by killing that life of flesh in which they move, and live, and have their being. He who denies this, denies the name of Jesus, commits mortal sin, and cannot be saved till he repent, and be absolved from the same.

3. *Finally*, He who, believing that Jesus is very God from eternity, of the substance of the Father, and very Man born in the world of the sinful substance of the Virgin, does deny or not confess that He is still man, at the right hand of God, crowned Lord of all in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible; to come again, and rule over all as man, for ever and ever in subjection to the Father, subordinate though co-equal, very God, though very Man, does deny the name of Jesus, is guilty of mortal sin, and cannot be saved, unless he repent and receive absolution of the same.

To hold, and to hold fast; to confess, and not to deny; to proclaim from the housetop, and to contend earnestly for this the faith once delivered to the saints;—this, even this, is the excellent work for which the minister of Philadelphia is commended, and did receive the door of entrance and of utterance, and of reward from Him who is holy and true, and well rewards His servants who are holy and true, from Him who has the key of David, and is able to promote in the house of His Father, whomsoever and to whatsoever dignity He wills to promote.

4. Attempts to Shut the Door

Moreover, it is signified by the expression, “and no one is able to shut it,” that there would be many and mighty at-

tempts made to close that door of knowledge:

- to darken counsel with words without wisdom, to pour contempt upon the new things brought forth from the treasury:
- to prevent the people from entering in, by false reports of the land, by restraint of personal liberty, by excommunication from the Church;
- by lifting up the hue and cry of novelty and blasphemy, and by every other means which ignorance and malice, guided by the prince of darkness and falsehood, can invent.

But they shall not prevail against this faithful and patient servant of the Lord; who, with his followers, and the believing Jews brought from their apostasy, should hold on against malice and falsehood, until they were carried beyond the reach of tribulation and woe, which in that hour should alight upon the troublers of their peace, the heads of the malignant and abandoned world.

Prevail indeed they should to shut that door upon too many of the Church, even upon those whom in Laodicea we find with barred doors, outside of which Christ stands knocking, wet with the dews of night; but they will not let Him in: and so He sups not with them, nor they with Him. And then the direful reality of their miserable estate being revealed in their eyesight, they shall come to His gate, whereinto the Philadelphian Church has passed with Him at their head; but, alas! they shall find it closed upon them forever, and they shall say:

“Lord, Lord, open to us.”

And He shall answer them, saying:

“Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.”

Thus it is amongst us, even now:

Proverbs 1

²⁰ Wisdom cries without; she utters her voice in the streets:

²¹ She cries in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she utters her words, saying,

²² How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?

²³ Turn at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.

²⁴ Because I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;

²⁵ But you have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:

²⁶ I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear comes;

²⁷ When your fear comes as desolation, and your destruction comes as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish comes upon you.

²⁸ Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:

²⁹ For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:

³⁰ They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

³¹ Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.

Though in the premises I have not sought to connect the experience of the Philadelphian minister with that which I myself, and many besides me, have had in these days, both of good and evil, I have felt, as the Spirit opened the matter to my mind, that it was given to me to write these things for the comfort of all those ministers, and all those people who are waiting for the consolation of the Church.

No false modesty, no fear of public scorn, shall prevent me from expressing my honest belief that within these few years there has been opened a door of truth and of holiness, in the house of David our King, for which we cannot be enough

thankful, as being by far the greatest proof of our King in the midst of us, and the surest token of a day of great things, and glorious, already dawned upon the Church.

The light which has been cast on the darkest prophecies of Scripture; the life, the thrilling life, which has been put into the tones of David's harp, which so long hung upon the willows, in the watercourses of Babylon; is a thing not to be hidden, but to be avowed, not to be talked of between brethren, but to be sounded forth as I now do it, in the ears of the world.

Be amazed, and be horribly afraid, you who love darkness, for the light has shined. You who love the light, be joyful; for it is bursting forth like the noonday. Come, you children of the light and of the day, and let us examine ourselves in the light, that our evil deeds may be discovered; come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

O but though no one should lift up the voice of this song, though all should be afraid because of a scornful world, and an unbelieving Church, I myself will sing the praises of the Lord, for the new light which He has opened upon my soul, and the new truth which He has enabled me to utter with my voice.

Moreover there have arisen a host of enemies to deny the new opening of truth which God in this time of the end promised, and according to His promise has bestowed. All the organs of public opinion, without one exception, have taken arms against the interpreters of prophecy. And the preachers of the coming glory and kingdom of Christ, have found it necessary, in order to make their views known, to set on foot an organ for that end, which again has been attacked and reviled in all ways possible.

High Church and Low Church, moderate and evangelical, and Dissenters of every name, and newspapers of all factions, and the whole literature of the kingdom, have lifted up their

voice, their tumultuous waves they have lifted up, to drown the voice of truth: they have combined their strength under the mastery of the evil one, to shut the door which God has opened; but they cannot, they cannot, for the Lord is on high: He is mightier than the voice of many waters.

Psalm 29

¹⁰ The Lord sits upon the flood; yea, the Lord sits King for ever. The Lord will give strength unto His people, the Lord will bless His people with peace.

5. The Adjuration

Now then, O you who know the Lord, know wherein your strength consists, and wherefore you have received this succor from the Lord. It is because you have little strength: continue so weak, and you shall be strong. Number not the people who hold with you, number them not.

Count not upon your gifts natural, upon your eloquence, upon your talents, upon your wit, upon your learning. O beware, beware of good report, court not honor in the sight of men, be contented, rejoice to be despised. Calculate not upon the names, however august, of those who have held with you in times past.

I pray you, dear brethren, seek not the honor which comes from men, but the honor which comes from God only; and count not upon the venerable names of Church of England or Church of Scotland, nor expect to retain your honors or immunities therein.

Be ready, aye, ready to be cast out: and the more you are weakened, the more rejoice; for your weakness is your strength: only keep the word of Christ, and let it not go. Confess His name, and deny it not; and be assured the door that is open will never be shut: the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

O how much of God's glory, and of Christ's honor, rests at

this moment with a few rejected and despised men! Thus be constant and true: O be steadfast and faithful.

There is nothing to be found in history like the Church in her present condition, save the liberties of poor Scotland, when they lay in the hands of a few persecuted and outlawed men, the Wallace and the Bruce, and their forlorn comrades, against whom was marshaled the nation of mightiest prowess, under her king of highest renown for wisdom and for war.

Such a season of forth-driving and endurance surely abides us, with such a recompense of freedom and of renown. Be steadfast, O my brethren; be valiant; your case is that of David and his wretched band, who were the hopes of Judah and of Israel, though hunted like the partridge on Judah's wilds, by Judah's king, and dwelling in the caves and ragged rocks of Judah's solitudes, and driven to desperation, and almost to despair, by the combination of Judah's people.

God of His mercy grant to us songs in the night, such as He gave to David in the cave of Adullam, and in the wilderness of Ziph. O for the harp of David, of faithful David, of David the man after God's own heart! O for that spirit of faith and valor which made him mightier than misfortune, and stronger than despair.

It will all be needed, and it will all be given, given by you who have the key of David, who opens, and no man shuts; who shuts, and no man opens.

TRIUMPH OVER ENEMIES

The second of these gracious benefits which the chief Shepherd and only Head of His Church proposes to this faithful keeper of His word and confessor of His name, concerns the Jews, who have not been mentioned in this series of historical portraits of the Church, save once in the times of the Church of Smyrna, where they are introduced with the same characteristic features as the "synagogue of Satan, who say they are

Jews, but are not.”

But in that case their blasphemy alone is rebuked, without the addition of any notice of their recovery out of the snare of Satan, and reunion to the Church of the living God.

The Jewish People

This is a note of gladsome hope unto the Jew, and likewise unto the Gentile:

Romans 11

¹² Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness?

¹⁵ For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?

This glad tidings of great joy to Jew and Gentile, is now for the first time given in the period and to the worthiness of this good Philadelphian bishop, in the following words, introduced with a special call upon our attention:

Revelation 3

⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

This promise consists of two parts, both referring to the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. The former is the promise of a gift from amongst these deniers of the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ: it is remarkably worded in the original, to point out, not a universal inbringing of the Jews, but only of a chosen number. They are designated the synagogue of Satan, as given up by God, according to the word spoken by the Prophet Hosea:

Hosea 1

⁹ You are not my people, and I will not be your God.

They are called the synagogue of Satan because they have fallen into pride, which is the snare of the devil, and think it beneath them to acknowledge the grace of God which has appeared in Jesus Christ, bringing salvation to all men. The stiff-necked generation will have a Messiah after their own heart, a Lucifer, the son of the morning. Meanwhile, they have received his spirit of pride into their hearts, and perhaps they may receive his personification ere many days pass.

God may grant them their hearts' desire, and give them into the hands of a cruel lord; their infidelity seems to be ripening them for imposture, and their numbers and wealth and unity make them a great temptation to an ambitious monarch: and the fantastical tricks which they played with Napoleon, encyphering his name with the mystical name of their God, in some measure prepares us for believing, according to the wild traditions of the ancient Church and the dark hints of prophecy, that the personal Antichrist, who, if he be not an incarnation of the prince of evil, shall doubtless possess him for his familiar spirit, will come to the Jews with all subtlety, and by them be accepted as their long-expected king.

I know not what to say concerning this, upon which we are not called particularly to speak; but I do perceive in the 11th and likewise in the 8th chapters of *Daniel*, as also in the 2nd chapter of the *2 Thessalonians*, and perhaps also in some of the symbols of the *Apocalypse*, a ground for the ancient tradition, that Antichrist was to be a monstrous birth between the devil and the tribe of Dan.

Passing this, however, for the present, we observe that the next characteristic of the people is, that "they claim to be Jews, and are not, but do lie;" whereof the meaning is, not that they were of another stock than Abraham's, but that the name Jew means something higher and better than to have Abraham's blood flowing in our veins. Wherefore also the Apostle says:

Romans 9

⁶ For they are not all Israel which are of Israel.

And more distinctly still:

Romans 2

²⁸ For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh:

²⁹ But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God.

We do wrong, therefore, in applying the name of Jew, which is derived from Judah, and signifies praise, to these malignant revilers of the Lord, who curse, and praise not, who blaspheme, and adore not, the name of Jesus.

In saying that they are Jews, our Prophet declares that they lie: and we, in permitting them in their presumption, do encourage their lie; and from this comes, in no small degree, that error which we hinted at above, that they must renounce Judaism in order to become Christian.

We misname them Jews in their state of unbelief: the word Jew thus becomes the characteristic of one that believes not in Jesus of Nazareth; and so when they believe, we require them to throw off that name and badge of unbelief. But who made the name Jew characteristic of unbelief? Not the Word of God; which twice over in these epistles teaches the Churches that their unbelief disqualifies them for such a name.

They become Jews by believing; and then may well and rightly use that honorable name. Nor can I see any reason to prevent them from using the peculiarities of a Jew, provided always they use them as glorying in Jesus Christ, as a partial foreshowing of that fullness which came in Him; provided also that they impose not upon the Gentiles any of these observances, which, for the sake of their nation and in honor of Jesus, they count it no burden to undertake.

For if Christ Himself deprives them not of the name of Jew

upon receiving His faith, He deprives them not of what that name signifies. They may if they please (I say not they ought, for here I see not my way clearly, but surely there is nothing to prevent them) keep those observances in honor of Jesus, which their nation keeps in honor of Moses. But if hereupon they should claim any superiority in the Church, then would they destroy the unity of the body of Christ,

Colossians 3

¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

But because it is thus written of male and female, no one would therefore say that a female had not still a female's part to perform, or that, performing this faithfully, and carefully abstaining from the office of the man, she hereby introduces schism into the Church.

Nor, because it is thus written of bond and free, would anyone say that a bondman should insist upon his liberty, and refuse the commands of his master, because he and his master are equal and alike in Christ. Or that his master should, to prevent schism, at once emancipate his slaves; seeing that the very contrary is enjoined by the Apostle in all his epistles, and especially in one, where he requires the slave, not to be less, but rather more dutiful, because his master was a Christian.

They who thus speak, and even doctors in the Church are not ashamed thus to speak, have conceived a totally erroneous view of Christian unity, which stands not in uniformity of rank, or station, or person, not in equality and levelness, but does, in spite of all natural diversities, yea, in harmony with all appointed ordinances of creation and providence, preserve unity of spirit, and of end, and of blessedness.

Why, then, if male and female, bond and free, can well enough consist, yea, and are required to consist, with Christian liberty, why should the poor Jew thus go to the wall, and

be forced to become Scotchman, or Englishman, or German, or Presbyterian, or Episcopalian, and just what you please he should become, in order, forsooth, that there may be no schism in the body? Why, if you can be Presbyterian, and Episcopalian, and preserve the unity of Christ, may not the Jew remain Jew, and do the same? It is just another of our hardhearted persecutions of that ill-favored race.

The Apostle, writing to the Galatians, has these words:

Galatians 5

² ...if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

³ For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

This was spoken to those Churches of Galatia which had been troubled by certain who came down from Judea, and taught the brethren saying:

Acts 15

¹ Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.

This question gave rise to the council of Jerusalem, which determined that the Gentiles should not be so bound, but for the present should, as a matter of expediency, conform in some particulars to the Jewish customs.

Notwithstanding this, these Galatian Churches, at the time the Apostle wrote his Epistle, five years after the council of Jerusalem, were still given to impose Judaical customs upon the Church, as ordinances for salvation. This spirit of bondage and formality to resist, the Apostle labors mainly throughout that Epistle; and in the passage quoted above lays it down, that if a man should deem circumcision necessary to his salvation, and in such a spirit submit to it, he rejects Christ and the way of grace and liberty, and adopts the way of works and of bondage; and so must stand or fall according to the law, whose rubric is:

Galatians 3

¹⁰ Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.

And to say woe to every man, be he Jew or Gentile, who thinks to be saved by the works of any law, whether the law written on the heart or the law written on the tables of stone.

This being granted and held fast as the very anchor of holiness, the question whether a believing Jew ought or ought not, may or may not, keep the law as not adding anything to Christ, not dividing with Him the weight of salvation, but distinguishing the Jew, and preserving his relation to Abraham, without affecting his relation to Christ. The question, whether being baptized by the Holy Ghost as Christ was, he may not do as Christ did, and as Peter and as Paul did, and as the primitive Church did, is not affected at all.

A question verily it is, of great importance, upon which the Church at this time has little light, and yet is acting with an obstinate and perverse decision, which only the clearest light and the strongest conviction could justify.

I feel assured that the door which opens into this chamber of the house of David is now opening, and will soon be altogether opened. Till then, we will not see the second part of this promise to the angel of the Church of Philadelphia fulfilled; till this, we will not see that section here promised brought into the bosom of the Church.

Much has already been done, in opening the door of knowledge and utterance, concerning the second coming and kingdom of the Lord upon the earth, and concerning the part which the Jewish nation, as a people, shall occupy in that dispensation. The doctrine, the true doctrine, has almost completely been discovered to the Church. It remains that some light should be cast upon the discipline of the Jews who enter the Church. At present they are forced to renounce the name of Jew; which is contrary to the Lord's solemn averment in

the text, that no one is entitled to that name until he shall have believed, instead of then being denuded of it.

My own opinion is, that they should walk just as our Lord walked after His baptism, always fulfilling the righteousness of the law, the letter of it whenever they might see it right and profitable to do so.

The Salvation of the Jews

We now come to the important matter to which what went before is but the introduction.

Revelation 3

⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews...

Not the whole nation, but some of them, an election from amongst them. The epistle to the Church of Smyrna presents us with the Jews passing into a state of blasphemy, and perhaps carrying along with them a part of the Christian Church also into a state of mortal schism. And from that time forth until now, they come not into this historical series of the aspects of the Church.

Accordingly since the second and third centuries, when the Ebionite and Cerinthian heresies disappeared, we have till this day no stirring of life amongst the Jews. There have indeed been in every age a remnant, saved out of Israel, who, having lost their identity in the Church, do therefore occupy no place in the representation of these long ages.

But if we have judged aright in placing this Philadelphian age about the present time, and if we have found its antitype:

- in those who believe in Jesus Christ; the True, coming in the truth of our nature, the Holy, perfecting holiness therein; in Jesus Christ, the head of David's house and David's Lord, whom David in his royal acts prefigured;
- in those who have opened the subject of the New Jerusalem, which comes down from Heaven with all its

mysteries, maintaining the broad and substantial truth against the nominalism of the Reformed Church, and the self-sufficiency of the evangelical world;

Then should we at this time be looking for the gift, the goodly gift of an election from the seed of Abraham, heirs of his name, but not yet heirs of his faith.

Here it may reasonably be inquired, whether there be any authority for believing that, towards the conclusion of this age, there will be any such ingathering of the Jews into the Christian Church. There has indeed always been a tradition to this effect, which has become the ground of many prayers, as I well remember in my youth to have heard, both in the congregation and in the family of my fathers.

But how does this tradition, that besides the first-fruits, which came in in the days of the Apostles, there is also to be an ingathering of the Jews before the dispensation of the elect is concluded; how does this tradition stand with the word of God written in the Holy Scripture? It stands well, as I now proceed to show, from a consideration of the 11th chapter of the *Epistle to the Romans*.

This forms part of a discourse contained in the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of that Epistle, explanatory of God's dealings by the Jews, which then began to be discovered in His providence, and resolving it into His own sovereign right of election, which every man who honors God must ever assent unto, but which the Jews as a people had forgotten, substituting in its stead a claim of right in virtue of their being descended from Abraham's loins.

But for a sinner to put forth a claim of right towards God for anything whatever, save for death, is either to deny the eternal holiness of God and his own sinfulness, or to mistake the nature of the demerit and guilt of sin. And when any person or persons, as the nation of the Jews, do thus in thought and deed belie the eternal constitution of God's holiness and

of a sinful creature's merit of death, God will, yea and must, if the dispensation of grace is to go on, mark the falsehood of such a system, by casting the persons who hold it, into the most fearful affliction and misery, in order thereby to make conspicuous unto the world, that they lie in thinking and declaring that they have a natural right to His favor and a fee simple in His benefits.

This is the argument of the Apostle in the 9th chapter, where, by the instances of Ishmael and Isaac, of Esau and Jacob, he shows that God made no account of Abraham's or of Isaac's seed, but of His own purpose of election according to His promise.

And likewise by the instance of Pharaoh, He teaches them that there was not only no claim of right, but on the other hand to those who would plead and stand upon it, there was a judgment of blindness of mind and hardness of heart, which God had begun to execute against Israel from the days of Hosea and Isaiah, whose prophecies to this effect he largely and most appropriately cites.

Then passing onward in his discourse, he opens in the 10th chapter the practical reason of that rejection of Christ by His nation, which lay so heavy at his heart, and makes it to consist in this, that instead of giving faith to God's word, which was near them, in their mouth and in their heart, and had been preached to the utmost bounds of the dispersion, they went about to do this work and that work, and busied themselves with an outward ceremonial and formality; as if there could be any keeping of the law without faith of the Word of God.

Having thus instructed them in the cause of their unbelief, and drawn their hearts, what he could, to the acknowledgment of God's unmerited goodness and the belief of His holy Word, he passes, in the 11th chapter, to unfold unto them the future purposes of God by the Jewish nation; and this he does

in the way of question and answer, propounding first:

Romans 11

¹ Has God then cast away His people?

To this he gives the most direct and solemn denial, appealing to himself as an instance to the contrary. The adducing of this instance shows clearly the nature and intent of the question to be:

“Are the Jewish people then utterly cast out from the Church of the living God?”

This Luther held, regarding them as the standing instance of the state of the damned; and his opinion has here, as in everything else, colored the opinions of the Reformed Churches. But that he held an untruth, Paul with an asseveration solemnly declares; and after quoting himself as an instance to the contrary, he reverts to past times, and upon God’s own word to Elias shows, that there was a remnant then of seven thousand, and so the Apostle declares it to have been in his own time.

Now there would have been no meaning in adducing that instance, unless the Apostle were reasoning to this conclusion, that the Lord’s purpose was in all states and in all times to have a remnant, be it great or be it small, from among the house of Israel, so that no period of the history of the Church should be without a portion of believing Jews. And this I suppose to be the origin of the papal custom, to insist upon the baptism of at least as many Jews, on a fixed day of every year, as they can by any means induce to submit to it.

From the days of Elias until the days of Christ, and from the days of Christ until the days of Elias again, God has, by taking an election out of that people, endeavored to prevent His severity towards them from being falsely construed into the entire rejection of them. For the mystery of the Jewish people is not the mystery of hell, as Luther thought, but of heaven; it

is the mystery of the Church preserved through a thousand generations against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and saved and blessed notwithstanding its own vast wickedness, through the boundless grace of God. It is in truth glory emerging out of grace, feeding upon darkness, darkness made into light, and sin forced to yield forth righteousness.

This truth of the continuity of an election according to grace in the Jewish people, having fully asserted, the Apostle, after another touch of practical application, proposes a second question, in these words:

Romans 11

¹¹ Have they stumbled that they might fall?

By which question I understand him to ask, whether the end of God, in permitting His people to stumble, was that they might fall never to rise again. Perhaps also:

“Had God no other end in view than merely that they might get a fall?”

No, says the Apostle; His end was to humble them out of their pride by the double effect, first of their own fall, and secondly of the rise of the Gentiles, whom they despised, into their honorable room: as if a parent, to correct an undutiful and presumptuous son, should order him for a few days to the duty of his kitchen, and adopt from thence, one of the scullions, into the place of a son.

Romans 11

¹¹ Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy.

¹² Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fullness.

This turns the drift of his discourse a little aside from the Jew, to the Jew and Gentile in concert working out the purpose of God; and he puts the Gentiles into a place of subordi-

nation, though not of inferiority, to the Jews, making them to be in consequence and not in antecedence of the Jew:

- their bringing in to be the consequent of the casting out of the others;
- their riches to be in consequence of the poverty of the others;
- their grafting into the good olive to be in consequence of the cutting out of some of the natural branches.

And he exhorts the Gentiles to be humble therefore, and not to boast against the branches, but to remember that they are grafted into a Jewish root, which bears them, and not they it.

Then he forecasts another condition of things when the Jewish fullness shall come in; and this, he says, will prove as life to the world, as life from the dead. What now means he by this Jewish fullness? Is it the same which is written in the 26th verse, which doubtless refers to the universal salvation of Israel, the gathering of the tribes, and their settlement in their own land, and their exaltation to be the head of the heathen? Or does it mean the fullness of the election according to grace, whereof a first-fruits had come into the Church?

I am at a loss how to answer this question: sometimes my mind has swayed to the one side, and sometimes to the other. But upon the whole I am inclined to think that the Jewish, like the Gentile fullness, refers to the election according to grace, and not to the kingdom of Israel; because the subject of discourse has all along been, not the kingdom of Israel, but the election according to grace.

And yet there are difficulties in the way of this interpretation; for one would naturally identify the fullness of the Jews and the receiving of them, mentioned in verses 12 and 15, with the salvation of “all Israel,” mentioned in verses 26 and 27. Also the “lump,” mentioned in verse 16, and the “blindness

in part” of verse 25, one would be inclined to interpret with reference to the same universal redemption of Israel and turning away of iniquity from Jacob.

But then we are met with the opposite difficulty. If this be the fullness of the Jews, then the fullness of the Gentiles must be the conversion of all the nations to the faith; and so we are driven upon the error entertained by the Church since the loss of the true Millenarian doctrine, that the whole world was to be converted before the Jews were brought in, which is simply to set aside the whole of Scripture prophecy.

What then are we to make of the argument in the end of this chapter? As I have said above, I think the discourse is entirely concerning the remnant or election according to grace, both as to the Jews and as to the Gentiles. It was not given to the Apostle Paul, any more than to the rest of the Apostles, to know the times and the seasons, upon the accomplishment of which, God would restore the kingdom unto Israel.

But he, with them, was a witness of the Christ and of the Church that was to be built upon that foundation stone. And being especially the Apostle of the Gentiles, he magnified his office, by telling out to the Jews, that they should be left in the background until the fullness of the Gentiles come in, whereby they should be provoked to jealousy, and again have their precedence in the Church.

When the fullness of the Gentile election should be come into the Church, then God would turn to the Jews again, and have mercy upon them, and proceed to bring in their fullness, which being accomplished, all Israel should be saved.

I feel it needful to warn my reader, that while I incline to this view of the argument, I by no means give it forth as a decided conviction of faith. One thing, however, we have clearly learned from this digression, which is, that God, in all ages and times of the Church, has a people brought from amongst the seed of Abraham, into the condition of being Jews indeed.

And while we have learned this positively, we have also had reason to think, that when the nations shall have ceased to yield stones for the spiritual temple, God will build its uppermost courses, as He did its undermost, with Jews; with them bring out the pinnacles of its glory, as in them he laid the strength of its foundation.

There is yet another source of information upon this subject, which I have not room to enter upon, nor is this the proper place for so large an inquiry. It is the subject of "the former and the latter rain," so often spoken of in the Old Testament, and also referred to in the New.

But here we must leave the matter at present with the Lord. He well knows what His own purpose is; and before accomplishing it He will make it known unto His servants the prophets. If we be on the eve of the Jewish fullness; if we be arrived on the verge of the Philadelphian time of the Church, then by someone certainly He will make known the thing which He is about to do.

O how wide of the truth are they who think that the Word of God speaks not plainly till God's work is done; that the prophecy is not intelligible till the accomplishment! These are not believers of the Word of God: they are believers in the sight of their own eyes. They believe facts: they do not believe words at all. They do not believe God. Past history is their Scripture; certainly not the Bible. God forgive them, and grant them repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth.

One word of a practical kind, before leaving this head, I may be permitted. I am grieved at the very erroneous doctrine which is held by Christians upon the whole subject of the Jews; as if, in order to become Christian, it was necessary first to renounce circumcision, and every other vestige of Abraham's race; and as if in that earthly blessedness, everywhere prophesied of in the Old Testament which concerns earthly things, and sometimes mentioned in the New which concerns

not earthly and natural, but spiritual and heavenly things, there were to be nothing distinctive of Jew from Gentile; whereas the Jews, gathered one by one from every land, and settled in Canaan according to their tribes, and keeping there the law of Moses, and worshiping God in His holy temple on Mount Zion, shall be the heads, guardians, and workers out, under God, of that millennial blessedness of the earth.

Not to believe this is merely not to believe those parts of the Old Testament which concern the future condition of this habitable world. It is ignorance, and the fear whereof ignorance is the parent, which has brought the Christian Church into infidelity while they read Moses and the Prophets. Ignorance, to wit, of the truth that the Christian Church is altogether super-terrestrial and supernatural; as high above the Jewish dispensation as the heavens are high above the earth: as the soul is, in its constitution and substance, above the constitution and substance of the body which serves it; or, to use the exact similitude, as the glory of the celestial body, in which we shall rise immortal and incorruptible, is above the terrestrial body in which they shall live mortal and corruptible.

This dispensation of “the celestial things” closes at the coming of Christ to reconstitute and refresh the terrestrial things: and His saints, who are raised at His coming, do form the body of His heavenly rule and dominion, through whom He governs and blesses the spiritual and invisible creation, as the Jews form the body of His terrestrial administration.

Instead of seeing this distinction, which is the whole of the distinction between the Old and the New Testament, between the Law and the Spirit, self-sufficient ignorance will ever be sitting in judgment upon that which is the beautiful order of God, and condemning, as a very horrible doctrine, the notion that the Jews are to be restored, and governed by their law, and regulated by their religious ordinances.

“What”, say they, “bring us back to the law again?” “No”, we answer, “not bring you to the law, but honor the law as Christ honored it, by enabling men in flesh to observe it, and to be holy and blessed in observing it.”

The law was not made to be abortive of holiness, as hitherto it has been in every man brought under it, save the man Christ Jesus; but to show by what means flesh, fallen flesh, might be kept from sin, and the world, the fallen world, filled with righteousness; in order that flesh might feel its weakness, and cry out for a Redeemer.

Christ is that Redeemer; who, being conceived of the Holy Ghost, was circumcised, and kept the whole law; and when He comes again He will so pour out His Spirit upon all flesh as that they shall be able in mortal bodies to keep the law; and then God’s law shall be honored when men do keep it, and its righteousness shall be evinced, when men through it do preserve their righteousness.

And the world together shall dwell in peace, through the perfection of those forms of justice, forms of society, forms of religion, forms of government, which God Himself gave to that nation, whom He set forth to be, and shall yet bring to be, the great Archetype of terrestrial righteousness, religion, and blessedness. But with all this we have nothing to do, except to know and admire the goodness of God, which has been to us like the womb of a higher life, like the baptismal font of a purer nature.

These are great truths, not to be stamped under the foot of ignorance, nor torn with the teeth of criticism, but to be studied in the Word of God, where they lie revealed, and to be admired as the way and the wisdom of God towards this mortal estate, out of which we are risen with Christ, and seated with Him in the heavenly places, there to abide with Him forever in that heavenly Jerusalem; which, though upon the earth existing, exists there as the manifested dwelling-place of God,

the light long hidden in the secret heaven, the glory at present in the highest, the very dwelling-place of God, the lofty Acropolis, not of earth only, but of all creation.

Perceiving, then, that God's purpose in the Jew is not yet accomplished, yea hardly well begun, I perceive it to be a hasty and erroneous conclusion that in order to be a Christian a man must cease to be a Jew. The thing is rather the other way, that we become Christians by being grafted into that branch of renown, which Abraham's root put forth in the person of Jesus Christ, who, while He was upon earth, was one of the most despised branches of that noble stem.

But all at once from this slip of Abraham's tree burst forth the very glory of the tree of life, and it begun to bud and branch forth in spiritual beauty and spiritual glory. Yet still it abides in the trunk of Abraham; that is its soil, that is its bark, and from the body of that tree this branch of renown, bearing fruit of heaven, came wondrously forth.

If then Jesus Himself did not cut asunder His unity with Abraham, why should any Jew be required to do so? Let those who are called in circumcision, says the Apostle, in circumcision abide; let those who are called in uncircumcision, in uncircumcision abide: for neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. *1 Corinthians 7:18-19.*

To say then that the Jew, or the child of a Jew, should be uncircumcised, is to make uncircumcision something, just as to say, that a Gentile must be circumcised is to make circumcision something. And the same with respect to the Law of Moses, which Christ has kept in its spirit for all men, seeing spiritually all men were obliged to it; both in its letter and in its spirit for all the seed of Abraham. Jew and Gentile are alike delivered from its curse, and from its bondage, in receiving the spirit of adoption.

At His baptism Christ received the testimony of God that He had been a faithful servant under the bondage of the law;

that He had fulfilled its righteousness in letter and in spirit: and we, in like manner, when at our baptism we receive the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of adoption, have the testimony of God, that He has excused us from law-keeping, because of that grace which is in Him, and that perfect work of law-keeping which was wrought for all men by Jesus Christ, made under the law. And from thenceforth during all our baptized life in the flesh, we are expected of God to sit free from the obligation of the law, being married to another, even to the risen body of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If, therefore, we make it a matter of conscience before God to observe the Law of Moses, we thereby deny the substitution of Christ as the Law-keeper. If, on the other hand, we make it a matter of conscience not to eat with a Jew, or worship with a Jew (worshiping Jehovah, and not denying Jesus), we destroy our Christian liberty, and set up Jesus against Moses.

“What then should we make conscience of?”

I hear my reader exclaim. I answer:

“Make conscience of being free.”

Freedom stands not in being hindered, this way or that way, by the Law of Moses, but in being hindered in no way at all. Most clearly did the Apostles act upon this principle when they went to the Temple at the hour of prayer; when Peter made his defense in the matter of Cornelius; when Paul made a vow and kept it, when he circumcised Timothy, because his mother was a Jewess, but would not circumcise Titus, because he was a Greek; when he declared, after his much labor among the Jews, to the brethren at Rome:

Acts 28

¹⁷ Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered a prisoner into the hands of the Romans.

Let Christians, and Christian ministers, therefore show their freedom by condescending to the weaknesses of their Jewish brethren, in order to free them from their bondage. Let us go in unto them, and enter into their conditions, and offend none of their prejudices; for surely Christ was no offense to Moses, nor was Moses any offense to Christ; and so entreating them with Christian love, and bearing with their Jewish bondage, whether with the understanding of the mind or of the flesh, let us endeavor what we can, to enlarge them into the same liberty.

Surely Paul, who said that, rather than make a weak brother to offend, he would not eat flesh while the world lasted, taught this lesson to the Church.

If the Moravian Brethren have sold themselves to be slaves, in order to win the poor negro slaves of the West Indies; if Joseph Wolfe, the most successful of missionaries, have sold himself to a Mohammedan master, in order to reach the central regions of Africa, in search of his brethren, ought not we who dwell at home at ease also deny ourselves many indulgences, in the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, who to save became a bondman, and to make us rich became poor? Ought we not to stoop from our dignity of sons and fellow-heirs with Christ, and exercise the noblest prerogative of freemen, which is, to limit and curtail, and, if need be, forgo our freedom, in order to emancipate many slaves?

Ah me! Satan has wrought dismally against the poor Jew. He has made us Jews, in order to keep them Jews: he has given us the pride of Jews, that we might trample the Jews under our feet.

There is no redemption from this antichristian spirit of proud and sectarian Protestantism but one,—the much contemplation and firm belief of that divinest act of God, His act of all acts inclusive, yea, the prerequisite of all acts, which is, His being contented to humble Himself into the form of man,

and the likeness of sinful man, yea to death itself, in order to show us that grace of God by which He becomes the Savior of mankind God enable us to walk after this high pattern.

God Humbles the Enemies

Returning now to the epistle of our Great Shepherd to the angel of the Philadelphian Church, we observe that it is said of these Jews, not only that they should be given to Him as a gift, but this moreover:

Revelation 3

⁹ Behold I will make them to come and worship before your feet; and to know that I have loved you.

These words intimate that this election from amongst the synagogue of Satan should transfer their place of worship to the Philadelphian Church, and conform themselves in all things to its holy ordinances, that, from standing up in their pride against the angel thereof, they should become heedful of his word and obedient to his instructions.

The expression, “worship before your feet,” needs to be explained, lest it should be thought to encourage in any way the worship of saints on earth or saints in heaven.

There are two kindred expressions in this book, which being considered do effectually prevent such a fatal delusion. The one in *Revelation 22:8*, where John, having heard and seen all the visions, was so overwhelmed that he fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed him these things; but he forbade him, because he was only his fellow-servant, and commanded him to worship God.

This incident shows us that it is not permitted to worship any angel or prophet, or faithful keeper of God’s Word; which therefore cannot be intended in the passage before us.

The other place is in *Revelation 19:10*, where it is written:

Revelation 19

¹⁰ I fell before his feet to worship him; and he said to me, See

you do it not.

In both these cases the same expression “before your feet” is used as in our text; but in the original it is not so. In our text, the word is translated before in sight or view of; in the two passages cited, it is in presence of.

It may seem a small matter, and I do not say it is a great one; yet I think it not unworthy of observation, because the presence is in the first-mentioned passage understood as equally significant with the person worshiped, and a kind of argument might have been constructed for the creature-worship of the Romanists from the seeming identity of the two expressions in that place, and in our text.

But granting that there were no difference between the two particles “in view of” and “in presence of;” and supposing they were perfectly identical and did signify the same thing, then what should we have but Christ admitting, yea enjoining in one place what in another He solemnly interdicts?

The truth is, however, that in both cases the object of worship is omitted which in the other passage is introduced in the dative case, as it commonly or indeed almost always is. Instances of the like omission are frequent in Scripture, and indeed in all books and languages of men who know that God is the only legitimate object of worship.

Wherefore, then, it may be asked, is the expression “before your feet” used at all? Because the angel of a Church, being the head of it, as the representative of Christ, therein was wont to occupy a seat of dignity and elevation; so as that the Church, when in the act of worshiping or prostration, might be said to be worshiping before His feet.

Now the Lord promises that He would bring these Jews out of the synagogue of Satan to do the same; to mingle with the Philadelphian people, and reverently and humbly to worship God under the superintendence and ministry of the angel.

I think, moreover, that there is in it an act of deference and homage to Christ in the person of His minister. It is well known that this word worship is oftentimes used both in sacred and in profane authors to signify that prostration, genuflection, or other inclination of the body whereby in ancient times, and in Eastern countries still, deference towards superiors is wont to be expressed; which indeed is the true radical sense of the word.

Moreover, it is a common form in the Hebrew to connect it, as in the passage before us, with the presence of the person to whom homage is done: for example:

Genesis 23

⁷ Abraham bowed himself before the people of the land

Which both in the Hebrew and the Greek is:

“Abraham worshiped before the face of the people of the land.”

And I believe the expression *before your feet* to be a Hebraism, to signify merely doing that homage to the Christian minister which the seed of Abraham will at present no more do than Mordecai would bow to Haman, and do him reverence as he passed him in the gate.

With them a Christian and a Christian minister are the most loathsome and contemptible of all impostors: but it shall come to pass, in the days of the Philadelphian ministry, that a conspicuous change shall be wrought upon them, and a goodly number, a notable and remarkable company, shall come and worship in the Christian Church, and give reverence to Christ, speaking in the Christian minister.

That this is the substance of the thing signified by the words “coming and worshiping before your feet,” is, I think, clearly demonstrated by the words which follow:

Revelation 3

⁹ And I will make them...to know that I have loved you.

By what means is not declared: but out of this knowledge of Christ's love their reverence for His servant proceeds, whom they worshiped because Christ's love had made him worshipful. Beautiful condescension of Christ, and high honor of the Christian minister! thus to concentrate upon a worm of the earth His own heavenly love and the earthly homage and reverence of Jews, who were set apart to be a nation of kings.

For more royal than the royalty of the earth is the spiritual dignity of a Christian minister, yea and of a Christian man; greater than all earthly potentates is the least member of the spiritual kingdom of Christ. And why? Because the spiritual is above the earthly; and the Church is the spiritual body of Christ, in whom, and through whom, He holds the dominion over both heavenly and earthly things.

The New Jerusalem, which is the spiritual body of Christ, is the head of angels, and principalities, and powers; of all invisible creatures, as well as of all earthly and visible creatures. Wherefore the Jew, in becoming a Christian, makes as high a step in advance of dignity as does the Gentile.

The Church of Christ is the highest estate of created being, whether invisible or visible—whether celestial or terrestrial. It is the body of the living God: it is God embodied; it is God enjoyed; it is God uttering Himself forth in all His comprehensibility; it is God putting Himself forth into action in all His manifested and manifestable power.

The Church is the mystery of a human will, its dignity above, and its power over all creation, made manifest. The Church is the will, the heart, the mind, the hand, the word of God revealed, and forever revealing itself: whose Head the eternal Son of God thinks it no dishonor to be; whose spirit and life the eternal Spirit of the Godhead thinks it no disparagement to be.

Ah me! that it should now be a question in this very Church, whether the Church should have supernatural power

or not, which is no other question than whether there is a Church or no; for a Church without supernatural gifts is a piece of nature, and not nature's redeemer, nature's governor, nature's continual sustainer in blessedness. Ah me! these disputers of this age need to be taught what the word church means; which word the Apostle Paul wrote all his Epistles to explain, and Jesus gave the *Apocalypse* to reveal its preeminent destiny and surpassing glory.

There be many mysteries in heaven and on earth; but the greatest of them all is the Church; and he who does by his speech, or life, or reverential obedience, or patient suffering, or communion of saints, or supernatural power, set forth the least portion of this mystery is doing the highest destiny of a moral creature upon this earth.

I feel my honor to be greater in having been called upon of God to express in words, and somewhat also in deeds, the excellence of the Church, than if I had been downed in the capitol or hailed in the senate as the savior of my country. And I feel assured that I shall live to see the reward of my labors in the regeneration and restoration of the Church to something of her ancient fullness.

This now is the reason why these Jews will come bowing at the feet of the Christian minister, because they will recognize, that we are set for the testimony of the spiritual and glorified flesh, as they are for Christ's flesh crucified and lying in the grave; their sign is Jonas in the whale's belly, and their countersign is Christ in the heart of the earth: our sign is David and Solomon on the throne of Israel, and our countersign is the Son of Man ruling with the seven Spirits in the throne of God.

- Now, because the Lord has wakened again the music of David's lyre, and made the songs of Zion to be again full of spiritual melody;
- Now that the mystery of Daniel's numbers has been

disclosed, and the vision of Habakkuk has begun to speak;

- Now that the clouded glories of Ezekiel, and his cherubim, and his temple are beginning to display themselves full in our view;
- Now that the great chamberlain of David's house is bringing forth the treasures which have been therein hid for ages, and the mighty voice of knowledge, and of truth, which rends the cedars of Lebanon, is beginning to speak forth again from mortal men;

Behold, O you despisers, and perish; behold, O you believers, and give glory to God in the highest; behold, and God will give the sign, and the sign shall be that the force of truth will seal up the Gentiles in darkness, who have blinded their eyes that they might not see the glory of God,—while it strikes off the fetters of the Jew, and accomplishes the thing which is written in these words:

Revelation 3

⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

PRESERVATION IN TIME OF TROUBLE

The third expression of love and favor which the Universal Bishop of the Church bestows upon this his faithful vicegerent, is expressed in these words:

Revelation 3

¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Very beautiful, and very wise is the order of these successive benefits:

1. A door opened to him for entering into the truth, and

uttering it forth for the glory of God, and for the good of the Church;

2. A gift of souls, in consequence of the new truth bearing abundant fruit in the hearts of men; and, lo! to mark of what kind the truth is, they are disbelieving Jews who are brought to humble themselves at his feet, and acknowledge that God had loved them.

O what a reward, to deliver the seed of Abraham from blaspheming Abraham's seed, and David's people from blaspheming David's Lord.

But this reward is not without its painful and patient labor, in which having travailed, like the primitive Apostles, and borne reproach like the Man of Sorrows, behold how the merciful High Priest, and the bountiful rewarder of His saints, comes with help and deliverance in that fearful hour which is to try the whole world.

The language in which this third benefit is expressed is well worthy of our careful perusal, as casting a great light upon the time to which the Philadelphian Church, with its great benefits, refer.

There are three points to which it is necessary to direct our attention in order:

1. The "hour of temptation;"
2. The extent of the temptation, "which shall come upon the whole world" (habitable); and,
3. The purpose of it: "to try the inhabitants of the earth."

1. The Hour of Temptation

With respect to the first point, it is to be observed, that there are in this vision divers expressions for time, such as times, months, days, and that before us, an hour, or the hour. Now, each of these has its distinct significance, to be gathered from a patient study of this book itself.

It is called the hour of that trial or temptation, which is as

wide as the world. Now, at first sight, and beyond question, this has not yet come, there has been no such universal visitation as yet. And then arises the inquiry, whether there be any mention in Scripture of such a universal visitation of God's judgment upon the earth and its inhabitants.

The answer is, Everywhere in Scripture, from one end of it to the other, is this catastrophe of the earth and its inhabitants foretold; but especially in *Isaiah 24*, from which I have little doubt that the language of the text is taken.

My desire would be to transcribe the whole chapter, as the best commentary upon the expression in the text, and I earnestly request my reader to peruse it as a whole, if he would obtain adequate ideas upon the fearful doom which is yet to be executed upon the earth, not for its annihilation or perdition, but for its purgation and presentation in that holiness which is described in the three following chapters.

The two following passages, however, I cannot refrain from transcribing.

Isaiah 24

¹ Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste, and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof.

³ The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord has spoken this word.

⁴ The earth mourns and fades away, the world languishes and fades away, the haughty people of the earth do languish.

⁵ The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

⁶ Therefore has the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

¹⁷ Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.

¹⁸ And it shall come to pass, that he who flees from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that comes up out of

the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

²⁰ The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

And at what time this judgment takes place, is manifest in the concluding verse:

²³ Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

It is the same time of the Lord's coming, to which we have so frequently had occasion to refer in these Lectures, as the time of great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no nor ever shall be (*Matthew 24:22*); the time when He shall come with clouds, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him: and there is no other universal tribulation to the earth, and its inhabitants, save this only.

What further information is yielded in the *Revelation* itself concerning this hour of tribulation, this day of darkness and gloom? It is twice mentioned in the 14th chapter. First, of the angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth:

Revelation 14

⁶ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

⁷ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

And just after they had received this warning, and this

preaching of the eternal good news, the Son of Man comes as a reaper, sitting on the cloud with the sickle in His hand, and is thus bespoken by a certain angel:

Revelation 14

¹⁸ ...Thrust in your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for you to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

Now, if this be compared with the 13th of *Matthew*, it will be found that this harvest time, or end of the age, when the Son of Man comes to gather His own, is attended with direful effects to all the wicked without exception:

Matthew 13

⁴¹ The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

⁴² And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

These two passages, being taken together, do yield this comfortable information, that immediately before the direful judgment of the quick, and of the world where they dwell, there shall be a great going forth of preaching over the wide world, to the special effect of declaring that the hour of the judgment is just at hand, and the eternal Gospel, the Gospel of the eternal age, about to be revealed.

Now, I have a strong suspicion that this going forth is the same with the open door which He, who has the key of David, gives in the days of this Philadelphian Church; to wit, prophetic insight into what is on the eve of coming to pass, and prophetic boldness to proclaim it in all lands for the deliverance of all who will believe, from the impending calamities: and to this compassing of the wide world with the note of coming judgment, many of the Jews shall give ear, and make speed to join the messengers of salvation.

Now, be it noted, that this door they cannot shut; this passing onward and forward they cannot hinder: it will proceed in

the face of all opposition, and will prosper to the end.

Moreover if these things be rightly interpreted, and I have great faith in the interpretation, these bringers of good tidings, these prophets of judgments, and salvation from judgment, will not be cut short in their career by imprisonment and death, but will have their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and be delivered out of the tribulations which their word has brought upon the world.

If I err not, the calamities which overtake them will not be for their destruction, but for their scattering abroad. I believe the Churches will cast them forth, and forth they will go, and their way shall be prepared like the light before them. The Spirit will again say, "Come hither, and go not thither," and those sleeping Churches which would not be awakened by their cry shall, like Sodom, when Lot was delivered, go down quick into the lake that burns.

Let us not be afraid, brave comrades, nor be slack when the Lord shall call us to face the peril of the wide world: write these promises to the angel of Philadelphia upon your hearts, and you shall never fail.

We have further light cast upon the "hour of temptation," by that part of the prophecy which concerns Babylon or Rome, "that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth;" whose judgment is contemporaneous with the judgment of "the cities of the nations," the gathering of her kings with the gathering "of the kings of the whole world," as is expressly declared (*Revelation* 16:14, 19), under the head of the seventh vial, which is the judgment made manifest, the wrath of God filled up. *Revelation* 15:1, 4.

Taking, therefore, Babylon's downfall as the sign of the downfall of kingdoms, and visitation of the whole earth, the fleeing away of every island, and the disappearance of every mountain (*Revelation* 16:20), we go into this woeful burden of her desolation, in order to seek for further information con-

cerning the “hour of the trial of the whole world,” from which, all men and Churches, these Philadelphians alone are to be preserved. This is written in the 17th and 18th chapters of the *Apocalypse*, where the mention of this hour occurs no less than three times.

In *Revelation* 17, which presents her under the aspect of a woman, the apostate Church, the spouse of Satan, the kings of the earth are said to receive...

Revelation 17

¹² ...power as kings one hour with the beast.

And this power of their kingdom...

¹⁷ ...they give unto the beast till the words of God shall be fulfilled.

These words are two. First:

¹⁶ They shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

And second:

¹⁴ They shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

For the accomplishment of these two actions, to wit, for the destruction of “the mother of harlots,” which is the apostate Church, and for making war with the Lamb and His company, which is the true Church, power is given to these ten kings: and that power is declared to be “for one hour.” Not literally for the 24th part of a day, nor yet perhaps for 15 years, which is the period of a symbolical hour [although I confess I have no argument against this, seeing the expression, “one hour,” is so used and reckoned in the Turkish period (*Revelation* 9:15)], but for some very short and rapid interval, compared with the ordinary march of events, within which shall be accomplished

the ascendancy of the last head of the beast, who, for his greatness, is called the beast himself; being, if we err not, the same as the “Lucifer” and the “Assyrian” of *Isaiah*, “the willful king” of *Daniel*; “the lawless one” of the Apostle Paul (*2 Thessalonians* 2) and the “Shebna” of the valley of vision (*Isaiah* 22), who, in coming to the head of affairs, shall tread and trample down the “mother of harlots,” and, being there arrived, shall make direct head against Christ Himself, and claim for himself His names, titles, and attributes on the earth.

With such whirlwind wing and earthquake shocks shall these events come thickening on (and they are even now begun with their lightning speed), that in fifteen years, taking the hour at the largest, shall they be consummated.

And if we reckon the beginning of the period from the late French Revolution, which instantly took effect upon the putting down of Turkey and Algiers, the Euphrates powers, if we reckon the conclusion of the sixth vial, and the opening of the seventh vial, for that first shock of the earthquake, whose successive blows are now reverberating over all Christendom, we will have an exact definite period fixed for the duration of the hour of tribulation, from this year until the year 1844¹, which answers exactly to the period of the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the restoration of the tribes of Israel, deduced from the numbers of the Prophet Daniel.

But whether the symbolical interpretation of the “hour” be adopted or not, the conclusion stands all the same, that it measures the space with which are accomplished the destruction of apostate Christendom, by means of the 7th-8th head, the infidel and personal Antichrist, and his destruction by means of the Lamb and His Church; a short, short period for such awful events, whose rapid development will fill men

¹ **Editor’s note:** Irving shows a remarkable consistency with many other Advent prophetic expositors in naming 1844 as a significant year in the fulfillment of the prophecy of *Daniel* 8:14.

with wonder and astonishment.

If this be the truth, then it gives a distinct period to the Philadelphian Church, showing it to be in existence at this very time when the kings are hating the whore, and consuming her, to continue until the Church be taken up into the chamber of salvation, thence to rain down hail and fire, and tempest and furious storms, upon the corrupters of her Lord's inheritance.

And if so, we should expect this Church to be speedily distinguished and defined, by some act of separation or exclusion from the vineyard of Sodom and Gomorrah, that the one may be sealed for life, the other for death; the one for translation into glory, the other for translation into the pit of Tophet, the lake that burns with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.

Now the 18th chapter contains the same mystery of Babylon's downfall, written in terms, not of the personal spouse of Satan, but in terms of the city of her habitation, "where Satan's seat is." And this double representation of the Church, in person and in place, is constant from the days of Abraham, until the new Jerusalem descends from heaven to the earth, yea from Adam's creation, whose office was double, to be in respect of person, the image of God, in respect of place, the lord of all His handiworks.

Of Babylon, as a city, including not the seven hills of Rome, but the seven-headed powers of Christendom, we have it put into the mouths of the kings of the earth to bewail and lament over her downfall:

Revelation 18

¹⁰ ...standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is your judgment come.

Not by slow process of consumption, and gradual waning away of power, as some think, nor yet by conversion unto the

truth, as the evangelical world, more ignorant than the other world, believe;—disbelieving all Scripture, to believe it;—but by consumption of fire, by the same method by which Sodom was destroyed, whose name also for this reason she has received, “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt” (*Revelation* 11:8), and in one hour shall this great city be consumed.

So also do the merchants make their lamentation:

Revelation 18

¹⁶ ...saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

¹⁷ For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.

And so also the seafaring people:

¹⁹ ...for in one hour is she made desolate.

That this should be a part of each one of the three lamentable dirges sung over Babylon’s downfall, is surely a most remarkable circumstance, introduced to prevent men from giving heed to the seducing spirits, which are gone abroad to deceive men into the notion, that here also natural, and not supernatural causes will work out the words of God!

Infidels that they are! Will they not believe that Sodom’s riches perished in a morning, and Egypt’s first-born in a night; and Egypt’s king in the twinkling of an eye; and Babylon’s pride in one brief hour of midnight jollity? Were not these instantaneous?

So instantaneous and supernatural shall be the overthrow of all which constitutes the apostasy of Christendom. It shall go down like a millstone into the abyss!

Revelation 18

²¹ And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

The overthrow of Christendom shall be God's witness for the supernatural, which she was set to bear; but which she had forsaken for the witness of the natural, and the denial of the supernatural. In her death she shall exhibit and confess that, which in her life she would not; and she shall die with lies branded on her forehead by her own hand, with "apostate" uttered against herself by her own lips.

And when brought in her last days to see the supernatural, and to feel it, and to open her arms to receive it, a legion of devils shall be sent to revel upon her: the hag of hell, the devil's spouse, shall be made all quick with devil's imps, accursed with their possessions, and false prophets and false signs and wonders shall rule and riot over her dotard blindness and superstitious folly.

Her death shall be a fool's death. Like old worn-out infidels, she shall betake herself to superstitious comforts in the end, and shall receive seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons, who shall goad her to destruction, and send her howling into the open mouth of hell.

Ah me! what convictions of evil to come do visit my thoughts far beyond utterance. If I had not comfort and strength in my God, and assurance of His salvation, the thickening shapes of evil, abiding men and women, and sweet children, would drive me to despair. For my heart was never cruel, and much labor in the pastor's office has made it more tender, than well befits the messenger of such heavy news as God has called me to bear to this nation and the nations of Christendom.

If this inquiry which we are prosecuting into the meaning of "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth," do continue, as it has begun, to reveal under that name "the great tribulation," which the Lord predicted (*Matthew 24*), immediately before His coming, and out of which the white robed palm-bearing

saints before the throne are represented to have come forth (*Revelation 7:14*), the consequences which flow from it are immense.

For it seals all that we have said of the Philadelphian Church in particular, and of the succession of the Churches in general: it rivets the attention of the present generation upon the Philadelphian and Laodicean Churches, as in very deed descriptive of the opposite spirits which now solicit our obedience, and brings out into a splendor of truth and reality all that we have already advanced, both upon the forms of Sardis, and the substances of Philadelphia.

2. The Extent of the Temptation

We will therefore be easily excused for dwelling still a little longer upon this important head, while we search for the information which is to be had, from the expressions “the whole world,” and “to try the inhabitants of the earth.”

This expression, “the whole world,” occurs twice in this book besides in our text, and in all these three places in connection with the earth and its inhabitants. The literal signification of the word is “the whole habitable;” and it is generally used in Scripture to signify this world, in its widest and fullest sense; not only the earth, but the water and also the air; as may be seen by comparing *Hebrews 2:5*, with the *Psalms 8*, in which the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, as well as the beasts of the earth, are included in the dominion of the Son of Man, called there “the habitable to come.”

In this sense, or in a sense larger than the earth, it is used, I think, in our text, when the hour of temptation is first said to come upon the whole world, and then the end of it is described to be “in order to try them that dwell on the earth.”

My notion is fully exhibited in a passage of *Luke*, where that hour of trial is thus described:

Luke 21

⁵ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring.

These are the several parts of creation; and as the Divine word subordinates the sun, moon, and stars to the earth, if I err not, all these together constitute “the habitable” mentioned in the verse following.

Luke 21

²⁶ Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth [*habitable*]: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

²⁷ And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Perhaps some may think this too large a sense for the word “habitable;” and I do not say that it is commonly so used, but always in a larger sense than “the earth.”

When the Apostle would set forth the extent to which the Gospel had been preached, he does it by these words:

Romans 10

¹⁸ ...their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world;

...quoting from *Psalms* 19, which certainly can be interpreted of no narrower bounds than the whole visible creation.

Perhaps in the New Testament the distinction between the earth and the world is the same as, in the Old Testament, between the nations and the isles of the Gentiles; of which the former signifies the infield, and the other the outfield of the world; Jerusalem and Judea being regarded as the center and home; the one, the nations around, with whom they were acquainted by war or traffic: the other, the far-off region, of which they knew only the name, from the plantation of them, contained in their inspired books.

It is certain that a distinction of this kind, between “the

earth” and “the habitable” is observed throughout this book, in which we refer to these two other instances:

Revelation 12

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceived the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Here I think it is manifest from the context that, under the term “the whole habitable,” is included not the earth only, but also the heavens, the dwelling-place of the angels, as well as of men; the one being called upon to rejoice that he is cast out, the others to mourn because he is come down to them with great wrath.

And in the *Epistle to the Ephesians* he is called “the prince of the power of the air,” as well as “the devil, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” *1 Peter* 5:8.

The only other place where it is mentioned is in *Revelation* 16, where the three unclean spirits, like frogs, the spirits of devils working miracles, are declared to...

Revelation 16

¹⁴ ...go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

These are kings of the papal earth, then become infidel, and of the rest of the world. It is the preparation for the last cup of wrath, whereof the earth shall drink; for that earthquake which shall shake not the earth only, but also the heavens; and in which not only Babylon, but the cities of the nations shall fall, to rise no more.

And therefore it is made inclusive not only of those kings of Christendom, who have chiefly figured in the prophetic drama of this book, but of all other kings and potentates and rulers over the wide face of the world.

Isaiah's language, concerning the same gathering in that day of disaster, is still more mysterious, seeming to me to include the evil potentates of the invisible, as well as of the visible world, which would bring us back to the same interpretation of "the habitable," as in the former case.

Isaiah 24

²¹ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

²² And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

These passages, in which the "whole habitable world" is used, do all concur in giving to the hour of temptation, in our text, a distinct and unequivocal reference to the judgment of the world, which is immediately to precede the coming of the Lord, and so concur with the conclusions derived from all those which speak of the hour of trial and judgment. It only remains to the complete clearing up of this important point, that we examine into the nature of the temptation itself.

The two preceding inquiries into the time, and the extent of the temptation, have likewise disclosed that the temptation itself will consist in severe judgments upon the earth and its inhabitants. But these, though they should come in their four-fold form of the sword, famine, pestilence, and the noisome beast, do constitute only a small part of the temptation with which the world shall in that day be tried.

Above these I place the false Christs, false prophets, and evil spirits which shall be permitted to go forth and deceive men to their perdition. In the passage last quoted, it is said that:

Revelation 16

¹³ And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and

out of the mouth of the false prophet.

¹⁴ For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

And the same fearful truth is declared in all the parallel passages of the New Testament, which treat of that time of exceeding great tribulation, as, for example:

Matthew 24

²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect.

Such a temptation will arise, as will combine the three forms with which the Lord was assailed of Satan in the wilderness; from the flesh, from the world, and from the invisible spirits of darkness, taking possession of men's bodies, and working through them, such deception of the sense and of the understanding, as shall prevail against all, save those in whom the Holy Spirit of truth is found.

To this letting loose of the spirits of darkness, reference is made, I think, in that passage of *1 Timothy*, which has been commonly interpreted of the Papacy; as indeed it well may be, without depriving it of the full and proper application to the latter days. For the Papacy, as has been already observed, has the same relation to the personal Antichrist, who is to bring the indignation to an end, as this Church has to the personal Christ, who is to gather and glorify her in that day.

The Papacy prepares the way of Antichrist, is the working leaven of him, his growing members, preparing Christendom for his grand development.

1 Timothy 4

¹ Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.

And the same is declared of the wicked one, whom...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁸ ...the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming:

⁹ Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

3. The Purpose of the Temptation

This last passage reveals to us also the reason of this woeful inundation of evil spirits, and false signs; in order to reveal and make manifest the evil from the good, that through all their dark and deceitful hypocrisies. God may unmask them, or rather make their hidden wickedness and iniquity of heart and mind to be the occasion of their fall.

Spirits of all forms, proper to every complexion of wickedness, shall be permitted to come forth and seduce every man with his proper seduction. So that no learning, nor wisdom, nor prudence, nor any other carnal accomplishment, shall avail a man more, than to bait the trap in which his foot will be taken. And nothing in that day shall avail, but the heart upright and pure; which ever beholds God, and has no fellowship with the works of darkness.

It has seemed to me, reflecting deeply on these things, that the writers on Christian evidence have been preparing the way of this hellish invasion of the realm of Christendom. For the last hundred years have they been busily occupied in withdrawing the evidence of religion from the inward con-

science, which tries truth, and love, and holiness, to the outward sign; which, they say, if it be a clearly attested miracle, must put all objection to silence, and reduce us into the condition of mere recipients of the message which the worker of the miracles has to declare.

It is the standard doctrine of all our Universities and Presbyteries, that miracles are by far the strongest evidences of the truth of our religion. The Apostles did miracles, and that is enough to confirm any doctrine. This error has taken prodigious root throughout the Protestant Church in this island: and what will they say when this flood of signs and lying miracles is poured upon them, every one with his own doctrine? They must take up with one or other of the spirits, and so shall their alienation from God be revealed.

Their favorite dogma, that the age of miracles is past, will not be able to keep the ground many days by the side of well-attested miracles; and when it is forced to depart, what have they left but the necessity of believing the spirits who work them?

It will just live long enough to make them reject the gifts of the Spirit reappearing in the Church; against which, having taken a part, through their blindness to the inward, and only true proofs with which they come attested, and having treated those who side with them as followers of superstition, as enthusiasts and fanatics, God will straightway expose their wretched hypocrisy and sophistry, by letting loose evil spirits, with miracles wrought on purpose to seduce, and perfectly capable of standing the test of the senses: true miracles so far as weight, number, and magnitude are concerned; false, so far as doctrine is concerned.

And our modern divines, who consider the doctrine, as no more than an adjunct to the miracles, having its demonstration, not in itself, but in its antecedent sign, will be seduced by these lying spirits into all sorts of heresies and errors and

wickedness. I have a moral conviction that such a day is not far distant, if it have not even now dawned upon the earth.

If we had a record of the things which are now doing, and have been going on, for the last seven years, among the disciples of Joanna Southcote, we should be less to seek in those matters. It is in these counterfeits of power and of truth, that I foresee the great temptation of the latter days to consist.

The Church will be in this way sifted: the spirits will come and gather their followers; and Christ will come and gather His; and the strife shall be terrible in Armageddon. It will be on the very eve of the coming of Christ; and each man shall become his own judge, by betaking himself to his own banner.

I believe that there has been nothing seen like that scene of spiritual confusion which is just about to be manifested in Christendom. It shall become a Babel indeed, a confusion of tongues, a confusion of doctrines, and a confusion of spirits, until God shall no longer bear it; and “the city of confusion shall be broken up.” *Isaiah 24:10*.

So far as the direful consequences are concerned, they are, I think, shown forth in that provocation of God by the children of Israel, which, both by David and by Paul, is called “the day of temptation” (*Psalms 95:8, Hebrews 3:8*). The point ascertained by that temptation in the wilderness was this:

Who were worthy to go up into the promised land?

And the way by which this was ascertained was through the report made of it by the spies. Those who made the good report, Caleb and Joshua, went in; those who followed the evil report made by the other spies went not in, but perished in the wilderness.

So deem I, that as many as gladly hear the everlasting Gospel, which is now preached over the world, “fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come;” those who apprehend the judgments and the Judge to be at

the door, and are ready to welcome Him, and enter into the inheritance; shall be delivered from the power of the seducers, being led by the Spirit of God into the truth.

Whereas those who say, that Jesus has not come in flesh, and that He is not coming again in glory, or not until after a long time, and reject the call to prepare and go up with Him, shall every one of them be seduced of the seducers. And by reason of their unbelief in the two great tests of evil spirits they shall by evil spirits be utterly subverted.

Those tests are:

1. That Christ is come in the flesh, and
2. That Jesus is the Lord.

The former is denied by those who assert that He had not the law of the flesh. The latter, by those who say that all power is from the people, or that the people are lord, and not Jesus.

The one of them is now leavening the ecclesiastical, the other the political state; and taken together, they are making void Christ's incarnation and His exaltation—that is, His work altogether—and leaving us a few scholastic terms, such as election, justification, and sanctification, to keep up the game and farce of religion with, until the invasion of the spirits of hell do prove that we are ripe for hell, and utterly alienated from the God of heaven.

Keeping the Word of Patience

If those who hear and read these things be amazed at the conception which I have formed to myself of that direful hour of temptation, let them now give heed to the instructions of our great Bishop, as to the means by which the Philadelphian bishop and his flock are to be preserved from it:

Revelation 3

¹⁰ Because you have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep you from the hour of temptation.

The desert of this much approved and rewarded man lay “in keeping the word of Christ’s patience.” This is a very remarkable expression, and, being compared with the other Scriptures, serves much to confirm the conclusions to which we have already come concerning the hour of temptation. For, in connection with the great judgment of the earth and temptation of the Church, we always find an especial call made upon the people of God for patience, as in:

Matthew 24

¹³ He that shall endure (be patient) unto the end shall be saved;

Luke 21

¹⁹ In patience possess your souls;

And again on the annunciation of Babylon’s overthrow:

Revelation 14

¹² Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

These all bespeak a season during which, they who know their God shall be “tried and made white” (*Daniel 12:10*); when they shall eagerly look for one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not find it; when the expectation of Christ shall be so violent as that many false Christs shall arise and deceive many; when nothing shall preserve them from the snare and the pit and the fear on all sides of them, save the most attentive study and diligent observation of Christ’s own words concerning His coming.

Which inclines me to think that the thing meant by “the word of Christ’s patience” is the word of His coming again, which He has commanded us patiently to look for. If patience refer to the period of hoping, then, the end of the hope being His coming again, the word which speaks thereof may well be called the word of His patience. And to this agree many parts of Scripture: as the introduction of this very book, where John

entitles himself:

Revelation 1

⁹ I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Which I consider as parallel with that beautiful prayer of the Apostle for the zealous Thessalonians:

2 Thessalonians 3

⁵ And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

In the Greek, it is *the patience of Christ*, that patience which He showed on earth, and now shows in heaven, where He waits without impatience the times and seasons, which are wholly in His Father's hand—great example to His Church of long-suffering with His enemies, and waiting for God's appointed time!

Likewise that other passage in the *Romans 8* concerning the redemption of the body and the manifestation of the sons of God, the liberation of the creature, and the other parts of the one hope of our calling:

Romans 8

²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

I do greatly err, therefore, if this word of Christ's patience be not the word of the promise of His appearing, which shall then be very dear unto His people, who are commanded to hold up their heads because their redemption draws nigh; while to others it shall be as a dream, as a doting of vain and speculative men, insomuch that it shall be a question whether there be faith upon the earth.

To be keeping the word of Christ's patience, is therefore, as I think, to be holding fast the hope of His coming in the midst

of a generation of scoffers, who shall be saying:

2 Peter 3

⁴ Where is the hope of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the world.

That such who are looking for His appearing shall receive deliverance in that day, is sufficiently declared in all the Scriptures:

Hebrews 9

²⁸ Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

And it is embodied into the beautiful parable of the Virgins, whereof only those who had been keeping the word of His patience hidden in their hearts, were found in a state of preparation for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Ah me! if this be the true interpretation, how few are there who may look for deliverance; if so be that deliverance be given, not to all who believe in the second coming of the Lord, but only to those who are hiding that blessed hope in their hearts, and patiently looking for the appearing of the great God and our Savior!

As to those who think they are expecting Christ, by preaching that He is to come after a thousand years, at the end of all things, it is like saying that a young man is expecting death who is believing that he shall live till four-score; or that a woman is expecting the birth of her child, when many months of her time is yet to run. And yet they will go about, with bare and brazen face, and say:

“We also are expecting Christ some thousand years after this.”

If any but God were thus entreated, he would make short work with such hypocrites.

But, setting them to a side, as thorough unbelievers in this

doctrine altogether, as the perverters of it, and the persecutors of those who believe in it; and applying ourselves to those that are sincerely and honestly expecting Christ's advent, as a thing at hand, and very much to be desired for God's glory and the world's well-being; alas! how few even of this fragment of the Church are in the state described in our text, of "keeping the word of Christ's patience"!

I know that to some of us, and preachers too, it is an opinion which we condescend to patronize, and will occasionally contend for, though we would be far from being understood to make much of it; to others it is a conviction of the understanding, gathered from an honest study of the Scriptures, but not digested into principles and motives of holy living, lying stored up in the mind, but not living in the heart, or calling forth the energies of the soul.

To how few, alas! is it the consolation of adversity, the hope of the reformation of all abuses, the end and determination of all adversities and afflictions, the winding up of all inextricable disorders, the joy of the whole earth, and the deliverance of all the elements of nature!

There is, indeed, a wonderful voice gone forth over this land; and the echo of it now, after five years of preaching, returns to me from Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Doubtless it will bear wonderful fruit, as the doctrine of justification by faith did heretofore at the Reformation: and around this root will grow the historical antitype of the Philadelphian Church; while the rejecters of this precious hope, whose voice is lifted up throughout Christendom, will throw the rest into the historical antitype of the Laodicean state of the Church.

As the rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith brought the Roman Church to be, what since the Council of Trent we have seen it, a lifeless frozen lump of error, so will the rejection of Christ's coming in His glory cast the Churches called Reformed into that fruitless, miserable, and

abandoned condition, foretold and forewarned in the Church of Laodicea.

I see these things in their beginnings, and I take as it were their fluxionary expression. And, being now somewhat accustomed to the ratios of ecclesiastical affairs, I am able to calculate the effects which will in a very few years be produced. For speed, whirlwind speed, is the characteristic of the times in which we live. The work of centuries is now doing in a day; because it is the time of settling the account and bringing the indignation to an end. There is no longer any resistance or reaction; all the bands of society are loosed; and the machine will whirl round with unabating violence, till it shall have broken itself to pieces.

But, in the midst of the consternation and confusion, there shall be a few calm, collected people, who with heads lifted up and patient countenances, are looking on and suffering, and speaking to their neighbors of a Redeemer near at hand, who shall set all to rights again, and reconstitute the world in eternal beauty and blessedness.

“When shall He come?” is the cry.

“Be patient,” is His answer.

“Is this He whom we hear of in the secret chamber, or is this He in the desert place?”

“No, He shall not so appear; but, like the lightning, which all heaven and earth beholds, and with the vulture’s sure discernment of her prey, shall we make flight to meet Him.”

Great, I doubt not, will be the trials of His servants. I know not but Satan may succeed in casting upon them the blame of the evil accidents which are happening around; as upon the first Christians, who, whether a famine raged in the provinces or a fire in the city, had all the odium and guilt to bear. And so also it fared with the Reformers, whose doctrines Satan contrived to implicate in the minds of rulers with the Anabaptist

levelers of the ranks and distinctions of society.

The more need have we of watchfulness and patience; and the more with watchfulness and patience shall we be endowed. If Satan could get our cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom comes," put down, he would possess the world in hand to wind it to his own diabolical purposes. For as to those called the Evangelical and Religious world, they are literally his trumpeters, to cry "Peace and prosperity," to proclaim "A day of light and of liberty, a day of joy and of glory unto men," through the spread of those evil principles, which are working the destruction and downfall of the world. To whom I say, with the Prophet:

Isaiah 50

¹¹ Behold, all you that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled. This shall you have of my hand; you shall lie down in sorrow.

Supported by these religionists, Satan will do his utmost to inflame against us, all powers of this world and of the world unseen. In the midst of which, what is our consolation, but in our patience, the patient waiting for His Son in heaven; who shall bring every wicked work into judgment; who shall bring forth our righteousness like the light, and our judgment like the noonday.

James 5

⁷ Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

⁸ Be also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

And again:

Isaiah 1

¹⁰ Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice

of His servant, that walks in darkness, and has no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God,

Kept from the Hour of Temptation

It only remains to the complete elucidation of the promise contained in this verse, that we explain the manner of this preservation which is promised to the angel of the Philadelphian Church.

This is, indeed, a very secondary consideration to the believers of God's word, who are satisfied with the truth of the promise, though they see not, nor can by any means divine the manner of its fulfillment. Of which uninquiring faith behold a notable example in Abraham our father, when God commanded him to offer up that very son of promise in whom He had oftentimes declared that His seed should be called. Abraham thought not of reconciling these opposites,—that Isaac's posterity should be more numerous than the stars of heaven, and that Isaac himself should be offered up a burnt-offering upon the altar: he accounted, says the Apostle...

Hebrews 11

¹⁹ ...that God was able to raise him up from the dead; whence also he received him in a figure.

So we, having a promise of being preserved in that hour of temptation which is ready to be revealed, ought to be little careful as to the manner, but rest assured as to the certainty of it.

Still, however, it is our duty to do our part to discover the mind of God, so far as it is revealed; and, taking this book for our guide, as being its own best interpreter, we observe, first, that the promise made by the Spirit unto these faithful Philadelphians is, that they should become pillars in God's temple; and citizens of the New Jerusalem which comes down out of heaven.

This New Jerusalem descends from God with the full num-

ber of the Lamb's chosen ones; who must, therefore, have been taken into heaven before descending out of it. It is not peopled upon coming to the earth, but it comes down peopled from the heavens high.

If, then, the Philadelphians are to have their place therein, and no more to go out thence, they must be taken up from the earth before that manifestation of the glory of the sons of God. And to this agrees all Scripture, as:

- The gathering of the elect to Him when He comes in the clouds (*Matthew 24*);
- Our being changed in the twinkling of an eye, and caught up to meet Him in the clouds (*1 Corinthians 15*; *1 Thessalonians 4*);
- Our being like Him when He appears (*1 John 3*); and
- Our appearing with Him in glory (*Colossians 3*);
- Together with all the parables, which make mention of His coming; as, our entering in with Him into the marriage chamber, from which others are shut out.

But having opened these passages already, I shall, for the elucidation of the subject, content myself with referring to two others; the one for the very manner, and the other for the true type, of this deliverance.

In the 14th chapter of the *Gospel by John*, our blessed Lord, having given His disciples to wit, that He was departing to a place whither they could not follow Him now, but should follow Him afterward, adds, for their consolation that He went away before them to that place, in order to prepare mansions for them in the house of His Father—that temple in which these Philadelphians are promised a place; that New Jerusalem, which is declared to be the tabernacle of God (*Revelation 21:3*); and when He should have made ready chambers for all His faithful people, He said:

John 14

³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

No words can be more distinct and explicit for declaring, that His disciples should follow Him to the place whither He then went, and where He now abides; that is, in the presence and abode of the Father, for He continually declares, throughout the whole discourse, that it was to the Father He went.

John 14

²⁸ I go unto the Father.

To the Father, therefore, we shall go also, and in His house take up our abode. This is certain, if words can make a thing certain. It is moreover certain, that to take us there Christ Himself will come:

“I will come again, and receive you unto myself.”

Come where? There where we are; there where He went away from; to this earth. For what end? To take us unto Himself; to take us unto those prepared mansions of the house of God; to present us unto the Father at the marriage supper; to obtain for us, from the Father, the entering into and the eternal possession of that house, which He will for ever glorify and bless with His own radiant beauty.

This absolutely requires an assumption from the earth of all the saints, after the same manner as Christ was taken up. And to this great head of doctrine, all those legends of the Catholic Church, concerning the assumption of the blessed Virgin and other saints, do point.

By being taken up, to be “clothed upon with our house which is from heaven,” (*2 Corinthians* 5:2) I believe that Christ’s people will be delivered out of their tribulation.

Those who think it is by removal to Jerusalem, or some favored spot upon the earth, do, as seems to me, merely bind

themselves down to Moses and the Prophets, nor will acknowledge the spiritual interpretation thereof which came by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, the new light cast upon the purpose of God by the resurrection of Christ and the giving of the Spirit.

Joel 2

³² And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

This “deliverance in Mount Zion,” remains the same, and shall be literally fulfilled on the earth, whereas we escape to the spiritual glory which is from above and inherit the headship of the heavens, and are manifested in the heavenly Jerusalem, when the earth by these judgments and trials shall have been prepared for our reception.

There is a season and a time, during which the saints are not upon the earth, but in the heavens, acknowledged of God, and invested by Him in the fellowship of His Son’s prerogatives; given to His Son as an inheritance, that with them, as His body, He may hold possession of and exercise rule over the whole creation of God.

There is a season and a time, during which the Father and the Son have them unto themselves, and do manifest them in the sight of the heavenly host, as the appointed kings and priests of the universe; during which they receive the homage and the tribute of the powers and principalities and potentates of heaven.

And, being invested in rule and authority with Christ, and having given unto them the same ministry of the angels and ministering spirits which as winds and flames of fire did wait upon the Majesty of Heaven on the top of Sinai, they come with Christ, in order to execute the vengeance written; during which hour of temptation they are not upon the earth, but in

the heavens, and do bring the vengeance down upon the wicked nations who trampled them under foot, and in their person did trample under foot the Lord of glory.

But this promise to the Philadelphian Church is not, like that delivered to the Church of Thyatira, a promise of work to be done, in breaking the nations with a rod of iron, but of rest to be enjoyed with Christ from the temptations with which others shall be tried: as it is written:

2 Thessalonians 1

⁶ Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;

⁷ And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with His mighty angels,

⁸ In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These faithful ones “had kept His word, and had not denied His name” (*Revelation 3:8*); they had kept the word of His patience, through great trials: and, now that the hour of retribution is come, now that the year of recompenses is arrived, it proves to them the year of His redeemed; now that the day of His vengeance is in His heart, and He is inquiring after blood, He thinks upon the humble folk who have trusted in His mercy, and says:

Psalm 1

⁵ Gather my saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.

In one word, and that a word of God, to set forth this our glorious hope in those days of tribulation take this passage:

Psalm 27

³ Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident;

⁴ One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my

life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

⁵ For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion: in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me upon a rock.

⁶ And now shall my head be lifted up above my enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.

And now for the exact type of the deliverance which we are to receive out of that great city of confusion, “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified” (*Revelation* 11:8), I make no doubt, from the authority of Peter, that it is to be found in the deliverance of Lot out of Sodom.

The whole of his *Second Epistle* is written to put them in remembrance of those things (*2 Peter* 1:12, 13, 15) whereof he had seen the form and pattern upon the holy Mount of Transfiguration. And having commended to them the word of prophecy spoken by the Holy Ghost through the Old Testament Prophets, he informs them that false prophets should arise, perverting the truth, and so making it to be evil spoken of; whose pernicious ways many should follow, and with them should be destroyed, like Sodom and Gomorrah, which are:

2 Peter 2

⁶ ...an example unto those that after should live ungodly.

Then, for the consolation of those who, in the midst of the darkness and delusion spread abroad by these false prophets, are looking into the prophetic word as their light, and giving no heed to those seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, he adds these words:

⁷ [The Lord who] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

⁹ ...knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.

Then he proceeds to describe the character of these apostates from the truth; and afterwards the judgment, both of the elemental and spiritual world, coming upon men in the midst of their scoffings, and sweeping them into judgment, with all their ignorance and error upon their heads; and concludes with the “new heavens and new earth,” for which we with hearty expectation look, and with all holiness prepare.

Taking the Apostle’s guidance and instruction, I do call upon every man to remember at what unawares Sodom was arrested in her wicked career, and not to trust to vain hopes of timeous warning, to flattering and false speeches of ignorant and wicked men, as that the coming of that day is far off, and that those who preach it are troublers of the world’s peace. Give not heed to such deceivers; they are servants of Satan; being themselves deceived, and greedily bent on deceiving others.

The Church is in its last stage of hypocrisy and corruption. Faith, and honesty, the soul of faith, hardly any more exist. Sensuality, as brutal as Sodom’s, has long prevailed in the chief cities of Christendom: marriage, God’s ordinance, is spoken against as an evil; and children, God’s greatest blessing, as a very great curse; and every means is taken to bring into discredit things venerable and holy.

Society is broken from its moorings; the stormy tempest of revolution rages; and the ranks and orders of men are driving right ahead against one another.

Religion is away from men’s thoughts: the heads of the people are silent in their places: incurable blindness is settling down upon the Church, inability to think a thought, insensibility to feel a right feeling; perfect inanity of speech and inanity of action.

The people have everything their own way: neither king nor priest, neither Church nor State, may debate the matter any longer. The crew of the ship are fairly up in insurrection,

and the officers are put down: the helm is in the hand of those who know neither chart nor compass.

The spirit of madness is arising on every side; fury is poured forth, and blood drenches the earth. What a night of horrors is setting in upon the world! In the midst of which awful precursors of more awful judgment let the people of God stand fast, and believe assuredly that they shall receive deliverance.

God is taking evidence; He is come down to see whether the wickedness be such as it is reported to Him. He is trying every ordinance of His appointment, to see if there be any strength left in it; every man, to see if there be any reverence in him for any ordinance of God.

The ranks and orders of men are revealing the ungodliness that is in them; they are witnessing to their own ripeness for perdition. History is recording their acts: she pants in her haste, being unable to follow the rapid revelation which they are making of their wickedness. It is a terrible crisis!

The angels of the Lord are amongst us, looking on; the witnesses are observing all. O you people of God, entertain them in your houses, in your hearts, as Lot did; and they will surely save you, as they saved him.

The time of the angel's marking is going forward, and the six slaughter-men are abiding till he has done his commission of mercy: then will they fall on, and spare neither man, woman, nor child.

Though these three men, Noah, Job, and Daniel, were in that wicked city of apostate Christendom, they shall save neither son nor daughter: they shall but save their own soul by their righteousness, says the Lord. *Ezekiel 14:14*.

Whosoever believes these things, let him take up at once the office of Abraham, to intercede; and the office of Lot to be vexed daily, and daily to sigh and to cry unto God; and let him

abide in his place, nothing daunted; fleeing only to avoid persecution; and being assured that it is not in this place, nor yet in that, no, nor at Jerusalem, but in the heavens, that we are to find our place of safety, our chamber of salvation.

EXHORTATION TO PERSEVERANCE

The fourth and last of these most conspicuous benefits promised to this faithful servant of the Chief Shepherd, is thus expressed:

Revelation 3

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold fast that which you have [Greek: *grasp what you have*], that no man take your crown.

This no doubt has an intimate connection with the preceding verse, as revealing the coming of the Lord, whereby the deliverance promised should be wrought to His saints, and the tribulation threatened to the enemies of His saints.

The Coming of the Lord Brings Deliverance

We have seen, in the passages of Scripture referred to for the illustration and enforcement of the preceding topic, that the coming of the Lord is always interwoven with the deliverance of the Church and the perdition of her enemies; and therefore it was not to be expected, but that here also it should be found in the company of the same series of events; of which it is the center and pivot; of which they are either the prelude or the sequel.

And accordingly here it is introduced, with its usual invocation to attention on the part of man:

Revelation 1

⁷ Behold, He comes with clouds;

Revelation 3

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly;

Revelation 22

²⁰ Surely I come quickly.

In the Old Testament it is commonly called “the day of the Lord,” and, as in the passage before us, it is always represented as hastening, and hastening exceedingly. For example:

Zephaniah 1

¹⁴ The great day of the Lord is near; it is near, and hastens greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly:

And, as here, it is ever connected with deliverance and reward to His people. For example:

Jeremiah 30

⁷ Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.

And in “the burden of the valley of vision,” to which our attention is particularly drawn in the style of Christ prefixed to this epistle, we have that day written of in these words:

Isaiah 22

⁵ For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity by the Lord God of Hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

Coming Quickly

Search in all the prophets, and find me one place, if you can, in which this day is not represented as coming quickly, and then will I believe that the ministers of the Church may be otherwise than most guilty and abandoned in representing it as far off; at least more than one thousand years.

Surely they are making a snare for their own feet, and for the feet of all the foolish people who give heed to them. But they answer:

“Yes, there is a passage, one at least, in which the Apostle Paul censures the Church against looking upon that day as near at hand.”

And this passage they cleave unto as the stronghold of their unbelief, and their justification for making light of the whole

matter. Let us examine it, and for their souls' sake endeavor to dislodge them from their false and fatal security. It is contained in the *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, which, like the *Second Epistle of Peter*, may be entitled, *Of the Coming of the Lord*.

Now, before entering upon this work and labor of love for my brethren, let me point out to them a sure and certain proof that they are making an evil and erroneous use of this Apostle's writings, inasmuch as he dismisses the subject with this prayer:

2 Thessalonians 3

⁵ And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

"The patient waiting for Christ," or as the marginal reading has it: *the patience of Christ*, the same as the promise to the Philadelphians, "because you have kept the word of my patience."

Surely Paul, who prayed this prayer, could not at the same time be writing to dissuade them from expecting Christ. And you, who use the Epistle to encourage yourselves in that indifference to and contempt of the subject which you wickedly practice, must be using it grievously amiss, and greatly perverting the Apostle's aim, who prays, that those he wrote to might have their minds directed into the patient waiting for Christ.

What his real object is, he himself well explains. He begins by giving thanks to God for their patience under their tribulations, and counts the same a sure token of their inheriting rest with Christ in the day of His manifestation. Then he proceeds (chapter 2) very lovingly and earnestly, by that very hope and assurance, to warn them lest, by any spirit, word, or epistle, though of Paul's own, they should be shaken out of their mind and agitated, for instance, because the day of Christ is close at hand.

Our translation conveys the impression that the Apostle believed the day of the Lord not to be at hand; but I submit to the learned reader, that this is not in the original; which is literally “as that the day of Christ is instant,” and not “as if,” or “as though the day of Christ were instant.”

The tense of the verb is indicative, and not conditional. In his former Epistle he had written, that it should come as a thief, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God; and in the parallel passage he had written of it as coming...

1 Corinthians 15

⁵² ...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.

These declarations he does not here mean to contradict, and with them to contradict all Scripture; but he is earnest to prevent this very instancy of that day from being used by deceivers to shake the Thessalonians out of their sound mind, and cast them into a fever of agitation, and get them to neglect their ordinary callings, and to set light by the Apostle's commandments; and, in one word, break up the Church through a frenzy of fear and alarm about the coming of the Lord.

And he conjures them to suffer nothing whatever to work them up to such excitement; and prays that they may be established, steadfast, and brought into the condition of patient waiting, diligent preparation, and continual readiness. I submit that this is the true rendering of the passage:

2 Thessalonians 2

² That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand [or, *instant*].

I think it rather an assertion, than a denial, of its being at hand. However this be, the lesson is the same, and a very

good one it is—to wit, that we should not be shaken out of our senses, or disturbed in our mind, by that or any other hope;—and, if I mistake not, the very same thing is signified in our text, where it is said:

Revelation 3

¹¹ Hold fast that you have...

...as in that Epistle:

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁵ Stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

The notion that the Apostle in that place put off the day of the Lord to a distance, is favored by the words supplied by our translators in the next verse, which, being literally rendered, is as follows:

2 Thessalonians 2

³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

Then follows a discourse concerning the manifestation of the wicked or lawless one, which is continued down to the 13th verse; when he again resumes the thread of his subject, which is, to establish the minds and confirm the good order of this Church, which had been somewhat disturbed by Satan taking advantage of the Apostle's own Epistle, and his declaration therein of the instant coming of the Lord.

Wherefore this digression concerning the man of sin, occupying the eleven intervening verses, is introduced, is a question of which every one may give the best account he can. But whatever account may be given thereof does not prejudice the single object of the Apostle, to establish the minds of the believers in the Lord's coming, and to redeem them from the heat and rage of violent excitation, to the calm and steady mood of patience.

Our translators manifestly thought that this digression to the subject of the man of sin was introduced to postpone and put off the coming of the Lord; which doubtless it is prior thereto, as is distinctly declared in verse 8, where it is said that...

2 Thessalonians 2

⁸ ...the Lord shall consume [him] with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy [him] with the brightness of his coming.

But my impression is, that, while this is true, it was not the object of the Apostle to teach it by this digression, but rather to point out to the Church the fertile source and the fearful consummation of those seductions with which they, as well as all the other Churches, had been tried.

Having taken up the subject of those agitations and deceptions, he prosecutes it to the end, and shows to what a climax of wickedness they shall come, and with what a fearful catastrophe of instant destruction they shall be overthrown in the day of the Lord's appearing.

This I believe to be the main purpose of that digression; which contains very much information concerning the man of sin, well worthy of large discourse, but only to be glanced at in this place. Teaching us, that there is a mystery of iniquity, as well as a mystery of godliness, working in the world, concerning which the Apostle was wont to instruct the Churches, that they might be well guarded against it;—that there was also a power, or a person (for it is both in the masculine and neuter gender), letting, or hindering it from producing the man of sin: but, so soon as this hindrance should be taken out of the way, then should the wicked one be revealed, with prodigious powers of deception and delusion, which God should promote by blinding the eyes and hardening the hearts of men to believe a lie.

When by these means he has gathered a great head to himself, and has exalted himself into the place of God, in God's

own temple, Christ shall by His own personal appearance utterly consume him with flaming fire, together with all his followers:

2 Thessalonians 1

⁹ Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

¹⁰ When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

By this wonderful discovery of the work which Satan was working, and about to consummate, in the Church, the Apostle instructs the Thessalonians to be steadfast and immovable in the doctrines he had laid down to them, and to withdraw themselves from all those who sought to do otherwise.

But with all this discourse, he never hints that the Lord's coming was far off, or that these things were to take a long time of developing themselves. On the other hand, he declares that the mystery of iniquity was already working, and gives no intimation, because I believe he had no revelation, how long it was to work on before it should bring forth the man of sin.

Nor, when that revelation was fully given to the Apostle John, in the *Apocalypse*, with all its circumstances of times and seasons, is it used to postpone the time, or to deaden the expectation of the Lord's coming, but the very reverse.

And, finally, in answer to the objection:

“But were the Prophets and the Apostles thus deceived, seeing it did not quickly come?”

I refer to what I have set forth in the First Lecture², and in various other parts of these Lectures. Did God keep up a constant expectation by a false representation? No; but He de-

² *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 1, Chapter: “The Substance and Method of the Book”, p. 63-74.

sired to keep up a continual desire after that which, if it had been eagerly desired, would long ere this have come to pass.

Prophecy is not fatalism, but the discovery of God's mind and purpose after such a sort, as that it may be God's instrument, in working upon men's will, to will and to do of His good pleasure.

God wished to bind up every man's hope, and desire of blessedness, in the coming of Christ; which therefore since Enoch's time He presented in such wise, as that every man since Enoch's time ought to have been wrapped up in it, entirely possessed with it, and to have prayed for it continually, as the only remedy of this world's ills. Which if men had done, verily long ere this it would have come to pass; which men neglecting to do, and God pitying their wickedness, and earnestly wishing them to repent, behold it has been postponed even until now.

And what though it should be postponed much longer? I care not: I know what my duty is, and I will endeavor to do it; I know what my God's commandment is, and I will endeavor to observe it. Neither by my own calculations, nor by the calculations of all men, will I be prevented from desiring my Lord continually, and expecting Him daily, even as I ever seek to do; and when He says, "Behold, I come quickly," my soul, do you make answer, "Even so; come quickly, Lord Jesus."

Holding Fast

This inquiry has revealed a deeper reason than we have yet observed, for connecting the coming of the Lord with the duty of "holding fast," and "keeping what we have;" a connection in which we have seen it occur in every one of the last three epistles.

Not only, in general, does it give to the Church her proper place, of the steward and depository of a certain gift, of which she should make merchandise, and be able to render a good

account when the householder returns; but, in particular, it warns her, that towards the time of His coming, and immediately thereupon, there should be a great trial of her faithfulness and steadfastness; in the anticipation of which these repeated injunctions to hold fast are graciously given.

The first and third epistles contain, indeed, threatenings that He would come against them for correction if they did not repent, but no notices of His second advent to take an account of the stewardship of His Churches; as if during the first and third periods the peril of the Church was not to abandon, but to corrupt the things which He had entrusted to her charge.

But as the end draws nigh, and the time of reckoning comes, He is ever calling upon His servants to hold fast their gift, and be ready to present Him His own with usury. And what need there was for such frequent and urgent remonstrances with her is made apparent by the state in which the Church is found in the Laodicean period...

Revelation 3

¹⁷ ...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

These Philadelphians gave heed, and were ready to enter in with Him. But the rest, regardless of His admonitions, and hardening their hearts more and more, in indifference to His coming and their own responsibility, and being altogether content with things as they are, come into that Laodicean condition which the Lord hardly endures.

But, besides this, the general scope of these merciful solicitations, I perceive another use of a more particular kind, which shall benefit us who believe that the Lord is to come again, and ought ever to be expected and desired by His people.

When the Church shall be occupied as she ought to be, with hungering after her Lord, and desiring eagerly to see one of

the days of the Son of Man, it shall doubtless come to pass that Satan, working through the flesh, shall renew some of those temptations by which, in the days of the Apostles, he assailed the Thessalonian and other Churches.

Not only will he attempt to sensualize the hope, and bring in Cerinthian grossness, and to Judaize the hope with earthly ambitions; but likewise to agitate and trouble the minds of believers with vain fears and alarms, and get them to give up the diligent observance of the ordinances of the Church, and even of civil life:

- Instead of working with their hands, they will be craving to have all things in common;
- Instead of minding their callings, they will be led away to become busy-bodies;
- Instead of being in subjection to the powers that be, they will be tried with seditious doctrines concerning the duties and obligations of Christian kings; and
- Instead of love and dutifulness to the Church, they will be stirred up to schism and revolt, by her indifference to the truth and severities against themselves:

Being thus released from the restraints of religion, and the daily, hourly obligations of life; and withal being forsaken of the Spirit, whose ordinances they had forsaken; behold, false Christs will arise, and false prophets, showing signs and wonders, by whom those that are gaping after novelties, and refusing to stand in the old ways, will be seduced into all manner of evil, whereby the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

The Lord in His providence has made me acquainted with instances of this kind; and I perceive the leaven at present working in various quarters: and in the cases where I have had to meet it I have found it irresistibly strong, and have seen too many pass irrevocably, so far as man can see, into the depths of error.

Wherefore I am the more zealous in exhorting all, with whom my word has any power, to search and examine and prove themselves, and to observe the first workings of the evil spirit, and to repent, and confess their sins, and return to the way of truth and holiness.

The wine of the kingdom is strong and intoxicating, unless discreetly administered and wisely used. God has given to us, not only the spirit of power and of love, but also the spirit of a sound mind; and if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives liberally and upbraids not.

James 3

¹⁷ But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

Oh that my brethren and companions, in the patience of Christ, would be careful to try themselves often by this Divine test of heavenly wisdom, and bring themselves into the docility and obedience of little children! not merely calling Christ Lord, and maintaining His lordship against the worshipers of the people, but doing His commandments, and patiently abiding in all His ordinances; holding fast what we have till He come. And, above all things, not suffering themselves to be shaken out of their mind, or to be agitated in any way, by any spirit, word, or epistle, though of Paul himself, the learned doctor of the Gentiles.

The Danger of Forms and Ceremonies

While I thus lay out to my dear brethren the results of dear-bought experience—experience bought by the loss of spiritual children, and the declension of fellow-laborers from the truth, through the rash and heady temper of the times—and exhort all men to keep the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; I cannot leave this topic without touching a little upon the opposite extreme, of base servility and prostrate homage before the forms and ceremonies of the Church,

under which I see others bowing their faces down unto the earth.

The doctrine of this matter I have already opened, when treating of the style of our High Priest contained in the word “true,” or “real,” as opposed to hypocritical and servile; but I may be allowed to say a word upon the practical form which I perceive it assuming, and the discipline to which it ought to be submitted.

It begins by seeking to sanctify ceremonies into obligations: whereas they have their force only as expedient, and not as commanded things; for good and comely order, not as terms of communion; and though authorized by the Church, not on that account to be classed with the commandments of the Head of the Church.

This is not good, but bad Churchmanship, because the Church herself presents them to us in no higher character. But alas! how have I seen the narrow spirit of bigotry exalting them into very narrow essential acts of service!

From this it proceeds to exaggerate, and wholly to misapply, the matter of legal establishment: as if that conferred some new dignity upon the Church, in virtue of which she might glorify and exalt herself; whereas it is a great temptation, in the midst of which she should seek to walk meekly: and an obligation, of which she should seek to discharge her conscience solemnly, as in the sight of God.

And along with this, the Church established in a particular kingdom frequently adopts the national jealousies and quarrels of that kingdom: whereas the unity of the Church in all places is intended, among other good effects, for that of preventing wars and promoting peace.

To add to this, I perceive a most erroneous view concerning Baptism beginning to be propagated, as if it introduced us to one particular fellowship of Christians, as the Church of Scot-

land, whereto it bound us in all circumstances to adhere, instead of joining us to the body of Christ, and making us free of the ordinances of the Church, wherever and by whomsoever administered, so they be lawfully called thereto.

Besides these, I perceive many other tendencies towards a servile and schismatical spirit within the Church itself, which, as I have been instrumental in reviving the true doctrine of the Church in these days, I am bound by all means to withstand, as a very evil perversion of it.

If I, in my zeal for the ordinances of the Church of Scotland, and the greater personal liberty of her members, were to refuse my ear to the written sermons and liturgical services and sacramental forms of the Church of England; if I were to refuse the consolation and nourishment of her breast for these peculiarities of her attire, I were sinning, like a fool or a babe who is unable to discriminate, and would be punished for my folly and childishness.

As a baptized man, I am at liberty to hold communion with any Church which stands in the truth, nor is it in such entangling of the spirit to outward forms or ceremonies that we show our zeal for the ordinances of Christ, or hold fast the things which He has committed to our charge till He come again.

If men will not consider these things betimes, they will be taken at unawares, and most likely will suffer loss; for I see the day not far distant when the State may intermeddle with the sacred things of the Church, and when the Church herself may cast out her most faithful children. And what then are they to do, if till then they have been binding themselves up in the false and base doctrine of conformity, and obedience to the canons of the Church, be they what they may?

They will be silenced, they will be excommunicated, and deprived of all loving fellowship with the brethren. And what then, if they be regarding that visible community as the infal-

lible oracle of the living God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Personal Responsibility

But if they have been carrying everything to the law and the testimony; proving all things, and holding fast that which is good; hearing the infallible voice of the Holy Ghost answering to the word of truth, and not answering to any lie: if they have been regarding the Church as the ruler of the expedient, as well as the depository of the true, and ever liable to the temptation of confounding the one with the other: then such events as I believe to be in the womb of Providence, will not unnerve the resources of a Christian, or silence his voice, or destroy his fellowship, but, contrariwise, will make him more zealous and bold and persevering in promulgating and maintaining that truth of God, for which he is counted worthy to suffer reproach from the spirit of Babylon the Great.

I not only believe in the infallibility of the Church of Christ, but I believe in the infallibility of every member of it, because he is inhabited and wrought in by the Holy Ghost; and that every baptized man is ever responsible, both for spotless holiness and for infallible truth. And I abhor the claims of the Pope, and General Councils, and the Roman Church, not because they claimed infallibility, but because they claimed it to the exclusion of the other members and Churches of Christ.

The truth of God is one, and not many, is unchangeable, is indestructible; and we have that anointing of truth from the Holy One, which knows all things, and have perfect knowledge of what is a lie.

Every member of Christ is responsible for the keeping of this treasure, and not another responsible for him; and, therefore, whosoever denies the right of the Holy Ghost to testify the truth in every member of Christ, let him be anathema; and whosoever surrenders this into the hand of any man, or body of men, be they called Apostles (John wrote to them because

they knew the truth), be they called Reformers, be they called Evangelical Ministers, be they called Convocation, or General Assembly, or Pope, or General Council, or what you please, that man is making himself a beast, betraying his obligation to God and to Christ, resisting the Holy Ghost, and practically denying Him; and he is a bondsman, who has sold himself to be a bondsman, because he hates to exercise the immunities of a freeman.

I write these things for many men and many minds, and therefore I sow my seed widely, beside all waters.

Let No Man Take Your Crown

Revelation 3

¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which you have, that no man take your crown.

Having discoursed abundantly, in our Lecture upon the Church of Sardis, concerning the crown of life there promised by the Spirit to those who should overcome, I might dispense with further discourse concerning it in this place, did I not feel loathe to pass any opportunity of descanting on themes so rich and excellent. There is such a goodness about the words which our Lord gives in this book, that my mind can never have enough of them.

This crown the Philadelphian bishop is represented as actually possessing, according to the hymn of the Church in the mouth of John:

Revelation 5

¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Yet, though now held as by right, in virtue of the anointing with water and the Spirit, it is not to be received into possession until that day when Christ shall appear, according to the declaration of the Apostle:

2 Timothy 4

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

We are, like David, anointed, but not yet come to our kingdom; like Christ, baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and named sons of God, yet not manifested as such till we attain unto the resurrection from the dead; and the intervening while, we are tried by God, in the midst of all trials and persecutions and most beggarly experiences, in order to prove whether we can preserve the soul and temper of royal dignity and honor in the midst of all mean and base predicaments.

He uses us to teach kings, and potentates, and principalities, and powers, the lesson of casting their crowns perpetually at the feet of Christ, who all His life long laid His own at the feet of God, nor would wear it until He had first performed for His Father some work and service worthy to be rewarded with a crown and scepter and heavenly throne.

So also we, being called to royal estate, desire not the instant off-putting of those beggarly robes, and the putting on of our royal attire, but, gathering to ourselves the whole armor of God, we go forth into the wars against the devil, the world, and the flesh, preferring to have that as a reward which God would give us as a grace.

God gives it to us of grace; in our unconscious childhood He puts the honor upon us. But we, drinking into the Spirit of our Father, would first fulfill the same function of grace before entering upon our heavenly government. Therefore, most like unto the knights-errant of old, without anything to give save the blessings of mercy and of goodness, we wander over the desolate world, the scene of plunder and rapine, and all injus-

tice, and labor continually in the work of redressing the injured from the hands of the wicked, and redeeming the captives from their oppressors.

It is a low view of the Christian calling to desire to die; ours it is to desire to live for God's sake, in order to prove that we have a sense of God's love, and for God's sake are willing to endure and to undergo labors infinite. This was the worthiness of Christ,

- That, though rich, for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich;
- That, though a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;
- And, though the Son of God, was made man, in all things like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

And so we, being destined for the fellowship of His Melchizedek priesthood, must first follow his footsteps into death, to conquer death, into all His sufferings, to be able to sympathize with those over whom we shall be ordained priests, and care for those over whom we shall be ordained kings.

Our Father would first prove our affiliation to Himself, and Christ would first prove our oneness of spirit with Him, and we would first prove our willingness to part with all earthly good for them, before we are revealed in our glory and our majesty; that, before taking our crowns, we might be able to say, with Paul:

2 Timothy 4

⁶ For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

⁷ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.

It is no easy matter to win this crown, and I believe that far

more do lose it than keep it: wherefore it is said in this book, that only the martyrs are crowned and reign with Christ; signifying, as I take it, that this is a dignity which, though free to all baptized men and sealed upon them, few live to enjoy; the greater part perishing in their sins, drowned in their worldly lusts, or following after the pride and falling into the snare of Satan.

God, to prevent this, exhibits that prince and potentate, with all that followed him, reserved for judgment and perdition, thus to guard us against spiritual pride, and to teach us that only the meek should inherit the kingdom.

And in Adam's fate, from lordship of the world to become the food of worms, He exhibits the peril of outward temptations; and by Christ's attaining to the sovereignty through the denial of the devil, the world and the flesh, God teaches us through what tribulation we are to enter into the kingdom. Few care to endure these, and so they fall short of the grace given to them.

The blessed Lord, to guard His faithful servant of the Philadelphian Church against such dishonor, commands him to hold fast what he had, that no one might take his crown. The language is altogether very remarkable, and indicates a desperate temptation and obstinate conflict; where nothing less was in controversy than his crown, for which kings contend only in the last extremity.

And Christ, perceiving His servant hard pressed in the battle, calls aloud:

“Keep your ground, hold fast your position, stand well to your arms, and maintain what you have; for I am close at hand, I am hasting to your help, I come quickly.”

He is like to be overpowered; the enemy is come in like a flood; he and his faithful band of brothers in the name of the Lord lift up a banner against him: and the Lord, to give them heart, calls out to them by His name of Holy and True to keep

their hold of the truth and contend earnestly, for it would not be long till He would come to their help.

And I believe it will even be found to be, as it was in that last great battle wherein we overthrew the leader of the infidel host. All day long our men stood to their position, and kept their ground undaunted and unshaken, nor cared much to act offensively being in a continual expectation of effectual help, which being arrived towards the fall of night, they then rushed on with all their valor and overwhelmed the enemy in one fell blow.

So shall it be with us who are holy and true and brave enough to stand in the room of this faithful Church. The battle which has begun will surely thicken upon us more and more. It will not slack. We shall be sorely and more sorely pressed; and nothing but staunch and unflinching valor, hand to hand and foot to foot, will avail us or Him whom we serve.

Weary shall the conflict be, and we should be utterly overthrown but for the cheering word, "He comes! He comes!" ever and anon thrilling along our line. The patience of this hope will stand us good.

And when the enemy brings up his last attack thinking to overthrow us, he shall himself be overthrown, and we shall enter into our royal state, and inherit the kingdom prepared for us before the foundation of the world,—a kingdom now to be enjoyed, and never to be contended for again. Let us endure hardness, then, as good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not suffer anyone to take our crown.

SUMMARY

Such are the instructions to the bishop of the Philadelphian Church, and to all and every one who will occupy his position. Whether we be historically placed at this day in his aspect and attitude, is a question of which I have laid out the grounds fully in divers places.

These may appear of various force to various minds; and I would not mar the Catholic instruction contained in this glorious epistle by requiring assent to this or any other hypothesis, however conclusive the arguments for it may appear to myself. Therefore, leaving that question and all other questionable matters, let me endeavor to sum up the Catholic doctrine contained in these instructions.

- Whoever will believe that Jesus is the Holy One and the True; that is, that He was truly what He seemed to be, a mortal man in our fallen estate:

Isaiah 53

³ ...a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,
yet...

Ephesians 5

²⁷ ...holy, without blemish and without spot,

...without any taint of sin, original or actual, though laden with the very nature of the greatest sinner and of all sinners of mankind;

- Whosoever looking at Him as a sincere and true man, verily affected with all which the Holy Ghost declares Him in the Psalms and other Scriptures to have been affected withal;
- Whosoever will believe likewise that He has the key of David to unlock all the words which the royal Psalmist uttered, and to set open the portals of that kingdom over which He ruled, which was the type of the David to come;
- Whosoever will peruse David's Psalms with Christ as the key to them, and David's sufferings and glory with Christ as the key to them, and David's prophetic destiny after the Jews are restored and peaceably settled in their own land;
- Whosoever, in one word, will receive Christ in the full and fair signification of these terms, "I am the Holy and

the True, who has the key of David, who opens and no man shuts, who shuts and no man opens,” that man shall enter into the inheritance of all the blessings promised in this life to the bishop of the Philadelphian Church.

But first, he shall be tried with direful attempts of Satan and wicked men to get him to forgo his faith in Christ’s word, and to deny his confession of Christ’s name. They will tax him with all manner of errors and heresies; they will tempt him with all manner of subterfuges, and expedients, and substitutes for the truth. They shall try him with:

- the Marcionite heresy, “But it was not flesh like ours;”
- the Sabellian heresy, “But then it was God seeming to act as a man, but prevented from feeling as we would;”
- the Evangelical heresy, “But it was surely Adam’s temptation, and not ours, that He went through;”
- the Bourignian heresy, “But there was a double manhood,—one like us proved, and like us proving not only the temptation but also the turmoil of sin, and another far refined and sublimated above all such experiences into the fellowship of the Godhead.”

In one word, there is not a single temptation with which he will not be tried, from within or from without, in order to get him to renounce the name of Christ, “the Holy and the True, who has the key of David.”

But if he stand fast and hold it firm, and hold it in righteousness, then it will come to pass that a very wide door of knowledge and of power will be opened to him through which he may enter in, and, if he be a minister, may lead his flock along with him. His strength outwardly may be ever so little, the mighty God will stand his supporter, and no one shall be able to withstand him. Through the confessing and preaching of Christ’s holiness, truth, and power, as King of the Jews, he shall go on and prosper upon the earth, and in-

herit a crown of glory which fades not away.

And not only so, but he shall receive the victory over those who deny the name of Christ, over all the synagogue of Satan upon the face of the earth. The truth in his life shall prevail over the falsehood in theirs, and the humility and meekness of his carriage shall prevail over the pride and vain-glory of theirs.

Christ shall pour out upon him such perpetual proofs of His love, and make such manifest interferences in his behalf, he shall go on with so much prosperity; or if in adversity, he shall be attended with such patience and self-possession, as that his very enemies shall be forced to confess:

“Truly this is a good man—truly he is beloved of God.”

The Head of the Church takes Himself solemnly to pledge that He will not only give him an open door, which all the power of the enemy shall not be able to shut, but accumulate upon his head such tokens of His loving-kindness, that his very enemies themselves shall become convinced upon seeing the signs of a truly godly man wrought in him. And they who had denied Christ and bowed to Satan will, by his meek and holy and true conversation which they behold, give glory to God, and come and worship the God and Savior whom he serves in the midst of his flock before his feet.

Let this comfort every faithful minister who is declaring the truth in the midst of wickedness and persecution, in the face of power and opposition; let him go on patiently, and assure himself of the victory.

But besides this, Christ gives him assurance that when the day of trial and temptation comes he shall be preserved from it, as Lot was in the midst of Sodom.

Psalm 34

¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

There is in the word of God not only the promise, or I would say the privilege of suffering, but likewise of preservation under it and deliverance out of it, as is declared in *Psalm* 34 and 91. The inheritance of all these promises is freely given to every faithful and bold, humble and meek, minister of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, who ought to appropriate not only the trials but also the deliverances out of them to himself.

And finally, He has given to him the assurance of a heavenly crown, which, if he abide in the same steadfastness, no one shall be able to take from him.

Such are the excellent promises to the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, and likewise to the flocks of all faithful ministers. For be it ever observed and borne in mind, that as the minister is, so is the flock; as the one is entreated, so is the other. Which makes it a matter of very serious concernment to those who have the power of making a choice, what flock of Christ they join themselves to, and under whose banner they fight for the Lord of Hosts.

A great subject of doctrine opens itself here, which we cannot overtake now, but with which we will introduce the next subject. Meanwhile let every member of the flock of every faithful minister, who, by reverence of his office and obedience of his word seals to the union established by Christ between them, be assured that the fellowship of all these blessings promised to his minister will come also unto him.

This brings us naturally to the third head of our subject, which is...

THE SPIRIT'S PROMISE

WE have already observed, that the good Shepherd, in speaking to the angel, speaks not to him alone, but to the Church standing in him their head, as we all do stand together in Christ our common Head.

And we now observe, that when the Spirit takes up the word unto the Churches, He speaks to the angels as well as to the rest. For no Church ordinance makes void the personal responsibility, while it preserves the unity of many persons in one substance, which is Christ.

The distinction conferred for the time upon the angel, by his having a whole Church represented, and approved or censured in himself, is immediately, lest he should conceive himself something, destroyed by his being taken in along with the community of His Church in the exhortation of the Holy Ghost.

And again, lest any Church from the specialty of its charge might presume thereupon, and exalt its head among the rest, or be affected with some other separative mood, behold it is gathered by the Spirit into the same class, and exhorted in the same style, with all the other Churches.

And finally, lest the one holy Catholic Church should at any time imagine herself to be something, or think of herself more highly than she ought to think, and take on unsocial humors and uncharitable affections towards the rest of mankind, behold, all the Churches are classed and addressed, along with the whole human family, as no better and no worthier than every one "who has an ear to hear."

So very careful is the great Parent and Preserver of order to prevent the necessary subordination in His Church and in His world from engendering uncharitable dispositions and leading to divisive courses.

ABOUT CHURCH ORDER

Nevertheless, while it is true that all ordinances and arrangements of God's wisdom are so managed as to teach the co-equality and co-essentiality of every man with every other man, that no man may boast or usurp it over his brother, and that all may know, whatever be their place and office, that they are equally and alike responsible for all their personal actings, we should also be more careful to observe these various ordinances and arrangements of our Head and Lord, and to frame our walk and conversation conformable thereto, in the full assurance that in no way, save by the obedience of Christ's commandment, can we manifest our love or inherit His blessing.

Now, because not all Asia Minor, nor yet all the province of Asia in which these towns and cities lay, nor the Churches scattered up and down the country, but simply the Churches in these seven towns are addressed, and that without one hint of dependence or subordination, the one to the other, each in itself as a complete and entire Church, with its angel and its people, the elders and the deacons being included in the angel; we who claim the office and dignity of the angel,—and I for one do claim it unto myself, and so I think ought every dispenser of word and ordinance,—with the people who are gathered by the chief Shepherd into one flock, ought ever to bear in mind that we together do constitute a complete and entire Church within ourselves, which gains no new prerogative by being connected with another, neither loses any by being separated from others.

The connection of one such entire Church with another is for many reasons desirable; and wherever the spirit of love is, there will be an unquenchable desire for union, first with every Church, and then with every creature under heaven. But this confederacy and communion, be it Episcopal or Presbyterial, adds nothing to, neither detracts anything from, the sepa-

rate integrity of each Church within itself.

When such communions came to be established, as of the several sees of England into one Church, called the Church of England, or of the several Culdee Colleges of Presbyters (for we had no bishop or bishop's see till the tenth century) into one Church, called the Church of Scotland, there were certain new rules and compacts for the right administration of the whole body. But no one of these rules and obligations can destroy the integrity of the several and separate Churches, which is indefeasible, being by Divine right constituted, if our argument for these epistles be a correct one.

The confession of faith and canons of discipline, which they may adopt, for putting one common order into their Churches, do not affect the constitution of the Churches apart, and have nothing to do with it, save to protect it with jealousy; as the constitution of a free state protects the personal liberty of all the subjects of the same. And if these bands should come, by the stress of evil or the dissolution of the component parts of the state to be broken up, the integrity of each Church stands just where it did before, for it cannot by any accident be broken up.

Also when the Churches of Christ in England or in Scotland have received a new band of union from the establishment, by authority of the king to teach all his people the principles of Christian doctrine, and order them according to wholesome discipline; there arise new obligations to the state, new immunities, honors, and preferments.

But the original platform of separate Churches under their several angels is not thereby altered one iota; and in the event of the powers that be rising up against us, and stripping us of all exterior advantages, we are in no worse case than at the first, when our whole existence stood in groups of men gathered here and there, under their several angels or ministers of the word, with councils of elders and deacons, and other of-

fice-bearers, if need should be.

These observations are most important to be borne in mind, for many reasons. First, because at this time I perceive the great and noble confederacies of Churches, called by the names of the Churches of Scotland and of England, in peril of being broken up, by many causes: such as the disaffection of the people, the weakness of love, the bond of all union, within themselves, the unsoundness of doctrine breaking out into persecution of the truth, and the general stirring everywhere for the dissolution or renovation of things established.

And I perceive, in the trials which are about to ensue, that the Church of Christ will be preserved in those little fraternities, in those obscure Churches, and unseen recesses, in which it arose at first in the various parts of the Roman empire, and in which it was propagated abroad by the labors of single persecuted converts; who planted down a banner for the truth, around which men gathered, and grew together into a Church, by the force of charity and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, appointing each his place in the body.

I say and affirm, that this was the way in which the Church was planted; and I prophesy, that this is the way in which the Church is now to be preserved. Thus also the Church extricated itself from the lifeless and corrupt mass of the Papacy in our Scotland, by little knots and bands of believers, arising here and there throughout the land to justify the preaching of the Gospel; and thus I believe the Church will again extricate herself from these masses of dead formality, not to say active infidelity, which the Church of England and the Church of Scotland are hastening to produce.

It will come again to be the Church in this man and in that man's house, gathered together by that charity which rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth, and driven forth, because of their greater holiness, from the confederacy of Babylonish wickedness.

If such a state of things be near to come, be just arising, it is high time that the faithful should be withdrawing their affections from the state and pomp of that goodly fabric, which the established Churches have come to, and casting their looks upon that humble, hearty, and more goodly state of insignificance and contempt from which these ecclesiastical polities arose.

My own study and understanding of the doctrine laid down a year ago, in my fourth Lecture³, helped and guided by the singular blessing of God's providence, enabled me and my flock, without loss of any kind, to take our place as a primitive Church, when cast out for the truth's sake, from one of those associations of the Churches which had been formed in the city of our habitation. And so we stand in our integrity unbroken, not a fractional part of a Church, but a Church all-competent under our Head, and with His Spirit, for the knowledge of all truth, and the observance of all holiness; at the same time feeling all brotherly love to all saints, and especially to all the sister Churches, and desiring by all means to walk in the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.

Too soon may it be necessary for others to suffer the like deprivation of brotherly communion. Let them be prepared for it, that they may not be confounded when it comes, but may the rather rejoice because they are counted worthy to suffer for Christ's sake.

The other reason, and the chief one, for which I introduce this part of my subject with these remarks, is to give private Christians rest upon a question which is oft brought to me by tender consciences: Whether it be not schismatical for a man in the country to leave his parish church for another, or in the towns to make choice of any Church, whether it be of the English, Scottish, German, French, or Moravian brotherhoods.

³ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 4, Chapter: "Christ's First Designation", p. 5-21.

The answer to this question, which I was wont to give, was, that:

“Every person should abide where Providence had placed him, and be exercised with the plenty or the famine, with the bread or with the poison, which Providence had there appointed.”

And I was wont to say:

“Remember the doctrine of the communion of the saints, and enjoy the knowledge that you are a member of Christ’s Body, and will be a sharer of whatever health and strength is circulating through the veins thereof.”

I used sometimes to add:

“Remember you are not a member of that parish church, but of the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland, and will be served with a portion of that greater plenty, which distant parishes may enjoy through the communion of the saints, while they are straitened with some of your poverty, thus bearing one another’s burdens.”

In this advice, which I have given many a time, there was much sound truth and present consolation. All that respects the communion of saints cannot be too fully acted upon, as yielding the only consolation which is within the reach of most Christians, scattered over the dark parishes, yea, and dark regions of this island. And such persons ought to put the ordinance-Head to proof, and make Him show how much larger He is than His ordinance where it is perverted, and how little the ordinance depends upon him that administers it where it is rightly administered.

But at the same time I feel that the counsel lacks an element, in order to be complete; which is, That the flock is visited for the minister’s sake, and he for theirs; and to whomsoever we join ourselves, it is with the assurance of taking part and lot with them as brethren.

Now as no one ought to plant himself on a barren spot of

ground, if a fertile one be at hand; in an unhealthy neighborhood, when he might as well pitch upon a healthy one; in a city infected with the plague, rather than a city free from it; so neither will a wise, discreet, and provident man who desires his own well-being, and apprehends Christ's hand in the treatment of the Churches, join himself to one, whose doctrine is shallow and meager, their devotion cold and heartless, their discipline loose and irregular, their communion worldly and fashionable, if he can make himself the member of another Church where other conditions of an opposite kind exist, the doctrine full and free, the Church ordered after a godly sort, and the brethren walking in love one to another, and abounding in charity towards all men.

Where a liberty of making this choice is afforded, it ought to be made between all Churches of the same communion, and of any other communion which we believe to be true Churches, following no schismatical spirit, and professing no untrue doctrine.

A man, as we have had occasion already in this Lecture to observe, is not baptized into any particular Church, or confederacy of Churches, but into the Church of Christ. And therefore nothing hinders his passing over to the communion of a sister Church, if he sees the advantages, or have felt the advantages, set forth above. I do not say that a man ought, on slight grounds, to remove himself from any flock where Providence has placed him, until he begins clearly to see the truth and the ordinances slighted or contravened.

So then may he be sure that judgment is near at hand; it may be of lukewarmness, or of sickness and death, or of heresy, or of some other sort, which there is no avoiding but by a removal. And even then, he should rather be persecuted away for his protestation against the inroad of error, than separate himself; although it be really no separation, but the exercise of your natural indefeasible right to go and provide for

your spiritual as for your temporal well-being.

This doctrine ought to have been embodied in the counsel given above; and then, in the case of towns and cities, it would have brought out a different result, opening to men the privilege, and laying upon them the obligation, of choosing a home for their souls, with what liberty and care they would for their bodies.

I know this liberty, which I perceive that we have in Christ, may lead in some cases to an unsettled spirit: but it ought not; for the thing it permits is not shifting about, but choosing a place of settlement, with due attention to the laws of spiritual health which Christ has established, and the discipline which He exercises over His Churches.

So that a Church be suffering for righteousness' sake, we ought to desire its fellowship; so that it is prospering apparently because of the indulgence of the people, that ought to be our reason for avoiding it. We ought to look to see where truth and love, where faith and hope are most abundantly diffused, and cast in our lot there, and in such company, and for such rewards, take the spoiling of our goods, yea, and death itself, with all contentment.

Besides this defect, there is a slight inaccuracy in the counsel rendered above, arising from my mind being taken, as almost all are, with the political rather than the ecclesiastical unity of the Church; from thinking that there is something divine, whereas there is nothing more than human, in the name Church of Scotland and the name Church of England. These are very revered names, historically and politically considered; they have a great legacy of prayers, and no small treasure of martyrs' blood; and they have done the state of Britain great service, and in the old as in the present time have helped no little to propagate the Gospel in foreign parts.

Witness the labors of the Culdees of Scotland over half of England, over Burgundy, Swabia, Bavaria, Switzerland, and

part of Lombardy; besides their valiant resistance of the Papacy, in all times and at all hands. Put these acts God looks upon as the acts of the Churches then planted under the several angels according to Christ's ordinance; not as the act of the confederation. For never, till in these motley times, did the Church proceed with her work of propagating the Gospel by societies and committees, and large outfittings. This used to be appropriated in former times to the Pope and the Propaganda.

The Churches in England and Scotland were wont to proceed by the single efforts of holy and devoted men, without any support but that of God's providence and grace. It is therefore an erroneous supposition, that these works and labors of love, which, not as corporate bodies, but as individual persons, were wrought, should now be repaid to the corporation.

Nevertheless I believe that God, willing to make the best of everything established, though it have been only for expedient ends, and not rendered necessary by Divine ordinance, will do all He can for such institutions to keep them in good working. But they can only receive a certain ruder service, and when He pleases to send a finer and a fuller gift, they will, I fear, stand aloof and reject it.

But He will not therefore cease from His purpose of giving, but shower His gifts where they are received with welcome. And if the consequence should be the breaking up of the framework, and the falling down of things into their original parts, there is little or no loss sustained.

Still, however, as I said above, it is our part to reverence every form of love which we find existent, and not to violate it, but to maintain it while consistently with truth and love we can: and when we cannot, to press the better course of obeying God rather than man, and leave them to do their pleasure; bearing patiently to be put out of the synagogue, and to have our names cast out for the Lord's sake.

Let us beware, therefore, lest we make too much of those names Church of England and Church of Scotland. I fear we are making too much of them already, to the entire forgetting of that unity and completeness which every Church should feel and exemplify in itself.

I feel that the dignity which is perceived by God to lie in each Church under its angel, is transferred to one great structure of man's building; and, instead of having thousands of apostolic witnesses within the land, we have as it were but two.

And instead of growing warm with love and holiness, contemplating and pursuing the completeness of Christ in every Church, we are broken down and frittered away as if we were but a poor and helpless fragment in the one great whole, the Church of England or the Church of Scotland, which are wholes, not of God's making, but of man's making.

While the work of God's making, for exhibiting all the parts of a complete body, like the Corinthian Church, does in fact stand in every Church constituted like my own under an angel with the elders and deacons, not in a bishop's see or in a presbytery, which are ecclesiastical units expedient for order, but not necessary for life; of man's making, and not of God's.

I would have each flock to be prosecuting the completeness of the body of Christ within itself, and so I would be for raising up within the land as many witnesses for God and for Christ, as there are ordained ministers with flocks over which they are ordained.

The Question of Separation

While I thus clear the question of Churchmanship from great practical misconception, and restore the ministerial office, to its dignity, and the flock over which he ministers to its importance, as together set for an example of the complete manifestation of the Spirit, the due subordination of the mem-

bers of the Body to Christ the Head, and the full effect of the one inworking God, I would not have it to be understood that I am advocating a schismatical and sectarian spirit, or undervaluing the advantages of communion among the Churches of Christ; because the one of these I believe to be a mortal sin, the other to be the necessary condition of Christian charity.

I am but preparing the Church for another of those perilous conflicts with the rulers of the darkness of this world which I fear is beginning to arise. If the Church of Scotland should reject the truth of our Lord's flesh, God's universal love, or any other of the great truths for which she is now calling her faithful members into question, the brethren who cleave to the truth will be cast forth; and the question is, What are they to do? The same may happen in England also, though, from the learning and solidity of her Church, it does not seem to be so near at hand.

In such a case, the duty of the ejected ministers would be to preach as they did in the time of the Arian supremacy, and at the Reformation: as they did in the Church of England under the Commonwealth, and afterwards at the Restoration; as they did in Scotland at all times of the supremacy of prelacy. It is no new case.

But they should be careful to give no provocation to the ruling powers, lest they should drive them headlong into error; to establish no principle of secession or dissent, but simply to build up the Church of Christ in the land, and to call out witnesses in every city, who may patiently testify to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ, and wait for the Lord's coming.

The ministers should preach only the more zealously the truth as it is in Jesus: they should lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud, and spare not, like the prophets in the old time; but not by any means lead the people into any act of separation: they should purify their faith and love, and cast them back into the mixture to purify it; thus infusing fresh

life-blood into the veins of the Church.

If the Church should reject this, and cast them out as excommunicated persons, it is then their duty to call ministers, and form themselves into flocks, not as a sect, but as the true Church of God within the land, knowing and acknowledging no name but the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And in so doing they are following the example of the Lord and His Apostles, who did not separate from the Jewish Church, but were cast out, and did not separate others, but permitted them to worship in the temple and the synagogue, and to observe all the ordinances of Moses, until the temple was laid low, and with it all the glory and order of the Levitical institution, which lies a ruin, a ruin to remain, until He come whose right it is to build it up again.

It was not my intention to have gone into these details, but simply to have pointed out the connection which is established between: a minister and his people, and the one common discipline of good or evil, of reward or punishment, to which they are subjected, to the end that men might well consider with what congregation they cast in their lot, when they have the power of making a choice.

The anticipation of the perplexities with which we are about to be set around, has led me out further than I should have gone in the midst of a Lecture; and yet I can see a purpose of the Spirit in it, to instruct the Philadelphian sons of the Church, how they may preserve the love of the brethren, in the midst of those trials and persecutions which are about to come upon them; while they cease nothing, but are more earnest than others, in their testimony for the truth.

I feared lest the names Church of Scotland and Church of England might, from their venerable antiquity and many benefits, stun and stupefy the witnesses of the truth, should they come to be used against them, lest their voice might be silenced altogether, or they might flee into other lands. May the

Lord bless this short digression to the end of love and unity! And with this prayer I return again to the proper subject of lecture.

The promise of the Spirit to this Church, and therewith to all the Churches, and to every one who has an ear to hear, is as usual expressed in terms corresponding to the two other parts of the epistle; to wit, the superscription and the charge; as possessing the key of David, He has a right to open every door of David's house, and every gate of David's city.

1. And so He promises to the faithful, that they shall have their abode in the temple of His God, and in the New Jerusalem, the city of His God, which comes down out of heaven.
2. To these poor and weak brethren He promises the seal of His Father's name upon their forehead, that they may be delivered out of the midst of the judgments which are to come upon the earth.
3. And to these faithful and true disciples, who were not backward to enter into the door opened on earth, He opens the door of the temple in heaven, that they may enter in thereat, and forever glorify the Lord.
4. To those bold confessors who kept His word and had not denied His name, he promises the honor of many names; the name of His God, the name of the New Jerusalem, the city of His God, and His own new name.

But the peculiar adaptation of the promise to the circumstances of the Church, will more clearly appear as we proceed with the exposition of this most inclusive promise.

A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD

Revelation 3

¹² He that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven

from my God; and I will write upon Him my new name.

The two pillars in the temple were named, the one Jachin, that is, *He will establish*; the other Boaz, that is, *In it strength*: to sustain and strengthen, being their character and use. And the expression “to be pillars,” is applied by the Apostle Paul to the chief men of the Church of Jerusalem:

Galatians 2

⁹ ...James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars.

And in a certain Psalm, it is thus spoken of Christ:

Psalm 75

³ The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it.

And unto the Prophet Jeremiah it is thus spoken by the Lord

Jeremiah 1

¹⁸ Behold, I have made you this day a defensed city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land.

¹⁹ And they shall fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you: for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you.

These passages of Scripture serve to show us that the meaning conveyed by the word “pillar,” is support and steadfastness.

The Temple of God

But to the complete interpretation of the expression, it will be necessary to examine what is meant by “the temple of my God.” When Moses had charge given him to construct the tabernacle, it was in these words:

Hebrews 8

⁵ ...See you make all things according to the pattern shewn you in the mount.

For Moses and his house were only for a testimony of the Prophet like unto Moses and His house:

Hebrews 3

⁵ Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after: but Christ as a Son over His own house;

⁶ Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

The antitype of the tabernacle of Moses is therefore the Church, as it does at present exist, unfixed to place, wandering about and having no rest in the wilderness of the nations. This is clear from the passage just quoted out of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, as also from the whole contents of the 8th and 9th chapters.

But to me it is still more beautifully manifest from the Psalm, where Christ's ascension into heaven is compared to Moses going up to Mount Sinai:

Psalm 68

¹⁷ The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place.

And the end of His ascension into heaven is, in the verse following, declared to be for the very same end of building upon the earth a dwelling-place for God. Being literally rendered, it is:

“You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts in man, yea rebels also, for a dwelling-place of the Lord God.”

Which being interpreted by the *Epistle to the Ephesians*, in chapters 2 and 3, where it is quoted, yields this great truth, That Jesus having in His flesh destroyed the enmity between Jew and Gentile, and received the rebels and aliens as well as the children of promise for His gift:

Isaiah 49

⁶ It is a light thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation unto the ends of the earth,

...did with the Holy Ghost, which for this purpose He also received,

Acts 2

³³ Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear,

...proceed to build upon the rock of His Divinity, and the foundation-stone of His humanity, the spiritual temple, or rather tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, for “the habitation of God through the Spirit” (*Ephesians 2:22*); as it is written:

1 Peter 2

⁴ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

⁵ You also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

This work of building the tabernacle of witness out of frail furniture, Christ is carrying on since the day of His ascension into glory. He is making for God a place to dwell in; and in us verily God delights to dwell, and to will, and to speak, and to work by the Spirit in our spirits: but not yet in His visible glory, which is still to come, and shall make for itself a visible habitation.

At present, in our flesh dwells no good thing, in our spirit dwells the very presence and power of God; who tries conclusions against Satan and the world in our flesh, and prevails against them. Our flesh is thereby taken out of the hands of sin, to be hereafter taken out of the hands of death; made a

servant of righteousness, presented a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, and therefore is called the temple of the Holy Ghost:

1 Corinthians 6

¹⁹ Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?

But inasmuch as the body is still under the bondage of death, and waits for redemption in the day of the resurrection, it is not yet fit for being built into the visible and manifest temple of the living God.

And herein consists, if I mistake not, the difference between the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon, that the former represents the present state of the Church, unfixed and unsettled, and of frail materials composed; the latter, the future state of the Church, as it shall be after the resurrection, fixed and glorious forever. The former is the state of one overcoming, and the latter is the reward of one who has overcome; if we be faithful with parts of the tabernacle, we shall be built into the temple of the living God.

This, I think, is the true distinction between the tabernacle and the temple, when a distinction is intended; but because they agreed essentially in their design, which was to be the dwelling-place of God, they are often used indiscriminately, the one for the other. For example, the new Jerusalem is called:

Revelation 21

³ ...the tabernacle of God.

And, on the other hand, the present state of the Church is called:

Revelation 11

¹ ...the temple of God.

Temple Service

The question now arises, whether it be the tabernacle, or the temple state of the Church, that is intended in the promise before us. This I think is fixed by the words:

Revelation 3

¹² ...and he shall no more go out.

Which derive their interpretation from a passage in *Revelation* 7:15; where, in the same connection as our text, that is, in connection with the great tribulation, the same as the hour of temptation, it is said of those who come forth out of it white and clean:

Revelation 7

¹⁵ Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He that sits on the throne shall dwell among them.

This service by night and by day in the temple of God, is, I conceive, in substance the same with the expression:

Revelation 3

¹² ...he shall go no more out.

And the meaning in both places is, that the life of the saints shall be one of continual worship in the temple, and enjoyment of the presence, of God; whereof the blessedness has been ever looked forward to by the saints with the greatest delight:

Psalm 84

¹ How amiable are Your tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!

² My soul longs, yea, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God.

⁴ Blessed are they that dwell in Your house; they will be still praising you.

And the promise in our text is an answer to the aspirations of the longing soul, which are everywhere scattered over the Psalms, and which the Christian is continually giving forth in

his devotions: unless, indeed, in those Churches which are too spiritual and evangelical to use the Psalms, except as remodeled by some uninspired man.

The true origin of the expression, “not going out any more” seems to be taken from the custom of the temple, to be served by twenty-four courses of priests in succession throughout the year; so that one course had to go out from the blessed occupation, in order to make room for another. Whereas in the age to come it is promised, that we shall never have to depart from before His presence, or to cease from worshiping Himself and His image, which is the Lamb slain.

Even in this dispensation, we have a continual presence of the Spirit in our hearts, and should worship and serve God in all our actions, without respect of time and place; as indeed of all things which are promised to us in the resurrection and the age to come, we have a present enjoyment in the Spirit; then in the sense also, now in the Spirit only.

The Spirit does not take a *part* of Christ’s things, but *all of them*, to show them to our souls. We have now in the Church the fullness of Him that fills all in all. And the Spirit of Christ’s life in us should, by inward experience, as well as by faith and hope, possess us of the things which are not seen as yet.

But, alas! through the sore abuse of our privileges in Christ, both by reason of ignorance and of unbelief: through our much quenching, vexing, and grieving of the Spirit, it comes to pass, that God is not always in our thoughts, nor always served in our words and actions. Which is at once a very great sin and a very great sorrow to every godly man.

And so much joy is it for him to anticipate the time here set forth, when he shall never weary in the worship of God, never be turned aside by the seduction of worldly thoughts, nor in any way hindered or interrupted in the blessed work of worshiping and serving God.

By which promise we are not to understand, that our only occupation is to be temple-worship; the singing of Psalms with melody, the adoration and contemplation of the perfections and beauties of God. We have not so learned Christ, as to believe that worship is to be defined by times, seasons, and actions.

Worship is a continual and continuous occupation of the spiritual man. His knee is ever prostrate before God, his hands are ever lifted up to the place of His sanctuary, his heart is ever musing His praise, his lips uttering the song of His goodness; and his members ever consuming, as a spiritual sacrifice, under the fiery baptism of the Holy Ghost which he has received. Worship is one of the seven constant and continuous parts of a godly life. A saint is ever worshiping in the spirit; and when he is not, he is a sinner and not a saint.

When therefore it is promised to those who overcome, that they shall worship continually in the temple of God, it is signified that the attitude and act of devotion shall be ever present in their hearts; that God shall be acknowledged and served in all the occupations of their lives. Whatever their works be, they shall be undertaken for the glory of God, done in His presence, and with a view to His service, which are the ingredients of true worship.

During this day of our temptation, we are fain, for the refreshment of all our graces, to have stated times of worship, both secret, private, domestic, and public; but if we think that with these our obligations to worship God are ended, and that we may afterwards occupy ourselves in secular affairs, without respect to His presence, His service, His glory, we do most grievously err, not knowing our present Christian calling.

Why did Christ go about continually doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil? because God was with Him. He bore God in Him, He was God's temple. We bear Christ in us, we are the temple of Him who bore God.

And thus bearing God and the Lamb within us, and being their temple we ought to be their holy and ever active worshippers.

And as it is now in the Spirit, so shall it be hereafter in the body also: we shall be inclined both heart and flesh, to do the will of God: there shall be no law of the flesh to put down; there shall be no course of the world to overcome. All shall be disposed after a godly sort, the whole of the New Jerusalem shall be a temple, holy as the most holy place of the temple of God. Therefore it is written that John saw no temple there, for God and the Lamb are the temple of it.

What is a Pillar?

Why then, it may be asked, if there be no temple there, should it be said in our text, that we shall be pillars in the temple of God, and go no more out? This requires some explanation. When it is said:

Revelation 21

²² I saw no temple therein,

...it is not meant nor said that there was no temple there, but quite the contrary; for it is immediately added:

²² ...for the Lord God Almighty is the temple thereof, and the Lamb.

So also it is said of its light, that:

²³ ...the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

The one of these symbols helps to the interpretation of the other. God is the light, which shines through Christ the lamp over the New Jerusalem the habitation of the saints. God is not seen without seeing Christ, in whom He is contained, and through whom He sheds light over all the city. Nor is Christ seen otherwise than in the light of God, which shines forth from Him. God in Christ, and Christ in God, is the manner of

the manifestation there, and forever as it was here in the days of His flesh:

John 17

²¹ As you, Father, are in me, and I in You.

By this understand what is said of the temple, “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof;” and in that holy of holies the saints are continually to dwell, and to go no more out: that is, they are to dwell in God and the Lamb, or to dwell in God by dwelling in the Lamb. Their indwelling in the Lamb, and the Lamb’s indwelling in them is thus expressed;

John 15

⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you:

John 6

⁵⁷ As I live by the Father, so he that eats Me he shall live by Me.

It is the same manner of indwelling as that which is between Him and the Father:

John 17

²¹ That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent me.

²² And the glory which You gave me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one:

²³ I in them, and You in me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent me, and have loved them, as You have loved me.

The wonderful truth here embodied by common language, in a prayer, is embodied by a symbol in the promise of our text:

John 3

¹² He shall be a pillar in the temple of my God;

This temple is God and the Lamb:

“He shall dwell in God as I dwell in God, and he shall uphold the glory and the service of God, as I uphold it;”

...even as it is said of the Church, that she is:

1 Timothy 3

¹⁵ ...the pillar and ground of the truth.

God honors us by resting the burden of His name and work upon us; and we honor Him by cheerfully undertaking to bear the blessed burden.

This was the constitution of man from the beginning to be the stamp of God’s image, and to undertake the office of governing His creatures. When all creation shall be His temple, glorified with His presence and full of His praise, teeming with His goodness, and working all His pleasure, then of that temple shall those who overcome now be the pillars, bearing up its excellent state, preserving its good order, and accomplishing all its service; being manifested as its foundation stones and strong upbearers.

And this I take to be the meaning of the expression before us, as we say of such and such a one, he is a pillar of the Church, or a pillar of the State, because upon his shoulders rests much of their prosperity and well-being.

THE WRITING OF NAMES

The other part of the promise to the Church at Philadelphia consists of three things, which Christ will write upon every one that overcomes:

Revelation 3

¹² ...the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

The Name of My God

After what we set forth in our former Lecture⁴ concerning the meaning and importance of a name, we may not doubt, that under these three things are couched great and precious truths, which we shall endeavor to unfold in order.

The first of these forms of expression seems to be taken from the ordinance of God concerning the high priest, that he should bear upon his forehead a plate of gold, whereon was written, “Holiness to the Lord”:

Exodus 28

³⁶ And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

And the reason assigned for the ordinance is not less remarkable than the ordinance itself:

³⁸ And it shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.

This language, “bearing the iniquity,” &c. so often used of the priesthood, and from them transferred to our great High Priest (*Isaiah* 53:16; *John* 1:29; *Hebrews* 9:28; *1 Peter* 2:24), is constantly used, as one studious of the Law of Moses well knows, to signify, that the sin for which anyone came to offer sacrifice, passed over from himself to the victim, upon the head of which they were confessed, and in the victim they were supposed to inhere.

The victim being partly consumed upon the altar, and partly eaten by the priests, brought the guilt of all the sins of Israel upon the holy persons and the holy vessels: which together continued all the year round to drink up the sin of the whole

⁴ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 8, “Epistle to the Church in Sardis”, Chapter: “The Instructions to the Angel of the Church”, Sub-chapter: “A Good Name”, p. 42-52.

congregation, and for their cleansing one day was appointed, the day of atonement, wherein the high priest, as being the great intercessor, made atonement for the altar, which represented all the vessels of the sanctuary and for himself, who represented all the persons of the priesthood.

This being accomplished, the people greatly rejoiced, as having been delivered from all their sins. And the beasts which were offered on that day being very sinful, as containing all the sins of all the congregation for that year, might not be burned upon the altar or eaten by the priests, but were sent forth of the camp into the unclean region, and there burned with fire by the hands of a man, who was counted unclean for that act, and had to be washed and purified according to the law.

Of this great system of transferring sins from one person to another, the high priest, being the head, is said:

Exodus 28

³⁸ ...to bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their gifts.

He is always looked upon as laden with the transgressions of all Israel, even as Christ is, in the passages referred to above, looked on as bearing in His body the load of a world's transgression.

Now the wonder is, that with all this the high priest should yet bear on his forehead the words "Holiness to the Lord," which is required to be...

Exodus 28

³⁸ ...always upon his forehead, that they might be accepted of the Lord.

This points to the perfect holiness of Christ, notwithstanding His bearing the sins of the world; and that it was through His immaculate holiness that the sacrifice upon the cross was of any merit whatever.

The high priest's plate of gold, "Holiness to the Lord," not only protected him from being consumed for the sin of all the people which he bore about with him, but found acceptance with God for those holy gifts, which they were continually bringing in as an atonement for their iniquity; God hereby signifying that one holy person was sufficient to protect, and preserve, and find acceptance for the whole congregation of the tribes of Israel.

Not that the high priest was in himself more holy than they, but that he prefigured the person of our blessed Jesus, the holy Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world; and declared that for one holy person God was bearing with, and from the beginning had borne with, the sins of the whole congregation and family of mankind.

Now if this be the end for which God appointed that the high priest should have His name written upon his forehead, something analogous to this must be signified by the promise of Christ, that upon every one who overcomes He will write the same blessed and glorious name. It must refer to some dignity and office in the world to come, parallel with the dignity and office of the high priest in the dispensation which is past, and with the office of Christ in the present dispensation.

That we shall have the fellowship of Christ's name, of His new name, of that name which no one knows but he who receives it, is declared in this same promise; but the thing here presented to us is some specific part of that fullness. And what is it?

Upon a theme so very lofty it is necessary to proceed with all manner of caution and circumspection. Let us therefore look first into the description of that state of things where all these promises are fulfilled; for, as we have already seen, the seven promises of the Spirit, to the victorious part of the Church, are but the word and particulars of that blessedness of the righteous, which is described at length in the last three

chapters of *Revelation*, containing the new heaven and the new earth, with the city of the great King.

Now as we found there the exposition of the former part of the promise, “being made pillars in the temple of God,” let us look there for light upon this also, “I will write upon him the name of my God.” The answer to the promise is found in the 22nd chapter:

Revelation 22

³ ...but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him:

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

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

This is written in the language of the temple. The throne of God is the cherubim, and the mercy-seat, where the high priest alone might go in and minister, whither our High Priest, the forerunner, is entered before us within the veil. But now, behold, many have admission into the holy presence of God, even “His servants” who “serve” or “worship” Him (for the word always signifies religious service); that is, do before Him the service of the most holy place, have liberty of access to Him in their persons, as we have at present in the Spirit through the veil of Christ’s flesh.

Accordingly, it is added that they see His face, which was the high priest’s sole prerogative, to go in and look upon the symbolical face of God, whence beamed His glory, and came forth His word; and to show that as high priests they had this prerogative, it is said, “His name shall be in their foreheads,” which is the promise of our text realized.

Then—still further to keep up the action of the most holy place, which was enlightened neither by the sun, like the court, nor by the candlestick, like the holy place, but by the

shekinah or cloud of glory, the very light of God—it is added:

Revelation 22

⁵ And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light.

And, finally, to show that it was not a priesthood merely, but a royalty also, a royal priesthood, it is added:

⁵ ...and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Revelation 1

⁵ ...Unto him that loved us...

⁶ And has made us kings and priests...be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

There can be no doubt, after the examination of this passage, that the promise, “I will write upon him the name of my God,” has reference to the dignity of the high priesthood, which is reserved for us in that day.

And how shall this be occupied, and for what ends? Christ is now the High Priest over the house of God; and this office has He obtained not through His Godhead, but through His manhood, because He was...

Hebrews 2

¹⁷ ...made like unto His brethren in all things.

And, having been tempted as they are,

¹⁸ ...He is able to succor them that are tempted.

Hebrews 4

¹⁵ For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

This being the office of a high priest, to...

Hebrews 5

² ...have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way,

...the Son of God, that He might be qualified for the same,

did take flesh and blood with the brethren, and was trained up to the perfection of that high and holy mediatorship. In like manner are we training up through the fellowship of His sufferings, and the conformity of His death, to fill the same office to which He is now exalted, of being a nation of kings and priests after the order of Melchizedek.

If anyone say that our office is only that of subordinate priests, he errs, not knowing the Scripture and the grace of God:

- No priest but the high priest had the name of God upon his forehead;
- None but the high priests were of the first-born, as we are called “the Church of the first-born”;
- None but the high priest was accounted a king as well as a priest. He only had the raiment of a king, now we are called to be kings as well as priests.

We are to be like Christ, and He is High Priest: we are to sit in His throne; we are to be glorified with the share of His glory, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. Where then is His supremacy? Where it should be, in His Godhead.

But how is this realized? Not in a visible shape or form, but by His receiving the worship of all creation along with the Father. As He appears, we appear; as He is, we are; in all His manifest glory, we have a share; but with His Godhead no one intermeddles.

With our manhood humbled, He did communicate; with His manhood exalted, we shall communicate. In His flesh He is the image of God, and we are...

Romans 8

²⁹ ...predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.

And thus do we become one with Him, even as He is one with the Father. He is a High Priest, and we also are high priests; He is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and so

also are we. And this dignity we have now in the Spirit, as the Apostle teaches us in that passage where he urges us to...

Hebrews 10

¹⁹ ...enter into the holiest...

²⁰ ...through the veil,

...where none but the high priest might go. And in that other passage (*Hebrews 6:18-20*), where our hope is represented as being within the veil, where Christ for us is gone as our forerunner, whom we shall follow if we cleave to that anchor of the soul.

And, finally, the whole New Jerusalem, enlightened with the light, and having the throne of God, is but the antitype of the most holy place, and constructed like to it, of equal dimensions, length, breadth, and height.

What then serves Christ? He serves to procure for us this entrance into the most holy presence of God; and to Him we owe acknowledgment, and of Him we hold it, and for Him we exercise it; and when we offer to God, as we do always, we offer only by and through Him, yea and to Him; and we ever know that He is the only way to the Father, and the Father's only way to us.

If any one stand amazed at the boldness of these thoughts, and the stupendous dignity into which I am bringing man, let him learn that this was man's original level, and that it is the depth to which sin has dragged us down, that makes it look such a giddy height.

Man, I say, was made to be God's image, and His king; a priest for holiness, a king for power. And if man is to be redeemed, he must be brought back again to that, the original platform of his being. To this we are brought back in Christ, and by Christ. In Him we see manhood's original intention fulfilled; by Him we shall be brought, in the fullness of time, to the co-equality of His creature dignity, which is still infinite

descents from the range of His Divinity.

Why are these things not understood? Because the Church is become altogether Eutychian in her doctrine, mixing the human and the Divine natures, and demanding to see the Godhead in the manhood; and, if she cannot, disbelieving it.

You fool, Godhead is not seen but believed on; is not comprehended, but worshiped. Adam was greater than the high priest in all his glorious attire. Melchizedek was greater also, and so was Abraham, and Moses also, who was king in Jeshurun, and conversed with God as a man does with his friend.

God did not draw the High Priest more near than man was intended to be, but He cast all the rest further off; He kept one man caged up, as it were, in the form of that dignity which all men should have possessed, witnessing to that better Man who was to bring us out of our miserable depth, and advance us to our proper dignity and nearness before God.

But the question still remains, over whom are we to exercise this office of the High Priest? The answer is given in all parts of Scripture, and directly by the glorified saints themselves:

Revelation 5

¹⁰ And we shall reign on the earth.

Where their royalty is, there also is their priesthood; for these are one two-fold office, and not two separate offices. But it is said in another place:

Revelation 20

⁴ And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

This is the reign upon the earth. And is it meant then, that after this they reign no longer? That is not meant; for in all Scripture, save that one passage only, the kingdom of Christ and His saints is declared to be forever: and in the passage quoted above (*Revelation 22:5*), it is said, “and they shall reign forever and ever,” literally, “unto ages of ages;” whereas the

millennial period is only called “the age to come.”⁵

What then is the difference of their reign thereafter? I am not careful to answer this question: but if it be pressed upon me, I answer, according to the best of my judgment, that during the thousand years they shall reign on the earth, and bring all into subserviency to God thereon, and cast all evil out from thence.

This being accomplished, it shall be made forever and ever the seat of the Divine throne, and the center of the Divine government, and the dwelling-place of God; from which these high priests and kings shall go forth, and bear rule over all the creation of God, using the angels as their ministering spirits, and governing creatures after their own form, throughout all the regions of creation, with the subordinate creatures, the elements, and the inanimate things.

There is a time when the kingdom is delivered up to the Father; that is, as I understand the mystery, the kingdom in which all power and rule and authority need to be put down; namely, the earth, where God has been dared and defied, resisted and rebelled against.

This being done, God will give to those valiant and victorious ones who have borne His battles, and upheld the glory of His name, the honor of wearing His name upon their foreheads, of having His mind, His moral image, His authority stamped upon them, for the end of teaching, and showing, and bearing His excellent virtues unto all the creatures whom His hand has made, or by generation has continued and multiplied.

But what comes of our union with Christ, if we be thus sent forth to hold the heavenly dominion of all creation? The union of the bride with Christ does not consist in absorption

⁵ **Editor’s note:** I’m not sure which Scripture Irving is quoting here, but there are a few that mention the “age [world] to come”: *Matthew* 12:32; *Mark* 10:30; *Luke* 18:30; *Hebrews* 2:5; *Hebrews* 6:5.

into Christ, not in physical or local circumstances, but in oneness of glorified humanity and oneness of dignity and destination: a moral unity, the more demonstrated and the more glorified by diversity of place and circumstance.

We retain our personalities, and are a unity withal. The unity is spiritual, like the unity of the persons of the Godhead. It is not the unity of natural life, where all the members are physically joined in one by bands of flesh; it is the substance and the spirit whereof this is the faint and insufficient type.

Eve was once in such physical union; but she came forth of it, to show the real union in a diversity of persons subsisting. So the bridal or elect Church, shall not lose their personality, or be absorbed into Christ, but being one with Him in name and attribute, they shall show their union with Him by teaching all creation to know His name, and to stand in His fealty, and to worship in Him and through Him the only one living and true God.

As a corporation is administered by the various members thereof obeying one head and law, as the provinces of a vast kingdom are administered by many persons clothed upon with the authority of the king, and following his ordinance of government, so shall it be with the earth during the thousand years, with the earth and with all creation for ever and ever.

This is the best account which I can render of the mode of things, which, for my own profit, I seldom think of in their mode, but always in their essence. Now the essence of the promise before us is, that we who are faithful and true to Christ's name here on earth, and uphold it in all its authority and power, shall receive from Him that name of His God, and carry it ever written upon our forehead, to be seen and read of all.

Christ, whom we confess to on earth, shall confess to us in heaven, and He with whose humility and crucifixion we took part on earth, shall bestow upon us part of His honor and

glory in the heavens. That holy office over the creatures, which He now for a long time has held, the High Priest of God, He will, if we be faithful unto Him, as He was faithful unto His Father, share with us, and call upon us to be faithful and merciful rulers over the house of God.

We shall have the mercy and the grace, the forgiveness and the goodness of God to dispense, and we shall have the gratitude and blessedness of the creatures to render back again unto that God which is in Christ Jesus. As high priests, we are Christ's brethren; but we offer all the worship unto a God revealed only in Him, and in Him only approached. We share His manhood, but we worship Godhead in Him also. This I believe to be the mystery of His writing upon us the name of His God.

The Name of the City

The next inscription which Christ promises to make upon those who overcome is:

Revelation 3

¹² ...the name of the city of my God, New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God.

This derives great illustration from that name which is written upon the forehead of the woman who comes up out of the wilderness riding upon the beast with seven heads and ten horns, to which the devil gave his seat, and his power, and great authority. After a description of her person, as the harlot of kings, "arrayed in purple and scarlet color, with gold and precious stones and pearls," and of her attitude as the sorceress of the earth, "having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications," it is said:

Revelation 17

⁵ And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

“Babylon the Great,” is the name of a city, the city of confusion, the city of wickedness; that city which reigns over the kings of the earth, and sits upon seven mountains: Rome, the renowned for the mystery of iniquity. But nowhere so well described as in these words, “the mother of the harlots and the abominations of the earth.”

The woman is all throughout this book a symbol of the Church, the betrothed and well-beloved spouse of the Lamb, whose original beauty and investment of glory and power is set forth in the 12th chapter, together with the rabid and destructive purpose of the dragon to make away with her and her children.

But to such an awful degree she corrupts her ways, that when she comes up out of the wilderness, she has made her peace with the dragon, and rides upon his back thus apparelled, and thus described by the handwriting upon her forehead. Which description signifies that she had advanced herself from the outcast and widowed condition in which her Master left her to prove the fellowship of His trials, even to the dignity of being the queen of cities; from a houseless, homeless, and persecuted woman, to become a city, and to rule over the whole earth, and to make all the inhabitants of it drunk with her abominable mixtures, concocted in the darkness of midnight, and under the eclipse of the lights of heaven.

Taking this for our guide, we understand by the promise of writing the name of the New Jerusalem upon the foreheads of His saints, that Christ promises they shall grow up from being strangers and pilgrims upon this earth, who seek a city, to become themselves the inhabitants and the potentates of a mighty city, the New Jerusalem which comes down from heaven, the tabernacle of God, in which God dwells, and from which He sends forth His rule and government unto the world's end.

To these Philadelphians who had but a little strength, He promises the strength of pillars in the temple of His God: to the same people who were poor and despised, though faithful and true, He promises the honor of being the inhabitants of that Jerusalem, in the light of which the nations walk, and unto the gates of which the kings of the earth do bring their honor and their glory. Therefore the Church sings continually:

Isaiah 26

¹ We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

To this city of God, the Lord of hosts comes at the head of His people, and summons the angel warders of its gates:

Psalms 24

⁹ Lift up your heads, O you gates; even lift them up, you everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

And the strong angels who keep the twelve gates thereof give order:

Psalms 118

²⁰ This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

Isaiah 26

² Open the gates, that the righteous nation which keeps the truth may enter in.

To the most part of Christians, little acquainted with the mystery of the New Jerusalem; as laid down in all the Scriptures, it will perhaps bring little consolation to be told that they shall be written and stamped citizens of the New Jerusalem. But how much Abraham esteemed it, is declared by the Apostle:

Hebrews 11

¹⁰ For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

So also did all the patriarchs, of whom he said in the same place:

Hebrews 11

¹⁶ But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared for them a city.

And the Apostle, in writing to the Philippians, made high account of this, when he said, in contrast with those who mind earthly things:

Philippians 3

²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:

²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

And in another place He said:

Hebrews 12

²² But you are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.

And again:

Galatians 4

²⁶ But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

That can be no mean mystery, which the last two chapters of this book are taken up with, in order to describe the consummated glory and perfection.

And yet they have so dishonored and disallowed this excellent mystery of the New Jerusalem, as to have permitted it to be used opprobriously of a heretical and schismatical sect⁶, from whom no endeavors are made to reclaim it. Thus we despise our mother, and allow her name to be dishonored.

⁶ **Editor's note:** Irving is most likely referring to Swedenborgianism, also called "The Church of New Jerusalem".

Behold what honor God puts upon that city, and what dignity He esteems this citizenship to be. Give heed, I say, you faithless mockers, and stand in awe; otherwise fear greatly that you shall never enter within her walls.

Psalm 87

¹ His foundation is in the holy mountains.

² The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

³ Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Selah.

⁴ I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there.

⁵ And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her.

⁶ The Lord shall count, when he writes up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

⁷ As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in you.

I feel, therefore, that I have a most important function to discharge for the Church while I endeavor to exhibit, as is proper to the topic of a discourse, the mystery contained under this name, “the New Jerusalem,” for which we have ample materials in the Holy Scriptures.

The meaning is, that the Church, which is a captive in Egypt, shall grow into a polity, and that the head polity, the metropolis of creation. This is her destination,—out of captivity to be brought by the Captain of her salvation, and exalted to be the ruling power, the capitol of the world. And this hope we should cherish as we would wish to honor the power, and be thankful for the goodness of our God. Let us trace the progress of this mystery as it is shadowed forth in the type, which is the Jewish people.

Steps to New Jerusalem in Type and Antitype

Abraham and the patriarchs, as appears from the quotations made above, had received from God the promise, and

comforted themselves in all their wanderings with the sure hope of this heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God.

But first their seed must be brought into captivity to Pharaoh, who, with sensual and idolatrous Egypt, personates the dragon ruling in this beastly flesh, this benighted world, the corrupt and hideous grave.

There being brought down into the bondage of a cruel lord, they represent the seed of Christ, chosen in Him before the world was, and in the fullness of time to be glorified along with Him, brought forth of flesh under the law of sin and death into this world which obeys the oppressive rule and government of the prince of the power of the air. Generation after generation come under the same oppression, pass beneath the same yoke, and are grievously tormented if they show any signs of recollecting their high original, in the eternal purpose of God.

This, the common condition of all those who shall inherit the glory of the New Jerusalem, is set forth by the condition of the people of Israel groaning, and grieving, and crying to God in the land of Egypt.

From thence being delivered by Moses, who is the prophet like unto Christ, and baptized in the Red Sea where Pharaoh and his host were drowned; and being made to eat of the manna, which is Christ's flesh; and being made to drink of the waters of the rock, which are the Holy Ghost (not blood or natural life, but Holy Ghost or spiritual life), issuing from His stricken flesh; that same people, thus delivered and sustained in the wilderness forty years, do represent the second state of the Church brought from under the thralldom and dominion of the flesh and the world, sojourning in this valley of tears, and making her way onwards to the land of her inheritance and the city of her habitation.

We all are in this condition at present, dwelling in tents, and having God with us, within the curtains of this frail taber-

nacle. And should we be satisfied? We should be content, but not satisfied; and press forward and pray for the inheritance and the city, as it is set forth in the 107th *Psalm*:

Psalm 107

⁴ They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

⁵ Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

⁶ Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.

⁷ And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

If such were our feelings, we should know much more of that city, and have more frequently in our mouths the name of that city towards which we are plodding our weary way through this valley of Baca, digging for wells as we go; looking up to Heaven to refresh our faintness with showers in the desert, and crying unto God as the hart pants and brays for the water brooks in a dry and parched land. *Psalm 42:1-2*.

Next, when the children of Israel had all gotten across Jordan, they had still their land to fight for; to beat off the enemies from the portion which the Lord had reserved for His people when He divided the earth amongst the sons of Adam. And this they did under the banner of Joshua, the man of war.

To this third action we are called; in this laborious work we are invited to share, under our great Captain, *El Gibbor*, God the warrior, in the promise made to the Church of Thyatira.

All Joshua's wars, and Barak's, and Gideon's, and Samson's, and David's, in cleansing the land from its oppressors, are typical of that fearful work of destruction by which not only Canaan but all this earth shall be cleared of the wicked.

Then, and not till then, not till David, the son of Jesse, had attained to the full possession of the throne, till all the tribes, both the scattered two, that is, the living saints, and the lost ten, that is, the dead saints, have been gathered unto David

their King, in the cloud of his glorious advent, shall the city of Jerusalem come into her place in the Divine order.

For never during all the wars of the Judges had they been able to possess themselves of the stronghold of Zion, the upper city of Jerusalem, the Jerusalem above. This would have been out of place before David's time, and accordingly we have the account of its capture by David immediately after the Ten Tribes had come and acknowledged him in Hebron. In Hebron he might no longer stay but proceed to take and possess the strong city, and reign there, and transmit the possession of it to Solomon the prince of peace.

The nether city indeed they had been able to take and to hold (*Judges* 1:8; 19:12); but the upper city, Jerusalem, continued impregnable, a city not possessed till the day that David had gathered all the tribes in loyal fealty under his banner (*2 Samuel* 5). Then it was taken and ever afterwards was held as the metropolis of the holy people, until David's tabernacle, and David's throne, and David's city were all brought down to the dust, a miserable ruin, and a ruin to remain, till He come whose right it is, till the people shout,

“Hosanna to the son of David,
Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord to save us:
Hosanna in the highest.”

Then shall be the time for the possession of the upper city; and then shall we with our King reign in it, who shall bring it with Him as the habitation of His people whom He has brought up from their graves. For every one a mansion shall He have prepared in that royal, in that divine house of His Father.

This is the order of the time and succession of events, through which we, with Abraham and all the patriarchs, arrive at this city of habitation whose builder and whose maker is God.

The Polity of New Jerusalem

And now, for the unfolding of its polity, I must make my appeal to the Apostle Paul, who gives us great insight therein in his *Epistle to the Galatians*.

There the Apostle, in a discourse concerning the law, takes occasion to point out the mystical meaning couched under the two wives of Abraham: Hagar the bond-woman, and Sarah the wedded wife. And thus delivers himself:

Galatians 4

²² For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

²³ But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.

²⁴ Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which genders to bondage, which is Agar.

²⁵ For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answers to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

²⁶ But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

These two covenants or testaments, the one given from Sinai in the hands of the mediator Moses, the other from heaven in the hands of the risen Lord, who is now on the mount with God, he contemplates as having both of them their accomplishment in a city. They are bequests of God for a city or polity each of its proper kind; the one a city after the flesh, and therefore with the flesh in bondage to the law; the other a city after the Spirit, or law of Christ's risen body, and therefore free.

The law given on Sinai contemplated both a land and a city, the metropolis of the land. And without an inheritance in which the people might dwell and fulfill the relations of settled life, without a city where the tabernacle of God might rest, and the glory abide, and the nation gather themselves to their solemn feasts, nine-tenths of the laws delivered from

Sinai have no meaning at all. It is not persons alone, but property also, and a holy city for the holy presence of God which it contemplates.

And so say I fearlessly, that the New Testament also, purchased for us by the blood of Christ, and sealed with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, has little or no consistency or meaning, but in the view of the inheritance of this earth, and the habitation of a city which shall be the metropolis of the whole earth and of the entire world.

However much our present race of ministers, and members of Christ, may despise both the inheritance of the earth and the city of the saints, I maintain that the New Testament is just as unintelligible without them as the Old Testament is without Canaan and Jerusalem. The Apostle, in the passage quoted, expressly gives to that Jerusalem which is from above, a place second only to Christ; He the Father and she the mother of free-born men.

How, it may be said, can a city be said to be a mother? In that sense in which in all languages the expression mother-city occurs, more frequently indeed mother-country. But in either case it signifies the same thing: the place of our nativity.

And in what sense, it may be said, is the New Jerusalem above the mother-city of any man, saint or sinner? It is the mother-city of saints in that they are regenerated from thence, born from above.

John 3

⁵ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Galatians 4

²⁶ But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The Holy Spirit, of whom we are regenerate by the seed of the Word, descends out of heaven from our Father, the Second

Adam, who was not a quickening Spirit till by ascending up high He became the possessor of the seven Spirits of God.

From that place where He is, where is the throne of God; that is, from the New Jerusalem, for there the throne of God is (*Revelation 22:3*), are we begotten. That is the original of our generation. And into that city we shall be born from the dead, ascending up within the cloudy curtain of its glory, and thence issuing as the angels did from Sinai, in winds and flames of fire to consume the adversaries from the earth. Then descending with Divine majesty and holy beauties, it shall rest upon the earth, and remain there forever, holding within itself the King of saints and being truly the city of the Great King.

This is the high (above) calling for the prize of which the Apostle continually strove (*Philippians 2:14*): even that city in heaven, where he declares the conversation or citizenship of all Churches to be.

Man is made for citizenship and possession, for rule and government, as the universal pursuits of the world and the strongest temptations of the Church do testify. So strong that the lust of these things at length brings the Church to be apostate.

And how, I ask, is this desire of the heart, this great end of God in our creation, to be accomplished? In the New Jerusalem, which is set before the Church as her high and strong city. And how are men to be weaned of the world and its enjoyments? By having presented to their faith and hope the citizenship of the New Jerusalem, which comes down from heaven.

It is not God's method to lop and maim His creature of any of those members which He made for her, but to provide a use and occupation for them in the world. And so has He ever held out to His people, as in the passage before us, a glorious municipality, a noble citizenship, in the prospect of which

they may feast their souls while they walk upon the earth, as those who have no country nor city.

Hebrews 11

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

¹⁴ For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

¹⁵ And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

¹⁶ But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.

In opening this subject, I am opening almost all the Psalms and other portions of the Scriptures; and therefore I do not suffer myself to faint, but having besought strength of God, I gird my loins up and address myself to the laborious yet delightful way. And it concerned me little that they mock and deride on all sides; we must do our work, we must feed the flock of God, and gather His lambs with our arms.

The reason why this our mother-city is represented as complete, ere yet she has got all her people, so that Abraham sought her and the Apostle, and all of us, is this: That, being the most excellent of the works of God, she is built according to a plan; which has its origin in the purpose of the Eternal Mind, and for beauty and splendor has no parallel in any device of man, however fair and excellent.

The city of Palm-trees which Solomon built, and which still sits in the solitude like a dismantled bride, is never to be likened to that city of God, which is so dear to His heart, as that He should say of her:

Isaiah 49

¹⁶ Behold, I have graven you upon the palms of my hands;

your walls are continually before Me.

The time was when with great price they did purchase the freedom of a Roman citizen, and kings were zealous of the honor; how much more of that city which is built by God, enlightened by Him, and possessed of all the excellent persons and excellent things of creation; the very sanctuary of the world: of this, every one who is baptized unto Christ, is a denizen, a free-born citizen, over whom no power can cast a chain.

They who are born after the flesh, the inhabitants of the earthly city, and of every earthly city, will continue to persecute and torment all who will set their base polities at defiance, and, taking pilgrim's staff in hand, wend their way to the city of God. Sore will be his journey through all perils and temptations; through all terrors and tribulations; but let him hold on, and all will be well. And ever when the wondering and the frightened people are running to and fro, let him sing the sweet Psalm:

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

³ Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

⁴ There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High.

⁵ God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. [margin: "when the morning appears."]

That is, in the morning of the resurrection, when the heavens and earth shall be shaken, that city for which we look shall descend majestically from on high, and become the cen-

ter and stability of the world, our city of joy.

Many questions are started about this city, as whether it will be a real material city, or whether it be but a figure of speech for a state of blessed society like the church, but more firm and close and blessed. To this I answer, that as we look for a body in the resurrection, a true body, this very body in all its created parts, not lacking one, and each for that use unto which it was created, even so I believe that this body will have an appropriate habitation, as the Apostle calls it, “a home eternal in the heavens.” *2 Corinthians* 5:1.

That home will be a material one, but matter in such a purified state as, when devoid of death and corruption, it will become. And to represent this purity is the reason, I believe, why all manner of precious stones are used to describe the walls and gates, so that even the very streets of it shall be of transparent gold, which admits no greater purity; and into it nothing enters that defiles.

As Christ’s body shone, and His very mantle, above the brightness of the sun, why should we doubt that this habitation of the glorified saints will be all resplendent with glory? And if the matter of a small ball of diamond be esteemed a prize for a kingdom to possess, how much more to be possessed of a habitation in that city whose very walls are of precious stones, and its gates each a massive pearl?

I wonder what religious men make of their imagination, when it refuses to feed on such celestial food? They hide themselves from the truth of nature, by adopting a most Pharisical system of thought and feeling; and then they hide themselves from revelation, because it is larger than that pigmy of a man to which they have pared themselves away.

Another question which arises is:

“And will there be two Jerusalems on the earth at the same time; the one built by the Jews, and for the Jews, according to

the Old Testament Scriptures; the other built by God, for his people raised from the dead?"

Even so I believe it will be, for many reasons: as that in the one there is a temple; in the other there is no temple; the one city built by God, the other by the sons of the alien; the one coming down out of heaven from God, the other built according to Ezekiel's dimensions and locality upon the earth.

And it is no objection to this to find, that the Jerusalem of the Old Testament contains the language of the Jerusalem in the New Testament; for so the restoration of the tribes contains the language of the resurrection, and the Law the language of the Gospel. From which we are not to conclude, that there is no resurrection, but only a restoration of the tribes; that there is no better passover, or manna, or water from the rock.

Two Jerusalems I believe there will be, the upper and the nether, as there were in the times of old; and as the children of Judah fought against the nether Jerusalem and took it, and possessed it from the days of Joshua, but did not obtain the upper city from the Jebusites till the days of David the king; so may it come to pass that the children of Israel shall possess the lower Jerusalem before the time that the upper Jerusalem comes to be in communion and concert with the earth.

But after David the king arrives from his wilderness hidings I believe that the upper and the lower cities shall co-exist in harmony and communion with one another. "Where?" it is asked. I answer, the lower Jerusalem in its own place; the upper Jerusalem I know not well where, whether manifest in the heavens, or resting on the earth, but certainly within the ken and vision, yea and in the full view of men; being to the world as the sun in the firmament, giving light to all the nations of them which are saved.

But, as I said before, I am not careful about the modes, if I am only permitted to retain the substance, of the hope. And

the substance of this hope is, that we shall dwell with God and forever behold his face, and rejoice with his joy, and be blessed with his blessedness. For in his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore. *Psalm 16:11.*

We shall be the citizens of his city going in and out before him, free of his immunities, and going forth into all quarters to execute his purposes. We shall be sharers of his government, dispensers of his gifts, and partakers in the returns which are made from every corner of the blessed universe. We shall hear the sound of their evening and morning praise, and behold their blessedness all the day long. We shall rest with God, and rejoice with him over all his works together.

“My God”

There is an expression which has occurred no less than three times in this promise, but of which I have as yet taken no notice, reserving it till I had got together all the materials for an interpretation.

Revelation 3

¹² Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of **my God**, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of **my God**, and the name of the city of **my God**, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from **my God**: and I will write upon him my new name.

This expression “my God” occurs no where else in these epistles, or in this whole book, that I can find, and therefore does not occur here three times without a cause. And what is that cause?

Before this can be answered, we must first ascertain what the true force and import of it is. In what sense can Christ have a God? Only as He is a creature. For in His Godhead He is God, and there is no other. Only as He is the Son of Man, the Christ, or the Anointed, not in His own Divine self-exis-

tence, but in His communicated, derived, and sustained life, as the Christ, or the Anointed One, can He have one whom He worshiped as God.

As Son, He has a Father; but as Christ, He has a God. In His eternal generation He has no God, but in His generation within time He has a Father, and that Father is also His God. And not only so, but every one who is born of Him by the Holy Ghost, has in God at once a Father and a God.

For this is the honor of Christ's work in us and for us, that from being enemies He makes us friends, from being servants He makes us sons of the Most High and Almighty God. He sends forth His Spirit into our hearts, whereby we cry "Abba, Father." *Galatians* 4:6. And in putting this His own Spirit within us, He writes upon the heart, that which upon the forehead appears, the name of His God; now in the heart, and not outwardly seen; then outwardly in the face, as well as inwardly in the heart.

Christ was known to the Old Testament saints in His Godhead, by His name *Jah*, and He lay beside them in His manhood under the sacrifices of the law. When He came into the region of the sense, and was incarnate of the Virgin, He was manifested in His creature character and worshiped God; and kept God's laws, and obeyed God's commandments, albeit in very truth these laws and commandments had emanated from Himself, and He was that very God.

First, He stands as Christ the representative of very God, and is as the one God worshiped; being verily very God in the person and form of the Word: then He presents Himself as man; but still He is very God, humbling Himself to be, and to suffer, and to act, as a man, from the cradle to the grave.

And now it is He speaks of His God, saying unto Satan, "It is written, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (*Matthew* 4:7); on the cross, "my God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (*Matthew* 27:46), and after His resurrection, "I am not yet

ascended to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God” (*John* 20:17); and now, being in glory, He three times calls the Almighty “my God.” This is a point of great importance, because it is the style of God, most proper for a Christian to use, and which being understood is the fullest of grace and consolation.

As the Jews knew God by the name “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;” and when they uttered this name, thought of the eternal God choosing to be the friend and companion of their fathers, being not ashamed to be called their God, and felt that they, as Abraham’s seed, had the inheritance of God in all those tender and endearing relations in which Abraham knew Him: so we Christians when we say, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” ought never to doubt, that we are introduced thereby into the same nearness of communion and fellowship, in which He, our blessed Forerunner and Example, the Author and the Perfection of our faith, experienced Him.

We are heirs of the same sustaining Spirit, of the same fullness of joy, of the same inexhaustible strength, and, in one word, of all His probations and triumphs during the days of His flesh, and of the glory into which He entered by the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven.

God is known by His works, at the head of which stands the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of man, His moral image and vicegerent on the earth. That this God should make friends afterwards with a shepherd, and should covenant with him, and enter into promises to a thousand generations, did raise that shepherd far above the princes of the earth; that He should choose one of our race to call Him Son, and to treat Him as a Father, and to give Him the victory over the devil, the world, and the flesh, and over sin and death, and to raise Him to the right hand of power, and set Him in His own throne; raises that Son of Man far above an-

gels and principalities and powers, and every name that is named, both in this world and that which is to come.

And that we should enter into the teeming fullness of that love, into the possession of that very favor, of that same experience every way, is our Christian prerogative; in comparison with which an angel's crown, and a seraph's lyre, are never for a moment to be desired.

But, to be more particular, I will explain the two points in which God's dealings with Christ, and through Him with us, transcend His dealings with all that went before Him. First, in that He was spiritually begotten of sinful flesh; secondly, in that He was raised from the dead to the inheritance of the heavenly throne.

In virtue of the former of these He was able to subdue the law of sin and death in His members, and to present Himself holiness unto the Lord continually: in virtue of the second, He was raised from the dead, and has received the dominion of all the creatures of God.

Of these two things, holy living in flesh and blood, and glorious power in the risen body, He now has freedom to bestow the community and full participation. And this He does by writing upon us the name of His God, which is permitting us to know God as He only knew Him; and in order to possess either the present benefits of regeneration in holy members, or the future benefits of resurrection in power and glory, we must know God by His name "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." *Ephesians 1:3.*

If we will not seek to Christ as the channel where this new stream of Divine beneficence flows, we shall not obtain one drop of it. If we will not approach God by that name, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," not one of Christ's experiences shall we ever possess; and of which the Church in this life coming out of regeneration, the New Jerusalem, of the future life coming out of resurrection, are the two principal.

Of this I will exhibit one or two proofs taken from the New Testament, where the name is used.

In the *Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians*, this style of God is used in connection with the mercy and consolation of which we are made partakers in and through Christ, through the coming of the Comforter, whom the Father did send in His name to abide with the Church for ever, and to make her partaker of Christ's joy and peace in the midst of all her tribulations undergone for the Gospel's sake.

2 Corinthians 1

³ Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

⁴ Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ.

In the *Epistle to the Ephesians* the same style is used, and the same benediction offered to the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," because of the spiritual blessings in the super-heavenly places which we have received in Christ—that is, in that Christ has received them.

Ephesians 1

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

⁴ According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

⁵ Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

⁶ To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

⁷ In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;

⁸ Wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself:

¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

¹¹ In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will:

¹² That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.

¹³ In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

¹⁴ Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory.

After Jesus had enjoyed the Holy Ghost for a spiritual generator during the days of His flesh, He promised Him, after His departure, to the Church, which promise on the day of Pentecost He fulfilled. Now that He enjoys the Seven Spirits, the communicable completeness of the same holy flesh in His resurrection glory, He promises to us that we shall be made partakers of the same, in the day of our manifestation as the sons of God, by the redemption of our bodies from the bondage of death and corruption.

In that day of redemption, when all bonds shall be loosed, we shall share with Christ in the glory of the Spirit of God, as we now share with Him in the consolation; then in the power, now in the weakness; then in the honor, now in the dishonor.

The Apostle accordingly goes over the twofold mystery of the regeneration and the resurrection, the lesser and the greater mysteries of the Christian faith: the lesser respecting

the redemption and forgiveness now possessed in the assurance of the Holy Ghost (verse 13); the greater abounding in the knowledge and anticipation of the future preferment which we shall hold in the dispensation of the ages to come, when all things shall be gathered together and headed up into the Christ, exhibiting the reality of that purpose from all eternity conceived in the mind of the Father, and set up in the person of the Son by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Of this completeness of the Divine idea the Apostle being happily delivered, and how much he esteems the utterance then given to him, he himself declares (*Ephesians* 3:2-8); he does at the 17th verse resume the name “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and calls Him “the Father of glory,” and makes prayer to Him to introduce the Church into the full apprehension and enjoyment of the infinite store of grace, and mercy, and glory, treasured up for them in their heavenly Head.

Ephesians 1

¹⁷ That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him:

¹⁸ The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

¹⁹ And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power,

²⁰ Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,

²¹ Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

²² And has put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church,

²³ Which is His body, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

The same name and character gives he to God, in the *Epistle*

to the *Colossians*, introducing a discourse concerning the fullness and glory contained in Christ, which has no parallel in Holy Scripture except that in the *Ephesians* referred to above:

Colossians 1

³ We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.

It contains in like manner the precious things of God hidden in Him from before the birth of time, and manifested by His incarnation of the Holy Ghost, and His resurrection in the full strength and power of the same Holy Ghost; all which are derived to us, through the faith of that God and Father of His, who first in Him did show that full fountain of blessedness and glory which is in Him for every man who will call upon Him by that thrice blessed name “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”:

Colossians 1

¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

¹³ Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:

¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

¹⁶ For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him:

¹⁷ And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

¹⁸ And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence.

¹⁹ For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell;

²⁰ And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say,

whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

²¹ And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled

²² In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight.

And finally, not to multiply quotations, the Apostle Peter, in his *First Epistle*, opens with the same doxology, to “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” as the Father of mercies and the Author of regeneration unto the blessed hope of the imperishable inheritance, the New Jerusalem in the heavens, the inheritance of the saints, which is about to be manifested for their habitation and possession in the last times against the day of the revelation of Jesus Christ.

And this he gives to them as their strong consolation under their manifold trials, and by the assured hope thereof he calls them to gird up the loins of their minds, and to be sober, and to hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you,

⁵ Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

⁸ Whom having not seen, you love; in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

⁹ Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your

souls.

Now, I ask all men if these passages do not cast a steady light upon the use of the expression “my God,” in connection with the poor, despised, and weak Church of Philadelphia, to whom he promises these super-celestial blessings of the New Jerusalem, and the temple, and the name of his God;—now indeed above in the heavens, but to descend from thence into the earth; to “come down out of heaven from my God.” *Revelation* 3:12.

They show that Christ received them from His God, in reward of His faithfulness, and truth, and piety, and obedience to Him during the days of His flesh, in the midst of enormous sufferings and hideous oppressions of the devil, the world, and the flesh. He “was heard in that He feared,” (*Hebrews* 5:7) on account of His piety, and received that glorious redemption from the grave, and exaltation to the Headship,—to have and to hold the honor of God’s name, and write it on whom He pleases, in their hearts and in their foreheads,—to have and to hold the key of David, which opens the gates of the New Jerusalem, in order to admit therein whom He pleases to admit.

And whom pleases He to admit to those celestial seats and titles? As many as will name the name of God as “the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ,” and serve Him as Jesus Christ did serve Him: they, and none but they, shall enter by the gates into the city.

He holds it as His own; but His own is God’s own, for He is God: He administers it as Christ; but Christ will do nothing against God, for Christ is God. And therefore He signifies that only to the sons and servants of His God will He grant these unspeakable blessings, which are reserved in the heavens for them who are kept through faith unto salvation.

These things are given to the Philadelphians because they

walk nearest and closest after the Lord's pattern; but they are equally free to all who will make themselves meet for them, by the same holy and heavenly course which Christ followed, showing us an example that we should follow His steps.

Oh my soul, awake, arise and climb those happy heights of glory! Though the way to them be through that dark and deadly valley, gird yourself and descend to the very depths of your Lord's sufferings, filled with the glorious hope set before you of rising to the very summit of His exaltation.

My soul, descend from the pride and vain-glory of the life that now is. It is naught, and worse than naught, most odious to a holy God, and ever abhorred by the holy Jesus. By you then, let it be in like manner abhorred, crucified, and kept in continual death.

Oh my soul, enter into the holiness of your God, and hate the life of Adamhood; because in Adam it rose against God, and love the life of Christhood, because in Christ it pleased God. Then will God be pleased in you, as in Christ He was well pleased. Amen, yea, and amen.

My New Name

Revelation 3

¹² ...and I will write upon him my new name.

There is such a collection of glories gathered together around the head of this Philadelphian Church, that I fear lest I should lose myself in the admiration of their much splendor, and forget the soberness of mind which becomes the interpreter of God's Holy Word.

Poetry is the fit vehicle for these sublime ideas, and by such I had thought and do still meditate to set them forth; but lately my life has been overladen with trials and labors which break up the musings of the soul, and hinder them from forming themselves into fit language and harmonious numbers. My station at present is as a fighting man, in the heat of battle, who has time for nothing but the handling of his weapon, and the keeping of his post with stern fortitude until help

come to his side. When that day arrives, I shall sit under my vine and make melody unto the name of the Lord my God, in the midst of the congregation of His saints.

Of Christ's "new name" I think we have the account in the *Epistle to the Philippians* where, after recounting His wonderful and most gracious condescension from the form of God into the likeness of man, and the ignominy of the cross, it is said:

Philippians 2

⁹ Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

¹⁰ That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

¹¹ And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And will Christ write upon us this very name? I believe that as we have borne the image of the earthly so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly. *1 Corinthians* 15:49. And will they bow the knee and confess unto us? Surely not; because we have the name of God written upon us, we are not therefore God: no more are we Christ, because we have the name of Christ written upon us. But like as by the former we become filled with all the fullness of God, so by the latter do we become filled with all the fullness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To what end? To the end of testifying to God the Father, and to Christ the Son and servant of the Father. As a slave, marked with the name of his master, has in him of the sacredness of that master, and may not be meddled with without bringing down the wrath of his master, so, being thus inscribed with the names of God and of Christ, we are covered with their sacredness, and clothed upon with their authority. But we do not on that account become either God or Christ, who cannot give their glory to another.

Christ makes common cause with us through eternity: He

enrolls us among His brethren, and we are conformed to His image. But we look up to Him as the fountain-head of our life, and beauty, and glory; even as now we look up to Adam, the fountain-head of this our present sinful being. And by our whole life directed Christ-ward, we direct the whole tide of life in that kingdom and priesthood which we administer to the same fountain-head of existence.

By having these two names written upon us, we direct the ascending tide of dependence and thanksgiving towards two objects; the one, God the Father of all, who is invisible; the other, Christ the Head of all, who is visible, yet secrets within Himself the hiddenness of God.

And requiring for these two, co-equal and co-essential honor and glory, we rule the world as it should be ruled, and teach it as it should be taught, to know, and observe, and obey the eternal God who in Christ is manifested, and in Him subsists for all creature ends of knowledge, observance, and worship. So that creation is the witness of God, the fullness of Godhead embodied in Christ; from whom it drinks evermore the life-blood of its being and blessedness.

And in the enjoyment of sound membership, indissoluble union with Him, it is the conscious witness of the Holy Spirit, who thus causes an embodied God, a being embodied within the straightness of human nature, to be felt consciously present to the utmost bounds of the habitable world.

And so is made out the great problem of creation, to make it the witness of God, of a one spiritual being in three persons subsisting, and through his action therein blessing outward things with his own inward blessedness.

Much, very much, have I labored to instruct this generation in the mystery of the Trinity. I have sought to lift her eye above the lip of that frozen sea into which she became sealed up at the Nicene Council, that she might know the open sea in which the goodly vessel sailed freely and fully before that act

froze all up in the chains of controversy; to the end she might struggle hard to find her way back to the former and better age of Ephesian love and Smyrnian patience.

And I have in part succeeded: I behold the fruit of the better doctrine bursting forth upon every hand in a holier conversation, and in the reviving gifts of the Holy Ghost.

At the same time I have not been unobservant, as the Spirit bore me through that exceeding broad way of doctrine, to observe the ancient avenues of heresy leading down to hell upon either side: the Gnostic, the Manichean, the Cerinthian, and the Arian; and ever as I passed them I have sought to rivet the doors more closely which the ancient Church, in her faithfulness and charity, placed upon them to warn unwary travelers. Yet have I received small thanks, because I sought not the reward of man; seeing in heaven I have a more enduring substance, for I also seek a city whose builder and whose maker is God.

There is mention made, in the *Apocalypse*, of a name written on Christ:

Revelation 19

¹² ...He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself.

And in the following verse it is said:

¹³ ...and His name is called The Word of God.

Are these the same? I think not. The former I take to be the Godhead in incomprehensibility and incommunicableness. The latter, the Godhead revealed in word, unto the word-comprehending reason of man. Of the latter we can be, and I believe shall be, partakers; because, having reason, we can be informed with all of Godhead which in his reasonable soul inhabits. And the same we still give forth in word, being the full and sufficient expositors and exemplifiers and enforcers of all which in the Word of God is summed up.

I do not think that the name Word is the name for Christ's essential Divinity, but for His reasonable form. I question whether His essential divinity is capable of any name but negatives, the negative of reasonable fullness, or the method of expression by contraries; such as, "the first and the last," &c, of which we discoursed at large in our second Lecture⁷ and in divers other parts of these interpretations.

Some argue that, in refusing these as the names of Godhead, I deny His Godhead. They know not what they say. I am maintaining Godhead as the boundless, the absolute, the unsearchable: I am delivering the Church out of knowledge into worship. I am taking the self-sufficient boastfulness of knowledge out of her, and bringing her into prostration at the feet of the incomprehensible God.

I am doing no disservice to Christ while I am doing service to God. I am separating Christ's divinity from His humanity by an impassable gulf, and endeavoring to destroy Eutychianism in the Church, and Spinozism in the world. That is all they are raising the hue and cry about.

Christ is very God in His every act; but no act of Christ is very Godhead; very Godhead in its immensity, but very manhood in its limitations. He the doer of it is God; but the thing done is not God, but a limited thing: and the thing comprehended is not God, who is essentially incomprehensible; but it is an image and likeness and representation of God most true and veritable, because He who makes it is very God.

It is God discovering Himself within the region of faith, as creation is God discovered within the region of sense. But as creation is not God, no more are the things of faith God. They are but expressions of God; knowing and feeling which, we know and feel God; and being all blessed by the knowledge

⁷ *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2, "Christ Revealed by Names", Chapter: "The Names of Christ", Sub-chapter: "Alpha and Omega", p. 88-91.

and feeling of Him, we fall down and worship Him for ever and ever.

This is the knowledge of the true God and the worship and the service of Him, to bow down before Him as beyond the bounds of reason, yet as nothing contrary to reason, but ever showing Him forth as reason, of which reason Christ is the container.

But He contains more than reason. And what is that? It is the unknown and unknowable name you see written upon Him. I cannot read it, I cannot speak it, I cannot know it; but I can worship it, and so can you. Come let us worship Him as God; as the image of God for knowledge, as very God for worship. Christ is God acting, and speaking, and suffering within the limits of man; but these limits are not Godhead, neither are the things done therein God, although it is God who does them.

THE SPIRIT SPEAKS

Such is the exposition of the epistle to the Church of Philadelphia, which the Spirit commends in its most bountiful blessedness to all men whatsoever in these His customary words:

Revelation 3

¹³ He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the Churches.

Upon which I have a remark to make, that I do not remember to have made before; which is, that though Christ in His own person speaks every word of the epistle, the Spirit declares that He also speaks them; proving the oneness of the substance and word and action, and a beautiful exemplification of the office of the Holy Ghost, as the herald, and the witness and the enforcer of the things of Christ:

John 16

¹³ Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will

guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

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

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

It is also a beautiful exemplification of the liberty of preaching which the Spirit gives wherever He is present; and it puts a veto, a stern disavowal upon that false preaching which addresses itself to the elect only, to the Church only, instead of addressing itself to all men who have an ear to hear.

I wonder how any minister who sees the Spirit addressing this word of the Philadelphian consolation and glory, to all the Churches, and to every one who has an ear to hear, can dare to hide any part of Gospel fullness from any creature under heaven. He does so at the certain peril of bringing down upon his head the displeasure of his Master, and bringing the Church of which he is minister into sore trouble. Far be it from Christ's servant to do any such thing.

And let him not think that thereby he will break down the distinction between the Church and the world, by speaking the same word to all. God makes that distinction by giving faith, by giving His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him, and from those who ask Him not withholding it. The reason why the whole world is not one Philadelphian Church is because of their rejection of Christ, and of all the fullness which the Holy Ghost, blowing like the wind where He lists, carries around the whole world, and into every ear of man, as free and full as the wind which breathes and blows around him.

Therefore, with all affection, I do entreat every man who lives upon the earth to receive those benefits of the name of God, and of the city of God, and of Christ, and by abiding holy and true, in the faith and testimony, and obedience and wor-

ship thereof, to become in the day of the Lord a pillar in the temple of his God.

OF HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

IT does but remain that I should gather together from travelers and historians, what is to be found concerning the present state and past history of this ancient city and Church. I have already referred to its foundation, and spoken something of its condition until the coming of our blessed Lord.

It was visited by Dr. Chandler about eighty years ago, in whose time the country was possessed, as it is still, by wandering tribes of Turcomans, who fed their cattle along the beautiful plains of Katace-Kaumene. The town itself is of considerable extent, though mean to look upon, and spreading over the declivities of three or four hills. But it will be better to quote his own words:

Of the wall which encompassed it, many remnants are standing, but with large gaps: it is thick and lofty, and has round towers. On the top, at regular distances, were a great number of nests, each as big as a bushel, with the storks, their owners, by them, single or in pairs.

And Mr. Arundell, who visited the same place only four years ago, besides confirming the account of Chandler, adds these observations of his own:

The view from these elevated situations is magnificent in the extreme: gardens and vineyards lie at the back and sides of the town; and before it, one of the most extensive and richest plains in Asia. The Turkish name for Philadelphia, *Allah Sher*, "the city of God," reminded me of the Psalmist: "beautiful for situation is Mount Zion," &c. There is an affecting resemblance in the present condition of both these once highly favored "cities of God:" the glory of the temple is departed from both; and though the candlestick has never been removed from Philadelphia, yet it emits but a glimmering light, for it has long ceased to be trimmed with the pure oil of the sanctuary.

We returned through the town, and, though objects of

much curiosity were treated with civility, confirming Chandler's observation that the Philadelphians are a civil people. It was extremely pleasing to see a number of turtle doves on the roofs of the houses: they were well associated with the name of Philadelphia.

It is curious to see the city, thus subsisting in its ruins, prolonging its existence, it knows not well how, because a word of God rests upon it, still exhibiting the poverty of its ancient times, and confessing to the violent shocks with which it had been assailed yet never overcome.

The stork, if I err not, is the symbol of a commonwealth, and surely the turtle dove is the symbol of the Church. This is the more remarkable when it is known what fierce sieges and attacks it had to withstand from the Turks, to whom at length it was fain to capitulate, as being of that third part of the earth given into their hand by the prophecy of this book.

Yet with what distinguished honor to itself, let the historian Gibbon testify, who was no favorer of the truth of God. Yet these are his words:

At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperor, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above four-score years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans in 1390. Among the Greek colonies and Churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins.

From that time to this it has continued to follow the fortunes of its conquerors, and in their hands still remains. But God has preserved the vestiges of that Church for which the vestiges of the city were preserved.

Dr. Chandler visited the bishop in his palace, such as it was, and entered into discourse with the chief priests in the absence of the bishop, but found them ignorant of the Greek language, in which they did the service, yet persevering to keep up the service, as those upon whom rested a word of

prophecy, that they should be kept in existence till He come again.

So also Mr. Arundell found things upon his visit, whose fellow-traveler...

“...could not help shedding tears, at contrasting this unmeaning mummerly [the long Greek service on Palm Sunday which he attended], with the pure worship of primitive times, that probably had been offered on the very site of the present Church.”

And yet God’s goodness seems to have remarkably shone towards this Church in endeavoring to keep her from the cloud and darkness of ignorance by preserving among them some ancient manuscripts, it is likely of the Scriptures; for, alas! They no longer exist; and when the latter traveler inquired about them, the priest told him that he recollected...

“...to have formerly seen some very old pieces of parchment, but that he had learned today the children had torn them all up.”

It would be wrong to omit mentioning another emblematic circumstance with which we will conclude, that amongst the ruins stands up a solitary pillar of a higher antiquity, and manifestly pertaining to a more ancient structure, which with its solitary finger pointed to that New Jerusalem in the heavens, and may abide there haply till it comes down thence; seeming to say:

Revelation 3

¹² Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

