The Revelation of Jesus Christ
Book 5

Revelation 2:8-11

Epistle to the Church in Smyrna

Edward Irving

1831

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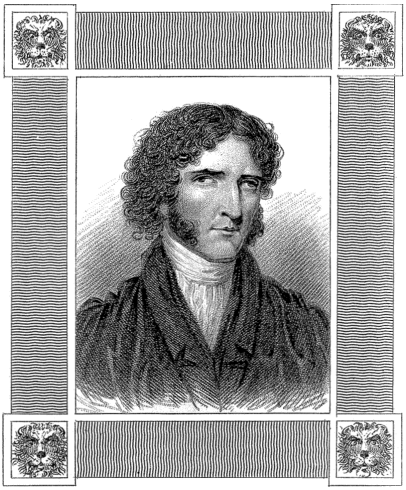

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Revelation 2:8-11

Epistle to the Church in Smyrna

Edward Irving

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

1831

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Revelation 2

[8] And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things says the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;
[9] I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.
[10] Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.
[11] He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches; He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.

Smyrna

Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Frank Zimmerman
practicaprophetica.com

Gather up the fragments, that none be lost.

I. The Importance of Spiritual Interpretation

IT IS a low view and a loose interpretation of the *Apocalypse*, which would represent those innumerable coincidences which it has with the old prophecies as an accidental thing, or which would account for its varieties of imagery by the exuberant riches of the Word of God.

It is a very common abuse of the Prophets to quote them for the effect of their sublime imagery, and to examine no further into the matter or substance of the prophecy; yea, to abuse and contemn, as drunken men, those who seek for the truth of interpretation. I know not whether more to pity or to blame such tampering with the solemn and solid Word of God, as if any part of it were for ornament, any part of it for poetical or oratorical effect.

But to me it is a low view even of poetry and of oratory, to seek for words or figures therein for any other sake than that of interpreting and truly interpreting, the spirit of truth in the poet and orator. But thus to deal with the Word of God, whose very jots and tittles are more solid and substantial than the heavens and the earth, is a most unworthy calumny, yea, even blasphemy of Him by whose Spirit the words were indited.

The poetical language, the rhetorical power, the depth of feeling, the richness of symbol, the exuberance of figure with which it abounds, are nothing due to any wanton, unregulated playful humors or tastes of the writers. But they are the most proper, the most exact, the most complete forms for expressing the fullness of that eternal truth which God would express concerning His Christ; for…

Revelation 19

[10] …the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus.

I have learned, God be praised, a higher reverence for the written Word than so to regard, than so to treat it. I have learned to look upon its minutest particles as sacred, and to study it with

more care, than wherewith I was wont to read the most condensed demonstrations of the *Principia* of Newton, or the most learned and adorned passages of the *Paradise Lost*.

And where I cannot find a consistent meaning for anything which I find written in the Word of God, I no longer think of explaining it away, by what they call a spiritual interpretation, but am content to confess my ignorance, and wait till God send me a teacher, which I ever find Him most ready to do.

There is, indeed, a spiritual interpretation of every history and prophecy in God's Word. The events and incidents are but the means of conveying to us insight into the being of God, who is a Spirit, and the being of man, who is an embodied spirit. To raise, therefore, a spiritual interpretation upon the basis of every action of God, whether past or to come, is the bounden duty of every preacher, of every interpreter, and of every reader of God's Word. The rest is but the means, this is the end; the rest is but the acting of the faculty which considers means, this is the acting of the faculty which looks at God.

Man was not made merely to consider the machinery of a purpose, but through the consideration of this to see the mind and will of Him who purposes. Would that such were the spiritual interpretations now contended for! Then would there be no objection to literal and historical interpretation, which but prepares the materials for the spiritual; bearing to it the same relation which the knowledge of God's ways bears to the acknowledgment of His wisdom and faithfulness and loving-kindness to the children of men.

But that thing which they are contending for, under the name of spiritual interpretation, is really no interpretation at all. It is the privilege of remaining ignorant of the particular, and even general, purposes of God, for which they plead, and justify themselves in following after.

They want the liberty of reading whole sections of the Word of God without affixing any meaning to them at all; they want the

license of casting the adamantine Word of God over again in the sandy molds of their own narrow systems of knowledge, faith, and practice. Like schoolboys, they would cull flowery passages out of the prophets to ornament their speech withal. Like children, they would find sweet morsels here and there, to please their own and their people's ill-regulated taste.

As a minister of Christ, I am a guardian of God's Word, and I have a right to speak. God has given me a wardenship of the treasure, and I must not sleep upon my watch: therefore I lift up my voice to all concerned in the honor of God's Word, and solemnly protest that this attempt of what are called evangelical writings and preachings, to withdraw the mind of the Church from the prophetic parts of Scripture, is a more dangerous and a more subtle work of Satan than when he moved the Council of Trent to intersperse the *Apocrypha* through the inspired canon, and our Bible Society to give effect to that daring dishonor of God's faithful Word.

Let the men confess that they cannot interpret those passages of the Word, and seek help from the Holy Ghost, who searches the deep things of God. Let them honor the office of an interpreter in whom they discern an orthodox faith, a right charitable spirit, and a trembling reverence for the Word of God.

An interpretation is that which answers to the words and sentences of the Scripture, understood as the same words and sentences in any other book would be understood; for God does not write in a cipher, nor does He deal deceitfully with speech, the organ of intelligence.

There is no esoteric and isoteric school of interpretation of the Scripture: there is no Egyptian priestcraft hiding truth in hieroglyphics; nor any mysteries, Greek or Roman; nor any Druidical secrecies, revealed only to a few. The word which is written for all shall hereafter judge all.

O Scotland! where now are your Durhams and your Flemings, who had delight, and gave delight, in opening the *Song*, and the

Apocalypse, and all the Prophets! Were they poor divines, because they delighted in the prophetical writings? Were they injudicious men, unworthy churchmen, or indifferent ministers and pastors? And when shall England find me an interpreter of Scripture like Joseph Mede the millenarian; upon whom it afflicts me greatly that the heedlessness of a minister of my own church should have cast derision as he has also upon the most venerable fathers of the primitive times.

In the company of such men as Joseph Mede, Irenaeus, and Justin Martyr, to be derided is a high honor. But it were far better that he, who thus exposes his folly and his malice, would learn from them lessons of knowledge, and wisdom, and piety, and how to reverence the awful Word of God.

I make no secret of my desire that these unfaithful dealers with the Word of God should be exposed, as you would expose a class of men who have combined to adulterate the food of the people. The time is come when either the treacherous dealers with the Word of God must be exposed, or the Church be taken in the lap of carnal security.

I believe that a worse deluge than the flood of Noah is near for to come, from which only faithfulness will save my own house and my own charge. For one who thus believes, it is cruel, it is infamous, to hold his peace against those who say that all is well, and working well to the glory of God and the good of the Church. I cannot be silent, I cannot hold my peace. If others I cannot save, as Luther said, I must save my own soul: if others I cannot deliver, I must, as says the Holy Ghost by Ezekiel, deliver my own soul.[1]

[1] *Ezekiel* 33:1-20.

II. Historical Background

CONCERNING Smyrna, the city in which the angel and Church honored with the next epistle had their abode, we have the following information given to us in Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*, under the life of Polycarp, who was angel of that Church, and is believed to have been the very person addressed in the verses which form the subject of our present lecture:

> A place it was of great honor and renown, and has not only very magnificent titles heaped upon it by the writers of those times, but in several ancient inscriptions set up by the public order of the senate, not long after the time of Adrian, it is styled the chief city of Asia, both for beauty and greatness the most splendid, the metropolis of Asia, and the ornament of Ionia.
>
> But it had a far greater and a more honorable privilege to glory in, if it was (as we suppose) the place of Polycarp's nativity, however of his education, the seat of his episcopal care and charge, and the scene of his tragedy and martyrdom.

It had been, before the time of his suffering, the honored scene of other martyrs and confessors for the truth, as we find it reported in the Encyclical Letter which the Church of Smyrna wrote to the Churches of Pontus upon the occasion of his death. This letter is partly transcribed, and partly given in summary, by Eusebius, in the 15th chapter of the fourth book of his *Ecclesiastical History*. It begins thus:

> The Church of God, which is at Smyrna, unto the Church at Philomilium, and unto all the congregations of the holy Catholic Church throughout Pontus, mercy, peace, and the love of God the Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied.
>
> We have written unto you, brethren, of such as suffered martyrdom, and of blessed Polycarpus, who signed and sealed the persecution with his own blood.

And before they make relation of Polycarpus, they rehearse the constancy and patience of other martyrs, saying:

> The beholders were amazed, seeing the flesh of the martyrs rent with scourges, even unto the inner veins and sinews, so that the most secret entrails of their bodies, their bowels, and inward privities, were piteously to be seen; beholding again the sharp shells of sea fish and pebble stones strewed under the martyr's backs and bruised bodies, with every kind of torment that could be devised. Last of all, they were thrown to be torn to pieces, and devoured of wild beasts.
>
> Specially they wrote of Germanicus, that he valiantly endured and overcame, through the grace of God, that corporeal fear of death, grafted in the frail nature of man. For when the proconsul exhorted him to relent, admonished him of his tender years, prayed him to pity his own case, being now in the flower of his youth, he, without intermission, enticed the beasts to devour him, yea, constrained and compelled that with speed he might be dispatched of this cruel and wicked life; which patience and constancy of the blessed martyr, and of the whole Christian nation, the multitude of infidels beholding, suddenly cried out, "Remove the wicked, seek out Polycarpus."

I shall add one other extract, as casting light upon Smyrna, the seat of this Church, and upon Polycarp, its bishop, before proceeding with my subject; likewise taken from the life of Polycarp, in Cave's *Lives of the Fathers*:

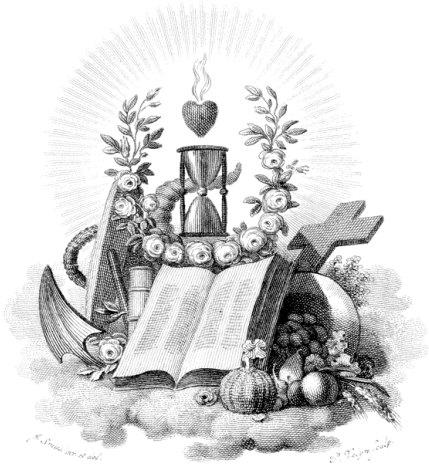
> It cannot be deemed but that Smyrna was next to Ephesus, as St. Clemens says that city also was, and that St. John seems to have had a more than ordinary regard to that Church, it being, next Ephesus, the first of those seven famous Asian churches to whom he directed his epistles, and St. Polycarp at this time bishop of it; for that he was that angel of the Church at Smyrna to whom the apocalyptical epistle was sent, is not only highly probable, but, by a learned man, put past all question.
>
> I must confess that the character and circumstances ascribed by St. John to the angel of that Church, seem very exactly to agree with Polycarp, and with no other bishop of that Church, (about those times especially,) that we read of in the history of the Church; and whoever compares the account of St. Polycarp's martyrdom, with the notices and intimations which the *Apoca-*

lypse there gives of that person's sufferings and death, will find the prophecy and the event suit together.

That which may seem to make most against it, is the long time of his presidency over that see; seeing, by this account, he must sit at least seventy-nine years bishop of that Church, from the latter end of Domitian's reign (when the *Apocalypse* was written) to the persecution under M. Aurelius, when he suffered: to which no other solution needs to be given, than that his great, nay, extreme age at the time of his death, renders it not at all improbable; especially when we find, several ages after, that Remigius, bishop of Rheims, sat seventy-nine years bishop of that place.

From that time, until our own day, which witnessed the massacre of the Greek inhabitants, Smyrna has been the seat of continual persecution, and, notwithstanding, retains the most flourishing church at present subsisting in Asia; fulfilling to the letter the promise of this epistle, as we shall show in its proper place, after we have opened in order the three several parts of the epistle:

1. Christ's designation therein.
2. His charge to the angel of that Church.
3. The Spirit's exhortation to all the members thereof.



III. Christ's Second Designation

Revelation 2

[8] These things says the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

THIS second designation, like all the seven, is in substance contained in the vision emblematical of the universal Bishop with which the epistles are introduced, being part of the words which his glorified, yet gracious, Master spoke unto the astonished seer:

Revelation 1

[17] And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last;
[18] I am He that lives and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

When we explained these words, in the course of our exposition upon the 1st chapter,[2] we had space merely to open the doctrine which they contain, and referred the details and application thereof until we should meet the words again in the superscription of the letter to the Church in Smyrna.

Now, therefore, we are called upon, both by our pledge and by our inclination, to enter fully into the import and the dignity of these words, "the first and the last, who became dead and lived;" and to show wherefore Christ should deem them worthy of being used to designate one of the seven attributes of His glorious high priesthood.

The style consists of two parts; the former expressed in these words, "the first and the last;" the latter in these words, "which became dead and lived." Into the mystery of each of these truths I would now reverently inquire.

---

[2] See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 3 "Christ the Universal Head and Bishop of the Church," Chapter: "The Vision," Sections: "The Announcement: I Am the First and the Last" & "The Announcement: I Am the Living One."

The First and the Last

First,

Revelation 2

[8] These things says the first and the last.

This is now the third time since the commencement of these labors that we have been called upon to meditate the profound truth of Christ, embodied to reason in these words.

I say a truth of Christ embodied to reason, rather than a truth of God; because Godhead being essentially incomprehensible, unsearchable, and inexpressible, cannot be embodied by any words to reason or to any other intelligence, otherwise than through Christ, who is the Godhead brought or rather bringing himself within the bounds and limits of what a creature can know, express, and apprehend.

All that language can do, in speaking of God, is to deny that He has the attributes of a creature: by negatives, and by those only, can we speak of the infinite God. For example, that very word "infinite" signifies not bounded, not ended.

If anyone should object to this cardinal truth, that we can, for example, assert positively, that God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent; I answer that these words do not express attributes of the incomprehensible, but of the comprehensible God; not of God the Father, but of God the Christ. For to know all things, to do all things, and to fill and possess all things with His presence, carries us not a jot beyond the bounds of creation, beyond the region of things; and therefore they are not expressions of the unbounded Godhead, but of Godhead within the bounds of creation.

So, in like manner, those expressions of God derived from the conscience,—such as that He is holy and faithful and true, and loving and merciful,—are within the bounds of pure reason, are in fact properties of perfect reason, and therefore can in no wise contain the fullness of Godhead unembodied, but only the fullness of Godhead embodied in Jesus Christ.

And in a word, if any man were to say that he could comprehend God, by word or by idea, he would make himself co-equal with, yea, and of larger capacity than God; forasmuch as that which comprehends is larger than that which is comprehended therein.

We lay it down, therefore, as an indubitable truth, as a truth of the first order, that no one by searching can find out God;[3] that words cannot tell out His essential being, nor thought possess His invisible ways; for as the heaven is high above the earth, so are His thoughts above our thoughts, and His ways above our ways. The question therefore necessarily arises,

> "And what then is it that words do express; and what then is it that reason apprehends, if so be they express and apprehend not the eternal and unchangeable Godhead?"

I answer, Words express and reason apprehends the Christ of God. And is not the Christ of God the very God? Yea, verily: yet is He that very God bringing himself within the limits, first of the intelligible and then of the visible. And when the eternal Godhead has thus come within the bounds of intelligence in the Christ, He can be spoken of by word to intelligent beings when they shall be created, and by them He can be apprehended.

Now this subsistence of Godhead within the bounds of intelligence is sustained in the person of the Son, and not in the person of the Father, nor in the person of the Holy Ghost. The Son consents, for the common purposes of Godhead, to subsist within the limited bounds of the Christ, wherein He shall ever call the Father God,

> **2 Corinthians 11** [also Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3]
> [31] The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the expression of His subordinate personality, as the generated Son in the co-equal and co-essential Godhead. It is proper to Him, as Son eternally begotten, to take upon Him the submissive dutiful and lovely part of condescending out of the in-

[3] *Job* 11:7.

finite Godhead into the finite Christ; and without changing, or separating from, His Godhead, to put forth forever its energy in the way of self-emptying and humble condescension into a limited form; which limited form, for its properties we speak not of now, but may give to it its name among other intelligences, which is the risen God-man.

Now, while thus it is proper to the Son to uphold and sustain the subsistence of the Christ, it is proper to the Holy Ghost to bring that subsistence into realized form.

- The Father's property it is to originate the form;
- The Son's property it is to give it person;
- The Holy Ghost's to give it life and being:

And their communion is, to educe out of it the various ages of time, the various forms of life, the various things of creation; which all, as they come forth from the fullness of the Christ, may acknowledge Him as the origin and originator, as the creator and upholder of their life.

And thus it is that the Godhead, anterior to all creation and before all worlds, took to himself a limited form of subsistence, which:

- In the *Proverbs* is called Wisdom (chapter 8); and
- In the Gospel of *John* is called the Word; and
- In the *First Epistle of John* is called the Life; and
- In all Scripture is called the Christ.

This is the Divine subsistence which is expressible by word and apprehensible by reason. This is that of which all Scripture testifies; which also, all creation acknowledges and declares. This is He of whom the acts, offices, and dignities are thus expressed in the opening of the *Epistle to the Hebrews*:

Hebrews 1

[1] God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

[2] Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also, He made the worlds:
[3] Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
[4] Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.
[5] For unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are my Son, this day have I begotten you? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son?

And of this same being, the Christ, it is still more fully written in the opening of the *Epistle to the Colossians*:

Colossians 1
[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 unreproveable in His sight:
[23] If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.

Now it further remains to the complete unfolding of this most precious truth, that I should show what most necessary and otherwise unattainable ends are served by this great act of Godhead, before the world was. And first, it realizes the existence of Godhead before all time, and beyond all space of creation. Here is an act of Godhead in himself, exterior to creation, and therefore altogether out of creation. The act is the setting up of the Christ,

Proverbs 8

[23] ...from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.

And not only is the existence of Godhead thereby realized, but its existence in divers personalities, and also the relation of these personalities to one another, is thereby discovered. In the same passage of the *Proverbs* is thus written of these two, the person of God and the person of Wisdom:

[30] Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him;
[31] Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.

And in the sublime exordium of the *Gospel by John*, it is said of the Word that He was with God, and that He was God, and that He came forth from the bosom of God: and in the passage quoted above from the *Colossians*, it is said that it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell: expressions these which convey in the strongest terms the diversity of persons in the Godhead, the subordination of place in the unity of substance, between these two, the Father and the Son.

But this unity of substance between two divers persons can only be maintained, even in idea, by the existence of a third person, who shall be the bond of that union. If the Father in His own personality were to speak or to do anything to the Son, to the end of His coming into the bounds of the Christ, or if He were to express or show forth any affection to Him, in that subsistence, then the Father himself comes within the limits thereof, and illimitable infinite Godhead ceases to be the inalienable property of the Father;—ceases, indeed, from its unchangeableness, incomprehensi-

bility, and all the other attributes which are essential to its being worshiped by the creature.

Therefore, most necessary it is to the end of God, which is His own glory and worship, and the creature's blessedness therein, that, in holding communion with His Son in the limited form of Christ, He should do it by another person, who being God, may, for this very end of communicating between God the Father and Christ the Son, reduce himself in order to pass between, and fill the Christ with the continual supply of the Father's good pleasure; and having received from Christ the expression of His perfect duty, pass again into the Godhead of the Father; and so without bringing the Father into limitation, and without taking Christ out of limitation, may, by a continual circulation, preserve the oneness of mind, the identity of will, purpose, and act, between God and Christ, between Godhead in the infinite and Godhead in the finite, between Godhead in the absolute and Godhead in the non-absolute.

And thus, by the setting up of the Christ before the world was, is the existence of God out of creation, and His subsistence within himself in three persons, and His enjoyment within himself, demonstrated in the only way in which I believe it to be capable of demonstration.

Again, this setting up of the Christ by the persons of the Godhead before the world was, makes a creation possible, and gives to creation its proper place and use and relation unto God. Creation has a being only in virtue of the Christ who is already set up; and only through Him has it, or can it have, any relation to or communication with God. For, as has been said already, God in himself is essentially incommunicable, ineffable, incomprehensible, while creation is essentially derived, determined, and limited; and, therefore, there could exist no communication whatever between the absolute Godhead and a bounded creation, or a bounded intelligence; for there is no way from the infinite into the finite opened up.

Creation in such a case, if creation there could be such, would necessarily be a God unto itself, and consequently a rival God, which God, who is very goodness, would never permit. To connect creation, therefore, with the Godhead, in those bonds of knowledge, worship, and obedience, which are the only sources of its well-being, the setting up of Christ as the first was absolutely necessary: and, though I will not say that the setting up of Christ was for the end of creation, but for the higher end of God's enjoyment of himself, and perhaps also for the end of realizing the personalities of the Godhead in unity, most certainly necessary for the apprehension of the same by us; yet I will say, that creation could not have been without the previous constitution of the Christ, who is therefore said to be before all things, and likewise the firstborn of every creature.

To the consistency of this great idea, it is essential that the Christ be not a creature, be not a creation; for if a creature or creation He were, as the believers in a pre-existent humanity erroneously hold, then God were not known out of creation, because He is not known out of Christ; and creation, instead of deploring its own instability and sinfulness, would have had to boast of its stability and sinlessness.

What then is the Christ, if He be not a creature, and if He be not the absolute God? He is the purpose of the absolute God realized in a person, which person is the Son of God, very God of very God, in whose Christhood the Father beholds His purpose all complete, and through the means of the Holy Ghost expresses His delight therein, and receives His homage by the same Holy Ghost therefrom.

And the Son of God in His Christhood constitutes the ages, and creates the world, and does all things according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will, in whom we are chosen before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Creation, therefore, and redemption, and election, are all seen in the Christ, and communicated with, by the Father through the

Spirit, ere ever they had an outward being; and as the Christ is beloved, so is every creature beloved of the Father.

This is the high birthplace of every creature, this is the noble birthright of every creature, to have been beloved in the Christ by the Father, before the world was. As the Father loved Christ, so was creation loved of Him; and as the Father loved Christ, so are we the Church still loved of the Father.[4]

And as the Father loved Christ, so shall all the things in heaven and in earth, when recapitulated into Christ, be loved of the Father; and as creation was seen in Christ before it had a being, perfect, and beautiful, and beloved, it shall be gathered into Him and stand in Him through ages and ages.

This is necessary to be known and had in remembrance, in order that every creature may know what a Father it has in God, in order that every prodigal creature may know the heinousness of its offense in sinning against such a Father, in order that the exceeding sinfulness of sin may be known, in order that the exceeding long-suffering of God to sinners may be known, in order that the eternal love of God which moved redemption may be known to have been always in Him; for what is the love of redemption, but a love coequal with the love He has for His own Son; and if He has shown such a love to the creature in its fallen state, surely He had no less a love to the creature when He brought it into being.

A love to it, not out of Christ; for out of Christ it neither is nor can be, save by the judgment of the second death,—concerning which more hereafter; but a love to it as a part of the fullness in Christ, which by coming out of Him did not cease to be His, according as it is written in that exordium of John's Gospel, so oft referred to,

John 1
[11] He came unto His own [things, or creatures, or possessions],
but His own [persons] received Him not.

[4] *John* 17:23.

These truths, equally essential to the knowledge of God, and to a creature's knowledge of itself, as beloved of God, as sinning against Him and beloved still, and to be beloved, ay, and until it shall have rejected its Christ made known unto it; these truths, I say, of God, and of Christ, and of creation, I have here a little more enlarged upon, though they occur everywhere in these discourses, as everywhere they ought to occur in all Christian discourse, to the end that I may give full explanation to the expression, "the first and the last;" and afterwards to the expression, "which became dead and lives."

The first, He is in existence before God, or with God, or beside God. Though as God He is not to be called first, in respect of origination, being originated by the Father, (and as to time it has nothing to do with the Godhead at all,) He is the first of subsistences with God, and beside God, and before God.

Proverbs 8

[30] Then I was by Him as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him.

In the sense of His Christhood, and not of His Godhead, is it said in the text, "He is the first." In relation to the creatures, and not in relation to God, is it said, He is the first; and the intention of so speaking concerning himself is, to give to the creatures the knowledge of their origin and fountain-head from himself, to teach them that they are not self-existent, but deriving their existence from Him, though He appeared late in the order of creation; that though He had not been born and constituted a creature some hundred years before, yet was He the first in the order of existences, before Adam, before angels, before all things.

It is to claim to himself that precedency which is His due; that creatorship, that constituting and upholding of all things which is His due. To the end that this truth might be known of His Christhood,

Hebrews 13

[8] ...the same yesterday, today, and forever;

–to the end it might be known from what preeminence of place, from what primordiality of being He did, in His gentleness and love, condescend, when far on in the generations of men, He took His place as the child of an obscure daughter of David.

To take precedency of David, as not only David's offspring, but David's root;[5] to take precedency of Moses, as Moses' master, the Son and Heir, whose servant Moses was,[6] to take precedency of Abraham, before whom, says he, "I am;" to take precedency of Adam, who was but the type of Him that was to come; to claim to himself the Melchizedek dignity of being without father or mother, without beginning of days or end of life, He so solemnly insists that He is the first.

And not for this end alone, of asserting to himself His proper rank and order of being, as the Christ, as…

Hebrews 13

[8] …the same yesterday, today, and forever;

–but likewise to teach all the practical truths, the great moral truths, which flow from that mother truth, He so oft makes use of these simple words, "I am the first." Of which great moral truths these be the chief:

First, That in right of the first He asked and required the homage of all things created and made, that they should look to Him as their Parent, and yield to Him their obedience, and not go about to think to come at God by any other way than through the honor of Him as the great creating, redeeming, sustaining Head.

Secondly, to teach them their unity in himself, all diverse in rank, order, and individuals; all divided by the wounds, schisms, and strifes of sin and death; all disunited by space and time, as the creatures be;—that yet in Him they have their origin, their habitation, their unity: and therefore, if they would have peace, to Him they should draw with all their affections, and in Him suffer

[5] *Revelation* 22:15.
[6] *Hebrews* ch. 3.

themselves to take root and abide, in Him find reconciliation with God, and with one another.

Thirdly, by taking to himself this title, "I am the first," He exalts himself above the powers of every other creature whatsoever, above Satan, above wicked angels, above wicked men, above the world, above all confederated powers of evil.

Such preeminence of place, such primordiality of time, He claims in this place, to comfort and sustain the heart of the angel of the Church of Smyrna, who was about to be tried with sore tribulations, and the heart of all good and faithful men, who should be put to the test by the rulers of the darkness of this world.

He says in the ears of every poor and afflicted creature, "Fear not, I am the first;" and with such words He would comfort and strengthen the heart of every solitary troubled creature under the face of heaven. "Fear not," says He, "I am the first."

These things when I reflect upon, my soul is filled with admiration. I lose myself in the glorious condescension of God in Christ, of Christ in Jesus, of Jesus in death. I see the love of God, yea, the grace of God, as an eternal principle of His being manifested in the act of God's becoming Christ in the person of the Son.

I see creation, with Christ its Head, as a unit, one though apparently so diversified and contradictory. I see creation, with Christ as its Head, as a harmonious whole, consenting in the expression and effecting of the purpose of God; I see it perfect, as God's conception; I see it beautiful, as God's own idea; I see it harmonious, as God's own unity; I see it stable, as God's own being in the person of the Son.

There is something very awful in what I see through the knowledge of this truth, that Jesus is the first. It seems to me, as if from the unity of my own person I could somewhat discern in the constitution of the Christ that idea which the Father saw, that purpose which the Father purposed in Him. It is a high and mysterious and magnificent thought.

By this designation of our blessed Lord, "I am the first," I understand it to be asserted, that He is the archetype of all creation; unto the figure of which it is conformed, of the unity of which it sends out the several parts; and into which the redeemed parts of creation shall be gathered again, so as to exhibit through eternity that fullness, which in Christ is summed up.

Moreover, this designation, "the first," sets Him out, as that image of the Godhead, which the eye of creation is capable of perusing, which the mind of creation is capable of apprehending; while, at the same time, in apprehending Him, we do not apprehend what is out of God, we do not apprehend a creature, which like other creatures might betray its Creator and utter falsehood; but we apprehend a subsistence in God, very God of very God, who dwells in the bosom of God, and comes thence to show us clearly of the Father: in one word, God manifested, God revealed, God intelligible.

Now this primordial subsistence, the Christ of God, is that Great Original before all worlds, from which all worlds do take their form, and the law of their being.

- He it is, in whose image man was made;
- He it is, who walked with Adam in the garden, and with whom Adam had sympathy and fellowship in all respects.
- He it is, whom God presented to the old serpent as his future destroyer;
- He, whom Enoch prophesied of, as the Avenger;
- He, whom Abraham knew as the Promiser;
- He, whom Moses saw as the Jehovah of the covenant;
- He, for whom David's throne and Solomon's were upreared, and shall be upreared again;
- He, whose glorious person Ezekiel and Daniel oft beheld;
- He, who was born of a virgin, becoming then a man, Jesus of Nazareth, which is the Christ;
- He, whom God testified to be His own Son, by the resurrection and ascension, and session on His throne, and gift of the Holy Ghost to dispense unto his Church;

- He, who shall come again in his Father's glory, and His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, uniting in His person these three spheres of being and of glory:
    - the sphere of Godhead, which is His by nature or essence;
    - the sphere of manhood, with all its dependencies of a visible world, which is His by assumption and redemption;
    - the sphere of the invisible or angelic subsistences, which is His by sustentation, for He sustains them from falling, as is beautifully signified in the ladder which Jacob saw in vision, whereon angels of God ascended and descended between heaven and earth.

And then, when He shall be exhibited in the glory of His Father, and His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, He shall be known to be the last as well as the first. The first, inasmuch as from Him, and out of Him, all things proceeded by creation: The last, as into Him all things shall be gathered, and stand together by regeneration. As the fountainhead of the river from which its waters flow He is the first, and the mighty ocean into which they flow He is the last; so, even so, is Christ the first and the last of all creation.

Now in thus designating himself as the last as well as the first, He presents himself unto His servant, the angel of the Church in Smyrna, as the all-enduring one, whom no power shall shake, whom no time shall wear away, whom no change shall alter in the least lineament of His being: expressing, as I judge, the same ground of confidence in Him which the Church thus expresses in the 102nd *Psalm*, when she is brought to the lowest ebb of feebleness, and stands in the terror of instant dissolution:

Psalm 102

[24] I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; your years are throughout all generations.
[25] Of old have You laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of your hands.

[26] They shall perish, but You shall endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall You change them, and they shall be changed.
[27] But You are the same, and your years shall have no end.
[28] The children of your servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before You.

When it is said, "I am the last," it is signified that in the latter end of time He only shall live, He only shall survive along with those who take refuge under the shadow of His wings, and are built up into the membership of His body. But for all those who shall withstand or reject Him, they shall be cast out into the outer darkness, and misery, and impotence, and corruption of the second death, answering as I conceive nearly to the thing which is expressed in:

Psalm 90
[1] Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations.
[2] Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world: even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.
[3] You turn man to destruction: and say, Return, you children of men.
[4] For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

This designation is taken towards that Church and its angel, which was destined to endure the most heavy trials and persecutions, and which through them all was to come victorious, and to abide, as at this day it abides, in no small strength nor mean condition. Therefore He presents himself as the stable One who knows no change, but in the midst of change stands, the column which upbears the world, and prevents it from passing away.

He presents himself in the midst of vicissitudes, bereavements, and losses, as:

- the Refuge which never fails,
- the Abode which shall never decay,
- the Friend who sticks closer than a brother,

- the Lover who loves unto the end.

To His Church, launched upon the stormy billows of the world, He presents himself as the Anchor of her faith, fixed within the vale beyond the world's reach.

To every poor minister buffeted with the reproach of the wicked, and beat upon with the evil powers of this world, and of the spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places, He presents himself as the Shepherd-King who will restore his soul, and with His rod and staff sustain him in the valley of the shadow of death.

He said unto Peter, when he had notably confessed Him to be the Christ the Son of God:

> **Matthew 16**
> [18] Upon this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

So likewise says He to the angel of the Church of Smyrna:

> "I am the first and the last; fear not; join yourself to me, and be perpetual; enter into me, and brave the desolation of the second death."

As the former epistle had respect to pastoral care, to episcopal jurisdiction, to the feeding of the flock in love; so has this epistle, from the first to the last, respect to the sufferings and persecutions of the Church, to its trials and vicissitudes, to its escapes and deliverances; until it shall stand in perpetual safety, beyond the power of the second death.

In the Church of Smyrna was to be given the demonstration of Christ's faithfulness stronger than death, and mightier than the powers of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and therefore every word of it tells of the everlasting constancy of Christ—presenting Him unto all angels of the churches, and unto all churches as their sure defense and continual preservation, in whom they may have, through faith, a perpetuity in that place where their candlestick has been set up.

The former epistle did exhibit the principle of every Church's decay to be the declension of their love to the Lord Jesus Christ,

and warns them against this fatal consumption; but this epistle exhibits, on the other hand, the ground and assurance of a Church's perpetuity against all accidents, against all revolutions of empires, against all apostasies of surrounding churches, against all persecutions, wars, destructions; to the end that any Church whatsoever and every Church may be assured of stability till the Lord come; provided they will cling with steadfastness to Him which was the first and is the last, which was dead and is alive.

And therefore it is nothing to be doubted that Christ's purpose towards every Church that He plants is, that it should not be rooted up till He come again. And whatever churches have fallen down are to be looked upon as having fallen down by reason of their own refusal of Christ, the Foundation-stone tried and precious, sure and steadfast.

And those churches now upon the earth, which are mourning over a departed glory, ought to strengthen the things that remain, and return unto the Lord who has smitten them, join themselves to the first and the last, and rest assured that they shall be built up again, and established like the Rock of Ages.

I feel this to be a great consolation, and I thank the great Head of the Church for the strength and assurance which it has brought to my soul, as the minister of a Church of the living God. I feel a confidence for myself and for my Church, that if we will together give good heed to this epistle, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. Let us then with the more diligence proceed in its exposition.

Which Was Dead and Is Alive

Revelation 2

[8] These things says [He]...which was dead and is alive.

Literally, "which became dead and lived." To the understanding of the truth and the consolation in these words contained, it is, first of all, necessary that we should remember the subject of whom they are spoken. They are spoken of Christ, by which name is sig-

nified Godhead, subsisting under an intelligible form in the person of the Son.

The person who died, therefore, is the Son of God, who is very God of very God. For nothing has the orthodox Church in all time so zealously contended as to affirm that God was born of a virgin, and that God died upon the cross; and as it is written in the 20th chapter of the *Acts* that God has purchased us with His own blood, because in these expressions they contended for this truth of truths—that the thing, the holy thing conceived of the virgin, was in the origin of its existence inseparably united and made eternally one with the second person of the glorious Godhead.

Therefore in our catechism it is said:

> "...that the Son of God was conceived in the womb of the virgin, and born of her, yet without sin."

On the other hand, no point has been more diligently argued, and more explicitly pronounced by the Catholic Church, in all ages of its existence, than this:

> That the Godhead cannot suffer nor be tempted, nor with any creature affection whatever be moved or influenced: because, if so, Godhead would cease to be a subsistence above, apart from, creation, all-sufficient in itself, subject to no change, and incapable of change.

How, then, it may be asked, could God be born, could God be crucified, could God suffer and die, according to the constant faith of the Catholic Church? Here is an apparent contradiction between two capital points of the orthodox faith. How are they to be reconciled?

They are to be reconciled by the doctrine concerning the Christ delivered above, and in no other way whatever. Before the world was, the Persons of the Godhead set up among themselves the Christ, as has been said, and the Son took that form of subsistence, and was God, subsisting as the Word, the Logos, before the world was. This glorious fullness of the Godhead, not absolute, but contained, and containing all purposes, forms of being, provi-

dences, and events whatsoever, is what Christ speaks of under the name:

John 17

[5] ...the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Now contemplate the Son of God thus subsisting as the Christ before creation, and you have the Being "which was made flesh, and dwelt among us:" which died upon the accursed tree; or, as it is in the text, became dead and lived again. He is not God in His absoluteness who does so, but God within the limits of the word; not God absolute, but the Logos, whose person indeed is the Son of God, but whose subsistence is not as the absolute Godhead, but as the Godhead intelligible.

Now this is He which was born, and yet Godhead was not born: this is He which was tempted of evil, and yet Godhead cannot be tempted of evil: this is He which died, and yet Godhead cannot die. God first realizes to himself a subsistence, as the Word in the person of the Son; and the Son thus subsisting, not in His absolute Godhead, but His limited Godhead, becomes flesh, and becomes dead.

His Godhead all the while remaining unchanged, His Christhood alone passes through the condition of humiliation and death; and yet the identity of the person is preserved, whether you look to His subsistence in Godhead absolute, or His subsistence in Christhood before the worlds; or His subsistence in sinful flesh, which He made sinless, redeeming it out of death; or His present subsistence in the throne of God; or His future subsistence as the King and Priest of a regenerate world.

The unintelligible part of this mystery is, how Godhead should come out of the absolute form into the relative form of the Christ; and how the person subsisting as the Christ should likewise subsist as the absolute God. To attempt to explain this, to attempt to understand it, is to attempt to make God comprehensible, which is no less than to attempt to make Him a creature —yea, and the creation of a creature: for this action of Godhead, by which He

becomes comprehensible, is an action above and beyond the comprehensible; is an action to the end of becoming comprehensible, and must therefore remain forever incomprehensible. This, therefore, I attempt not to explain: this I pronounce inexplicable to man or angel.

But from the point at which the Christ is set up, and God in the person of the Son becomes active in Christ, from that point it is all intelligible, all within the bounds of pure reason, which to know is life eternal.

That reasonable man who turns aside from the knowledge of God, from the full and perfect knowledge of God in Christ revealed, is guilty of an enormous sin, which I shall not name nor judge, but of which I will say this, that it is the heaviest sin of the Church in these times. For, alas! she is contented to be ignorant of those high points of truth and reason which I am continually straining my faculties to express: *labor ingratus:* labor truly without reward; yea, labor with much contumely, suspicion, and accusation pursued, if I were to look to the multitude of men and churchmen around me, my brethren, and my fathers; but labor well bestowed and most delightful, when I look unto the Light of life, when I look into the community of it, which I myself have partaken; and when I look unto those who, refusing the fellowship of a dark world and a blinded understanding, do seek and find their fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Of the Son of God, then, subsisting as the Christ within the bounds of reason and of word, it is said in the text that He became dead. In the first of *John* it is said that He became flesh, but here it is said that He became dead. Now between these two spheres of humiliation there is a great difference, upon which I would make some observations: that is to say, in order to show more perfectly what is meant by Christ's becoming dead, I would follow Him in His progress thereto by His first becoming flesh.

Flesh is the region of humanity, the bound and compass which God has fixed for the definition of His creature man; not the body

alone, nor the reasonable soul alone, but the body and the soul or spirit, the visible and the invisible parts of man, subsisting in union with one another. When, therefore, it is said, Christ became flesh, it is signified that He who heretofore had subsisted in the glory and fullness of Godhead intelligible, did empty himself thereof, and come into the condition and limits and passions and affections of manhood, such as manhood is experienced by us to be, such as manhood is by God defined to be.

This is incarnation in the abstract idea of it—that from being the *Pleroma*, the fullness of the Godhead, the *Logos*, the Word of God, subsisting not in any creature form, but in the bosom of the Father abiding, and its vastness filling, and its blessedness enjoying, He should take upon Him and be brought into the conditions of space and time, and endure whatever pains, sufferings, diseases, troubles, and affections, an embodied soul and quickened body are heir unto. This, I say, is the abstract idea of incarnation, and is the proper measure of the humiliation voluntarily undertaken therein.

As to the peculiar condition of the flesh which He took, whether fallen or unfallen, sinless or sinful, it is a question not of the substance, but of the accidents of incarnation; for incarnation might have been in Adam's unfallen substance, as well as in Mary's fallen substance. It would have been equally incarnation in either case.

But if in Adam's unfallen substance, it would have had:

- no connection with our fallen condition,
- no sympathy with our trials,
- no affliction with our afflictions,
- no share in our sufferings,
- no fellowship of our mortal ills,
- no conjunction with us in our death, and
- no bearing upon our condition beyond the grave.

If He was incarnate of Adam's unfallen substance, incarnation has no comfort in it to a sinner:

- As man, it touches me and honors me, but, as a sinful man, it touches me not at all;
- As a mortal man, it yields me no life of immortality;
- As an enslaved man, it yields me no tidings of redemption;
- As a rebellious man at war with my God, it yields me no knowledge of atonement.

It is, indeed, a great condescension of God, which, like the devils, I may look at and tremble; which, like Balaam, I may see, but not nigh: condescension of God there is in it to creation, but to a sinner there is no grace.

Wide, wide of my wants it is: and if so it is that Christ took Adam's unfallen substance, I, a poor fallen sinner, am debarred from hope of liberty, and must hang my harp upon the willows; or, if I take it into my hand, must strike the note of hopes defeated, of human redemption forever forsaken of God, of mankind forlorn, and the world forever lost.

But it is not so. Whoso says it is so, let him be anathema. If an angel from heaven should come and say it is so, let him be anathema maranatha.

When I said above, that to the idea of incarnation in its abstract form, redemption from sin and death was not necessary, I did not mean to say that it was not of the essence of the purpose of God, wherein Christ is contemplated as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It is as much of the purpose of God, that Christ should die, as that He should be made flesh: and therefore when the man who was His forerunner and messenger to announce Him, pointed his finger at Him, he spoke these words,

John 1
[29] Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world;

–announcing Him as the sacrificial Lamb, whom God had sanctified and sent into the world for the end of taking away its sin. And upon this He rests His claim to the Father's love; not that He had become flesh, but that He was to give His life for the sheep.

And wherever in Scripture this great mystery is celebrated, an essential part of it consists in His dying: as, for example, in the 2nd chapter of the Philippians:

Philippians 2

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;
7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And in the opening of the *Hebrews:*

Hebrews 1

1 God, who in sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets,
2 Has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds;
3 Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;
4 Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

His becoming flesh, therefore, is not to be separated in the purpose of God, from His becoming dead: to the unfolding of which truth we now proceed. Death is the stamp of God, which distinguished a sinful state of the creature.

Romans 6

23 The wages of sin is death.

Romans 5

12 Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Putting Christ out of the question, no one can deny that death is the one thing which differences the creature void of sin from the creature under sin; the creature in its creation state, from the creature in the state wherein by its own actings it has brought itself; or in one word the unfallen from the fallen.

I do not say that death proves a creature to be actually sinful, because then it would prove Christ to be sinful; but I say that it proves a creature to have lost its creation standing, and to be upon another footing before God, which is the footing of redemption, resting upon another base than that base originally given to it by God.

Christ, to become mortal, must therefore not be created, but generated of a woman: His generation is of the Holy Ghost, but it is not creation. If it were creation, then He must fall before He can die: but being generated, He himself, as to His human nature, stands upon a redemption footing, and therefore is mortal. And in the Psalms, and in the Prophets, He is as continually, ay, and more frequently spoken of, as being saved than as saving, as being redeemed than as redeeming:

Psalm 16

[9] Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
[10] For You will not leave my soul in hell; neither will You suffer your Holy One to see corruption.
[11] You will show me the path of life: in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 22

[20] Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.
[21] Save me from the lion's mouth: for You have heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

Psalm 28

[8] The Lord is their strength, and He is the saving strength of His anointed.

Psalm 35

[17] Lord, how long will You look on? rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.
[19] Let not them that are my enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.
[23] Stir up yourself, and awake to my judgment, even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.

[28] And my tongue shall speak of your righteousness and of your praise all the day long.

Psalm 40

[1] I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.
[2] He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.
[3] And He has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.
[11] Withhold not your tender mercies from me, O Lord: let your lovingkindness and your truth continually preserve me.
[12] For innumerable evils have compassed me about: my iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head: therefore my heart fails me.
[13] Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make haste to help me.

Psalm 41

[4] I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against You.
[5] My enemies speak evil of me, When shall he die, and his name perish?
[9] Yea, my own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.
[10] But You, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them.

Psalm 55

[16] As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me.

Psalm 56

[11] In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.
[13] For You have delivered my soul from death: will not You deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?

Psalm 69

[29] But I am poor and sorrowful: let your salvation, O God, set me up on high.

Psalm 71

[20] You, which have showed me great and sore troubles, shall quicken me again, and shall bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Psalm 91

[15] He shall call upon me, and I will answer Him: I will be with Him in trouble; I will deliver Him, and honor Him.
[16] With long life will I satisfy Him, and show Him my salvation.

Psalm 116

[4] Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech You, deliver my soul.
[8] For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

Psalm 118

[5] I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.
[8] It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.
[9] It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.
[10] All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.
[13] You have thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.
[14] The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.
[17] I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.
[21] I will praise You: for You have heard me, and are become my salvation.
[22] The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

Isaiah 8

[17] And I will wait upon the Lord, that hides His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him.
[18] Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwells in mount Zion.

Isaiah 49

[7] Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to

a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose you.
[8] Thus says the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard you, and in a day of salvation have I helped you: and I will preserve you, and give you for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

Isaiah 53
[9] And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.
[10] Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when you shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
[11] He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.
[12] Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 55
[5] Behold, you shall call a nation that you know not, and nations that knew you not shall run unto you because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.

Acts 2
[22] You men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you yourselves also know:
[23] Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
[24] Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be held of it.

Acts 3
15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God has raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

Acts 13
30 But God raised Him from the dead:

Romans 4
24 ...if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

Romans 6
9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death has no more dominion over Him.
10 For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.

Romans 8
11 But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.

1 Corinthians 15
15 ...we have testified of God that He raised up Christ...

Ephesians 1
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,

Philippians 2
8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
9 Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:

Hebrews 2
9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.
10 For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Hebrews 5

[7] Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared;

[8] Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;

[9] And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him;

Hebrews 13

[20] Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

1 Peter 1

[21] ...believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

And the same is declared to have been the object and the end of those prayers, and supplications, and tears, which He offered in the days of His flesh;[7] and in one word, the acting of Godhead in Him, which is the Father's acting, is altogether made void, unless we look upon Christ as standing in the condition of needing to be saved, and of having been saved in virtue of His continual faith upon the Father.

Where then, it may be said, is the acting of His own Godhead? This question contains in it a fundamental error; as if, when He showed the acting of the Father's Godhead, He did not also show the acting of His own Godhead, which would divide the substance of the Godhead.

If a man, being shown the Father's acting in support and preservation of Christ, turn about and say, But where is the acting of the Son's Godhead? I say, that man makes two Godheads, and is a Polytheist, a believer of more gods than one.

And if a man say that Christ's human nature needed no salvation, preservation, redemption, but was in itself an unfallen thing,

[7] *Hebrews* 5:7.

then that man makes void the Godhead altogether in Christ, and is a worshiper of unfallen human nature.

And again, if a man say that Christ conceived and born, had no need of continual sustenance, salvation, redemption, from the Father, that man denies that His Godhead was at all operative after His conception.

But if a man say, as do all the Scriptures, that He, by being conceived of the Virgin, was brought into the weakness, and infirmity, and trials, and temptations, common to all mankind, and was only delivered out of them by the continual acting of faith upon the Father, and reception from the Father of Godhead power, which He used to defeat, with every faculty of the soul and every member of the body, all His and our enemies, then does that man well hold and maintain that in all His actions Godhead acted, and that to the holiness of all His actions Godhead was necessary; and in one word, that a human nature and a divine nature were present in every action of that person, the Son of man, who was born of the Virgin.

And, moreover, he who thus maintains that Christ, when conceived and born of the Virgin, needed, in order to be saved from sin, the continual acting of Godhead, therein maintains that no creature whatever can prevail to do a good action otherwise than by the same Godhead power.

For if human nature, even when informed by the person of the Son of God, could not in that personality do a good action without the sustenance and information of the Divine nature, without the acting of the Father, by the Holy Ghost, to the Son, who receiving this divine power might with it inform, strengthen, sanctify, and redeem His every member; if, I say, the Son of God when born of a woman could not otherwise than by the Godhead nature be good, and do good, how is it to be believed, or to be imagined, that a created person, a limited being, a man in the same nature subsisting, should be able to be good or to do good?

We are all taught by the instance of Christ, that, to be good and to do good, we must receive power from the Father in like manner communicated; that is to say, the Father, or the absolute Godhead, without departing from His absoluteness, without changing His form of the infinite, through the Spirit communicates unto Christ divine power, which He may exercise by the same Spirit, now acting as the Spirit of Christ, and communicates to each of us who believe on the Father, power to do good and to be good.

This now is the explanation of His becoming dead; and thus explained, "His becoming dead and living again" is the most pregnant truth of God.

He became dead, in order to show that God out of sinful flesh, such as we now do all possess, could bring forth holiness such as is required of us all. His Son the Christ became flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone; that is, He came into the experience, and the obligation, and the suffering, which all flesh is heir to; and by the power of Godhead He took this flesh out of the hands of all His and our enemies, and presented it unto God at all times, and in all ways, pure and spotless, whereby was shown the grace and power of our God.

In like manner, further to prove the power of Godhead, He became dead. Now it has been made a question how He who never sinned could die. But the question, if a question is to be made of it; is far larger; how He that never sinned could suffer. The answer to both questions is,

> "Because His human nature was held of sinful Adam."

Hebrews 2

[14] Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood,
He himself took part of the same.

And the part which He took was subject to the same laws, as the lump of which He took it: and so He became dead by becoming flesh.

Those who ignorantly or heretically maintain that He took unfallen flesh, or that in conception His flesh was brought into a

different law of being from ours, can give no account of His death whatever, so as to justify God. They do indeed talk long and loud about its being vicarious and sacrificial, to cleanse away our sins, which no orthodox man ever denied. But if Christ's flesh were unfallen, how could it die without God's violating the law of creation, which is not death but life? What would we say of anyone who should affirm that God made Adam for suffering and death? Where then were God's goodness in creation?

But what better is it to say that Christ took Adam's nature in order to die therein? The thing is monstrous, and never was heard of in the Church till now. Preachers, indeed, in the large liberty of discourse, may be found, when insisting upon the purity of Christ's human nature, to have now and then likened it, and perhaps even identified it with Adam's before the fall; but that any theologian should maintain as a thesis that Christ's substance was in the state of Adam, is what I, in the course of my reading or hearing, have never met with, save in some schismatical and heretical pamphleteers of this day.

Equally erroneous is it to maintain that, by the miraculous generation, the substance of His flesh was brought into a third state; neither such as Adam's nor such as the Virgin's, such as no one possesses, and no one therefore can define or sympathize with, except by negatives;—as, that it was not like ours, it was not predisposed to temptation, it was not inclined to evil, and so forth. For what law appoints this third estate of flesh to die? If the root of sin was taken out of it by extraordinary generation, how was the fruit of death not taken out of it also? And who shall tell the properties of this metaphysical substance, this nondescript body? Was pain to it pain? Was death to it death? Was resurrection to it resurrection? Or are they all but phantasms, as the Marcionites held?

It is not my present object to press these erring brethren of mine into a corner. I would rather lead them out of their schismatical fastness into the open field of wholesome and pleasant discourse; but if I were inclined, I could show that they are

plunged into the Marcionite heresy, which the Catholic Church has ever abhorred, and which our Church condemns by name.

Marcion held that Christ's was not a *true* body; and therefore it is asserted in our Catechism that He took a *true* body. Now what is meant by the word *true*, when applied to the body, but that in all its properties it was as ours is, not failing one? And how then say they "changed in the generation"; yea, so changed as to be entirely of different properties, having no proclivity to temptation?

If temptation bounced from Him like a ball from an adamantine rock, His body is as different from ours as the rock of adamant is from the soft and yielding clay. And so an untrue body, which is the essence of the Marcionite heresy, is maintained.

But is it sinful to be tempted through the flesh? If it be, then Christ must not be liable to temptation through the flesh, for He is sinless. But if it be sinful to be tempted through the flesh, how can there be such a thing as holiness at all brought out of man? For every man is tempted through the flesh, at all times, and in all ways.[8]

Galatians 5

[17] The flesh lusts against the spirit.

But I deny that it is unholiness to be tempted through the flesh, or by the flesh to be tempted through the mind, provided the will yield not to the evil suggestion, provided the will consent not to the evil consciousness. On the other hand, I assert that it is a condition to all holiness to be thus tempted. Holiness since the fall there has been none, but through such temptation; and holiness consisted in being assailed by such temptation of the flesh or of the mind, in being conscious to it, and overcoming it.

How any man dares, in the face of God's Word, to say that Christ was not in all points tempted like as we are, is beyond my comprehension. And the boldness is only increased by making the words "without sin" to limit the scope and extent of the temptation; which words contain the great truth, that though tempted

[8] *James* 1:14.

always He was sinless always, by overcoming the temptation, and carrying His Divine power into the field of the temptation, and casting the tempter out; so that when in the end of His career the devil came to Him, he found nothing of his in Him, no root of bitterness, no right of possession, no sign of subjection.

And this word "without sin," introduced also into the Catechism and the Confession of Faith, when treating of our Lord's generation, in order to guard against the communication of guilt, whereof ordinary generation is the sign, these misguided men would seize upon to prop up their wretched soul-destroying error, that Christ's flesh underwent in His generation a change which made it impassive to temptation, or at least not passive as ours is: the end of which vile and abominable fiction is to separate Him from all sympathy with us, and us from all sympathy with Him, and to make His mortality an arbitrary appointment of God, and no obedience of the word of His holiness pronounced upon mankind.

If an innocent angel or archangel can die for any end whatever, then the distinction between good and evil, between righteousness and iniquity, is subverted forever, and man's estate since the fall is no proof of God's holiness whatever, but a mere arbitrament of His will.

Ah, it is a fearful siege which is at present carrying on against the very citadel of God's own holy being, and man's free inheritance in His grace; and we, who should have been as one man to defend God's holy being, and our own goodly inheritance in His grace, are like the sons of Ephraim drunken, but not with strong drink,—drunken with delusion and the cup of error. I could weep and bow myself down in fasting and mourning, because of the things which I hear, and which I partly see, with respect to the opinions entertained by some of the more ostensible and conspicuous of the clergy of my mother Church.

I hope it is otherwise with the quiet and unobserved parish ministers. If not, I trust, O God, You will bless these labors of your servant, to stand in this breach and defend your truth. Give me a

confidence in the truth which shall not be afraid even of a brother's wrath, even of a mother's punishment. The time is short; the issues are a nation's, and a Church's preservation: therefore, O you who know the truth, be up and doing; quit you like men, be strong.

Referring, for further argument upon this great subject of Christ's mortality, to our second book,[9] I observe, in improvement, what strengthening and encouragement to human nature, to the Church, and to the angels of the Church, there is in this great truth, "He became dead, and lived."

The subject is Christ, in whom is contained creation's utmost perfection, creation's eternal life. This One, the Life, and the Prince of it, became dead, came into the last and lowest condition of a creature, the dissolution of its being; and there He lay a buried body, a soul in Hades. For a buried body is not death; but a buried body and an imprisoned soul, that is death, and this Christ became.

Now, let us fix our contemplation upon the Lord of glory in the condition of a dead man. What does it mean? What awful truth does it reveal?

THE LOVE OF GOD

This, first of all, That he loved man with a desperate love. Thus to resign the bosom of God for the cold, chill bosom of the grave, the power and scepter of the universe, for the prison house of the separate soul. Well might it be said in that chapter of the *Proverbs* so oft referred to, of Him who thus surrendered all for us:

> **Proverbs 8**
> [30] Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him;
> [31] Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

[9] See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 "Christ Revealed by Names," Chapter: "Name of the Son," Sections: "The Faithful Witness" & "First Begotten,."

Ah! what a brotherhood is in this! Ah! what a cleaving, knitting love! Herein indeed is love, that He who is God should follow man down into the shades of the grave. Oh! my soul, doubt no more: no more despair. He that spared not His own Son, but gave Him up to the death for you, will surely with Him freely give you all things.

THE LAW OF GOD

But this is not all: there is a yet higher truth than this revealed in the death of Christ. The truth of God's moral being; the truth of what sin is; the truth of what the law of God against sin is,—how terrible, how unalterable. Man transgresses the commandment of God, and mankind dies for that one transgression: and flat sunk into the bowels of the earth, falls prostrate the glory of mankind. How fearful!

But how very much more fearful, that a person who is God, creation's fountain word, creation's life, should, for that one transgression of man, likewise die. My faculties are absorbed in the thought, my mind reels again under the weight of such a thought. Then indeed, O God! you are…

> **Exodus 15**
> [11] …glorious in your holiness, fearful in your praises, and doing wonders;

–awful in the sanctity of God, awful in the nature of sin! O God, let the impression which these words feebly utter, dwell upon my soul forever, and upon the souls of all who shall read these words.

CHRIST'S UNITY WITH HUMAN NATURE

Furthermore, the perfect unity of mankind in condition before God was taught by Christ's becoming dead. If His different personality from Adam did not give Him escape from Adam's sentence, how should ours give us any escape? Time and place makes no difference: we all sinned in him, and fell with him; we all were created with him holy in the image and likeness of God, with dominion over ourselves and the creatures; and for this es-

tate, God holds every one of us answerable, and because of our fall from thence the wrath of God abides on us.

I do not say, that Christ sinned in him and fell with him, because Christ existed before him, and existed beside him, and had no part whatever in him as a creature, other than right over him as Creator. But I say, that Christ's coming into our nature and becoming partaker of our curse thereby, well proves what a unit mankind is, in the sight of God; and what a rending schism it will be, when a part is torn away, and cast into the lake of the second death.

Such a schism to prevent, God has labored diligently in the gift of His Son, a ransom for all, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

MORAL HIGHER THAN PHYSICAL

There is yet another thing which is seen in Christ's becoming dead: How small a thing creation is, compared with the moral being of God; how transient its beauty, how ineffectual its stupendous power, how weak and effete its mightiest action, how idle its state, how contemptible its glory, when set beside one single and solitary acting of the moral principle in God; for in Christ's death was seen the death of creation. It was as if all motion had come to rest, and all form had returned to chaos again, and all light been swallowed up of darkness, and all life returned back into the womb of nothingness.

For He died, whose life quickened the chaos, and formed the earth, and spread the heavens abroad. He died whose word said, Be light, and light was; and this, and all this quenching of creation's light and life came to pass, because man had transgressed one commandment of God. Oh! how the moral is by this exalted above the physical! oh! how righteousness shines over power, how God is glorified above God's work!

LESSONS FROM HIS RESURRECTION

Besides these and other great lessons taught us by the death of Christ,[10] there are other lessons taught by His living again out of death! "He became dead, and lived;" or rather I should say, the half only of every lesson is taught by His death, and the other half by His resurrection out of death.

His death, of itself apart, would have taught this erroneous lesson, and this only, that sin had somehow or other lodged itself in Godhead also; and that God himself had been mastered by the potentate of death, which is the devil. Had Christ only died, God's subjection to sin would have been proved, and creation's misery and thralldom forever sealed; the guilt of the guilty made irrevocable, grace and mercy made impossible. So needful is resurrection to the subsistence of hope in the breast of man, and to the proclamation of good news from the throne of God.

These consequences, which are inevitable, if Christ rose not, come with equal force, though not with such strong appearance, if it be said, that the body which died and rose, and the soul which descended into hell, (the place of separate spirits,) and brought thence the keys of hell and death, were a different body and soul in any respect whatsoever, from those which mankind in common possess. For upon every principle of sound reason, and by an invariable rule of logic, if in any number of individuals there be one, who, in one respect only, differs from all the rest, and he have a different action or passion from all the rest, that action or passion must, and ever is and will be, ascribed to the influence of this his particular and distinguishing property.

So, if Christ's body and soul have any distinction of natural being, from bodies and souls in general, to that distinction must, in reason and logic, be ascribed the peculiar specific phenomenon of His resurrection. If the Spirit changed His body in its conception, then to that extraordinary work of the Spirit is necessarily to be

[10] For further information upon which we may refer to *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 2 "Christ Revealed by Names," Chapter "Conclusions," Section "The Mystery of God."

ascribed the extraordinary effect of His resurrection from the dead; and we who have had no such extraordinary generation, can on such a wretched (but prevailing, as I understand,) hypothesis have no resurrection, and creation is as dark of hope as if Christ had not risen. Oh! to what man's unbelief or partial belief drives them in the hidings of God's countenance, and the withholding of His prevenient grace!

If again it be held that Christ arose with a different body, NUMERICALLY different, (that is, which can be numbered as another,) from that which was laid in the grave, the same fatal conclusions necessarily follow; for in that case, it is not redemption of the created thing, but the creation of another thing; and resurrection is by the annihilation of the old thing created, and by the creation of a different thing. Creation is defeated, and the Creator is defeated. He tried His hand the first time and failed; but the second time he succeeded: false, fatal conclusion, changing God, deifying the devil!

And this conclusion comes as necessarily from supposing a change of the virgin's substance in the womb, as a change of the Lord's substance in the grave; I mean, change into another, numerically another, so as that it may be said of Christ's body, This is of another substance from mine.

There is no point on which the Church labored so long and so successfully to establish as this, That Christ took His human nature of the substance of the virgin, in the same sense in which He took His Divine nature of the substance of the Godhead: and in all the Creeds of the Catholic Church, and in all the Confessions of the same Church, after it had protested against the Roman Apostasy, this point is most carefully and scrupulously worded.

Nor had I supposed that it would have ever come into doubt in any branch of the Catholic Church. At this moment, however, I perceive a strong temptation of the devil to work upon what is called the Evangelical party, to deny this great head of faith, and to enunciate something contrary to it; as, that He took substance

of Adam before He fell, or that He took it in a different state from what it is in one of us.

As to what an individual, or any two or three individuals, may say, it is of little comparative consequence; but if any Church, by word or deed, should sanction error here, that Church proves itself not to be upon the foundation; which foundation is not, that there is a Christ, but that Jesus is the Christ; that He who was of the virgin's substance is the Christ.

How one of fallen sinful substance could become the holy Christ of God; or, to speak more accurately, how the Christ of God could, without sin, take up unto himself a sinful substance, and preserve it ever sinless; is another question which must be gone into and made good, otherwise all is lost.

But that it was the sinful substance which He took, and, taking, preserved holy throughout all its ills and temptations, tendencies, propensities, and inclinations; all the hidings of God's countenance, and smitings of God's wrath, sufferings, sorrows, death, and corruption, and everything else to which such a substance is liable, and must ever encounter;—this is the root of the matter, the elements of the problem, the nodus of the question, without which there is neither question, problem, nor matter of reality in the Incarnation. Of denying this, of doubting this, O my brother! whoever you are, be you wary, be you awfully wary. For, thus denied:

- Christ in His nature has no union with your nature;
- There is an element in every one of your temptations which is not in His;
- His victory over any temptation is no assurance of yours;
- He cannot be your High Priest, for He has not fellowship with you in your trials; which is laid down by the apostle as the very condition to anyone's being a high priest.[11]

In your sinful actions, truly, He has not sympathy as having so acted, for His actions were always sinless and holy: but even here,

[11] *Hebrews* 4:14-16; 5:1-2, 7-9.

though He has it not by real impartation, He has it by imputation; for all along, and in all respects, He was treated as a sinner by the Father, He was made sin, He was made a curse: and so here also He can sympathize with us: although sinner He was not, yet as sinner was He treated, and herein stands the vicariousness of His work: in the other stands the real personality of it.

But of this last there is no dispute among us. Luther made it good against the Romanists. Must some second Luther make the other good against the Evangelical? I hope not, I pray not.

The erroneousness of all opinions which make a difference between Christ's body born and ours born, or Christ's body risen and His body interred, consists in this, that whatsoever was done in Him and for Him by Godhead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, has no necessary connection with us; proves no love, grace, or holiness of God towards us; holds forth no redemption, salvation, resurrection, nor glory for us, but only for one who had an essential difference from us; not an accidental but an essential difference, a difference of God's own making, and which God did first make before He set His love upon Him or would have any communion with Him.

This proves that He cannot set His love on us as we now are; that He cannot have communion with us, nor any grace towards us, nor any compassion of us. Christ's incarnation becomes thereby the seal of our condemnation, instead of being the gospel of God's forgiveness. And for our souls, there can be no hope in God until they shall have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost, as Christ's soul became regenerated; and then the question is, what should move God to regenerate any soul? Hatred cannot, wrath cannot: love only can; but then there is no love to move Him to it.

And as for the resurrection of the body, it becomes a mere figment and falsehood upon this scheme which they are blazing forth, to destroy the Church withal; for Christ's body to be beloved of God, and helped with Godhead power, had first to be changed by extraordinary generation, which ours cannot be, and therefore must it be hated, and have no hope of Godhead power.

And so resurrection is the property only of a body changed by extraordinary generation, and therefore is no property of ours, and so man's hope lies flat.

Where is your boasted metaphysics, your intellectual acumen, O you Scottish divines, that you cannot see these fell conclusions with which you would sweep out the stars of heaven?

But,—to forsake the region of controversy, and keep to our proper vocation of an interpreter of God's most holy Word,—seeing that Christ, having come into the condition of a dead man, did revive and live forever; these great points of doctrine are established, first, that Godhead did not exhaust itself when it said, "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die," but that beyond this depth there was yet a greater depth in the good pleasure of God.

The first depth was this: that one transgression should erase creation's life. The second depth was this: that God's grace should raise creation's life from the grave again.

The first depth was this: that to sin against God, is more than the life of creation is worth. The second depth was this: that with God there is forgiveness, and plenteous redemption, that He may be sought after.

The one is not the contradiction of the other, but the establishment of the other: as it is written:

Psalm 85

[8] I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: but let them not turn again to folly.
[9] Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.
[10] Mercy and truth are met together: righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
[11] Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
[12] Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.
[13] Righteousness shall go before Him, and shall set us in the way of His steps.

The opening of the fountain of life in the grace of God, to a perished creation lying prostrate in death, was the first great fruit of the resurrection. The creature-nature of Christ lay in death; the body in the grave, the soul in hell. The Godhead power of Him carried off the gates of hell and the grave, and brought forth thence not only himself but many of the saints; and it is one of His prerogatives to have the keys of hell and death, and to open them when He pleases.

All, therefore, of disgrace, misery, penalty, curse, or by whatever name you may call it, Christ has destroyed devil and all. He has led captivity captive, and ascended up on high: He has brought life and immortality to light by His death and resurrection. This is the first great truth taught by Christ's resurrection, that creation dead and buried for its sin, is, by God's free act in His Son, risen and glorified through regeneration of the Holy Ghost. There is brought in, through regeneration, as unbounded a hope to creation, as was brought in an unbounded hopelessness by sin.

They who would limit to a portion of mankind the profit of Christ's resurrection, do not understand election, quite another mystery from redemption, which is the prerogative of another person of the Godhead; nor do they understand redemption; nor do they understand the nature of original sin, nor any other of the great heads of Christian doctrine.

Particular redemption is a misnomer for particular election; or if it be held not to be a misnomer, then I hold it to be a schismatical doctrine, that is, expressing only a part of the truth. Universal propositions, such as these:

John 1

[29] ...the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world.

1 John 2

[2] ...the propitiation...not for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world.

1 Timothy 2

[6] ...a ransom for all...

1 Timothy 4

[10] ...the Saviour of all men...

...&c, can only be set aside by universal negatives, and are only confirmed by particular affirmatives; such as:

John 10

[11] The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

[15] I lay down my life for the sheep.

Acts 20

[28] The church of God, which he has purchased with His own blood.

And that the redemption should be affirmed of, particularly as well as universally, is derived from the higher mystery of election, which takes out of the redeemed whom God the Father pleases to take.

For redemption, though it be truly a gift of God, whose reality as a gift depends nowise upon our receiving or not receiving it, demonstrates to the full the alienation and rebellion of mankind, who will not have life, but prefer to abide in death, who will not have God's grace, but prefer to abide in His wrath, will not be charmed by the Divine charmer, charm He never so sweetly.

The great Prophet of creation, our Orpheus, master of the heavenly song, has in love for His wife descended to her prison, and brought her up: but back looking she prefers to abide there; and another, though yet not another, but another in person though the same in substance, even the Father, the Godhead unsearchable, must have the honor and be worshiped, as giving that which delivers man from the power, the fatal power of a rebellious will.

This is the second lesson taught in Christ's dying and living again; namely,—the willingness of the unchangeable Godhead to redeem every creature from the power of death. For Christ, who is Godhead in its comprehensible form, Godhead within the scope of creature-limits, having taken flesh, is enabled to do good and to be good therein, by faith exercised upon the Father; while the Father serves Godhead power to the person of His laboring Son, and

the Son uses it in His mortal members, to take them out of temptation's hold.

And the same Son from the depths of hell (Hades) uplifts His faith, and is served there with Godhead power, acting as Godhead properly acts by three persons, which He the Son uses to take His body from the grave; and thus Godhead's willingness, the Father's willingness to subsist and to advance and to glorify fallen men, is put forever beyond a question.

It is not Christ's love merely which is demonstrated, for that form of being when embodied prevailed not of itself to do the work; but it is Godhead's, absolute Godhead's love, the Father's love, which is revealed unto human nature, in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The good will of the electing God has thus appeared.

It appeared first in Christ, His elected one, and it ought to be preached in Him to all men; and not to preach it to all men is not to preach election, whereof the essence is in this,—not that it applies only to a part, but that it applies only to as many as will believe in God, and put their trust upon Him. Election is the continual assertion of man's inability of himself to join himself to Christ, and of God's willingness and ability to do that same thing.

I therefore set down these as the great truths taught by Christ's dying and reviving; first, that there is in Him life to all mankind; and next, that there is in God the will and the power to make that life the property of all men; so that he who possesses it not does not possess it through disbelief of that which God proclaimed to all the world.

The more particular application of this style, which the Universal Bishop chooses to adopt towards the angel of the Church of Smyrna, will appear under the head of the charge to which we now proceed.

IV. His Second Charge

I Know Your Works

Revelation 2

[9] I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but you are rich)...

I KNOW not what tenderness of spirit I am continually overpowered with, ever as I read and comment upon the words which the Lord of glory uses from the throne of heaven to His poor ministers abiding in this vale of tears, and travailing with much carefulness in the cure of souls.

There is such human heartedness, such simplicity, such sympathy, and such minute and delicate consideration of our case, that I can hardly figure it to be spoken by God, but am ever tempted to think I hear the voice of some co-presbyter encouraging me in my labor.

This also is my infirmity; for much and zealously as I have argued for the truth and verity of Christ's manhood, I also feel the temptation of this day, which, in the orthodox Church, is to think of Him as God only, and not as God consenting ever to act by man's instruments, and in man's limitations.

Much need I to learn the lesson for the teaching of which I have suffered reproach, that Christ in heaven, seated on heaven's throne and worshiped of heaven's host, is nowise changed from the Son of man who washed the feet of His disciples and wept at the tomb of His friend.

Let me lay to heart that passage which I have so often quoted:

Hebrews 13

[8] Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

From the era in eternity before all measured time, when He chose, or when the Godhead chose that form of being under which all intelligence should rank as its largest orb, Reason was that favored form in which the Christ subsisted, and subsists, and

shall forever subsist, creation's Head, creation's Lord, creation's Light, creation's Word.

Now reason is man's community, and of every reasonable thought and act man is a partaker. And there is a oneness between Christ and man, as between parent and child; and there is a delight in Christ with man, as the delight of a parent with his child. So that we may not marvel that His words are so appropriate to human wants, that His consolations are so welcome to man's conditions. The wonder were that they should be otherwise; yea, it is impossible that otherwise they should be.

Truly revelation is reason perfect and complete: because revelation is Christ portrayed, and Christ is the Logos, the Reason, the Light of life, of whose fullness we have all received.

Now, O my heart, be enlarged, while I change the theme of my discourse, and pass from contemplating the depth and compass of that name,

Revelation 2

[8] The first and the last, which became dead and lived,

–to feel and express the pathetic tenderness of this charge of my Great Bishop to the angel of the Church of Smyrna. He begins as usual with expressing His knowledge of his works, to intimate that he did not serve an indifferent or unobservant master, but such a one as did well notice, carefully remember, generously acknowledge, and plentifully reward, every act of His faithful minister, according to His own word:

Matthew 25

[40] Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these little ones, you have done it also unto me.

These words, "I know your works," are not spoken in the spirit of an inquisitor, or spy, or corrector, but in the spirit of the good Shepherd, who knows His sheep by name, and gives heed to every sheep of every flock of His servants: words they are not expressive merely of the attribute of omniscience, but of the higher

attribute, the moral attribute of watchfulness and carefulness over those chosen ones of His Father; as it is written:

John 17
[12] Those that You gave me I have kept; and none of them is lost.

John 10
[27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:
[28] And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Nevertheless, though these words be spoken in a loving and most charitable mood, they are not on that account the less, but the more powerful rebuke of our ignorance, our ignorance of our flocks, our indifference to their estate, our unfaithfulness to their conditions. Oh, no! these words,

Revelation 2
[9] I know your works,

–do thrill through my heart with a power which no threatening nor rebuke could have. And, woe is me, what a fearful, dreadful note of future reckoning do they bear unto the pastors of the churches. Not to cast any one into despair, nor to annihilate the energies of any, but to call every one to meditate his responsibility before Christ, as a steward in His house, to humble us under the sense of our shortcomings, and to move us unto repentance and reformation of our lives.

While these words sound in the ear of the indolent and careless feeders of the sheep, how do they comfort and sustain the faithful and oppressed ones, who in poverty and persecution, in reproach and contempt, are pursuing the shepherd's care!

While to you, O you idle shepherds, who seek your ease in rural retreats, or in populous cities pursue your pleasures, spending the produce of your flocks in vain and wicked pomp, or with lettered pride and elegance, entertaining your selfish minds, it speaks.

While to you, O you homesick shepherds, who will not leave your comfortable quarters, and venture out in the dark and stormy nights to preserve your flocks from the drifting tempest, but please yourselves with the security and the quiet, and the worldly reputation for prudence which you enjoy;—these words, "I know your works," do ring a knell like the summons of the judgment, and certainly to be followed by dreadful judgment, if you rise not, O you self-seeking sluggards, and gird yourselves, and take your scrip and your sheep-hook, and go forth to seek the sheep in the dark wintry night upon the mountains.

These same words do breathe balm of consolation over the heart of every faithful servant who seeks not his own but his Master's honor, who cares not for himself but for his Master's trust, who forgoes his own ease, wealth, and glory, that he may devote himself to the Church of God, and give his all, yea, and his very life, for the sheep: such a one, for example, as Paul declares himself to have been:

Acts 20

18 You know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,
19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:
20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,
21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.
27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Such a one also as he exhorts Timothy to be:

1 Timothy 6

[11] But you, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
[12] Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called, and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.
[20] O Timothy, keep that which is committed to your trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:
[21] Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen.

I Know Your Tribulation

Revelation 2

[9] I know your...tribulation...

Tribulation has reference chiefly, or almost entirely, to outward persecution of one sort or another in the Church, from false brethren, or schismatical spirits; out of the Church from wicked and violent men of the world, from heretical and sectarian leaders, or from apostates from the faith.

These Achans within the camp, these Korahs, these persons like Ananias, Simon Magus, Alexander the coppersmith, and others mentioned in the Scriptures, do us much evil, and occasion the faithful minister much trouble. But he must not be amazed as if God, had forsaken him, or some strange thing befallen him. Not only to the minister is it said, but to every Christian,

2 Timothy 3

[12] All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

Acts 14

[22] We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

But that ministers of the gospel and pastors of the Church have especially to expect these hardships, and are expected to bear them like good soldiers, yea, like hardy captains of the Lord Jesus Christ, is abundantly declared by the chief Shepherd, the great

Captain of our salvation, when first He sent out into the world, our great progenitors, the twelve apostles and the seventy disciples. As it is written at large in *Matthew* and the other gospels, from which let me quote the following passage, which gives us honorable preferment in this bloody strife:

Matthew 10

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.
17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;
18 And you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.
19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what you shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak.
20 For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you.
21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.
22 And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved.
23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee into another: for verily I say unto you, You shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Upon the last words of this extract from our missionary instructions, I have a remark to make, both for the sake of my brethren in the ministry, and for the sake of the truth.

These words, which have been so much abused of late to prop up the system of money-missions, signify simply that this commission was to endure even until the coming of the Son of man, in His kingdom, which is not yet; and so takes the whole passage out of the destroying teeth of those falsely-called missionary societies,—their proper name is colonizing societies,—which have done their endeavor to give this whole discourse a local and temporary application to that first missionary expedition which Christ set on foot, in the days of His flesh.

Which dilapidation and destruction of the eternal word, these worse than Papists, for the Papists did but add to the Word, and took not from it, do justify upon the ground of our Lord's saying,

Matthew 10
[23] You shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

This, with the reckless haste of unbelief,[12] they interpret as necessarily confining the whole context to that first journey, which was restricted to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But, without entering into the sophisms, the false principles of interpretation, and the most daring violations of the Word of God, with which they prop up their poor inventions for converting the world, I will take the plea altogether out of their mouths, by referring them to the margin of our Bibles, which is,

> "You shall not end, or finish, or be done with, the cities of Israel, until the Son of man be come."

In the context He had been instructing them, when persecuted in one city, to flee into another; not to be prodigal of their lives, not to seek persecution, not to brave it, no, nor even to wait for its ultimate consummation, but to hasten and flee to another city, and so to circulate the truth of the gospel.

And lest they should think that by such removals they would be too early finished with their work, He tells them that they should not have finished even with the cities of Israel till He should come; that it should prove a more untoward work to evangelize men than they thought—a long, a wearisome, a laborious work.

He mentions the cities of Israel, because as yet the gospel was published only to them. And, accordingly, behold how true it has come to pass, even with these. They are not yet evangelized; and when He shall come, we know that:

Malachi 3
[3] He shall come as a refiner of the sons of Levi,

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[12] **Isaiah 28** [16] He that believes does not make haste.

Ezekiel 20

[38] ...[to] purge out...the rebels;

–and though His coming shall be in grace to them, yet it shall be also in mourning and bitterest repentance,

Zechariah 12

[11] ...like the mourning of Hadadrimmon.

Which issue well knowing, He said to the twelve:

> "Go, hasten, tarry not, for there is plenty of work on hand. Cast not away your lives rashly, bestow not your labor unprofitably, for great is the work you have to do, and when I come to inspect it, I shall find much undone."

These instructions being largely applied to the successors of the apostles, the regularly-ordained ministers of the word, do convey this truth, that we should not seek persecution, nor brave it, nor wait its issues of death, but hasten and flee away to other habitations of men, and plant, and sow, and water among them; for there will always be enough to do on the earth among the cities of the nations, even up to the very day of the coming of the Son of man, concerning which it is spoken despairingly:

Luke 18

[8] Nevertheless, when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith in the earth?

While therefore a minister of the gospel, an angel of the Church, may assuredly expect tribulation, and ought to bear it patiently, he is not called upon to pursue an endless ungrateful labor, nor to cast himself in the way of rude conflict and perils of his life.

It is true that the Apostle Paul did go up unto Jerusalem, though the Spirit testified that bonds and imprisonment awaited him; but then Paul had the testimony of the Spirit that he should go up.

The time comes without our seeking it, when God will call on us to seal our testimony with our blood; that time found almost all the apostles, and apostolical men, and this angel of the Church

of Smyrna, if, as seems most probable he was, the venerable Polycarpus, concerning whose martyrdom we have shown above.

These cautions and instructions of the Lord are not, however, for the encouragement of a timorous or cowardly disposition; for in the same discourse He says:

Matthew 10

[39] He that finds his life shall lose it, and he that loses his life, for my sake, shall find it,

But they are for preventing rashness and resoluteness, the spirit of contradiction and foolhardiness, and wanton bravery, which are not fruits of the Spirit, but fruits of the flesh, and which, when a minister has well brought under, and carefully eschews, he shall still find tribulation and persecution enough to try weak humanity, to prove its weakness, while at the same time it proves the incorruptible and invincible strength of that grace which is sufficient for us, and that strength which is perfected in weakness.

O you ministers of Christ, and angels of the churches, who, in the fulfillment of your office, are now enduring grief and vexation of spirit from the peccant and malignant humors which flow in the veins of the Church, from the unfriendly, ignorant, and oppressive spirit which is beginning to manifest itself in the governors of the State, know, and be assured, that the eye of heaven looks down upon your condition, and that the approval of heaven smiles upon your patience, and that the light of God's countenance shines upon the narrow path of life in which you walk.

Remember, O my brethren in contumely and contempt, in opprobrium and false accusations, you objects of the revilings of the wicked, the envenomed shafts of false churchmen and schismatical sectarians! remember who they were that were sealed in the destruction of Jerusalem, whose lives were preserved in that wreck and ruin of an apostate Church. Is it not written in the book of Ezekiel the Prophet, in these words:

Ezekiel 9

[4] And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the fore-

heads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

Remember, O my brethren, who are standing for the ordinances and doctrines of the Church, against the disciples of human intellect and expediency and worldly wisdom; who are standing for the hope of the day of the Lord, and witnessing against the wickedness in the Church and in the State, and for such testimony are enduring that tribulation which is the beginning of sorrows; oh remember who they are that are remembered in that day of decision, and spared in that day of destruction. Is it not written in the book of Malachi the Prophet:

Malachi 3

[13] Your words have been stout against me, says the Lord: yet you say, What have we spoken so much against you?
[14] You have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?
[15] And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.
[16] Then they that feared the Lord, spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.
[17] And they shall be mine, says the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him.
[18] Then shall you return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serves God, and him that serves Him not.

Therefore, O you ministers who know the Lord,

Daniel 11

[32] ...be strong and do exploits.

Be not afraid of their terror, neither be ashamed with any amazement.[13]

[13] *1 Peter* 3:14, 6.

Isaiah 58

[1] Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show the Lord's people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

The day of trial is at hand. Be not like the men of Ephraim, bearing bows, who turned back in the day of battle. If they trouble you, the Lord will sustain you in six troubles, and in seven He will not forsake you. If they afflict you, then in all your afflictions He is afflicted, and the Angel of His covenant shall preserve you. Speak the truth, and the truth which you speak will save your own souls, and them also who hear you.

I see a day of tribulation darkening, it is near for to come; the day of the Lord, dreadful and terrible, like darkness spread upon the mountain. And the shepherds shall be smitten, and the flock shall be scattered; but:

Luke 12

[32] Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Yet have I a hope, yea, and I have a faith[14] that the end shall be glorious even in the sight of our enemies, that the time for treading down the saints is accomplished, and the time of treading down the enemies of the saints is arrived. We shall not any more be given into their hands like sheep for the slaughter, but we shall be delivered out of the great tribulation, and our days prolonged to many generations: yea, forever and ever.

Yet not until we shall have been proved with trials, more trying than imprisonment and death: trials which would deceive the very elect; miracles and signs; all the seductions of intellectual beauty, all the inventions of human wisdom, and all the accomplishments of human speech, shall entangle us like a net, and engird us like a girdle. It is already begun:

- mockery from the worldlings;

[14] For the grounds of this faith, see Book 2 "Christ Revealed by Names," Chapter: "Second Advent."

- pity from the body of the Church, as lost and misguided men;
- cunning snares of Satan, to take us in our own peculiar beliefs, concerning the advent and kingdom of Christ;
- false charges of heresy from the guardians of the Church's faith;
- inquisitorial espionage of our liberty in Christ, from false brethren, crept in unawares to spy out our liberty in Christ;
- liers in wait to catch us in our words, and to condemn us for a word;
- base misrepresentations by church-swollen men, heresy-finders, who, in our Scotland, have taken up the old craft of the witch-finder.

These forms of wickedness, these confederacies of wicked men, are now raging on every side around that little company, who have been bold enough to challenge the Church's poverty of faith, and to arouse the Church's carnal security. It is already a day of tribulation to those that know the Lord, and that think upon His name.

Well! glory in it, you angels of the churches, who are called upon to endure it. Seek it not, strive not after it; for the man of God must not strive, but be patient towards all men. Seek not after it; yet, like the three children, care not for it; but remember the word of the Lord, which He spoke, and oft, oft repeated in one form or other:

Matthew 5

[11] Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
[12] Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

And though no eye shall see, and no ear should hear, and no heart should pity, remember, oh! remember the great Overseer, the one Shepherd and Watchman of Israel, who said unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna, and to all in likewise tempted,

Revelation 2

[9] I know your works, I know your tribulation.

I Know Your Poverty

Revelation 2

[9] I know your…poverty, (but you are rich)…

This also, like the rest, I understand in a literal sense, as signifying the absence of riches, and even of honorable and becoming state, the presence of poverty, bare and needy poverty: for, if the contrary condition of the Church of Laodicea, related in:

Revelation 3

[17] I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,

–be, as it must be, taken literally, then must the poverty of the angel of the Church of Smyrna be also so taken. Indeed, I have not as yet seen any reason to interpret otherwise than literally any part of these epistles; and it is a fixed canon of all interpretation of words that the literal sense should ever be preferred, and the figurative, or allegorical, or symbolical, never be adopted unless the literal manifestly will not serve, or unless there be given some intimation of another sense.

Besides, there would be no force nor beauty in the parenthetic clause, "but you are rich," unless we should understand the poverty to be literal poverty. And being so understood, the spiritual riches of the poor minister of Smyrna stood in sublime contrast with his temporal poverty, answering to that beautiful instruction of our Lord:

Matthew 6

[19] Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust does corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal;
[20] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust does corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal;
[21] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Answering also to these beautiful contrasts of the apostle:

2 Corinthians 6

[10] ...as poor, yet making many rich.

James 2

[5] Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to them that love Him?

We make no doubt, therefore, that the Angel of the Church of Smyrna was distinguished for his poverty among the seven selected churches, as he was to be yet more distinguished for his tribulations; and thus by degrees, we begin to gather together the elemental idea of this epistle, that it is written to set forth, both by instance and by general doctrine, the example of a Church outwardly beset with every form of affliction and want; yet, through faith in Him who is the first and the last, was dead and is alive, prevailing unto this day against all outward accumulations of adversity; for the encouragement of all churches, and for the demonstration of the triumphs of faith, over the wildest and cruelest oppositions and persecutions of the world.

Poverty then is no sign of God's disfavor to a Church any more than persecution; nor is it any sign of a Church's weakness, but contrariwise of a Church's prosperity, so that they be rich in faith towards God. For, behold, in these seven cardinal instances, there are two,—the one distinguished for its poverty, the other for its abundance, whereof the former is blessed with all consolations, the latter treated with indignant threatenings by the Lord; whereof the former still subsists in strength and honor, the latter is lost both to memory and to sight.

Some, looking to this distinction, have rashly concluded, that therefore a Church should be established in poverty, and it has passed into a maxim in the North, that a poor Church is a pure Church; and that the Church of Scotland is founded upon the rock of poverty. God forbid that she should not be founded upon some better foundation than this!

No: such reasoners abuse and wrest the Scriptures, which commend not poverty as a blessing or a good, but comfort those that

are under it, as being in a trial, which through their faith will redound unto honor and glory in the day of the Lord. Godliness has the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come, and the Psalmist boasts in God:

Psalm 37

[25] I have been young and now am old, yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

That maxim which has got into the mouths of certain puritanical or churlish men, savors more of the mendicant orders of the Papacy, or the sacrilegious spoliation of the nobles which went on at the time of the Reformation, especially in Scotland; than it does of any reverence for the Church, or enlightened view of her prosperity. The true doctrine concerning the outward estate of a minister is given by our Lord in the code of instructions, which we have already referred to, in these words:

Luke 10

[7] And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

[8] And into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.

This evangelical canon is that upon which the apostles went; or if at a time they departed from it, as did Paul and Barnabas, it was with the reservation of the right when they pleased to resume it; as may be seen set forth at large in the 9th chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians*; and by this canon every Church and every minister ought to regulate himself.

And what is the spirit of the canon? Not obligation to any particular condition of life, as poverty; nor preference of one to another, but indifference to all; a willingness to abound, a willingness to want, a willingness to be in riches, a willingness to be in poverty.

This is the noble dignity, this is the royal liberty of the minister's calling, to sit and feast with the king in his palace, to sit and

fare with the king's poorest subject in his cottage, and to be as much at home with the one as with the other.

Oh, it is a poor, crude, yea, and wicked view of our office, to say that we should be kept poor; as if upon being entrusted with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, we might not be entrusted with any portion of this world's goods.

I do admire, while I perfectly penetrate that good-natured care of us incompetent ministers, which moves so many of our liberal statesmen to argue that there should be no livings in the Church above such and such a value, and none below such and such a value. The laity indeed may be trusted with untold wealth; a citizen with a plum of money, a noble with the lands of a county, and the revenues of a king; but a clergyman is not so to be entrusted, and must be put under the tutelage of our most parsimonious and economical exchequer.

The Church lands, which the piety of our fathers devoted unto the necessities of the Church, must be taken under the management of the Lords of the Treasury, who have managed their conceits so well as to involve their country in many hundred millions of debt!

God forgive me if I speak lightly or irreverently, but my heart is embittered with the clamors which I hear from all men, concerning the trustlessness of the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, the angels and ministers of the churches; who, let me say it, though there be shameful exceptions, live poorer and die poorer than any other class of the community above the rank of a day-laborer.

Ignoble age! ungenerous children of generous fathers! where now is your liberality to the Church of the living God? Methinks you are preparing for another such abominable sacrilege as heretofore was transacted in these lands at the Reformation.

O you nobles of Scotland, who left the Church in beggary, tell if you be at this day the richer for all the plunder which you made of your mother's estates? Are you at this day the less encumbered with mortgages, that you did encumber the Reformers and first

preachers of Scotland with want, bare want and miserable poverty?

And yet behold, O Church of Scotland, how the poverty of your Reformers and your ministers was not able to embarrass or prevent your prosperity, but did rather bind you round the neck of your people, and write your worthiness upon the tables of their hearts. Though you were sore hampered in your purposes of good for the realm of Scotland by the avarice and the sacrilege of the nobles, you were only the more endeared to the body of the nation, who witnessed your labors for their salvation, in the midst of poverty and nakedness.

And when the day came of your sore tribulation, and your covetous nobles turned away their face from you, you found in the devotedness of the people that arm of strength which set you in your honorable place: the poorest and the most efficient, the worst rewarded and most laborious of all the Christian Churches.

But be not vain of your poverty, or churlish towards your sister's grandeur. Join not those sons of Belial, who under the name of reforming the Church, would meddle with her sacred treasures, ruin themselves, and, if they could, ruin her. The office of the deacon, and the charge of the deacon, and the goods of the Church which are under his administration, dare as little be intermeddled with, as the higher trust of the elder. In these things no king, no parliament, no, nor people, may interfere. The talents committed to the minister, the trusts committed to the elder, the goods committed to the deacon, are all alike and equally put beyond the power of any civil interference.

I do not go aside to dilate on these things; but, perceiving the gathering storm, I would do my part to warn the Church and the nation, and to deliver my own soul. They say afflictions never come single; and I foresee that if this infidel or liberal principle get the upper hand in the administration of the State, it will to a certainty bring forth the spiritual and the temporal estate of the Church under its cruel hands.

It was so in the Primitive Church, that all-tolerant Rome did ever, when it persecuted the faith, plunder also the goods of the exclusive and intolerant Christian. I say exclusive and intolerant, in the contrary sense in which Paganism was, and our present infidelity is, liberal and tolerant.

The spirit of Pagan Rome, and of liberal Europe at this day, is to put no difference so far as this world is concerned, yea, and if they could, so far as another world is concerned, between men of any or of no creed whatever. And a Christian, as he believes God to be true, and tenders his own eternal well-being, must stand up on the contrary part and affirm that this is a lie; that God, both in this world and in that which is to come, puts the extremest difference between him who worships and obeys the name of Christ and him who does not, or who worships or obeys any other name.

These contrary spirits must come to issue, as to issue they ever came in ancient Rome, until power changed in the days of Constantine and Theodosius, from the liberal indulgence of all religions, into the exclusive patronage of the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ; and when they come to issue in this case, I feel assured that the goods of the Church, over which the deacon is consecrated, will be invaded by law, even before the doctrine and discipline of the Church, over which the elder is consecrated.

Nay, but what else at this present moment is that proposal for an Act of Parliament to bring in secular persons with authority to administer the collections made in our churches for the poor, which heretofore have been inviolably administered by the ministers, elders, and deacons of the churches? And, as if to make way for such secular inroads, the proper guardianship of deacons has been discontinued, notwithstanding the frequent and positive injunctions of the General Assembly.

It is always so: our own unfaithfulness is the occasion of God's judgment. We despise or undervalue His ordinance, and we lose the temporal or spiritual blessing which it was intended to convey. Why are there no bequests to the poor of the parish as

heretofore? Because there is no order of deacons standing in their place, whom God might honor. Why have poor-rates become necessary in Scotland? Because there is no order of deacons to take care of the poor. Political economists will laugh this to scorn; but believing churchmen, if any there be, will consider the matter. For my own part, I will walk in the ordinances of the Church, and if I fail, I shall meanwhile have secured to myself friends who will be able to receive me into everlasting habitations.

The true principle, therefore, upon which an angel of the churches should feel and act, is never to mind his outward estate, be it rich or be it poor, so long as he has bread to eat and raiment to be clothed withal.

But if he should be in want of necessary supplies for himself and his wife, or for his children, he ought then to tell the Church, whereof he is angel, that the Lord will not prosper their worldly industry, that He will disappoint their hopes and defeat their labors, until they shall have provided for the ministry of His altar. And if the people refuse to hear the Lord speaking by his lips, the Lord will speak in another way, and make himself be heard. Let not His faithful servant fear. God will not leave him desolate. His children shall not beg their bread.

I am afraid to encourage the pride of my brethren, the ministers of the Church of Scotland, for we are too high-minded already; but in proof of God's faithfulness I will speak it, that the sons, often the fatherless sons of her ministers, have attained in every city to the highest and richest preferment. So much for God's faithfulness to their fathers' and to their mothers' prayers.

But let me tell the whole truth: these sons of the Scottish clergy are in general unmindful of the God of their fathers. I speak a word which I can too well verify in this the city of my habitation. But still the word of God stands sure:

1 Samuel 2

[30] Them that honor me, I will honor.

The lesson taught by this part of the Epistle to the Church in Smyrna is, that no poverty nor tribulation can bring us low, provided we be rich towards God, in faith upon Him who is the first and the last, and who includes within himself all the fullness, not of the Godhead only, but also of creation, whose is the silver and the gold and the treasures of the earth.

The lesson taught us by this word, "I know your poverty, but you are rich," is, that a Church was never yet, since the world began, destroyed by its poverty, so long as its faith under the trial gave not way. Poverty is one of God's methods of proving faith; and when a Church is brought into poverty, it is a trial of her faith brought upon her not without a cause; but being upon her, a proof of God's love, and if she endure the chastisement, an assurance of her future well-being.

What moves the refiner to cast any stuff into his furnace? These two things:

1. He believes that there is pure metal in it;
2. He sees that the pure metal is mixed with much earthy dross, which he would separate from it.

Even so when God casts any Church or person into the furnace, it is to separate the fine gold from the pollution which defiles it.

Are not the candlesticks represented to be of the purest gold, and does not this signify saints of the most enduring faith? And how is the pure gold made to show its glory in the midst of the shining glittering counterfeits? By casting them all into the furnace. Then it is, that God's inheritance is proved to be God's own work, and worthy of God, when no combination of evil accidents, nor fire of hottest persecution can destroy it, or sully its beauty.

In the letter written by the Church of Smyrna to the churches of Pontus concerning Polycarp's martyrdom, it is written that the fire could not consume him, nor harm him, and that his body shone in the midst of it, like the most refulgent gold. It was a type and a prophecy of the endurance of that Church, whereof he was

the angel, which, since his time, has been cast out of one furnace into another, yet abides in strength unto this day.

Oh that I could bring home this lesson to the angels and the deacons of the churches! Oh that, instead of trusting to the arm of flesh, and deserting their posts, to rake and range about the country for subscriptions, bringing themselves and their offices into contempt, they would stay at home, and faithfully instill into the people what be the duties of a Christian congregation in these respects!

And if the worst come to the worst, let them take serge and sackcloth for their clothing, and bread and water for their fare, and bless God and be thankful. Would God suffer long such things to be? No verily. He would soon take up the cause of His own ordinances; He would soon avenge the neglect of His own servants: and how He would do it, let the word of *Haggai* the prophet testify:

Haggai 1

[2] Thus speaks the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.
[3] Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet, saying,
[4] Is it time for you, O you, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?
[5] Now therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.
[6] You have sown much, and bring in little: you eat, but you have not enough: you drink, but you are not filled with drink: you clothe you, but there is none warm: and he that earns wages, earns wages to put it into a bag with holes.
[7] Thus says the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.
[8] Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, says the Lord.
[9] You looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when you brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that is waste, and you run every man unto his own house.
[10] Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.

[11] And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon that which the ground brings forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labor of the hands.

False Jews

Revelation 2

[10] And I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

This also I interpret literally, because it bears, as I think, a full and sufficient interpretation in the literal sense. Paul takes the distinction between a nominal and a real Jew in these words:

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.

Romans 9

[6] For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.

Our Lord, in like manner, when the Jews boasted, that they had Abraham for their father, saying, "We be Abraham's seed," answers them:

John 8

[37] I know that you are Abraham's seed; but you seek to kill me, because my word has no place in you.
[38] I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and you do that which you have seen with your father;

Thereby insinuating the truth that they were the synagogue of Satan.

[39] They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said unto them, If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham.
[41] You do the deeds of your father. Then said they to Him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

Now mark the reply of Jesus, how exactly it is in unison with the text:

John 8

[42] Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, you would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but He sent me.
[43] Why do you not understand my speech? even because you cannot hear my word.
[44] You are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Now because this mode of speaking concerning the literal Jews, is not uncommon in the Scriptures, I prefer for my part to interpret the passage before us literally of Jews in Smyrna, who were a great vexation and pest to the Christian Church there, as everywhere; of whom Paul says:

Titus 1

[10] For there are many unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision;
[11] Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

1 Thessalonians 2

[14] For you, brethren, became followers of the churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for you also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews:
[15] Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:
[16] Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

These passages of Scripture show us, with what fearful animosity against the Christian churches, the Jews in all places were animated. And the experiences of Paul, as related in the *Acts of the*

Apostles, do exemplify the general accusation brought against them, in these two passages of Holy Writ.

And no wonder that it should be so, when it is remembered under what notions of Messiah, the Jews of that generation were nurtured;—to believe that He would avenge them of all their enemies, that He would break the neck of the Roman powers, that He would satisfy His own people with bloodshed and victory, and give them the necks of all their enemies to be under their feet.

What a revulsion in the mind of men thus rooted and grounded in a false and cruel faith, must it have occasioned to hear the Son of a carpenter, who had been condemned as a malefactor, and with malefactors crucified, preached as the Hope of Israel; and what an indignation and wrath, to see Him believed on, as the Hope of Israel! Disappointed in their daily looking for of a deliverance, rankling under the memory of a thousand indignities, the proud Jew clung to his messiah, and grasped the hope of him to his heart, and waited and waited, thirsting for revenge, and assured that the day of vengeance would come.

Conceive then, what a spite, what gall and wormwood, to see a slain, ignoble Nazarene gone from the face of the earth, believed in as the Christ of God; to see their children and their brethren deserting Moses, and the hope of Israel, for this Nazarene and these Galilean fishermen.

Add to this, that from about the time of the apostles' beginning to spread the gospel, the Roman empire fell into such shakings and convulsions during the reigns of the emperors from Tiberius to Vespasian, as threatened its entire downfall, and as were sufficient to have brought it down, had God not needed it for His battle-axe, to hew in pieces the Jewish nation.

These unheard-of cruelties, extravagancies, conspiracies, civil wars, and convulsions of every kind, by the space of more than thirty years, brought the Jews into the conviction that the fourth empire was just about to be broken forever; and believing rightly

enough that the Shepherd and Stone of Israel was to break it, they were in a frenzy for His appearing.

He had come, and they knew Him not. Now they were mad that He should come, but they stretched out their hands in vain; for no deliverer was there for them, but destruction like a whirlwind. Disappointed expectations, deferred hope, such a glorious occasion unoccupied, added to the complete fulfillment of the times, brought the whole nation into a state of madness, and they snatched on every side, and every upstart Messiah they gathered unto; and they blasphemed the Christ of God; and they rose in insurrection until their very name became hateful, and that Roman revenge was engendered which at last broke them in pieces.

They had received the first smitings of the Roman arm at the hand of Titus, before this vision was given: they were scattered abroad; and wherever they went they turned against the Christians; until at length the recovered polity of Rome could bear them no longer, and a war next to extermination was, about twenty years after the revelation of this book, carried on against them. In this interval or breathing time, it is not to be wondered that in two of these epistles we should find the Jews mentioned as a sore trial to the angels of the churches.

And not only in the way of bitter persecution, but likewise of controversy, did the Jews trouble the believers in Christ, maintaining that Jesus of Nazareth was not the Christ of God, the Messiah promised to the fathers. This was one of the chief controversies which the Primitive Church had to maintain, as is manifest from the writings of the fathers of the first three centuries: a controversy it was, also, of weighty arguments upon both sides: and indeed, but for the steady belief in the personal coming and personal kingdom of Christ, which in these ages prevailed, the argument could not have been maintained with the Jew; for much more of the prophecy concerning Messiah remains to be fulfilled, than has been already accomplished.

The Church in those days dared not to take such liberties with the prophets as now it is counted pious and faithful to do. They dared not take so much of a prophecy and say:

> "This had a literal fulfillment in Messiah's person and work upon the earth; but for the rest, though it be written in exactly the same language and connection, it never was meant to have a real fulfillment upon the earth."

If a man had dared to reason so in these times, he would have received his proper name of an unbeliever, of an infidel, of one who by his traditions made void the Law and the Prophets. It was reserved for times like these to lake such liberties with the word of God, and to sanctify the sacrilege with the names of spirituality, piety, and good sense.

The Jews in those days, as always, stood stiffly for the great principle that Messiah should completely accomplish every thing which had been written of him by the Prophets. The Christians likewise maintained the same, and argued that what was still unaccomplished He would to the very letter perfect at His coming and kingdom: and I am bold enough to say unto the man who denies this principle, that he is doing dishonor both to God and to Christ; and I solemnly recall to his remembrance these words of the Lord:

> **Matthew 5**
> [17] Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.
> [18] For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.
> [19] Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

We, the angels of the churches, have not this particular form of trial to withstand. The Jews are put under, broken, and dispirited. They trouble not us, if we will not trouble them.

But there has arisen to try us, who hold the primitive faith of Christ's advent and kingdom on the earth, a form of opposition, much of the same kind, and of still greater strength; an argument also with brethren,—I had almost said with implacable brethren,—and an argument which, it is remarkable, has to be maintained upon precisely the same grounds as that which fell to the share of the angel of the Church in Smyrna, and the angel of the Church in Philadelphia: I mean, the argument and the controversy which we have to urge with the multitude of the professing Church, who either are indifferent or opposed to, the glorious advent and kingdom of Christ upon the earth.

These our brethren deny that Christ is to accomplish visibly upon the earth, more of the prophecies than He has accomplished. The Jews deny that those prophecies which speak of Messiah's humility, were to be fulfilled literally; they deny that those which speak of Messiah's glory are to be fulfilled literally. Put those together, and the result is, that none of the prophecies concerning Him are to be fulfilled at all; which is infidelity complete. Either the Jew is infidel or our brethren are infidel, or both. I leave them to settle it between them.

For my own faith is, that every jot and tittle prophesied of Messiah as to take place upon this earth, shall upon this earth take place; and, though much of it I cannot explain, I would rather not be able to explain any of it, be in the dark with respect to the whole prophetic word, than not believe any one jot of it, or not be looking to it as a constant light in the midst of the darkness.

This is a great controversy bequeathed to us, who know the truth; and the way in which it is to be managed is, by learning in the word of God, and patient exposition thereof, in season and out of season. I advise my friends when in company with those who disbelieve or discountenance the subject, not for a moment to hide their convictions, nor to decline giving an account of the hope that is in them; and if passages of Scripture be quoted, patiently to go into their explanation; and should they be hard and difficult, frankly to confess with Peter when writing on these sub-

jects, that in them are many things hard to be understood;[15] and after thus having done our best to deliver our brethren from their fastnesses, we should freely submit to try our several opinions by the word of God; and leaving to them the choice of the ground, travel with them in the Scriptures, until both are satisfied with the occupation for that time.

In such labors of love, I have found myself sometimes much tried, by the manifest attempts of the adversary, to wrest the Scriptures from their simple, plain, intelligible sense. This is an evil which must be borne with. It may be temperately reproved and rebuked, but ought not to deter us from going on with our brother, so long as he will go on with us.

But as to following their abstract and metaphysical arguments, which rest upon no text, or interpretation of a text, I counsel the angels and ministers of the churches, to abstain from such strifes of words and vain janglings, and idle babblings about theology, falsely so called; and for the encouragement of patient and unwearied labor in this behalf, I refer to the passage now under consideration.

Revelation 2

[9] I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, but are not; but are the synagogue of Satan.

I do not say that I would use such language of those who oppose the personal advent and reign of Christ upon the earth, or even of those who deny that He took a body such as ours, because I may not judge any man: but this much will I say, that he who would quash all inquiry into these subjects, and decry the study of the prophets, and the prophetical parts of Scripture, is an enemy of the truth, and a manifest disbeliever in the word of God, and a most diligent propagator of his unbelief. And for my own part, I esteem those two questions as the two poles of a sound faith, and will ever contend earnestly against all who deny, gainsay, or deride them.

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[15] *2 Peter* 3:16.

A Crown of Life

Revelation 2

[10] Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. Behold some of you will the devil cast into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.

This last part of the epistle is spoken with reference to the future, foreboding many and sore trials to the Church in Smyrna. The first and the last of the three propositions which it contains, are spoken to the angel in person, and the other to him and the members of the Church taken together.

Yet we are not on that account to regard any part as of private interpretation; because it is addressed to the angel of the Church alone, who, by being an office-bearer, ceases not to be a Christian. So that by the rule of Christian polity, that the higher office always includes the lower, every private Christian is addressed, when the angel of the Church is addressed, when it is said to him,

[10] Fear none of those things which you shall suffer;

–it is said to all, what his sufferings were to be, and how fearlessly he met, and how patiently he bore them is fully set forth in that letter from which we have made the extract.

Well did Polycarpus maintain the honor of the Christian martyrs: he was faithful unto the death, and doubtless he will obtain the crown of life.

Now, concerning this crown of life, it needs that we explain a little. A crown is the symbol of a king: to promise a crown is to promise a kingdom; and in the original it is, "the crown of the life". Now what is "the life" which Christ promises to him who is faithful unto the death? It is evidently not that new life which we possess by regeneration; for this we already have, and over it death has not any power. It is some life which comes after death, as the reward of those who love not their lives unto the death.

Now, we be all agreed that regeneration and the union of the soul with Christ thereupon, is that whose continuity death does

not dissolve, whose power death does not abate, whose enjoyment death greatly enlarges. The reward, therefore, promised unto the martyr is something more than this: and what more can it be, except the body raised in honor and glory? The resurrection of the body unto life is, therefore, the thing here intended.

But are not the wicked to be in like manner raised from the dead? I answer, Not in like manner, for only the righteous shall possess the likeness of the glory of Christ. They are raised to immortality, to incorruption, to power, and to glory; but the wicked are raised to judgment, condemnation, and the second death.

But are they not both raised to life? I answer, No. The wicked are raised, not to life, but to the second death: and it is to confound words whose meaning is directly contrary, to say that the second death is the same with life. To consciousness, indeed, they are raised, to the consciousness of everlasting misery; but this is not what Scripture means when it speaks of life; but what Scripture means when it speaks of the second death. How high was Christ's idea of life when He said:

Psalm 16

[11] You will show me the path of life.

And what is the Psalmist's assertion of the wicked?

Psalm 49

[6] They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;
[7] None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:
[8] (For the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceases forever:)
[9] That he should still live forever, and not see corruption.

I freely allow that the resurrection of the righteous is no more than the imputation unto their dust of that life which in the regeneration, by baptism, their spirit receives; but being an integrant part, and the complete consummation of the glorious work of the Godhead in a fallen creature, I hold it to be not only dis-

tinct from, but the very contrary of, that state in which the unregenerate shall rise, of whom it is said in the same *Psalm*:

Psalm 49

[14] Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning: and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. [19] He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light.

Whereas it is said of the righteous:

[15] But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me.

I lay it down, therefore, as a great, and perhaps the greatest head of doctrine concerning things future, that the resurrection of the righteous is in all respects the opposite of the resurrection of the wicked: the one being known in Scripture, as the resurrection unto life, and the other as the resurrection unto judgment.

John 5

[29] And shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [or *judgment*].

Furthermore, I assert, that, as in Scripture baptism and regeneration are spoken of as including, because they commence the life of the Holy Ghost in the soul, as representing the whole work and blessedness, and holiness thereof, so the resurrection is spoken of in Scripture, as containing, because it commences all the future glory and blessedness, which thenceforth we shall enjoy with Christ.

And, to confound the resurrection of the wicked and the resurrection of the righteous, as if they were one act of Divine power, and to call the mere bringing up again of the body into organized consciousness, resurrection unto life, is to do away with the whole intention of the Holy Ghost by that word; which intention, I say, from the beginning of the Scripture to the end of it, is to convey thereby a peculiar specific reward unto the upright, in which the wicked have neither lot nor part. If resurrection be

merely the common thing whereof all are partakers, what, I ask, is the meaning of these sentences which I quote from one of our Lord's discourses?

John 6

[39] And this is the Father's will which has sent me, that of all which He has given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.
[40] And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.
[44] No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.
[54] Whoso eats my flesh and drinks my blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Not to insist upon so manifest a matter, I do from these premises nothing doubt that the crown of life here spoken of is that resurrection of the body which the righteous, and the righteous alone, shall receive at His coming, being the same with that which is spoken by the Apostle Paul:

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.

Now we must look in the Apocalypse for the fulfillment of this promise, because it is one of the marvelous excellencies of this book; that not only does it rest upon the other Scripture, with its allusions, symbols, expressions, yea, and very words, but likewise that it contains within itself the accomplishment of all its own promises. Behold then, in *Revelation* 20 the accomplishment of this prediction:

Revelation 20

[4] And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them…

Who sat upon them? Those ones who had just come out of heaven with Christ, to contend with the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, and had destroyed them. These are they for whom the thrones are set, after that Satan had been bound. And what office do they fulfill?

Revelation 20

[4] ...and judgment was given unto them...

They judge or rule in room of those kings who had been removed from the government of the earth. And wherefore are they so honored?

[4] ...and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither had received his mark in their foreheads, or in their hands...

These are the services for which they are rewarded; some for being faithful unto the death, and others for standing out against Antichrist, among whom is included in the first class the angel of the Church in Smyrna. And what more is said of their reward, dignity, and occupation?

[4] ...and they lived and reigned with Christ, a thousand years.

Their distinction stands first in life; for it is said:

[5] But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished.

Their second distinction is to reign with Christ, to be crowned and enthroned beside Him: according to His promise,

Revelation 3

[21] To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne...

Put these distinctions together, and what do they amount to? They amount to a crown of life: the thing promised in the passage before us. Beyond a doubt therefore, and if I did not know the spirit of these times, I would say without a cavil, this promise, "I will give you a crown of life," made unto the angel of the Church of Smyrna, and in him to all faithful martyrs, is fulfilled in the

first resurrection; and the kingdom of Christ upon the earth, during the thousand years prior to the resurrection unto judgment and the casting into the lake of the second death, of every wicked thing, of every wicked person.

Not that the reward of the righteous ceases then, or the kingdom of Christ upon the earth ceases then, which all Scripture declares to be everlasting; but that every word of God to good or to bad, to men or to angels, to heaven or to earth, or to hell,—every word which has proceeded out of the mouth of God, shall within the duration of these thousand years be accomplished; after which the unchangeable world, the immovable heavens and earth, the irreversible conditions of all things, shall begin to roll their endless course.

The millennium is the settling and clearing time; and when the millennium is closed, every word of God shall be an accomplished thing: like His word irreversible, like himself unchangeable.

Tribulation Ten Days

It remains now, that we explain what is contained under these words:

> **Revelation 2**
> [10] Behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation ten days.

What is meant by these ten days of tribulation? I would say, let it be understood, as days are wont to be understood in Scripture when referring to time future. Now, in this respect, day in Scripture is not always, nor yet most frequently, used to signify a period of twenty-four hours.

- The creation was accomplished in seven days, which could not be counted by the sun, forasmuch as the sun was not created till the fourth day.
- The day of the Lord, so spoken of in Scripture, is not one day, but a period of time.

- The day of grace and of salvation, the day of vengeance, the day of slaughter, the day of judgment, &c, are not periods of twenty-four hours.
- When Christ says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day,"[16] He does not mean the day of His birth, but the period of His incarnation.

And innumerable other instances could I produce, to show that day in Scripture is used very often of a fixed and limited period of time; even as it is in common language, for example, a man's day and generation.

We do not mean to deny, that in the generality of instances which are historical it is used to denote the period of twenty-four hours; but we assert, that it is not against the tenor of Scripture, nor the common use and wont of language, to use it in a less definite sense: and when things less definite than exact history or narrative are to be recorded, such as things future, we assert, that it is more common, we had almost said that it is constant, to use it of an indefinite period, whose duration is to be defined according to the conditions of the prophecy; but certainly not to be necessarily, nay, nor commonly, defined to twenty-four hours.

I do not remember at the present moment one instance in which the term day, spoken of a thing future, signifies twenty-four hours; and I can produce fifty in which it does not signify a period of that duration. Let me refer to a few:

Romans 2
16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

1 Corinthians 1
8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2
16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

[16] *John* 8:56.

1 Peter 2

[12] Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Thessalonians 5

[2] For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

Now I ask the same liberty of understanding the ten days before me. If anyone insist, upon the other hand, that because the number ten is set down, we must limit ourselves to literal days, I refer to the following as an instance directly the contrary:

Hosea 6

[2] Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He has torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.

I refer likewise to all the visions of *Daniel* and the *Apocalypse*, of which to this hour it has been impossible to give a consistent interpretation upon the principle of understanding the days as literal days; so that those who will cling to this hypothesis are obliged to confess entire ignorance of those very prophecies which have in them the element of succession, and by their very structure indicate a successive evolution and progressive fulfillment, which should daily more and more discover itself.

Until, therefore, instances shall be adduced of a number of days being literally used in a prophecy of future things, I am at liberty, nay, am directed by the instance in *Hosea,* and the other instances in *Daniel* and the *Apocalypse*, as well as by the common use of Scripture, to take these days as not definite periods of twenty-four hours, but periods which the progress of events would sufficiently define.

Now all history whatever, containing any account of the Pagan persecutions, or of the days of trial to the primitive Church, reckons them to be in number ten. And because as every other partic-

ular in these epistles has been found to be of a universal application to the churches, I am inclined to interpret these ten days of the ten periods of persecution, unto which all history bears testimony that all these churches were subjected.

But if any should object, that one of these persecutions was already past in Nero's time; and that the second was either in being, or already past, when John received these visions, and therefore that there were only eight to come; I answer to this objection that it has its force from not understanding the nature of this book; which in all the instructions given to the Church contemplates her, as she was instituted on the day of Pentecost, ere yet she had brought forth any of her children.

In proof of which, I need only refer to the 12th chapter, where she is represented with her crown of twelve stars, though the apostles were no longer in life, and as about to bring forth her martyrs, though already she had brought forth many of them.

This other consideration I give for removing the objection, that the book of the *Apocalypse* contemplates everywhere all the witnesses, all the saints, all the martyrs of Jesus; and therefore cannot have its virtual commencement as a constructed book from any time but the day of Pentecost, when Christ began to act as Head of the Church by baptizing with the Holy Ghost.

What have we then revealed to the primitive churches in these words, uttered to the persecuted saints of Smyrna? It is revealed to them, that for their purgation they should ten times undergo severest tribulation, in the midst of which the faithful and true witnesses are called upon not to be afraid of those things which they should suffer, but to continue faithful unto the death, and they should receive a crown of life.

Persecution is to a Church what the loss of children is to a family: and by this very similitude we have it set forth in the twenty-third verse of this chapter. It is not to be looked upon as a good, therefore, but as an evil; not to be sought after as a blessing, but to be received as a sore trial.

I do not find in the history of the Church as it is recorded by the Holy Ghost in the Old Testament, that they were ever given into the hands of a cruel lord, for any other cause but chastisement for their sins. Surely it is God's severity, who loves not to afflict the children of men, but delights ever to bless them.

And yet so needful is suffering to the perfection of our graces, that the Lord himself, though a Son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and by sufferings was made perfect. Now the servant is not greater than his master; and that we who are children of God shall surely have our share of the like tribulation, is declared to us in every part of Scripture, especially by Paul in the 12th chapter of the *Hebrews*, where he says:

Hebrews 12

6 For whom the Lord loves He chastens; and scourges every son whom He receives.

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the Father chastens not?

11 Now no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby.

While, therefore, nature shrinks and misgives in the midst of sore and direful temptation; and that this is not sinful, the agony of Christ well shows; the spirit of the sufferer is willing to endure for the knowledge it has of God's purpose, and the zeal it has for His glory and the Church's weal, saying with Paul,

Colossians 1

24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the Church.

The Unchangeable Love of God

For knowing how God loved Christ, how God was one with Christ, how the unity of their substance was never divided, and the greatness of their love never abated, though He laid upon Him all our sufferings and all our diseases, and brought Him into tribulations never yet felt, and never again to be felt by a living

soul, the believer feels assured that every member of Christ may be brought into the same agonies of spirit, anguish and torture of body, and horror of thick darkness over the mind, and in the midst of it all retain the same unbroken, unclouded love of God as at other times: yea, more; thereby win a higher place in God's love, by patiently for His sake enduring this, and all that He can lay on; as a faithful wife gladly endures for the love she has unto her husband, or a loyal subject for the honor he bears to his king.

This consciousness, this conviction of a love in God towards the children of men, which no outward circumstances nor inward distresses can in aught disturb, is, I take it, the great lesson taught by the extremities to which the Son of God in flesh was reduced.

It not only proved how low the Godhead in the person of the Son could come, for the redemption of a creature; and how much Godhead in the person of the Holy Ghost could do for the salvation of a creature; but it likewise showed how much the Godhead in the person of the Father could lay upon a creature without any dismissal of His love to it, without any change of the eternal relations between the creature and the Creator: proving this main point of divine truth, that the creation after it had been overwhelmed with sin by the transgression of its monarch, man, was not the less beloved of God, whose love to His creatures changes not by their changes, but abides unto the end the same.

This great truth, this only consolation, this pre-existent cause and spring of redemption, this first principle and moving power in God, which moved Him to send His Son, how could it otherwise be revealed, be clearly and indubitably revealed, but by exhibiting His Son who is one with himself, unchangeably one with himself, overladen with the distresses, darkness, and thick darkness of a sinful world, and brought into the condition of a dead, dissolved life; yet all the while loved the same, and confiding in that love, and so by love of the Father, and faith of Jesus, saved himself and saving all.

Christ: The Prince of Suffering

If anyone stand before me and say, But Christ was not brought into any such swimming darkness, I sweep such an objector from his place by repeating to him:

Psalm 22

[1] My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from helping me and from the words of my roaring?
[2] O my God, I cry in the daytime, but You hear not; and in the night-season, and am not silent.
[6] But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
[14] I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.
[15] My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and You have brought me into the dust of death.

And if more be wanting, I hurl against such wicked perverters of the truth the words of:

Psalm 69

[16] Hear me, O Lord, for your loving-kindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of your tender mercies.
[17] And hide not your face from your servant, for I am in trouble: hear me speedily.
[18] Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me because of my enemies.
[19] You have known my reproach and my shame, and my dishonor: my adversaries are all before You.
[20] Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none.
[21] They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

O you ungrateful men, you unbelieving men, you vain janglers, have you no hearts, have you no bowels to compassionate the Man of Sorrows? Will you be ever saying that these rending cries of His, these burstings of heart, these desolations of flesh and spirit, these drops of blood expressed by a working, troubled, melted heart, are not what they seem to be?—are not real natural

weaknesses?—are not flesh-and-blood grievances?—are not heavings and tossings of the soul, over which all the waterspouts of God are poured, and over which the billows of His fierce anger went amain?

Forgive them, Father; they know not what they do. Forgive them, Lord Jesus; they know not what they say nor whereof they affirm. Make their wisdom foolishness: take vengeance upon their inventions: but, oh have mercy upon their soul, and deliver them from all their deadly error.

This awful manifestation of God's fixed love, and of the creature's fixed faith upon God's unchangeable love, is the basis of all joy in suffering, of all patience in tribulation, of all victory in persecution; yea, is the basis of all righteousness whatsoever. And I cannot help both feeling and saying, that the continual presentation of Christ's sufferings, as the price of God's love, has done a world of mischief in obscuring this truth, as well as every other.

That our salvation comes out of those sufferings, is a truth never to be gainsaid. But how? I do not press the question, how? but if a minister of the Church be working upon a false answer, I will answer the question rightly, in order to disabuse the Church.

How then do the sufferings of Christ procure our salvation? By showing that God's love is not weakened by the darkness of our mind, nor the mortality of our flesh; that there is a love in God to be trusted in by human nature in its last and lowest ebbs, and in its dying perplexities, and in its dead condition, and in all its estates, from the womb unto the grave; for in all those conditions was Christ the beloved one, and in them all and under them all was equally beloved.

But if they say (for they have said, and they will say, and let them say, yet for all their sayings the word of the Lord is steadfast; if they say) that He was not a sinner: True; but He was treated as a sinner, as the greatest sinner, as the only sinner.

1 Peter 1

[24] He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

2 Corinthians 5

[21] He was made sin for us who knew no sin.

Galatians 3

[13] [He was] made a curse for us.

And there is not one mood of despondency, and of grief, and of desperate sorrow, in which a sinner was ever found, for which the most appropriate language is not to be found in those Psalms which the Holy Ghost wrote for Jesus, and which Jesus in the days of His flesh appropriated to himself.

And what is the end and meaning of Christ's coming into all the sinless conditions of sinful man, and having laid upon Him all the sins of all sinful men, save to exhibit and manifest God's love, unchangeable and unchanged, by all these the fatal consequences of the fall.

This is one part of the answer to the question, How do the sufferings of Christ procure our salvation? They give us in God's love the object of faith. Now observe that this comes not to those who either disbelieve His true Divinity, consubstantial with the Father's, or His true humanity consubstantial with ours. Deny the first, and there is no proof of the unchanging love of God to Christ; for, to outward appearance, He is not God but the most marred of men. It is not of sight, but of faith, to believe that all the while He is one of substance with the Father.

Again: disbelieve the latter, (as some unstable and unlearned persons in these days do, God forgive them!) and the proof fails entirely. God's love is proved only to human nature in that better form of it which Christ assumed. It has not come so low as our state, and therefore we have no ground of hope, but rather the reverse. But being both God and man in one person, the proof is complete and irrefragable, that God is love to the most abject miserable sinner who lives, and moves, and has his being upon the face of this troublous world.

But, as has been said, this is only half the answer to the question, How do the sufferings of Christ procure our salvation? For

we want not only the disclosure of the object of faith, but we also want the proof that faith can take hold, and keep hold of it, despite the devil and all his angels; and this the faith, not of a faultless man, but of an infirm and sinful man, such as all men are.

The Faith of Jesus

Now how is this steadfastness of faith, this uplifting and upholding power of faith shown in the sufferings of Christ? The sufferings are but the opposing force, the ocean load upon the breast of man, from beneath the depths of which he has to be uplifted, under the load of which he has to be enabled to walk at large and in liberty.

Now the Son of God, by coming into the conditions of very sinful man, partly by taking part of sinful flesh, and partly by having guilt of sin imputed to Him, did, under that ocean load, act faith upon the unchanged love and power of God, and did receive from God, in answer to His faith, strength to bear upon His shoulders and walk in majesty and grace, in glory and in power, in victory and in triumph, under the mass, the monstrous mass, of a world's sin, of a world's mortality, of the Father's pronounced curse: "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die."

And may any single man do this? No: not as a single man: for Christ did it not as a single man; but He did it in manhood united to and supported by the Son of God; and thereby did prove, that not in single manhood, but in manhood united to and supported by the Son of God, such faith is possible, such triumphs of faith are certain. Therefore we are taught that, anterior to triumphant faith, there must be union with the human nature of Christ; and so union with His mighty person: which truth being expressed in His own Divine language, stands thus:

John 6

[53] Verily, verily I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you.
[54] Whoso eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.
[55] For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

[56] He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I in him.
[57] As the living Father has sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats me, even he shall live by me.

Now, into the faith of this union for himself, and for His children, baptism introduces every man; and he who believes in the sacrament of baptism, as a seal of the New Testament, is united unto the Son by being united to His human nature: and being so united, I, a human person, acting in this flesh, made one with His flesh, and having in it the same power of the Holy Spirit as was in His, do act faith even as He did, who brought himself into the very condition of a man; and by so acting faith in the unity of my flesh with His, I have:

- in His holiness the assurance of my holiness,
- in His conformity to the Father the assurance of mine,
- in His victory over the devil the assurance of mine,
- in His power of faith the assurance of mine,
- in His resurrection the assurance of mine,
- in His acceptance with the Father the assurance of mine,
- in His personal glory as the Son of man, (though not in His Father's glory, with which no creature intermeddles,) the assurance of mine.
- I am crucified with Him;
- with Him I am delivered out of hell's hands:
- with Him I am delivered from the grave; and
- with Him I am seated in the heavenly places, and
- with Him I shall come again, and
- with Him I shall reign as a king and a priest forever.

And thus it is that the sufferings of Christ procure me salvation, by giving me an object of faith in God's love, in all extremities, and under all conditions; and by giving me the proof, that a person into my conditions brought, and in my conditions subsisting, may through faith be brought out victorious in every conflict.

It is necessary to observe, that Christ, though not a human person, ever acts as a human person, under the conditions of a human person, within that defined sphere of creature being; and this is the meaning of His name, the Son of man. But while thus acting within bounds, He ceases not to be the Son of God. He is Son of God, in that it is He who ever consents to become Son of man: and He is Son of man, in that He has ever consented to be so.

But His actings in the Godhead who can understand, who can speak of? They have no commensurateness with human language, nor with creature intelligence. But if anyone, out of this unknown and unknowable and unsearchable something would derive an argument, or in his own mind harbor a suspicion, that His consciousness in the manhood was not true manly consciousness, and His sufferings in the body true manly sufferings, and His words in the body expressions of true manly feelings, that man is:

- using His Godhead to extinguish His manhood:
- mingling His Godhead with His manhood, confusing and confounding them;
- arrogating to himself both to understand and to discourse of Godhead;
- making His manhood a fiction, the Gospels an imaginary tale, and faith a foolish fancy.

But if a man say:

> "Here is a something in His Godhead, which, though unknown and inexpressible, is the source and fountainhead of every one of His actings and sufferings, and triumphings in man's estate, and this something I want for myself also, in order to my obtaining His fellowship, His fellowship of suffering, His fellowship of victory."

I answer to that man:

> "You have spoken right well: it is most necessary, that of this unknown source and origin you should also partake, in what way Christ as a human person did partake of the same. And this also you do, through union of your human nature, through union of your flesh and blood with His flesh and blood; for then have you

sustentation from His Godhead, even as He himself had sustentation from the same. And thus are you a human person, acting in the community of His flesh and blood, and through that fellowship having hold of His Divine nature, to strengthen and support you, and give you the victory, even as He was strengthened and supported, and got the victory when out of His Godhead, He ever and continually condescended into His manhood, to act there within the bounds and limits of a human person."

And now, having brought out this great truth of the fellowship of the believer with Christ in all His trials, persecutions, and triumphs, I desire devoutly to acknowledge unto God His great goodness in permitting me to understand, and enabling me to express, and honoring me to defend this great truth, which is now on all hands either doubted of, or called in question, or denied, or, to put the best face upon things, is looked upon as a piece of curious and nice speculation.

O my God! you who know that it is the all in all, teach us more to honor, better to know, and more firmly to believe this most precious truth:

- that in the trials which are around us, we may be found more patient and joyful,
- in our testimony to the truth more full and faithful,
- in our love to thee more devoted,
- in your love to us more trustful;
- of our union with Christ more mindful;
- of the power of the Holy Ghost more confident, and
- by the knowledge of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, more fruitful in every good word and work.

If I seek my own glory in these writings, then let me not prosper; if your glory I seek and promote, then, O Father, let your Son be glorified in me; and the glory which you gave Him, give to me, according to His own prayer for all believers: and grant, O Father, that I may be with Him where He is, and that I may behold His glory which you have given Him, for you loved Him before the

foundation of the world. O God, how precious is your truth! therefore shall men's sons put their trust in You.

The Devil: The Instigator of Persecution

Besides the statement of these great doctrines, through which persecution is to be cheerfully borne, there are one or two remarks which we have to make before dismissing this part of the subject. The first is concerning the devil, who is represented in the text as the head and leader of these persecutions.

> **Revelation 2**
> [10] ...the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation ten days.

This confirms me in my interpretation of these ten days, as referring to the ten times of persecution, which the Christian Church endured from pagan Rome; immediately upon the last and fiercest of which, she obtained the victory over Paganism in the exaltation of Constantine to the throne; for in the 12th chapter, which presents the Church not under the symbol of seven candlesticks, but as a chaste and beautiful woman, the mother of saints, the antagonist persecuting power, represented under the symbols of the Roman empire, as we shall see, is declared (verse 9) to be that old serpent called the devil and Satan.

Now, if the devil be there represented as the actor of all the temptations done against the Church anterior to the period of the Arian persecutions, or rather to the time of Constantine; then we should reasonably conclude that the same complete action of evil is likewise given to him in this passage before us; and consequently, that the ten days are the ten persecutions, which fell in upon the Church from the time of Nero till the time of Constantine the Great; that is, from the year of our Lord 56 AD, until the year of our Lord 310 AD.

Warning Against the Persecutors

In whatever form, therefore, temptation comes, whether from Paganism, Popery, or Infidelity, the devil is its instigator, and his

children are its promoters: whether they wear a crown or bear a crosier, they are the seed of the serpent, who persecute the Church; and if they repent not, they shall have their portion in the lake that burns; for:

> **Mark 9**
> [42] And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

There is such a fearful verdict of God written against the persecutors of the Church in the book of doom, as when it is foretold in the book of *Revelation* makes men start all aghast; and in the present irreverence and infidelity of the Church towards God's word; in the present fast and loose interpretations thereof, it is the custom of our mealy-mouthed preachers to explain away these passages of the Psalms which denounce comminations direful upon the persecutors of Christ and His Church.

Even some there be, incoherent fools, or rather blasphemers, who put such passages down to the score of David's vindictiveness, and the lower morality of the Law of Moses. But in the name of the Lord God, whose word cannot be broken, I protest against and abjure all such defamations of the holy text;—for example of the 109th *Psalm*, which is expressly quoted by the Holy Ghost in the mouth of the apostles, and applied to Judas the traitor, the first great persecutor within the bosom of the Church.

To deter all kings and judges of the earth, to deter all churchmen, be they Papist, Episcopalian. or Presbyterian, from afflicting and persecuting the members of Christ Jesus, I write out a portion of the burden of that *Psalm*; which I myself, within the bounds of the realm of Scotland, could show-verified in many conspicuous example's of families enduring the long penance of their fathers' guilt in persecuting the Church, and exhibiting the certainty and invariableness of God's purpose, as announced in these awful words:

Psalm 109

[6] Set you a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.
[7] When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin.
[8] Let his days be few: and let another take his office.
[9] Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.
[17] As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.
[18] As he clothed himself with cursing like as with a garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.
[19] Let it be unto him as the garment which covers him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.
[20] Let this be the reward of my adversaries from the Lord, and of them that speak evil against my soul.

Persecution as Chastisement

And now concerning the ten persecutions of the Church instigated by the devil, and promoted by Pagan Rome, though it is not my purpose to write historically thereof, which may be found in any book of ecclesiastical history, yet have I a remark to make thereon, which I reckon of no small importance.

As has been said above, persecution is a chastisement from the Lord, brought upon the Church for her sins; in bearing which she does well to examine herself, for God is proving her, and to reform her ways with which He is offended.

Forgetting this, the primitive Church adopted the erroneous principle, that persecution is the sign of God's favor. Confusing the end and fruit of chastisement, which is our holiness and good, with the origin and source of chastisement, which is our evil; they thought that when the Church is cast into the furnace, she has therein a proof of God's joy and satisfaction with her state and condition.

And by this error, she was diverted from searching out the secret sins within herself, on account of which God visited her with the loss of children.

Now I am as fully convinced that the ten persecutions of the Church proceeded from ten provocations, as I am, that the judgments which came upon the children of Israel, from the time they left Egypt, till they were cast back, from the borders of Canaan, into the bowels of the waste howling wilderness, proceeded from the ten provocations with which God complains that they had so grievously provoked Him.[17]

And I believe, furthermore, that as the children of Israel were cast into the wilderness on account of these ten provocations, and perished there, all except Caleb and Joshua, so the Christian Church was driven into the wilderness of the Papacy on account of these ten provocations which brought on the first ten persecutions.

But it came to pass from that persecution-loving spirit, that glory of martyrdom which possessed the Church like a passion, I had almost said like a mania, during the first three centuries,—it came to pass that instead of interpreting the hand of God in these visitations, they went on in their full race towards that corruption and worldliness, which persecution indeed kept down while it lasted, but which burst forth with rank luxuriance under the fostering favor of Constantine and his successors.

Be it never forgotten, therefore, that persecution is an evil, and a great one, not willingly inflicted on the Church, but brought upon her for her purification from some mixture of impurity.

Still let not this tarnish the glory of the martyr's crown, nor let it discourage the faithfulness of the martyr's testimony, nor disparage the meed of the martyr's praise: for thus it is, when the devil is loosed and raging, that the glory of God, in frail man, is shown forth triumphant over the devil's utmost rage. Then it is, that out of the mouths of frail mortals, of babes and sucklings, God's praise is advanced, and the enemy and avenger is brought low.

[17] *Numbers* 14.

Revelation 12

[11] They overcame him by their blood and the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives unto the death.

Then it is, that:

- the gold and the fine gold of the candlestick appears;
- the precious wheat of the barn floor is separated from the chaff and laid up in the garners of heaven;
- the good fishes are separated from the bad, and stored for the Master's use;
- "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, is found unto praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."[18]

Nero's Persecution against Christians

[18] *1 Peter* 1:8-9.

V. The Spirit's Second Promise

WE NOW come to the third part of each epistle, which is the promise of the Spirit addressed in the holy catholic ecclesiastical style, which is proper to it:

- holy – "to him that overcomes";
- catholic – "he that has an ear let him hear";
- ecclesiastical – "what the Spirit says unto the churches."

Upon this manner of address we have nothing to add to what we set forth in our former lecture, with which in our mind we desire now to proceed to consider the promise itself, which is expressed in these words:

Revelation 2

[11] He that overcomes shall not be hurt of the second death.

Here again is a great subject in few words expressed, which our limits will barely permit us to open. The first step towards a right interpretation of any difficult and disputed matter is rightly to understand the terms in which it is expressed.

Promise of the Resurrection

Now this expression, "the second death," is peculiar to the *Apocalypse*, being found nowhere else in Scripture, and what is signified thereby is amply explained to us in the 20th and 21st chapters of this book; in the former of which it is said of those who partake in the first resurrection, of those who receive the crown of glory for being faithful and not loving their lives unto the death:

Revelation 20

[6] Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power.

This helps us to the meaning of the words in the text, "shall not be hurt;" being to us, who are placed in conflict with the powers of darkness, the assurance of the first resurrection, which will include those from among the dead who are exempted, for their faithfulness, from the injury of the second death. The first death

they braved for Christ, and entered fearless into His hold; and from His hold, by Christ they are snatched.

Whether or not, of those who have died before the first resurrection, all that are not raised, then shall be adjudged to the second death, after the thousand years are accomplished, I dare not positively to affirm, nor is it necessary to the full and satisfactory explanation of the matter in hand.

It is sufficient to be informed, that of those who are raised in the first resurrection, no one shall ever again return to corruption. This, I say, is sufficient to explain the expression in our text,

Revelation 2

[9] He that overcomes shall not be injured of the second death;

–and for those who are left unredeemed from hell's hand, still under death's dark oppression, we need not in this place to affirm anything whatever.

Now though this singular privilege and honor be not anywhere else in Scripture, by the same terms expressed, yet is it, like every other great principle of the kingdom, contained implicitly in all the Scriptures. I think the first notice of it is given in Enoch's prophecy, and Enoch's reward. His prophecy was in these words:

Jude 1

[14] Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousand of His saints,
[15] To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

Now, if the Lord was to come with ten thousand of His saints to do judgment upon the living, these saints must first have been taken from the hold of death; and therefore I make no doubt that Enoch's prophecy was substantially to teach how the verdict pronounced upon mankind in Paradise could be, and should be, made subservient to the Lord's triumph over sin, and death, and all ungodly men and angels, in the first resurrection of the saints, and the execution of judgment by their means upon the ungodly liv-

ing, and in the setting up thereafter of a kingdom of righteousness upon the earth, under the whole face of heaven, forever and ever. And this promise of victory over death, and triumph over ungodly men, Enoch's prophecy conveys unto the saints, and unto them alone.

Now, the great difficulty in the way of believing this, was the universal occurrence of death to the godly, as well as to the ungodly: there was no resurrection of the Son of man for the preacher to preach in those days.

Therefore God, to give them an instance which should confirm Enoch's doctrine, and put His own power to vanquish death in the resurrection of His saints beyond all question, makes Enoch himself the positive instance, and by removing him beyond death's bourne, without tasting of death's power, he did prove that death was still but God's slave, whose services could be dispensed with, when God so pleased.

And by making this state consequent upon Enoch's holy walk and conversation, beyond death it was shown to be the reward of the righteous, the inheritance of the saints; and thus from the beginning the victory over death, whether by resurrection from the dead or change of the living, was made the substance of preaching and exhibited as the reward of faith in the truth which God gave His servants to preach.

That preaching which propounds any other, any lesser reward, than the first resurrection and victory over death, judgment with Christ of the living, and kingdom with Christ on the earth, and presentation unto God as kings and priests forever, is not the full preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, is not the perfect exhibition of God's goodness, grace, and love, of man's redemption, salvation, and glorious destiny.

In this conviction, coolly delivered, I do challenge the great body of preaching, almost all the preaching which now is preached, yea, and I may say which has been preached since the

primitive age. as short of the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

This also is the reason why Paul in his cloud of witnesses connects the reward with Enoch's translation in these words:

> **Hebrews 11**
> [5] By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.
> [6] But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

In which passage he concludes that Enoch had faith from these premises that he pleased God, and received the reward of God, showing what his notion of the reward was, even translation beyond the bourne of death.

But it may be asked, How did this act done unto Enoch, which was not resurrection, show forth the resurrection? My answer is, In that way of incompleteness which is proper, yea, necessary to every type: very resurrection from the dead could not be until Christ should, in His own person and in His own power, accomplish it; for in all things, and in this especially, was He to have the preeminence.

The instances of raising from the dead in the Old Testament and in the Gospels are not resurrection; for all these returned again to death, to lie for a season under death's power; whereas the substance of resurrection is, rising so as never again to return to corruption.

They were indeed exhibitions of death under God's control, and at His bidding, but not of resurrection. So also Enoch's was not resurrection, nor do I think that it was change into the spiritual body, in which also Christ must have the preeminence; and to this agrees the word used by Paul, which is not change of substance, used *1 Corinthians* 15:52, but change of place, *Hebrews* 11:5: but change of place from the death-governed earth, unto some place where death comes not. It was therefore the exhibi-

tion of a place beyond death's dominion, where man might and should exist; and so far forth it taught the substance of the first resurrection and the reward of the saints.

Now it would be tedious to follow this great revelation through all its opening forms in the book of God. Suffice it to say, that Abraham's faith rests upon it as a postulate; that is to say, it is not a part of his faith, so much as that universally received and believed truth, upon which his faith rested; which was taken for granted by God, as existing in His mind already, when He made promises to him of inheriting a land of which He gave him not a foot. This is the reason why God makes no allusion to his being raised to inherit the land; because Abraham had no need of any such explanation, being already a believer in the resurrection.

This is the one and simple falsehood upon which Bishop Warburton's *Divine Legation* is founded, who argued, that the future state is not mentioned: true, it is not mentioned, because it is everywhere presupposed, and indeed is the *postulatuni* or prerequisite to the inheritance of any of God's promises, for death is a fixed thing, fixed by God's word, and cannot be done away with; and all within death is the leading on to death.

If God, therefore, promise good to men, eternal, essential, and unchangeable good, it can only be promised to men in the understanding of a resurrection from death to possess it. Can anything demonstrate more clearly, how God intended the resurrection to be the basis and preliminary condition of every promise, than His taking to himself that name,

Exodus 3 [Matthew 22:32]
[6] The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,

–the God not of dead men, but of living men; living in His purpose, and to live in His fulfillment of that purpose. Upon Abraham's firm belief in the resurrection, the apostle rests the principle and the worthiness of the great act of obedience in offering up his son Isaac:

Hebrews 11

[17] By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son.
[18] Of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall your seed be called:
[19] Accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also, he received him in a figure.

Job again, who, I think, with the most judicious interpreters, was of the patriarchal age, and his book a relic of patriarchal religion, when brought to the utmost desperation, rises aloft above it all, upon the wings of hope, whose eye looks steadily at the resurrection of the flesh:

Job 19

[25] For I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:
[26] And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:
[27] Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

And how much he prized this strong consolation, he well expresses in the preamble or preface with which he introduces it:

[23] Oh that my words were now written, oh that they were printed in a book!
[24] That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever!

Now, in contrast with this passage should ever be taken the confession of the conscience-stricken Balaam, who was as firm a believer in the resurrection as was Job, but saw it not, like him, as the ground of consolation:

Numbers 24

[17] I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh.

Isaiah 25 and 26

I have already referred to the 49th *Psalm*, as containing one of the fullest forthshowings of the reward of the righteous, and likewise to the 5th and 6th chapters of John's Gospel; and in my last lecture,

I enlarged upon the passage in the 20th chapter of *Luke;*[19] and out of the many that now press upon me, illustrative of the same universal truth, I shall only select one, and open it a little for the instruction and consolation of the Church. It is contained in the 25th and 26th chapters of *Isaiah.*

After the ten burdens contained between the 13th and the 24th chapters, the prophet, generalizing, and as it were consummating, and in one description including them all, in the 24th chapter sets forth in words of fear and anguish the judgment of the quick and the desolation of the world, at the time of the coming forth of the Lord, which is thus defined:

> **Isaiah 24**
> [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.

Then follows the song of His people, whom in that day He visits, to plant them again in their own land, beside His holy mountain; where, among other glorious actions that He will do, this is mentioned:

> **Isaiah 25**
> [8] He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.

Which words, though doubtless they contain in them the historical mystery of the discovery of Israel's long-lost tribes, we can, on divine warrant, assert do contain also and embody, chiefly, the mystery of the first resurrection,—the resurrection of the righteous; which shall be at the last trump. In that glorious change and resurrection which is described *1 Corinthians* 15:50-54, and has nothing to do whatever with the resurrection of the wicked, which is corruption and the second death; in that act, I say, of the resurrection of the saints, which is the first resurrection, a thousand years before the resurrection of the dead, it is said:

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[19] See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 4 "Epistle to the Church in Ephesus," Chapter: "His First Promise," Section: "To Eat of the Tree."

1 Corinthians 15

[54] So, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

This seals the import of the first clause of Isaiah's prophecy. And for the second,

Isaiah 25

[8] ...the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,

–I find it to be taken into the book of *Revelation*, and applied to the condition of the risen saints in the New Jerusalem:

Revelation 7

[17] For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Revelation 21

[4] And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Doubt, therefore, can there be none, that the resurrection of those, who shall not be hurt by the second death, is the thing prophesied to take place at the time of the coming of the Lord of hosts to reign in Mount Zion, at the time of His bringing down the terrible ones which have destroyed His earth, at the time of His making in Mount Zion a feast of fat things unto all peoples, and there destroying the veil that is spread over all nations, and making the rebuke of His people to be taken away from off all the earth;

Isaiah 25

[8] ...for the Lord has spoken it.

Thus firmly and fixedly is the event of the first resurrection, and the New Jerusalem's glory, indented and dovetailed in among the events of real history, the revolutions of this very earth. But this glad hope of the faithful and victorious Church of Christ has a further and more distinct opening in these two chapters of *Isaiah*.

After describing in most fearful wise the destruction of Moab in that day, and setting forth the triumphant song of delivered Judah; which song is too large for the mere historical event of Israel's restoration, though including it, and not to be divorced from it, as being the great historical type of a greater historical event, which is the recovery of the Church from death's hand; the Holy Spirit uses that symbol of a woman's travail, which by our Lord is used, *John* 16:11, of the same day of His coming, and by Paul, in *Romans* 8:22, of the emancipation of the elemental world from Satan's thralldom, in that same glorious day.

Now be it observed, there is not in nature such an image as woman's travail for expressing that event; which, looking to the substance of it, is the bringing again of the Son, out of the womb of the invisible, into the visible world, forever to abide therein; which, looking to the circumstances of it, is with long-deferred hope, growing towards the consummation into longing desire, and accomplished with rending pangs, yet issuing in joy, transport of joy, that the Man-child is born into the world; which, again, for the time of it, is fixed and definite, but as it approaches all uncertain as to the very hour, inducing continual preparation and readiness, yea, and longing, until the fierce trial be overpast, and the joy be come.

By this most expressive similitude, dignifying and sanctifying that sorest trial of humanity, having expressed the condition of the parturient Church, and the weakness to which at length she is brought, and her own lamentation over her own unprofitableness in the earth:

Isaiah 26

[18] We have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth,

–the Holy Spirit comforts the Church with these words, spoken in the person of the Christ:

[19] Your dead shall live; my dead body shall they arise.

These words, without any gloss whatever of an interpreter, convey their own meaning to be, that the deliverance which the Church lamented she had not wrought upon the earth should be wrought by the raising of her dead men, who are promised this, among other things, that they should rule the nations with a rod of iron and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. These dead men of the Church He honors by the name of His "dead body," according to the universal symbol of the Apostle Paul, which represented the Church as the body of Christ, the fullness of Him that fills all in all.

Isaiah 26

[19] Your dead shall live; my dead body shall they arise…

Then there follow two invocations; the one to the dead, the other to the living saints. That addressed to the dead saints is in these words:

[19] …Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust; for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

This is the first resurrection. Why in this and in other places,[20] as in the 110th *Psalm*, should it be compared to the dew of the morning, which rests upon every herb, refreshes and cherishes it, and makes it to profit from the rising sun, which otherwise would scorch up its verdure, herein seems to me to consist the propriety and significance of this beautiful symbol, that the children of the resurrection, unlike the fly of Egypt, and the bee of Assyria,[21] or the palmerworm,[22] or the locust, or the canker, or the caterpillar which rests upon all bushes,[23] and upon all herbs of the fruit-bearing earth, (symbols these of successive tyrannies consuming the life of man's blessedness,)—the children of the resurrection shall be unto the grass, as the dew for purity, and as the drops of the dew for number; and by their refreshing influence shall make all withered places verdant, and all desolate places to bud and

[20] *Micah* 5:7.
[21] *Isaiah* 7:18.
[22] *Joel* 1:4, 2:25; *Amos* 4:9.
[23] *Joel* 1:4, 2:25.

blossom like the rose; under whose benign and righteous government the sun shall not smite by day, nor yet the moon by night.

For this benediction of the fruit-bearing earth, for this invigoration of all life, for this refreshing of all faintness, shall the dead rise in the morning, awaking from the dust and singing the songs of the morning; and, like the morning star, shedding the hope of a bright and a glorious day over the troubled face of nature.

These inhabitants of the dust having first invoked, (for the dead in Christ must rise first,) God speaking in the person of the Son next invokes the living saints according to the order mentioned by the same apostle:

1 Thessalonians 4

[17] Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

And to these living ones what does the Son of God proclaim? He summons them up into the chambers of salvation with these words:

Isaiah 26

[20] Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

Which I make no doubt refers to a deliverance of the living saints before the judgments fall in upon the nations:

- Up within the skirts of that glorious cloud in which He shall come to execute His Father's faithful word, of deliverance unto Judah and Israel, of perdition unto Antichrist, of all sorest calamities to the world,
- Up within the skirts of that cloud which once arose over Egypt to guide the children of the Lord from thence, and confounded Pharaoh and his host, and inwrapped the summit of Sinai, and rode marching in the heavens through the wilderness, and rested in Shiloh in the tabernacle, and in the temple of Jerusalem made its seat, and departed from the earth in the days of Ezekiel; and has not visited us again

save at times, as in the mount of transfiguration and unto Saul in his way to Damascus, but which Ezekiel, with the Psalmist, assures us shall come again,

- Up within the skirts of that cloud with which Messiah shall come again, not manifestly but in His sign riding upon the cherub,[24] which is His Church,
- Up thither, which, with the sound of the last trumpet shall we, His waiting people, be summoned into, the ark of salvation, into the chambers of His presence, being counted worthy to escape all these things which are coming upon the earth, and to stand before the Son of man.

The full manifestation of this glorious mystery, to which all the world is asleep, and the Church also, I am daily expecting before that seventh vial be outpoured. God is rewarding my labors with this most cheerful hope, with this most gladdening expectation; and I can not only say to the congregation,

"Wait for Him,"

–but I can say unto himself,

"I do wait for You."

And oh, all you who hear and read these words, cast away your fear of Him; cut the Gordian knot of your argumentation and sophistry, O you worldly-wise; you doubters, you self-sanctifying doubters, be ashamed of your doubt and believe. All you virgins, by times while it is called today, before the night comes when no man can work, trim your lamps, gird your loins, up, go forth, meet the bridegroom, who says:

Isaiah 26

[20] Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors about you: hide yourself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

For behold what follows, after all has been gathered from the tares in the harvest, when the children of the kingdom have been

[24] *Psalm* 18.

taken up within the foldings of the glorious cloud; hear and tremble, oh you children of men:

Isaiah 26

[21] For behold the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Isaiah 27

[1] In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent, and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

This is the action of judgment upon the nations, which Christ and His people, which the man-child personal and the man-child mystical, which the head and the body, which the Word of God upon the white horse, clothed in a garment dipped in blood, and the armies of heaven likewise riding upon white horses; in one word, without a figure, which the Lord of hosts from the white cloud scatters and shoots forth like arrows of lightnings and tempests of hail upon His enemies, to rid the world of its oppressors, as it is written in the 11th and the 18th *Psalms*,[25] and in all the Scriptures, "He that has an ear to hear let him hear."

Having thus detailed this instance of what I hold to be the universal law of God's revelation; that the first resurrection, the triumph over death, the deliverance from the injury of the second death which is the substance of the promise before us, is the continual reward held out to the faithful; I do now proceed for the full exposition of the promise before us, to consider in a few words what is properly signified by escape from the second death, and what really is this second death from which we have escaped.

Nature of the Second Death

This also we will best learn from the book of *Revelation*, which is not only the interpreter of the other Scriptures, but its own interpreter. In the fourteenth verse of the 20th chapter, it is written;

[25] *Psalm* 11:6; *Psalm* 18:7-15.

Revelation 20

[14] And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire: this is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21

[8] But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

From these passages we learn, that the second death is the condition of conscious beings subsisting in the lake of fire. Now of this lake of fire we have many intimations in Scripture, of which it will be good to examine a few before endeavoring to come to any conclusions.

In the 19th chapter, at the twentieth verse, where the overthrow of the beast and the false prophet, which are the temporal and spiritual powers of Christendom, is described, it is said:

Revelation 19

[20] These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

By which, I understand, that in that day of the consummation of wrath, the enemies of Christ thus designated, that is, the whole institute of apostate power, and apostate priesthood, shall, like Koran, Dathan, and Abiram, go down quick into the pit. At the end of the millennium the devil also, in whom as the head I suppose all inferior angels to be represented, is cast:

Revelation 20

[10] And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

And this is all the information which we have concerning the lake of fire in the book of the *Revelation of Jesus Christ.* But in the Gospels and other Scriptures we have frequent allusions made to it—as, for example, in the judgment of the nations, it is said unto those who persecuted His people:

Matthew 24

[41] Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

But perhaps the most remarkable passage in all the Scriptures concerning this point, is to be found in:

Mark 9

[43] And if your hand offend you, cut it off: it is better for you to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;
[44] Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.
[45] And if your foot offend you, cut it off: it is better for you to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;
[46] Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.
[47] And if your eye offend you, pluck it out: it is better for you to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire;
[48] Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.

Now this most fearful description of hell-fire, where three times it is set in opposition unto life, though not denominated the second death, three times described not only by fire the element of bodily torture, but by the gnawing worm, the symbol of undying remorse of conscience;—this passage, I say, in which the eternity and misery of the damned is so expressed, as if to put universalism and purgatory out of the possibility of being ever thought of, rests upon a passage in the Prophet Isaiah, from which the language is almost literally taken:

Isaiah 66

[23] And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, says the Lord.
[24] And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

This presents us with a hell upon earth, in the neighborhood of the city of Jerusalem; and parallel to this, is the concluding words of the *Apocalypse:*

> **Revelation 22**
> [14] Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.
> [15] For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loves and makes a lie.

And the same mystery seems to me to be taught in the 59th *Psalm.* It is a great mystery which I am not called upon to open now, as it will come in its own place.

The only question before us at present is, why it should be called the second death. I think it is so called from its resemblance to the first death in this particular, that it brings those who are its victims into a state of impotence, passiveness, inactivity, and helpless endurance of ill.

The first death is separation of soul and body: but this is not the character of the second death, before which they are united. The first death is the dissolution of the body into unconscious dust, and the imprisonment of the soul in Hades; when the wicked are conscious, I believe, but confined; the subject of its own lusts and passions preyed upon by the memory of evil, and the presence of hopeless remediless evil, while the body is preyed upon by the worm. This passiveness of condition is the character of the first death to all whom Christ has not redeemed; and this passiveness to misery is likewise the form of the second death.

Now seeing this estate of the second death comes upon the apostates in the Church at the beginning of the millennium, and not upon the devil and his angels, and other men, until the end of it: the promise in the text to every one that overcomes, of not being hurt by the second death, is an assurance against apostasy, and the consequences of apostasy.

Apostasy is that falling away from the faith, that return unto the lusts from which we had clean escaped, that disseveration

from the body of Christ to which we had been joined, which is continually referred to in all the Scriptures, and especially in the writings of the apostles. Whereof the certain doom is the second death during the millennium, expressed by casting the beast and the false prophet alive into the lake of fire, while during the same time those who have not his mark—that is, all Christians who have not fallen away from the Lamb, and from the foundation of Mount Zion—do enter into life, do inherit the crown of life.

I think I am right in saying, that during the millennium, the lake of fire contains only the apostates from the faith, whose character is described in such places of Scripture as the following, to which we only refer: *2 Thessalonians* 2; *1 Timothy* 4; *Hebrews* 6 and 10; *2 Peter* 2; *Jude.*

But at the end of the millennium, all others whose names shall not be found written in the Book of Life shall have their portion therein, and the devil and his angels shall have their portion there, and death and Hades shall likewise have their portion there.

But where the place of that direful congregation shall be, after the millennium, I find not. Upon the earth I believe it will not be; for even the sea is not any longer there, and all things are made new. Somewhere without, out of the blessed heavens and earth, redeemed from the curse, somewhere in the regions of Chaos and of Old Night, shall these children of darkness have their habitation; concerning whose condition many thoughts of a very far range, and hard to be uttered, rise before me, which I forbear to express until in their proper place, under the 20th chapter, I shall have an opportunity of unfolding them fully.

Let that which has been said suffice for clearing up the deep and hidden truth, which is contained in the Spirit's Second Promise "to him that overcomes."

Great, vast, yea, almost infinite, are the subjects which have come before us in this lecture. There is a grandeur about the Epistle to the Church of Smyrna, which I have done my endeavor, cer-

tainly, but very imperfectly succeeded, in representing by my unworthy thoughts and unskillful words.

There is a severe simplicity, a solemn majesty, an unutterable consolation in its few lines, which I feel and admire, and have sought, but poorly succeeded, to express; yet what I have done, being done according to my gift, and in perfect sincerity, I know that my God willingly accepts: and I pray the holy Catholic Church and communion of saints to receive in good part these offerings of my best thoughts, and to sanction them with their approval, and to use them for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edification of the body of Christ: that I may not be an unprofitable member of that holy communion, but may supply my portion of strength and nutriment to the whole body, for which I ever pray night and morning, and in all my holy offices, that it may grow up into the stature of perfectness, making continual edification of itself in love.

Some I offend whom I would fain not offend, if not offending them I might please the Lord Jesus Christ. But when His displeasure is to be avoided, I must hate father, mother, brother, sister, wife, children, and my own life also.

The time is short, I fear the Church's long period of the reprieve is about run out. I apprehend that the truce is about concluded, and that the Lord is about to commence hostilities again. And I am a worthless man, and have been an unworthy servant, and now that He has taught me how near at hand is His day, I do well to labor diligently, that I may be found of Him in peace. And oh, my friends, hear, hear, hear, that word of warning which stands next before that judgment which ends all:

> **Revelation 16**
> [15] Behold I come as a thief, blessed is he that watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

Yea, so come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

VI. Conclusion

A FEW words will serve to confirm the prophecy of this epistle, by the history of Smyrna, the seat of this Church.

After enduring more than its share of the first ten persecutions, this city, which was wont to be styled the lovely, the crown of Ionia, the ornament of Asia, began about the year 1084, to be cast into the furnace of Mohammedan desolation, in which it has continued unto this day.

The same Turkish pirate, referred to in our sketch of the Ephesian Church,[26] got possession of it; and, in its rescue out of his hands, besides the loss sustained in regular war, 10,000 of its people were massacred, to revenge the death of one man.

And such were the effects of these ravages, that in the year 1106, the Greek emperor commissioned one to go and endeavor to restore the desolated coast from Smyrna to Attalia. And in the beginning of the next century, when the Acropolis was repaired by John Comnenus, the Greek emperor, the city remained an uninhabited ruin.

It was in its grave, and the Church also seemed to be in its grave. From that time forward, it was the object of continual conflict between the Sultans and the Latins, assisted by the knights of Rhodes, who kept a lodgment for Christianity there, till the year 1402, when Tamerlane besieged it and took it, and slaughtered the people, and expelled the Christian knights.

All hope seemed now forever lost to Christianity there; but there was a word upon it from Him "which was dead and is alive," and behold at this day there are in it more Christian churches than in any city of the East.

It is the seat both of a Greek and an Armenian archbishop; and of three orders of monks, Franciscans, Capuchins, and Jesuits. There are both an English and a Dutch chapel.

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[26] See *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Book 4 "Epistle to the Church in Ephesus," Chapter: "His First Promise," Section: "Him That Overcomes."

And it is further to be observed, that from the time of the researches of Dr. Smith in the year 1671, down to the book published last year on the subject of the Seven Churches, almost all our information has come from persons resident in that city, and proceeding in their researches from thence.

And at present it is the rallying point of all the missionary labors in that quarter: from which any reawakening life has its source.

These things are most worthy to be noticed, as confirming all the truth of the prophecy contained in this epistle; and also all the lessons which we have endeavored to draw from it for the use of those churches which may be found under the same circumstances of trial.

As the former epistle teaches us that decay of first love will certainly consume the most flourishing Church upon the earth; this teaches us, that no outward persecutions can overcome the hope of the most unnoticed and unknown, as of Smyrna, of which there is not even a mention in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Moreover it confirms the truth, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church; and that persecution is the furnace in which the gold is proved, but not a grain of it lost.

May God preserve His Church in Britain, and Britain for His Church, as He has preserved Smyrna. Amen, amen.