

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ,"

which God gave to him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, is a book of pen-pictures of events and of periods of earth's history—from Christ's first advent onward—usually in groups of seven succeeding stages; several of the groups running more or less synchronous, or parallel in time, with each other.

The seven messages to the seven churches, to be in harmony with the rest of the book, must also mark or be directed to seven succeeding periods in the history of the church. The remarkable harmony between the prophecy and that history not only leaves no doubt of this interpretation, but is an unanswerable proof of the inspiration of the book, and a pledge to our faith in what remains unfulfilled.

In *Ch. 1:11* we are given the names of the cities to whom the messages are sent. Seven cities then existing, and which remain (some in ruins) until the present. Whether the condition of these local churches in John's time was such as would be specially and respectively blessed by these messages, we know not; but it seems evident that these cities were chosen from a peculiarity in their names which fitted God's purpose. We will notice this in due time. In *verse 12* and onward we have a description of the appearance of the glorified Saviour and his surroundings, some feature of which seems to be peculiarly fitted to each church; and is quoted in the message to it, as if saying, remember who it is that speaks.

These churches are placed in Asia. The Roman province of Asia was a part of that district which we now call Asia Minor (In Modern Turkey today), and embraced only the southwest half of the peninsula.

The word Asia means *muddy* or *boggy*. Any one doomed to a long journey through a wild bog would, we think, before he got through, have a tolerably correct idea of the pathway of the church during the past 1800 years; especially if the greater part was traveled in comparative darkness—what with pitfalls and treacherous ground, with will o' the wisps and fog, it would prove a hard journey. True, the church has always had a polar star, but the mists of the Babylonian mystery had nearly hidden it. "*To the messenger of the assembly in Ephesus write.*" [2:1.]

Ephesus was the capital or chief city of the province of Asia. Being the first or chief city of the province, and from or through which the laws, proclamations, etc., would go forth, it fitly represents the first period of the church. The church of Christ and his apostles. We believe implicitly the records left and the proclamations made by the *messengers* of that first church—Matthew and his three co-laborers, Peter, James, John, and Paul. But why? "These things saith he who *is holding* the seven stars *in his right hand*, who is walking in the midst of the seven lampstands—the golden." [Young's trans.] These, who were to be messengers to *all* the churches, were so held in the grasp of Christ that they could not waver or deviate. We accept the fact of their inspiration, and receive their writings as from the right hand of him who guided their pens.

We accept another fact, that only the spirit of him who in Spirit has walked with his church all the way down, can make clear the messages given in the Word. Moreover, we believe it is

only because he is again personally present in his church, that such an abundance of light is now given—such as the church never had during his absence.

The Lord commends this church for its works, toil, and patience; and because "thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

Why, in apparent opposition to the general command, "Judge not," are they commended at this and *only* this time for trying these false teachers? Because to the first church (and to her only) was given the supernatural power of discerning of spirits. The cases of Ananias and Sapphira, of Simon and Elymas the sorcerers, and others, reveal this power.

After those gifted ones fell asleep, the enemy, without hindrance, came and sowed tares among the wheat; and then the command was not to pull them up, but to let both grow together until *the harvest*. In opposition to Christ's command, the servants have, all the way down, been trying to pull tares; but of course they pulled wheat, just as our Lord had foretold. Now, in the harvest, the tares are being revealed and *bound* in sectarian bundles preparatory to the fire. *Verses 4 and 5* show us that the "Ephesus" period reaches down to where the church began to lose her first love.

"Thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." Nicolans, in Greek, has the same meaning as Balaam, in Hebrew; and means *a conqueror or lord of the people*.

In the Ephesus, and also in the Pergamos periods, there were those who loved to *lord it* over the Lord's heritage. It was the old contention—who should be greatest in the kingdom? "*Which thing I hate*," emphatically says Christ. Those whom God makes leaders will be the last to boast of it.

"Him that hath an ear, let *him* hear what the spirit saith unto the churches." Jesus often used these words, evidently to show us that there are some messages sent which are not for all, but to those (overcomers) who are prepared to receive them. Our Lord recognizes two classes in the church all the way down—the nominal Christian, and the overcomer. To these last, who had gladly yielded up the pleasures of life for the truth's sake; who, like Paul, had spent their lives in hardship, even unto death, spreading the good news, there is a blessed promise of rest, a feast of life, and unending joy "in the Paradise of God."

R351

THE MESSAGE TO SMYRNA.

["And to the messenger of the assembly in Smyrna write" *Rev. 2:8*.]

The name Smyrna means myrrh. Our word myrrh is from the Arabic *marra*, to be bitter. The Hebrew word *mara* is the name given to the first water found by the Israelites in the wilderness. *Ex. 15:23*. It was also the name chosen by Naomi in her affliction. *Ruth 1:20*.

The symbolic meaning of the title here would be, *To the church in bitter affliction*. This agrees perfectly with the condition of the Smyrna phase. The chronological location is evidently

from the end of the Ephesus period *or earlier*, to the beginning of the reign of Constantine. It was the period covered by the terrible *pagan* persecutions.

The message is sent by one who announces himself as "the first and the last; who was dead, and is alive."

This was in itself a message of comfort and hope to these suffering martyrs. It was as if he said: "Fear not, my faithful ones; I was before all these persecutors; I shall be when they are forgotten; I shall take care of you. I, too, was put to death by this same power. Fear not to follow in my steps. See! I have risen in glory, in power, in immortality. *Follow me!* I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (*but thou art rich*)." This is an interjection with an emphasis. It is as if he said: You poor? No, no; you are looking at the things which are seen. Look up; the kingdom of heaven is yours. This is the cross, that is the crown.

He reminds them that he, too, has heard the blasphemy of those who claimed to be the favorites of the gods, and to whom he now applies the true symbolic and appropriate name by which they should afterwards be known—Satan, Devil, &c. *Ver. 13; 3:9; 12:9*. "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer; behold the *devil (this pagan power)* shall cast you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation *ten days*." This is, of course, symbolic time—a day for a year. It clearly refers to the most cruel persecution under Diocletian. It began Christmas day, A.D. 303. We extract the following from Wilson's Outlines of History: "During ten years the persecution continued with scarcely mitigated horrors; and such multitudes of Christians suffered death that at last the imperial murderers boasted that they had extinguished the Christian name and religion, and restored the worship of the gods to its former purity and splendor." Through all this the faithful flock, as they looked forward to a martyr's death, could see above, spanning the heavens like a glorious bow of promise, the living words in letters of light: "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*" "He that hath an ear"—listen. "He that *overcometh* shall not be hurt of the *second* death."

R359

THE MESSAGE TO PERGAMOS.

"And to the messenger of the Assembly
at Pergamos write."

Rev. 2:12.

Per is an article of emphasis, frequently equivalent to *very*. Ga or gee [*g* hard] is earthy. Thus the name Perga [*Acts 13:13*] *very earthy*. Pergamos means earthy height or elevation. It was the name given to the citadel of Troy.

The Pergamos of John's day, and to which literally the message is addressed, was a celebrated city of the Roman province of Asia. Here parchment was first perfected. It had a library of 200,000 volumes; also a famous temple of Esculapius, the mythological deity who presided over medicine.

The Pergamos period dates from the time that Constantine professedly embraced Christianity; which, being thus popularized, soon became the nominal religion of the

people. The church of this period was exceedingly exalted, but only from an earthly point of view; she was "exalted in the earth."

Persecution having ceased, the policy of the Emperor became the policy of both priests and people; and the nominal Christian church soon filled with the popular time-serving crowd. Masheim tells us that while the great zeal of many good men, the purity of their lives, the many translations and expositions of the Scriptures made at this time, and the intrinsic beauty and value of Christianity as contrasted with Paganism must have had their influence; yet it is evident that a desire to please the great emperor and his successors, and to be on the popular side, were the chief reasons for the sudden and great increase of the nominal church.

Many pagan philosophers finding that it would be policy to join the ranks of the rising religion, set about paving an easy way to it by trying to discover correspondencies between Christianity and Paganism, and so to blend the two together. They succeeded only too well. Many sought "to form to themselves a middle kind of religion, between the ancient theology and the new doctrine that was now propagated in the empire; and they persuaded themselves that the same truths which Christ taught had been for a long time concealed by the priests of the gods under the veil of ceremonies, fables, and allegorical representations." [Masheim.] As the old theology had a number of chief gods, with many demi-gods of both sexes, the Pagan-christians [if we may coin a word] set themselves to reconstruct the list for the new theology. At this time, therefore, the doctrine of *three* Gods was invented—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. Also the Goddess Mary. To make the list as respectable in numbers as the long line of pagan deities, they canonized the dead apostles and an unlimited number of martyrs, angels, etc., real or imaginary.

Masheim says of this period: "The public processions and supplications by which the Pagans *endeavored to appease their gods*, were now adopted into the Christian worship, and celebrated in many places with great pomp and magnificence. The virtues which had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations [ceremonial cleansings by water, etc.], to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches—to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men."

"The propensity of rude and uneducated converts [?] from Paganism to cling to the festal rites of their forefathers proved to be invincible, so that it seemed to be necessary to adopt the old usages to the new worship, rather than to abolish them altogether." [Encyc. Brit.]

We feel safe in asserting that all the vile doctrines that have saturated the papal church, and that still permeate Protestantism had at least their origin in this period.

The philosophy of Plato was engrafted, a parasite upon the Scriptural stock. This vile fungus, planted by Satan in Eden [*Gen. 3:4*], watered by the Egyptians, and brought to an increase by a pseudo-christianity, has borne an abundant harvest of errors, and exhaled an influence more deadly than the repas tree. Purgatory, Eternal Sin, Eternal Torment, Mariolatry, Saint Worship, Transmigration, Mohammedanism (Islam), Swedenborgianism, and Mormonism are some of its legitimate fruits, which could not have existed without it.

The Pergamos message opens in the words, "*These things saith He who hath the sharp sword with two edges.*" The speaker is Christ himself. It seems as if the little company of faithful ones, beset on every side by the enemy, were earnestly looking amid all the noise and strife for their

Leader, when, suddenly, the great Captain appears by their side, and waving his sword on high, shouts, *Attention! Company!*

The two-edged sword is the Word of God. [*Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12*] This weapon is formed both for offensive and defensive warfare. It is sharp, and while one edge is presented toward the enemy, there is another toward him who wields it. Christ has given it to the church to be used in his service: woe to him who handles it unskillfully. Our Lord's words are a warning to those of that age who were exercising this spiritual weapon.

"I know thy works." They were many. The faithful of this period were very zealous, and were hard workers against much opposition. *"And where thou dwellest, where Satan's seat is."* The home and stronghold of Paganism; which, in course of time, with a change of little else than name and names was rechristened Papacy. *"Thou holdest fast MY NAME, and hast not denied my faith."* Their fidelity is more particularly noted because of their adverse surroundings. At this time there were many teachers, and more controversy than ever before. Light was darkened by words, and truth with sophistry. During this period also arose the old dispute of "who should be greatest?" The bishops, or *Patriarchs*, as they preferred to be called, of Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, had acquired a degree of pre-eminence over the others, and there was a long-continued rivalry between them; the supremacy being finally divided between Rome and Constantinople. The nominal church was split in two, chiefly over the question of image-worship; the idolaters ranging under the bishop of Rome, who received the name of Pope [Latin, *papa*—the *father*], while the image-breakers, as they were called, formed the Greek Church under the Patriarch [*chief father*] of Constantinople. A remembrance of this controversy will help us to understand the passage which follows:

"Thou holdest fast MY NAME... even in those days in which ANTIPAS was my faithful witness; who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth." *Anti*, in Greek, means opposite or against; *papas* is *father*. In the usual manner of forming words, *Anti-pas* would evidently mean *against the father*, or opposed to the Pope or Patriarch; as we use the name *anti-christ*, the opponent of Christ. It is clear, then, that our Lord here commends the faithful hand who, "holding fast" the endearing name of our "Father," in obedience to the command, "Call no man Father," opposed the development and establishment of the Papacy, with its attendant heresies of a class of holy [?] and Rev. [?] fathers [*Matt. 23:9*], who, being called by the church—or the almighty dollar—or the love of honor and ease, as the case may be, profess a superior sanctity, privilege, and authority for the exposition of God's Word. *"But I have a few things against thee. Thou hast there them that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things offered to idols, and to commit fornication."*

Num. 22 and onward tells the story of Balaam. The kings of Midian and Balak, king of Moab, found themselves unable by force of arms to subdue Israel. They hired Balaam to curse God's people. He found it impossible, but knowing why they had the Lord's favor and protection, he advised Balak to lead them into sin; which succeeding, brought upon them a plague which destroyed 24,000 of them.

From what has been said, the spiritual meaning of the Balaam teaching should be easily seen. The blasphemous doctrines of eternal torment, and the endless existence of sin and sinners; also the fiction of the short line from the death-bed to heaven, and kindred fancies, have always been a "stumbling-block" to the church. The homage given to pagan rites,

ceremonies, festivals, etc., Christianized [?] such as prayers to the dead, sacred places, days, and persons; union with earthly powers and with those who do such things, would in our opinion be *Baal-am* service.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans, noticed in the Ephesus message, found its development in this age; and has been a burden to the church ever since. *Nicolas* means *a conqueror of the people*. In the church of Rome the laity or people are as much the subjects of the Pope, both in spiritual and temporal things, as any of earth's conquerors ever dreamed of demanding. This, in the face of Christ's plain statement that there is but *one* Lord, *one* Master, *one* Father, "*and all ye are brethren.*" [**Matt. 23:8-12**] The command "Search the Scriptures," was intended for every one; the commission to "preach the good news" to all who have received the Spirit; and if anyone has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His, and can only be a blind leader of the blind. "*Repent, or else I will come unto THEE quickly, and will fight against THEM with the sword of my mouth.*" Notice *thee* and *them* in this passage. The words are evidently used like *you* and *them* in **1 Thes. 5:1-4**. The Lord speaks directly *to* his church as *thou* or *you*; but *of* the world, as *they* or *them*. He came to his own, and in a sense delivered them out of Babylon; bearing them up on eagles' wings [**Rev. 12:14**], and carrying them into the wilderness; "into *her* place, where she is *nourished*."...from the face of the serpent, Satan. To *them*—Babylon, he comes with the sword, and by the sword they are cut into two—the Roman and Greek churches. "*He that hath an ear, let HIM hear what the Spirit says to the churches.*" "*To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna.*" The manna recalls the story of Israel in the wilderness. *Hidden* would point as an index finger to the golden bowl full of manna laid away in the Ark of the Covenant as a memorial of the faithfulness of Jehovah, who led and "nourished" his people in the wilderness. It is a pledge to the Pergamos church that he who watched over literal Israel in their journeyings would care for them in the weary march that was about to begin.

The manna, of course, typifies spiritual food, the word of God. Perhaps some were enabled to see a deeper meaning, that it referred not only to the written word, but to the living Word; the true Bread of Life who came down from heaven to give life to the world. [**John 6:47-51.**]

It was a promise in the face of desolation and death, of a life that should be *hid*—from all the power of persecution—with Christ, in God. "*I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name engraved, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.*"

What a blessed assurance to the church during those 1260 years of trial, outcasts from the world, branded as heretics by the church, to realize that God's seal was upon them; to remember that "the Lord knoweth them that are his."

The signet or seal—evidently referred to—was the emblem of authority. See **Gen. 41:41-42**; **1 Kings 21:8**; **Esther 3:10-12**; **8:2-8**, etc. To present any one with the signet ring was to invest them with all the power and authority of him who owned it. This is, therefore, one of the exceeding great and precious promises of joint heirship with Christ, given only to the overcomers.

The color of the stone would indicate the purity of the reign. "A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." However precious the jewel, it was made much more so on account of its use; it was therefore the symbol of that which was most highly esteemed. See **Haggai 2:23**; **Sol. Song 8:5-6**.

The name on the seal is significant. We believe it is the name assured by our Lord on taking unto him his great power and beginning his reign. A name now revealed to the members of his body, when the reign has begins. A name peculiarly comforting to the persecuted saints during the reign of Anti-christ—the name of our beloved KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

R388

THYATIRA

**"And to the Messenger of the Congregation
in Thyatira write."**

Rev. 2:18-29

It is claimed that the name Thyatira means "sweet savor of labor." We think it applies to the first part of the period during which the church was said to be *in the wilderness*; the time also in which the papacy was in power. It would thus cover the period during which the true church, purified by persecution, relieved of its ordinary load of lazy dead-heads, and untrammelled by the class who always choose the popular side, was fully harnessed and faithfully laboring in the Lord's work. Many evidently had more zeal than knowledge, but they were faithful to the light they had. *"These things sayeth the Son of God."*

This is a more emphatic declaration of who the speaker is, than in any previous message. It was necessary. A usurper had arisen, who, as foretold by Daniel, had "a mouth speaking great things." Claiming to be the Vicar of Christ, he assumed to speak as the mouth-piece of God.

Our Lord here announces *himself* as speaking through his written Word—his only authorized authority. This declaration would call to mind the words of Paul: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

"Eyes as a flame of fire." Expressive of their piercing brightness. Despised and persecuted for the truth, as the little faithful company were, by those who claimed to be the church of God, it was a cheering thought to know that their exalted head "seeth not as man seeth"; but "the Lord knoweth them that are his." *"His feet are like to polished brass."* The description here is very like that of the spiritual being seen by **Daniel [10:6]**: "Eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in color to polished brass." This metal was perhaps the most useful and enduring known to the ancients. It seems as if he would say to them: Fear not in all your terrible journey of 1260 years in the wilderness, lo! I am with you; we shall walk together; I will be your companion and guide. *"I know thy works, and thy love and faith and service and patience, and thy last works are more than the first."* This is generous praise, and shows the Lord's appreciation of the faithful labors of the true church of this period. The language is quite similar to that used in addressing the first church, with the apparent recognition that works of Thyatira were even more abundant than those of Ephesus. *"But I have against thee that thou sufferest the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things offered to idols."*

The Bible is a wonderful book. We find in it a faithful record of human history, and many curious events, sometimes so strange as to be almost or quite disbelieved by

the *natural* man. Various attempts have been made to prove the Bible *unhistorical*; that while it taught spiritual truths, it was not intended to teach history, science, etc., and was in those directions entirely unreliable. The light of modern research and criticism is fast scattering such infidelity, and proving, day by day, the antiquity and reliability of the Book of books. Not only is its historical and scientific truthfulness shining out clearly, but there also appears a strangely deeper vein of truth which seals its supernatural origin, by revealing the astonishing fact, that that history was a living, speaking, prophetic pantomime—a prophecy acted out in type by living characters. Even their faults and misdeeds faithfully noted (to the disgust of some *over-particular* people) being apparently necessary to fill up the anti-type.

The history of Elijah, and his relations with Ahab and Jezebel, is one of these prophetic pictures, seen not in vision, but in real characters. As this type is familiar to many of our readers, and will be treated fully soon for the benefit of all, we only take space to note a few of the prophetic features.

Jezebel, as the nourisher and protector of the prophets of Baal, is the type of the Papal Church, the mother of abominations. **1 Kings 18:19; 2 Kings 9:22.** Ahab, her husband, the king of Israel, represents the kings or kingdoms of Europe who committed spiritual fornication with the "mother church."

The Elijah of **Malachi 4**, is evidently the Gospel church in its militant condition, and which must be fully come—filled up. **Rom. 11:25**—before the trouble spoken of can fairly begin, seeing that they assist in pouring out the plagues. The three-and-a-half years of drouth and famine foretold by Elijah (during which he was miraculously fed) were typical of the three-and-a-half "*times*" or symbolic years of spiritual drouth and famine foretold by **Amos (8:11)**, during the combined reign of the Babylonian Jezebel and her kingly paramours.

If we compare **Dan. 7:25; 12:7**, with **Rev. 11:2,3,9,12**, and **12:6,14**, we will find that they measure the same length of time. In symbolic language a "time" is composed of twelve months, of thirty years each (a day thus symbolizing a year). A symbolic year is 360 literal years, and 3-1/2 of these years, or 3-1/2 times 360 is 1260. Also 42 months multiplied by 30 days to a month is 1260 symbolic years. There is abundant proof that this is the way God intended us to calculate symbolic time.

We thus see that the flight of the true children into the wilderness, from the face of the false church during 1260 years, while the harlot reigned a queen, and lived deliciously with the kings of earth, was clearly foretold in Elijah's flight from the face of Jezebel, and the 3-1/2 years of famine. **1 Kings 19:3**, also **17:1**—with **Luke 4:25**.

The description of Jezebel in this message exactly fits the teaching of Rome. "*To eat things offered to idols.*" How could the Pagan ideas taught by the Papacy, and clung to by Protestantism, be better described? The natural immortality of all men, as first taught by the most beastly of idolaters—the Egyptians—the eternity of sin; and, worst of all, the character of God so degraded that no heathen monstrosity ever invented by pagan priest-craft could compare with it. Instead of a loving Father, a vindictive Giant, kind indeed to his followers [are not the heathen so?], but *infinitely* cruel to, not his enemies alone, but also to those who, never having heard of him, could neither like nor dislike him. True, we were told that he—or rather his Son—was love personified; but this idea was so mixed up with the hideous doctrine of "eternal torment" that the result was Babylon [*confusion*]. "*She teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication.*"

Churches are continually typified in the Scriptures by women, so the teaching alluded to is the following and union with some of the daughters of Babylon. So successful has been this seduction that Protestants generally would rather associate with an *immoral* member of an orthodox church, or a member of the body of anti-Christ, than a faithful and consistent Christian, who has thrown off the fetters of sectarianism.

Rome has claimed to teach the doctrine of "one church"; but the direct result of her teaching has been the various creed-bound sects which still hold captive the spiritual Zion. *"And I gave her TIME that she might repent; and she willeth not to repent of her fornication. Behold, I cast her into a bed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation [see Rev. 2:21,22] if they repent not of HER works."* [Sinaitic, Vatican, and Ephraim MSS., and other *best* authorities: "HER WORKS."]

The time given for repentance must date, we think, from the dawn of the light of the Reformation. Strange to say, just about 365 (now 504 years in 2021) years have passed away since Luther began to preach against the errors of Rome. On the 31st day of October, 1517, he placed his ninety-five theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg. In a few weeks the theses were known throughout Christendom, having been translated into several languages. This is considered the beginning of the Reformation in Germany. Now, we see the force of the language of our Lord in this message.

"I gave her [a] *time* that she might repent." A "time," 360 years from the first clear rays of light through Bro. Luther, brings us to the hour when our Lord said to the nominal Gospel Church—as shown by the parallels—"Your house is left unto you *desolate*." If we read the signs of the times aright they have already entered the "affliction" promised. *"And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts; and I will give to you every one according to your works."*

Rome, in the days of Thyatira, endeavored to kill Thyatira's children with literal death; and the Lord cheers them by the assurance that the reverse would finally take place; and that while those who had imbibed that persecuting spirit of Jezebel would be stricken with spiritual death [the anti-type of the 450 priests of Baal whom Jezebel fed, and whom Elijah destroyed], she (all having the spirit of Thyatira) would receive the glorious reward according to your works. This changed condition of things will also reveal to "all the churches" who it is that is doing the sifting work. *"But to you I say: to the rest which are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching; who know not the deep things of Satan (as they say); I put upon you no other burden; but that which ye have, hold fast till I come."*

It will be noticed that there is a peculiarity in the use of the expression "deep things." There are apparently certain ideas which "*they*" call deep things [of God] which our Lord calls by their proper name: "deep things of Satan."

When we speak to a certain class about God's dealings with mankind, and of the justice [?] of consigning the ignorant to everlasting misery, as *imputed* to our heavenly Father, we are at once told that we cannot fathom God's purpose in allowing all this sin and misery; that he has not revealed his plans; that our reasonings are mere speculation, the whole matter belongs to the "*deep things*" of God, which he has not revealed. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard," etc.; not knowing that Paul continues: "but God *hath revealed them* unto us by his spirit."

Although knowing that anti-Christ has loaded "Our Father's" name with odium, and his character with infamy, they still persist in asserting that it is not our business to attempt to clear him; he will do that himself on the day of judgment, when, according to their theology, it will be too late to do anybody any good.

We, who see the Plan of the Ages, might be content to wait; but we have a right to expect that those who believe that the world is now on probation should do all in their power to place God's character and dealings in a proper light before the world. We would be ashamed to treat an earthly friend so, *how much more* the "friend above all others"? Thank God we have not learned this "voluntary humility."

"I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true."

To the faithful laborers in Thyatira he lays no other "burden." He began his message by commending them for their "works" and "service." He ends by telling them to patiently carry this burden, holding fast what they have "till I come." We think we know some still living who have the Thyatira spirit. *"And he that overcomes, and he that keeps my works until the end, to him will I give authority over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter are they dashed to pieces, as I also have received of my Father."*

The promise to the overcomers of the Thyatira age is peculiarly appropriate. Rome, the false church, was at this time in the height of her glory, claiming to be the kingdom of God; that Christ's reign had begun—through his vice-gerent, the Pope. Claiming, of course, the promises given to those who reign with Christ, she did literally rule the nations with a rod of iron, dashing in pieces whom she would.

The type (in a sense) of the iron rule and great power of the true kingdom was thus signified [*made signs of—shown by signs—Rev. 1:1*] before their eyes; making even their terrible persecution a reminder of the glory and power they were called to inherit. *"And I will give him the morning star."*

These who would continue to "work" in harmony with God's plan (which they could only do by walking in the light of present truth), are promised not only increasing light, but *advanced* light—as if before it was due; also the first sure proof of "Day Dawn," and of the approach of the glorious Sun of Righteousness who shall rise—*not to bring* DARKNESS, (Is **John 1:9** fulfilled?)—*not to destroy*, but with *healing* in his wings. "The leaves of the tree were for the *healing* of the nations." *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

R490

THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

We began some months ago a series of articles on The Seven Messages to the Churches, of **Rev. 1 to 3**.

Absence from home and other reasons have hindered their continuance. We have already examined the first four, but it is suggested that we partially review these before proceeding.

We hold that the book of Revelation is a book of *symbols*. We are told that our Lord "sent and signified [made signs] by his angel unto his servant John" (*Rev. 1:1*).

We know that the book abounds in symbols or signs, and we are satisfied that these are the rule, and the literal—when unavoidable—is the exception.

To be in harmony, then, with the rest of the book, "the seven churches which are in Asia" must be symbolic: and as the book is chiefly "history written beforehand," they must also symbolize seven successive stages in the history of the Christian Church; covering the period between the first and second advent of Christ. The fulfillment, we think, proves the correctness of this position.

In the *first chapter* we have a description of "one like unto the Son of man," as seen in a vision by John. Some one or more of the features of this description are peculiarly appropriate to each of these successive stages of the Church; and in each case he who sends the message is thus described.

The names of the churches are also characteristic, as we shall see when we come to look at them.

The last part of each message, or the promise to the "overcomers," is also peculiarly adapted to the different periods.

To give a sort of birdseye view of the arrangement, we would notice their chronological position. *Ephesus* covers the period during the lives of the Apostles; *Smyrna* during the time of the Pagan persecution, reaching to about A.D. 323, when Constantine became sole Emperor of Rome, and declared in favor of Christianity. *Pergamos* embraces the transition period in which the Papal Church had its rise; *Thyatira* the space during which the true Church was in the wilderness, and the mother of Harlots sat as a queen, cohabiting with the kings of the earth. *Sardis* takes in a short interval just before the Reformation. *Philadelphia*, from the Reformation until recent times; and *Laodicea*, the nominal Church of today.

Ephesus means, *first, desirable*. In this period our Lord "holdeth the seven stars in his right hand," etc. (compare *chap. 1:20*). The messengers of the Churches (Paul, Peter, John, etc.) during that period were so powerfully led and kept in the grasp of the Lord Jesus that we accept their teachings as we accept his, believing that their words were really his. This Church is commended for its faithful, patient *labor*, and its discernment of truth and teachers (*Acts 20:28-30, 1 Cor. 11:19*). It was a characteristic of that period that "they forsook all and followed him"; they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; they sold what they had, and gave to those in want. Though often deprived of the bread of *this* life, they not only had the living bread, but the promise of "*the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.*"

Smyrna means *bitter*, [*Myrrh* and *Marah* (*Ex. 15:23*) are kindred words.] It was the period of most bitter persecution, under the Roman Emperors from Nero to Diocletian. "The *devil* [Pagan Rome] *shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days*" (last and most severe persecution, A.D. 303 to A.D. 313).

Those who have read the history of this period can understand the depth of the words, "that ye may be tried." Some of the most sublime pictures of Christian endurance that the world has ever seen were enacted during the Smyrna period.

The call was for faithfulness "*unto death*"; the promise was "a crown of *life*." Also "*he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*." Pergamos means an *earthly elevation*. The speaker is he who has "*the sharp two-edged [Greek, two-mouthed] sword*"—the Word of God. During this period, while the nominal Church was growing popular, the true Christians were tested by the introduction and development of Pagan and Papal ideas. The Pagan priests, unwilling to lose their positions of honor and influence among the people, sought to bend their theories to fit the new religion; and while nominally professing Christianity they brought many of their ideas with them; which were eventually engrafted upon the true stock. Thus the Church was led into error, evil practices, and away from God. This is what is alluded to in the reference to Balaam and Balak. Balak tempted Israel to sin, and thus brought about what he could not accomplish by his own powers (*Num. 31:16*). So these priests taught the Church to indulge in spiritual fornication, and thus brought upon her the withering blight of God's wrath.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes seems to be the theory of lordship or headship in the Church. Nicholas means a *lord*. The strife as to who should be greatest existed among many of the Patriarchs (fathers) of the prominent churches. At their councils there was a bitter fight for supremacy. The tendency was toward an earthly head, and of course many wanted the honor. The patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome, were most prominent. The first two dropped out, but the strife continued several hundred years between Constantinople and Rome, and was only settled by a division of the Church: the Eastern, or Greek Church accepting the Patriarch of Constantinople for its head, and the Western, or Papal Church acknowledging the Bishop or *Pope (Father)* of Rome.

Many of the true in the churches denounced this attempt to disobey the direct command of Jesus, "Call no man Father" (*Matt. 23:9*), and of course received the persecution promised (*2 Tim. 1:12*). This class in Pergamos our Lord commends under the symbol of "Anti-pas my faithful martyr." In the Greek, *anti* means *against*, and *Papas*, *father*; so in the usual formation of words Antipas would mean an Anti-papist, one who protests against the Pope or Father.

In this age also those who sought to be popular received the emoluments of the Church, but the promise to the overcomers is of pleasure and honor that shall be eternal.

Thyatira seems to mean "The sweet perfume of a sacrifice." It was the period of the Papal persecution. The Antichrist had seated himself in the temple of God, announcing himself through his minions as "Our Lord God the Pope," ruling the nations and the churches with a rod of iron; dashing in pieces like a potter's vessel those who would not acknowledge his authority. The virgin church was enduring the hardships of the wilderness, while the harlot, reveling in her lewdness, sat on the throne of her royal paramours.

The message is sent by one who has "*eyes like a flame of fire*" to watch over his faithful ones as they wandered through the dark valleys, or hid in the darker caves of earth; and "*feet of hard brass*" to walk by their side as they scale the rugged mountains, or wander footsore and weary seeking a place to plant the seeds of truth. An allusion is made to a faithful old prophet who had to flee for his life into the wilderness from the idolatrous wife of a king. The picture is from the history of Elijah, Jezebel and Ahab. Jezebel was the protector of the priests of Baal. Her husband was king, and she wielded his power for her own ends. The drouth of three and a half

years was evidently a type of the "time, times and a half"—1260 years—of the spiritual famine, "not of bread nor of water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (*Amos 8:11*). "And I gave her space [chronos, time] to repent....And she repented not. Behold I will cast her into a bed [sleep, stupor], and them that commit adultery with her into [the] great tribulation." A symbolic "time" is 360 years, as the three and a half above. Her time for repentance has been, of course, since the light of the Reformation dawned upon her. On Oct. 31st, 1517, Luther nailed his ninety-five propositions on the church door in Wittemberg. The news and light spread rapidly. ... "And I will kill her children [daughters] with death." Spiritual death is what ails the Churches of today. The Physician has given them up and the spiritual gangrene is surely doing its work

The characteristic of this Thyatira [R491 : page 4] period was the reign of the false church, therefore the promise to the overcomers is, "To him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

The false Church claimed infallibility, that she alone could interpret the Scriptures; but to the faithful is here promised not only light before the day, but the same proof of the time of night and of the dawning—"I will give him the morning star."

R491

SARDIS,

REV. 3:1-6

"To the messenger of the congregation in Sardis write." Sardis is said to mean—that which remains; as if it were perhaps a useless remnant; or something out of which the life or virtue had gone. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." They had the appearance of being what they were not, having the form of godliness without the power. Hypocritical, perhaps, without knowing it. A kind of carnelian, *Sardian stone*, is found near *Sardis*, from which it received its name. It is of a blood-color, sometimes covered with a thin layer of white. Thus it may look like purity, but a close examination will reveal the deep red or *flesh*-color below the surface. To outward appearance and by profession spiritual, but in heart animal, fleshly, carnal. Sardis was the remains of the true Church which had been driven into the wilderness; but when persecution began to abate, her zeal also subsided. Persecution has always developed the life and vigor of the Church: ease brings languor. Thyatira was specially commended for her works (*Rev. 2:19*). Sardis for the opposite—"I have found no works of thine fulfilled before my God" (REV. VER.)

Their love and understanding of the Scriptures had evidently decreased. They were warned to "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." God's Word is spiritual food. He who continually feasts upon it will grow vigorous, healthy and powerful. He who neglects to eat, or fails to *digest* this living bread must be weak and sickly; remaining at best only a spiritual dwarf, powerless to discern "the signs of the times," ignorant of what the Lord is doing, or what his plans are.

Many having the Sardis characteristics are living today; to such there is a fatal warning in the declaration: *"If perchance, then, thou mayest not watch, I WILL HAVE COME as a thief, and in nowise mayest thou get to know during what kind of hour I SHALL HAVE COME upon thee."* (Rotherham's trans.)

They do not expect him to come "as a thief," *stealthily, silently*. Seven times his coming is so described. To those only who are watching is the thief's approach known. Those who are in bed know nothing of his whereabouts until after he has *entered* the house. Those *asleep* will only be awaked after he has taken full possession. As he progresses in his work of destruction they gradually wake up. They wonder what that noise means. They rouse themselves, but it is too late; they have been "overtaken." Thus he will be *present*—invisible and unknown (except to the watchers) for some time (years) after his arrival, and will only be recognized by the sleepers as the noise gradually increases, and they slowly realize what it is. The reason many cannot comprehend his *presence* is that they are looking for, first, a *fleshly* Christ, visible to the fleshly eye, and with an imposing demonstration, which they cannot mistake; secondly, they suppose that from the moment of his coming there will be commotion in nature and among men. Thus they are unable to understand "the signs of the times." Failing to recognize the fact that spiritual bodies cannot be seen (without a miracle) by human eyes, they cannot understand HIS PRESENCE while all things continue as they were since the beginning of creation. *"But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments: and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."* Here are a little flock who are pure all the way through; these are entitled to wear a covering of spotless white: they are what they appear to be. *"He that overcometh shall thus be arrayed in white garments; and I will in nowise blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."* Having been once cleansed and having our name written in the book of life is no guarantee that we shall always retain this position. We may become so defiled that our Lord will be ashamed of us, and drop our names from the record. "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

When the Lord would revive his work and bring to an end "the dark ages" by giving increasing light and knowledge in spiritual things, he did not give it to Sardis. She was "dead." He went into the stronghold of idolatry, and called one out who, like Abraham, cared not whither he went so long as he knew he was led of God. Luther came out of Rome.

It was easier to start a new tree from fresh and vigorous seed, even in a "Romish dunghill," as he called it, than to cause to sprout a decayed and lifeless stump. Even so it is now. The nominal Church has become too proud to represent the Meek and Lowly One, who humbled himself and preached the gospel to the poor. The Lord is calling out those who will speak his truth and do his bidding without consulting Babylon.

R504

PHILADELPHIA

REV. 3:7-13

"To the messenger of the congregation in Philadelphia write." The meaning of this name is well known—"Love of a brother." This stage in the church's history evidently began at the great Reformation; and there are many still living who possess the characteristics described.

We may understand the message better if we recall the condition of Rome when the Reformation began. She claimed to be the only holy and true. She claimed to have the sure mercies of David, the throne of the kingdom of the Lord; with power to bind or loose; to open or shut the gates of heaven; to be the only true synagogue; the only true recipient of the favor and love of God; to be the city of God; the only one having a right to bear his name. *"These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shall shut; and shutteth, and no man shall open."*

He who speaks has not given his prerogatives to fallible men. He lent the keys to Peter to open the doors to both Jew and Gentile. Peter preached the opening sermon to the Jew on Pentecost, and to the Gentiles in Ceasarea probably three and a half years after. (*Acts 2:10*) But Peter fell asleep and the Master holds the keys. He it is who shall unlock the gates of hades and of death and shall free the long bound captives. No "successor of St. Peter" ever has or even can. If they had the power they would have tried it long ago.

"I know thy works." It is a brief mention but emphatic, and carries with it this encouragement: *"Behold, I have set before thee an open door, which no man can shut."* There is considerable similarity between the work begun on the day of Pentecost and the work of Luther and his friends. The Reformation was, in a sense, the beginning of a new era; a dawning of light where all had been darkness; the separation of the true from the false and a new start in the way of truth and life. It was the beginning of a mighty work. No doubt all the powers of Satan and his human allies were exerted to close that door—we know they tried hard; but "He that is true" had said—"which no man can shut." The "little flock" of reformers had but *"a little strength"* compared with the mighty hosts of their enemies; but they knew they had the truth, and fully trusted the Giver. Thus the Master could say, thou *"hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name."* Luther's declaration at the Diet at Worms, as he stood *alone* before the princes of Germany and the stern emperor Charles V., are worthy of a Paul, and illustrative of the text. "Unless," said he, "I shall be convinced by Scriptures, (for I can put no faith in popes and councils, as it is evident that they have frequently erred, and even contradicted each other); unless my conscience shall be convinced by the Word of God, I neither will, or can recant, since it is unworthy of an honest man to act contrary to his own conviction. Here I stand; it is impossible for me to act otherwise—so help me God."

We do not understand that this symbolic period is restricted to those early days. That was the beginning. The conflict is not over. The proud and boastful churches of today are persecuting and would fain "wipe out" those still living of the Philadelphian band. The work is the Lord's, he will take care of it, and man cannot hinder it. *"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."*

This is very plain language regarding the opposers of the truth, who claim to be the church of God. They would say we were calling them dreadful hard names if we were to use language half as expressive. When *"the hour of trial, that which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth,"* has humbled their pride, they will learn who were the chosen, and come and render obeisance at their feet. The faithful ones will be *kept* from the power of

this great trial; and the reason is given, "*Because thou didst keep the word of my endurance.*" (Rotherham.)

Those who have been disciplined, and have been wholly consecrated, and are in a crucified condition when this trial comes, will be far above its power. "A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked" (*Ps. 91; Luke 21:34-36*). "*I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.*"

Numbers have believed for many years that we have been living in the "quickly" time; but failing to recognize the *manner* of his coming and the condition of his *presence*, they still *look* for him, and congratulate themselves on their patient waiting and watching for his return. They say, "When he comes, we expect to know it." When asked how, they triumphantly quote: "This *same* Jesus"—failing to appreciate the fact that the same Jesus was not recognized after his resurrection by those who had seen him daily for years. Mary and his disciples might talk to him and mistake him for a stranger, but these will recognize him instantly—miles away.

Since he ascended he has been glorified. He allowed Saul of Tarsus to catch a glimpse of him in his new condition. It took him three days to get over it, and even then his sight was only restored by a miracle. Not until we are like him shall we be able to see him as he is (*1 John 3:2*).

Let those who thus cling to the fleshly, lest, fear while still looking for him in an earthly condition, he may come as the thief cometh, *silently*, and in a spiritual—therefore unseen—body, and, in his distribution of rewards, give the crown to *another* (*ver. 11*). "*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and my own new name.*"

In the Philadelphia period, especially during the first and last phases of it, the faithful have either been obliged to come out of the nominal temple to find liberty, or they have been "cast out" for their straight testimony.

The reward is that they will be, not simply an unimportant piece, but a vital part—a *pillar* in the true and eternal temple—a part that cannot be taken away or cast out while the structure exists. During their trial, their names were cast out as evil; they were branded as infidels and heretics; they were not recognized as children of God, as citizens of the heavenly country, as Christians. All this is to be reversed. The Lord knoweth them that are his, and in due time will fully and eternally acknowledge them.

R505

LAODICEA

REV. 3:14-22

"*Unto the messenger of the congregation in Laodicea write.*" Laodicea is interpreted as "a tried, or judged people." The description shows us that they were tried and found

wanting. *"These things saith the Amen."* This is the word so often translated "verily" in the gospels, and used by our Lord as a kind of affirmation or solemn prefix to some important announcement.

From the peculiar use Jesus made of it, we should at once recognize the speaker and perceive that he is about to send a message of more than ordinary interest and solemnity. *"The beginning of the creation of God."* If we understand Christ's meaning here this message is sent particularly to those who profess his name but deny *the truth* he here himself presents. Let those who do so, read with special care this special message.

"What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is he?" (*Matt. 22:42*) is a question that has had many answers. More Bible and less hymn-book theology would have made the subject clearer to all. The doctrine of the trinity is totally opposed to Scripture, and has not a single reasonable text to support it when the well-known interpretation of *1 John 5:7* is discarded and *John 1:1* is understood. We suggest that anyone who does not see this subject clearly should read *carefully* and *prayerfully* *John 17*.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

Here is a picture of the Church of today as our Lord sees her. They are not cold in one sense; they have a good deal of zeal; but it is not according to knowledge. They have, with much labor on the part of some, organized their armies, developed their machinery, and multiplied their stores; but yet the enemy does not fall before them. They claim that their principal object and aim is to convert sinners; to (spiritually) beget children. The prophet puts these words in their mouth when they awake to a knowledge of the situation: "Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been *in thy PRESENCE*, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have, as it were, brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the earth come to (spiritual) life." This is said after they have realized *the presence* of the Lord.

Neither hot nor cold, they incite disgust and are cast out as a hateful thing from being the mouthpiece of the Lord.

To be a minister in the Church of today, one must bring with him a plentiful store of that which Paul despised and left behind, namely, human wisdom (*1 Cor. 1:17; 2:16*). There is a wisdom learned by the *mature*, "even *the hidden*," "which the Spirit teacheth." This is not taught "in the schools," neither can it be learned there, but it is "freely given to us of God." Ministers are no more called of God with them. They are made as newspapers are made. Blank paper (sometimes very blank) is put into a machine, impressions are made on it, and it comes out *finished*. It is wrapped and stamped and is ready to be sent away. We may search the Scriptures in vain for an instance of God's sending through such a channel.

He hath raised up a new mouthpiece. He sheds increasing light to a little flock who are willing to receive it, and spread it abroad without fear. To those who humbly and prayerfully search for the truth; having but one aim, the glory of God; one desire, to do his will; one hope, to share that glory—according to his promises.

We should not look for light where little remains but the fading *reflections* of a former glory. That sickly hue which now appears is but the smoke illuminated by the piercing rays from the part of a hand which, high on the wall, is writing, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.

"Because thou sayest I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art the wretched one, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

"I am rich." I have all the spiritual light that exists in the world. I have gotten riches; have still more enriched myself; have much goods laid up for many years. All others are too poor to add to my store. I have all that is worth having, and need no more. ... Of course Laodicea cannot recognize her own picture, she is "blind." "And *knowest not* that thou art the wretched one," etc. ...

If she is so blind that she cannot recognize her own condition and location, how can it be expected that she should see his. When she has learned his, she will realize her own, and it will be "pitiable, and poor, and naked." *"I counsel thee to buy of me gold, tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."*

Some may say, How can this be a description of the Church of God? Is it not founded upon the Rock, Christ? We answer, the majority of those who compose the Churches of today know nothing about that Rock. Moreover, those who are founded upon Christ, if they refuse to do his bidding, must suffer the consequences. His call is, "Come out of her, *my people*, that ye be not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues."

Even though we are built on Christ, yet, if instead of building with gold, silver and precious stones, we daub together wood, hay and stubble, we shall suffer loss; for the fire (of his jealousy—**Zeph. 1:18**) shall try every man's work; and such "shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (**1 Cor. 3:11-15**).

The gold that is needed is the wisdom that cometh from above; the white raiment, the righteousness of Christ; the eye-salve, the Spirit's help in the understanding of the Word.

These will stand the fires, and enable those who have them to *stand* before the Son of man. *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent."*

The words translated rebuke and chasten, are in the Greek much more forcible than here appears. The first means *reproach, disgrace; put to shame, dishonor*. The latter, *to train or educate like a child or youth*. What a call! No wonder that the proud and conceited teachers of popular churches cannot hear the call. No wonder that some who have seen and heard refuse, to follow "the path their leader trod." "As many as I love, I disgrace and train: be zealous, therefore, and repent.

"What poor despised company
Of travelers are these,
Who walk in yonder narrow way
Along the rugged maze?
Ah, these are of a royal line,
All children of a King!
Heirs of immortal crowns divine,
And lo! for joy they sing."

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Unknown to the Laodicean Church, the Lord has returned. He stands at the door. He could not do this if he were not present. He has not been always there as some think. To Sardis he said, "I will come"; to Philadelphia, "I come quickly"; to Laodicea, it is rap, rap, rap. Awake; let me come in. Do they hear? *Solomon's Song 5:3*, gives the answer.

Why has this little company had such a continuous feast of truth? Why does the light and glory stream down upon us in ever increasing brightness? It is because the Master has come in, and has girded himself, and made us *sit down*, and has himself served us. It is because the Sun of Righteousness *has arisen*, and those on the mountain and on the house-tops are already bathed in its glorious beams, for

"The glory of the sunlight
Of the bright Millennial day,
Scatters all the powers of darkness;
Lights the gloom with healing ray."

"If any man hear my voice." There is nothing here said about being deaf. If they had been awake they would surely have heard. Jesus clearly foretold that he would come as a thief, but did not tell them the *hour*. His orders were simply, "Watch." They failed, and fell. "If the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through." He slept on guard.

While the nominal Church is still seemingly in power, while the old glory still hangs about her, while it is still respectable and honorable to be a church member (it will not be so long, in the eyes of many), the little flock of truth-seekers are despised and rejected. They are covered with reproach because they dare to point out the faults of a worldly church. They are looked down upon by her who sits as a proud queen, lifted up that she may have the greater fall.

The decree has gone forth; the fall has begun; while *"to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne."*

The nominal Church has a vague idea of a kind of throne (composed principally of white cloud) somewhere, beyond the bounds of time and space, in the third heaven (counting upwards) where they shall sit forever; principally engaged in making music, and reigning (?) over their own passions (their passions being buried out of sight with their bodies). Strange work for eternity. God's agents, as far as we can see, are always in activity.

Christ does not always sit on the Father's throne; he has one of his own. He will occupy it. And those who have followed him, *by the way of the cross*, shall share it with him. *"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."*—W. I. M.