

Revelation - Commentaries by George Vicesimus Wigram

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Worship

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There is one remark which I would make about this portion, which will commend itself to the mind of a simple reader—that it comes in in the way of a parenthesis. If I may be allowed the expression, it comes in intrusively. It is an expression of the feeling of the heart of him to whom the message came—an expression of the worship of his heart. It is a common thing in Scripture, to find the course of the thoughts of the speaker interrupted by some burst of praise which could not be restrained. You have a similar thing in Rom. 11:33: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" when the apostle feels the subject too large for his heart to contain, or for his ability to explain.

If any one knows God, or Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, there will be assent to this, that the heart of a saint never finds itself in the presence of God or of the Lord Jesus without worship. With a poor sinner who does not know grace, it is something beside worship. A saint finds something beautiful before him, and "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

This book is not like the gospel of John though written by the same person. The gospel of John in a peculiar way gives the history of the Lord Jesus as Son of God, and of the saints as sons of God. But in the Revelation connected with the throne, the titles are not such as lead to Abba, Father: saints here are "kings and priests."

"Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is, which was, and which is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne." Even the Spirit is seen in another character. Again, the Lord Jesus is not seen as the Savior, but the "Prince of the kings of the earth." Directly the apostle John finds before whom he is, worship must come. There were affections in the heart of the apostle, and directly the person of the Lord Jesus Christ is presented to his soul, "Oh," he says, "that is the One who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood!"

One remark I would make on this portion, the circle of which comes before the mind I would look at the picture as a whole. The apostle had the sense of such a fullness connected with the works and offices of the blessed Lord so laid upon his heart that he must give back to God. One of the most remarkable things in redemption is that we are enabled to live to God, of whom and to whom are all things. No one can say, "I serve God," who does not know redemption accomplished, salvation finished. If you do not know salvation as completed, you never can find yourselves in the presence of God but some horrid sin will start into your remembrance, and make you wish to get out. The saint can say, "I am here, and God is waiting to hear me." There is nothing in the presence of God to daunt him. He knows the eye of God and the ear of God are waiting for him. If you have not been washed you cannot think of getting into God's presence without fear.

To produce worship in us is the highest thing the love of God does. It is not what He makes us for others. He may take the Church up, and make her the habitation of God through the Spirit, but that is not making the Church something for God, for Christ. Now when we get into worship—that is what we get—it is all of God, of Christ. God will have His people in His presence to express their delight in what God has made them for His Son. God sought such to worship Him. God in heaven was desiring to hear the praises of John in banishment at Patmos.

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory," &c. (v. 6.) Not like the brazen censer—it was a senseless censer; but the praise goes up from us with affections warm, and we know the position in which God stands in to us. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him." He is the receiver, and we the giver of worship. This is not merely the blessedness of a man able to praise; but in this picture we have the Person worshipped, and the one worshipping.

I would ask those who are not Christians, "Have you ever had a thought of the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who desires to have your praise?" I do not think nature takes up that thought—the graciousness of the Lord Jesus in standing, desiring to hear free, spontaneous praise.

To us who are Christians there is many a sweet thought in this little song of adoration. First, observe the way in which the apostle singles himself out. When Luther was once pressed as to justification by faith, Gen. 4 came into his mind as a reply, "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering." The person of Abel was accepted, and therefore it was simply of grace. There was only one place for Noah's dove to rest the ark, and there is only one place for us to rest—the person of the blessed Lord. This song does not begin with, "To Him be glory and dominion," &c., but it marks out the person of the blessed Lord as its object. In glory we shall be able to express as we cannot now. There He is before us, and there our souls find perfect repose.

After that he proceeds in a beautiful divine order: "He has loved us." Who loved? The Lord Jesus. "He washed us;" and behind that, to an intelligent mind, comes in a volume. He loved us. It is a very different thing to say, "Yes, in Him there is love." He loved us. There was this real affection in Him—a personal love; that is the reason why praise comes out. The Church knows she is loved by Christ. We can turn to the Man in glory, and say, "He loved us." How shall I know He loved us, and not praise? There we get beautiful consistency in the continuance of the praise, "Washed us in His own blood." We had got sins, and He washed us from our sins in His own blood.

The only thing spoken of in connection with these people, is their sins. If you stand in God's presence with the sense of what the Lord Jesus has done, you know He has put away your sins. It is sweet to look at this point. The poor sinner has sins, and they are met by the Lamb's blood. The remedy for sin is pointed out, and we have known the use of this blood for ourselves. He that provided the blood has applied the blood. Most divinely perfect—the remedy is sufficient for the need.

Look at that word, "washed us," connected with the Lord. Jesus Himself. Many have no rest in their hearts because they think they must do something themselves. The answer is, Christ first and Christ last. He washed. No heart is set free for praise which does not see that the Lord Jesus is the One who washed. Christ began the work, and Christ went on with the work. That word "sins" meets everything in my conscience, for nothing could escape his eye. Do you suppose that in any of those the Lord Jesus has washed He has left any sin behind? There was the love of the blessed Lord, and then comes, "He washed us from our sins."

He was the Lamb, and the blood was presented by Him as Priest. If you take up the details of office, connected with the shedding and presenting the blood, you will find many of His offices displayed. There is something very blessed when you think of the blood of the Lord Jesus as connected with conscience. It was the Spirit speaking to John God's thoughts about the blood; and when the mind comes to look at the thing, peace is found through the blood of the Lamb. This without controversy.

There is great beauty if we look at the order of the song. "That washed us from our sins," comes in as meeting the want of a soul in the presence of God always. But he does not stop there; He goes on to enlarge and prepare the blessing, and show what it is. "And hath made us kings and priests;" not sons with the Father-that we are, but this is not presented here. Christ may be presented in any character, and the eye of faith says, "That is the One that washed me." It is surely the expression of the wonderful love of God with regard to the Church. No measure in the human mind can ever comprehend divine love. He was forming something for His Son-giving glory to His Son; and in desiring to give glory to His Son, "He made us kings and priests." What is the thing which always occupies the mind of the blessed Lord? The glory of God. If there is a kingdom and a temple to be opened, He must bring the Church there. (John 17:24.) What sort of love must His be, that in the presence of -God He must have His Church there? It is the sense of this love that makes the heart turn and render back, "To Him be glory and dominion 'forever and ever. Amen."

We want to search ourselves about this question of praise and worship. If your hearts are not full of praise and worship, there is not the savor of Christ. I Beseech you to see whether or not you are holding your proper place as worshippers. Do you know what this praise is, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Introduction to Addresses on the Seven Churches

Verse 1. The "revelation" (unveiling, uncovering, manifestation, as in Rom. 8, "manifestation of the sons of God") "of Jesus Christ" (in this book to show the way in which He meets all God's desires in the midst of the wreck and ruin of the Church) "which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass." There is a great meaning in the manifestation being especially made to the servants, this applying to those gathered out from the churches-"He that hath an ear, let him hear." There may be a difficulty in the last clause of this verse. Perhaps the meaning is, God signified by Christ to His servant John The revelation of Jesus Christ in this book is of a different character to that which we get in the epistles. This goes beyond the scope of what is unfolded there.

Verse 4. Grace and peace, not from the Father, as in the epistles, but from God in the abstract sense-self-existence, power, and eternity being the attributes implied in the thought. "From the seven Spirits," &c., source of government in connection with the earth; "from Jesus Christ," the characteristics here named, "Faithful Witness," &c., are not those of special relationship to the Church, but are more His intrinsic personal distinctions and offices, and relate to Him in the universal sphere of His dominion. John in his right place is a worshipper. "To Him who hath loved us," &c.

Verse 8. He speaks of Him; he first realizes the washing from sin, which was necessary before he could be a priest. If we do not take our right place in the first thing, we are not in our right position in the second. The prodigal son would not have made a good servant in the Father's house; he must get into his place as a son. God's ways with us are all according to the glory of His Son. "All things work together for good," therefore the judgment of the churches. The very highest abstract title of God is given to Christ, "Which is, and was, and which is to come;" also the title expressive of His power, "Almighty," "Alpha, and Omega"-the "Beginning and the Ending," connected with all testimony; the Word-first and last letters of the word. "First and Last" expresses that which was in existence before the "Beginning," and continues after the "Ending." It is more connected with the eternity of Christ as God. In the addresses to the churches, it is observable that those in which there is the sense of responsibility in government, the title with which He comes to them is connected with something in His person, as the "Ancient of days;" but when there is most the expression of grace, it is connected with what lies deep in His own bosom, individual dealing; e.g. Philadelphia.

It is needful to remember that God has given all truth for me. I must be holding fast what God gives, and be keeping always in my soul the conviction that I have not got all yet. Two things are very important to remember; first, all is in Christ, therefore I cannot get it for myself; and second, all is in Christ, and I am in Him, therefore all is safe for me, and God is for us. Grace and truth have never been held together in human controversies, therefore you constantly find yourself at "Pihahiroth"-nothing but sea before you; you are conscious you cannot get out, and can do nothing.

John is surprised and alarmed at seeing Christ come to judge the churches (walking amongst the candlesticks). He had learned the truth of the heavenly calling of the Church, and was not prepared for this; therefore his anxiety. The suddenness of it was another cause. If John had had more faith and understanding of Christ's holiness, and consequently of the need to judge the churches which He had set up, he would not have been surprised or afraid. But see the condescension of Christ in meeting him just where he was. (vv. 17, 18.) His highest title, "First and Last," associated with human being, "He that liveth, and was dead." This condescension of Christ in all our difficulties is like oil upon the conscience. How little we realize it as we might! We humble ourselves perhaps, and pray about a thing, and then have five hundred anxious thoughts about those very things we have confessed or prayed about. Christ uses this terror of John at seeing Him on earth to express to him this moral truth connected with Himself. (v. 17.) When "he fell at His feet as dead," "He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." The touch is very peculiar. One stranger does not touch another stranger; but here Christ comes, and lays His hands upon John as

much as to say, " You lay on my bosom once. I am the same." "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death "- all power over hades and death. What perfect sympathy as a man associated with divine glory in this chapter! In personal experience, " I have passed through deeper waters than you, and have come up out of them," Christ would say, " and have the mastery of the unseen world-death and hades."

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Glory of Redemption, The

Rev. 1:5,6; Ch. 4 and 5

I have read these scriptures as presenting to us the glory of redemption, and judgment as beginning directly the servant of God has got into it. (Chap. 1:5, 6.) In addition, a thought closely connected with it; and that is, the thought of the grace learned down here in the wilderness. The two clauses found at the end of verse 5, and filling up verse 6, present the grace which John saw at the time when it burst forth from his lips, through realizing what the wilderness was through which he had to go, and what the grace which his own soul had been made to taste through the Christ then and there revealed to him (vv. 5, 6, &c.)

" Unto Him that loved us," &c. I want to open up that a little, first of all as connected with the saint in a very remarkable and blessed way; and then as being the song that the men of this world, never having known Christ, are entirely ignorant of. When the Lord removes those who have learned in the wilderness how to glory in the fullness found in Him, they will go to glory, and see the redemption sphere of glory as their place, and the very Lord they had learned down here as Heir to all this glory, opening the seals of judgment on the wicked, those who had despised His grace and His beauty. People very often evade their own position in the world. Do you do that?

I speak specially to the children of the saints. Your conduct may be lovely and amiable, nothing much to object to, brought up by godly parents-how shall I reach you? However much those who have brought you up may comfort themselves by your orderly walk, if you have not tasted what John did, have you tasted that love in Christ, or have you not tasted it? If you have not individually, for your own self, tasted what Christ does for the people of His love, as one of those of whom John could speak as us, you have neither part nor lot in the matter. If you have not tasted His love as associating you with His people down here, if Christ took you up into the glory, there would be nothing in the scene in which you could find your delight, nothing for you to find your home in-real scenes of beauty and glory to those who are His.

Now I turn to the song of John Here I would only remark in every way it was a wilderness song. When John looked about him, and weighed the character of that scene, the effect of the light was that he felt he really was in the wilderness. He had labored to build up the saints, to feed them, and a rude hand had shut him up in Patmos. That too made him feel it. There was everything to bring it home to his heart that he was not at home, but a pilgrim and stranger.

Verse 5. All the titles connected with divine glory are everyone of them distinct from the revelation of the truth which formed the Church of which the apostle John was a member. There was everything to the heart of John as a servant to make him feel he was a stranger; but directly he sees the Lamb, the blessed Lord, the stream of His love filling his heart, he turns back in praise. He saw the Lord, and his heart responded in worship and adoration-"Unto Him that loved us." John right well knew what

had been the experience of this company, and every saint to the end of time can say, " Loved us." He puts the Lord there in the first place as the One who had bestowed such unspeakable blessing upon him that he can say, " Unto Him," &c. That thought about the Lord Jesus Christ, would it waken up in the hearts of unbelievers such songs as these? When the thought of God comes up before the soul that has not learned His grace in the wilderness, they say, " Do I love Him? Can I appear before Him? "-like Jacob searching among the stuff for the false gods before he goes up to worship. That would never have done for John such questioning of his love to the Lord. He saw the Lord in a vision, and that was the Person who had loved him, and his heart was full of love. " I am going to do all these things, and shall not I tell John? Shall not I let My love come out in confidence to My people, and tell them what I am going to do?" He loved the Church.

I will just remark in this song of praise that the beloved of the Christ of God are marked. What did Christ see when He looked on me? when He applied His

blood? Sin, and nothing but sin. The first thought of

Christ when He looked on Saul of Tarsus was, " I see something there to shut out that person forever from God's presence. The only thing that characterizes him is sin. If I do not apply the blood he never will have boldness to look God in the face." I ask, Are those your thoughts when looking upon Christ-nothing but sin? A loctor of this world does not want people who are well. When Christ sees sin in a sinner, does He say, " I must pass that one by, and look out for those who think they are good "? It was not like Him to pass by those who thought themselves sinners. He loved them, and He washed them. Christ knew all about the blood; knew where the blood came from. He gave that blood. There was atonement and there was cleansing, and He applied it to every one that entered into that little word "us," and applies it in the wilderness, and it begins with His loving us.

Granted that every child of God knows that he has the value of the blood applied to him, and sees the heavenly side of it, and that he says, "Oh, yes, I have forgiveness of sins!" But have you got it mingled with all your thoughts down here? Or do you say, " I have not got at what Paul's thought was about that blood?" It is not a question of our learning, but a question of Christ's washing. Christ saw sin on our consciences, and Christ knew how to apply the blood. I defy the judge who sits in judgment on Christ's work; it is as perfect as He who has created and who governs the world could make it. He has done it for my poor little self as a member of this little company, as one whom He loved. Christ applied the blood without any leave given Him by Paul. It is not one corner washed, and it is not the whole body washed badly, but all washed perfectly from all sin. All He sees now is the blood; and we are washed completely—whiter than any fuller can whiten. We can draw near with this crown, with redemption applied to our souls, and we can draw near with perfect boldness before the throne of God. Then what have we got of our own? Nothing. That which justifies God justifies us. It was not His mind only to remove a part of our sin: the whole

judgment was borne by Him, and the value of this is brought to bear on the soul of every saint. We know His intervention for us in our misery, and He has cleansed us from all our sins. As a child by adoption, all the glory of sonship is communicated to me. There were certain parts of the glory He could not impart to us, though we get the benefit of it. All the love that the Father has caused to rest upon Him, and the glory too, He means to rest upon us-to share them with His people.

John had nothing of his own. Well, what are you? I am of the royal priesthood. You a priest You do not look much like it. No; but it is mine, given me by Christ. I am a king and a priest, and praise flows forth. There are two things in that song. The first is, if I had been there and heard John saying that, I might have said, Do you really mean, John that you wished that? "Indeed I do. To find the One I delighted in, in power before God, I have sympathy in His exaltation." John's delight in this, "To Him be glory," was no mere piety, but the Spirit of God guided him, when in his pilgrim state he ascribed "dominion and glory" to the One God had just appointed for it. Put Him out, and somebody else in, and all my hopes are touched. I want to praise Him. Does the heart brought up nicely in educational religion see its felt need is to put in something about Himself? When I get near to Christ, in the sense of all my need being met, all His fullness as far as it could be put on me, I want to ascribe praise to Him. It is the felt want of the heart to put in something about Himself, some praise. Do you say, I cannot praise? Can you not? No praise could be sweeter than "Unto Him that loved us." Simple praise is a description of what Christ has done for you. You do not need to bring in all the high sounding words and nicely rounded periods in connection with praise. The heart that has learned its lesson in the wilderness, says, "The Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father; He is the One who is the Head of the Church; He is the One who has given the Holy Ghost; the One who has shed His blood, and carried us in there that the Father might let His love flow out. Besides all this, when He comes to me individually, He washed me and made me a king and a priest to His God." And that was learned by John in the wilderness-the sweetness of having this Christ as the delight of his heart down here.

Well, but about the glory? Chap. 4 and 5 John was caught up into heaven to behold these magnificent scenes of glory, but where is there one single thing in that 4th and 5th chapters, of which a graceless sinner, if caught up, could say, "I feel at home there?" No, he could not say that; it would be terrible to him to be in that light. It is the secret of being associated with Christ; the delight of finding your home in that scene of being at home. There I want to open all that is my own before Him. The question is, Are you at home, a saved sinner that has tasted grace? Have you such sympathy with Christ, that if He is exalted you are perfectly happy? What are they all about? The glory of God and the Lamb, what do you know about Him? Nothing there for you; what comfort would you find in it? None. What joy is it to you to see the glory of the Lord God Almighty? None whatever. John is up there, and sees everything bringing out that beautiful scene just fitted for one who has learned grace in the wilderness-a glory formed by God for the express purpose of setting forth all the divine glory that belonged to the Lamb. This is the power that ministers to the saint that has learned grace in the wilderness.

Chap. 4:10. "Their crowns." What were they? A rightful privilege given to be worn before everyone's eyes as a witness to their right to be kings and priests. The thought of a crown can meet the mind of man in nature; but "casting them down" seems a strange thing-to throw off the emblem of association with the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is not strange to the heart that knows the Lord Jesus, that knows God. When He brings us into the glory, will it be a word of command to cast our crowns before Him? Will it not be in perfect harmony with the wilderness lesson taught here? It will be a word springing from the very depths of the heart. All secure for Him, all secure for us, because He has undertaken our cause. He made us rich; He made us clean; we have got home out of the wilderness. In chapter 4, it is all the glory of Jehovah-el-Shaddai, not the Lamb upon the throne, because He wanted it to be seen that all His acts and counsels were executed by the Lamb.

Chap. 5:3, 4, 7. What does the Lamb do? He goes: and takes "the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." That Person is the Lamb, and has a right to be crowned as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Why did He go and take the book? Because He wanted to communicate to His servant John and His servants down here, what would take place after the rapture of the saints-the destinies of the earth down to the end. Oh, how blessed for John and us-His servants. "I want to show to My servants, those practically in the world, those who serve Me, all the reserved secrets of God." What honestly, in truthfulness, could any person say about himself if he has not tasted Christ's love in washing him from his sins? He would say about Christ, "I am sure He does not want to show these secrets to me. If that is true of John's company, I am not of that company." And why are you not of the company? Have you got anything but sin? God says, "I have a fountain open; My Son is a Savior, and He needs sinners to show forth His love in grace." When Christ comes, having loved His own unto the end, He finds His people in mortal bodies, and many of them wanting resurrection. If I appear there on the ground that Christ has not forgotten His promises, I shall not be ashamed. I shall appear before Him in a glorified body like His own. That blood has made good all claims in heaven above, and I shall not be ashamed. I can never be ashamed to go into His presence by faith.

Verses 9, 10. Now remark one thing. It is a very different song which burst forth from the elders from that which came from John in the first chapter. This explains the worthiness of the One who could take the book. In chap. i., it is John in the wilderness, in Patmos. If a man has learned in the wilderness what Christ has done, when he gets into the glory he will find he can sing. I shall exalt Him in every possible way. Who could go and take the book of God's revealed secrets? The Lamb. Who can rejoice in redemption? No person can enter into the mercy displayed in redemption but the person who is redeemed. The servants could not enter into the joy of the prodigal. It is a question of the compassions of God pouring down upon the heart of one who is fitted for grace. I have got a Father, such a Father; He knows how to break me down with His goodness. The Father and I understood it in a way the elder brother, and others could not, the joy that comes with redemption. God looks at souls in pure compassion on their estrangement from Him. The elder brother had set his heart on his father's things. "I had marked that calf for myself, sir, and you gave it to celebrate the return of my prodigal brother." That is his estimate of his father, and that is what man's thought is of God. Our first thought is, What can I get for myself? Ah but when grace comes in, God has a right to say, "I can get glory in a poor sinner." There is something very humbling to a soul, beloved friends, in that word redeemed (redemption here is the word for purchase). Do you know you are bought with a price? What does a Christian say? "Ah I am bought with a price, a goodly price. I do not belong to myself, and I own it." If I look at Christ, I can enter into the thought of redemption, I enter into it with joy; I own that He has bought me with a price, that is a very humbling thing to human nature. You must be satisfied to be as clay taken up by the potter; but He only 'can form it for Himself. What an evidence of the truth of Christianity. It puts God up there in glory, and it puts a sinner down lower than the human mind can imagine, and yet he has boldness in the day of judgment, and in Christ he has the measure of what his completeness is in the presence of God. I defy any Christian to say that he has measured the wrath due to his sin in the sight of God. Has he measured the blood of Christ? You cannot measure it. You can say, "God knows it, knows the worth of it; but if my measure of my unworthiness is my measure of the blood of Christ, I must give it up." You never can measure it so as to comprehend what it was. Man has

got his pleasure, and is not God to have His pleasure? He has His thoughts and counsels about the Church. They began before man was, before the foundation of the world, and many of us are witnesses that God has been and is working-we have the witness in our own souls when we are brought into the Father's house. Redemption is His work, the salvation in which it will issue when the sons of God are brought into the new Jerusalem-that is pleasure to Him.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Bright and Morning Star, The

Rev. 21:10

WE find a special warning given in the beginning of this portion (v. 10), an address going forth to a mixed multitude -the unjust, the filthy, and the holy found together. There is also a Word put forward to those who in this place professed to be the Lord's people; and there is, when He comes, a reward for those who are really His, and a shutting out of any who, with the profession of His name, are unjust, filthy, &c. (spoken Of together with the holy and righteous), a mixed multitude, all bearing His name. We find in verse 15, a further description of those shut out after the blessing pronounced on those who are His. The Lord in the next place sends the testimony to the churches (v. 16), " I Jesus have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." If one looks at what the house of God has become since Pentecost, truly, as Gibbon remarks, "wickedness has never been found like that wrought in the name of the Lord;" but the Lord knows His own, and He sends a word to make all who bear the name of Christian remember that profession is one thing and reality another. Then He puts forth another thing sweeter yet; not only that to which every godly heart could say Amen, but something to satisfy love, to meet the heart's craving.

I know there is the inheritance, and if He is the Root and Offspring of David, there are certain glories; and those who delight in Him know that He will show forth these glories; and if His glory covers the earth as waters cover the sea, they rejoice in the prospect. Still that would be nothing to satisfy the heart; but there is another thing, " I am the bright and morning star." This is for a people who know the secret, not of being connected only with that glory when He comes as Sun of Righteousness, but of being associated with Himself now, a people who have to weather the night, looking out for the harbinger of day. His people see Him up there, and know that they are one with Him, and long for Him to come, because they know there is no rest of heart save in Him. As a beloved brother was saying, for twenty -eight years and more he had known the blessedness of being a worshipper. And in connection with worship in spirit and truth, most blessed it is to be where we are; but more blessed than that even is our connection with Christ Himself-looking for Him, the Spirit and the Bride saying, " Come."

People are often astonished when they look back on the darkness prevailing even fifty years ago; and why? Because they look more at man than at God. If they looked more at Him who sent down the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, they would see the reason of all revivals. He is always the same. Why did the Holy Ghost begin to work outside the temple? Ah! this Jesus had gone up on high, and the promise of the Father was to be fulfilled to a people outside whom He loved, and the Spirit took up everything for them. And why has there been a revival at the present time? Is the House better than before? Or is evil thickening, and everything growing more dark? Infidelity is on the one hand, and superstition on the other; and what new phase of evil may come next none can know. And how can any count on going through it all and being kept? Ah! because of One who never wearies, One who can never forsake, One who came down to reveal the worthiness of Him with whom His people are linked; and they can count on Him to keep them in spite of all the evil, looking for deliverance out of it-the Spirit and the Bride saying, " Come." This is the only passage in which the Spirit is presented with the Bride. There is something very touching in connection with wilderness circumstances, seeing the Spirit in that character speaking thus, saying, " Come." Is the Bride for the earth? What has she to do with the earth, with the wilderness, save as Rebecca passing through it? It is this which gives her whole character, a certain position recognized by Christ. Many say, " The temple of the Lord are we; " but does Christ recognize them? In what character is the Bride recognized by Him? As without spot or wrinkle, and to be presented to Himself.

It will be a marvelous scene when Christ presents the Church to Himself, when the last Adam takes that Bride of His to share His glory. Ah! not only that, but the oneness with Himself that characterizes us. What the heart feels is our being looked at as belonging to Himself, taken out of Himself-that the Father sees us, not only in a relationship that links us up with the Son of His love in the glory, but in such a relationship that He could not do without us. He, the Bridegroom, must have the Bride up there.

If you follow His course down here, from the Babe in the manger to the death of the cross, and see Him now in resurrection on the throne of the Father, the circumstances are very different; but, ah! it is the same Lord Jesus, it is Himself; He Himself, the object of our love; and we know we shall be for His own self in the glory. That is the distinctive thing, that is where the heart rests. One may see the earthly side now, but when we see Christ Himself, it will be the heavenly side, it will be in the full, unhindered energy of the Holy Ghost, having hearts responsive to that blessed grace that brought us there. The first Adam was not alone, and the last Adam will not be so. He also will have His Bride. " The Spirit and the Bride say, Come," &c.

Remark the testimony to separation (v. 19), not separation from outward wickedness, but from the corruption of truth, a special warning being given to guard it from being tampered with. We are often taken by surprise at seeing outward wickedness, but all must know how infidelity has been put forth, and accepted wholesale by the readers of infidel books, and the Lord says it will go much farther before the end comes. He says, " I have given a book, and I put before the people I love a warning against tampering with this special book; they must be kept, not only unspotted from wickedness, but from the corrupting of this book."

We have to lay a stress on " certainly." Surely I, I come quickly. Oh, it is the sweetness of that " I " presented there that so touches the heart! " I come," not " I stand at the door knocking," but the Lord speaks of Himself coming for His Bride. Ought He not to be jealous if He is not the only object before our hearts? We have here not alone, " I am the bright and morning star," but, " I come "-presenting Himself with all the savor, all the attractiveness of what He is. Have not some of us known Him for years, and have we not found the attractiveness of His beauty deepening in our souls? What is all we have learned of Him here when compared with the thought of beholding Himself, looking on His face, seeing the One who died for us, the One that loved and watched over us from infancy-oh, with what tender gentleness watched over us!

"Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." An important thing comes out here; that not only should we have communion with His mind in all that meets us in the wilderness, but there is another sort of communion to be enjoyed—communion responsive to the desire of His heart, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." The effect of the bright light shining down has been, that we have found earth would not do for our future course, and we know, because we have it revealed, that He means to come and take us to heaven. This thought has given joy in persecution. But what is the thought of being in heaven compared with the thought of His coming to take us there? At times our hearts are drooping, and we are "hardly bested;" but what is anything we have to pass through here, if one has the consciousness of being able to respond to Him, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Thou dost desire, Lord, to take up Thy people, and most blessed it will be to be up there; but ah! it is Thyself my soul craves for. Is the desire of the Lord Jesus to come, which is put forth here, burning in my heart? If I know His desire to come, am I able to say "Even so, come"? It is really having communion with that heart of His, whose every thought is the Father's will, and who has been waiting eighteen hundred years to come, and take up the people given by the Father—He the Bridegroom, they the Bride.

Words of Truth Articles 3: Volume 3, Revelation 22:16, A Thought or Two on

Rev. 22:16 is for the churches, which were previously shown to be in ruin, and about to be judged. The Lord announces Himself as "the Root and the Offspring of David,"—a title which showed He had a glory to skew to the earth when the churches were set aside; "and the Bright and Morning Star,"—a title in which His blessedness is suited for those who watch through the night, as we do, that is, the living members of the heavenly church who are found amid the ruined churches.

The title of Christ, as to the earth, is that of "the Sun," as may be seen in Malachi 4:2, and in Psalms 19. —the day-dawn upon the earth; but ere the 'Sun shines, we shall be with Christ in the heavenly glory.

In 2 Peter 1, the exhortation about the Day-star arising in your hearts seems to me simple enough. "Hold to the prophetic word, and give heed to it, until you see that Christ will, appear to remove His church, ere He comes, down to the earth," is the substance of the exhortation. We talk of the sun rising in London, rising in Paris, &c., and so the light of Christ as the Morning Star—hope of His bride—does not shine into every believer's heart, though the privilege of all. In Revelation 2:28 he says, "I will give him the bright and morning star." This, I should suppose, like eating of the hidden manna, showed a peculiar connection to come with the Bright and Morning Star to the overcomer—an entering, perhaps, into the affections, thoughts, and sentiments of His heart, as the One that has been waited for during the night.

In this passage it comes, as it does in Revelation 20, after a clause which: points to the earthly side of the Lord's coming glory, and, perhaps, there is a contrast in Peter also, for he speaks of "the more sure word of prophecy" which he had, and which they to whom he wrote had, besides the vision on the mount, and this daystar shining in the heart. We know the blessed Lord is spoken of as now upon the throne, either as the Son or the Lamb; hereafter, as entering the heavenlies to receive His church; and thirdly, as descending from the heavenlies to the earthlies, in which He will shine forth as the sun. Is it not in His transit from where He now is, the Son of man upon the throne of the Father, and the Lamb upon the throne of God Almighty, that this morning-star glory comes in?

It is a blessed subject, one that refreshes one to think of. G. V. W.

Christian Friend: Volume 11, The Bright and Morning Star Revelation. 22:16

I wish to say a few words on what it is that gives the heart of a believer boldness at all times to say, "Come, Lord Jesus." My own thought as regards this passage is, that nothing but personal affection to the Lord can ever give the heart boldness before Him. The soul, must realize that it has been laid hold of by His love, that such a light is shining down upon it from His face as to enable it, under everything coming up against it, in spite of failure, to know that there is nothing but love in the heart of the Lord Jesus Himself towards it.

Yes, through all possible changes we have still His love. I may be a poor thing, as unlike Him as possible, still His love laid hold of me just as I was, and nothing that He can find in me is unforeseen, or can change that love. If the thought of my heart were, "I have been a Christian thirty or forty years, done this or that," would that enable me to stand and say, "Come, Lord Jesus?" No; nothing but love to Himself will.

"I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." All the promises are sure in Him. Have they failed with us or Israel? No; Christ is the guarantee for all. "Root and offspring." Is the root never to bud and blossom, and fill the world with fruit? Should we be content to have Him up there, and Satan possessing the earth? No; in my heart He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; I must see every knee bow to Him. "Bright and morning star." Not of the night, but of the morning without clouds, harbinger of day before the glory of the sun lights up the world, as it will do. This glory, brightness of the morning star, is a glory to be in Himself, seen and admired of His saints, a peculiar glory. It was something to cheer John's heart in the midst of failure (and ours too), to watch through the night for that bright star, that Lord "who loved us, and gave Himself for us."

Then we find the word, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Why displace God's thoughts of the bride for my thoughts of myself? Knowing the grace of Christ, cannot I leave myself in the hands of Christ without reference to what I am? If I can do that, I can say, "Come." If we think we have a multitude of things to do first, we cannot know the blessedness of waiting and watching for that bright star. John might have said, "I have testified of the failure of all in man." But what there was in Christ to meet it all was his thought; is it yours?

There is no scene so marvelous in the whole world as the description of the bride, the Lamb's wife. Faith identifies the soul that has it with the Lord. You ought to know why you can say, "Come, Lord." Testimony may have failed; and if walking in the Spirit, you can never count you have given Christ what He deserves. How then can you say, "Come?" The name of "bride," connected as it is with the Lord Jesus, brings one to the conviction that God is acting just to please Himself there; that Son to be enthroned in the heavenlies with all possible glory, but not

alone. He must have companions there. It is God's thought to have an adopted family of poor sinners there; and who shall stop Him? If a ray of light has come down into my heart from the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ray identifies me with the bride. I belong to Jesus; I must be with Him, go where He is. Strange place for such as I, but I am His; I must be there. The most halting, the "saved so as by fire," will go up to one common glory, brought in because part of the bride. Rewards, differing according to faithfulness, likeness to the Lord, there will be; but when I think of the Christ there in glory, and myself a part of His body in it, how it does away with all thought of creature merit, and faith understands why Christ must have glory, without reasoning; for "He is worthy." The heart that loves will never be satisfied till Christ has all His glory. Oh for softness of heart rather than greatest intelligence! Is there nothing to move the affections in the certainty of those words being so soon accomplished: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry?" Are you longing for Him? He is coming! Is the hope ever on your heart? Has that part of God's grace told on your souls? The moment a man gets this hope he must begin to act on it. How sweet to have love drawing the heart in separation to Christ, or to fruitfulness, if unfruitful!

Looking then at ourselves or our service, there could be nothing but despair; but the moment the person of Christ flits before the mind, then comes a joy that neither light or darkness can dim. He is surely coming, and a bride is surely kept to meet Him. Lift up your eyes in the midst of all your failure; He is coming; it is Jesus; and the heart can say "Come" to Him. I cannot think of Him without breathing out, "Come, Lord, come quickly;" and I cannot get to the love in the bosom of the Father without longing for another to enjoy it too, looking out too for another heart to cry, "Abba, Father" with me. That word "come" is a sort of plumb-line to our hearts, a touch-stone by which to test the state of your soul. Is it failure that hinders? And do you ever expect to meet His face with joy on account of your own faithfulness? No, impossible! All your confidence must spring from what Christ is, not from what you are. If this moment we were caught up to meet Him, His first thought would be surely not to find fault. His first thought would be; These are mine; this is the bride made ready by the Father. He never found fault with anything He did. He does not love to find fault; commendation is sure to come first with Him. He will have a private account to settle with each soul, but not at the hour of meeting—all will be joy then. Living water is ever streaming from that Rock, and where is the limitation? "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." There may be two states of souls thirsting. With the one God deals to make them find out what they are. If you are one trying to snatch at everything to satisfy yourself, to you I could not say, "Drink freely." Another state of soul is seeing everything in Christ to satisfy; but thinking you have something to do to get hold of Him, there is a grasping, a catching, but a never getting hold; seeing the manna and water, really hungering and thirsting, and crying out, "I see, but cannot lay hold." Such a soul has to learn that the God who has showed the blessing is the One alone to give it. Would the Lord coming tonight find you as those having to do with Christ, and not with yourselves?

This portion fits the day we live in! Nothing now remains but for God to introduce Christ, to put down all the wickedness of man; and in the sense of this, at the far end of the Church's failure for nearly 2000 years, I can still stand and say, "Come, Lord Jesus;" but I could not do so if looking at a single thing around me or in myself. My heart and my eye must be filled with Himself. Then, and then alone, can I cry, "Come, Lord Jesus."

G. V. W.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Ephesus*

Rev. 2:1-7

Christ sympathizes with God as well as with us; therefore He judges us according to the blessing He has bestowed on us. If Christ is the High Priest to maintain our access, &c., He opens the "thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4) So here Christ has done great things for this Church, and is looking for some suitable response that God can see in her. Sympathy and warning are always associated. It is because He loves that He comes to search. He must, on the very ground of love to me, search my works now. If Christ's love is perfect towards me, He desires that when I come face to face with God, He should find my works perfect before Him; that is, walking before Him according to certain traits of character. The things done are not so important before God as the formation of character. Many things He has to repress, and one object of Christ in searching and trying is to prove His own work in us to God.

A candlestick is the medium of giving light in testimony, and it always has reference to Christ. He holds it in His hand. There is no real fruit but that which is from the tree; and there is no real light but what comes from Christ the Life. Whatever was given from Christ when here, as the Light, was always in the power of life. The light is in "earthen vessels" with us. There is no light at all in the old nature, but the new nature is the medium of testimony; Christ's nearness and Christ's upholdings are essential to testimony. Approval first, and then reproof here; man takes knowledge of works, God takes knowledge of growth as well as works. He expects us to walk with Him according to the light given. Here were works in the midst of an evil world, and in the midst of difficulty, patience, hating evil, &c., are taken knowledge of by God. There is a double meaning in coming here with praise. It is not only individual, but He is coming to see what the effect of the light is in association with Himself, and this is to be manifested to God. Trial brings out the proof of what Christ has wrought in a soul to God, and this is sometimes the reason of trial being sent. "The Lord knoweth" means, not only being cognizant, but approval. Christ has sown much, and He expects much; He loved much, and He looked for much in return for that love. "I do see a reflection of my love in their hearts, but not equal to the measure I have spent on them." "Thou hast lost thy first love." This is not so much that the object was changed, not so much singleness of motive lacking as purity of spirit in acting. Verse 5. There is a difference between dealing with a people in flesh and in Spirit—His dealings with Israel, and here in Revelation There it was through the outer man, here through the inner man. Confession is to be made, but upon a different principle. We have to separate between what is flesh and what is Spirit. Truth nourishes the inner man.

Verse 7. There is a double contrast in this promise to what man had at the beginning. First, man was shut out from it. Second, that was the paradise of man; this is the paradise of God. We have it in Him (by faith) who has overcome. We have not got it literally yet, because in these bodies of sin and death. There is a glory proper to the last Adam. Eating of the "tree of life" has nothing to do with fixity of state, but it is having direct access to the person of Christ, in whom I now know that I have eternal life. He will be the center of a sphere, including the heavenly and earthly. We shall be where He is, and shall have unhindered access to Him out of whom all that scene has flowed. We shall

have access to (though we shall never fathom) all the divine glories and relationships between Christ and the Father—all the fields will be open to us. The chief delight of all will be in seeing how Christ is honored. The power of victory is in going after Christ. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." Christ is the center and power of testimony. He says, "I know and see each one of you, and I would cheer you up with the thought of what is mine to give in that scene which is preparing, which you shall have as overcomers." It is a solemn thought that God does care for testimony. "He that hath an ear, let him hear."

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Smyrna

Rev. 2:8-11

THE peculiarity of the Church of Smyrna is that it preserved its character before God. There is something very blessed in the state indicated. The end signifies that they would be able to go through death for Christ's sake; and therefore the promise is that they should not be "hurt of the second death," but have "a crown of life." The character in which Christ comes to them is remarkably blessed. There is none so high as that of the "First and the Last," because it is that which is connected with the person of the Lord. His title of Alpha and Omega is connected with testimony, the expression of the Word which was "made flesh," &c. The "Beginning and the Ending" is connected with His human character; but the "First and the Last" implies something before there was a beginning, and after there is an ending. Christ comes to this Church in this divine character, the "First and the Last," because the Church is looked at as divine. The heavenly character of the Church is another thing, contrasted with the earthly dealing with the Jews not brought out until Christ has taken His place at God's right hand. There is another thing also connected with this. The Church is more than heavenly, it is divine—the mystery, His body—and it shows forth thus what Christ has been. It is a brighter thing to be able to say, "I am a member of His body," than to say, "I am of the heavenlies." So here Christ as the "First and the Last" connects Himself with the Church as Son of God.

The Church in the glory that is to come will have all the glories of Christ laid open to her. There will be no distinction between Christ and God,¹ for it is the "throne of God and the Lamb." All the glories, all the relations between them, will be open to the Church, for she is with Him there as His bride.

The earthly people who behold Jehovah in the temple will not know the Lord as Bridegroom in the heavens, which is a higher thing. The Smyrnian Church is recognized as in a position to see the blessedness of this, and thus the character in which Christ comes to them is perfectly moral and spiritual. They were brought into sorrow, humiliation, but they are in a state capable of having sympathy with the mind of Christ. Taste for truth depends upon the state of your own soul. There are some states in which the circumstances connected with Christ take most hold of the soul, and others in which the person of Christ has most attraction. The caliber of a person's soul may be known by what he most delights in of Christ. The Laodicean state of the Church is met by the promise of sitting on Christ's throne to those who overcome. Christ speaks of Himself to John as the "First and the Last," who was dead but alive; so here to Smyrna. What was comfort to John would be comfort to them. There is an answer in the person of Christ to all the circumstances. There might be many an aching heart in Smyrna breaking about the state of things; but it would be great comfort to the saints to realize, whatever circumstances they are in, "Christ has passed through it all before." Look at Christ's humiliation! And Paul, in all his tribulations, could always say, "Christ went lower down than this, and He could always commit Himself to God as to a 'faithful Creator.'"

There are other things in which Christ's sympathy was expressed in a different way. Christ never sinned, never had a fretful will, &c., but He tasted all the bitterness of its judgment when He bore our sins upon the cross. I must realize the cross to understand His sympathy in this. It was when He passed through death for it, and now He can say, "I am He which was dead but am alive." In coming to the church at Ephesus, the Lord was coveting fruit from them. It was a thing He desired to find. To Smyrna He says, "I know thy works;" and what follows? There was what God saw in them, and what Satan could see in them—"tribulation, poverty (but thou art rich)." The saint is often most spiritual when in the most humbling circumstances, and the reverse. When David was on the top of the tree, his will was breaking out; never was he so near God as in his adversity. We ought to be able to pass through prosperity without loss, being instructed, like Paul, "to be full and to be empty, to abound, to suffer need." Paul goes right through to the end of his course, and the end was lost in brightness. We should look to be able to do so too; but generally it is easier to go through the afflictions, tribulations, &c., with the soul right with God, than through prosperity.

"I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not." Here is the old tale again at Smyrna. Profession without reality—saying they are Jews when they are not so—and the effect of their wishing to get a place brings in trial for Smyrna. If a person begins doing things for his own honor, professing it to be for God, it will be sure to end in casting off God altogether. If he begins with God, he will end with God. We have need to be jealous over ourselves, whether what we hang outside be according to the expression inside. The spiritual energy of Paul was such that what came outside was what was within, and nothing more came out than was inside. Walking with God is the only safeguard of a saved sinner. The great thing is to walk in the same Spirit as Christ walked; and He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." Take God's will and suffer in it, that is the happy way. The most precious part of Paul's service was in suffering, not in doing. So also Christ's when He went to the cross. Those who are seen by no one, but suffering God's will, may be doing much more than where there is much to attract with "see here or see there."

The contrast in verse 10, is between the ten days' tribulation and the "crown of life;" the second death has no power over the overcomer. The Scripture is very much handled according to the state of mind a person is in. Some would dwell upon the "ten days." Then the Lord would have them see they are little compared with the "crown of life" at the end—"Our light affliction which is but for a moment," &c. You may have got all this tribulation, affliction, &c., and they are as a crucible. What effect has the crucible on you? If you are dwelling on the things, you will find the crucible affect you much; but if your mind is on what is beyond, you will pass easily through it. Observe, God measures things by days, months, years; there is a limitation. How many? Only "ten days." "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther." What are they contrasted with? The "crown of life."

Suffering here is connected with the outshining of the life. Look at Christ; "He endured the cross, despising the shame," &c.; but what glory is like His? It is one thing to have life, and another thing to be marked there, having the crown of life. The contrast in Hebrews 12:4-5, is

between the little afflictions of the Hebrews and the great afflictions of Christ. We think much of a little suffering; but if it cripples my fleshly energy, breaks my will, and in the glory I have a crown of life, I may rejoice in it. We must remember, too, that flesh takes hold of suffering as well as doing. If doing is the expression of self-will, it is out of place; but if God is sending it me, and I bow down to His will and suffer it, that is another thing.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." There is a curtain hanging before you in your path; come up to that, and you will see the end. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." That is in danger of being clouded by our carnal thoughts; but the sense of it is, "Do not be afraid of death; the second death cannot touch you." If your soul goes out of your body by their taking away your life, they cannot take the spirit out of your soul. "Over-comers" is the character of all those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Who is he that overcometh but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ? The gospel is a gospel of life, not strivings. The character of these Smyrneses is peculiarly beautiful; they are a set of pilgrims—Nazarites cast out. They could not say, "The temple of the Lord are we." They are in affliction, and the Lord's words would flow out from Him for their comfort. We can never remember too much as regards testimony for whom the testimony is, and to whom it is and the thought that God is the Judge of all that is done is the great comfort. I have no doubt that we shall find, as things advance (and perhaps days of persecution may come), that the real bond of union will be willingness to do God's will independent of measures of light. Unity in the Spirit is the great power of fellowship. It is often heart-breaking to look round and see how little one can really do now; but it is our comfort to find little things owned by God; as in Zechariah the people who took up the first thing that came to hand and did it were approved, while those who would do some great thing were turned away.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Pergamos

Rev. 2:12-17

As before observed, we find a remarkable harmony between the character in which Christ comes to address these churches, and the promises given to them. In the epistles of Paul we notice, that when the state of the Church is low the higher subjects cannot be introduced to them, and when they are in a higher state they do not need the lower points so especially. In the epistle to the Hebrews who were in danger of going back to ordinances, offering bullocks, &c., all the official titles of Christ are brought out; while in the epistle to the Ephesians we have the truths connected with the Church, the helpmeet for Christ, the sharer of redemption-glory, as Eve was to share with Adam all his glory and dominion. To this Church at Pergamos Christ comes in an official character. (v.12. See also chap. 1:16.) That which proceeds out of His mouth is the "sharp sword with two edges." The word is the detective power of God to deal with evil. There will be no need of the sword to cut in heaven. Now God comes into the circumstances, and makes everything bare by His word; He lets nothing pass. (Heb. 4) This is not needed in heaven. In the passage referring to the word in Heb. 4, Christians are apt to get hold of the lower part only; and this is likely to have a false effect, because if I think only of the sympathies of Christ as consolation for me in my weakness it strengthens my weakness; but if I see that He sympathizes with God, is full of zeal for God, and brings God's light to me, and in view of that, shows me my wrong motives, lifts me up into God's light, coming down to me in my need, putting His hand under me to help me, I am strengthened in God's way. Christ is zealous for God, and so zealous for me. The word is the perfect expression of the divine mind, and Christ sympathizes with all that is new in us, not with what is of the old nature. He had to do with that on the cross, when He bore our sins; but now He bears up whatever is pure to God.

Christ comes to the Church at Pergamos as having the "sword with two edges," an implement discerning and penetrating all. It is not in days of quietness and ease that Christ's sympathy is most realized. Here were some bruised under Satan's power; but Christ could not stand by and not take knowledge of it. And He lets them know it too. Christ's sympathies are engaged for those surrounded with evil while He is in opposition to it. (v. 13) "Holding fast His name" is noticed by Christ. It is communion with Christ cultivated in the midst of the sorrow. "Hold fast" means treasuring up. (v. 14) This is very solemn. It is not positive sanction of the evil, but allowing it by being present, and not protesting against it.

There is a farther thing in the Church at Thyatira, where Jezebel is teaching. If an assembly take the position of covering over evil it is like this (v. 14), and it shows the want of power of life. There is a contrast between Balaam and Jezebel. Balaam was the last prophet to the Gentiles. He prophesied truth, for he could not help it; but he sold himself for a price. Jezebel took a place amongst the people of God, and taught what she ought not to have done. Rome has no right at all to take a place over God's people; the world can have no right to triumph over the people of God. There are others in the Church of God who have a gift, and are selling themselves for a price, like Balaam. Suppose a person having a gift, and being a man of God besides, a price having drawn him aside, he is drawn out of his place by the gift; he tampers with the world and with consciences, and so gets those to whom he ministers into a place which needs to be judged by God.

Babylon signifies confusion, mingling with the world what God has given from heaven. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes is not known, and probably we are kept in ignorance of what it is to keep the conscience alive. The churches present a state not true fully now; but there are assemblies of saints to whom in their corporate position the word may be applied: "He that hath an ear, let him hear," &c. (v. 17.) They were in a state here to need the sword, the use of which was to break bands as well as to strengthen and nourish that which was good.

The promise (v. 17) is a very blessed one, and in its harmony with the office in which Christ comes to address them. There is hidden glory connected with the "sharp sword"—the word, and here the thing promised is what is hidden from the eye of man, but gathered up to be God's delight. The manna was food given to the people in the wilderness. When it fell they said, What is it (manna)? Food unsearchable and past finding out. Christ, as manna, is food for the wilderness, not Christ in every relationship. The manna could not be kept without stinking—it bred worms when they laid it up. This may be significant of Christ, the manna for His people 6,000 years, but in the seventh thousand there will be no manna because He will be personally present to feed His people. Individually, communion now brings all in Him as the answer to our hungering in the desert, which is a very different thing to having in ourselves store-old stores put by to feed on. This is the hidden manna spoken of, that which God has. God was so pleased with His provision for His people, that He would have a memorial of it, and directed a pot of manna to be laid up before Him in the ark. God's delight in what Christ has been, as the food of His people in the wilderness, we shall know, as though God said, "I delight in what Christ has done, and you shall taste of my delight"—in the manna. God will share His delight with

us. God would have us occupied with His own joy in Christ, but this is what we come so-short in. " I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." Christ Himself will do it, just as if Aaron had taken the people to look into the ark where the manna was laid up. He has overcome and sat down, and He will give us to share with Him as overcomers.

" I will give him a white stone." This is an allusion to the ancient custom of making an election by giving the white stone. " And. in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." It was the custom of monarchs, not only to give fancy names to their favorites, but names the meaning of which was only known to themselves, the explanation being only given to the one who received it. So when Christ gives a name, He knows it, and the one who receives it knows it. Christ gave names to His disciples—Cephas, a stone; and Boanerges, sons of thunder; and it would seem that the name given to the overcomer here spoken of would bring out to the remembrance of him who has it what his character had been here. Jacob, the supplanter, would be no more called by that name, but prince with God; this new name being the expression of God's grace in his change of character. I know who this prince with God is, he is one who was tricking and deceiving all his life; but he had to learn to come to the end of himself, and then God triumphed over it all. All the Scripture names have a meaning. The name of Jesus-Savior-how precious that name will be to us in the glory! The Savior Jah will be ever remembered as the One who served God by letting the glory of redemption in, and served us by saving us from our sins.

The word is precious to God. We have it not only as judging, but as nourishment for His people, and not only so, but God's own delight in Christ. There are two precious things for us to rejoice in. First, God's all-searching eye upon us, having all circumstances purified out, so that we can stand before God in glory; and secondly, nothing is hidden from the overcomers; the ark with the manna, all open to them, and individually they are able to taste God's delight in Christ.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Thyatira

Rev. 2:18-29

The three first addresses end with promise. The four last with exhortations. This is doubtless significant. The three first churches have the cheering word last, and the four last have the cheering word first, and the warning afterward. In verse 18, we have the Lord coming to Thyatira as the Son of God, who had "His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet like unto fine brass." The glory of the Lord is the prominent feature in the character in which He comes to them. The range is peculiarly large in this address, beginning with the Son of God, and ending with His rule over the nations (v. 27)—the range of His government.

The hope of the Church is Christ as the "Morning Star." It is quite different to be looking to see the Morning Star, and to possess Him. The overcomer will share all with Him, and more than that, he will possess the Morning Star Himself. The character in which Christ comes to the church of Pergamos, and that to this church, is connected. The sharp sword is sometimes the "eyes of the Lord," and when separated there is something to be remarked. The sword is never in heaven, but the eyes of the Lord are.

The sword, as in Heb. 4, implies something that needs putting away when He comes down from heaven to earth. It is the High Priest's work for our blessing. The "eyes of fire" have to do with the person of the Lord, and relate to intelligence belonging to Himself alone. The bride who shares His glory will be able to look round on all the heavenly and all the earthly glory, but not to understand it all. Although she is with Christ, He has something more than she has. Though there will be communion, there is in Him the enjoyment of something entirely beyond her. "Feet like unto fine brass;" the feet are more connected with service than the eyes—"feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," which signifies that if the heart is full of peace, the walk of such a person is marked by it. "Fine brass." The brass of those days was peculiarly fresh, and bright as gold, and adapted for all kinds of uses, and signifies here a readiness for all sorts of work. People often limit Christ's service to His humiliation, but this is not true. He is serving us now, and He will hold the servants of God in the glory. He not only loosed the bands of things down here, and can say to God, "Satan put Me to death, but I have risen up over him," but He will shortly be able to say, "I have destroyed the usurper." He will take the earth into His dominion, for He has bought the globe. He has done the work of Servant in the past; He is serving us now, and He will serve in the glory. If He is in service as the High Priest, it is as anointed with oil and sprinkled with blood, ready for all service here, and He does it all in the glory of His own Person as Son of God.

If Christ planted a Church, and cared for God's glory, He must come and seek for fruit from it; and if He cared for man, He must desire them to produce fruit. Therefore He comes to see their state. People often get the thought of not liking to be judged; but it is a wrong thought. If I were a father, I should not like my child to think that I did not care about his love, or was indifferent to his little offerings. There was nothing like the joy Christ had in serving. His delight was to do the will of His Father, and He would have us know it too.

"I know thy works, and charity," &c. Some future time we may dwell on that word "charity," which is very peculiar. It is that salt by which goodness can flow out in spite of evil. How little our hearts are exercised by the nice discernment of the Lord, which is so distinctive here in connection with the churches Each word has a meaning, and how He reckons up what He can find in them!

Verse 20. The evil here is Jezebel in contrast with that in the last Church—"Balaam." In reading any history of the Church, such as Mosheim, two things strike one. First, we find persons who have no right to touch the things of God, but have done it; and second, there are those who had power, and sold it for a price, as Balaam did. It cuts an immense knot when we see this. Constantine got into the place of power on earth, and usurped power in the Church. This brought in Jezebel evil. The other is also constantly the case—persons who profess to own the Holy Ghost, and going about from place to place using their power to get a place, and lowering the truths they profess to hold. A doctor of divinity pays a price to take his place. This opens the door to all kinds of worldliness. Archbishop Leighton's heart was free from the world, and it was quite against his will to take a place in the Church; and therefore when he got into it he could preach against the world, and in the end he died at an inn. But the usual effect of taking a place in the world in connection with God's truth is "fornication," which with us is not worshipping stocks and stones, as with the Corinthians, but tampering with the world. It is a breach of the position in which we are set, if we patronize the world while professing delight in the things of the Father and the Son; and it becomes adultery.

Verse 21: "I gave her space to repent." This seems strange to us; but so precious to Christ was the light in which Jezebel was set, that He gave her space to repent. "I will cast her into a bed." (v. 22.) This means laying aside—bedridden. It is important to notice that there are children who propagated what was false before God. To herself He says, "Repent," but of the children, "I will kill them with death;" and to the Church He says, "I have something against you for permitting this evil." This searching the heart is very solemn. If a man is doing evil he will not come to the light; if he is doing good he comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God (John 3). But having come there is another thing. We have God's searchings then. Has it ever been a comfort to you that Christ searches the heart and reins? that there is not a single thing but what God sees? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I, the Lord," &c. The reins are the seat of intelligence, and there is not one single thing that is hidden from His eyes. I have been looking into my heart, I have found it utterly inexplicable to myself. True, I ought not to have looked for it; for I should have known that it is inexplicable. But whatever comes out, it is the greatest comfort to know that He knew what was inside before. What comes out must have been inside first. You cannot bear God's searchings until you know that He is love; and you cannot bear them till you know the eternity of His love, the completeness of His love. Though He knows all that is in me, He gives me to be the object of His service, and He gives me glory. Christ knows not only what I am, but what He was here. Can you be satisfied to be nothing? Is your heart never set on fire (because not in Christ's presence) when another is unkind to you? What He was down here was the "despised and rejected" One. No works done to Him pass without His notice. There are works ordained before the foundation of the world that we should walk in them every day, and the energy to sustain us in them is faith. If in the simplicity of my soul I look up to God and say, "What wilt thou have me to do?" I find He says, "Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world;" and for this there is both present and future reward.

Christ will take knowledge of all. "Hold fast till I come." (v. 25.) I should like to speak a little on the three things connected with the encouragement to this Church. "Power over the nations," &c., is promised to the overcomers. The overcoming, as we have seen before, is believing that Jesus is the Christ.¹ There may, in a certain sense, be victory, having faith in Christ for life without the works being kept, but it is very sad when it is so only. See the contrast between Abraham and Lot. Abraham had the opportunity to return to the country whence he came out, but he would not return. But Lot chose the well-watered plain, clinging to a bit of straw. There is such a thing as works being burnt with fire. God would have us laden with fruit, and so stand before Him. Christ has for His reward "power over the nations," to "rule them with a rod of iron." He gives us both, but something more. When Christ wishes to show His love He makes me something to God; when God wishes to show His love He makes me something to Christ.

"Even as I have received of my Father." What He has from the Father He shares with us. Is He a King and a Priest? He has made us kings and priests. Here He takes up the two spheres over which He will reign. Consider this in connection with men's thoughts about an earthly reign. Men say, "We do not want an earthly reign." Men may have their carnal thoughts about it, but it is true that what the Father has given to Christ you will have, whether as now rejected by the world, or coming again in power and glory. Christ says, "Even as I have received of My Father." That was the precious thing to Him—receiving of the Father. Judgment and rule are part of that. The stone will fall upon the nations and break them to pieces; but those who are upon the Stone are not broken. If Lot could have realized a fortnight before that the brimstone and fire were coming down from heaven, he would not have felt about Sodom as he did. If we have right thoughts about the judgment that is coming on the world shortly, we shall not wish to be mixed up with it. It is an old saying of Rutherford's, "The rooks will not rest when a forest is doomed"—they quit the trees; so the people of God, when they see the world is going to be burnt up, will get out of it as quickly as they can.

In this promise of power there is real gospel; it was joy to Adam and Eve in Eden that God should raise up a power against the evil. The power of God coming in through redemption is the real gospel, and rejoices the heart. Our association with the power has this joy in it, that it is power to overthrow only that which is evil. I cannot desire Satan's power. It is really a good thing that God should say, "I will not let Satan have his own way, and I will come and sweep away everything that is hostile to Me." You take care you do not go down with that. Christ is calling on us to do now what He has to do hereafter. Keep clear of all the evil. The next thing is association with Himself, and we would desire association with Him in everything. Lastly, He will sweep out all that is against Him, and cause evil to make way for the good; this is not only the destruction of evil.

"I will give him the morning star." I do not agree with some in thinking this means the position of Christ as He is now. It is not characteristic of the glory of Christ as now sitting on the Father's throne, but as leaving it, and entering the Father's house. Directly He leaves the Father's throne the language of the Bride will be, "I must go up to meet Him," and immediately we rise up with Him. The "morning star" is that which precedes the day. Looking for and possessing the "morning star" are different, just as our feeding now on Christ as the manna, and eating of the hidden manna, are two different things. You ought to be able to respond to His joy when He says, "Rise up and come away." Now the time is come for the answer of all those expectations you have had all those years, while people have been saying, "Oh, no! He will not come yet." Christ has a joy in prospect, and He says, "I will let you into My joy of coming to take you. I will give him the morning star." It is one thing to say, "Christ is rising up from the Father's throne," and another to say, "I know His joy in rising up. The wilderness is all passed, and I shall now rise to His Father's house."

This solemn word, "He that hath an ear," is addressed to individuals in the presence of that which is just about to be spued out of Christ's mouth. Its solemnity is enhanced on that account, whilst it is the challenge of love to the hearts of the faithful ones.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Thyatira

Rev. 2:18

These epistles to the churches are divided into three and four. The first three and the last four go together. The difference is marked by the place of the exhortation: "He that hath ears to hear," &c. This epistle to Thyatira is the first of the last four. In Ephesus we get the failure of the Church in forsaking its first love, Christ as the eternal Lover, and that love known by faith; but they had forgotten it, and He could not be satisfied with anything save their love. When there is love, it cannot be satisfied to find in the object of its love, coldness and indifference.

Smyrna brings out how, when there is failure in first love, Christ meets the difficulty. He lets in a terrific persecution to stop the progress of the evil. If a saint, or a company of saints, get into ease and forgetfulness of the love of Christ, He kindles the fires to touch that which is holding them back-the flesh-and to throw them back upon the Lord. Pergamos gives us corruption let in through the doctrine of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitanes.

In Thyatira we get an awful picture-a strong appeal on God's part to His saints. People say, "We do not see any strong appeal on God's part." Then your ear is stopped. All these calls remain in the power of the love of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ for every person down to the end of time-for everyone who says, "I have heard the voice of my Beloved, who will not be satisfied till my walk is responsive to His heart." The insignia He takes here are very peculiar; "the Son of God," a title above all; bringing out what He is essentially as well as the immutability of His character. Having saved a people, and brought them into a position of responsibility, never could He give up the question of their responsibility.

"Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire." We get the same thought in Heb. 4. There it is you have got a great High Priest, and when you come to Him He will read to you, and to you only, what is in your heart. It is love, not to the world but to His own people. His is an eye that searches and makes everything manifest. A flame gives us the idea of something rising, but it need not be so always; it may be as a sunbeam coming down like a sword of light, making manifest all that lies hidden in a dark valley. Take any brilliant light and turn it, say, on a garden; it will disclose everything that is in the garden. When the eye of the Lord comes down (He is up there in pure light), it discovers everything; and when He looked at Thyatira in that character, He said, "I will let you know how I read things."

"His feet like unto fine brass." In the tabernacle there were three metals used. Gold, which always figured divine glory; silver, which had to do with the title of the Son of God as born of the Virgin, the Son of the Highest; and brass, which figured Him as the Son of man displayed among men. The silver in the tabernacle was connected with quite different things from the gold, and so also the brass. We get the brazen altar-a Man is my substitute. "God manifest in the flesh" it is true, but a Man. The Gnostic says that it was a phantom that hung on the cross; but that takes away all peace. It will not do to say that

God took an appearance on the throne. The Man who took His place in heaven was the Man who hung upon the cross. He was Man actually, in body, soul, and spirit. "His feet like unto fine brass," &c. Whatever the ways of man in connection with Him on earth, He was thoroughly prepared for it, and went right through it. And now, as Head, He thoroughly understands all about it. He can come and deal with me, and bring out all about me. He can take us up, and say, "You have to go on a thorny path; but I tread down the briars before you. I will go through the furnace before you, and be to you exactly what you want."

"The Son of God, who hath His eyes like a flame of fire" (making manifest), "and His feet like fine brass," says, "I know thy works"-love, faith, service, patience, &c., "and the last to be more than the first." This is a very remarkable expression; there were not many churches to which He could say that. Was the state of the assembly then very good? No; the state of the whole was such that He had to take up a remnant. (v. 24.) It shows a bad state when even inside the Church, every one that nameth the name of the Lord is called upon to depart from iniquity. (2 Tim. 2:19). We have come to that in the present time. Infidelity quietly tosses Scripture aside; superstition buries it! Are things getting better? My conviction is that the time is now come when you must either walk with God, or go with the stream-constrained, if you want to keep your conscience in purity before God, to say, "I have got my cross on my shoulder, and I must go to heaven after Christ; if others go with me, well; if not, I must go without them." Christ says, "I cannot say the whole mass at Thyatira, but 'if any man,' &c. He recognizes the extreme of weakness, the body as a body corrupted. All I can do is to give the exhortation. Let people save themselves if they cannot save anybody else."

There is a remarkable difference between this church and Pergamos. There it was Balaam, the son of Beor, from Pethor, in Mesopotamia; i.e., he was from beyond the Euphrates. He was not a Jew, nor a good man either; he was a wicked man, though the power of God's testimony was with him, so that he could not but speak the word of God. Yet his heart was set on gold. Sent for to curse the people God delighted in, he goes; but when he gets there he finds God too strong for him, and he cannot curse them. If God takes up anything, the question becomes, Was He justified in taking it up? He takes care of what He does Himself. Ask Him if He is justified in taking up Israel or the Church, and He will say, "Yes, I will be just, and the Justifier." When a charge is brought against that which God has taken up, what is the first question? Is it, Are they walking consistently? No; it is, Is God justified in having taken them up? All Balaam could do was to raise the question. God says, "That is a question against Myself. I will meet it." What did Balaam do? Like Satan himself, he says, "If this way will not do, I will try another way. If you can get this people to do what God does not like He will break them up. He insists on purity-you get in fornication, you will have them smashed up and forsaken?"

Could there be anything more Satanic? Yes, there was Jezebel. Balaam was but a stranger brought in to try what he could do against a people of whom he was not one; he was outside them, though he was identified with the one who wanted to curse them. Jezebel was worse-she was brought inside, because connected with the person put by God to take care of His people, and she had children inside. This was far worse. Balaam said, "We cannot change them; let us spoil them;" but this was nothing like Jezebel being brought in, and giving the sanction of the king's name to the false worship inside the house of God. God recognized Balaam as a prophet; but of her He says, "Thou sufferest thy wife" (not woman merely) "Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess." What brought her in and made her queen, putting her in a place of government? There is something very remarkable in the meaning of the words. Here Balaam means "no people" (giving the idea of desolation); Beor means "consumption;" Jezebel means "no dwelling" (desolation in another form), patronized by Baal, the abomination of false gods. Christ says, "You have confessed Me as your Savior; I hold you responsible."

My conviction is, that if we live down here ten years longer, we shall find a line traced of people walking as those who have God dwelling in them, and who are dwelling in God, and no other line whatever-infidelity everywhere else. The break-up there depicted, is in principle working now. We find that people do not mold their walk on the fact that Christ has been here, and now is in heaven. If false standards corrupt the soul, and mine is a false standard, not only am I not on a right level, but I am on that which corrupts my soul. But if I go where Christ is, all is open. /do not know what is in me, but I have an open bosom before Him, and I can know what is in His heart towards me. He in heaven says to me, "I laid down My life for you; I came off the throne of God to do it; I have gone back to heaven, and there have talked of you, cared for you, and I am coining again to fetch you." What sort of a person ought you to be? And do you say, "Do not be too particular, do not be too

particular?" "Are you surprised that I am making claims on you? It was no little love led Me to die for you, no little love led Me to go into heaven before the hosts of darkness, and talk about you." If Christ's love is before you, do you not say, "How strange that He should so love me, care for me, that not a word of my lip, not a thought of my heart, but He loves me so that He likes to have all in me according to His own mind"?

Verse 25. There He is putting a soul in the position of having received a deposit from Him. You have received this; now clutch it, hold it fast. My mind is not occupied with evil only-I noticed the good first-now hold it fast. What are you and I doing? Have we got the truth that has made us free? Then are our faces towards the glory where He has gone? Are we holding His words on to the end? "He that overcometh," &c. It is not a very high promise, but there is a great principle involved in it. In looking at each promise, we find that the Lord picks out the only thing that will help them out of the difficulty in the state of things they are in. Here He had been speaking of the evil brought into Israel by Balaam and Jezebel. So in the Church of the living God, where the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ought to have been the subject of testimony, corruption from the Gentiles had come in. Hence we get the promise, "I will give him power over the nations;" or, taking the essence of it, "I, Jesus, am not only the only One who brought in good, but the only One who will triumph over evil. Have I given you an ear to hear, and have I not given you a good thing? When I come to triumph over evil, you will like to be with Me. Another time is coming when I shall be victorious over all, and I mean you to be with Me." What special love! Shall I not take care not to identify myself with the evil He is coming to put down? Would you like, when He comes to judge the evil of the nominal church, to be found to have been identified with the spiritual corruption? No, I should not. I should like to be found outside it all.

Verse 27. "Even as I received of my Father." He says to each individual, "Not only shall you come forth among the invincibles, but you will like to be identified with Me when I take the things given Me of My Father; not merely as in a place of power, but that part of the glory connected with Me as delighted in by My Father." The Father delights in Him, and there is no glory that will not put a crown on the head of Christ. "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them." As if He said, "He has given Me a throne; you shall sit there with Me. I have got to come and put down My enemies; you shall share the glory with Me." Oh, what a thought! When you think of what you were-born in sin, shapen in iniquity, children of wrath, so that nothing but the death of Christ could break the bonds of sin, and save you from eternal death; and of what you are-poor stupid things, rebelling against the grace of God, and then to think of such things as you were, pitiful things as you are, being identified with the Lord when He comes in the triumph of His power. What should the effect of this be on our life now?

"I will give him the morning star." It is one thing to watch for the morning star, another thing to have it. I shall not have the morning star till I enter into the thoughts of God, that this Son of His love should have a bride, and that all honor must be His, and that the Father's delight is in Him. Some manna was put by in a pot before God, as if He said, "I will not only give My Son as manna in the wilderness, but I delight in the thought of Him, and I will put some before Me to show that I know how to take care of My people." Christ, as the manna down here, feeds me. Christ, as the manna amongst God's treasures, shows God's delight in Him. Christ, as the morning star, will appear in the right time, and the Church will be wafted home; but to possess the morning star is now to see God's delight in it. Christ will not be ashamed of His Church. He will not bring her in at the backdoor. He will say, "I have got a companion in glory, and I am not in the least ashamed of her."

Then He winds up with the exhortation, "He that hath an ear." The body as a body will not have an ear; but there may be some one heart reached by that promise. These are critical days we live in, a day where there is no standing still; as in climbing a precipice, if you sit down to rest, you will at once slide downwards. But we have got Christ up there, and all help ready. We cannot climb the precipice of the day without Christ up there to help us; but we must go upwards if we want to stand. We must get into God's presence, and walk there; if not, down we shall go.

May God in grace keep our eyes steady on Christ, and give us to abide in Him, with whom all wisdom is folly, and all strength weakness. If it is to be glory then, now it is the cross, and now the wilderness, and nothing but Christ for me in my walk through it.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Sardis

THE titles under which the Lord presents Himself to this Church, in the first verse, are these: "He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars." We find the Spirit of God spoken of in other places as the eyes of the Lord that run to and fro throughout the earth. These, and the expression "seven Spirits before the throne," are connected with power and execution. It is not the Spirit as the Comforter, but as having power to execute God's will on the earth. The "seven stars" are not power, but light. The star gives light in the night-a candle is for the darkness. God has always had a candlestick, or candlesticks (according to the circumstances), in the temple, or in His dealings in this period. A light is set up in the place it is wanted in-in the midst of darkness. There is a solemn thought here, because the "seven stars" are connected with what the candlestick is at the beginning. God chose the nation of Israel to show what a wonderful God, what a wonderful Being He was. All the nations were to see by them what God was. What did Israel do? They made a golden calf directly. Just so has each piece of light failed; priests, judges, kings, and prophets, all failed, until at last the great Light came, and in such a state were the people of Israel, that they went and asked a Gentile for leave to put Him to death, who had been shining in the midst of their darkness. Then the Lord Jesus, who was crucified, but raised up to sit at the right hand of God, must have a testimony. His heart is towards the earth, and He must have a testimony on it. This question about a candlestick does not bear upon Rome, &c., but upon what God has set up Himself. But where is it now? God has a testimony elsewhere; but that does not alter the solemn fact, that these emblems which He set up are confessedly all gone.

There is one thing very important to notice in reading all these epistles, and it is very prominent here. To be saved, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and made an heir of glory, is one thing; but to bear testimony for Him in the world is another. It is quite certain that what He did before the foundation of the world I cannot lose in time; but my faithfulness or unfaithfulness will tell its own tale in the glory. The Church and a Church are two very distinct things. Constantine was the first who brought in the thought of the visible and the invisible Church. The Romish Church under the Pope, and the Greek Church under its patriarch, are each something standing in the world, and recognized as an instrument of government, an implement of political power. Napoleon felt he must have the patronage of religion of some kind, thus confessing that man could not be governed without religion, and therefore it was a thing to be supported. This brought in the thought of the visible and the invisible Church. The child of God has both now, though the candlesticks have failed. If a ray of light from God

has shone down into my heart (and heavenly light shining from the face of Jesus Christ to a poor sinner gives him life for eternity), God says, "You are mine; mine in the place where you found this light mine in the place where you are in the wilderness; mine in the counsels of eternity for glory and the Father's house."

One of the fallacies of the human mind, observe, is to argue thus: "I am chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world. I am born of God. I am washed, justified, and sanctified. I have everything; do not talk to me about testimony." But will that satisfy God? No. "From the day you are mine," God says, "you are associated with Me, and you cannot shake off association with Me. You are brought into company with the living God." The object put before me by Him is to live Christ; and if there is not fruit-bearing, there is sure to be some uncertainty in the soul somewhere. I never met with one but what this was the case. You may hedge up the uncertainty; but it will break out somewhere else. The jealousy of Christ's love is ever watching for some expression of His love to me, to flow out from me. A person cannot walk with God, without feeling the need of giving-rendering back to God; and therefore there must be uncertainty in a person's soul if there is not fruit-bearing. Whether there are candlesticks or not, it is quite plain you have to be a light-bearer. God holds you responsible for the light He has given you, though the candlestick is removed.

With regard to God's dealings with man from the beginning, we find man has always lost what God has given. In the garden of Eden it was found there was nothing to hope for but the Seed of the woman. Afterward the corruption of man was so great, that God must send the deluge, and only one family was saved. Then Abraham was called out; then a kingdom was set up, and that does not stand; then it is given to the Gentiles, they fail in their responsibility, and then Christ comes. When He comes again we find that all these things in which man failed will be taken up afresh. The paradise will be the paradise of God. The government of Israel and of the nations will be in the hands of the Lord Christ. God did put the testimony into the hands of churches-the churches failed, but that does not destroy the responsibility of individual testimony. There is something beyond; viz., the hearing ear, and the victorious power, even faith in the Son; and just when the whole thing fails, these blessings, which have an eternal character in them, come out to light. When anything has failed, God has always showed His eternal purpose through it all. He had not done with man, and He always gathered up a remnant. There were the twelve apostles, and the one hundred and twenty witnesses for Christ. It will be for loss to a soul eternally before God if there is not faithfulness to Him.

"Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain." I may be wrong in making the application, but I believe this has a most emphatic bearing on what in the present day is called Protestantism. Works wanting according to the profession everywhere.

Verse 3. The spring of their blessing was hearing from Himself, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard." What a contrast is here alluded to, as to Christ's coming, with the language of the bride. (Rev. 22) Instead of coming as the expected One, He comes and takes them by surprise. Everything we do may be tried by the power of its amalgamating with the hope of the Lord Jesus' return. If the saint is really occupied with the thought of the Lord Jesus rising up from the Father's throne, everything we are doing will be tested by it. I am one of the espoused virgins, and I have to live as one who will be with the heavenly Bridegroom. Whenever I can say, "I am doing this thing for the Lord," I shall not be ashamed of it. The expectation of the Lord has a certain moral character in it, because it is that which tells of my taste of His love. Christ's leaving the Father's throne to enter the Father's house is the great expression of His love to me; and if I really walk in the enjoyment of His love, I shall not like to be doing anything which does not tell of His love. Whatever I do will harmonize with His love. There is one difficulty people make about being ashamed. (1 John 2:28.) They say, "How can we be ashamed when in the glory, and perfectly conformed to Him?" But how can I reconcile Christ's suffering in sympathy now with His people down here? for though we know He is past suffering, we cannot doubt the fact of His sympathy with His members in all their wilderness path.

Verse 4. Promise of white robes. Every one else may be spotted around, but I have a clean one. I have one on -having on Christ; but what is this distinctive mark? Will not all be white? Ah! but He says, "They shall walk with Me in white." This is the expression of perfect approval of them in the glory; it recognizes them as keeping themselves unspotted now in the wilderness....

Think of the Lord Jesus pointing out to one of us, and saying, "You gave me a cup of cold water; you visited me in prison," &c. This shows the uncommon largeness of God's grace to us in not only recognizing the whole, but those special little acts of service done to Christ. In it all we trace marks of Christ's sympathy with God's divine glory and His people's blessing. "You thought that because I had given you a white robe you ought to walk clean; I will make it manifest before all." The question is not only about ourselves getting the blessing, but of Christ's love being shown out in the expectation of His coming.

"He that overcometh." Does a person then say, "If I do not overcome, shall I not get the blessing?" I would only say to such an one, "If all you are doing is for yourself, take care." If a timid person says, "I shall never be able to get it; for I am always failing," I would ask, "Do you want to meet God's mind? or do you want to get it for yourself?" I do not get any mark as to one who is faint-hearted, but only of one who has faith. I get wrong here, and fail there; but, after all, this faith in Christ will overcome; and it is not I who overcome either, but He who has sat down on the right hand of God; He has won the victory for me.

"I will not blot out His name out of the book of life." Mark there are two books of life-the book of the living, and the book of the life of the Lamb slain, &c.; the book of the testimony,¹ and a book recording salvation. There are many at different times (at such a crisis, for example, as the Reformation) who have begun faithfully to witness for Christ, but who have gone away just at the end. There was Cranmer in England, and many in Germany and elsewhere; their names were blotted out as to the place of testimony. This applies not only in a great crisis, such as that spoken of, but at any time that testimony is going on. It does not signify how feeble the service is. That has nothing to do with testimony. Paul asked the weakest for their prayers. It is never a question of what the service is, but of faithfulness to Christ. (v. 5.)

Many of the promises have a moral and spiritual application now as well as future. Christ gives tokens of His favor now as well as in the glory, and makes it manifest. Many persons, and godly persons too, are apt to bring down what is divine and heavenly to what is earthly. If I look to myself to bear testimony I shall certainly fail, and not bear fruit; but if I look to God to bear testimony through me that is another thing. He says, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine," &c. When Christ came into the world, the effort to do God's will was the power to recognize God's ways and actings. So Luther was seeking with prayers and fastings to please God. when he found in the Prayer Book the expression, "Communion of saints," which set his soul on fire, and he heard from a poor man the pardon of sins, which he could not forget. Into whose heart did these truths come? To the man who was ready to do God's will at whatever cost. Two things are needed-readiness to do God's will, and intelligence about the way of doing it. If a person is not bearing fruit he has not these. Sometimes

there is the will; but you have to wait God's time for the light to know what to do.

Is your life formed on this: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" It is a most solemn question, connected with fruit-bearing, whether you are living to God in the wilderness, a place which God uses for the showing forth of the grace of Christ.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Philadelphia Part 1

Rev. 3:7-12

Lecture 1.

THE titles under which the Lord presents Himself to this Church are these: "He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." There is something very remarkable in the address to Philadelphia. The very name is full of blessing-brotherly love. Thus the Lord's condescension in calling us "brethren" down here in the wilderness is called to remembrance. The characteristic traits of the Lord Jesus brought out here, too, are very precious. The divine fullness in Christ is always the same, but the flowing out of it depends very much on the state of the people to whom it flows. We find the truth ministered to the church of Galatia is very different to that given to Ephesus. The apostle would have been straitened in himself if he had attempted to speak for God to the Galatians as he spoke to the Ephesians. The Ephesians were in a very blessed state, and ready for the highest truth connected with the Lord Jesus. It is the same difference in Philadelphia and Laodicea. He addresses the people of His love under a different title to those who are in a lukewarm state.

It is important to rest a little on the first title and insignia. Title is connected with what He is in Himself; insignia relate to office. There are some permanent offices, and some which pass away with the occasion for which they are used. "He that hath the sword with two edges" is an office implying something to be put down, some evil which can only be here. The eyes like unto a flame of fire are connected with His eternal office to the Church in glory; divine intelligence belonging to the Lord Jesus. "He that is holy." Let us rest on this, perfect holiness is connected with the Lord Jesus. We are accounted holy, as being in Him. Our abstract ideas of holiness are very imperfect, but there is another thing; viz., the word holiness conveys a different thought to different persons, according to what they are themselves. If I speak to a sinner by the wayside, and say, "God is holy," "Yes;" but he will say, "He is merciful too." He has no thought connected with holiness but severity. To a young Christian, if I speak of holiness, he will say, "How difficult it is to be holy!" An older and established saint will say, "Aye, but I have been separated to God by the truth, and I ought to keep myself separate." "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The father in Christ will see even differently to this—he will see something peculiar in God's character as to holiness, he will see what is beautiful in the essential character of God, and will be able to say, "That is just what I want."

Holiness is the essential character, not an attribute, of God. Christ says here, "He that is holy." When I come to God, I see in Him certain attributes—power, wisdom, intelligence, and I find those things existed in God before redemption was unfolded. At one time He is finding out knowledge of witty inventions, in creating a world; at another, by the foolishness of preaching, saving them that believe. But there is something higher up than any of these. There are three kingdoms—Creation, Providence, and Redemption. God set up creation as the Creator; but there was no expression of mercy there. He was pleased to see creatures capable of enjoyment. There was goodness in exercise, but no mercy. In providence you see the power of God, and the wisdom of God; but if you merely look at providence for mercy, you see it limited to present things, and it is irrespective of responsibility. But God's mercy in redemption is connected with eternity. The high spring is in God, flowing down to something beneath Him. But when you get up to the divine glory, and see how 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, you see how it was possible for One who was perfectly holy to take up such things as we are. There was nothing between the garden of Eden and the pavement of hell, as it were, if God had not brought in mercy. He comes and shows how He could pick up the victims, fillet the flowers of man's sin round His neck, and take up the one who is fit for nothing but a hot place in hell, and give him a place in heaven, to share all the glories of His Son. That God could have nothing to say to His Son, when in the place of the sinner, cuts the whole question of the magnitude of man's sin. That you who are shut out of Eden should be made to share all the glories of God's Son, could never have entered a created mind. In bringing in mercy, God re-arranged everything in heaven and in earth. The only thing that suits the sinner is mercy, and yet it is the last thing the sinner takes hold of. God's holiness is more shown in mercy than in anything, and therefore nothing is so precious to the child of God (a father in Christ nearing his rest), as the character of God's holiness. Weigh in your minds what your thoughts of God's holiness are. It is a word that has scared many, but it is a word of blessing and power, when one really sees how it embodies that special trait in God's character—mercy. Christ was standing here in relation to this little militant remnant, not only as having the understanding of this character, but in the circumstances where this holy separation to God is needed; and He comes as such to associate them with Himself, sweeping out all that would not bear the light.

"He that is true." Here is another characteristic of the Lord Jesus. The two words, faithful and true, are similar; "true" means much the same as truthfulness. The truth was not embodied in any of God's manifestations to man until Christ came. A ray of light came down (e.g. Noah, Abraham, &c.); but we could not say that God came down then, or in the giving of the law, to call back man to the knowledge of what God required; but when God's Son came into the world, there was the full manifestation of what God was. Truth came in the person of Jesus Christ. That thought of reality when it comes into the mind is greatly connected with simplicity. It has been said of Christ, that two things were peculiar in Him—simplicity and repose. He was never hurried nor fluttered. He had one thing to do, and that was for God. There was perfect simplicity, because there was in Him only the expression of the one thing. For young people who may be puzzled what to follow amidst the maze of things around, the great thing is reality; be real, and you will be simple. There was no distortion in Christ; He was always kind to people for God's sake. Take this as a trait of Christ to follow—reality, simplicity; be real before God.

Another trait that Christ takes in coming to the little band in the wilderness to separate and strengthen them from the evil around is, "He that hath the key of David;" this is one of the insignia of office. Christ had a perfectly divine and human character, and besides that, He had a variety of offices. In David we have an allusion both to Israel and the Church. Abraham was the head of the family of faith, and David also

occupied a special place. God gave to him, as to Abraham, promises too big for a man upon earth, to have; they were heavenly and earthly. "Key" is expressive of office; it implies power to open and shut. A stranger coming into this house would not know where to find certain treasures in it that are locked up. I have the key, and can find them. Christ says, "There is no spring for Israel except from Me. It is laid up, and none can open but Myself. I do not yet set Myself to make Israel to germinate, but I shall do it. 'I am the root and the offspring of David.'" The allusion here is connected with the hope of the Church. It is true in the most minute things that He openeth, and no man shutteth, &c. He opened the Church by Peter; He opened the door to the Gentiles. He will open the way into the Father's house, and then to Israel afterward. He will be the Opener to blessing, and will shut out all that is contrary. He is the Opener and the Shutter. This applies to us individually now. What I have to do is to look out to see what Christ opens to me, and to do everything He gives me to do with my might. Take everything that comes under your hand, and do it. There is not a single thing, little as well as great, but what is connected with the person of Christ. We have no need to be anxious, but calmly to leave things to Him. The connection of this with the testimony is important. This testimony should be near to our hearts. If you love your Father, do you not wish His honor? Do you not wish that men should know and believe that it is their fault, and not God's, if they are not saved? Two things connected with light should affect our hearts. There are two parties concerned in it—God and man. In mission societies we see value for souls the one absorbing thing with them, but there was another with Christ; it was God's value for souls and desire to save them, and we never get the right desire about the blessing of any, until we see how the glory of God is connected with their salvation. The great thing to mark from what we have seen this morning is the importance of the single eye—simplicity and reality. All responsibility rests with Him who has the key of the promises, and we have need of resting quietly on Him in simple dependence.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Philadelphia Part 3

Rev. 3:7-12

Lecture 2

VERSE 8: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." There is often great enlargement gained in the sense, through the change of a word—none rather than "no man." In the conflict of things here, even supposing we had to lay down our lives, no one, not even Satan himself, can overcome, for it is against Him who is stronger than he. We have looked before at verse 7, where Christ in His character, and in His insignia connected with office, is put before us. He is the Possessor of the key of the beloved one (David), the Opener and the Shutter, against whom none can prevail. It is to be remarked in this address to Philadelphia, that their circumstances are mentioned before their character. The slightest change even of this kind has a meaning, though we do not always light upon it for want of being more spiritual. Verse 8 really tells of the Lord's love to the churches. Nothing marks the low state of timings more than that people often attach the thought of legality with God's looking for works. It is not so at all. The poor sinner directly he has life, will surely say, "Now I must be doing." Men in their natural state will try works, anything to save themselves, rather than having to do with a living Christ; but after trying all for a foundation, and finding all fail, at last the poor simmer lights upon Christ, and then he is in danger, from the low state of things, of tossing works overboard altogether. Christ would have us rest on His finished work, but then He desires that the life He has given should appear. If you say to Christ, "I will give you no works;" He says, "You do not care for my love." If you really cared for His love you would wish to hear Him say, "I wish for this little thing and that." It is the jealousy of His love that He cannot bear that another should be in our hearts in His place.

The first thing He takes notice of in verse 8, is peculiarly sweet in a day like this: "I have set before thee an open door: for little hast thou strength." Israel was carried, as it were, out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, they hardly knew how. When they were out in the wilderness they had an open door before them, but they could not return to Egypt. There is the same contrast in the early and latter times with the Church. There was a time when they were seen to have the power of God with them, then they came into circumstances which try what the will is for God. In addressing this Church Christ makes them know that He keeps a little door open. He sees the use they had put the "little strength" to, they had "not denied His name." See the difference between walking with God, and walking religiously before men, and without God. Am I thinking whether the things I do will get praise from men? Paul's service was not more approved than Phoebe's might be. The question for each one is, "What has the Lord given me to do?" Faith does not set up a thing on an ordered plan, and faith will not sustain a thing so set up. In this country we see much set up, but faith has not to do with that. Remark, too, that the open door to me might be quite another thing to the open door for another. I must have a conscience towards God, and towards man, and walk with God in the path He has opened. We find constantly that God has opened one door, and we want to open another; but if God has opened one for you, and you are looking to open another, you will find Satan can shut the one you are opening for yourself. It is true for each one of us individually, in any little path of service we may have, and it is certainly true for missionaries. Christ takes notice of the "little strength." The force of the expression is, not you have a little strength (in the sense you may say to a sick person, "Now you have a little strength, only rise up and use it"), but it is, you have a little.

Another thing comes in, too, which Christianity has set aside so much. Little is the strength thou hast, but thou "hast kept my word." If God sees that in a day when His word is thought very little of, it is very precious to me; and if when His person is little honored, it is much set upon by me, I have His signal approval. The Word and Name are together. There is a connection between the Name and the preservation of the word in purity. If a soul is seeking honey out of the word, you always find that Christ grows before the soul as of paramount importance. "Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." All the heresies that have come into the world have always had their root in the abuse of the name of Christ. That by which God does everything is in connection with the name of His Son. Heresies soon crept into the Church; and after the apostles left the scene, instead of the authority, "thus saith the Lord," the thoughts of men were quoted. The great assault of Satan is against the person of Christ, and your safeguard is in keeping fast that name. If you are faithful to Christ He will keep you from the error that is ready to touch your soul.

Verse 9. He shows them about the trial of their faith—"I will make them of the synagogue of Satan that say they are Jews, and are not," &c. There are often mistakes made on this subject; but, as Leighton said, "Gold must be tried;" and so, if God has given faith, it must be tried. If

God has set this Church, there will sure to be something also set up with pretension only. God has set up something, and Satan imitates it. You say, "How am I to know which is of God? Ought it to trouble me, that I do not know?" If you do not know what you should follow, stand still and wait. God will put your heart to the test; it is not a question of intelligence, but dependence and subjection of will. Simple faith will sit down quietly and wait. If there is self-will and human energy, there will be nothing but restlessness. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." You may have to come to your wits' end—a very good place to come to—but God will not leave you without light. Christ is not responsible for the building of the synagogue, but He is responsible for His people's overcoming it. All the evil sweeps around Christ as the center, and catches the evil that is in the man, and pushes what is for Christ nearer. What is not for Christ will be humbled and broken down; but what is for Him will be strengthened. Christ says, "I will not leave you until it is manifest who is on My side, and who is not." You often find people adopting after a time the very thoughts and expressions used by those they oppose, which is just a recognition of them. "I will make them of the synagogue of Satan to come and worship before thee."

Verse 10: "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation," &c. In connection with the testimony of the churches, the Lord passes on to show what they on the earth would have to pass through on the earth. There is a time coming to try them that dwell on the earth, but they are promised to be kept from it. There is a time of trouble coming; if you are willing to suffer trouble, you shall not go into it. If you are willing to yield to Me in everything—your heart above though your feet are on the earth, "I will keep you." There is a sweet word to those in trial, and who know there is nothing but trial before them, "Behold, I come quickly." It is very precious to see the connection between His people's delight in Him, and the promise of what joy they shall have in glory. What will be so sweet to you as to see Him? Well, He desires for you to see Him, and it will be an expression of His reward for your faithful service. "Behold, I come quickly." He will give you a chaplet of victory such as He Himself has to bestow. There are different crowns spoken of—the royal crown, which all will have, and the chaplet of victory are distinct; and there are chaplets of victory in different things—running, wrestling, fighting. A man may have a dozen crowns. That in which we have been victors will stand forth to His joy and His people's in that day. Do you think of the joy it will be to Christ to see you stand forth then? You ought to think of it. He will have perfect delight in seeing His whole Church, and in seeing each believer perfect. When a painter has put the last touch upon his picture, he sees it complete, and he dare not add to it; another touch would spoil it. Not only is the joy reciprocal of the Church meeting Christ, and Christ the Church, but His joy will be the greater. The one is finite, the other infinite.

Verse 12. The thought conveyed in "the pillar" is stability, in "the temple" worship. There will be no more going out; but that is not enough for Christ. He says, "I will write upon him the name of my God," &c. "I will write upon him my new name"—Christ's new name! What is in the Lord's mind here, I believe, is to contrast the thought of their little strength and the little door (instead of running here and there, and doing a great deal, passive suffering, and holding fast, and not letting go) with the large sphere He would set before them." You see the evidences of what I have; now I give it to you." There is one thought which in our selfishness we forget—the largeness of the expression of Christ's love in giving to us what God has given to Him. We think of the suitability of the glory to meet all our felt wants now; but as we get on as Christians we ought to be learning more of His love in desiring us to share His glory. It will be seen how in Christ was the establishment of everything connected with God's counsels in glory. It is a blessed thing to be pushed by the armies of Pharaoh out of Egypt, but it is more to have the heart opened to admire what is Christ's. Not my getting a place in glory should occupy me, not something good for me (it is that), but the largeness of the expression of God's love for Christ, and His love in not being there without giving me to share it. This is connected with the gospel of peace to my soul. Christ is on the throne at God's right hand; but He is only satisfied with that until He comes to usher His people into the Father's house. There are two points to the blessing—the end that touches God, and the end that touches me. It is a blessed thing for me to have pardon, but it is a more blessed thing that God has joy in me.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Philadelphia Part 2

Lecture 3.

IN the very name of this church the Lord's love to His people is recalled, and there is something peculiarly sweet in this, in their time of difficulty and trial from the evil around.

My desire in mentioning a few things is not to bring out new truths, but old truth which God may use for the good of the sheep, as they go in and out—the manna for pilgrims passing through the wilderness.

In the beginning of this book (chap. 1:3), we find a blessing connected with reading and hearing the words of this prophecy, for the servants of the Lord Jesus. In chap. 22:6, the Lord's coming is connected with the responsibility of keeping what was written in the book. In verse 12, the effect of the coming of the Lord is regarded. In the whole place where there is light—Christendom—but there is general responsibility which Christ will not let slip, because the Church is precious to Christ. Then, thirdly, Christ comes as the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star, upon which the Bride immediately says, "Come," and He at once responds to the affection of her heart, and says, "Surely, I come quickly." First, Christ says, "Now you have a book; I have given you a book, and come to see what use you have made of it." Secondly, "I have given you light; now I come to see what use you have made of that light." Then again, as part of the Bride, are you able to say, "Come" to the Lord Himself? Is it not a remarkable thing that the book closes with this peculiar brightness, which seems to shine out in the welcome the Bride is ready to give? The book of the Apocalypse is something like a clear stream from a rock, washing through all sorts of muddy, marly, dirty soil, which turns up blacker and blacker as it goes further on, but the stream itself continues pure; and it is an uncommonly bright thing at the end to find that some are calling on the Lord to come.

After the apostles left the scene the fathers were looked up to for authority, then succeeded a period of pitch-darkness; then at the Reformation, God began to separate some for Himself by acting on their consciences; at length, after that, there have been some who can say, "I belong to no churches, but to Christ in heaven, and I am waiting for Him to come for me." This, I say, is an uncommonly bright thing amidst all the mixture that has existed.

We have seen how, in the first of these addresses to the churches, the endeavor is rather to get things right again. Afterward it is rather to keep people out of the evil which is around them. In this church of Philadelphia it (the Spirit's word) is like a knife cutting down between the

good and evil that are there. (Chap. 3:11.) " Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." This is worthy of notice; first, because in this church faithfulness to the word has been praised: " Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name," thus recognizing that the crown is theirs, as much as the truth put into their hands. While all the divine family are recognized as crowned as kings, "we shall reign with Him," and so all have the insignia of royalty alike; there is something more, there is the diadem of victory. I may be an overcomer by faith in Christ, but be without a chaplet of victory. Saved, but works burnt up, just as Lot, dragged out of Sodom, had nothing to bring out.

There was Sampson also dictating to God where he should go with the Philistines. It is a very different thing just to know that I am saved, and to have the heart of the pilgrim, rejoicing that Christ has separated me from evil, and that I can look up into His face with joy-my works approved, not so much for the quantity of them-but the little things done to Him are owned as faithful service to Him in His blessed presence. After His telling them, " I know thy works," He gives them that which was to act as a stimulus to them- " Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

I would recall one thing here connected with the structure of these addresses. In the first three the exhortations come before the promises, and in the last four the promise is put first, and the warning afterward. There must certainly be a spiritual meaning in it. It is not a question of whether I can say why it is, but this is very manifest, that if I went into a person's house and exhorted first, or comforted first, you would suppose I had some reason for it. Just this we can see in relation to the churches, that the lower you go down in them, the more weakness there is in them as churches; and the more there is of weakness, the more of course will consolation be felt and valued.

Verse 12. " Him that overcometh," &c. This is said to those who are already conquerors through faith in Christ. Who is he that overcometh but he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ? This is a most comforting word, as comforting as a bolted door to the poor weak pilgrim inside! This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith," &c. Two things are to be remarked in this; first, the entire cutting asunder of the Church and the world-that which marks the believer is victory over the world through faith in Christ. This is a word that meets the soul, however it may have fallen. I may have sunk down to where Solomon fell, or where Peter fell. Sampson, again, was not much like a victor; but if even like these, I can rest in that word, " He that overcometh is he that believeth."

But there is something more. A man walking with Christ is in all things more than conqueror through Him that loved him. How far are we overcomers in this sense? I could not say of myself, that the Holy Ghost sees me in every detail of daily life more than conqueror. I desire in everything to be a victor, first for my own sake, for there is no joy in being borne down. If I am not conqueror, I am disappointed in everything I touch. God is present at all times; but if a person does not walk with God, God must walk against him, and must break him down. Another thing why I should desire to overcome is, for God's glory. Has He sent His Son into the world to die? Has He given His Spirit to dwell in me? and am I to have no spirit becoming a son? no devotedness of heart and affection? For God's sake, then, I desire to be more than conqueror, I desire in everything to be a victor. An over-come in Christ should be an overcomer in his walk as regards everything. The promise here given to the overcomer lets out in the details who Christ is. Is it said, " How do you know that Christ is the Son of God?" There are many things which I could not give as evidences to others, but which are very sweet to myself, as showing His right, and the power attaching to Him as Son of God. Who but He could have a right to say, " Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? It seems to me that this must either be the expression of a maniac, or of One who has infinite power to do what He promised. So here, " Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, he shall go no more out," &c. He has power to make what He pleases; power to keep, and power to give away. "I will;" the acting of our blessed Lord in Matt. 11, where, like a nail in a sure place, in spite of all the failure around Him, He says, " Come unto Me," is similar to the words to these poor Philadelphians, waiting in patience in the midst of evil. In all this, we do not get a disquisition only of what was done more than eighteen hundred years ago, but it is addressed to our hearts for our daily experience. He is dealing it out to me by means of this little book as One who has an actual part in it. Has not the living Christ, who has been speaking amongst men, has not He spoken to me, and given me rest? May we judge ourselves in the light of that experience. Is not this Christ the same now as He was then? And is not His promise the same to me as it was to those to whom He spake then?

With Philadelphia, we see running right to the end of this string of precious pearls for His people a trait of moral glory. Christ is acting with the heart of a Brother (for He is not ashamed to call us brethren), and when He wants to express His delight in a thing, and to give His approval, He does not rest on the thing to be blessed, but brings out some of the expression of the love He has received from His Father. He says, " I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God," as though He said, "God has given me a place in the government and worship, and I shall not have it alone. I must have kings and priests with Me. I shall make you sharers with Me in it." "My God." Thus He would give you something connected with Him who is most precious to Himself. What a word that is, "Pillar in the temple of my God." The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth. There is not only the thought of stability in it, but it is the memorial or record of a certain victory. The overcomer is there as the trophy of Christ's conquest. Let us pause here. It is something so different to think of glory as that for which we are struggling ourselves, from having it before us as that which Christ gives. We ought to work because of what He has done for us, and because we have such a Master. There is a big bit of selfishness in us all-I, I, I-when, as regards every end or rest, it is all Christ's. Works that please Him are not ours, but Christ's. The end to have in view is not our gain, but Christ's. The rest not ours, but Christ's.

A young Christian says a great deal of "I the good," or "I the bad;" but an old Christian says nothing at all about it; but God knows altogether what I am. He has the true measure of me, and He has measured Christ against me. " He shall go no more out;" as none can open the door, and none can bring in but Himself, so none can keep it but Him. God's delight in Christ is so great that He will bring the Church into this heavenly paradise, so far beyond what Adam ever had. He could be turned out of that, but none shall go out from this.

" I will write upon him the name of my God." There is something in this like the manna that was for the people's food, and some of it put in the ark for God. There is the communication of the character of God upon the child of God. Our thoughts run upon our being there. I shall see Christ; sit down with Him; see all that great multitude round about Him. But there is another thing, " I shall be like Him, for I shall see Him as He is." Then will be fully realized " grace for grace," spoken of in John It will be perfected in us according to 2 Cor. 3, " beholding with unveiled face." When I see Him face to face, when I stand before Him in glory, I shall have it all; it will be mine for Him to behold. Present this to the world, and they could not understand it. A poor sinner can understand the blessings of salvation; but as a Christian learns communion with Christ, he rejoices in this, that he will be like Him. Another thing connected with the blessing is, " I will write upon him the name of the city of my God." If God ever and anon formed the garden of Eden, the tabernacle in Israel, the temple of Jerusalem, in which He appeared, they were but beggarly elements to show forth that higher, better thing to be taken possession of by God. Poor sinners saved by grace, and God Himself

making them His dwelling-place. Rough stones as we are, from the quarry of nature, there can be no mistake as to the origin of our being in that scene above. Nothing but redemptive love could give you and me a place there.

The heavenly city is interesting to us by way of contrast with the earthlies. If God has to do with the earth, it begins in time; if it is in blessing in the heavenlies, it begins in the counsels of God. Everything centers in Christ the eternal Son of God; all hangs upon and grows out of one root—God's delight in His Son; and redeeming love is the means of bringing it out. There is a great comfort in knowing this, and in Christ's giving us a special place in that divine glory. "I will write upon him my new name." It was the custom, as we have before spoken of, to give a new name which others did not know. These names often had great meaning, and were connected with character. The name of "Israel" was given to that shuffling character that was always planning for himself and supplanting others, and after all was always in straits and difficulties. See him, for example, not knowing how to get over the brook Jabbok. When God had got him down to the right place, He says, "Now, if you as the creature draw from me as the Creator, I can do what I will with you, and give you the power of God." "Israel" is the new name. There are heights and depths in this new name of the Lord Jesus full of deep blessing. His person none can penetrate. One can only bow down and shelter oneself under the word, "None knoweth the Son but the Father." But as to character, not Person, we see how He puts it upon us, and makes us sharers of it. God displays His grace in different ways at different times. When Christ was down here in the position of the humbled One who had emptied Himself, the Servant going down step by step to the cross, He seemed without any glory in the eyes of men, and yet there was really nowhere that His name, His character, His glory shone out more than on the cross; but it was all between Himself and God then.

Then He rose up from the dead, ascended up on high, sat down, and there He is patiently waiting, the Church down here in patience too. It is in a most anomalous position for the Son of God to be on the throne of the Father, but He will not always be there. There is redemption glory to be manifested in Christ, and this new name is the redemption name to be given Him, not now, but when He who was the Servant, and in Whom always was all the power, will be manifested in glory. The time is coming when He will lead the praise for the Church and for Israel. The new name is always in Scripture connected with character, not only of moral worth, but also of position. The Lord will take a new position altogether, and then He says He will put it upon us. There are two things peculiarly sweet to me—the unselfishness of heart this would lead us into, and then the joy of the Lord in being able to look up to His God in the thoroughly unselfish joy of His heart in having us there. Think of Him looking on all around, and looking up to God to see His joy in the many sons He has brought to glory!

"He that hath an ear, let him hear." Faith is the heart having to do with God Himself, and Christ gives the challenge to the heart where He has a place. It is not so much respecting service; that may be closing, but the ear; and are there not some that have an ear? I know there are some who are thankful to have not only the ears "digged," but "bored," and thankful to have such a Master.

There is one word to add in the use of these expressions to the churches. Our using them to profit depends on our rightly dividing the word of God, not taking all the promises without the warnings, nor the warnings without the promises; they are closely connected in the mouth of the Lord Jesus. What is the hope set before us? We shall not only see, but shall bear the glory; "the name of my God," the full display of the glory of God, into which we are to be ushered, as bearing that which will distinguish us from all the other spheres of glory which will exist in that day.

There is evidently a peculiar force in the word "writing." The Church is the epistle of Christ, and you ought to be able to say, that those around you have read a little bit of Christ in you (or Christ says it for you), that they have marked that you are not like other people. But Christ is not content with that, but will have the name of His God indelibly engraven on you. You may be very little in yourself, but the glory would not be perfect without you, as the most beautiful sculpture would be marred if the smallest fragment were knocked off. When will this glory come? Will next year find us marshalled in the glory with God's name written on us? "My new name." Christ is called to patience now, to wait, and so are we; the Man of sorrows was His name then, but He will come forth as the Man of joy; this will be His new name, which will be written on His people. "If so be we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." It is the false heart of unbelief that clouds that vision of glory which God presents before our souls. It is a little while, a very little while, and only horrid unbelief of heart sends it to a distance, instead of seeing it even at the very door.

Memorials of the Ministry of G.V. Wigram 1: Volume 1, Laodicea

Rev. 3:14, &C

There is one thing very helpful to remember in connection with all truth; viz., that as it comes from God, man, as a creature, is unable in himself to hold it. It is a question that often escapes from our minds, that we are powerless not only as sinners but as creatures. Not only is it impossible for God to allow a single blot in His presence, but a creature as such cannot stand before God. Any created being needs to be sustained by God. This is proved in the angels, who kept not their first estate; and in the garden of Eden, when man was seen unable to stand upon his own resources. When God was not present to hold and keep him in place, being a dependent limited thing, he fell; left to himself he had no power. It will be proved again in the millennium, when a brilliant court is set up in heaven, extending its rule over the earth, while Satan is bound in the bottomless pit; but in the end, when he is loosed, and the restraint over men on earth is withdrawn, there is the following after, and taking part with Satan. No display of God could ever keep man; His power could, but He had not laid hold of the wickedness to keep it really in.

What God keeps He hides in Christ. The saved man is one chosen in Christ, and therefore the only question is whether He can keep him. It is very helpful to remember this; for it lets me down as to myself, not only as a sinner, but it also teaches that as a creature I am dependent. There must, then, be something above me, and if I am not instructed by that I shall get off my ground of dependence. God never meant from the beginning to give up the keeping; He always meant to be the keeper Himself. It is well to bear this in mind in looking at these churches, because it gives us to see where we are, and what the security of our heart is.

There is something solemn in the titles with which Christ introduces Himself here. "The Amen," the "verily," as if He would have them to know He was speaking with all deliberation and consideration. This splicing out of His mouth is a very serious thing, but he knew what He was doing. He is the "Faithful Witness," not only for man, but for God. The thought of claim is brought in here. Christ comes and claims all for God in the position in which He has placed us. In the gospel Christ not only shows what God is for us, but what He would have us to be for Himself. In speaking to the Jews, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with All thine heart," &c., God asserts His right over man, but Paul's gospel was far beyond that. Christ loved God's purpose about the poor sinner being saved to bring fruit to Himself from them as such. He was the faithful witness for God and for man.

The "beginning of the creation of God." If Christ was the foundation for these Laodiceans to be built upon, were they who professed to be built upon the foundation like it? In the case of Paul's building it was so; but if these were not found so, they would be tested by it and rejected. Christ never counted on anything from man. He knew there was no good in him. We see this in John 13:14. Peter said, "I will lay down my life for thy sake." Christ's answer was, "The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."

There is much grace shining out in this address to Laodicea. People often forget that God turns things in favor of grace, instead of against it. Why has God put into man's hand this testimony of grace? Because He delighted in it. He has spent two thousand years in showing what the light is in grace. He has sent out witnesses—people to show forth what His love to man is, because He would not shut it up. Grace has been revealed, and people have had to be let down in themselves to see how unable they are to keep it. Man is brought to a dead stand in the presence of God. I see everything has been positively abused. What hope then is there for me? Well, God has not only revealed grace to man, but He is the God of grace. He has not only shown mercy, but He is the God of mercy. Adam might have said to God, "I have dropt everything out of my hands," but then God said, "I have everything in My hands." This is part of our moral education. He knew what use we should make of mercy, and yet permits us to trade with it; and when we come to the end of everything He says, "I am not ruined; look to Me. I have it all." So in all these different manifestations to the churches God would show us what we have in Himself.

Let us look at some of the particulars connected with this Church. Christ looks at the lukewarmness with utter disgust. Because "thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Moderation is the outcry of men; everything of respectable measure, the form of religiousness without any power. Christ hates this. He would rather have them dead, cold (He would then know what to do with them), if not burning hot. The happy medium, as it is called, is no pleasure to Him. Men try to mix the language of Sodom with Canaan; they would have both countries, and so break down the boundary that God is most anxious to keep up. In Roman Catholic countries Protestants are obliged to have the word of God in their hands continually, and there is consequently a great deal more vitality than in countries where there is nothing to disturb the quiet easy settling down. Nothing so hinders my having a taste of grace as having a fair outside. If I then just get a place, a good reputation for myself, and God is not glorified, I have no taste of mercy in my own soul. It is better to be broken down as a poor sinner than to have the name and character of being a saint without the living reality.

"I know thy works," God says. In this country, and in this year, there is a general feeling of satisfaction in what men call woes; but Christ says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold." When a person is really walking with God he can neither count possessions nor works. With Paul it was always upwards and onwards. When there is form without the power, people look round themselves; Paul looked round Christ.

"White raiment." These things are all the spoils of a victor; one who has conquered continually will have nothing to make him ashamed—that "the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." The eye must be upon Christ above for conquest. Christ above must be glorified.

Nothing would stand the eye of Christ, the eye of God, but what is Christ's. If there is a shred of one's own, God will mark it, and pick it out. There is an immense mass of things done—Bible distributions, missionaries, &c.; but that is bringing what is done to a human standard. How would all the machinery look in the sight of Christ rising

up from the Father's throne? What is a system without a living Christ? What was it to Paul? All the hope of the Church is formed for His return. Then I am a widow until He comes; and if a widow, I cannot sit as a queen, and glory in what I have. With these Laodiceans there is complacency in the labor of their own hands—works; but after all, if God lets in the coming of the Lord Jesus upon them, they will find all that they are doing will be spued out in that day. What is the cure for all this? A word from Christ's mouth makes people wince. They do not like it; but if the eye be single, the whole body will be full of light. He says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." Have you the gold here spoken of?—the broken heart, all the springs in God? This is to be really rich. You have all wealth in your possession, if you are nothing before God, but are trusting in His mercy.

These Laodiceans did not know Pihahiroth (not knowing what to do, but finding it a happy place to sit down to wait for God). "White raiment, that thou mayest be clothed." There is the white robe of Christ to cover over all our own deformity, and there is the vesture wrought out, the righteousnesses of saints. We should like to have not only the perfect robe to cover us, but the recognition of what He has wrought in us. We have so to walk now, as that these things may be manifested then to be approved, being formed and fashioned by God's grace working in us. Christ would wish us to be coming home laden with the fruits of righteousness wrought in us. "Eyesalve." They were no judges themselves of what was good, and they needed eyesalve. There is something in your eye that hinders your seeing, and you need to be put upon something to cleanse your eye. A Christian may be in a perfect fog, he gets no light, and before he can get it, he has to turn towards God, and seek the glory of God. Christ presented Himself to God—"Lo I come to do thy will;" "Thy law is within my heart;" "If any man will do His will," He says, "he shall know of the doctrine."

Verse 20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Christ's patience is remarkable here. "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." You must be in Christ where all His light is upon you or you are out of Christ, where there is no light upon you. How far is it a settled thing in our hearts, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." If we are to be part of the letter for Christ, it must be Christ in us—anything that is good must be put in by Him. If we have learned to say, "Sinners, of whom I am chief," we must also learn to say, "Saints, of whom I am least." This will not be making light of failure, but will give a taste of grace.

I have to do with God who sees how I have failed in everything. I have nothing to say, and then I may count upon His rich grace to meet my need.

" Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." Here we see the perseverance of His love. He stands knocking to those who have got in, and do not know how to get out of the ruin. Christ says, " Let me in. If, like Peter, you have cursed and sworn, you have used all My gifts for yourself more than for my glory; still, let Me in." This is a most blessed thing. The sun will not roll its twenty-four hours without God being there, if the soul is open to receive Him.

One word as to the promises. The mind, if less spiritual, is most attracted by the lower promises. When the soul is in a more spiritual state it is drawn most by those connected with the person of Christ. There is a difference in these promises; yet this is a very blessed one as connecting one as a victor with Christ Himself. He has won the throne, and those who overcome will share the throne with Him The rich unselfishness of who and what He is comes out most blessedly in it all. He does not bring things to be sold out, but holds forth these promises as encouragements to us while passing through the wilderness. If those poor Laodiceans could have realized what they gave up when He came to them with His gold, &c., knocking at their hearts, dead dogs as they were, they would find they made a sad miscalculation in being in the place they were. They were Satisfied with themselves, and with what they possessed, saying, " I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing."

Food for the Flock: Volume 2, Laodicea

EV 3:14-22{Without question the state of the assembly at Laodicea was worse than that of any other of these seven churches. It is the only one to which the Lord says: " I will spue thee out of my mouth." But the very darkness of the moral state of Laodicea becomes, as it were, a background to set forth, the gentle tenderness of the Lord Jesus; its darkness and weakness give occasion to Him to show the extent of His faithfulness and tender love.

There is` peculiar (one in his titles as He presents Himself to this church. "The Amen"- the verify-and "the faithful and true witness." There is a double bearing in the title under which Christ is here set forth. If it apply to a bad state, each title is a most awful word; for, as surely as the judgment is pronounced by Him-the "verily"-so surely will it be executed. But, on the other hand, He-the " yea and Amen"— will have a true testimony, and very comforting is this His name to those willing to hear.

Among Christians here present I suppose there is not one who has not felt inclined to take this word out of the Lord's mouth, and to say of himself: I am " wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Directly the Spirit of God gives us a sense of the failure of all that is around us, and we find ourselves in connection with it, so soon is there a humbling of ourselves, confusion of face, and the casting of ourselves on His mercy.

Did the Lord ever say to any poor soul coming thus to Him: If you can show any service done to me-if you can show me a life well spent?—No! On the contrary, if you were to say: " I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," it is then the Lord would come and cut you down. Do not speak for yourself; let Christ speak for you. I will not give myself a character. When Job would maintain a character for himself, God showed him He could pull it all down; but when he was in dust and ashes before God, abhorring himself, then. God could stand up for His servant. Can I say: I will put in a good claim for the glory? No; I will let Christ speak for me; none other would speak so well. How does He speak of His disciples?—Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." And this of Peter, who had said: " Spare thyself." I would rather have Christ as my special pleader before God, than say anything for myself He will me a Character when I could not give one for myself.

`What exquisite love comes out in the conduct of Christ! " Behold, I stand at the door and knock." It was a church which had clean for, gotten -him. He knew their hearts were not so familiar with Him as to be at 'ease in His pre-!knee. They were like Lot-with his heart crammed full of the evil of the world. He wants to come in and make a clean riddance of everything; He wants to come in and be there alone; He wants to come in and so dwell there that there shall be no one there but Christ. He looks at you to serif you are carrying about the lumber of the world; He looks to see how much you have of Himself in your heart. He had to counsel them to buy clothing. Hearts are uncommonly naked in God's presence, unless Christ be their covering.

What patient graciousness there is in the ways of the Lord Jesus, whether in the 'conversion of a sinner, or in His dealings with the poor way-worn saint. When a poor Christian gets down into the world, Christ may let him go into captivity until the last-the eleventh-hour; but He says even then: I must be in your heart, and you in mine; we must yet sup together. I stand and knock. You do not hear; your hearing is very bad. I want to come in; it. is just supper-time-the last hour before you go to

The-door has been long fast shut against Him, but still, as if it were His own home, He will sit to sup there.

Men would say: Oh, the joy given at this hour cannot be genuine, after such a life of ups and downs!-But they forget what God is. He says: How simple you have been to be going on all this time without me; here I am at the end of it.

I do not see why I am not to admire Christ here. I admire a friend who watches me, and comes in to help me in difficulty. And here is Christ knocking at my divided heart till the last hour, saying: Open! Open! I must come in!-I must admire Him. There is something beautiful in His conduct. His patience, His pertinacity, is to be admired. His determination to come in to the heart which would shut him out, and sup there. I cannot see him so without loving Him.

Now turn to the promise. " To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." If you read the addresses to the seven churches you will see that, when the moral state is good, the promise is high up; but, when the moral state is bad, the promise is low. Thus to Ephesus is given " the paradise of God." A man out of communion does not know anything of the paradise of God; but talk to a man of the world of a " throne," and he will understand that at once. Thus the promise hear is palpably addressed to sense. But everything which brings with it conformity to Christ is sweet; we do love anything that makes us a little like Him, because we love Him. Thus he says here: I am not going to give you it promise I have not proved myself. I have been in conflict, and I am now seated on a throne. You shall have the same. I conquered;

a throne was prepared for me. You are in conflict; a throne shall be prepared for you. What a heart of love He has! He says: Thou poor Laodicean, listening to my word, see the place I have prepared for thee. True, you are in conflict now, but what will be the end?. A throne prepared for me, and you shall sit on it.

You who have "an ear to hear," think of His joy to welcome you—to see you on His throne! And He would not tell how all the labor was His—the sitting down ours! Look He looks into 'your heart, and well He knows the sorrows of the wilderness; it is His love which has brought you there; He knows all the perils of it. But His victory is ours. He puts life into you, and He is responsible for bringing it forth in that day. He says: "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." He begins, and He ends.

This conflict is an uncommonly happy thing. Talk not to the saint, who knows anything of what Christ's conflict here was, of the dread of conflict. Set your sorrows, against Christ's set your conflict against Christ's. He had none to solace; He was forsaken of God at the last hour.—It is a conflict for us, and no mistake; but, if I know conflict, if I know weakness, if I know powerlessness, I fight under Him. If I have nothing to say for myself, He is more than conqueror for me.

The thought of being rejected by the world is a relief. Are you saying: Foolish one that I have been! I have tried to be happy in the world, but I cannot; the world will not know me?—Happier ground to take that of saying: I love Him. He was murdered here, so I cannot sit down here. He could not find a rest here, so 'I cannot—I believe you might thus write upon every sorrow and trial you go through: Christ is here.—Christ overcame all that was against Him. What joy and alacrity knowing this gives us! Thou, Lord, leadest us on in triumph! We have need of watchfulness. We must watch against—must keep apart from—the world; but He is there in grace for every time of need, and I wish to be in this world where my blessed Lord was. And, meanwhile, what can give bounding of heart, and brightness of face? Getting to Christ in heaven and finding He has, there a heart overflowing with affections for me.

—I do not doubt there is a certain connection between the name of the church and its state when addressed. Laodicea means "judgments of the people." Now the scriptural view of the church is an absolute monarchy—no mind or authority save one. Any liberty of the flesh is not of God but often the doctrine of the guidance of the Spirit is taken much as though it were "the voice of the people, the voice of God."

When the Spirit of God takes up any truth, it always does so in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ, so that living affections are brought into exercise. The way the enemy, often catches us is by getting us to look at truth as a mine in which we may go and dig for ourselves apart from the person of Christ.

The titles of the Lord in this Scripture are very solemn. He is "the faithful and true witness"—the witness not only in heaven, but more especially in the world. He has made clear the whole mind of God. If he see the oil oozing, out of the bowl, and the wick going out, has he nothing to say? If He find in Laodicea what is contrary, to Himself He must come in in censure. Perhaps many can hardly understand in the present day such words as: "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." I do not think the force of it can be felt unless the difference be seen between God's dealing with a soul to bring it to Christ, and His dealing with it afterward in moral judgment to break up the flesh, and to perfect the inner man so that the believer may be able to stand without anything to cover over at the judgment seat of Christ.

There is such a thing as the importance of being a witness for Christ. You are left down here for that purpose—to give a certain witness. At a trial a witness must not be a bad subject of course, but he is not called because he is a good one, but that he may do a certain work. There is no thought more solemn in connection with our standing as saved souls waiting for the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ than this: that He can say of any one of us: "I will spue thee out my mouth." Not as eternal rejection, but as saying: I will not allow you to stand any longer in the rank of those who are giving present testimony for me. He does it often. I could mention name after name in connection with the reformations, whether of Luther's or Whitfield's day. Look too at what has passed Within the last forty years; persons having certain truths given them for the day, running well up to a certain point, and having then stumbled and fallen. The extinguisher is put upon their testimony, and it is never allowed to take its place again.

The world; the flesh, or Satan, has been yielded to, and where are they now? Many of them to be found in the church of Rome; and Christ saying: Cover up that testimony; take away that light; it is a false one.

What is in your heart? Let God leave you to yourself for half an hour, and the most dreadful evil, the most awful sins recorded in Scripture will come out. All that Christ said to Philadelphia was: "Hold that fast which thou hast," and they had but "a little strength." And, if I were ten thousand times weaker than Philadelphia, is it in the heart of Him who was crucified through weakness to say to me: Go—you are too weak?—If we be but as water spilled on the ground yet He will never despise us. He says: If you want strength, there is strength in the word; if you want consolation, there is consolation in me.

At Laodicea they were lifting up the head, well pleased with themselves. It is thus that flesh acts. Has not God before now gone very nigh to set aside the testimony of many of us, because He saw that feeling, "I am rich and increased with goods?" Christ cannot be any party to self-complacency. If these Laodiceans had counted, over their riches, He had counted over His too. Could they think of themselves as a vessel carrying about the character of the Lord Jesus? He wanted them to have that pilgrim weanedness from the world which He had shown down here. The soul that has that could not be occupied with the world. You ought to be a vessel freshly filled from the Lord Jesus Christ—filled with

ointment—His own character—the character of the one Man who has passed over the earth perfectly full of divine treasures. The soul should exercise itself as to being occupied with Christ and Him: alone.

"I stand at the door and knock," can only be addressed to this church. They were not witnesses for Him He tries to rouse them—tries to wake them up. He says: Seek me for gold, for white raiment, for singleness of eye. I am the one who is seeking to get into association with you. Though in such a sad state it may yet end, not in my spueing you out of my mouth, but in your opening to me. I will give you everything to make you witnesses, and I will come and sup with you.

If any of us were to ask ourselves before the Lord whether we have been holding the position of witnesses as we ought, how could we say that we have? and that they in heaven ought to point down to us and say we are the reflection of the Christ up there? What is our only answer? The longing, yearning heart, which says He must have a brighter testimony at the end than at the beginning, if possible.

(G. V. W.)

Gleanings from the Teaching of G.V. Wigram, Gleanings 211

" And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints." (Rev. 4:8.) That latter clause is very peculiar as connected with the grace of God in His own proper eternity. There are things His people suffer from, and that He never forgets. All their prayers are treasured up before God-their tears are put in His bottle and treasured up. What! the sorrow I have forgotten, has God put that down? Is that one of the things that will shine? He can use all for His glory, but can the prayers and groans of a saint be kept and have a special place, be an odor of a sweet savor to God? The sinner does not know this, but a poor broken one can say, " Not only does God remember my prayer, but He puts it by on His own throne, like the pot of manna which He liked to be laid up, to be remembered as a trophy of the way He carried His people through the wilderness. And so will their prayers tell there what their special need of His presence was here. " Golden vials." Gold marks the divine character of that by which they are kept; the odor, a fragrant incense going up; the fragrance ever the same. Is that said of the prayers of saints? Yes, not one of them lost. The Lord Jesus knew them all, they were ever before God.

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