

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 3

This chapter contains the epistles to the churches at Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, and begins with that to Sardis; in which the sender describes himself by some things taken out of a former description of him; and gives an account of the state of this church; that her works were known by him, which were imperfect; and that she had the name of a living church, but was dead; wherefore she is exhorted to watchfulness and diligence, to remember how she had heard and received the Gospel, and to hold it fast, and repent of her sins: if not, he threatens to come as a thief unawares upon her, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:1-3), but excepts some few persons from this general account, who were not defiled with the corruptions of the majority, and who therefore should be favoured with communion with him, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:4), and then some gracious promises are made to persevering saints, and the epistle is concluded in the usual form, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:5,6). Next follows the epistle to the church at Philadelphia; in which the sender assumes some peculiar titles not before mentioned, taken from his holiness, truth, and power, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:7), signifies his approbation of her works; declares he had set before her an open door, which could not be shut; affirms she had a little strength, and commends her for keeping his word, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:8), and, for her encouragement, promises that some persons, formerly of bad characters, should come and worship before her, and should know what an interest she had in his love; and that since she had kept his word, he would keep her from an hour of temptation, which will be a trying time to all the world, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:9,10), and in consideration of his speedy coming, he exhorts her to hold fast what she had, that she might not lose her honour and glory; and promises the overcomer a fixed place and name in the house of God; and closes the epistle as the rest, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:11-13), and then follows the last epistle of all, which is that to the church at Laodicea; in which the sender describes himself by some characters taken from his truth and faithfulness, and from his eternity, power, and dominion, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:14), represents the members of this church as lukewarm, and very disagreeable to him, (~~REV~~ Revelation 3:15,16), and as having a vain

opinion of themselves, being ignorant of their real state and case, (^{f987}Revelation 3:17), wherefore he gives them some wholesome counsel and advice, suitable to their condition, (^{f988}Revelation 3:18), and whereas there were some among them he loved, he lets them know that his rebukes and chastenings were from love, and with a view to stimulate them to zeal, and bring them to repentance, which became them, (^{f989}Revelation 3:19), and then he informs them where he was, what he expected from them, and what they might upon a suitable behaviour enjoy with him, (^{f990}Revelation 3:20), and next promises to the overcomer great honour and glory, such as he had with his Father; and concludes the epistle in his usual manner, (^{f991}Revelation 3:21,22).

Ver. 1. *And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write*, etc.] Of the city of Sardis (see Gill on "^{f991}Revelation 1:11") when, and by whom this church was founded, and who was the present angel or pastor of it, is not now to be certainly known; however, here was a church in the "second" century, of which Melito was then pastor; and he is thought by some to be the angel here intended; this man wrote upon the book of the Revelation, and an apology for the Christians, sent to the Emperor Antoninus Verus, in whose time he lived ^{f999}; and in the "third" century a church remained in this place; and also in the "fourth", as appears from the council of Nice, which makes mention of it; and likewise in the "fifth", as is evident from the acts of the synod at Chalcedon, in which age it was the metropolitan church of the Lydians; and in the "sixth" century there was a bishop of this church in the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the "seventh" century, Marinus bishop of Sardis assisted at the sixth synod in the same place; and in the "eighth" century, Euthymius bishop of it was present in the Nicene synod; and even in the "ninth" century mention is made of an archbishop of Sardis ^{f100}; but now there are but very few Christians to be found here, and who have not a place to worship in, nor any to minister to them ^{f101}. This church represents the state of the church from the time of the Reformation by Luther and others, until a more glorious state of the church appears, or until the spiritual reign of Christ in the Philadelphian period; under the Sardian church state we now are: (this was published in 1747, Ed.) that this church is an emblem of the reformed churches from Popery, is evident not only from its following the Thyatirian state, which expresses the darkness of Popery, and the depths of Satan in it; but from its being clear of Balaam, and those that held his doctrine; and from the Nicolaitans and their tenets, and from Jezebel, and those that committed adultery with her;

things which the two former churches are charged with; but from these the present church reformed. This city of Sardis was once a very flourishing and opulent city; it was the metropolis of Lydia, and the royal seat of the rich King Croesus, though now a very poor and mean village; and may denote the magnificence and splendour of this church state, at least in name and figure, it has appeared in, in the world; though now in a very low and mean condition, and may be worse before the spiritual reign of Christ begins in the next period: there may be some allusion in the name of this church to the precious stone “sarda”, which, Pliny says ^{f102}, was found about Sardis, and had its name from hence; the same with the Sardian stone in (~~604E~~ Revelation 4:2 21:20). This stone, naturalists say ^{f103}, drives away fear, gives boldness, cheerfulness, and sharpness of wit, and frees from witchcrafts and sorceries; which may be expressive of the boldness and courage of the first reformers; of the cheerfulness, joy, and pleasure, which appeared in their countenances, and which they spread in others by preaching the doctrines of the Gospel; and of those excellent gifts and talents both of nature, learning, and grace, by which they were fitted for their service; and of their being a means of delivering men from the witchcrafts of Jezebel, and the sorceries of the whore of Rome: and perhaps some allusion may be in this name, as is thought by Cocceius, to the Hebrew word *dyrc̄*, “sarid”, which signifies a “remnant”, since in this church state there was a remnant according to the election of grace, a few names, whose garments were undefiled; or to the word *dr̄ç*, “sered”, which signifies a carpenter's rule or line; since the first reformers were endeavouring to bring every doctrine and practice to the rule and line of God's word:

these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God; the fulness and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, as in (~~604E~~ Revelation 1:4), which Christ, as Mediator, has without measure, and are at his dispose, and which he, having received for men, gives unto them; and at the time of the Reformation bestowed them on many eminent servants of his in a very plenteous manner; for which reason he assumes this character in writing to this church:

and the seven stars; the ministers of the Gospel; (see Gill on ~~601E~~ Revelation 1:16”), (see Gill on ~~601E~~ Revelation 2:1”); these were filled by Christ at this time with evangelical light and knowledge; and were sent, and held forth by him as lights in the world; and were instruments in his

hand for great good; and were wonderfully held, kept, and preserved by him, notwithstanding the greatness of their work, their weakness in themselves, and the power, rage, and fury of the antichristian party; Luther is a remarkable instance of this: Christ's making use of the same title here as in the epistle to the church at Ephesus, which represents the apostolic church, may show that this church state bore some degree of likeness to that, and that it was a sort of renewing of it:

I know thy works; good works chiefly; the nature and imperfection of them; and also bad works: that

thou hast a name that thou livest: the reformed churches have had a name for spiritual living, by faith on Christ's righteousness only for justification, that article being the great article of the Reformation: there was in them an appearance of liveliness, by their zeal for Gospel doctrine and worship, and a form of living according to godliness; they were esteemed, were celebrated, and famous for these things, especially for living by faith on Christ's righteousness:

and art dead; or “but art dead”; for, the most part, or greater part of the members of these churches, are dead in trespasses and sins; and as for the rest, they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace, and in the discharge of duties; and under great spiritual declensions and decays, just as it were ready to die; and but few really alive in a spiritual sense, and especially lively, or in the lively exercise of grace, and fervent discharge of duty; yea, dead as to those things in which they had a name to live: and this seems to be our case now, who, it is to be hoped, are at, or towards the close of this period.

Ver. 2. *Be watchful*, etc.] Which may respect both ministers and members: the ministers of the Gospel, whose business is to watch over themselves, their conversation and doctrine, and watch every opportunity to preach it, and the success of their ministry; and that they do not grow careless, or be drawn aside through frowns or flatteries; and over others, as shepherds do, to know the state of their flock; as watchmen of cities to give the time of night, and notice of approaching danger; and to see that the laws of Christ's house are put in execution: and this may also respect the members of these churches, who ought to be watchful, and constant attenders on the word and ordinances, and in the duty of prayer; and should watch over themselves, their hearts, thoughts, affections, words, and actions, and against sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers: or “be awake”; which

shows that both ministers and churches are asleep, or much inclined to it; which is the present case of both in this period of time:

and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; not good works; though these may be said to be ready to die when men grow weary of them, are lifeless in the performance of them, and want zeal for them; and may be said to be strengthened when men do their first works: nor the graces of the Spirit; for the whole work of grace remains, and though it is imperfect, yet no part is, or can be taken away from it; yea, there is an increase of it, though it may not be discerned; the work of grace cannot die, or be ready to die; there may be a decline as to the exercise of it, and a want of liveliness in it; and things may be ready to die in appearance, and in the apprehension of believers, but not in reality; and besides it is God's work, and not man's, to strengthen this: therefore they may intend the truths of the Gospel, which at the beginning of the Reformation were revived, and were preached with great life and liveliness; but towards the close of this state, as now, would be just ready to expire, to be almost lost, and dead, and buried, as they are; and which it becomes both ministers and members of churches to hold, and hold up, establish, and confirm: or else the rest of the members of this church may be meant, those of them that remained, that were not wholly sunk and apostatized; and yet were in a very faint and sickly state, scarce any life in them, ready to give up their religion and profession; which should be strengthened, by preaching the pure Gospel, by faithfully administering the ordinances of it, and by speaking comfortable and encouraging words to them. The Complutensian edition and some copies read, "which thou art about lose"; which seems a good reading; and the Arabic version, and some other copies, "which thou art going to reject":

for I have not found thy works perfect before God; meaning that the reformers, and reformed churches, stuck where they first began; and did not carry their works neither with respect to doctrine, and especially with respect to discipline and worship, to a greater perfection, as they ought to have done: and however perfect they might appear before men, they were not so in the sight of the omniscient God, nor found so by Christ, before whom all things are naked and open: the Arabic version reads, "before me"; and the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, "before my God". This church, though she has departed from the corrupt church of Rome, and from her evil doctrines and practices; yet did not go on to that perfection which

might have been expected and desired, and which would have rendered her praiseworthy, whereas she is now discommended. It is an observation of a Jewish writer^{f104}, that

“if one departs from an evil way, and does not do that which is good, he does not *whç [m myl çh*, “make his work perfect”, and he is not pronounced blessed.”

Ver. 3. *Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard*, etc.]

That is, hast received upon hearing; for hearing goes first, and then receiving: the design of the advice is to put this church in mind of the doctrines of grace she had heard at the beginning of the Reformation, from Luther and others; such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon through his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice, doctrines now almost lost and buried in forgetfulness; wherefore Christ would have her remember these things; how that she heard them with attention, reverence, humility, and without prejudice; and with much affection, so as to approve and love them, believe them, feel the power of them, and taste the goodness in them; and how she received them with all meekness, readiness, and joy, when now they are greatly disliked and rejected by many; very few attend to the doctrines of the Reformation. This is exactly our case:

and hold fast: the above doctrines, though the majority is against them, and learned men despise them, and they are charged with enthusiasm and licentiousness. It looks as if there was danger, as there is, that they would be entirely wrested out of her hands:

and repent: of her deadness, coldness, and indifference to these truths; of her unwatchfulness over them, and imperfection in them; not carrying truth to its fulness and perfection, resting in her first light and knowledge, and even going back from that:

if therefore thou shalt not watch: and preserve truth, and hold fast the form of sound words, and keep to the order, as well as the faith of the Gospel, and constantly attend divine worship, and look for the coming and kingdom of Christ:

I will come on thee as a thief; in the night, and at unawares, unthought of, and unexpected; which must be understood of coming to her in a way of rebuke and chastisement, by bringing some affliction, or suffering some

sore distress to fall upon her: the phrase, “on thee”, is left out in the Alexandrian copy and in the Ethiopic version:

and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee: which, though applicable to the spiritual coming of Christ in the next church state, and to his second coming in his kingdom and glory, which will be both sudden and unexpected, yet these will be to the joy and comfort of the church; whereas what is here spoken is by way of threatening, and must relate to some severe dispensation on her; and which we might now justly expect, were we not in the unwatchful, unthoughtful, and ignorant situation here described.

Ver. 4. *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, “but thou hast a few names”, etc. or “a few men”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; who were called by name, and were men of renown, excellent men, men famous for holding the truth of doctrine, and for powerful and practical godliness; men of great light and grace, and who were known by name to God and Christ: these are said to be but “few”, not in comparison of the world, in which sense all the elect of God are but few, though a large number, considered in themselves; but in comparison of formal lifeless professors of religion, with which this church state abounds; and which, if we were not as dead as we are, might easily be observed; there may not only be hypocrites in churches, but a majority of them: yea, these few may be understood in comparison of the greater number of true believers; for in this period of the church there are but few, even of them, that are lively, zealous, and careful, and are heartily concerned for the purity of doctrine, discipline, worship, and conversation; and a few there are, blessed be God, even in this our Sardinian church state. God will have a few in whom he will be glorified in the most declining times; and the Lord knows and takes notice of these few; and for their sake the church state is kept up, the Gospel and its ordinances are continued; nor is a church to be judged of by the number of its members, nor is a multitude to be followed to do evil.

Which have not defiled their garments; the Ethiopic version adds, “with a woman”, the woman Jezebel. They were not guilty either of corporeal or spiritual fornication, which is idolatry; they kept their outward conversation garments pure, and maintained a profession of Christ and his truths incorrupt; they did not defile it by an unbecoming walk, or by a

denial of Christ and a departure from him, and by embracing false doctrines; they were neither erroneous in their principles, nor immoral in their practices; few there, are indeed of this sort. Defiled garments, in either sense, very ill become members of the reformed churches. Among the Jews^{f105}, if a priest's garments were spotted or defiled, he might not minister; if he did, his service was rejected.

And they shall walk with me in white; there is a walking in Christ by faith; and a walking before him as in his sight; and a walking worthy of him, in all well pleasing in his ways and ordinances; and here a walking with him, in a way of special and comfortable communion, both here and hereafter: and this is in white; in white raiment, meaning either in the robe of his own righteousness, compared to fine linen and white; or in the shining robes of immortality and glory; and may be expressive of that spiritual joy which such shall be partakers of, as well as of their spotless purity and innocence in the other world. White raiment was used among the Romans as a token of joy at festivals, and on birthdays, and at weddings, and such like times.

For they are worthy; not of themselves, or through any works of righteousness done by them, which are neither meritorious of grace here, nor of glory hereafter; but through the grace of God, and worthiness of Christ. The Jews have a saying somewhat like this^{f106};

“they that walk with God in their lifetime, *μykwz*, “are worthy” to walk with him after their death;”

In the Apocrypha we read:

“Take thy number, O Sion, and shut up those of thine that are clothed in white, which have fulfilled the law of the Lord.” (2 Esdras 2:40)

This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 5. *He that overcometh*, etc.] The deadness, formality, and imperfection of this church state; gets over these things, and is among the few names in it:

the same shall be clothed in white raiment; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read, “thus shall he be clothed in white raiment”; he shall have abundance of spiritual peace and joy, great success and prosperity, both inward and outward, in himself, and in the church; and

triumph over all his enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death, and every other enemy; and not only be clothed with change of raiment, the pure and spotless righteousness of Christ, but shall enjoy eternal glory and happiness! the allusion seems to be to the custom of the Jewish sanhedrim in judging of priests fit for service^{f107};

“they examined the priests concerning their genealogies and blemishes; every priest in whom was found anything faulty in his genealogy, he was clothed in black and veiled in black, and went out of the court; but everyone that was found perfect and right, **μυνηλ ἄβωλ** , “he was clothed in white”, and went in and ministered with his brethren the priests.”

And I will not blot out his name out of the book of life; by which is meant the choice of persons to everlasting life and salvation; and this being signified by a book, and by writing names in it, shows the exact knowledge God has of his elect, the value he has for them, his remembrance of them, his love to them, and care for them; and that this election is of particular persons by name, and is sure and certain; for those whose names are written in it shall never be blotted out, they will always remain in the number of God's elect, and can never become reprobates, or shall ever perish; because of the unchangeableness of the nature and love of God, the firmness of his purposes, the omnipotence of his arm, the death and intercession of Christ for them, their union to him, and being in him, the impossibility of their seduction by false teachers, and the security of their persons, grace, and glory in Christ, and in whose keeping this book of life is; which respects not this temporal life, that belongs to the book of providence, but a spiritual and eternal life, from whence it has its name.

But I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels; which shows that Christ has an exact and perfect knowledge of all the chosen ones, he knows them by name; and that he has a strong and affectionate love for them, and is not ashamed of them, of their cause, of their persons, and of their relation to him; and that he does and will own, acknowledge, and approve of them, both here and hereafter: and the confession he will make of them will be in their praise; in praise of their persons and the comeliness of them, which he has put upon them; and of their graces, though they are his own; and of their good works as the fruits of grace: and this will be made before his Father, who chose these persons, and gave them to him to preserve and save; and before the angels, who rejoice at

their salvation and happiness; and this will be at the last day; (see Gill on “~~4002~~ Matthew 10:32”).

Ver. 6. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, etc.] (See Gill on “~~4003~~ Revelation 2:7”).

Ver. 7. *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write*, etc.] Of the city of Philadelphia, (see Gill on “~~4004~~ Revelation 1:11”); According to the Apostolical Constitutions ^{f108}, one Demetrius was ordained bishop of this church by the Apostle John; but this is not to be depended on; nor is it known who this angel was: however, certain it is there was a church in this place in the “second” century, in the times of Ignatius, who wrote an epistle to it, and which then had a bishop or pastor over it, whom he mentions ^{f109}, though not his name. And in the same century twelve Philadelphians suffered martyrdom at the same time Polycarp did ^{f110}; and in the “third” century a church remained in this place; and also in the “fourth”, since a bishop of this church was in the council at Nice; and in the “fifth” century, a presbyter of Philadelphia was in the synod at Ephesus under Celestine; and in the “sixth” century, a bishop of this place assisted at the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the “eighth” century, Stephen, bishop of the church here, was in the Nicene synod ^{f111}; and there are now very many that bear the name of Christians of the Greek Church in this place ^{f112}. This church is an emblem of, and represents the church in that period of time, in which will be the spiritual reign of Christ. Its name signifies “brotherly love”, which in this interval will be very remarkable; saints shall not envy, vex, and distress one another any more; they shall be one in the hand of the Lord, and among themselves. Love, which is now so cold, and so much wanting in our present Sardian church state, will be exceeding warm and fervent, and in its highest pitch in the Philadelphian state. The characters Christ here assumes point at the holiness of life, truth of doctrine, and purity of discipline, for which this church state will be distinguished: in this period of time an open door for the Gospel will be set; it will be preached in its power and purity, and; will be greatly succeeded; the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, and the Jews will be converted; hypocrites and formal professors will be discerned and detected; great honour and respect will be shown the church by all men; and this state will be an emblem and pledge of the new Jerusalem state, of which mention is made in this epistle, or the thousand years' personal reign of Christ with all his saints:

these things saith he that is holy; which character not only agrees with Christ, as God, who is the Holy One of Israel, and equally glorious in holiness as his Father, but as man; his nature was free from original sin; his life from any actual transgression; his doctrines were pure and holy, and so were all his works, and all his administrations in each of his offices: and, as Mediator, he is the cause and author of holiness to his people; they are sanctified in him, and have their sanctification from him, and are sanctified by him: this character he chooses now to take, because he was sending an epistle to such as were lovers of holiness, and famous for it, both internal and external; so that while he describes himself, he points at persons, the members of churches in this interval:

he that is true; truly God, and truly man: true and faithful in the discharge of his several offices, and in the trust reposed in him, both of the grace and persons of the saints, and in what he undertook to do for them: he is truth itself, the truth of types, promises, and prophecies; and the sum and substance of all the truths of the Gospel; and is therefore to be depended on in every prediction and promise; and this title of Christ may have some view to the truth of doctrine which shall, in this period, prevail, and to the faithfulness and integrity of his people to his cause and interest:

he that hath the key of David; mention is made of David, because he was a type of Christ; and because from him Christ came according to the flesh, and whose throne he was to sit upon, in a spiritual sense; and because, in this period of time, the Jews are to be converted, who will seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and by the key of David is meant the key of the house of David; that is, the church of Christ, of which David's house and family were a type: and this key is either the key of knowledge, or it is expressive of power and authority. Christ has the key of knowledge, he knows all the persons of his people, all their affairs, and what they do in his house, and how they behave there: he has the key of knowledge in the Scriptures, and gives it to his ministers. And it may also design his authority in his house and church, in fixing the ordinances of it, in bestowing gifts on men, and in dispensing the blessings of grace and goodness; this may have some regard to the pure discipline of this church, as well as to its light and knowledge in the doctrines of the Gospel. The Targum on (²³⁷Isaiah 22:22) interprets the key of the house of David, of ןְיָ לְמַדְבָּרָא, “the dominion” or “government of the house of David”.

He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth; he opens the Scriptures, which are shut to a natural man, as he did in his own personal ministry, when here on earth, and now by his Spirit; and none can shut them, either men or devils, or hinder the spread of light and knowledge by them: he opens the door of the Gospel, and gives an opportunity to preach it, and liberty of mind and expression to his ministers, and a door of utterance to them, and of entrance for it into the hearts of men, which none can shut, or hinder: he opens the door of the church, which is himself, and lets in his sheep into the sheepfold, into a Gospel church state, and the ordinances of it; and he opens the door of heaven by his blood and righteousness, and gives his people liberty and boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and brings many sons to glory in spite of all the opposition of men and devils: on the other hand, when he pleases, he shuts up the Scriptures, and the eyes of men from seeing what is in them; he shuts up the door of the Gospel, and forbids the preaching of it in this and that place; and the door of heaven will be shut by him at the last day, when all called to the marriage of the Lamb are entered, and there will be no opening. This shows the sovereignty, power, and authority of Christ, and which he will exercise in this church state, (see ^{K124} Job 12:14). A like phrase is in the Talmud ^{f113}, *j twp wnya bwç rgwsç ^wyk*, “when he shuts again, there is none that opens”.

Ver. 8. *I know thy works*, etc.] Good works, of faith, love, and patience; and which lay much in preaching, professing, and maintaining the pure Gospel, and in acts of charity to one another; and which were done to some degree of perfection, and with great sincerity; since this church is not complained of, that her works were not perfect before God, as the former church is:

behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; or “which no man can shut”, as read the Alexandrian copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions. This “open door” may design an uncommon opportunity of preaching the Gospel; and a very great freedom of mind in the preachers of it, and great attention in the hearers, whose hearts will be opened to observe, receive, and embrace it; and a very large gathering in of souls to Christ, and his churches; much and frequent preaching of the word with great success, which it will not be in the power of any creature to stop or hinder: now will the abundance of the sea, the forces of the Gentiles flow in, and the nation of the Jews shall be born at once.

For thou hast a little strength; which is not to be understood of inward spiritual strength, for of this the church in this period will have a great deal, as well as of courage and fortitude of mind, but outward power and authority: some great men, and princes of the earth, will come into the churches of Christ, even kings will come to the brightness of her rising; for now will all those prophesies have their accomplishment, which respect the secular grandeur of the church, with regard to its numbers, power, and riches; (see ^{<23>}Isaiah 49:18-23 60:3-17).

And hast kept my word; both the commands and ordinances of Christ in practice, and that in their primitive purity, as they were delivered by Christ and his apostles, particularly baptism and the Lord's supper; which have been, one or other of them, or both, most sadly corrupted in all the periods of the churches hitherto, excepting the apostolical one, but will now be restored to their pristine purity and glory; and also the doctrines of the Gospel, which will be kept, not in memory only, but in the heart and life; they will be publicly and openly preached, professed, and defended:

and hast not denied my name: Christ himself, his doctrine respecting his person, office, and grace, neither in words, nor in works, but both ways confessed and owned it.

Ver. 9. *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan*, etc.] Which may be understood either of the Papists, the followers of the man of sin, whose coming was after the working of Satan, and whose doctrines are the doctrines of devils, many of whom will now be converted, and brought to the true church; or rather of the Jews, who had, and have, and will have till this time, their synagogues for religious worship in their way; but they are no other than synagogues of Satan; the men that assemble in them are of their father the devil, and do his works, and will do them:

which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; they are Jews by name and nation; they are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly and spiritually, (^{<8>}Romans 2:28,29); they are carnal wicked men, under the influence of Satan, though they pretend to be religious men, and worshippers of God:

behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet; the conversion of the Jews is here intended. The worship here spoken of is not either a religious or civil worship of the church, for the church is not the object of worship; only before whom, and at whose feet, this worship shall be given to God in the most humble and hearty manner: the sense is, that

the convinced and converted Jews shall come to the church, and in the most lowly and contrite manner acknowledge their former blindness, furious zeal, and violent hatred of the Christians, and shall profess their faith in Christ; shall join themselves to the church, and partake of the ordinances of the Gospel with them; and shall worship God and Jesus Christ, their Lord and King, in their presence, and at their feet:

and to know that I have loved thee; the Gentile church, and the members of it, in assuming human nature, and dying for, and redeeming them, as well as the Jews; in sending his Gospel to them, and calling them by his grace, and planting them into Gospel churches; giving them a place, and a name in his house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Ver. 10. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,* etc.] The Gospel; so called because it gives an account of the patience of Christ, in the midst of all his outward meanness and humiliation; and because it is a means of implanting and increasing the grace of patience, which God is the efficient cause of, and Christ is the example of; that patience, which bears a resemblance to his, in enduring afflictions, reproaches, persecutions, desertions, and temptations, and in waiting for his kingdom and glory; and because both the preachers and professors of the word have need of patience, and should exercise it in like manner as Christ did. This word, the churches, in the Philadelphian state, will keep pure and incorrupt, and observe the ordinances of it according to the directions given in it; and will believe the promise of Christ's personal coming, and patiently wait for it: wherefore, Christ promises as follows,

I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth; this hour seems to refer not to any of the vials which will be poured out on the antichristian states, but to some affliction and distress which will befall the reformed churches, and will light upon the outward court worshippers among them. It seems to be the last struggle of the beast of Rome, and to denote some violent and sharp persecution, such as what Daniel mentions, that never was before nor since; but it will be but short, but one hour, the twenty fourth part of a prophetic day or year, perhaps about a fortnight; yet it will be very extensive; it will reach all the world, the whole Roman empire, and all that dwell upon the earth, that are called by the name of Christians, and will try them, whether they are so or not; Christ will now have his fan in his hand, and purge his floor of all his formal professors and hypocrites;

and it will be known who are his true churches, and pure members; and these he will keep close to himself, and preserve safe amidst all the distress and confusion the world will be in. This cannot refer to the bloody persecutions under the Roman emperors, for from those the church at Philadelphia was not preserved. We read ^{f114} of twelve members of it that suffered with Polycarp.

Ver. 11. *Behold, I come quickly*, etc.] To bring on this hour of temptation on the reformed churches, which will be at the beginning of this period; to help and deliver, save and preserve the truly godly among them; to destroy antichrist, and introduce the latter day glory:

hold that fast which thou hast; either her grace in the exercise of it, as her faith, patience, etc. or rather the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, which she had received, as delivered by Christ and his apostles: and which she had held in the truth and purity of them, and is now exhorted to hold them fast, since this hour of temptation would be a trying time to her faith, patience, integrity, and constancy:

that no man take thy crown; not eternal happiness, called a crown of life, glory, and righteousness, and which was prepared for her, and promised to her, and would be certainly given her; nor was there any danger of another's taking it from her; not but that exhortations of this kind to the saints are necessary, with respect to that, to excite to diligence, care, and watchfulness; and are no ways contrary to their final perseverance, and certain salvation, but are means thereof: but either her honour for her faith and faithfulness, for her integrity, sincerity, and purity, is here meant; or the glorious things which were spoken of this church state, and to be accomplished in it, (^{<880>}Psalm 87:3); (see ^{<260>}Isaiah 60:1-22).

Ver. 12. *He that overcometh*, etc.] In the hour of temptation, in this period of time; that stands his ground then, sustains the shock of the beast, with courage and intrepidity, and overcomes him:

will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; by which is meant not the church triumphant, though such will have a place, and an abiding one there; but the church militant, so called in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem, for its author, matter, situation, strength, solidity, magnificence, and stateliness, and for its holiness; and may be said to be the temple of God, because it is of his building, and is the place where he dwells, and is worshipped; and the temple of Christ's God, as he is man and Mediator,

through whom all worship is given to God in it; and those who are overcomers by the grace and strength of Christ are made pillars by him here, in allusion to the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, in Solomon's temple; that is, they become very ornamental in the church, they are made honourable members of it; they come in at the right door into it, and fill up their places, and all relative duties in it, and walk becoming their profession; and, like pillars, are a support to it, to the interest of the church, the truths of the Gospel, and to weak and poor saints; and, as pillars, they are upright in heart and conversation, and are steady, firm, and constant:

and he shall go no more out; out of the church, the temple of the Lord, but shall abide in it unto death: it is a promise of perseverance both in the grace of God, and in a profession of religion; there shall not be such instances of apostasy as now.

And I will write upon him the name of my God; in allusion to inscriptions of names on pillars; the sense is, that it should be manifest that such are interested in God, as their covenant God and Father, in like manner as he is the God and Father of Christ; and this should be as plain and as evident as an inscription on a pillar, or as if it was written upon their foreheads, as the high priest had on his forehead written, "holiness to the Lord"; and indeed it will be by their holiness that it will so clearly appear that God is their covenant God; for in this church state, or spiritual reign of Christ, holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses:

and the name of the city of my God; [which is] new Jerusalem, in allusion to "Jehovah Shammah"; meaning the Gospel church in the latter day glory; and the sense is, that such shall be manifestly citizens of this city, in this new and glorious state of the church, and shall enjoy all the privileges of it, which at this time especially will be many and great. This will not be the new Jerusalem church state, or the thousand years' reign of Christ in person, for in that there will be no temple, as in this; but it will have the name, and some appearance of it; it will bear some resemblance to it, and be a pledge of it:

which cometh down out of heaven, from my God; as it is before called new Jerusalem, in distinction from the old, so here it is said to come down from heaven, or to be the heavenly Jerusalem, in distinction from the earthly one. The inhabitants of it will be born from above, and be called with an

heavenly calling, and their conversation will be in heaven, and all the glory of this church will come from God.

And [I will write upon him] my new name; either the name of “Jehovah” our righteousness; or rather the name of King of kings, and Lord of lords, (^{f116}Revelation 19:16); which Christ will now acquire, or at least this will now be made more manifest upon the destruction of antichrist, in this church state; in which conquest he will make all his people sharers, and they shall now more openly appear to be kings, and to reign with him in his spiritual kingdom.

Ver. 13. *He that hath an ear, let him hear,* etc.] (See Gill on ^{f117}“Revelation 2:7”).

Ver. 14. *And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,* etc.] Of the city of Laodicea, (see Gill on ^{f118}“Revelation 1:11”); there was a church here in the times of the Apostle Paul; by whom it was founded is not known; mention is made of it in (^{f119}Colossians 2:1,2 4:13,15,16), who was now the angel, or pastor of it, whether Epaphras, who is there named, or another, is not certain. According to the Apostolical Constitutions ^{f120}, Archippus was ordained bishop of it by the apostles; (see ^{f121}Colossians 4:16,17). There was a church here in the second century, for Sagaris, bishop of it, suffered martyrdom in the times of Antoninus Verus ^{f122}; and in the “fourth” century, this church was famous for two eminent bishops, Theodorus and Gregory; and in the “fifth” century, it was the metropolitan church of Phrygia, as it was in the “seventh” century, in which age Tyberius, bishop of this place, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople ^{f123}; but now it is even without inhabitants ^{f124}. This church represents the state of the church, from the end of the spiritual reign of Christ, till the time of his personal appearing and kingdom, to judge the quick and dead; for after the spiritual reign is over, professors of religion will sink into a formality, and into a lukewarm frame of spirit, and into great spiritual sloth and security, (^{f125}Revelation 3:15,16), which will make those times like the times of Noah and of Lot; and such will be the days of the coming of the son of man to judge the world. Its name signifies either “the righteousness of the people”; and so may point at that popular and external righteousness, which the majority of the professors of religion in this period of time will be boasting of, and trusting in; being self-sufficient, and self-dependent, when at the same time they will be naked, as well as poor and blind, (^{f126}Revelation 3:17,18); or it signifies “the judging of the

people”; for this church state, at the end of it, will bring on the general judgment; the Judge will now be at the door indeed, standing and knocking; and they that are ready to meet the bridegroom, when he comes, will be admitted into the nuptial chamber, and sit down with him in his throne, in the thousand years' kingdom, at the close of which will be the second resurrection, when all the people, small and great, shall be judged, (^{<4189>}Revelation 3:19-21).

These things saith the Amen; (see ^{<2616>}Isaiah 65:16); The word “Amen” is the name of a divine Person with the Jews, and it seems the second Person; for so on those words in (^{<2083>}Proverbs 8:30); “then was I by him as one brought up with him”, they observe ^{f119}, do not read “Amon”, the word there used, but “Amen”; and, a little after, “Amen”, they say, is the “notaricon”, or sign of [^]man Æl m l a, “God the faithful King”; they make ^{f120} “Amen” to be one of the names of the second “Sephira”, or number in the Cabalistic tree, by whom the second Person in the Godhead seems to be designed: and they say ^{f121}, that the word “Amen”, by gematry (or numerically) answers to the two names “Jehovah, Adonai”. Christ may be so called, because he is the God of truth, and truth itself; and it may be expressive of his faithfulness, both to God his Father, and to his people, in whom all the promises he either made, or received, are yea and amen; and also of the firmness, constancy, and immutability of Christ, in his nature, person, and offices, in his love, fulness of grace, power, blood, and righteousness; and is very appropriately assumed by him now, when he was about to give the finishing stroke to all covenant engagements, and to all promises and prophesies; (see ^{<4018>}Revelation 1:18).

The faithful and true witness; who as he was in the days of his flesh, (see Gill on “^{<4015>}Revelation 1:5”); so he will be at the day of judgment, a swift witness against all ungodly men; and he may the rather take up this title, not only on that account, but to show that the description he gives of the state and condition of this church is just, (^{<4015>}Revelation 3:15,16); and to engage it to take his advice the more readily, (^{<4018>}Revelation 3:18); and to assure it of the nearness of his coming, (^{<4019>}Revelation 3:20); and to strengthen the faith of his people, and quicken their hope and expectation of the happiness with him promised, (^{<4021>}Revelation 3:21); the same character is given to the Logos, or Word of the Lord, by the Targumist in (^{<2405>}Jeremiah 42:5), let the Word of the Lord be to us [^]myhmw j wçq Æyhsi , “for a true and faithful witness”; the very phrase here used.

The beginning of the creation of God; not the first creature that God made, but the first cause of the creation; the first Parent, producer, and efficient cause of every creature; the author of the old creation, who made all things out of nothing in the beginning of time; and of the new creation, the everlasting Father of, everyone that is made a new creature; the Father of the world to come, or of the new age and Gospel dispensation; the Maker of the new heaven and new earth; and so a very fit person to be the Judge of the whole world, to summon all nations before him, and pass the final sentence on them. The phrase is Jewish, and it is a title the Jews give to Metatron, by whom they sometimes mean the Messiah; so those words in (^{1024b}Genesis 24:2), and Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, they paraphrase thus ^{f122};

““and Abraham said unto his servant”, this is Metatron, (or the Mediator,) the servant of God, “the eldest of his house”; for he is **μωqm l c wytwyrb tl j t**, “the beginning of the creation of God”, who rules over all that he has; for to him the holy blessed God has given the government of all his hosts.”

Christ is the **αρχη**, “the Prince”, or Governor of all creatures.

Ver. 15. *I know thy works*, etc.] Which were far from being perfect, and not so good as those of the former church:

that thou art neither cold nor hot; she was not “cold”, or without spiritual life, at least in many of her members, as all men by nature are, and carnal professors be; she was alive, but not lively: nor was she wholly without spiritual affections and love; to God, and Christ, to his people, ways, truths, and ordinances; she had love, but the fervency of it was abated: nor was she without spiritual breathings and desires altogether, as dead men are; or without the light and knowledge of the Gospel, and a profession of it, and yet she was not “hot”; her love to God and Christ, and the saints, was not ardent and flaming; it was not like coals of fire, that give most vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench the had not fervency of spirit in the service of the Lord; nor was she zealous for the truths of the Gospel, and for the ordinances of it, and for the house of God and its discipline; nor did she warmly oppose all sin, and every error and false way.

I would thou wert cold or hot; which must be understood, not absolutely, but comparatively; and not that it was an indifferent thing to Christ

whether she was one or the other; but he alludes to what is natural among men, it being generally more agreeable to have anything entirely hot, or entirely cold, than to be neither; and so uses this phrase to show his detestation of lukewarmness, and that it is better to be ignorant, and not a professor of religion, than to be a vain and carnal one; Christ desires not simply that she might be cold, but that she might be sensible of her need of spiritual heat and fervency.

Ver. 16. *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot,* etc.] A lukewarm professor is one that serves God and mammon; that halts between two opinions, and knows not what religion is best, and cares little for any, yet keeps in a round of duty, though indifferent to it, and contents himself with it; and is unconcerned about the life and power of godliness, and takes up with the external form of it; and has no thought about the glory of God, the interest of Christ and truth; and this was too much the case of this church, at least of a great number of its members; wherefore it was very loathsome to Christ, hence he threatens:

I will spew thee out of my mouth; this shows how nauseous lukewarmness is to Christ, insomuch that on account of it he would not own and acknowledge her as his; but even cast her out, unchurch her, and have no more any such imperfect church state upon earth, as he afterwards never will, this is the last; nor is there any church state, or any remains of one in Laodicea; it is indeed quite uninhabited.

Ver. 17. *Because thou sayest, I am rich,* etc.] In worldly goods, which occasioned her lukewarmness, as riches often do, and her vanity, pride, and arrogance, afterwards expressed. Laodicea was a very rich city, and so will be this church state, through the accession of kings and princes, and great men of the earth unto it, in the former period: riches seldom do any good to the churches of Christ, they did not in Constantine's time; and it seems that even at the close of the spiritual reign of Christ they will be of bad consequence, since they will usher in the Laodicean church state: or her meaning is, that she was rich in spiritual things; not in grace, but in external gifts, which still remained, upon the very great pouring forth of the Spirit in the last church state; and in good works, on which she too much trusted for salvation, placing her righteousness in them: she is one whom the Jews^{f123} call *hrwtb ryç* [, “rich in the law”]:

and increased with goods: with outward peace and prosperity, with much natural and divine light and knowledge, with the purity of Gospel ordinances, even beyond the former church state in her own imagination:

and have need of nothing: contenting herself with these external things: true believers, as considered in Christ, stand in need of nothing indeed, they are complete in him, and have everything in him; but, as considered in themselves, they are daily in need of daily food for their souls, as for their bodies, of fresh light and life, strength and comfort, and of new supplies of grace; wherefore this church shows great ignorance of herself, as well as great pride and arrogance to express herself in this manner:

and knowest not that thou art wretched; as all men are in a state of nature and unregeneracy; which may be the case of many professors, and they be ignorant of it; as to be under a sentence of wrath, obnoxious to the curses of the law, in danger of hell and destruction, lost and undone, and unable to extricate themselves out of such a state: true believers account themselves wretched, as the Apostle Paul did, on account of indwelling sin, and the plague of their own hearts, which the members of this church, the greater part of them, were ignorant of:

and miserable: a miserable man is one that is attended with outward afflictions, but this was not the case of this church; and with spiritual poverty, blindness, and nakedness, and this was her case; some persons neither know their misery, nor their need of mercy:

and poor; not in purse, nor in spirit, nor with respect to outward afflictions, nor as to her church state, but in a spiritual sense; one whom the Jews call a ^{f124} *hrwtb cr*, “poor in the law”; as such may be said to be who have nothing to eat that is fit to eat; nothing to wear but rags, and have no money to buy either; who are in debt, and not able to pay, nor to help themselves on any account; and this may be the case of professors, and yet not known and considered by them:

and blind; natural men are blind as to a saving knowledge of God in Christ, as to the way of salvation by Christ, as to the plague of their own hearts, as to the work of the Spirit of God upon the soul, and as to the truths of the Gospel, in the power of them; but here it regards blindness with respect to her church state, and its imperfection:

and naked; sin has stripped man of his moral clothing; man's own righteousness will not cover his nakedness; and whoever is destitute of the righteousness of Christ is a naked person.

Ver. 18. *I counsel thee*, etc.] Christ is a Counsellor, and is every way fit to be one, for he is the all wise God, the Ancient of days, and the Father of his people, and, as Mediator, the Wisdom of God; and he was concerned in the council of peace from everlasting; and when he was here on earth he gave counsel in person, and now he gives it by his Spirit, and by his word and ministers; and the substance of it is, to come to him for grace, life, and salvation; for pardon, peace, and righteousness; for spiritual light and knowledge, and every supply of grace; and his advice is always wholesome, good, and suitable, is hearty, sincere, and faithful, and is freely given, and is wise and prudent; and, being taken, infallibly succeeds; the counsel here given follows:

to buy of me gold tried in the fire; by which is meant either a more pure and glorious state of the church, such as was in the former period, or greater; or a larger measure of light and knowledge in the Gospel, which is better than fine gold; or some particular graces, and a comfortable exercise of them, as fervent love and strong faith, which is much more precious than gold; or rather, all spiritual riches in general, which are in Christ, and are unsearchable, solid, substantial and satisfying; are lasting and durable, precious, excellent, and incorruptible: and the buying of this gold is not to be understood in a proper sense, by giving a valuable consideration for it, for no such is to be given, but in an improper sense; it is a buying without money and without price; Christ and his grace are given freely; Christ of whom it is to be had and of him only, does not sell it, but he gives it to those that come to him for it, and desire to have it, and are willing to part with all, so they may but enjoy it; for that it is to be understood in such a sense, is clear from the character of the persons who are advised to buy, who were poor, or beggars, (^{<6617>}Revelation 3:17); the end of it is,

that thou mayest be rich; for though this church was rich, yet not in spirituals; and though she was rich in her own conceit, yet not really so: persons are not to be accounted truly rich who have only this world's goods; none are rich but those who have an interest in Christ and his grace; and they who are poor in this world, and yet have grace, are really rich: the next thing advised to is,

and white raiment; that is, and buy white raiment, by which some understand the heavenly glory, robes of immortality, a being clothed upon with the house which is from heaven; this may be compared to raiment, for it is a glory, an immortality, an incorruption to be put on; and fitly enough to white raiment, for the purity and spotlessness of it; and being clothed with this, no nakedness, or shame of it will appear; and this is to be had from Christ, and in the same way as gold is to be bought of him; the design of this advice may be to quicken the desires of the church after heavenly things; though it rather seems to respect something suitable to her in this present state: wherefore others think that by it are meant good works, holiness of life and conversation; but these are never called white raiment, but even rags, yea, filthy ones, in the best; and whatever cover they may be from nakedness in the sight of men, they are no cover from it in the sight of God, nor do they preserve from shame and blushing: rather then by it is meant the righteousness of Christ, which may be compared to raiment; it is upon the saints, and is put upon them as such; it covers as a garment does, protects from injuries, keeps warm, beautifies and adorns, as raiment does; and it may be compared to white raiment for its purity and perfection; now this is to be bought of Christ, it is to be had of him, and is to be had of him freely, without money and without price; it is a free gift of grace; and even faith itself, which receives it, is the gift of God: the ends of giving this advice are,

that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; the soul may be naked when the body is well clothed; and notwithstanding a man's moral righteousness, he may not be clothed; they, and they only are clothed, who have on the righteousness of Christ; nakedness arises from want of, righteousness, which is only covered by the righteousness of Christ; and from hence also springs shame, which Christ's righteousness hides:

and anoint thine eyes with eye salve; by which may be meant the word of God, particularly the Gospel; and anointing with it is making use of it for the gaining of light and knowledge: all without this divine revelation are in darkness, and such who reject the authority of it go astray; the Scriptures are the only directory, and rule of faith and practice; the law is a means of enlightening persons to see their sin and misery, and the danger they are in; and the Gospel is a light, whereby is beheld the glory of Christ, of his person and office, of his grace and righteousness, and of salvation by him; and this is the Gospel of Christ, and is to be had of him freely, even the

saving knowledge of it. The Jews have adopted the very Greek word here used into their language, and apply it to the law; says R. Chija ^{f125}, speaking of the law,

“*y[| tyrwl yq*, “it is a salve for the eye”, a plaster for a wound, etc. it is a salve for the eyes, as is written (~~1908~~ Psalm 19:8).”

or else the illumination of the Spirit is meant, by which the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, men see themselves, the impurity of their hearts and nature, the imperfection of their righteousness, their impotency to all that is spiritually good, and that they are lost and undone in themselves; and by which they see Christ and salvation by him, that it is in him, and in no other, and that it is full and suitable, and for the chief of sinners, and that it is all of free grace, and that they have an interest in it; by this they have light into the doctrines of the Gospel, and have some glimpse of the glories of another world; and this is to be had of Christ, who gives his Spirit freely, and an understanding to know spiritual things: and the end of the advice is,

that thou mayest see; who, notwithstanding the conceit she had of herself, was blind; persons may have much human prudence, much knowledge in things moral, yea, in things evangelical, notionally, and yet be blind as to true spiritual light and experience; they only see spiritually and savingly who have the Spirit of God.

Ver. 19. *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten*, etc.] The persons the objects of Christ's love here intended are not angels, but the sons of men; and these not all of them, yet many of them, even all who are his own by his Father's gift and his own purchase; and who are called his church, and sometimes represented as such who love him and obey his commands: the instances of his love to them are many; as his suretyship engagements for them, his assumption of their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying their debts, procuring their peace and pardon, bringing in a righteousness for them, purchasing their persons, his intercession for them, preparations in heaven, supplies of grace, and frequent visits in a kind and familiar manner; and as for the nature of his love, it is free and sovereign, everlasting and immutable, and it is matchless and inconceivable, it is strong and affectionate, and as his Father loved him; and such are rebuked by Christ, not in a way of wrath, but in a tender manner, in order to bring them under a conviction of their sin and of their duty, and of their folly in

trusting in, or loving any creature more than himself, and of all their wrong ways; and they are chastened by him, not in a vindictive, but in a fatherly way, which is instructive and teaching to them, and for their good. This seems to refer to some afflictions which Christ was about to bring upon this church, by some means or another, to awaken her out of her sloth and security, and which would be in love to her, and the end be to rouse her zeal and bring her to repentance. Some think this respects the Gog and Magog army, which will encompass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city; but that will not be till after the thousand years' reign, and besides will be no affliction to them; rather it designs the unchurching them, signified by spewing them out of his mouth, (~~Rev~~ Revelation 3:16);

be zealous, therefore, and repent; zeal was what was wanting in this church; which is nothing else than hot, fervent, and ardent love, love in a flame; whereas she was neither cold nor hot, but lukewarm, Christ would have her be “zealous” for God; for his cause and interest, for his Gospel, ordinances, and the discipline of his house, and against everything that is evil; against all false worship, all errors in doctrine, all sin and iniquity; and to be zealous of good works, and in the worship of God, both private and public: and “repent”; in an evangelical way, of her lukewarmness, remissness, and supineness; of her pride, arrogance, and vain boastings of herself; and of her self-sufficiency, self-dependence, and self-confidence.

Ver. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock*, etc.] The phrase of standing at the door may be expressive of the near approach, or sudden coming of Christ to judgment, (see ~~James~~ James 5:9); and his knocking may signify the notice that will be given of it, by some of the immediate forerunners and signs of his coming; which yet will be observed but by a few, such a general sleepiness will have seized all professors of religion; and particularly may intend the midnight cry, which will, in its issue, rouse them all:

if any man hear my voice; in the appearances of things and providences in the world:

and open the door; or show a readiness for the coming of Christ, look and wait for it, and be like such that will receive him with a welcome:

I will come unto him, and sup with him, and he with me; to and among these will Christ appear when he comes in person; and these being like wise virgins, ready, having his grace in their hearts, and his righteousness upon

them, he will take them at once into the marriage chamber, and shut the door upon the rest; when they shall enjoy a thousand years communion with him in person here on earth; when the Lamb on the throne will feed them with the fruit of the tree of life, and lead them to fountains of living water, and his tabernacle shall be among them.

Ver. 21. *To him that overcometh*, etc.] The lukewarmness, and self-confidence, and security of this state:

will I grant to sit with me in my throne; at the close of this church state, which will be the last of this kind, consisting of imperfect saints, Christ will descend from heaven with the souls of all the righteous, and raise their bodies and unite them to them; which, with the living saints, will make one general assembly and church of the firstborn, all perfect soul and body; among these he will place his tabernacle, and fix his throne; and they being all made kings as well as priests to him, shall now reign on earth with him, and that for the space of a thousand years: and this is the blessing promised the overcomers in the Laodicean state, that when Christ shall set up his kingdom among men, and reign gloriously before his ancients, they shall sit on the same throne with him, or share with him in his kingdom and glory; (see ¹⁵⁰Revelation 5:10 20:4 ²⁰²Daniel 7:27);

even as I also overcame; sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell:

and am set down with my Father in his throne; in heaven, at his right hand; which is expressive of equality to him, distinction from him, communion with him, and of the honour and glory he is possessed of; but it is not on this throne that the saints will sit, only Christ sits on the same throne with the Father in heaven; it is on Christ's throne on earth, or in his personal reign there, that the saints shall sit down with him; and which honour they shall all have, all that are more than conquerors through him, and are made kings by him. And when this reign is over, then will follow the second resurrection, or the resurrection of the wicked, when will come on the judgment of the people, as Laodicea signifies; and when these, with the devils, will form themselves into the Gog and Magog army, and attack the beloved city, the church of glorified saints on earth, under Christ their King, which will issue in the everlasting destruction of the former; and thus these seven churches bring us to the end of all things.

Ver. 22. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*, etc.] (See Gill on ¹⁰⁷“Revelation 2:7”).