

surely be pronounced, "they know not neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness, all the foundations of the earth are out of course;" and the sentence will be delivered, "ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" (Ps.lxxxii).

So that the challenge of the candlesticks in Rev. i.-iii. must be assumed to have ended in conviction and dismissal. And to establish this as a fact, I may refer to John himself in those chapters. He is a kind of representative of the churches or candlesticks, and he is set before the Lord Jesus, the Son of man, as One that was walking among them as a Judge, shining before John in bright, burning judicial glory. Had He appeared to John as a Judge of *the world* John would have stood; for he had already learnt and taught that "we have boldness in the day of judgment" (1. John iv. 17). But He was standing among *the candlesticks*, and before John as representing them; and this was overwhelming. As one dead, he falls at the feet of such a Judge, such a glory. He came short of it—he had no answer for it—the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, would do for him as a sinner but not as a steward—he is overwhelmed and falls at His feet as one dead. Just like Isaiah in like conditions; for when the Throne of Jehovah set itself before him in judicial glory for the challenge of Israel, the prophet cries out, "Woe is me, for I am undone!"

All join in telling us what the end of this challenge must be. The steward is called to give an account of his stewardship, and it comes to pass again, as it had ever done before, that he is no longer steward. The stewardship is taken away—the dispensation is in ruins—and upon this, the long and dreary age of Christendom, of a corrupt and ruined dispensation, begins to take its course,