

in the church, or in corporate spiritual action as a whole ; but enjoins the saints to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, and to be assured that the promise of His coming and majesty is no cunningly devised fable. He speaks to them of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, but not of a return to a restored order of things in the church on earth.

Jude, also, in like manner, anticipates "the last time," and many terrible corruptions, such as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored beauty and consistency as in earlier days, but encourages the "beloved" to build themselves up on their most holy faith, to pray in the Holy Ghost and to keep themselves in God's love ; but he is so far from encouraging any hope of recovered order and strength in the church on earth, that he tells them to be looking out for another object—"the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ into eternal life."

John, in his way, gives us the judgment of the seven churches in Asia, in Rev. ii. and iii. It is a very solemn scene. There is some good and much evil found in the midst of them. The voices of the Spirit, heard there, have healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition. But there is no promise that the judgment will work correction and recovery. The churches are judged, and they are left under the judgment ; and we know no more of them *on earth* ; the next sight we get of the elect is in *heaven*. (See chap. iv.)

All this is serious and yet happy ; and all this is strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us, under our eye, or within our hearing, at this moment. For we know that the great