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## CHRIST'S OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCHES.

A Church of Christ is not a mere society based on expediency, but a Divine institution. It exists in His name, through His strength, by His direction, and for His glory. Hence the care with which the Redeemer guards the interests, and advances the welfare of the Churches. He is represented as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks. The emblem used by John in the Apocalypse, of the golden candlesticks, furnishes to our view an evidence of the Scriptural nature of the polity we observe as Congregational Churches. It is not a golden candlestick, with branches, but seven golden candlesticks, each distinct and in its own place. The locality and the relative geographical distances of the cities in which the seven Churches of Asia flourished, were such that, undoubtedly, they were within reach of Episcopal or Presbyterial action; but they are not represented as controlled by a Diocesan, or managed by the central authority of a Synod. In either case, we would have had the Church of Asia; but the record says, the seven Churches which are in Asia. The distances, respectively, of the several places from each other were thirty and forty miles, and yet they formed not one but seven Churches, each treated on a distinct and independent basis under the government of the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. They were one in that aspect of connection and endeared relationship with Christ: His presence was vouchsafed to all—His glory was displayed in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, are, however, severally and distinctively addressed, warned, and encouraged, as each amenable to Him who knew their works. This brings out the precious and important truth, that there is a perpetual and universal superintendence exercised by the Redeemer over all the Churches. The spiritual condition of each Church is an object of care to the Good Shepherd. Light is to come from Christ's people—ye are the light of the world. When, however, self, or worldly wisdom, or carnal policy are in the ascendancy, and grow with the extension of outward membership, the light is then darkness; the testimony of Jesus is in the shade, the name of the Saviour is dishonoured, His doctrines obscured, and the energy of the Christian life a nonentity. To mark, foster, strengthen, and secure the growth and triumph of His cause, Jesus lives and reigns. The basis of His judgment of the spiritual condition of a Church is the right discharge of the work assigned to it by the Great Head. This oversight enables Him to say,—I know thy works. Faith is a star of the first magnitude in the firmament of truth; yet, there are other stars that shine in glory. Every article of divine truth has its proper place. Faith being alone, is dead. Faith calls to action. Christianity becomes a power—its home is a living, loving heart—its beauty is not the marble form,