

also, depend upon the Christian church. The fact, however, of the declension of these churches, is an impressive admonition to Christians of their tendency to corruption, and affords a warning of their danger, should the case actually occur. It urges, with trumpet tongue, the necessity for examination, watchfulness, and prayer.

At the time referred to, John was at Patmos, a barren rocky island, in the Ægean sea, contiguous to the localities of the seven churches; to which place he had been banished by the Emperor Domitian, for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The enemy of souls, by this step, aimed at nullifying the truth, and at checking its progress; but, as is ever the effect of opposition to the truth, it resulted in its furtherance. St. John was privileged to receive additions, of a most important nature, to revealed truth.

On the Lord's day—the Christian Sabbath, so called—John, having no Christian assembly to which he could resort, was engaged in meditation and prayer. He was in the spirit of devotion; and was specially influenced by the Holy Spirit of God. He had, no doubt, felt deeply concerned for the cause of Christianity generally, and more particularly for those churches of Asia where he had so long labored. During this exercise, and while under this influence, he heard behind him a great voice as of a trumpet, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." The injunction was then laid upon him to commit the scene to writing, and to communicate it to the seven churches.