

us feel the magnitude of spiritual and eternal realities, to cool our angry passions, and to teach us to walk as the children of that light which is from above, where Jesus reigns at the right hand of God.

(3.) Christ is to the churches as an overseer, to prevent their extinction. He prevents the destruction of particular churches so long as they remain true to their professed mission in the earth. Whenever they become lukewarm or unfruitful he permits them to perish. Examples of this are conspicuous in the history of the seven churches of Asia.

The lamp of a church may abound in oil, and the light shine brightly, but it is still liable, humanly speaking, to destruction from external violence. The hand of man may be raised to demolish the candlestick. The plague or pestilence, or the storm of war may endanger the perpetuity of its effulgence. But does it remain true to its Lord, does its faith burn in a pure flame that reflects him, neither violence, nor war, nor pestilence, nor conspiracies, nor the plots of rival sectarians, nor heretics shall destroy that church. Where the danger is from *without*, he will come to the rescue, with whom it is all one, to save with many or with few. On the other hand, does the danger come from *within*, is the church untrue to her testimony and her Lord, is her faith feeble and her love cold, and her vineyard barren, then the Saviour does permit her enemies to triumph. When she falls, nothing belonging to him perishes in the ruin. What no external violence can do, she has herself done. *If a church does not destroy herself from within, no efforts of professed friends or open foes will destroy her.* History offers us no examples of a true light being suffered by the Lord to perish.

To the church of Ephesus, the Saviour said, "I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." The Ottomans in the 14th century, destroyed this church, once blessed with the loving and saintly labors of the prisoner of Patmos. To the church of Laodicea, the Saviour wrote: "I will spue thee out of my mouth." Laodicea has completely perished, destroyed by one or more earthquakes. The Saviour blasted it with the breath of his anger and abhorrence. On the other hand, the Saviour for similar reasons prevented the extinction of the church of Philadelphia. The Saviour said to this church: "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." The hour of trial came, when the Mohammedans overran Asia. The Christian church in other parts of Asia was nearly obliterated. Gibbon testifies however, that "Philadelphia was saved by prophecy or by courage. Philadelphia is still erect, a column in a scene of ruins." Neither could Pharaoh destroy the ancient church, nor Herod and the high priests the early church of the New Testament. Why do such examples abound? It is to show us that if a church desires to be preserved, and

to raise up bulwarks of defence, she must look to *herself*. So long as danger does not threaten her from *that* quarter, she has nothing to fear.

A bishop of Turin, in the twelfth century, began to expound the Scriptures, and founded a church. Its members never submitted to the pope as the head of the church. The Waldenses were subjected in the twelfth century to the most desolating persecution. In the thirteenth century, a crusade was carried on against them with fire and sword, and an army of *three hundred thousand* men endeavored to destroy effectually this bright and beautiful branch of the golden candlestick. In the *seventeenth* century such cruelties were practised upon them by their own sovereign, the reigning Duke of Savoy, that other powers interfered, threatening war, if a persecution were continued that offended even human nature. See, however, in the issue how well Christ preserves his true churches, and prevents the destruction of a single genuine branch of the golden candlestick! While the Papal states are now in an ignoble position, the worst governed and the most unhappy in Europe. While the house of Savoy is a weak and neglected principality, the nation of which the Waldensian church forms a part, is rising to the position of a first rate power, is the home of freedom and patriotism in Italy; its institutions are free and flourish, and the church of the Waldenses is pursuing a course of spiritive activity and usefulness. They are the missionary centre of the continent, and are at this moment, sending out missionaries and bibles to the immense armies upon the plains of Lombardy, and in the prospect of those ignorant and down-trodden people being formed into a kingdom of North Italy, are preparing men for the arduous, but noble work of leavening it with the free gospel.

The case of *our own* church demands peculiar consideration. Fifteen years ago, her existence as a branch of the visible church seemed imperilled, and by unfriendly critics was pronounced certain. Active men, who had been all their lives defending her principles, abandoned in combined force her venerable altars. Many who left, congratulated themselves with having obtained a monopoly of the true faith, and with having succeeded in the strange endeavor of, not "buying for themselves," but abstracting all the oil from our lamps. The noble candlestick trembled a moment, and, after a rude shake, with the help of the Lord, righted itself. The oil began to flow in its wanted passages, the lights to burn clear, and now it beams more bright and lively than it has ever done during a long and eventful history.

The noisy storm of '43, rolled its waves by selfish agitation to this distant shore. Division was imported hither by those, who delight in "endless questions, that minister strife, but not godly edifying." The plea was weak, but men's passions were strong, and passion needs no plea. The result was serious, but