

as it is still doing in this our day, and, as it will do, in growing corruption of every form, and multiplied confusion in every place, till it end in the judgement of Christendom as the specially guilty thing on the earth, under the eye of God.

Now, the second epistle to Timothy anticipates, as I believe, and as I have already said, this interval—the era between the challenge of the candlesticks (and their consequent removal) and the judgment of Christendom.*

And let me here turn aside for a moment just to say, that we ought to acquaint ourselves with the mysteries of this dispensation, as the Lord Jesus told His disciples in His day, that they ought to know "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xiii. 11). We ought to know the course, and the changes, and the successive phases through which it was to pass, for otherwise we cannot be dully instructed scribes to bring out of our treasures the old things and the new things of God, according to "His manifold wisdom."

To return, however, to the two epistles to Timothy, of which I was speaking, and to give them a little closer inspection. We know not what time intervened between the writing of these two epistles, but it is likely that it was considerable; for Paul was at large, abroad in active ministry, when he wrote the first of them; but he was a prisoner at Rome, having already appeared before

* From the epistle of James to that of Jude (and this includes all which are not Paul's), the churches have receded from the eye of the Spirit; inasmuch as it is not churches, but saints personally or individually considered, that He is then and there addressing. It was otherwise in Paul's epistles. And this further prepares us for the challenge of the characters in Rev. i.-iii., and their consequent disappearing.