

CHAPTER TWO

Letters From Christ to the Churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, and Thyatira

In chapters 2-3 is found the section of Revelation treating *the things that are*; whereas, chapter 1 considered *the things that thou has seen*, and chapters 4-22 will consider *the things which shall be hereafter*. The section considering the things that are consists of seven letters to seven churches in chapters 2-3. In 2:1-7 is found the letter to the church at Ephesus, in 2:8-11 the letter to the church at Smyrna, in 2:12-17 the letter to the church at Pergamos, in 2:18-29 the letter to the church at Thyatira, in 3:1-6 the letter to the church at Sardis, in 3:7-13 the letter to the church at Philadelphia, and in 3:14-22 the letter to the church at Laodicea. Each letter seems to have a four-fold purpose. First, the letters were written to actual churches existing at that time with the exact circumstances mentioned. Second, there are also churches similar to each one of these churches in all ages of Christianity to whom these truths may be applied. Third, each church represents individuals in all ages of Christianity with these same characteristics. Therefore, the instruction is given in the singular, *To him that overcometh* and *he that hath an ear, let him hear*. Finally, although it is nowhere stated in the text of Scripture, there is also an apparent similarity between the individual churches and successive ages in church history where succeeding ages seem characteristic of the respective churches in the order in which they are listed in chapters 2-3.

Each letter is addressed to the angel or messenger of the particular church. There then follows a statement from Christ with a description repeated from chapter one which is in some way connected to the particular need of each of the respective churches. In most of the letters there is a commendation as well as a criticism. There is also an appeal to pay attention to what has been said and to act upon it.¹

2:1-7. The Letter to the Church at Ephesus

In verses 1-7 is found the first of seven letters addressed individually to the seven churches mentioned in chapter 1. According to verse 1, the first of the seven letters John is to write is to be addressed to the angel of the church in Ephesus. In verses 2-3 the Lord commends the church at Ephesus. According to verse 2, He knows the church's works and patience and how it cannot put up with those who are evil. The church has tried false apostles and found them to be liars. According to verse 3, the church at Ephesus has labored and endured and has become weary but has not given up. In verse 4 the Lord condemns or criticizes something about the church at Ephesus. The church has left its first love. In verse 5 is found the correction prescribed by Christ. The church at Ephesus is to *remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works*. In verse 6 Christ returns to His commendation of the church at Ephesus. The church hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which Christ also hates. In the first half of verse 7 is found a call to hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. In the second half of verse 7, there is the challenge to the overcomer: *to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*.

(1) Unto the angel of the church of

Ephesus write; These things saith he

Revelation 2

that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

(2) I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

(3) And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

(4) Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

(5) Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

(6) But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

(7) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

2:1

In verse 1 Christ instructs John, **Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write. Unto the angel** is simply *to the angel* or *to the messenger* and functions in the Greek text as the indirect object of *write*. The **angel** or *messenger* is best understood as the pastor of this church, God's representative leader of the congregation. It is not just any angel or messenger to whom John is instructed to write. It is to the angel **of the church of Ephesus**, one of God's local churches or congregations. Ephesus was a large metropolitan city, the most prominent city in the Roman province of Asia. Ephesus was famous for its temple of Diana, a structure considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Paul had spent three years in Ephesus according to Acts 19, and his ministry resulted in reduced sales of the idols of Diana which in turn resulted in a riot recorded in Acts 19:23-41. Timothy had also spent much time working in

Ephesus and was apparently pastoring this church when I and II Timothy were written. The Apostle John had likewise spent much time working in Ephesus. According to tradition, John had come to Ephesus to stay at about the same time Paul was beheaded (A.D. 67) and had been there until his exile to Patmos (in the early-to-mid A.D. 90's). This is a particular message needed by and intended for this particular congregation, the church in Ephesus. Other churches or individuals might need a similar message. The tense of **write** suggests that John is to write these things at once and without delay.

The speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ as is clear from a comparison of this verse with chapter one. He describes himself by, **These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand** is a reference to Revelation 1:16 where the words used are practically identical to, but in a slightly different order from, those found in this verse. A different word is used in the Greek text for *holdeth*, but they are synonyms; and there is no change in meaning. A second difference is that *the* appears before *seven stars* in the Greek text in 2:1 but was not present in 1:16. It is used in 2:1 to denote previous reference, the reference in 1:16.

Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks refers to Revelation 1:13 where the wording is again almost identical. **Golden** is supplied from the context, and **walketh** is given as an additional detail. He was stated to be in the midst of the seven lampstands in 1:13. **Walketh** means to *walk around* or *walk about*. The significance of this description of the glorified Christ is seen in that He controls and/or protects His messengers and moves among the local churches directing them. There is no indication of any ecclesiastical body, board, or hierarchy controlling any of these churches. It is the Lord Himself Who controls these churches through His messenger, the pastor.

2:2

In verses 2-3 the Lord commends the church at Ephesus. **I know** is *I know* in the sense of *I see* or

Revelation 2

I perceive. What He knows is **thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.** **Thy** is a reference to the messenger as representative of the church at Ephesus. Hence, it is a message to the church itself which Christ has addressed through its messenger. **Works** is a general term for things the church has done involving *deeds, actions, or accomplishments.* It may include the *labour* and *patience* which are mentioned next. It may also be summarized by *labour* and by *patience.* As translated in the King James Version, **and** before *labour* implies that *labour* is something in addition to *works.* At the same time, the use of *and* followed by a second *and,* may be understood in the sense of *both . . . and.* Furthermore, the first *and* may be emphatic and understood in the sense of *indeed, in fact, yea, verily, or certainly.* Thus, the passage may be understood in the sense of *I know thy works, both thy labor and thy patience* or it may be understood in the sense of *I know thy works, indeed thy labor and thy patience.* The only difference in meaning is whether the works, the labor, and the patience constitute three separate and distinct things or whether the labor and the patience constitute the works. In support of the idea that the labor and the patience constitute the works, is the fact that *works* is plural; whereas, both *labour* and *patience* are singular. On the other hand, one can argue that the nature of the terms *labour* and *patience* require them to be singular; whereas, the nature of the term *works* requires it to be plural. **Labour** is a term which means *labor, work, or toil* and implies the weariness which accompanies the *toil.* **Patience** is a term which means *endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, or perseverance.* It is a patient endurance which puts up with all kinds of things, persevering through them while remaining steadfast. Something else which the Lord Jesus Christ knows regarding the church at Ephesus is **how thou canst not bear them which are evil.** **How** is the word ordinarily translated *that* and should be understood in this sense here. **Thou** is *you (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its messenger, the pastor. **Canst not** is *cannot* or *are not able to,* and its tense indicates an ongoing situation in the church. What the church at Ephesus

was not able to do was **bear them which are evil.** To **bear** means to *bear patiently* or to *put up with.* **Them which are evil** is simply *evil (ones).* **Evil** is a word used commonly to mean *bad* or *evil* in a moral sense.

Another thing which the Lord Jesus Christ knows about the church at Ephesus is **thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.** Again, **thou** is *you (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor. **Hast tried** means to *make trial of* or *put to the test* to discover what kind of a person someone is. One cannot be certain whether this was a formal trial conducted by the church as a matter of church discipline or whether it was a standard practice whereby the church put these people to the test in order to discern whether they were genuine. The ones tried or put to the test were **them which say they are apostles.** **Them which say** is *the ones saying* or *the ones asserting.* Its tense indicates an ongoing or repeated action. The tense of *them which say* also indicates that its action occurs at the same time as the action of *thou hast tried.* What they were saying or asserting is that **they are apostles.** The implication of this statement is that they were claiming to have been sent by God or by Christ just as John, Peter, and Paul had been. Paul had addressed a similar situation in II Corinthians 11:13, *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.* **And are not** indicates that their assertion that they are apostles was not true. The conclusion or result of the trial or test is indicated by **and hast found them liars.** **Hast found** is *found* or *discovered,* and it has been translated in a way which properly emphasizes the results of its action. It literally means to *find* or to *discover.* When used figuratively as it is here, it implies that the finding or discovery is an *intellectual one based upon reflection, observation, examination, or investigation.* Their claim to be apostles was false. **Them liars** is to be understood in the sense of *them (to be) liars* or *that they are liars.* *The* does not appear before *liars* in the Greek text which indicates that their quality as *liars* is being emphasized. Apostles they were not; liars they were.

Revelation 2

2:3

According to verse 3, the Lord knows that the church at Ephesus has labored and endured and has become weary but has not given up. *Thou*, referring to the church at Ephesus, must be supplied from verse 2 as the subject of *hast borne*, *hast patience*, *hast laboured*, and *hast not fainted*. **Hast borne** was used in the previous verse and means to *bear*, *endure*, *bear patiently*, or *put up with*. Its tense indicates action summed up as a whole. It has been translated in a way which emphasizes its results. **Hast patience** is literally *you (singular) have patience*. The present tense of *hast* indicates an ongoing action and describes an existing situation. What the church has is **patience**, the same word used in the previous verse meaning *endurance*, *fortitude*, *steadfastness*, or *perseverance*. *The* does not appear with *patience* in the Greek text in order to indicate that its quality as *patience*, as *endurance*, as *fortitude*, as *steadfastness*, or as *perseverance* is being emphasized. It is a patient endurance which puts up with all kinds of things, persevering through them while remaining steadfast.

For my name's sake is *because of my name or on account of my name* where **my** refers to the speaker, the Lord Jesus Christ. **Name** stands for the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and implies all that He is and represents. It implies a high motive in their service for the Lord. **Hast laboured** is the verb form of the noun in the previous verse translated *labour*. As a verb it means to *labor*, to *work*, or to *toil* and implies the weariness which accompanies the *toil*. As a verb in this context, it means to *become weary* or *tired*. Its tense indicates action completed in the past whose results have continued. This implies that they have labored to the point of weariness and that they are still weary. It suggests that they may well have used all their strength in their service for the Lord. In spite of laboring to the point of weariness, **(thou) hast not fainted**. The church at Ephesus had not *fainted*, i.e. *become weary* or *fatigued*. Its tense also indicates action completed in the past whose results have continued on. Taken together, *(thou) hast laboured and hast not fainted* means that the church in Ephesus had worked hard and diligently but had not

given up. They were tired *in* the work but not tired *of* the work; they were continuing to work faithfully.

2:4

In verse 4 the Lord condemns or criticizes something about the church at Ephesus: the church has left its first love. **Nevertheless** introduces a strong contrast. It is the word ordinarily translated *but* and is to be understood in this sense here as well. **I** is the speaker, the Lord Jesus Christ. **Have** implies continuing or ongoing action. **Somewhat** has been supplied by the translators as the direct object of *have*. **Against thee** refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor. In spite of this church's many good qualities, it also had a major fault. **Because thou hast left thy first love** is translated as a causal clause indicating the reason that Christ had something against the church at Ephesus. The word translated **because** is often used to introduce causal clauses and is translated *because* when it does. The King James Version translators have understood it in this way. However, it is also frequently used to introduce noun clauses; and when it is, it is translated *that*. In this context it seems better understood as a noun clause functioning as the direct object of *have* with the result that it should be understood in the sense of *I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love*. **Thou** is *you (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor. What the church has done is indicated by **hast left thy first love**. **Hast left** is simply *left*. The translators have translated it in a way which emphasizes the results of its action. When used figuratively as it is here, **left** means *have given up* or *abandoned*. What they have given up or abandoned is indicated by **thy first love**. **Thy** is *your (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor. In this context, **first** implies *initial*. **Love** is the term which implies the sort of love which gives itself on behalf of another without expecting anything in return. It is this sort of love which Christ demonstrated when He died on the cross for the sins of the world. It is this sort of love which a husband is to have for his wife and which Christians are to have for their enemies. **First** is used to restrict or limit the meaning of love.

Revelation 2

Thy first love is literally *the love of thee, the first (love)*. The first love of the people of the church in Ephesus was that deep, fervent, and exciting love for the Lord Jesus Christ which was theirs when they were newly saved. This same love was for God, for the Word of God, for the people of God, for prayer, for the things of God, for the local church, for the lost, for Christian service, and so forth. Inasmuch as the text does not limit the object of this love, neither should the reader. However, persecution, trials, laborings, weariness, and other things had taken their toll. Although they still loved the Lord, their initial excitement was gone. They were going through the motions and doing things mechanically. They were carrying out their duties, but they were doing them out of a sense of responsibility rather than out of love and excitement about what the Lord had done for them. The people in the Ephesian church needed to give themselves anew to the Lord out of their love for Him. Their love was colder than it had been. If not corrected, this love could be given to other things and might eventually destroy the church. It was a serious problem. It is possible that this problem in the church at Ephesus had even come to pass during John's lengthy ministry in Ephesus or that it had arisen in the recent past following his exile to Patmos. It had now been approximately forty years since the Apostle Paul founded this church, and a new generation of believers had arisen. Many married couples have gone through similar experiences several years after marriage. Although they still love each other, the excitement about being with each other has a tendency to wane. Times spent together may become less frequent; yet, both partners continue to take care of their responsibilities, but may perform them out of duty rather than out of love. The joy and excitement which they once had are gone from the marriage and need to be rekindled. Husbands and wives need to give themselves on behalf of one another once again as they did during their engagement and first years of marriage. If this situation is not corrected, it may destroy the marriage.

2:5

In verse 5 is found the correction prescribed by

Christ. The church at Ephesus is to **remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works**. In addition a warning is given to the church that if it does not do as it should, Christ will return and remove its candlestick. **Remember** is the opposite of *forget* and means to *keep in mind*. It is a command whose tense indicates a continuous or ongoing action and is to be understood in the sense of *be remembering, be keeping in mind, keep on remembering, continue remembering, or continue keeping in mind*. **Therefore** is used to introduce an inference from what has been stated in the previous verse that Christ had against the church at Ephesus that it had left its first love and is used in the sense of *then, consequently, accordingly, or so*. What the believers in the church at Ephesus as a whole were to remember is **from whence thou art fallen**. **From whence**, which means *from where*, is the translation of an adverb which is used to modify *art fallen*. Here it indicates the state *from which* the church had fallen. **Thou** is *you (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor. **Art fallen** has been translated in a way which emphasizes the results of its action. They *fell off* or *fell from* something. The result of this action is described by *art fallen* or *are fallen*. **From whence thou art fallen** refers to *thou hast left thy first love*. This church as represented by its pastor had fallen from its previous position and needed to get back to where it had been. Not only is the church at Ephesus to remember the state from which it had fallen, it was also to **repent** which means to *change its mind*. This change of mind is to be so thorough that it will result in a change of action with the result that the present status of the church at Ephesus of having left its first love will be reversed. **Repent** is a command whose tense indicates that its action is to be undertaken at once and without delay. The church is also to **do the first works**. As is true of *repent*, **do** is a command whose tense indicates that its action is to be undertaken at once and without delay. What the church at Ephesus was to do is **the first works**. The word order in the Greek text reads, *the first works do* and indicates that *the first works* is being emphasized by its placement in the Greek text. **The first works** implies the things

Revelation 2

characterized by the first love which had been left or abandoned. These were the works which at one time were of primary importance in the lives of these believers as a whole, works that had previously characterized them. Their works were great, but they were just going through the motions; and the hearts of the people as a whole needed to be characterized again by their original fervent love for the Lord and for the things pertaining to Him. This church's having left its first love had resulted in its failure to do some of the first works which had previously characterized it.

In the second half of verse 5 is found the consequence promised by Christ for failure to carry out the instructions He has given in the first half of the verse: **or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.** Christ's stated consequence is composed of two conditional statements. The first one is *or else I will come unto thee quickly*, and the second one is *and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* **Or else** is the translation of a simple condition, which, for the sake of discussion, is assumed to be true. It is not necessarily actually true, however. *Or else* is literally *and if not, now if not*, or *but if not* and implies *and if you (singular) do not repent and do not do the first works, now if you (singular) do not repent and do not do the first works*, or *but if you (singular) do not repent and do not do the first works*. Inasmuch as this is assumed for sake of discussion to be true and inasmuch as it is not known whether the church at Ephesus will repent and will do the first works, *if* should be understood in the sense of *assuming that* and the condition understood to mean *assuming that you (singular) do not repent and do not do the first works*. **I will come unto thee quickly** is the statement of what is going to happen if this negative condition is met, i.e. if it turns out to be true that the church does not repent and does not do the first works. **I will come** is actually present tense and has been translated as a futuristic present. Its present tense implies that Christ is already on His way and will take care of the matter when He arrives if the church has not repented and begun doing the first works. It is something so certain of fulfillment that it is stated as

already happening. It does not mean, however, that He has to be physically present in order to remove the candlestick of this church. The candlestick has long since been removed, but He has not yet returned. **Unto thee** is simply *to you (singular)* where *thee* is used in reference to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor. **And** is used to introduce a continuation of the consequence promised by Christ. It is a second condition. This time, the condition is stated last in order to emphasize the action Christ will take if the church does not repent. Also, in this conditional statement no assumption is made regarding the truth of the condition. The action promised by Christ if the church does not meet His condition is **(I) will remove thy candlestick out of his place.** **(I) will remove** is predictive of a future event and means *(I) will move away*. What Christ will remove is **thy candlestick** where *thy* is *your (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus. The *candlestick* is the *lampstand* upon which lamps were placed or hung. **Out of his place** indicates the place from which the candlestick or lampstand is going to be removed. **His** refers to the candlestick and is to be understood in the sense of *its*. **Place** means *position* and implies the place or position where something should or could be found. In other words, although this church may continue to exist as an organization, it will no longer be able to enjoy its position as a testimony for Christ; and God's blessing will cease to be on it as it has been in the past. The condition upon which this action of Christ is based is **except thou repent** which is literally *if you (singular) do not repent*. **Repent** is the same word used earlier meaning to *change one's mind*. The tense of *repent* indicates that its action is being considered as a whole as occurring at some point in time.

2:6

In verse 6 Christ returns to His commendation of the church at Ephesus which also encompasses verses 2-3. The church hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which Christ also hates. **But** is used to introduce a strong contrast. It is the same word translated *nevertheless* in verse 4. **This** is used as the direct object of **thou hast**, and it means that it is

Revelation 2

to their credit that they have it. **Thou** is *you (singular)* and refers to the church at Ephesus as represented by its pastor, and **hast** is *have*. **That thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans** functions as a noun clause and is used in apposition to *this* and indicates the content of *this*. **Thou hatest** is *you (singular) hate, you (singular) detest, or you (singular) abhor*. Its tense indicates continuous action. It is a timeless truth. What they hate is referred to as **the deeds of the Nicolaitans**. **The deeds** is *the works* and was translated this way in the phrase *I know thy works* in verse 2. **Of the Nicolaitans** indicates that it is the Nicolaitans who do these works or who work these deeds. *The* before *Nicolaitans* indicates that the sum total of the Nicolaitans is being considered as a group or class of people. Exactly who or what the Nicolaitans were is not clear. The literal meaning of the Greek word translated **Nicolaitans** is *people conquerors*; and if it is to be understood in this sense here, it would imply that they were clergy who conquered or dominated the laity as if they were lording it over God's heritage. One cannot be certain that this literal meaning is what John intended, however. According to some church fathers, the Nicolaitans were professing Christians who lived licentiously. **Which I also hate** is a clause functioning as an adjective modifying *deeds*. The antecedent of **which** is *deeds*. **I also** refers to Christ and suggests Christ in addition to the people in the church at Ephesus. **Hate** suggests *detest* or *abhor*. It is the same word translated *hatest* in the phrase *thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans*. Not only did these believers in the church at Ephesus hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans; but Christ hated them as well, regardless of whether the meaning of Nicolaitans is *people conquerors*, i.e. of clergy dominating laity in the church, or whether it refers to professing Christians who lived licentiously.

2:7

In the first half of verse 7 is found a call to hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches. This call is repeated word for word for all seven churches. **He that hath an ear** functions as the subject of *let . . . hear* in the phrase which follows it. It is literally

the one who has (an) ear or the one having (an) ear. **Ear** does not have *the* before it in the Greek text in order to indicate that its quality as *ear* is being emphasized. Inasmuch as under normal circumstances every human being has two ears, this statement is addressed to all human beings. **Let him hear** is a third person imperative in Greek for which English has no equivalent. It is a commandment which is just as binding, however, as if the commandment had been given in the second person. It means that all those who have an ear *must hear, must listen to, must follow, or must obey*. What he must hear, listen to, follow, or obey is **what the Spirit saith unto the churches**. **The Spirit** is *the Holy Spirit*. **Saith** means to *utter in words, say, tell, or give expression to*. It may also mean in a more specialized sense to *order, command, direct, or enjoin*. **Unto the churches** indicates the ones to whom the Holy Spirit is saying these things. The fact that churches is plural suggests that the Holy Spirit is asserting these things to other churches and individuals as well. The same problems true of these seven churches may likewise be true of other churches or of many individual believers.

In the second half of verse 7, there is the challenge to the overcomer: **to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God**. **To him that overcometh**² functions as the indirect object of *will . . . give*. It is literally *to the one who conquers* or *to the conqueror*. It also means *to the one who prevails* or *to the one who is victor*. Who is this overcomer? This is answered in I John 5:5, *Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* Believing that Jesus is the Son of God is equivalent to believing that Jesus is the Messiah, that He is God Himself. In this connection note John 20:30-31,

(30) And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

(31) But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Revelation 2

One who overcomes is a saved person. In fact all saved persons are overcomers. **Will . . . give** is a promise Christ is making to the overcomer, i.e. to each overcomer or to each and every believer. Its tense indicates a future action, and its mood indicates that it will definitely happen. It is not just a potential action that is intended. Christ is hereby making a commitment to give something to each overcomer or to each saved person. **I** functions as the subject of *will . . . give* and refers to Christ. **To eat of the tree of life** functions as the direct object of *will . . . give* and indicates what Christ will give to the overcomer. It will be the privilege of eating of the tree of life. The tree of life was seen in Genesis 3:22,

(22) And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.

The tree of life is mentioned again in Revelation

2:8-11. The Letter to the Church in Smyrna

In verses 8-11 Christ addresses the angel of the church in Smyrna. In verse 8 Christ describes Himself as *the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive*. In verse 9 is seen the commendation from Christ for the church in Smyrna. According to verse 9, Christ knows the church's works, tribulation, and abject poverty; yet this church is rich in Christ. He also knows the blasphemy of those who are Jews physically but not spiritually. In the first half of verse 10 is found an admonition from Christ for the church at Smyrna: *fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*. According to the second half of verse 10, the devil will cast some of this church's people into prison to try them; and the church will have a trial of ten days. The one who is faithful unto death will receive a crown of life from Christ. In the first half of verse 11 is a call to hear what the Holy Spirit says to the churches, and in the second half of verse 11 the overcomer is promised that he will not be hurt by the second death.

(8) And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;
(9) I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.
(10) Fear none of those things which thou

22:2,

(2) In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

It seems best to understand the tree of life as *the tree which gives life* or *the tree which produces life*. Perhaps, it is *the tree which sustains life*. Inasmuch as it is given to the overcomer, it is given to every saved person. **Which is in the midst of the paradise of God** is a clause which functions as an adjective modifying *tree* and indicating the location of the tree of life. The antecedent of **which** is *tree*. **In the midst** is *in the middle*. *The* does not appear before *midst* in the Greek text in order to emphasize its quality as *middle*. **The paradise of God** seems to be a reference to heaven in that it is connected with the new Jerusalem.

shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

(11) He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.