OH. ii. 6] EXPOUNDED 33  
  
at Jerusalem desolate, as the house of the Jews, not  
of His Father, the marble and gold shone as ever:  
only a spiritual eye could note its desolation.  
Jesus does not say He would put out the lamp. The  
stand being removed, the lamp would go out. The  
Church, unsustained of grace, would cease to be. Jesus  
does not say that He would give the place left vacant  
by Ephesus to another Church. No! The dispensation  
ts not to last. This threat addressed to the first Church,  
and the solemn reproof of the last, combine to testify  
the same truth.  
From this we learn, that no congregation of the faithful  
upon earth is infallible, or steadfast. But does not  
Jesus promise that “the gates of hell shall not prevail  
against His Church ?” (Matt. xvi. 18). No, He does  
not! He promises, “That the gates of Hapzs shall  
not prevail against His Church.” But Hades is a  
very different place from hell, and the Saviour’s promise  
does not assert that His churches on earth shall never  
cease to exist, nor be overcome by Satan’s deceits, or  
by force. He declares only, that the gates of the place  
of departed spirits shall not detain His chosen in custody,  
whenever He shall proclaim the hour of resurrection.  
“Except thou repent.” This passage is very impor-  
tant, as asserting the efficacy of believers’ repentance, in  
turning aside the threatened judgments. All threats  
uttered against them are conditsonal—“ To be fulfilled,  
if not repentant.”  
Jesus, ever ready to notice points worthy of praise,  
again commends the rejection of the practices of the  
Nicolaitans.  
Who were they ? Probably a branch of the Gnostics.  
From the epistles to Timothy, who was left at Ephesus  
to counteract false doctrine, we infer, that they denied  
either the deity or the humanity of the Lord Jesus.1  
  
1« The Church of God which He purchased with His own  
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