**give to him a white stone** (see below),  
**and on the stone a new name written,  
which none knoweth except he that receiveth  
it** (the views concerning this stone  
have been very various. Bede interprets  
it “the body, now white by baptism, then  
refulgent with the glory of incorruption.”  
But this is surely out of the question.  
Some have connected this with the mention  
of the manna, and cited the Rabbinical  
tradition, that with the manna fell  
precious stones and pearls. Others again  
think of the precious stones bearing the  
names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate  
of the High Priest, the order for  
which was contemporary with the giving  
of the manna, Exod. xxviii. 17; xxxix. 10,  
and regard this as indicating the priestly  
dignity of the victorious Christian, Ebrard  
remarks, that as the hidden manna  
was the reward for abstaining from idol-  
meat, so this for abstinence from fornication.  
Again Arethas and others have reminded  
us of the Gentile custom of presenting  
the victors at the games with a  
stone or ticket which entitled them to  
nourishment at the public expense, and  
to admission to royal festivals. Hence  
they regard the white stone as the ticket  
of admission to the heavenly feast. But it  
may be replied, 1) the feast is mentioned  
separately under the name of the hidden  
manna: and 2) the description of the  
writing on the stone, which follows, will  
not suit this view. Again, others, regarding  
the connexion of the white stone with  
the manna, refer to the use of the lot cast  
among the priests, *which* should offer the  
sacrifice: or to the writing a name, at  
election by ballot, on a stone or a bean:  
or to the custom of *absolving* criminals  
with a white stone and condemning them  
with a black one. Some expositors combine  
two or more of these expositions.

But it is against all these interpretations,  
that no one of them fits the conditions  
of this description. Each one halts  
in the explanation either of the stone itself,  
or of that which is written on it. Least of  
all, perhaps, does the last apply; the verdict  
of *acquittal* would be a strange reward  
indeed to one who has fought and  
overcome in the strength of an acquittal  
long ago obtained, Col. iii. 13. The most  
probable view is that which Bengel gives  
a hint of, and which Hengstenberg and  
Düsterdieck hold, that the figure is derived  
from the practice of using small  
stones, inscribed with writing, for various  
purposes, and that, further than this, the  
imagery belongs to the occasion itself only.  
Taking it thus, the colour is that of victory,  
see ch. iii. 3; vi. 2; iv. 4; xix. 14.  
The *name inscribed* yet remains for consideration.  
It is in this, as it would be in  
every case, the inscription which gives the  
stone its real value, being, as it is, a token  
of reward and approval from the Son of  
God. But *what name* is this? not what  
name *in each case*, for an answer to this  
question is precluded by the very terms,  
“*which none,* &c.:” but *of what kind?* Is  
it the name of Christ Himself, or of God  
in Christ? This supposition is precluded  
also by the same terms: for any mysterious  
name of God or of Christ would either  
be hidden from all [so ch. xix. 12], or known  
to all who were similarly victorious through  
grace. These very terms seem to require  
that it should be the recipient's *own name*,  
a *new* name however; a revelation of his  
everlasting title, as a son of God, to glory  
in Christ, but consisting of, and revealed  
in, those personal marks and signs of God’s  
peculiar adoption of *himself*, which he and  
none else is acquainted with. “If the  
heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a  
stranger intermeddleth not with its joy”  
[Prov. xiv. 10], then the deep secret dealings  
of God with each of us during those  
times, by which our sonship is assured and  
our spiritual strife carried onward to  
victory, can, when revealed to us in the other  
blessed state, be known thoroughly to ourselves only).

**18—29.]** THE EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH  
AT THYATIRA. **And to the angel of the  
church in Thyatira write; These things  
saith the Son of God** (our Lord thus names  
Himself here, in accordance with the spirit