“Thou art dead.”  
 Jesus is denying to the angel, not “*life*,” but “*liveliness*.” This use of the word is common enough among  
ourselves: as when we say, “The churches of New York  
are in a very *dead* state.”  
 The expression is also applied in the New Testament,  
where spiritual life is not supposed to be extinct.  
Where Paul is speaking of the widows of the Church,  
he says, “Now she that is a widow indeed and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications  
and prayers night and day; *but she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth*” (1 Tim. v. 5, 6). Thus  
also our Lord calls Peter “Satan”; and His apostle  
describes one of the saints as a “wicked person,”  
and the whole assembly of Corinthian believers as  
“carnal.” Our Lord then intends, I suppose, to  
discover to us an *assembly of believers* with their *chief  
pastor grown cold and* worldly, drowsy, and *neglectful  
of spiritual things*.  
 Their worship before God was heavy, infrequent, and  
formal; their testimony to the world all but extinct;  
their graces toward each other almost vanished; their  
good works it were hard to find. That this is the  
sense, we shall see to be borne out by the exhortations  
which follow.  
  
 2. “Become watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that were about to die; for I have not found thy works  
fulfilled before my God.”  
  
 The *hope* and expectation of the *Saviour’s return* had  
faded away from the eyes of the Sardian believers in  
general. It ought not so to be; it was not so once.  
*To this expectation*, and to the attitude appropriate to  
such a faith, *they were to return*.  
 But *the call to become watchful*, is not a call to the  
world; *it supposes life possessed*. Jesus would have