of His Church. The terrible “Day” does not begin till  
after the prophetic portion of the book is begun: vi. 17;  
xvi. 14. This is evident also from Paul’s epistles.  
1 Thess. iv. describes our *Lord’s advent* as the hope of  
His *Church*. 1 Thess. v. gives the descent of the “Day”  
upon the *world*. Also in 2 Thess. ii. the “*Presence*”  
*of Jesus* is offered to the *Church*, as her consolation  
against the fears of the “*Day*”: ver. 1, 3.

4. “But thou hast a few names in Sardis who defiled not their  
garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are  
worthy.”

Jesus does not commend anything in Sardis but the  
few who were unlike the rest. His expression is peculiar—“a few *names*.” This refers to numbering, or to  
lists. *It supposes a church-book*. “Let not a widow  
be put on *the list* under three-score years old” (*Greek*).  
1 Tim. v. 9; see also Acts i. 15.  
 These names the angel possessed. He was keeper of  
the church-book; *he admitted converts to communion,  
and entered their names*. Jesus, as the chief Shepherd,  
knows the names of all His sheep. And these simple  
unofficial Christians He notices with honour. Grace  
is not according to dignity in the Church.  
 In the former churches, a few were wrong; in Sardis  
but a few are right. This is the only commendation;  
but the Saviour can discriminate, and discern the faint  
sparks of good in the midst of evil. How little ought  
we to appeal to the doctrines or practices of the early  
churches, when, even in John’s lifetime, there was so  
much of declension from true doctrine and right practice!  
 From these words of the Saviour we learn, that in the  
midst of bad examples, individual Christians may still  
live so as to glorify God. It will not suffice to excuse  
us from rebuke, that our superiors and all around us  
were as cold and dark as ourselves.