the Lord’s taking them to another sphere—the heaven,  
which is then delivered from the foe.  
 The man-child is caught up to God and His throne.1  
 Sardis and Philadelphia are contrasts. Sardis is the  
unwatchful saint, on whom the Lord comes as a thief.  
Philadelphia, the watchful believer taken, like Enoch,  
to his Lord’s presence with joy. And Laodicea represents, I suppose, the state of the Church, *after the salt  
that kept its taste is removed*.  
 This promise, then, has yet to be accomplished. But,  
if so, it follows that churches are still recognized before  
God, as His witnesses on earth. Till the rapture has  
borne away the waiting ones of Christ to His presence,  
Jesus still occupies His post as the Priest of the Sanctuary, overseeing the lamps of heaven.  
  
 ll. “I am coming quickly: hold fast what thou hast, that  
none take thy crown.”  
  
 In those words, “I am coming quickly,” is conveyed  
to us an intimation of the way in which the saint will  
be taken out of the Great Day of the Lord, and its hour  
of dread temptation. The apostle Paul sets before the  
Thessalonian believers the Presence of the Lord Jesus  
after His descent from heaven, as the point to which  
they would be lifted, and so be delivered out of the  
storm below: 2 Thess. ii. 1. The word “Behold” is  
rightly omitted in this verse, as we gather from internal  
evidence, as well as external. 2 For the coming spoken  
of is the thief-like secret one, in which the waiting  
believer is rapt to his Lord, but no hand is seen.  
 Jesus encourages His saints to hold out, by a prospect  
of the brevity of the struggle.  
  
1 There is a lower place of safety on earth for the believing  
remnant of the Jews. It is “the wilderness,” a place not inhabited, Rev. xii. 6. Hence the employment, not of the terms  
γη, or κοσμος, but οικουμενη, “*habitable* earth.”  
2 Ιδου omitted by the critical editions.