A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA

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PREFACE.

In presuming to offer an exposition of any portion of the mysterious book in which the Epistles to the Churches are contained, the Author is not unmindful of the commendation which Joseph Scaliger bestowed on Calvin, viz. That he had shown his sense as much by not commenting on the Book of Revelation, as he had by the manner in which he had commented on the other Books of the Bible. With this in his recollection, he ought not, perhaps, to have ventured to publish even upon this small but important portion of the Book of Revelation; he has, however, been influenced by the consideration that although all may not agree

precisely in the interpretation, none are likely to differ in their view of the invaluable practical lessons, and the sublime and cheering promises which are the chief characteristics of these Epistles.

In agreeing with some commentators* in thinking it not improbable that the state of the Seven Churches of Proconsular Asia, was typical of the state of the Christian Church during seven different periods, reaching from the apostolical age to the end of time, the Author desires not to dogmatise upon so obscure a subject, but simply to present the view, as at least an interesting one, to the consideration of his readers. He is by no means wedded to this particular interpretation, nor shall he quarrel with any for differing from

[•] Many before the Reformation; and Brightman, Forbea, Mede, More, Gill, Sir Isaac Newton, Vitringa, Lampe, and others, since that period.

him upon a point of such uncertainty; his chief object and aim have been to find the Lord Jesus Christ in all these Epistles, as the great Head of the Church, manifesting Himself as the Creator, the Saviour, the Sanctifier of His people,—at once the Beginner of their faith, and the consummation of their joy.

If he have succeeded in this, and in conveying to the minds and hearts of the true children of God, more elevated and more comforting and more influential views of Him, whom having not seen, they love, he shall be thankful, although he may not carry them with him in the particular mode of interpretation which he has adopted. Should he have failed in both these objects, he would still venture to hope that the direct personal appeals, and the close and pointed applications to the conscience, abounding in these remarkable Epistles, may not be without a blessing either to himself, or