



the  
**REFORMATION**

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*Week of Prayer*

**December 7–16, 2007**

**The Laodicean**

*Syndrome*



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There is a famous saying in English, “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.” The message of the True Witness to the Laodiceans is like that. It always seems to apply to some neighbor on the other side of town, or at least at the other end of the church pew.

Yet somehow, when our trial date comes in the heavenly court, we all have to face the reality that the witness never lies—the faithful and true Witness sees absolutely everything with unerring accuracy. But how thankful should we be that this same Witness has also taken it upon Himself to serve as our Advocate as well. The apostle assures us, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

The Week of Prayer provides us with a wonderful opportunity to search and examine our deceitful heart more carefully—to open our eyes and finally see the actual reality of our condition, and to plead with our mighty Advocate for the vital help and deliverance that only He can offer.

These readings should be prayed upon in groups, and an effort should be made to study them in person also with isolated believers, that they might join in the blessing as well.

**Sabbath, December 15**, will be a special day of prayer with fasting, and on **Sunday, December 16**, a special offering will be gathered for the missionary work in new places.

May our heart unite in close fellowship with the True Witness, that His Spirit may prevail in our midst and invigorate us in heeding His inspired counsel!

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—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 488.

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# Facing Reality

## *in the Laodicean Era*

After His ascension into Heaven, Jesus gave to John the Revelator specific information to be given to believers till the close of earth's history. To the church of Laodicea—that period of time known as the "Judgment of the people," Christ has a specific message. Being the "wonderful Counselor" that He is (Isaiah 9:6), He brings us perfect advice. But first we must be prepared to listen. There is a basic premise in successful business practice: "Honesty is the best policy." Honesty and integrity are foundational principles in the Christian life as well, for their divine Author is none other than He who clearly identifies Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

"Christ, His character and work, is the center and circumference of all truth, He is the chain upon which the jewels of doctrine are linked. In Him is found the complete system of truth."<sup>1</sup>

"All true believers center in Christ, their character is irradiated by Christ; all meet in Christ, and circulate about Christ. Truth comes from Heaven to purify and cleanse the human agent from every moral defilement. It leads to benevolent action, to kind, tender, thoughtful love toward the needy, the distressed, the suffering. This is practical obedience to the words of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

As we acknowledge the flawless perfection of the glorious system of Heaven-sent truth, there is another aspect of truth we must face: The truth about ourselves.

In diagnosing physical disease, modern technology enlists the help of blood tests, x-rays, magnetic resonance imaging, CT scans, and so on to penetrate and unveil the depths of the human organism in order to evaluate properly its real condition and recommend appropriate treatment, if needed. In today's information age, modern medicine is reluctant to assume anything at face value, since many important factors may be looming beneath the surface. No thorough, competent physician wants to risk overlooking key hidden factors which could cost a life.

Seeing ourselves as we really are is more complicated than most people may realize. When you think about it, not one of us has ever even seen our own face. The closest we can come is by viewing a mere reflection in a mirror. And our spiritual heart? Oh, that is much deeper yet! The Scripture tells us plainly that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9).

Just as doctors rely on technology to help them see things more clearly, we need God's help to see our heart. "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (verse 10). In fact, it is especially valuable because our Creator will tell us the truth—the whole truth, the pure truth, and nothing but the truth. Like a penetrating surgeon's knife, sometimes the truth hurts. But it is specially designed to work for good, to promote life.

So when the True Witness speaks the truth to us, we need to listen. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

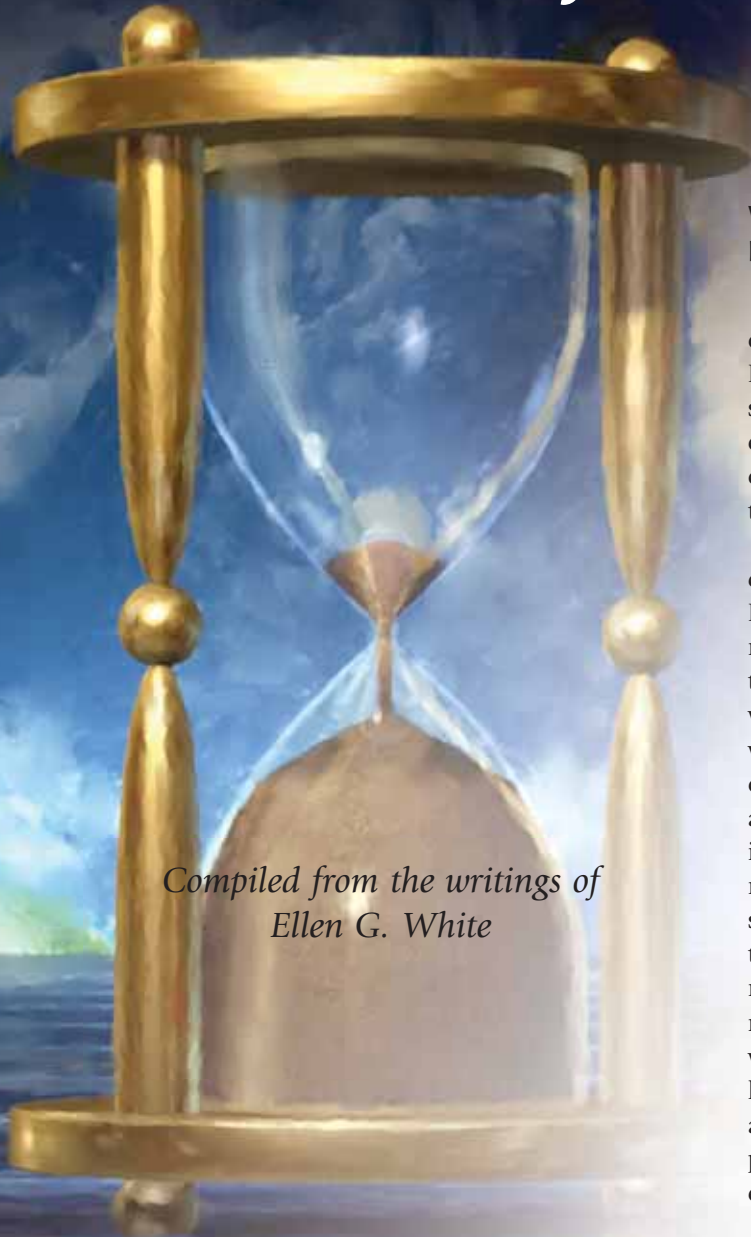
#### References:

<sup>1</sup> *Our High Calling*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 3, p. 199.

# The Laodicean Syndrome

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*Compiled from the writings of  
Ellen G. White*

## WE ARE LIVING IN THE PERIOD OF LAODICEA

The names of the seven churches are symbolic of the church in different periods of the Christian Era. The number 7 indicates completeness, and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, while the symbols used reveal the condition of the church at different periods in the history of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The warning for the last church . . . must be proclaimed to all who claim to be Christians. The Laodicean message, like a sharp, two-edged sword, must go to all the churches: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:15–19). It is our work to proclaim this message. Are we putting forth every effort that the churches may be warned?<sup>2</sup>

## A MESSAGE FOR YOU AND ME

The Laodicean message is applicable to the church at this time. Do you believe this message? Have you hearts that feel? Or are you constantly saying, We are rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing? Is it in vain that the declara-

## *The warning for the last church . . . must be proclaimed to all who claim to be Christians.*

tion of eternal truth has been given to this nation to be carried to all the nations of the world? God has chosen a people and made them the repositories of truth weighty with eternal results. To them has been given the light that must illuminate the world. Has God made a mistake? Are we indeed His chosen instrumentalities? Are we the men and women who are to bear to the world the messages of Revelation fourteen, to proclaim the message of salvation to those who are standing on the brink of ruin? Do we act as if we were?<sup>3</sup>

The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to all who have had great light and many opportunities, and yet have not appreciated them.

There are a large number of professing Christians who do not really follow Jesus. They do not bear the cross by proper self-denial and self-sacrifice. Although making a great profession of being earnest Christians, they weave into the fabric of their character so many of the threads of their own imperfections that the beautiful pattern is spoiled. Of them Christ says: "You boast of being rich and increased with supposed spiritual attainments. In reality you are neither cold nor hot, but are filled with vain conceit. Unless converted, you cannot be saved; for you would mar heaven with your unsanctified wisdom. I cannot endorse your spirit and your work. You do not act according to the divine Example. You are following a pattern merely of your own invention. Because you are lukewarm, I must spue you out of My mouth."<sup>4</sup>

The Laodicean message applies to the people of God who profess to believe present truth. The greater part are lukewarm professors, having a name but no zeal. . . . Those who

should be faithful and true, fervent in Christian zeal, of gracious temper, knowing and loving Jesus earnestly, are found aiding the enemy to weaken and discourage those whom God is using to build up the work. The term "lukewarm" is applicable to this class. They profess to love the truth, yet are deficient in Christian fervor and devotion. They dare not give up wholly and run the risk of the unbeliever, yet they are unwilling to die to self and follow out closely the principles of their faith.<sup>5</sup>

The message to the Laodicean church applies most decidedly to those whose religious experience is insipid, who do not bear decided witness in favor of the truth.<sup>6</sup>

The great outpouring of the Spirit of God, which lightens the whole earth with His glory, will not come until we have an enlightened people, that know by experience what it means to be laborers together with God. When we have entire, whole-hearted consecration to the service of Christ, God will recognize the fact by an outpouring of His Spirit without measure; but this will not be while the largest portion of the church are not laborers together with God.<sup>7</sup>

### **FACING THE REALITY OF OUR CONDITION**

The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true condition of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testi-

mony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and His testimony must be correct.

It is difficult for those who feel secure in their attainments, and who believe themselves to be rich in spiritual knowledge, to receive the message which declares that they are deceived and in need of every spiritual grace. The unsanctified heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9). . . .

As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice. We need to cultivate Bible holiness. Sin prevails among the people of God. The plain message of rebuke to the Laodiceans is not received. Many cling to their doubts and their darling sins while they are in so great a deception as to talk and feel that they are in need of nothing. They think the testimony of the Spirit of God in reproof is uncalled for or that it does not mean them. Such are in the greatest need of the grace of God and spiritual discernment that they may discover their deficiency in spiritual knowledge. They lack almost every qualification necessary to perfect Christian character. They have not a practical knowledge of Bible truth, which leads to lowliness of life and a conformity of their will to the will of Christ. They are not living in obedience to all God's requirements.

It is not enough to merely profess to believe the truth. All the soldiers of the cross of Christ virtually obligate themselves to enter the crusade against the adversary of souls, to con-

## *The Laodicean message, like a sharp, two-edged sword, must go to all the churches*

demn wrong and sustain righteousness. But the message of the True Witness reveals the fact that a terrible deception is upon our people, which makes it necessary to come to them with warnings, to break their spiritual slumber, and arouse them to decided action.<sup>8</sup>

This message of the True Witness has not accomplished the design of God. The people slumber on in their sins. They continue to declare themselves "rich, and having need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17). Many inquire, Why are all these reproofs given? Why do the testimonies continually charge us with backsliding and grievous sins? We love the truth. We are prospering. We are in no need of these testimonies of warning and reproof. But let these murmurers see their hearts, and compare their lives with the practical teachings of the Bible; let them humble their souls before God; let the grace of God illuminate the darkness, and the scales will fall from their eyes, and they will sense their true spiritual poverty and wretchedness. . . .

I am very sure that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness is because they will not receive correction. Many have despised the reproofs and warnings given them. The True Witness condemns the lukewarm condition of the people of God, which gives Satan great power over them in this waiting, watching time. The selfish, and proud, and lovers of sin, are ever assailed with doubts. . . .

### **RETURNING TO OUR HERITAGE OF SELF-DENIAL**

In the first rise of the third angel's message, those who engaged in the

work of God had something to venture. They had sacrifices to make. They started this work in poverty, and suffered the greatest deprivations and reproach. They met determined opposition, which drove them to God in their necessity, and kept their faith alive. . . .

Some young men start out with no real sense of the exalted character of the work. They have not privations, and hardships, and severe conflicts to meet, which call for the exercise of faith. They do not cultivate practical self-denial, and cherish a spirit of sacrifice. Some are becoming proud and lifted up, and have no real burden of the work upon them.<sup>9</sup>

The people of God must see their wrongs and arouse to zealous repentance and a putting away of those sins which have brought them into such a deplorable condition of poverty, blindness, wretchedness, and fearful deception. I was shown that the pointed testimony must live in the church. This alone will answer to the message to the Laodiceans. Wrongs must be reproved, sin must be called sin, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly, and put away from us as a people.<sup>10</sup>

God would teach His people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to Him, and not to be lightly regarded. He shows us that when His people are found in sin, they should at once take decided measures to put the sin from them, that His frown should not rest upon all His people. But if those in responsible positions pass over the sins of the people, His frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for the sins that exist in their midst. God, in His dealings with His people in the past, shows the necessity of purifying

the church from wrongs that exist among them. One sinner may diffuse darkness which will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, then they should earnestly seek God in great humility and self-abasement, until the wrongs which grieve God's Spirit are searched out and put away from among them.<sup>11</sup>

### **OUR GREAT DANGER**

The Laodicean message applies to all who profess to keep the law of God, and yet are not doers of it. We are not to be selfish in anything. Every phase of the Christian life is to be a representation of the life of Christ. If it is not, we shall hear the terrible words, "I know you not" (Matthew 25:12).<sup>12</sup>

### **HOW CAN WE AVOID BEING SPEWED OUT?**

The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that [Christ] cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God. [Christ] cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in anywise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you.

Could the curtain be rolled back, could you discern the purposes of God and the judgments that are about to fall upon a doomed world, could you see your own attitude, you would fear and tremble for your own souls and for the souls of your fellow men. Earnest prayers of heart-rending anguish would go up to heaven. You would weep between the porch and the altar, confessing your spiritual blindness and backsliding.

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congre-

gation, assemble the elders, gather the children: . . . let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach" (Joel 2:15–17).

"Turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil. Who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him?" (Verses 12–14).<sup>13</sup>

## OUR ONLY HOPE

The only hope for the Laodiceans is a clear view of their standing before God, a knowledge of the nature of their disease. They are neither cold nor hot; they occupy a neutral position, and at the same time flatter themselves that they are in need of nothing. The True Witness hates this lukewarmness. He loathes the indifference of this class of persons. Said He: "I would thou wert cold or hot" (Revelation 3:15). Like lukewarm water, they are nauseous to His taste. They are neither unconcerned nor selfishly stubborn. They do not engage thoroughly and heartily in the work of God, identifying themselves with its interests; but they hold aloof and are ready to leave their posts when their worldly personal interests demand it. . . .

Intellect and earthly riches were powerless to remove the defects of the Laodicean church, or to remedy their deplorable condition. They were blind, yet felt that they were well off. The Spirit of God did not illumine their minds, and they did not per-

ceive their sinfulness; therefore they did not feel the necessity of help.<sup>14</sup>

Those who heed the testimony of warning, and zealously go about the work of separating their sins from them, in order to have the needed graces, will be opening the door of their hearts that the dear Saviour may come in and dwell with them. This class you will ever find in perfect harmony with the testimony of the Spirit of God. . . .

The True Witness declares that when you suppose you are really in a good condition of prosperity you are in need of everything. It is not enough for ministers to present theoretical subjects. They need to study the practical lessons Christ gave His disciples, and make a close application of the same to their own souls and to the people. Because Christ bears this rebuking testimony, shall we suppose that He is destitute of tender love to His people? Oh, no! He who died to redeem man from death, loves with a divine love. He rebukes those He loves.<sup>15</sup>

Some may say it is exalting our own merits to expect favor from God through our good works. True, we cannot buy one victory with our good works; yet we cannot be victors without them. The purchase which Christ recommends to us is only complying with the conditions He has given us. True grace, which is of inestimable value, and which will endure the test of trial and adversity, is only obtained through faith and humble, prayerful obedience.<sup>16</sup>

God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have

a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: "God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people." Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: "They are joined to their idols, let them alone," and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.<sup>17</sup>

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 585.
- <sup>2</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 77.
- <sup>3</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 92.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 306.
- <sup>5</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 87.
- <sup>6</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 962.
- <sup>7</sup> *Christian Service*, p. 253.
- <sup>8</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 3, pp. 253, 254.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Review and Herald*, September 16, 1873.
- <sup>10</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 260.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Review and Herald*, September 23, 1873.
- <sup>12</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 962.
- <sup>13</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 408, 409.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, pp. 87, 88.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Review and Herald*, September 16, 1873.
- <sup>16</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 89.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 187.

# “Buy of Me Gold”

By H. Paredes

8

**A**mong all of the precious metals universally known by human beings, gold is one of the most outstanding. The prosperity and power of the nations is measured by the amount of gold they possess. The Bible speaks about Abraham as being one of the richest men of his generation, not only for the many cattle he own but also for the great amount of silver and gold he possessed. “And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold” (Genesis 13:2). When God commanded the Israelites to build a sanctuary for the indwelling of His holy presence, He gave specific instructions on the type of material to be used in the sacred edifice. After giving all the directions about the size of the building and its furnishings, the Lord said: “Thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and

shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about” (Exodus 25:11). Not only the building itself, but every important furniture in the tabernacle—the candlestick, the showbread table, the ark of the testimony, the mercy seat with the two cherubim—were either made or overlaid with the purest and finest gold that existed at that time.

## THE HEAVENLY MERCHANTMAN

In the letters to the seven churches recorded in the book of Revelation, the True Witness—Jesus Christ—presents a clear picture of the spiritual condition in which the churches are found. The letter to Laodicea describes the wretched and deplorable condition in which she is found. Although she is making a high profession and thinking to be in need of nothing, she is found destitute of heaven’s greatest riches.

“The great Redeemer represents Himself as a heavenly merchantman, laden with riches, calling from house to house, presenting His priceless

goods, and saying, ‘I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich’ (Revelation 3:18).<sup>1</sup> What does He mean by this, and how can we carry out His plain, forthright counsel to us?

## “BUY OF ME GOLD”

Certainly not everyone can afford to buy expensive precious metals—especially pure gold. Yet Christ, in His deep love and heartfelt desire to enrich His beloved people dearly purchased with the high price of His own blood, bids us do exactly that. How can we?

Many years before the message was ever written to those who would be alive during the Laodicean era, the True Witness inspired the prophet Isaiah to extend an invitation to us. He says: “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” (Isaiah 55:1). Yes, beloved brethren and sisters, without money and without price! None can say that he or she cannot afford to buy the precious merchandise. “The Saviour comes





with jewels of truth of the richest value in distinction from all counterfeits, all that is spurious. He comes to every house, to every door; He is knocking, presenting His priceless treasure, urging, 'Buy of me.'<sup>2</sup>

"The gold mentioned by Christ, the True Witness, which all must have, has been shown me to be faith and love combined, and love takes the precedence of faith. Satan is constantly at work to remove these precious gifts from the hearts of God's people. All are engaged in playing the game of life. Satan is well aware that if he can remove love and faith, and supply their place with selfishness and unbelief, all the remaining precious traits will soon be skillfully removed by his deceitful hand, and the game will be lost."<sup>3</sup> How urgent, then, is our need!

## THE FINEST GOLD

What kind of gold are we really looking for? The Bible tells us that we should not be overcharged with the affairs of this life, that the final day may not take us unawares. Jesus gave a warning to be emphasized especially toward the end of time, to "take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34). Yet so many are preoccupied with the cares of this life. In their heart, the gospel seeds "are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection" (Luke 8:14). Such persons usually dedicate the major part of their precious time seeking after the gold that this world offers. At the same time they neglect the greatest riches—the conclusion of all matters—that is, the fear of the Lord and obedience to all His holy

commandments. Because of this neglect, some lack conversion and are found in the Laodicean condition. The psalmist declares that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:7–10).

The gold that Christ offers is the faith that works by love as it is revealed in His spotless character. This love which all can buy from Christ is not the mere love limited by finite human understanding, but rather is that love which is the real credential of true discipleship. By the purchase of this precious merchandise, men and women have the privilege of being partakers of Christ's divine attributes: "To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19).

"Faith and love are the true riches, the pure gold which the True Witness counsels the lukewarm to buy. However rich we may be in earthly treasure, all our wealth will not enable us to buy the precious remedies that cure the disease of the soul called lukewarmness. Intellect and earthly riches were powerless to remove the defects of the Laodicean church, or to remedy their deplorable condition. They were blind, yet felt that they were well off. The Spirit of God did not illumine their minds, and they did not perceive their sinfulness; therefore they did not feel the necessity of help.

"To be without the graces of the Spirit of God is sad indeed; but it is a more terrible condition to be thus destitute of spirituality and of Christ, and yet try to justify ourselves by telling those who are alarmed for us that we need not their fears and pity. Fearful is the power of self-deception on the human mind! What blindness! setting light for darkness and darkness for light! The True Witness counsels us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire, white raiment, and eye-salve. The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich; for it has been purged until it is pure, and the more it is tested the more brilliant is its luster."<sup>4</sup>

The greatest honor ever bestowed upon humanity is to possess the spiritual graces of heavenly origin and thus reveal to this world the good tidings of Jesus' love. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34, 35). This love is not something that humans naturally possess, though created in God's own image. Because of disobedience, people no longer reveal the divine attributes of their Creator's character.

"We live in a hard, unfeeling, uncharitable world. Satan and his confederacy are plying every art to seduce the souls for whom Christ has given His precious life. Everyone who loves God in sincerity and truth will love the souls for whom Christ has died. If we wish to do good to souls, our success with these souls will be in proportion to their belief in our belief in, and appreciation of, them. Respect shown to the struggling human soul is the sure means through Christ Jesus of the restoration of the self-respect

## *The gold here recommended as having been tried in the fire is faith and love. It makes the heart rich.*

10 the man has lost. Our advancing ideas of what he may become is a help we cannot ourselves fully appreciate. We have need of the rich grace of God every hour, then we will have a rich, practical experience, for God is love. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. Give love to them that need it most. The most unfortunate, those who have the most disagreeable temperaments need our love, our tenderness, our compassion. Those who try our patience need most love. We pass through the world only once; any good thing we can do, we should do most earnestly, untiringly, with the same spirit as is stated of Christ in His work. He will not fail nor be discouraged. The rough, stubborn, sullen dispositions are the ones who need help the most. How can they be helped? Only by that love practiced in dealing with them which Christ revealed to fallen man. Treat them, you may, as they deserve. What if Christ had treated us thus? He, the undeserving, was treated as we deserve. Still we are treated by Christ with grace and love as we did not deserve, but as He deserved. Treat some characters, as you think they richly deserve, and you will cut off from them the last thread of hope, spoil your influence and ruin the soul. Will it pay? No, I say no, a hundred times no. Bind these souls who need all the help it is possible for you to give them close to a loving, sympathizing, pitying heart, overflowing with Christlike love, and you will save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins. Had we not better try the love process?"<sup>5</sup>

It is only through Christ that we can become rich. By receiving the gold that Christ offers, we can be born again, be a new creature, and finally be counted as gold in the

crown of Jesus. Of such the Lord declares, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir" (Isaiah 13:12).

### **GOLD AND WISDOM**

Christ's invitation is for all to come to Him, that He may supply their every need. The richest Merchant is calling every heart with celestial gold to bestow upon those who accept the cordial invitation to buy from Him. He wants to dwell in the heart of those who come to Him with the desire to receive the richest blessing of His grace who "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). Christ offers us the beauty of His immaculate character that enables us, with His power, to be called His children. He longs to impart His knowledge to those who come to Him to buy gold without money and without price. The wise man says: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold" (Proverbs 3:13, 14).

Job, one of the wealthiest men of ancient generations, possessing a great amount of gold, was inspired to ask the following question: "Where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living" (Job 28:12, 13). That wisdom is found in the words of Christ, and it has been with us from the beginning of creation. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the

only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). This is a different type of gold than that which is commonly known by people. It is not perishable, neither can it be compared to the gold found in the mines. "It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it: and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold" (Job 28:16, 17).

"O that our youth would treasure up the knowledge that is imperishable, that they can carry with them into the future, immortal life, the knowledge that is represented as gold and silver and precious stones! . . . Let every student who values the heavenly treasure put to the stretch his mental and spiritual powers, and sink the shaft deep into the mine of truth, that he may obtain the celestial gold—that wisdom which will make him wise unto salvation."<sup>6</sup>

### **IMITATION GOLD**

There is an old saying, "Not all that glitters is gold." A mere profession of faith will not save anyone in the great crisis that is coming to this earth. Many members of the church are falling in the trap of Laodicea. People are always tempted to put more value in the gold and the wisdom of this world than in the merchandise offered by the True Witness. The message to Laodicea applies to all believers in this particular time. "The pure and the base metal are now so mingled that only the discerning eye of the infinite God can with certainty distinguish between them. But the moral magnet of holiness and truth will attract together the pure metal, while it will repel the base and counterfeit."<sup>7</sup>

In the time of Noah, the people were so absorbed in seeking after temporal riches that they had no time to seek after the Lord. "God bestowed

upon these antediluvians many and rich gifts; but they used His bounties to glorify themselves, and turned them into a curse by fixing their affections upon the gifts instead of the Giver. They employed the gold and silver, the precious stones and the choice wood, in the construction of habitations for themselves, and endeavored to excel one another in beautifying their dwellings with the most skillful workmanship. . . . They adored nature in place of the God of nature. They glorified human genius, worshiped the works of their own hands, and taught their children to bow down to graven images."<sup>8</sup>



## TRIED IN THE FIRE

The True Witness is at the door of every heart, but He cannot bestow His most precious and finest gold unless we buy it from Him. In the heart of many there is no room for Jesus. The soul temple is so cumbered with the affairs of this life that there is but little time to seek after that which is eternal. The church of Laodicea fell into a deplorable condition because they thought they were rich and in need of nothing. They were not aware of their own sad condition.

Pretending to possess the love and the faith of Jesus, they were seeking after the gods of this world that led them to eternal perdition. "The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 7:25).

"Let no one deceive his own soul in this matter. If you harbor pride, self-esteem, a love for the supremacy, vainglory, unholy ambition, murmuring, discontent, bitterness, evil-speaking, lying, deception, slandering, you have not Christ abiding in your heart, and the evidence shows that you have

the mind and character of Satan, not of Jesus Christ, who was meek and lowly of heart. You must have a Christian character that will stand. You may have good intentions, good impulses, can speak the truth understandingly, but you are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. Your character has in it base material, which destroys the value of the gold. You have not reached the standard. The impress of the divine is not upon you. The furnace fires would consume you, because you are worthless, counterfeit gold."<sup>9</sup>

## PURGED AS GOLD

If all Christians receive the counsel of the True Witness to the church of Laodicea, it will bring the long expected revival and reformation that will testify that Christ's precious blood has power to purify a people zealous of good works, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). The church, just as in the time of the apostles, will be made rich again—not only by possessing

the celestial gold, but actually by being purged as gold. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:3). Christ longs to supply His children with the rich grace of heaven symbolized by the heavenly gold.

"'Open unto me; buy of me the heavenly wares; buy of me the gold tried in the fire.' Buy faith and love, the precious, beautiful attributes of our Redeemer, which will enable us to find our way into the hearts of those who do not know Him, who are cold and alienated from Him through unbelief and sin. . . . Oh, shall we not open the heart's door to this heavenly visitor?"<sup>10</sup>

## References:

- <sup>1</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 358.
- <sup>2</sup> *Our High Calling*, p. 350.
- <sup>3</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 36, 37.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 88.
- <sup>5</sup> *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 281, 282.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169, 170.
- <sup>7</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 101.
- <sup>8</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 90, 91.
- <sup>9</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 441.
- <sup>10</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 964.

# What Does It Mean to Be Righteous?

By M. Natarajan

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*I* counsel thee to buy of me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear" (Revelation 3:18).

Human beings are unrighteous by nature. In speaking of this, the apostle Paul says, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). Being unrighteous, a person is, of oneself, without hope, because "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9). To be saved, therefore, we must possess righteousness. Christ said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). Here is emphasized the importance of being righteous. And "we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

What is righteousness? The suffix "ness" signifies the quality of something. Righteousness is more than merely right doing. There is a difference between sweetening and sweetness. One indicates action; the other

quality. Righteousness is the state or quality of being righteous. It is life, the life of God. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness," we read in Romans 8:10. It is life that is in harmony both inwardly and outwardly with God's great standard of righteousness.

The psalmist was inspired to declare to the Lord, "all thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172). Righteousness is the life and character of God's law written in the heart by the Holy Spirit, as we read in the Lord's plea in Isaiah 51:7, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law."

## THE WHITE RAIMENT

"By the wedding garment in the parable [found in Matthew 22:2-14] is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given 'that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white,' 'not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' The fine linen, says the Scripture, 'is the righteousness of saints' (Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27). It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour. . . .

" 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags' (Isaiah 64:6). Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God was 'manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin.' Sin is defined to be 'the transgression of the law' (1 John 3:5, 4). But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. . . . When on earth He said to His disciples, 'I have kept My Father's commandments' (John 15:10). By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ . . . we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah."<sup>1</sup>

"The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to

## *Righteousness is the life and character of God's law written in the heart by the Holy Spirit.*

enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering."<sup>2</sup>

"Sin is disloyalty to God, and [is] deserving of punishment. Fig leaves sewed together have been employed since the days of Adam, yet the nakedness of the soul of the sinner is not covered. All the arguments pieced together by all who have interested themselves in this flimsy robe will come to nought. Sin is the transgression of the law. Christ was manifest in our world to take away transgression and sin, and to substitute for the covering of fig leaves the pure robes of His righteousness. The law of God stands vindicated by the suffering and death of the only begotten Son of the infinite God."<sup>3</sup>

Righteousness is the opposite of sin, "All unrighteousness is sin," and "sin is the transgression of the law," the apostle tells us (1 John 5:17; 3:4). Christ is the only One who ever lived a righteous life from the beginning of life to its end. The law was written in His heart; the law was His life (Psalm 40:8). He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"; He "did no sin" (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). Christ, then, is the only source of righteousness for us. He came to this world to live a righteous life for human beings as well as to die for them (Romans 5:10).

"Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. 'I counsel thee,' He says, 'to buy of Me

... white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear' (Revelation 3:18)."<sup>4</sup>

### **OBTAINING THE PURE, HEAVENLY GARMENT**

How can we secure the righteousness which Christ is counseling us to buy? First, it cannot be obtained by works. This gospel truth is stated by the apostle Paul: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified [made righteous] in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). This is one reason that we are not justified by the deeds or works of the law. The law declares everyone guilty, and "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Verse 23). The law which pronounces the sinner guilty cannot at the same time save him or her. The work of the law is, under God, to convict of sin and place the transgressor under condemnation, so that the sinner will be repentant, confess his or her sins to God, and receive the imputed righteousness of Christ, "for Christ is the end [meaning 'object,' 'purpose']—James 5:11; 1 Peter 1:9] of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4).

It is that law that points out sin, and hence demands righteousness which it cannot supply to the sinner. But by the Holy Spirit the law leads to Christ, and the sinner receives from Him, by faith, His righteousness, which is a life in perfect harmony with the law that points out sin. Then the law, like the mirror, witnesses to the fact that the person has the righteousness which it demanded, but couldn't supply (Romans 3:21).

The New Testament refers to righteousness in the sense of conformity

to the demands of the will of God, the so-called "righteousness of the law" (Galatians 3:21; Philippians 3:6, 9; Titus 3:5), but in the end this attainment falls far short of true conformity to the divine will (Romans 3:19, 20; Luke 18:9–14; John 8:7). However, if Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20) with the law of God in His heart (Psalm 40:8), then we walk "not after the flesh but after the Spirit," and "the righteousness of the law" is "fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:4). God's active help is extended to us in the miracle of His grace through Christ.

God's righteousness proclaimed by Jesus is a gift to those who are preparing for the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:6). By faith in Christ and His work of atonement, unrighteous sinners though we are, we receive God's righteousness—that is, we are given a true relationship with God which involves the forgiveness of all sin and a new moral standing with Him (Romans 3:21–31; 4:1–25; 10:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9). By dealing with all the consequences of our sin and unrighteousness (both toward God and humans), through the cross, God at once maintains the moral order by which alone He can have fellowship again with the human race (Romans 3:26).

The gift of God's righteousness assures salvation and eternal life in the kingdom of God (Romans 6:12–23; 2 Corinthians 6:7, 14; Philippians 1:11; Ephesians 4:24). Hence the extrinsic righteousness imputed through the cross finds inevitable expression in the intrinsic righteousness of a life which in a new way conforms to the will of God, even though the ultimate realization of this conformity must await the consummation of the kingdom (1

*Purity of heart, purity of motive, will characterize everyone who is washing his robe, and making it white in the blood of the Lamb.*

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John 3:2; Philippians 3:12–14; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Peter 3:11–13).

"To everyone God has made an offer that will help to brace every nerve and spiritual muscle for the time of test that is to come to us all. I am charged with the message, Clothe yourself with the whole armor of Christ's righteousness. . . . And, having done all you can do on your part, you have the assurance of victory. To every soul is granted the gracious opportunity of standing on the Rock of Ages."<sup>5</sup>

Righteousness, then, is secured only by faith in Christ and His atoning work for sin that culminated on the cross of Calvary. It can be received in no other way. To be justified or accounted righteous, one's sins must be covered. All our own works, no matter how good and how many, cannot atone for our past sins in God's sight. Christ atoned for sin by His death, and hence we can be forgiven and accounted righteous only by faith in, and acceptance of, what Christ has done for us.

Only by faith in Christ, then, can justification be received. When one accepts by faith Christ as his Saviour, his past sins are forgiven, and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him. The word "impute" means to be credited with, to set to one's account, to be charged with. Christ lived a life of righteousness. When one is convicted of sin, and comes to God in repentance, confess-

ing all known sins, God forgives that person by virtue of Christ's atoning death on the cross; and then He imputes to him or her the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of Christ is credited to our account as if we had ourselves lived it. It covers all our past life, and in Christ, the Father looks upon the sinner as if he or she had never sinned. That brings us hope!

#### **A VITAL EXPERIENCE NEEDED IN THIS PERIOD OF LAODICEA**

"Clad in the armor of Christ's righteousness, the church is to enter upon her final conflict. 'Fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as



an army with banners' (Song of Solomon 6:10), she is to go forth into all the world, conquering and to conquer."<sup>6</sup>

"Christ's white robe of righteousness will never cover any soul that is found in sin unrepented of and unforsaken. 'Sin is the transgression of the law' (1 John 3:4). Therefore those who are trampling upon the law of God, and teaching others to disregard its precepts, will not be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Jesus came not to save people in their sins, but from their sins."<sup>7</sup>

God set forth His Son Jesus "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:25, 26). Christ then is "our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). He has become "righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). "For he [the Father] hath made him [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ's righteousness can be imputed to us, because He kept God's law. All will agree that had He broken one of the commandments of God, He would have no righteousness to impute; for He Himself would have been a sinner; but He kept all of the commandments (John 15:10). His life was in perfect conformity to God's holy law. It was in His heart (Psalm 40:8). The faith



## Be Part of the Action!

Would you like to see the Lord's work finally completed? Do you long to be part of the action to hasten the return of Jesus? One way you can do this right now is by giving not only generously—but sacrificially—to the **Week of Prayer offering** to be gathered in all the churches on **Sunday, December 16, 2007**. For those who are isolated, your Week of Prayer offering can be sent directly to the address found on page 2 of this magazine.

This special offering supports new missions around the world. It promotes God's work in places where the pure message of present truth is still young, where it has not yet taken strong root. Such places need a real boost—and isn't it only natural that we as brethren and sisters in Christ be the ones to offer our support?

What has God given you? He gave no stinted, grudging, half-hearted gift. He poured out His all upon the altar, even the life of His only-begotten Son. When the call is made, what an honor it is to respond in love by bountifully giving to Him in return!

that brings justification is a living faith, bringing forth the fruits of righteousness (Romans 6:22).

"The white raiment is purity of character, the righteousness of Christ imparted to the sinner. This is indeed a garment of heavenly texture, that can be bought only of Christ for a life of willing obedience."<sup>8</sup>

Thus, when a person is born again and justified, then a life of sanctification begins which is a life of obedience to God. The Holy Spirit imparts the righteousness of Christ to us so "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). Righteousness by faith then is a specific provision of the gospel of Christ which becomes evident in keeping all God's commandments. This is why the Lord insists: "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

"The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ that may be wrought into the character. Purity of heart, purity of motive, will characterize everyone who is washing his robe, and making it white in the blood of the Lamb.

"Today let the question come home to the heart of everyone who professes the name of Christ, 'Dost thou believe in the Son of God?' Not, 'Do you admit that Jesus is the Redeemer of the world?' Not to soothe your conscience and the consciences of others by saying, 'I believe,' and think that is all there is to be done. But do you believe with all your heart that Jesus is your Saviour? Do you bring Him into your life, and weave Him into your character, until you are one with Christ? Many accept Jesus as an article of belief, but they have

no saving faith in Him as their sacrifice and Saviour. They have no realization that Christ has died to save them from the penalty of the law which they have transgressed, in order that they may be brought back to loyalty to God. Do you believe that Christ, as your substitute, pays the debt of your transgression? Not, however, that you may continue in sin, but that you may be saved from your sins; that you, through the merits of His righteousness, may be reinstated to the favor of God. Do you know that a holy and just God will accept your efforts to keep His law, through the merits of His own beloved Son who died for your rebellion and sin?

"You may say that you believe in Jesus, when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that His death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood."<sup>9</sup>

May God help us to make this amazing experience of moral transformation our own! This is possible through the strength and merit of the precious blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 310–312.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 310, 311.

<sup>3</sup> *The Upward Look*, p. 378.

<sup>4</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 311.

<sup>5</sup> *My Life Today*, p. 311.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *The Review and Herald*, August 28, 1894.

<sup>8</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 88.

<sup>9</sup> *The Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888.

# Eyesalve

By E. Tenorio

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**D**uring this Week of Prayer, thus far we have learned from the True

Witness to the Laodiceans

how serious is our spiritual condition, and how urgent is our need to buy of Him gold and white raiment. Yet that is not all. He is giving us a further admonition: "I counsel thee to . . . anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see" (Revelation 3:18).

It is interesting to note that in the ancient city of Laodicea, a popular eye medicine known as "Phrygian powder" was a significant source of wealth. The medical school at Laodicea was famous for the preparation and use of this eyesalve.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY EYES

Though Laodicea was famous for its eyesalve, this was not the spiritual eyesalve the Lord tells the church to use. The eyesalve of the world is not the solution for the church—only His special, heavenly eyesalve can satisfy the needs which you and I have in our daily journey towards heaven. Only the heavenly eyesalve can help us see clearly the pathway in which we are to tread.

The Bible tells us that the health of our spiritual eyes is very important; if these are doing well, everything else will be fine: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

For us living in the Laodicean period, in order to keep our eyes in good health, we are counseled to anoint them with eyesalve bought from Jesus who is the depository of all graces.

## THE EYE IS THE CONSCIENCE

"The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. Upon its correct view of things the spiritual healthfulness of the whole soul and being depends."<sup>1</sup>

The Laodiceans have an eye problem; they think they can see—and physically they can, but not spiritually. They have riches and comfort but their conscience is benumbed by the cares of life, so they are more concerned to have the applause of the world than the approval of God.

Those living in this period tend to have some knowledge about spiritual things, but they have no deep knowledge of their own condition; they cannot see very clearly—their depth perception is blurry. Christ is outside, knocking at the door of the church,

but the door is opened by individual believers.

The message of the True Witness is given to the whole church, but the acceptance of it must be a personal matter. Individually we must hear the Lord's voice and personally open the door of our heart, then the Lord will come to us and His presence will be the healing salve for our eyes.

## THE EYESALVE

"The 'eyesalve,' the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application; for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow, and the eye be single to the glory of God. The sinner, beholding himself in God's great moral looking glass, sees himself as God views him, and exercises repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in the light of God's Word we are to examine ourselves, detect sin under any guise, and flee by faith to Jesus. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10). It is God's Word which imparts that wisdom and grace to enable us to discern between the evil and the good; it is God's Word that gives faith in Jesus, for "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).



## *The Laodiceans have riches and comfort but their conscience is benumbed by the cares of life.*

The following questions can help us diagnose the health of our eyes (conscience): When was the last time I read through the whole Bible? When was the last time I read through one book of the Spirit of Prophecy? How much time am I devoting to read God's Word? How much time am I devoting to the reading of academic books, secular magazines, catalogs, and other kind of literature? How much time am I spending on the Internet? How much time am I spending watching movies? Is it possible for me to invest more time reading the Bible?

If you see that you need to spend more time reading the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, it means that you are just starting to receive the eyesalve of God.

If the Holy Spirit is speaking to you at this moment, listen to this still, small voice, and God will speak to you every moment. Then you are going to feel how wonderful and joyful it is to commune with our heavenly Father. Nothing else can give you the same satisfaction and happiness.

Do you know that by reading three to four chapters every day you can finish reading the Bible in one year? You don't have to wait until the beginning of next year to start—you can start today.

Nowadays there are so many sources of information and, as the wise man said, there is no limit to the making of books, but to study other books while sacrificing the study of God's Word is weariness of the flesh (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

There are even many devotional books, but how can we spend time with some of them in place of the ones we know to be fully inspired, without the risk of losing sight of the things which really matter in our walk with Jesus?

Other books may have beautiful contents, but they lack that transforming power which accompanies the inspired word—if we read such books more than God's Word we will turn our eyes inward to our own little world and will lose the spiritual sight.

### **ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TODAY**

Why is it so important that those living in these last days in the period of Laodicea see things clearly, as they really are? We need strong, sharp discernment, because "in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

"Satan himself is converted, after the modern order of things. He will appear in the character of an angel of light. Through the agency of spiritualism, miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and many undeniable wonders will be performed. And as the spirits will profess faith in the Bible, and manifest respect for the institutions of the church, their work will be accepted as a manifestation of divine power."<sup>3</sup>

"Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:13, 14).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine;

but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

Today, when we look back upon all the events of history, we see the success that Satan has gained in perverting the teaching of the Gospel message. Strange, uncertain interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, and the numerous controversial theories regarding biblical faith that we meet in the Christian world—these are plots designed by our great enemy, who invented them to confuse people's minds, so that they would not be able to discern the truth. And all the differences and separations existing among Christian churches, to a considerable extent, are explained by the deep-rooted customs to pervert the Scriptures to support some favorite theory whereby people "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21).



*The Lord rebukes us in His love. If we willingly accept it; it will be an eyesalve to cure our blindness.*

18

Instead of thoroughly searching God's Word with humble hearts trying to know His will, many people just want to find something unusual and original.

"The last great conflict between truth and error is but the final struggle of the long-standing controversy concerning the law of God. Upon this battle we are now entering—a battle between the laws of men and the precepts of Jehovah, between the religion of the Bible and the religion of fable and tradition.

"The agencies which will unite against truth and righteousness in this contest are now actively at work. God's holy word, which has been handed down to us at such a cost of suffering and blood, is but little valued. The Bible is within the reach of all, but there are few who really accept it as the guide of life. Infidelity prevails to an alarming extent, not in the world merely, but in the church. Many have come to deny doctrines which are the very pillars of the Christian faith."<sup>4</sup>

### **THERE IS HOPE FOR THE LAODICEANS**

What is especially sad about the Laodiceans is that they are not even aware of their condition. The True Witness warns, "Thou . . . knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Revelation 3:17). They think they are rich and in need of nothing, but the Lord says they are poor, blind, and miserable. Many churches in the world today appear to be successful—they have large membership rolls, buildings, schools, buses, and even TV

channels, but the problem with many is that they are just as blind as the religious crowd found in Matthew 13:15, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

Nonetheless the Lord shows the way for healing: "The Laodiceans . . . were not entirely blind, else the eyesalve would have done nothing to restore their sight, and enable them to discern the true attributes of Christ. Says Christ, By renouncing your own self-sufficiency, giving up all things, however dear to you, you may buy the gold, the raiment, and the eyesalve that you may see."<sup>5</sup>

The price may seem too high, but if I could see with the eyes of faith, I would realize that, remarkably, the price is too low. I actually pay nothing to gain Christ who is everything; He is all I need.

"He who places himself where God can enlighten him, advances, as it were, from the partial obscurity of dawn to the full radiance of noonday."

"True sanctification means perfect love, perfect obedience, and perfect conformity to the will of God. We are to be sanctified to God through obedience to the truth. Our conscience must be purged from dead works to serve the living God. We are not yet perfect; but it is our privilege to cut away from the entanglements of self and sin, and advance to perfection. Great possibilities, high and holy attainments, are placed within the reach of all."<sup>6</sup>

### **THE RESULTS OF ACCEPTING GOD'S REMEDY**

The Lord rebukes us in His love. If we willingly accept it; it will be an eyesalve to cure our blindness.

We must be willing to devote ourselves entirely to God; as mentioned earlier, this is the condition pointed out by Jesus when He said: "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). Therefore our desire must be to discern the truth and to obey it at whatever cost. Then we will have divine enlightenment. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17).

The heavenly eyesalve (God's Word) will:

- Give us clearness to understand.<sup>7</sup>
- Enable us to detect sin under any guise and abhor it.<sup>8</sup>
- Help us to discern the necessities of the time.<sup>9</sup>
- Enable us to discern spiritual things.<sup>10</sup>
- Enable us to distinguish between truth and error.<sup>11</sup>
- Help us to distinguish the Spirit's workings from that other one that produces license and fanaticism.<sup>12</sup>
- Enable us to see and shun Satan's wiles.<sup>13</sup>
- Enable us to see the glories beyond.<sup>14</sup>
- Enable us to see our own defects of character.<sup>15</sup>
- Make us see truth and obey it.<sup>16</sup>
- Give us discernment as required to enter heaven.<sup>17</sup>
- Help us detect buried truth.<sup>18</sup>
- Help us to fasten our eyes on God.<sup>19</sup>
- Enable us to discern God's will.<sup>20</sup>

The days in which we are living are full of falsehood and deceitfulness, “perilous times” (2 Timothy 3:1), when heresies will shake the church. Not only that, on a daily basis, we also have to face situations in the work place, in relationships, in school, in church and everywhere we go, and only the heavenly eyesalve can give us sufficient knowledge to make right choices, to discern and choose according to God’s will. Therefore we need to read God’s Word more than ever before, because right there we have the answers to all our questions.

## OUR PART

Since Laodicea was famous for its eyesalve, it probably was very hard to convince its inhabitants that they had to buy some eyesalve from outside. Here is the key for us to understand that we have to buy something from outside of ourselves. No matter how good we think we are, no matter how rich we think we are, we cannot be satisfied with our condition, we still must depend completely in God.

According to the instruction given in Hebrews 12:2, we need to be “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Our salvation begins and ends with the Lord. He plainly declares: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22). Salvation is only in Christ. “Jesus saith unto [Thomas], I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Anyone who looks anywhere else for salvation will be sadly disappointed one day, because as

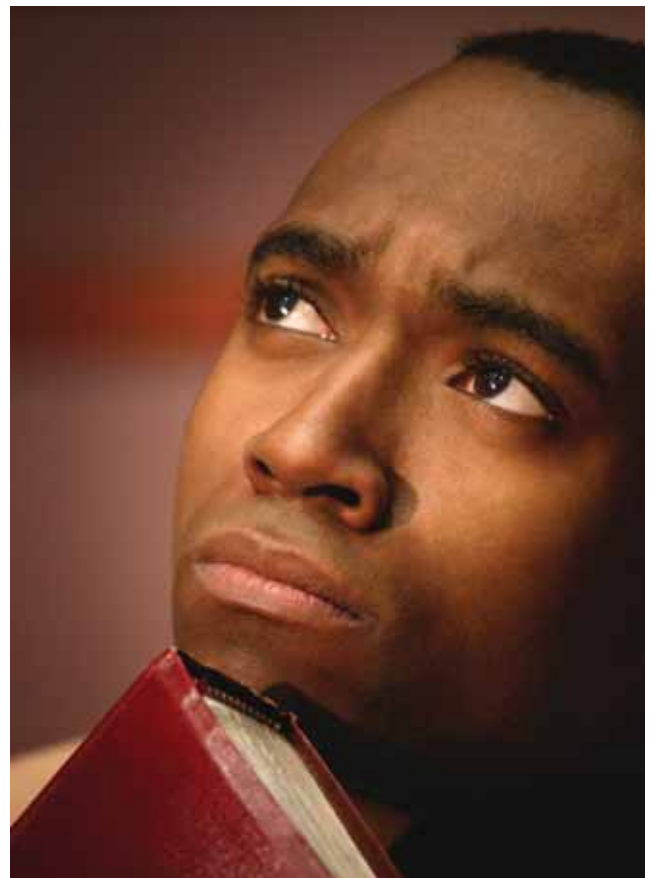
Acts 4:12 says, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Our salvation, our new life, begins with keeping our eyes on the Lord—and it is to continue that way, “looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” As soon as churches or individuals begin to take their eyes off the Lord and look elsewhere, they begin to lose their spiritual eyesight.

It is impossible to have Jesus and bear no fruit; it is impossible to have Jesus and walk in darkness.

“Some may say it is exalting our own merits to expect favor from God through our good works. True, we cannot buy one victory with our good works; yet we cannot be victors without them. The purchase which Christ recommends to us is only complying with the conditions He has given us. True grace, which is of inestimable value, and which will endure the test of trial and adversity, is only obtained through faith and humble, prayerful obedience.”<sup>21</sup>

“We must be awake to see our wrongs, to search for our sins, and to put them away from us.”<sup>22</sup>

May the Lord open our eyes to see the beauty of His Word in such a way that we may say: “Lord Jesus, because I now see what a treasure You are, I am ready to pay any price, though I realize that I actually can pay nothing



to gain You, who are everything I really need.” Amen.

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- <sup>1</sup> *Our High Calling*, p. 350.
- <sup>2</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 965.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 588.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 582, 583.
- <sup>5</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 965.
- <sup>6</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 564, 565.
- <sup>7</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 89.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 254; vol. 4, p. 88.
- <sup>9</sup> *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 42.
- <sup>10</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 964.
- <sup>11</sup> *My Life Today*, p. 72.
- <sup>12</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 142.
- <sup>13</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 233.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 368.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 615.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 233.
- <sup>17</sup> *Our High Calling*, p. 351.
- <sup>18</sup> *Reflecting Christ*, p. 111.
- <sup>19</sup> *Our High Calling*, p. 315.
- <sup>20</sup> *That I May Know Him*, p. 249.
- <sup>21</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 89.
- <sup>22</sup> *Our High Calling*, p. 351.

# True Love Brings Zealous Repentance

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*Reformation Herald editorial staff*

In His inspired message to believers living in this present era of Laodicea, the True Witness makes one thing very clear: He knows and sees everything about us. There is nothing hidden from the True Witness. He thoroughly reads our heart, His watchful eyes pierce through every inner thought and secret motive. All is utterly transparent as flawless glass to His penetrating vision. In Revelation 3:15, He boldly declares, “I know thy works.” “Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:13).

This solemn reality should call forth in every one of us a deep searching of heart. Let us each consider prayerfully: Do I sometimes have double motives in my life? Yes, I want to serve the Lord; yes, I want to surrender all to Him. But is everything really on the altar of sacrifice? Or are my inner affections still clinging to some worldly element—prideful ambition, love of display, lust, or materialism? Are even my good works sometimes tainted with traces of selfish motivation?

Christ makes the earnest appeal to every heart: “Love not the world,

neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15–17).

## THE LAW OF HEREDITY

Whenever a certain disease is found in a family, the children in that family will naturally have a stronger tendency to be afflicted with that particular disease. Our Creator explains plainly, “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:5, 6). Our chances of getting a specific disease such as cancer, heart disease, or arthritis are usually greater if our parents suffered from any such disease.

This principle of heredity also applies when we consider the Laodicean syndrome. We need to face squarely the bitter fact—lukewarmness runs in our family! We cannot escape our heritage. And as the sin problem continues to esca-

late on our planet, each successive generation grows weaker and weaker. So, all who are born in this era of history must be absolutely on guard. There’s no escaping the reality. But with the wonderful help which our merciful God is offering us—if we apply the healing remedies we’ve been studying about during this Week of Prayer—we can yet escape the subtle, insidious snare of the Laodicean syndrome.

## HEAVEN-BORN PATERNAL LOVE

Why is it possible to be delivered from the trap that entangles the Laodiceans? Because our heavenly Father loves us. His Son plainly declares, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten” (Revelation 3:19).

Just think about it: When we genuinely love our children, we make sure to correct their wrong tendencies and wayward habits. We try not to let them grow up in crooked paths—we make every conceivable effort to straighten the tender, young sapling before it becomes a massive gnarl of defective timber. Why? It is simply because we love them so much.

Likewise, as our heavenly Father’s children, we are told to “despise not . . . the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom

the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:5–11).

### THE CHASTENING OF THE LORD

One of the first studies in this Week of Prayer was about the glorious investment property that Jesus wants us to purchase—those heavenly riches of faith and love. Yet, "before there can be an intense desire for the wealth contained in Christ, which is available to all who feel their poverty, there must be a sense of need. When the heart is full of self-sufficiency, and preoccupied with the superficial things of earth, the Lord Jesus rebukes and chastens in order that men may awake to a realization of their true condition."<sup>1</sup>

In chastening and rebuking us, the Lord discloses to us our defects. He unveils the decay and deformities that are eating away at our spiritual life. And as we begin to honestly see ourselves as we really are—wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—we are less likely to climb up onto any presumed judgment seat to stand as harsh critics of our brethren and sisters in the faith. In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord admonishes us: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what

judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7:1–5).

The apostle confirms, "We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12).

"When men arise, claiming to have a message from God, but instead of warring against principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, they form a hollow square, and turn the weapons of warfare against the church militant, be afraid of them. They do not bear the divine credentials. God has not given them any such burden of labor. They would tear down that which God would restore by the Laodicean message. He wounds only that He may heal, not cause to perish. The Lord lays upon no man a message that will discourage and dishearten the church. He reproves, He rebukes, He chastens; but it is only that He may restore and approve at last."<sup>2</sup>

"In the church militant men will be ever in need of restoration from the results of sin. The one who in some respects is superior to another is in other respects inferior to him. Every human being is subject to temptation and in need of brotherly

interest and sympathy. The exercise of mercy in our daily relations with one another is one of the most effective means of attaining perfection of character, for only those who walk with Christ can be truly merciful."<sup>3</sup>

### OPERATING SUCCESSFULLY WITHIN THE CHURCH MILITANT

"We wish we had heaven here below, but we have not. The church militant is not the church triumphant. The church militant must wrestle and toil. She must strive against temptations and fight severe battles, because Satan is not dead. His agencies are much more active in his work than are the agencies of God in the work of their Leader. . . .

"God wants His workers to stand together in perfect unity. One worker is not to measure another worker, trying to find out how high or low broad he is spiritually. If you think your fellow worker is not all he ought to be, try to show him where he is lacking. Those who are new in a field cannot be expected to possess the experience of those who have been in the field for years. They are to be trained and educated, learning, lesson after lesson, how to do the work.

"To those . . . who all their lives have indulged themselves God says, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up the cross and follow me.' The one we are told to follow is the Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, who, in His great love for the human race, laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and came to this earth to show men how to live Christian lives. He tells us that self-denial is the evidence of discipleship.

"Could the curtain be rolled back, you would today see that the

*The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves.*

angels of heaven are looking with sadness upon our terrible neglect. All heaven is waiting to give God's sufficiency to those who will consecrate themselves unreservedly to the Master's service."<sup>4</sup>

## ENTIRE CONSECRATION, WHOLEHEARTED REPENTANCE

What does it mean to consecrate ourselves unreservedly to God? It's easy for us to expect this of others, but when it involves our own life, then the real challenge of the cross enters into the picture. Our mind seems to see a horizontal barrier directly blocking our upward, vertical aspirations. But that very cross has an attractive drawing power. Nothing can compare with the magnitude and beauty of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Lord has shown us the victory to be achieved by His supreme act of self-denial, with the words, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:31-33). This amazing drawing power is able to inspire in the human heart not mere superficial repentance, but truly zealous repentance. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

## BEHOLD THE MAN!

In his desperate attempt to make a proud, bloodthirsty mob to see the innocent purity of Christ, Pontius Pilate exclaimed, "Behold the man!" (John 19:5.) The misguided, self-righteous piety of the

Jewish leaders was more than this Roman governor could tolerate, even in his own heathen ignorance. Yet Pilate's fruitless efforts to appeal to the better nature of this professing religious people were tragically in vain. Though the governor had found no fault in their lamblike Victim arrayed in a mock purple robe and crowned with thorns, their cruel, pitiless verdict seems to have been virtually unanimous: "Crucify Him!"

For us today looking back on the scene, are we ever in our thoughts or actions somehow guilty of blindly repeating the same outrageous error as these supposedly religious men? "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." Such "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 10:26, 27; 6:6). We need to look to Calvary, we need to fall on the Rock, we need to be broken in spirit.

"Oh, why have we so little sense of sin? Why so little penitence? It is because we do not come nearer the cross of Christ. Conscience becomes hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, because we remain away from Christ. Consider the Captain of our salvation. He suffered shame for us that we might not suffer everlasting shame and contempt. He suffered on the cross, that mercy might be granted to fallen man. God's justice is preserved, and guilty man is pardoned. Jesus dies that the sinner might live. Shame is borne

by the Son of the Highest for the sake of poor sinners, that they might be ransomed and crowned with eternal glory.

"The cross of Calvary appeals in power, affording a reason why we should love Christ now, and why we should consider Him first, and best, and last, in everything. We should take our fitting place in humble penitence at the foot of the cross. We may learn the lessons of meekness and lowliness of mind as we go up to Mount Calvary and, looking upon the cross, see our Saviour in agony, the Son of God dying, the just for the unjust. Behold Him who could summon legions of angels to His assistance with one word, a subject of jest and merriment, of reviling and hatred. He gives Himself a sacrifice for sin. When reviled, He threatened not; when falsely accused, He opened not His mouth. He prays on the cross for His murderers. He is dying for them. He is paying an infinite price for every one of them. He would not lose one whom He has purchased at so great cost. He gives Himself to be smitten, and scourged, without a murmur. And this uncomplaining victim is the Son of God. His throne is from everlasting, and His kingdom shall have no end.

"Come, you who are seeking your own pleasures in forbidden joys and in sinful indulgences, you who are scattering from Christ. Look, O look upon the cross of Calvary; behold the royal victim suffering on your account, and be wise while you have opportunity, and seek now the fountain of life and true happiness. Come, you who complain and murmur at the little inconveniences and the few trials you must bear in this life. Look on

Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith. He turns from His royal throne, His high command, and lays aside His royal robe, and clothes His divinity with humanity. For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.

"The Son of God was rejected and despised for our sakes. Can you, in full view of the cross, beholding by the eye of faith the sufferings of Christ, tell your tale of woe, your trials? Can you nurse revenge of your enemies in your heart while the prayer of Christ comes from His pale and quivering lips for His revilers, His murderers—'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do?' (Luke 23:34).

"A work is before us to subdue pride and vanity, that seek a place in our hearts, and through penitence and faith to bring ourselves into familiar and holy converse with Jesus Christ. We must not shrink from the depths of humiliation to which the Son of God submitted in order to raise us from the degradation and bondage of sin to a seat at His right hand. We must deny self, and fight continually against pride. We must hide self in Jesus Christ, and let Him appear in our conversation and character as the One altogether lovely, and the chief among ten thousand. Our lives, our deportment will testify how highly we prize Christ, and the salvation He has wrought out for us at such a cost to Himself. While we look constantly to Him whom our sins have pierced, and our sorrows have burdened, we shall acquire strength to be like Him. We shall bind ourselves in willing, happy, captivity to Jesus Christ. It is high time we devoted the few remaining precious hours of our probation to washing our robes of character, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb, that we may be of that white-robed company who shall stand about the great white throne."<sup>5</sup>

## NOW IS THE TIME FOR ZEALOUS REPENTANCE

"Men sometimes become ashamed of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits, before they are aroused to manifestly come to Christ; but it is the power of the gospel, the grace of Christ, that is drawing them to make reformation in their conduct. An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to look upon Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, 'Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation demanded that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?' They then understand that it is the goodness of God that leadeth to repentance. A repentance such as this lies beyond the reach of our own powers to accomplish; it is obtained only from Christ, who ascended up on high, and has given gifts unto men. Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one who can arouse in the natural heart enmity against sin. He is the source of our power if we would be saved. No soul can repent without the grace of Christ. The sinner may pray that he may know how to repent. God reveals Christ to the sinner, and when he sees the purity of the Son of God, he is not ignorant of the character of sin. By faith in the work and power of Christ, enmity against sin and Satan is created in his heart. Those whom God pardons are first made penitent.

"The pleasing fable that all there is to do is to believe has destroyed thousands and tens of thousands, because many have called that faith

which is not faith, but simply a dogma. Man is an intelligent, accountable being; he is not to be carried as a passive burden by the Lord, but is to work in harmony with Christ. Man is to take up his appointed work in striving for glory, honor, and immortality. God calls upon men for the use of every talent He has lent them, the exercise of every power He has given; for man can never be saved in disobedience and indolence. Christ wrestled in earnest prayer; He offered up His supplications to the Father with strong crying and tears in behalf of those for whose salvation He had left heaven, and had come to this earth. Then how proper, yea, how essential that men should pray and not faint! How important that they should be instant in prayer, petitioning for the help that can come only from Christ our Lord! If you will find voice and time to pray, God will find time and voice to answer."<sup>6</sup>

"The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. There will be a continual reaching out of the soul after God, a continual, earnest, heartbreaking confession of sin and humbling of the heart before Him. At every advance step in our Christian experience our repentance will deepen."<sup>7</sup>

Dear brethren and sisters, the opportunity is here. The time is now. Probation's hour is fast fleeing. May the Holy Spirit of God deeply impress each of us to take earnest heed of the counsel of the True Witness to "be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

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<sup>2</sup> *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 22, 23.

<sup>3</sup> *In Heavenly Places*, p. 290.

<sup>4</sup> *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 22, 1901.

<sup>5</sup> *The Review and Herald*, August 2, 1881.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, April 1, 1890.

<sup>7</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

# "If Any Man Hear My Voice"

By S. Karvatski

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God is the source of life, light, and joy for the whole universe. His rich blessings such as water and sunlight are graciously bestowed upon all His creatures. For the past six thousand years He has been working out His great plan of redemption in behalf of fallen humanity. The great sacrifice of love was made in order to save us. And for us especially, who are living in the last period of this earth's history, His voice is beckoning us, saying: "Come unto me" (Matthew 11:28). Our prayer to God is that we may always hear His voice, which directs us to the true way of salvation.

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah 1:2). Who is interested in hearing God's voice today? Many voices are speaking in the world. They all are trying to draw the people's attention, to win the people's heart. That is why we need to discern the source of these voices and obey God's voice. His is the only voice which can direct everyone individually and the church as a whole to the right path. The Lord declares, "This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isaiah 30:21).

Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, two voices are always speaking to us.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed the privilege not only of hearing, but also of seeing, their Creator. They heard His voice, blessing and warning them.

Tragically, our first parents fell by listening to the wrong voice—the voice of Satan. Yet even after their fall, the loving voice of God has called out to humanity in different ways: "Adam, where are you?"

"As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Meanwhile, Satan's voice is always present also, trying to say to us: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Ever since the dawn of human history, this insidious enemy has been carrying on his seductive work.

Today the same enemy of souls still employs his agents in sinister acts of deception against humanity. He assailed Christ Himself with the dare: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. . . . All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:3, 9).

"With the same temptation Satan approaches men, and here he has better success than with Christ. To men he offers the kingdom of this world on condition that they will acknowledge his supremacy. He requires that they sacrifice integrity, disregard conscience, indulge selfishness. Christ

bids them seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; but Satan walks by their side and says: Whatever may be true in regard to life eternal, in order to make a success in this world you must serve me. I hold your welfare in my hands. I can give you riches, pleasures, honor, and happiness. Hearken to my counsel. Do not allow yourselves to be carried away with whimsical notions of honesty or self-sacrifice. I will prepare the way before you. Thus multitudes are deceived."<sup>1</sup>

## HOW CAN WE DISTINGUISH GOD'S VOICE FROM SATAN'S VOICE?

### The voice of God in nature

We can hear God's voice through nature: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19:1–3).

"Through nature and revelation, through His providence, and by the influence of His Spirit, God speaks to us."<sup>2</sup>

"God has bound our hearts to Him by unnumbered tokens in heaven and in earth. Through the things of nature, and the deepest and tenderest earthly ties that human hearts can know, He has sought to reveal Himself to us."<sup>3</sup>

"Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself with-



out witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:16, 17).

Yet inspiring as these things are, it still does not give us a full knowledge of God's love to us.

### God speaks through the Bible

God speaks to us from the pages of the Bible. This is His Holy Word—it reveals His will for us. It is His voice. The Holy Scriptures can make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Word of God is helpful and necessary. It will be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). Jesus prayed to God in behalf of those who would be His disciples until the end of time: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

"In the Bible the will of God is revealed to His children. Wherever it is read, in the family circle, the school, or the church, all should give quiet and devout attention as if God were really present and speaking to them."<sup>4</sup>

### WE HEAR GOD'S VOICE THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

Jehoshaphat, one of the few faithful kings among God's ancient people, declared an important principle: "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (2 Chronicles 20:20).

At the present time the church is in a great danger because the devil "went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of

Jesus Christ," that is, the Spirit of Prophecy (Revelation 12:17; 19:10).

"The Lord designs to warn you, to reprove, to counsel, through the testimonies given, and to impress your minds with the importance of the truth of His word."<sup>5</sup>

### GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left" (Isaiah 30:21).

The Holy Spirit is a permanent, infallible, and divine Teacher (John 14:16, 17).

If we study the Word of God with the help of the Spirit of Prophecy, and seek the Lord in prayer and meditation, then the Holy Spirit will speak to us and will show us which way to follow. If we heed the voice of the Holy Spirit, then, like the apostle Paul, we will do God's work and will walk in His path.

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

### GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH THE ANGELS

God addresses us through the three angels of Revelation chapter 14, telling us that the grand tribunal is set up in heaven, where the destiny of His children of all times is decided. They tell us that people are not fearing God nor giving glory to Him through their works, behavior, diet, dress, and life. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

The threefold angel's message warns us about the dangers of clinging to the world, and of illicit com-



promise with the state and with the other churches that will result in apostasy and fall.

The third angel speaks in a loud voice of the changes in Bible doctrine that have been accepted by the majority of the Christian churches. He warns against worshipping the beast and receiving the mark of the beast—the false sabbath—the first day of the week. This angel proclaims the true Sabbath and the holiness of the Ten Commandments and the faith of Jesus: "And the third angel followed [the other angels], saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. . . . Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:9, 12).

The third angel carries out the important sealing work of God's people living in this era. The Lord's messenger was shown this in vision: "I . . . saw the third angel. Said my accompanying angel, 'Fearful is his work. Awful is his mission. He is the angel

*Many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open. . . . All this rubbish must be taken away.*

that is to select the wheat from the tares, and seal, or bind, the wheat for the heavenly garner. These things should engross the whole mind, the whole attention."<sup>6</sup>

God addresses us through the angel of Revelation 18, with whose glory the earth is to be lightened. This message reveals to us the character of our Lord Jesus Christ that will be reflected in His followers in this last time. And it includes a final call to all sincere souls to come out of spiritual Babylon (confusion), and be separate (Revelation 18:4) and join the remnant of His people.

### **GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE TRUE WITNESS**

Above all, in this last period of history, the voice of God is heard especially in the message of the True Witness to the Laodiceans: Revelation 3:14–20. The Lord plainly declares: "I know thy works!"

Here He speaks about the condition of the church, about the dangers that are threatening it, and also He advises us to come out of the lukewarm state of self-satisfaction and self-righteousness.

"[The message of the True Witness to the Laodiceans] is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel."<sup>7</sup>

Let us take earnest heed of Christ's appeal found in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

In considering this plea, the Lord's messenger testifies: "I saw that many have so much rubbish piled up at the door of their heart that they cannot get the door open. Some have difficulties between themselves and their brethren to remove. Others have evil tempers, selfish covetousness, to remove before they can open the door. Others have rolled the world before the door of their heart, which bars the door. All this rubbish must be taken away, and then they can open the door and welcome the Saviour in."<sup>8</sup>

"Your worldliness does not incline you to throw wide open the door of your hard hearts at the knock of Jesus, who is seeking an entrance there. The Lord of glory, who has redeemed you by His own blood, waited at your doors for admittance; but you did not throw them open wide and welcome Him in. Some opened the door slightly and permitted a little light from His presence to enter, but did not welcome the heavenly Visitor. There was not room for Jesus. The place which should have been reserved for Him was occupied with other things."<sup>9</sup>

"Satan is continually seeking to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers which separate them from the world. Ancient Israel were enticed into sin when they ventured into forbidden association with the heathen. In a similar manner are modern Israel led astray. . . . All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan. In the unregenerate heart there is love of sin and a disposition to cherish and excuse it. In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin and determined resistance against it."<sup>10</sup>

Many members of the church become slaves of fashion, imitating the world, and listening to the voice of the tempter saying, "Ye shall not surely die." If the church imitates the customs of the world, it becomes similar to the world.

The people of God should shun worldly amusements. We are not to set any wicked thing before our eyes and ears. Television programs, movies, and the improper use of the Internet are a great curse in this generation. These things result in the destruction of many families and the moral degradation of our youth.

"With the increase of business, and the brightening prospects of commerce and manufacture, there is an increase of worldly-mindedness."<sup>11</sup>

It's a pity that many people will remain in this Laodicean state!

The Majesty of heaven humbly asks you to do Him an honor and let Him come into your home. He promises you His blessings: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock" (Revelation 3:20). He has glorious heavenly mansions, He has joy of life in the heavenly mansions, yet He humbly stands at the door of your heart and asks you to open the door to give you His light and let you rejoice in His glory.

"Why does [Christ] not enter? It is because the love of sin has closed the door of the heart. As soon as we consent to give sin up, to acknowledge our guilt, the barrier is removed between the soul and the Saviour."<sup>12</sup>

Someone may ask: "Why is this message sounding constantly?" Because you have not fully repented, you are not living totally for Christ and He does not abide in you! When you cast away one idol from your heart, Satan has already prepared another one. If you do not consecrate yourselves fully to Christ, if you neg-

lect to communicate with Him daily, if you do not make Him your counselor, you will see that your heart is open to vicious thoughts, and is prone to serving self instead of serving God.

The work of the True Witness today, as mentioned earlier, applies to the church and to every individual personally. He reveals the dangers and deceptions of Satan that are threatening the church, such as the lowering of God's standards clearly stated in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, the changing of the doctrinal truths, the influence of the world, the imitation of other popular teachings, pride, and complacency.

"Unless there is thorough repentance, unless men humble their hearts by confession and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will never enter heaven."<sup>13</sup>

"God leads His people on step by step. The Christian life is a constant battle and a march. There is no rest from the warfare. It is by constant, unceasing effort that we maintain the victory over the temptations of Satan. As a people we are triumphing in the clearness and strength of the truth. We are fully sustained in our positions by an overwhelming amount of plain Scriptural testimony. But we are very much wanting in Bible humility, patience, faith, love, self-denial, watchfulness, and the spirit of sacrifice."<sup>14</sup>

Why are so many rebukes and instructions given us? Christ tells us: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

We still have the possibility to open the door of the heart and receive our Saviour: "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

He is waiting for us to open our heart and say: "Stay with us!"

"No man can of himself cast out the evil throng that have taken possession of the heart. Only Christ can cleanse the soul temple."<sup>15</sup> Jesus says: "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

"When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. But unless we do yield ourselves to the control of Christ, we shall be dominated by the wicked one. We must inevitably be under the control of the one or the other of the two great powers that are contending for the supremacy of the world."<sup>16</sup>

"Do you ask, 'How am I to abide in Christ?' In the same way as you received Him at first. 'As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.' 'The just shall live by faith' (Colossians 2:6; Hebrews 10:38). You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him, and you took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believe that He for Christ's sake did all this for you. **By faith** you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him—by giving and taking. You are to give all—your heart, your will, your service—**give** yourself to Him to obey all His requirements; and you must **take all**—Christ, the fullness of all blessing, to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your

everlasting helper—to give you power to obey."<sup>17</sup>

Dear friends! Today we need not just the knowledge of the truth. Our great need today is to be born again: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:3, 7).

It is today that Christ knocks at the door of our heart, but the time will come when people will knock and will cry: "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew 7:22).

"Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness)" (Hebrews 3:7, 8).

Soon the time of probation, the time of possibilities, will be finished. Soon the heavenly gates will be opened for God's children and they will hear, like the most wonderful song of glory, the words of blessing from the King: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34).

May God bless us! May God help us to hear His voice always and to give heed to His call! Amen.

References:

- <sup>1</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 130.
- <sup>2</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 93.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- <sup>4</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 84.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 605.
- <sup>6</sup> *Early Writings*, p. 118.
- <sup>7</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 186.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.
- <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 216.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 508.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 376, 377.
- <sup>12</sup> *Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 325.
- <sup>13</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 250.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 253.
- <sup>15</sup> *The Desire of Ages*, p. 161.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.
- <sup>17</sup> *Steps to Christ*, pp. 69, 70. [Emphasis supplied.]

# "To Him That Overcometh"

28

By D. Zic

What is there left to overcome? Why is it that after so clearly explaining to the

lukewarm Laodiceans what needs to be done for their own salvation, the end of the message (Revelation 3:21, 22) says "to him that overcometh"? Won't everyone who hears the precious messages found in the preceding verses accept the call of the "Faithful and True Witness"?

The Lord Himself answers this question: "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:24). "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

Surely after understanding that they have "the Laodicean Syndrome," many should "buy [of Christ] gold," "white raiment" and "eyesalve" because "True Love Brings Zealous Repentance." They know that "if any [person] hear my voice" his or her hope of salvation is sure. We studied these things already, and it is so clear. Yet the message is that only a few will "overcome" even after hearing all these wonderful promises.

Then what is it that prevents someone from becoming an "overcomer" even after hearing the present

truth? And those who do overcome in the period of Laodicea, what reward will they receive?

## IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

In order to be complete overcomers living in the period of Laodicea, we need to see what we should overcome. In asking this question to youth groups around the world, I often hear the same answers: we need to overcome sin, we need to overcome the devil, we need to overcome bad habits and so on. And while these things are all technically true, we will never overcome them if we avoid the greatest enemy we have.

"Self is our greatest enemy, and day by day each must strive for the victory."<sup>1</sup>

We have been studying these wonderful messages. But as we really examine our own heart, in which condition do we find ourselves? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). But how can this be? I read the previous articles and understand my condition, my need for spiritual gold, eyesalve, white raiment, and repentance. And I hear the voice of the Lord calling me. So what is preventing me from reaching the condition of an overcomer?

As amazing as it may seem, only one letter or word separates me from the victory of the overcomer: that letter is "I." "Sanctification is not the

work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of **constantly dying to sin**, and constantly living for Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The greatest delusion in which we can fall is to accept the present truth but not fully submit ourselves to Christ. "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, **though ye know them**, and be established in the **present truth**" (2 Peter 1:12).

"The message to the Laodicean church is applicable to all who have had great light and many opportunities, and yet have not appreciated them."<sup>3</sup>

## STEPS OF DECAY

The world is divided into only two groups, the children of God and the wicked: "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19).

The reason for the general condition of wickedness in this world is expressed in these words: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, **because it knew HIM not**" (1 John 3:1).

Then an escape from the Laodicean condition, and a precursor to becoming an overcomer, is to know "Him"; to know Christ. But we cannot have an experience with Christ while engaging in a courtship with this world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.

## *An escape from the Laodicean condition, and a precursor to becoming an overcomer, is to know “Him”; to know Christ.*

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him” (1 John 2:15). “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

We find these steps of decay clearly in the experience of Balaam (Numbers 22). As a prophet, Balaam knew the truth. When confronted with temptation (verses 6, 7), he should have immediately sent away those who brought it. But instead he tried to compromise with error (verse 8). His own selfish desires prevented him from resisting temptation and having a complete experience with the Lord.

“There are some who seem to be always seeking for the heavenly pearl. But they do not make an entire surrender of their wrong habits. They do not die to self that Christ may live in them. . . . They have not overcome unholy ambition and their love for worldly attractions. They do not take up the cross and follow Christ in the path of self-denial and sacrifice. Almost Christians, yet not fully Christians, they seem near the kingdom of heaven, but they cannot enter there. Almost but not wholly saved, means to be not almost but wholly lost.”<sup>4</sup>

### EXPERIENCING THE CROSS

Even before the Calvary experience Christ told His disciples that if they wanted to be overcomers they had to have an experience with the cross. “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” (Luke 9:23). What does it mean to take up your cross?

In the time of Christ the cross had only one purpose, to punish the trans-

gressor with a humiliating death. To daily take up the cross is to die to self each day. “I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily” (1 Corinthians 15:31).

This experience leads us to the point where we can put ourselves aside and let Christ take the lead. “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

“When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life.”<sup>5</sup>

We cannot become overcomers by ourselves. “It is **impossible** for us, of ourselves, to escape from the pit of sin in which we are sunken. Our hearts are evil, and we cannot change them. ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.’ ‘The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be’ (Job 14:4; Romans 8:7). Education, culture, the exercise of the will, human effort, all have their proper sphere, but here they are powerless. They may produce an outward correctness of behavior, but they cannot change the heart; they cannot purify the springs of life. There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. **That power is Christ.** His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.”<sup>6</sup>

### THE REAL THING

When you truly submit to Christ you will have a real experience in the

things of God. Religion ceases to be a function of activity and becomes instead an experience with the Saviour. Until now we have not been ready to experience the joy of the promise to the overcomer in the period of Laodicea. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Revelation 3:21).

The ability to overcome temptation is made real when we have this complete submission to Christ. “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; **I have overcome the world**” (John 16:33).

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

“Our life must be hid with Christ in God. We must know Christ personally. Then only can we rightly represent Him to the world. Let the prayer constantly ascend: ‘Lord, teach me how to do as Jesus would do were He in my place.’ Wherever we are we must let our light shine forth to the glory of God in good works. This is the great, important interest of our life.”<sup>7</sup>

“It is only by knowing Christ that we can know God. The Sent of God calls upon all to listen to these words. They are the words of God, and all should give heed to them; for by them they will be judged. To know Christ savingly is to be vitalized by spiritual knowledge, to practice His words. Without this, all else is valueless.

“Christ came to this world to reveal the Father. What patience, what pitying tenderness, what divine com-

## *As soon as you decide to submit to Christ, He will begin to bestow His special gifts upon you.*

passion, what strength of purpose, He manifested! He did not fail nor become discouraged. He was the embodiment of purity, and His love was without a parallel. At every step He practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice. In His death He was the revelation of the reconciliation between God and man. By taking our nature, He bound Himself to us through eternal ages. He is our representative and head. He represents our race before God, still and forever bearing the humanity of the race. He pleads before the Father the perfect righteousness of all who accept Him.

“Christ calls upon us to hear His words, that we may know Him. ‘He that hath ears to hear, let him hear’ (Luke 14:35). We are not to hear as did those of whom the apostles said, ‘The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it’ (Hebrews 4:2). Those who hear savingly are those who hear in faith, and who give earnest heed to the things which they have heard, lest at any time they should let them slip.”<sup>8</sup>

“Holiness is within the reach of all who reach for it by faith, not because of their good works, but because of Christ’s merits. Divine power is provided for every soul struggling for the victory over sin and Satan.”<sup>9</sup>

“The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who has drunk most deeply of His spirit of self-sacrificing love—love that ‘vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil’ (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5)—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice even unto death, for the saving of humanity.”<sup>10</sup>

The rewards of the “chosen and faithful” overcomer can be divided

into two categories: 1) the immediate rewards, and 2) the future rewards.

### IMMEDIATE REWARDS

As soon as you decide to submit to Christ, He will begin to bestow His special gifts upon you. The apostle Paul summarizes the rewards of the faithful in his epistle to the Romans:

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope” (Romans 5:1–4).

The first reward is peace, the lack of which in our modern language is referred to as stress. Connection with Christ will bring you the peace. By faith you will have access to His grace. The second gift we receive immediately is patience to deal with the tribulations of the enemy. This will give us a positive experience. And finally we will then be able to experience a little glimmer today of the hope we have for the future.

“We want a personal, individual experience **today**. **Today, we want Christ abiding with us**. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man has been lifted up, that we might look and live. There is but one plan of salvation. There is but one process by which the soul may be healed of its wounds. Look to the Man of Calvary.”<sup>11</sup>

You can have this reward today! You can be an overcomer today! There is no need to wait for the future to experience the joys of salvation. You can begin experiencing these things today. The things of this world will

loose their tempting allurements the closer we come to having this wonderful experience of submission to Christ.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us” (Romans 8:35, 37).

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (1 John 5:4).

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

“The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be the rule of our faith. It is a leaf from the tree of life, and by eating it, by receiving it into our minds, we shall grow strong to do the will of God. By our Christlike characters we shall show that we believe the word, that we cleave to the Bible as the only guide to heaven. So shall we be living epistles, known and read of all men, bearing a living testimony to the power of true religion.

“If we do not receive the religion of Christ by feeding upon the word of God, we shall not be entitled to an entrance into the city of God. Having lived on earthly food, having educated our tastes to love worldly things, we would not be fitted for the heavenly courts; we could not appreciate the pure, heavenly current that circulates in heaven. The voices of the angels and the music of their harps would not satisfy us. The science of heaven would be as an enigma to our minds. We need to hunger and thirst for the righteousness of Christ; we need to be molded and fashioned by the transforming influence of His grace, that we may be fitted for the society of heavenly angels.

“Of ourselves, we can neither obtain nor practice the religion of Christ; for our hearts are deceitful above all things; but Jesus Christ, the great physician of souls, who, with unerring skill, can read the heart of man better than he himself can, has shown us how we may be cleansed from sin.”<sup>12</sup>

Don't wait to have an experience with Christ in heaven. It will be too late. Have that experience today and begin receiving your rewards immediately.

### FUTURE REWARDS

Having experienced peace, joy, and hope on this earth, you will be prepared to receive all the rewards to the overcomer. As an overcomer in the period of Laodicea you have the right to six great rewards:

1. To be spared from the seven last plagues which will come upon the earth (Revelation 3:10).
2. To receive a new name when Christ comes (Revelation 2:17).
3. To eat

directly from the tree of life (Revelation 2:7).

4. To have power over the nations (Revelation 2:26).

5. To have access to the temple in heaven (Revelation 3:12).

6. To spend eternity with Christ (Revelation 3:21).

“In the Bible the inheritance of the saved is called ‘a country.’ Hebrews 11:14–16. There the heavenly Shepherd leads His flock to fountains of living waters. The tree of life yields its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree are for the service of the nations. There are ever-flowing streams, clear as crystal, and beside them waving trees cast their shadows upon the paths prepared for the ransomed of the Lord. There the wide-spreading plains swell into hills of beauty, and the mountains of God rear their lofty summits. On those peaceful plains, beside those living streams, God's people, so long pilgrims and wanderers, shall find a home.”<sup>13</sup>

“There the redeemed shall know, even as also they are known. The loves and sympathies which God

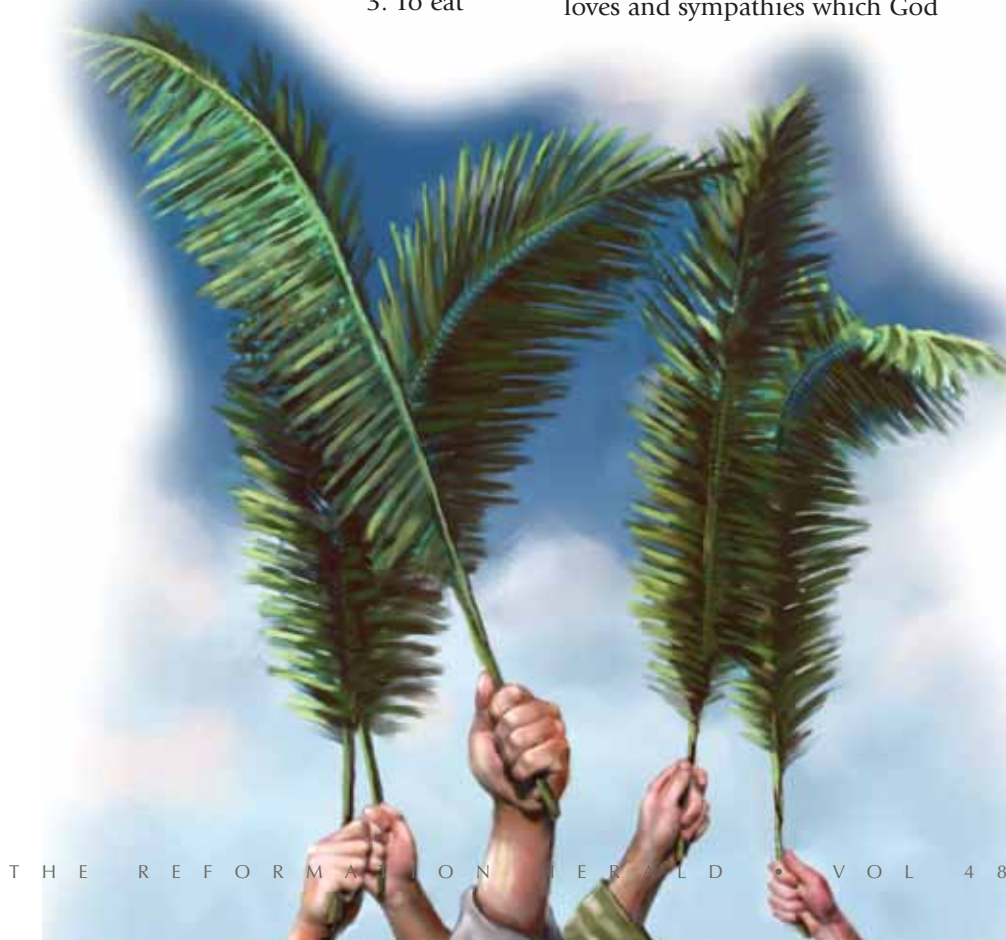
Himself has planted in the soul shall there find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, the sacred ties that bind together ‘the whole family in heaven and earth’ (Ephesians 3:15)—these help to constitute the happiness of the redeemed.”<sup>14</sup>

“And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise.”<sup>15</sup>

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:1–4).

### References:

<sup>1</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, August 26, 1897.  
<sup>2</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 560. [Emphasis supplied.]  
<sup>3</sup> *The Faith I Live By*, p. 306.  
<sup>4</sup> *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 118.  
<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.  
<sup>6</sup> *Steps to Christ*, p. 18. [Emphasis supplied.]  
<sup>7</sup> *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 121.  
<sup>8</sup> *The Signs of the Times*, January 27, 1898.  
<sup>9</sup> *The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 7, p. 908.  
<sup>10</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 543.  
<sup>11</sup> *The Review and Herald*, April 9, 1889.  
<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, May 4, 1897.  
<sup>13</sup> *The Great Controversy*, p. 675.  
<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 677.  
<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 678.



# *The Watcher Sees . . . and Speaks Up*

"The Watcher speaks at quiet times—  
perhaps in silence of the night. . . .  
He whispers that it's not enough  
that you and I have so great light.

Yes, it's great to have been granted  
so much pure and present truth.  
And yet He says it's not enough  
that we have known this from our youth.

"I would prefer that you were cold,"  
He says, "As folks with blind tradition—  
At least they're honest where they're at,  
with worldly hearts and vain ambition."

"But, Lord!" we say, "We can't be cold!  
We're smart with so much, so much light!"  
"I'd rather you be cold," He says,  
"Than see you go on just dead right."

"The cold ones' hearts are in the world,  
and yes, they all will have their fate.  
But since your thoughts are there as well—  
Lukewarmness I can't tolerate!"

"But, Watcher, do you really see me  
as I am, not as I think?"  
"It's like in ancient times," He says,  
"I sniff for fragrance—find a stink!"

Then certainly, we'd better rush  
to buy now from the Heav'nly One  
His merchandise, instead of heading  
for that latest, shallow fun.

He says, "If you were hot for Me, then  
now at last you'd really live.  
You'd take the message to the world,  
to every soul salvation give.

"There'd be revival in our midst  
and you could tell the vibrant story.  
You'd be amazed how soon this world  
will fill up with the heav'nly glory!"

"So as I read this Week of Prayer," I think,  
"How can it change my life?"  
"You need to overcome," He says,  
"Your tendency to sin and strife.

"You need to buy of Me," He says,  
"My blood-paid gold of faith and love,  
My raiment white and eyesalve pure,  
all coming only from above.

"Then strive to overcome, My child—  
the day is dawning more and more  
There's nothing to compare on earth  
With all the goods I have in store."

—B. Monteiro

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