

# THE KNOCKING AT THE DOOR

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If Jesus Himself were guest speaker in our church this Sabbath, what would His message be? The answer is simple. He is Guest Speaker already; and His message is readily available for all to hear—the message addressed “unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans.”

There is a neglected but essential preparation to make before the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Latter rain can possibly come. The solution to our problem may be far more simple than we have supposed. That most necessary preparation is a clear understanding of Christ’s special message to His people in the last days—the Laodicean message in Revelation 3.

There must be something in the Laodicean message which we have not understood or received. We acknowledge that the Latter rain and Loud Cry have been delayed for many decades. If, after all these many decades of praying for it, we are still not “fitted for the loud cry”, would it not be wisdom to turn our attention to the Laodicean message in order to find the reason?

The divinely appointed remedies for the Laodicean condition of pride are “gold tried in the fire”, “white raiment” and “eye salve.” With the passage of time it has become apparent that the remnant church has never clearly understood the dynamics of this message.

If we feel “rich and increased with goods” in regard to our understanding of “righteousness by faith”, and if we feel proud and satisfied because of our great progress in proclaiming it to the world, we shall feel no heart-need to study the Laodicean message. But if we sense a tremendous “hunger and thirst after righteousness”, if we have a deep conviction that history has brought us to a place of great crisis spiritually and that the Laodicean message provides the key to unlock our present impasse, then the Laodicean message will surely be reconsidered with open-minded candor.

The True Witness has listed the “gold” as the first remedy. Is it because the realization of our doctrinal and spiritual poverty is the most difficult barrier in our consciousness?

“The carnal mind is enmity against God”, says Paul (Romans 8:7). Until the people of God are truly ready for the sealing and the close of probation, they most certainly do have a problem. If we keep going into our graves as have countless generations before us ever since Eden, we are continually taking our problem with us to the grave. Not until the problem is solved can God’s people possibly be prepared to “stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator” (GC 425). Not until there is “a special work of purification, of putting away of sin among God’s people upon the earth”, can we assume that alienation is really overcome.

Latent “enmity against God” is the root of the problem. This is what has created a need for a “final atonement.” But we just don’t see it. It is an unconscious sin. We are like our beloved brother

Peter. Years after his baptism and his ordination to the ministry and after years of schooling under Christ Himself, Peter did not know or understand his own hidden motivations.

“When Peter said he would follow his Lord to prison and to death, he meant it, every word of it, but he did not know himself. Hidden in his heart were elements of evil that circumstances would fan into life. Unless he was made conscious of his danger, these would prove his eternal ruin. The Saviour saw in him a self-love and assurance that would overbear his Love for Christ. . . . Christ’s solemn warning was a call to heart searching.” DA 673.

Could words more plainly say that Peter’s problem lay in his unknown heart? As our Saviour beholds us now, on the eve of our last great trial, what does He see hidden in our hearts that must be “made conscious” to us?

When Peter finally denied his Lord, he did that which none of us dare repeat in the final test when “the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor”: “Peter had just declared that he knew not Jesus, but he now realized with bitter grief how well his Lord knew him, and how accurately He had read his heart, the falseness of which was unknown even to himself.” DA 713.

And yet Peter was a truly sincere “born-again Christian”. Thank God the final tests have not come as yet! Who of us would truly be ready?

The Jewish leaders were pathetically sincere in believing that the very existence of the “whole nation” required that Jesus die. Caiphas said: “It is

expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself. . . .” John 11:50, 51.

These men knew full well they were crucifying an innocent man. What they “knew not” was that they were giving expression to the unconscious “enmity against God” buried beneath the surface in all carnal human hearts. Their words and actions were being motivated by an unknown force within them.

We all have the same problem. “Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God.” DA 745. If we refuse this clear-cut truth, we may well set the clock back for another generation. Spiritual pride evades this revelation. “Impossible! I could never do that,” someone may insist.

The evil that was perpetrated on innocent Jews by Christian Nazi Germany indicates the depths of sin. In our own time we only have to look no further than Serbia which is a Christian country dominated by Eastern Orthodox religion and the atrocities committed there against the Moslems. Any form of racial or religious bigotry is a crime against the Saviour who died for all mankind. He feels the pain of it all. He is crucified afresh and put to an open shame by the sins of the world and that includes our continued sinning.

The final unfolding of history will be the disclosure of the world’s guilt so that all can see it at last. When the world unites to exterminate the people of God in the final decree, this unconscious mind of evil will be fully manifest. No longer will the Holy Spirit restrain it. And their hatred of God’s people will be in reality hatred of Christ—a fresh and

complete display of the same unconscious hatred manifested at Calvary, “that all the world may become guilty [out in the open] before God” (Rom. 3:19).

The painful truth disclosed in the True Witness’s message to the “angel of the church of the Laodiceans” is that a related guilt is our real sin today. And it is holding up the Latter Rain. Beneath the surface there is a “carnal mind” which “is enmity against God.” All through the decades this unconscious enmity against God has frustrated our best conscious efforts to hasten the coming of the Lord.

Obviously, only the “blotting out of sins” accomplished in the Day of Atonement can avail to cleanse this deeper level of unknown sin. When that work is done, the mysterious phrase, “the final atonement”, will be better appreciated. No magical process will do the work. The now unknown sins will be brought fully to consciousness and repented of.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring unrealized sin to consciousness. “And when He is come, He will reprove [convict] the world of sin” (John 16:8). It is impossible for such sin to be forgiven until the Holy Spirit imparts a consciousness of it. This is why there can be no automatic scrubbing of the tape by pressing the magic button—“Lord, forgive me of all my sins”—without those sins coming to consciousness. The sins buried in the human heart must come to our consciousness before they can be blotted out. The “good news” is that the Lord will do the work if we let Him.

“God knows every thought, every purpose, every plan, every motive. The books of heaven record the sins that would have been committed had there been opportunity. . . God has a perfect photograph of every man’s character and this photograph He compares with His law. He reveals to man the defects that mar this life, and calls upon him to repent and turn from sin.” E. G. White, 5BC 1085.

You have motives and purposes tucked away deep down in your heart that even you are unaware of. The Holy Spirit will reveals those things to you if you will but listen to His voice. What will you do when He reveals those things to you? Will you repent and bring them to Jesus?

Our morbid curiosity about the heinous deeds of others is constantly fed to us through sights and sounds. We pat ourselves on the back congratulating ourselves that we are not capable of such atrocities. But the very fact that we spend hours in front of this exposure indicates our interest in sin. Should we not rather flee from sin and pursue righteousness?

Two important factors condition the “blotting out of sins”: the sins coming fully to consciousness, and a new appreciation of the cross that provides the dynamic that makes the experience possible. Take away the atonement provided at the cross and no sin whatever can be forgiven, must less “blotted out.”

Zechariah’s great prophecy is clearly concerned with “blotting out of sins”, for he speaks of cleansing from “sin and uncleanness”. This prophecy in Zech. 12:10; 13:1 has never yet been fulfilled. “And I will

pour upon the house of David [the church leadership] and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem [the church], the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.”

When the Lord says “they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced”, it is clear that the Holy Spirit wants to convict us of our responsibility for crucifying the Saviour. We can expect the Holy Spirit to be “poured” upon the church giving a new vision of Christ crucified, revealing our own participation in the crime. The Spirit will arouse in the hearts of God’s people a new sense of oneness with Christ. It will bring us into sympathy with Him. We will love what He loves. His desires will become our desire.

I had a most unusual experience this past spring while flying home from Michigan. I boarded the airplane in Grand Rapids and took my seat next to a woman traveling alone. I started up a conversation with her and through the flight learned that she was a professor who taught at Calvin College. When she learned that I was a Seventh-day Adventist minister it sparked a most interesting exchange. I will not relate everything said over the course of an hour. But I did remember that she had a book out and she reminded me she had written a chapter against Seventh-day Adventists.

One of her parting comments to me was, “You don’t really believe in Ellen White and all those weird visions she had, do you? And you don’t really believe in that sanctuary stuff and the investigative judgment? That’s just a face-saving device to cover up bad prophetic predictions.”

You see most evangelical Christians have no idea what Jesus wants to accomplish in the heavenly sanctuary during this Day of Atonement ministry. It is like there is a veil that has been placed over their eyes so that they cannot see the truth. For that matter, most Seventh-day Adventists don’t have the foggiest notion either what is in the heart of Jesus regarding what He really cares about in the sanctuary. Most of us think the sanctuary has to do with heavenly arithmetic and the 2300 years. What does that have to do with us? we wonder. We are in the dark too. Oh, how we must grieve Him.

You see there’s a progression to truth. And unless you follow it all the way you will be left behind in the dust and your experience will correspond to it. We must have present truth in order to be fully up to speed where Jesus wants us to be.

What we need to realize is that Christian experience perfectly acceptable in times previous to the cleansing of the sanctuary becomes “lukewarmness” in our day. Measured devotion appropriate during the ministry of the High Priest in the Holy Apartment becomes “iniquity” when weighed against the incomparably greater scope of consecration appropriate to His ministry in the most Holy Apartment.

Look at Revelation 3:7-8, “These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth: I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it. . . .”

Jesus has shut the door to the first apartment. He’s not there anymore. No use to send your prayers to Him there. His grace does not proceed from there anymore. But He has opened the door to the Most Holy Place and no man can shut it though they may ridicule it and those who proclaim it.

Notice this revealing comment from Sr. White. “Then I saw an exceeding bright light come from the Father to the Son, and from the Son it waved over the people before the throne. But few would receive this great light. Many came out from under it and immediately resisted it; others were careless and did not cherish the light, and it moved off from them.

“Then a cloudy chariot, with wheels like flaming fire, surrounded by angels, came to where Jesus was. He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. . . . Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, “My Father, give us Thy Spirit.” Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy and peace.

“I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw

them look up to the throne, and pray, ‘Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace.” (EW 55-56.)

And those who have failed to follow Jesus into the Most Holy Apartment may pray to heaven, but their prayers are being sent to a place where the door has been shut and Satan is hearing their prayers and answering them. Whereas, we must enter into the open door that Jesus has invited us to enter. We must follow Him into the Second Apartment there to experience full cleansing of character from all sin and come into perfect loyalty and unity with Him.

This is the purpose for which Christ died. We must have a full gospel message to deal with the sin problem that will ultimately vindicate God. Evangelicals proclaim only a partial gospel. Forgiveness of sins and removal of guilt in justification is crucial in the plan of redemption. But did Jesus die on the cross in order to forgive us our sins so that He can save us in our sinning? Decidedly no. And this is the deeper work of the cross and the sanctuary. It’s whole purpose is not only for forgive but to cleanse. It is grace abounding.

The Evangelical gospel is good so far as it goes. But it is not good enough. We need a gospel that corresponds with the work of Christ in the sanctuary. It is a cleansing work not only for the hospital for sinners in heaven, but also the patients here on earth. Jesus wants to go to the root of the

problem of sin in our lives and that is the character the mind. Will you choose to let Him uproot the enmity—the hatred against God—that is deep-seated in your heart? Will you choose to let self be crucified with Christ?

That's what He did for you. He took your sinful nature upon Himself. Lived a perfectly obedience life according to His Father's commandments. And when it was all said and done, He took that nature of yours and executed it on the cross. It is dead. And it is your by faith. Claim it as your own. As self dies you are resurrected a new creation in Christ Jesus. Self no longer rules. The Spirit of Christ reigns in your life. But you must choose this daily.

This is the truth experienced that will vindicate God before the universe. In the great controversy with Satan the Accuser has long claimed that it is impossible for sinful man to obey God's law perfectly. For the most part we have proven his case to be true. There are only a few shining examples to the contrary—Moses, Elijah. But in these last days God must have a remnant who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus to prove Satan's charges annulled.

Jesus will demonstrate His life in a chosen generation who are willing to cooperate with Him. He is waiting with longing desire for that company who will demonstrate with Him that faith works through love by power from above. This is not perfectionism or holy flesh. We're talking about a demonstration of character and mind that is in perfect harmony with the law of God which is love. The conflict in this is over the flesh—the self—that

will not be removed from us until the second coming of Jesus. Those who gain the victory over self, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, the devil and the world will vindicate God in the great controversy before onlooking watchers and heavenly intelligences. Then God can assert that His claims have been true. That sinful man through the power and grace of God can be in perfect harmony with His will just as Jesus demonstrated in His life and death.

How do we get this gold? You've got to buy it. The gift of Christ's righteousness, everything He has for us is free, right? And yet, we're told here to buy it. How do we buy it? What is it that we have that can buy this righteousness? Well, it's something that we have that restricts God from giving us the gift. It's our self-righteousness. And self-righteousness stands in the way of me receiving the gifts of God.

And so we have got to purchase the gift of God here, if you will, with our self-righteousness. Maybe purchase here is not a good word. Exchange. We've got to bring and say, Here's the price. Here's my self-righteousness. I don't see it all. In fact, I don't feel like I'm really this way, but you have said so. And what little bit I can see here you can have it all. It stinks. I know that much whatever it is. I can see it in some others. If I've got any of that, take it.

We buy the white raiment—the righteousness of Christ—the same way.

Anoint your eyes with eye salve. We all know the eye salve is the Spirit. The Lord led me to a thought. In one place Jesus said, The words that I speak unto you they are Spirit and they are life.

Have you ever noticed that when your eyes—I'm talking about your real eyes—are anointed with the Word it can show you some of that self-righteousness and show you some of the righteousness of Jesus? They go together, by the way. The more we see of our self-righteousness the more capacity we have to see Jesus' righteousness.

Some people only see self-righteousness and it's totally discouraging and depressing. And that's why we need to show them Jesus so that they can see the contrast and be encouraged that Jesus loves the sinner and can bring the sinner from where he is to where He is. In fact, has brought the sinner from where we are to where He is.

Even after the close of probation, by the way, there's a purification process, isn't there? Have you read that, that the people of God go through fiery trials after the close of probation. What for? There's still a purification process going on. God's trying to remove all this self-righteousness until we've dumped it all at His feet so that He can fill us with all of His righteousness.

And so He's calling His church, His people, His leadership to repent. Again, not of some specific, you know, sin here and sin there, but of our self-righteousness. Of our parading before the world who we are. Of our stinking savor that's in the ointment and just not letting it come out the way God intends it to come out.

So be zealous, therefore, and repent.

And when God's people do repent and they finally let go of this attitude then there's going to be an

overcoming church. Then that church victorious that church envisioned is going to be seen. And this earth will be lightened with people who are the light of the world because the singular Light is in those people. And the church triumphant will be a church glorious. Jesus will have a bride that He will be proud of and be able to point to and say, My *agape* has been reproduced in them. The commandments of God seen in them. Behold, how they love one another. And behold, how they love the world and give themselves for it. May God bless us to that end. Amen.

Father in heaven, we thank you that you have spoken clearly to us here in Revelation 3:14-21. We thank you that the Witness is True. And we would like to humble ourselves. Make ourselves available. We ask you to accept the self-righteousness that we bring to you right now. And take it so that we can receive a faith that works by love. So that we can be clothed and not marching naked through this world—a shame to You instead of a glory to You.

Give us grace to walk in that light for Jesus sake. Amen.