# TIMELY GREETINGS

— The Only Peace of Mind —

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BAPTISM AND THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS-THE GATE TO THE CHURCH.

THE LAODICEANS PERISH WITHOUT THE "MESSAGE TO THE LAODICEANS."

## TEXT FOR PRAYER

*Amusements Bring A Flood Of Temptations*

Our reading today begins on page 54 of *Christ's Object Lessons*.

"Even the church, which should be the pillar and ground of the truth, is found encouraging the selfish love of pleasure. When money is to be raised for religious purposes, to what means do many churches resort? – To bazaars, suppers, fancy fairs, even to lotteries, and like devices. Often the place set apart for God's worship is desecrated by feasting and drinking, buying, selling, and merry-making.... The pursuit of pleasure and amusement centers in the cities. Many parents who choose a city home for their children, thinking to give them greater advantages, meet with disappointment, and too late repent their terrible mistake. The cities of to-day are fast becoming like Sodom and Gomorrah.... The youth are swept away by the popular current. Those who learn to love amusement for its own sake, open the door to a flood of temptations.... They are led on from one form of dissipation to another, until they lose both the desire and the capacity for a life of usefulness."

Let us now pray for both the parents and the children, for the Church herself at her lowest ebb is encouraging worldliness by her unholy methods of raising money; God's house is desecrated, and the cities are become like Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us pray that we as parents and guardians will keep close to the Master and seek Divine aid in bringing up the children in God's own order, for their very salvation is at stake.

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V. T. Houteff

**BAPTISM AND THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS--**

**THE GATE TO THE CHURCH**

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*SABBATH, DECEMBER 20, 1947*
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*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Acts 2:38.

The ticket to baptism, we see, is repentance. Baptism is therefore the gate to the Church. Then follows the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Now therefore arises the question, Of what shall one repent? – Broadly speaking, the answer would be, Repent from sinning. This is true, but how shall we know what sin is? We of ourselves do not know, declares Inspiration:

*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring*

*forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.* Isa. 55:7-11.

Inspiration, moreover, points out that by studying the Scriptures Jesus Himself learned the difference between right and wrong:

*Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.* Isa. 7:14, 15.

These verses certainly forecast the first advent of Christ, but the Scriptures also say that Christ ate of whatever lawful food was set before Him: "John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children." Matt. 11:18, 19.

The butter and honey, then, must be symbolic, and what can they symbolize but the Word of God, the source from which Jesus learned to choose the good and to refuse the evil? He has set the example, and Inspiration plainly warns that "butter and honey shall everyone eat that is left in the land." Isa. 7:22. Obviously, those who do not eat this spiritual butter and honey shall be taken out of the way, shall not be left in the land. "Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left." Isa. 24:6.

Yes, even after the sinners are taken out of the land, the righteous in the Lord, those that are left, shall continue to study the inexhaustible Word of God. Plainly, then, for any one to conclude that he already knows the Bible, that there is no more for him to learn, is indeed to blaspheme as the scroll unrolls.

How does the Word define sin? – We find the answer in the following scriptures:

*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* 1 John 3:4-10.

*And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in*

*Him. He that saith He abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* 1 John 2:3-6.

*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the Judgment.* Matt. 5:17-21.

*For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* Romans 8:6, 7.

*For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I*

*am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.* Rom. 7:19-25.

From these verses of Scripture you see that the law of the ten commandments, the eternal law which always was and always shall be, is the law which defines sin, and which judges a man either right or wrong. Now, since all mankind has broken this law, they are all condemned to eternal death, but we thank God that Jesus died in our stead and arose again, making us free from the condemnation of the law. Yes, His death and resurrection make us all free from the death which transgression of the law imposes.

All who repent of breaking the law, and accept Him as their Saviour, arise to walk in newness of life. A life that is in harmony with the law is indeed the righteousness of Christ. They, moreover, no longer sin, their salvation is secured because, says the apostle John, "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. He therefore cannot sin, or stay in sin. He is righteous in the Lord.

Until the Lord takes us back to our own land, though, there to change our hearts and to write on them His law (Ezek. 36: 24-28), until then the struggle in which the apostle Paul found himself – a struggle to obey the law of the Spirit while the law of the flesh is against it – is to be our lot. But we thank God Who gives us power to overcome day by day in the Lord our Saviour.

Though we fall seven times a day, though we sin unintentionally, if we arise and run the race we shall win. We cannot lose, because we have an Advocate, even Jesus Christ, the Righteous. Our assurance of salvation is therefore guaranteed.

Henceforth, warns John the Baptist, we should not be as the scribes and Pharisees: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Matt. 3:7-9.

Here you see that those who wish to be baptized must first prove themselves penitent, worthy. It must be seen that they have renounced their sins, and are living in newness of life. Moreover, they must not think that God needs them, that He cannot do without them, but that they need Him, for if need be He can create people out of stones.

To seek baptism as a way of escape from hell, is nothing less than repeating the acts of the Pharisees. Baptism should be sought as a way to become a son of God, to become an eternal, immortal being. Baptism, you see, is a public renouncing of sin, and the certification of baptism; with the gift of the Lord's righteousness, swings open the gate of the Church.

To prepare His prospective candidates for baptism, Jesus first taught the things recorded

in Matthew, chapters 5, 6 and 7, the sermon on the mount. Even after baptism we should do well to read these chapters often, lest we forget.

After we have received worthily the baptism of water we are patiently and confidently to wait for the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. This promise, we shall now see, the disciples received on the day of Pentecost.

*And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.* Acts 1:4, 5.

*Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren.* Acts 1:12-14.

*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and It sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Acts 2:3, 4.

Never since that day have men been thus baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. Indeed,

they could not have been, for never since then has a group of Christians, a church, come into one accord. There is nevertheless a promise of another such baptism after the "former rain, and the latter rain" fall upon God's people, after His people reach full spiritual maturity.

*Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.... And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit.* Joel 2:23, 28, 29.

The statement, "upon all flesh," shows that as a people, without one exception, all shall again receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

This scripture shows, moreover, that the manifestation of the Spirit, in the second Pentecost, is to be much greater than the former, that in comparison the former was but a sample.

When will this be? – It will have to be just as soon as God can get a company of people to "see eye to eye" (Isa. 52:8) that their own so-called good deeds are but filthy rags, and thus be of one accord. The only such company in prophecy, you know, is the 144,000, the first fruits, the servants of God who stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb without guile in their mouths (Rev. 14:1, 4, 5). To achieve such a happy holy state the Church must experience a mighty revival

and reformation, a shaking, a sifting, such as she has never yet experienced. Yes, if everyone were to cast away his private ideas and opinions, it would indeed bring the greatest revival and reformation since the day of Pentecost. This is what now must take place, and it will take place exactly as the following Scripture reveals: "He cried also in mine ears with a loud voice, saying, Cause them that have charge over the city to draw near, even every man with his destroying weapon in his hand. And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brasen altar.... And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house." Ezek. 9:1, 2 4-6.

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking

among God's people." – *Early Writings*, pg. 270.

"God calls for a spiritual revival and a spiritual reformation. Unless this takes place, those who are lukewarm will continue to grow more abhorrent to the Lord, until He will refuse to acknowledge them as His children.

"'A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from spiritual death. Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.'" – *Christ Our Righteousness*, pg. 121.

With such a guileless company of servants brought to light, the subject becomes unquestionably clear. They can with power proclaim the "everlasting Gospel," the gospel of the kingdom in all the world, for a witness unto all nations. Of those that escape the slaying (Isa. 66:16), the guileless ones, the Lord says:

"I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord,

as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." Isa. 66:19, 20.

"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Rev. 7:9.

Let us now hear how Jesus was baptized, and what we may expect after the baptism of water and before the baptism of the Spirit:

"And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Matt. 3:16, 17.

Having been baptized by immersion, and coming straightway out of the water, Jesus was immediately led to be tempted of the Devil.

*Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the Devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and sitteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast*

*Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the Devil leaveth Him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto Him.* Matt. 4:1-11.

Here is our example. After water baptism, temptations and victories are to be our lot, too. Jesus, you see, met the Devil with a "Thus saith the Lord," with what was written. If we cannot interest ourselves in the Bible as much as He was interested in It, if we do not study to know what He would have us to do, how, then, can we face our temptations and come out victorious? Is it any wonder that many after baptism fall out of the way? The very thing that would make them strong in the faith as they see God giving them glorious victory, they shrink from, not knowing that after a storm of rain and wind, there comes sunshine and a calm. Job was tried to the limit, but gained the victory, and afterwards received double for all his losses. Why can not we?

Having gotten the victory over His temptation, Jesus was never again troubled by the Devil. And Job and all God's great men by experience found the same relief from Satan.

Our position against sin, therefore, must be definite, without the slightest wavering. We, too, must let the Devil know that we mean business, if we are ever to find peace.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Heb. 6:1-6. To make reservation for sin, is as it were to dig your own eternal grave.

Now, we want to know how many baptisms the Bible teaches. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Eph. 4:4, 5.

Yes, there is but one kind of baptism, and one need to be baptized but once, if one is rightly baptized. Of course if one should backslide from the faith, and become as he was before baptism, – a heathen – it may be permissible to be rebaptized if that one should find repentance and be re-converted.

Rebaptizing, though, is not required when one makes an advance step into Truth. For example,

suppose the Apostle Paul had lived on from the day he was baptized until today. He consequently would have become a member of the churches in the Reformation, – first the Lutheran, then the Presbyterian, the Methodist, the Baptist, the Adventist, etc., as the unfolding of Truth would have led him from one denomination to another. He nevertheless would not have had to be rebaptized for moving upward from one denomination to another with the ever unfolding Truth.

In whom are we to be baptized?–

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Matt. 28:19.

*This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are One.* 1 John 5:6, 7.

When we are baptized in the name (singular, not "names") of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we are baptized in our Maker, the blood, and the Truth, and these three are One. Thus we are baptized in the "name," not names, because these three are one – The Trinity – Creation, Redemption, Truth.

Most people, though, act as if they were baptized to the church, to a society, to Paul or to Apollos, so to speak, but we as reformers and Present Truth believers, must go on with the Truth wherever it leads us, always remembering

that we have been baptized to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

If this be not true of us, then it is certain that we shall never advance any further in the knowledge of God, Christ, or His Truth, – no, not any further than we were the day we were baptized. Those who do this become dwarfs instead of grown-up Christians, never reaching the fullness of the stature of Christ, for they are satisfied to be what they are; they feel in need of nothing more than what they got at baptism; they are as unmovable as were the priests, scribes, and Pharisees in Jesus' day. God forbid that any of us should thus lose out.

## THE LAODICEANS PERISH WITHOUT THE "MESSAGE TO THE LAODICENAS"

*TEXT OF ADDRESS BY V.T. HOUTEFF,*
*MINISTER OF DAVIDIAN 7TH-DAY ADVENTISTS*
*SABBATH, DECEMBER 27, 1947*
*MT. CARMEL CHAPEL*
*WACO, TEXAS*

Rev. 3:15-17 – *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 spue 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.*

"What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong! 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 testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and his testimony must be correct." – *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 252-253.

When people are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked as are the Laodiceans, and do

not know it, then the only title that can be given them is "Deceived," yet ironically the Laodiceans are the people most fearful of being deceived! They think themselves in need of nothing, although the Lord Himself says that they are in need of everything. They think themselves rich and increased with goods. What goods? – Not money, I am sure, for right along we hear them calling for money, even begging for it.

It is with supposedly sufficient Bible Truth that they are satisfied. They are confident that they have all the revealed Truth they need to take them through to the Kingdom. This is their great deception. They do not know their great need of Truth now while the Church is about to enter upon the final phase of her work. They do not realize that this next phase of the Church's work cannot be carried on with her old phase of Truth. The Church now can no more do without the additional message (*Early Writings*, pg. 277) than could she at the closing of the Old Testament era have entered the Christian dispensation with the Old Testament ceremonial Truth isolated from the Gospel.

But, sad to say, to speak to the Laodiceans of more Truth than what they already have is to incur their greatest displeasure: and the idea that they need no more Truth, that they have it all, and that someone is always trying to deceive them, has been drilled into them as deeply as it can be drilled. This has made them prejudiced and suspicious of everyone who dares approach them with something new. This is what puts them in as bad a position as the Jews of old. Plain it is that if the Laodiceans choose thus to remain lukewarm, satisfied in their deception, they shall be spued out and forever

left without hope.

Rev. 3:18 – *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.*

The gold tried in the fire obviously represents inspired Truth for this time, the only truth that saves, the only kind God would sell. And what can be the white raiment which the True Witness urges them to buy, if not the righteousness of Christ?

And what must one do to obtain these? – We shall find the answer in–

Mic. 6:5 – *O My people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.*

Here we are admonished to remember Balak's question and Balaam's answer if we would know the righteousness of the Lord. Let us turn to–

Num. 24:17-24 – *I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come He that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and*

*said, Amalek was the first of the nations; but his latter end shall be that he perish for ever. And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas, who shall live when God doeth this! And ships shall come from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber, and he also shall perish for ever.*

Obviously this is a prophecy of Christ having taken "the reins in His own hands." *Testimonies to Ministers*, pg. 300. Such is His Righteousness that we are urged to know. Concretely speaking, knowing the righteousness of Christ is knowing whole-heartedly that in the latter days He is to take the Scepter, that He is to reign; that at the outset He is to smite the "corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth"; that Edom and Seir shall be a possession for His enemies; that Israel shall do valiantly; that He shall have dominion, and so on. According to Scripture, this is our righteousness of Christ if we know it. And he who realizes that the reign of Christ and His kingdom is not something intangible, not something imaginary floating in space, as it were, somewhere across hell, but a real thing, as real as any of the kingdoms today, will immediately inquire, as did the Apostle Paul, "What wilt Thou have me to do Lord?" This we shall again see from the prophecy of Micah–

Mic. 6:6, 7 – *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with*

calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

This inquiry by the people in the unfolding of this scripture reveals what they think would be most pleasing to the Lord. They think a gift of some kind from material things is perhaps the most acceptable gift they can offer for the remission of their sins. We with our own eyes actually see this very thing throughout our churches. This same condition obtained in the days of Christ's first advent: The Jews were very particular about paying tithe even on the minutest item of income, on such as mint, anise, and cummin, but they omitted "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." Matt. 23:23. Honest tithing was to their credit, said the Lord, but tithing should never replace judgment, mercy, and faith. This same answer comes to us today through the prophet Micah:

Micah 6:8 – *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Once having caught the vision of the great need for revival and reformation, God's people are willing to do almost anything, even to sacrificing their first-born.

For further information Inspiration advises–

Verse 9 – *…Hear ye the rod, and Who hath*

*appointed it."*

These are God's answers to the question, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?"

Since we are asked to do "justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with [our] God," it must be that we as a people are not practicing these things, that there is dishonesty, inconsiderateness, and pride. We are glad, though, that we are not hopelessly condemned for our iniquities, but that we are invited to give them up, to forsake them, if we expect to stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb.

Through the prophet Ezekiel we are shown wherein we abuse the gift of mercy and justice:

Ezek. 34:21, 22, 31 – *Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save My flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle.... And ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God.*

The diseased, the weak, are of course those who are less influential, and for one reason or another are unable to hold their own. These are pushed and horned out by the stronger, the unjust and unmerciful class, the class who control the work. This class is nevertheless eventually to be judged.

There is but one safe course to pursue if we would find favor with the Lord, and that course is out lined by the prophet Isaiah:

Isa. 7:21, 22 – *And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow, and two sheep; and it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk that they shall give that he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall every one eat that is left in the land.*

Imagine one cow and two sheep supplying with butter and honey all who are left in the land! Since a literal cow and two sheep could not possibly do this, we must agree that they are symbolical of something which is not only capable of producing an abundance of milk, but is able also to preserve the lives of its patrons.

There is but one thing that consists of three such parts (two sheep and a young cow) that is capable of keeping the world alive, and that is the Bible – unfolded by the Spirit of Prophecy, the Spirit that leads into all Truth. The two sheep, not being young, and two of a kind, must be symbolical of the Bible Itself, both Old and New Testaments. The cow being young and larger in size, is obviously symbolical of something of later origin, and more voluminous than the Bible itself. Hence it is none other than the published works of the everliving Spirit of Prophecy – the inspired interpretation of the Scriptures.

Those that are left in the land, therefore, when Christ takes His scepter to reign, are those who live on the butter and honey which only the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy can supply. All others are to perish with the modern Edomites and Moabites.

In the same symbolical prophecy we are shown

that Christ Himself learned the difference between right and wrong by studying the Scriptures:

Isa. 7:14, 15 – *Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.*

No one would deny, as mentioned in our last week's study, that this is a prophecy of Christ's first advent. And as we have the record that His diet was not of dairy butter and of bee honey, not restricted as was John the Baptist's, also by the fact that no literal butter and honey has the efficacy of compelling anyone to choose the good and to refuse the evil, it all proves that the "butter and honey" are symbolical of the Word of God, that Christ Himself learned from the Scriptures to choose the good and to refuse the evil.

Here you see that one needs a daily supply of spiritual butter and honey if he is to sustain his spiritual life.

That is, yesterday's meal could not take the place of the meal today – no, no more than Noah's inspired message for his day, can take the place of the inspired message of the Kingdom today.

Only the Heaven-sent message for today can save the people of today. This is just as real and as true and as logical as it is to say that the living cannot be judged with the message of the judgment of the Dead. Yes, "blessed is that…faithful and wise servant, whom His Lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them

meat in due season." Matt. 24:45, 46.

To further realize that we need to study in order to recognize the abominations that surround us, and to know how to avoid them, I shall read from *Testimonies to Ministers*, pg. 445:

"This sealing of the servants of God [the 144,000] is the same that was shown to Ezekiel in vision. John also had been a witness of this most startling revelation."

Ezek. 9:4-6 – *And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others He said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at My sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.*

When the day approaches for this scripture to be fulfilled, then its truth must be the "meat in due season" for the people at that time. Nothing else can take its place. And so we see that as Nineveh was spared by the message to it, so the Laodiceans can only be saved by the "Message to the Laodiceans."

From the following we see that the message to the Laodiceans is to bear fruit, that many will learn to choose the good and to refuse the evil:

"In the time when his wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul-anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God's honor and a love for souls, will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. Their righteous souls are vexed day by day with the unholy works and conversation of the unrighteous. They are powerless to stop the rushing torrent of iniquity, and hence they are filled with grief and alarm. They mourn before God to see religion despised in the very homes of those who have had great light. They lament and afflict their souls because pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church." – *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pg. 210.

Since we now clearly see that the Laodiceans perish without the message to the Laodiceans, we should hold fast to the Truth for this time, and win our crown of life, and in addition to it we shall be credited with a good harvest of souls and with the commendation "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Matt. 25:23.

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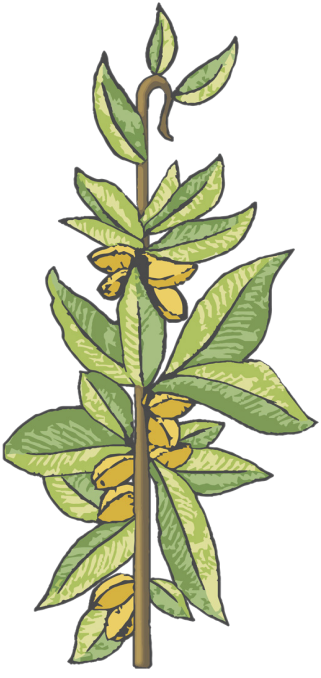

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