

# Messages to the Churches -- Continued.

by Martin Knapp

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*The sermon calls for a return to true holiness and warns against the dangers of superficial faith.*

**Topics:** "Repentance And Holiness", "Christian Sanctification"

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## Description

Martin Knapp preaches about the importance of holding fast to faith and repenting from worldliness and sin, emphasizing the need for restoration and the consequences of disregarding God's warnings. He highlights the significance of being undefiled by the world, adjusting to God's will, and walking closely with Jesus, experiencing His kingly companionship. Knapp stresses the necessity of maintaining holiness, reflecting God's glory, and being worthy through Christ. He underscores the power of holiness, loyalty to Jesus, and the imperative of repentance for backsliders, offering the hope of salvation and divine companionship to those who open their hearts to Christ.

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## Transcript

Man's Disloyalty does not destroy God's Love. -- Even the Omniscient Eye could see nothing in the Church at Sardis to commend. All of the other Churches we have noticed, no matter how far they had fallen, had something commendable. Yet God did not pass Sardis by, but revealed Himself unto her as a perfect God, and the Owner and Defender of His ministry and His truth. Is this not a rebuke to those who refuse to admonish Churches and people who have apostatized, instead of doing as God may lead in bearing them His messages of warning?

An Empty Profession can not deceive the Omniscient Eye. -- Of all such people and Churches He says, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead." The fig-leaves of a sham profession can not hide the nakedness of a sham experience. Such a people, by social standing, popular preaching, large congregations, superficial Sunday-schools, Church-joining meetings, big collections, fashionable choirs, carnal social gatherings, and compromise, may have a name in worldly and ecclesiastical circles as living, yet all who are in the Sardis experience are Divinely declared to be "dead." No matter how beautifully coned or how high the wreaths of flowers are piled upon the bier, they are cold, bloodless, fireless, and lifeless corpses, which nothing but the resurrection of God can bring to life.

Restoration. -- Yet even Churches in this sad condition may be restored, if they will awake and watch and seize their opportunities. The offers of mercy are still extended; and if they hear and heed the Divine admonition, and repent of their worldliness and sin, God will return again and dwell in their midst.

Admonition reflected is Doom invited. -- "He that being often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy." "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." This is God's warning to all who are resisting His truth. The word "watch" here means to be wakeful and vigilant. Satan hushes people to sleep in the hammock of a sham profession. The Holy Ghost, through Divine messages from heaven, rings awakening fire-bells of warning and alarm. Awake, arise, obey, and believe, and thou shalt live. Disregard, and these bells peal forth thy funeral march from the scaffold of the judgment to eternal exile amid the burning fires prepared for the devil and his angels. Sudden calamity awaits all those who will not awaken from their delusion. Drugged by the devil, deluded by a mere form, they will be suddenly cut off. As a thief, suddenly, unexpectedly, breaks into a sleeping man's house, robs him of his treasures, and takes his life, in like manner Jesus comes by His judgments upon those who live in .the paper houses of a mere profession.

Surprises. -- God hides His excellencies and His doings from the wicked, but reveals them to His chosen. To professors who reject Him, His truth, and His holiness, He says, "Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." But unto those who receive Him, and to all in whom the Sanctifying Spirit dwells, He says, "I will show you things to come." Unsaved people, and especially deceived professors of religion, seldom have the premonition of calamities that come upon them and of death. Those who dwell in the "secret place of the Most High" have the illumination of the Holy Spirit in regard to what awaits them, so that even when they come to die, they feel beforehand, as did Paul, "The time of my departure is come;" and as Peter, when he said, "The putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly." One class have their eyes blindfolded and their ears stopped to God's dealings with them; while the other have clear visions, and hear the "softest whispers" of the voice of God.

Undeified. -- "But thou hast a few names in Sardis which did not defile their garments." Holiness keeps clean; it makes its possessor a pure white flower, that will flourish and keep clean even in a coal-mine. It gives complete victory over defilement without and within. No matter how wicked the Sardis in which Providence places you, or how apostatized the Church with which you may be providentially identified, God's grace is sufficient to keep you there without defiling your garments. True holiness people, no matter where they live, are undeified people. They have no affinity for the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. They are undeified by the outer dirt of filthy habits, like the tobacco habit, opium habit, lust habit. dishonesty, and worldly conformity along Church, social, and political lines. They have been the Daniels through all the ages who have dared to stand alone, and when God's providence has placed them in Babylons, instead of being contaminated, they have been a burning rebuke. Nor are they defiled by the indwelling corruption of inbred sin; for in them this body of sin has been destroyed. and when Satan comes he finds none of the explosives of hell in their hearts, which, purified by faith, are the shining, beautiful temples of the Holy Ghost, in which He makes His home.

Holiness adjusts. -- Jesus did not rebuke the few names in Sardis for not coming out of her, but rather commended them for claiming the grace to fulfill their providential mission in the worldly Church without being contaminated. God has a place for every one of His children in His kingdom. Holiness puts them in that place, and keeps them there until God shall appoint them to another. In the present condition of things, He evidently leads some people to remain, and witness and preach to multitudes in the worldly Churches where His providence has placed them, and out of which His Spirit has not yet led them. There are people who are evidently just as providentially called to engage in independent holiness work, and identify themselves with holiness and Pentecostal Churches, which are springing up on every hand. One class of people are continually preaching that all holiness people everywhere are to stay in the various

Churches with which they have been identified. Others go to the other extreme, and teach that all are to come out from among them, and decry all Church organizations. The truth lies between the two extremes, and holiness discovers it. It constrains its possessors to obey God in everything. It teaches them to so commit their ways unto the Lord that "He directs their steps." If He says, "Remain in Sardis," there they stay, and advertise to heaven, earth, and hell that Divine grace is able to keep clean and give victory in the center of an iceberg or in the middle of a coal-mine. I can keep just as clean and hot in the heart of this wicked city as in a mountain holiness camp-meeting, so long as God places me here and hides me in His pavilion.

Kingly Companionship. -- "They shall walk with Me." To all who claim the grace that keeps them undefiled in Sardis it is promised that they shall walk with the Son of God. Holiness is not walking as the wicked world walks, but it is walking with Christ. It is considered an honor to walk with the Presidents and princes of earth; but every true possessor of Bible holiness is given a greater honor, even a walk with the King of kings. Hence they go nowhere that He would not go, and follow gladly whither His steps may lead. It is of such He says, "Lo, I am with you alway." A personal Pentecost cures from spiritual rheumatism, and enables us to step with a firm, elastic tread, keep by His side, and enjoy His companionship as never before; and puts us where we feel and sing,

"O, blessed fellowship divine!

O joy supremely sweet!

Companionship with Jesus here

Makes life with bliss replete;

In union with the purest One,

I find my heaven on earth begun.

I'm walking close to Jesus' side:

So close that I can hear

The softest whispers of His love,

In fellowship so dear;

And feel His great almighty Hand

Protects me in this hostile land."

What a walk! Though through Gethsemane's Garden, His presence and angels comfort! If we pass through the valley and shadow of death, we will fear no evil; for He is with us! Soon we shall walk with Him in His heavenly home, the mighty metropolis of this universe, the city of our God.

"Lord, I would clasp Thy hand in mine,

Nor ever murmur nor repine,

Content, whatever lot I see,

Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

Thus holiness gives victory over loneliness, and over separation from dear companions that must be left behind, and confers the priceless privilege of a constant walk with God Himself.

In Fashion. -- One of the biggest humbugs of the devil is to try and make God's people believe that they are out of fashion. Sinners follow the codes of the Jezebels of this doomed world. One of the piteous spectacles which angels look down on is the subserviency of professors of religion, and even of some who claim to be holiness people, to the fashion-plates of Gotham and the dictates of Madam Grundy. True holiness places people where, whether they eat or drink, sleep, wake, or dress, they do all to the glory of God, and are in harmony with the principles of His kingdom as unfolded in the Word. Its possessors lose their love for worldly adornment, and become dead to the fashions of this world, and aim to dress in such a way as to please their royal Bridegroom. They are governed by the principles of neatness, durability, economy, and adaptability, which are pleasing to Him. They are more particular about the dress of their souls than that of their bodies, and spend more time before the looking-glass of Divine truth than in standing before earthly mirrors. White is the royal color, in which the King and all who are in His kingdom are arrayed. Hence, true Christians would rather be white than rich, and are willing to be unpopular with carnal Church members and with a wicked world, so that they may please Him who has purchased their wedding robes at so great a price. They are willing to be unfashionable here for a little time, knowing that garments await that are fashionable in heaven, and which will forever be the admiration of all worlds.

Holiness People are "Worthy" People. -- Those who are kept undefiled in Sardis, Christ declares are "worthy." They are worthy of the confidence of men, for they never will betray them. They are worthy of the fellowship of the saints, for they belong to their number. They are worthy of the confidence God reposes in them, for they will be true to Him. They are worthy of places of responsibility and trust, for they would sooner die than be untrue. They are not worthy in themselves, but through Christ, who hath redeemed them and made them kings and priests unto God and His Father. Men may deride them, professors may ridicule them, and they are often afflicted with poor appointments, and sometimes with no appointments, by ecclesiastical agencies; they are despised and rejected of men and acquainted with grief; yet they rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks, for the Ruler over all things declares that "they are worthy," and in this they are exceedingly glad. So long as they retain His approving smile they count the censures and the excommunications of men as naught that they may win Christ.

Whiteness is a Test of Bible Holiness. -- Holiness people are always an overcoming people, and Jesus says that He that overcometh shall be robed in "white" garments. If there are stains on your garments you are not an overcomer. Many advertise the shallowness of their profession by the multiplicity of stains upon their spiritual robes. Professor, are your garments white? Are they being soiled with the stains of disloyalty, of worldliness, of censoriousness, of backbiting, of criticism, of selfishness, of needless self-indulgence? One may profess that he has this overcoming grace; but absence of whiteness proves absence of holiness. Child, I would not give you one single needless pain; but you had better see the stains now and fly to the fountain of cleansing than later, when there will be no fountain to fly to, and you will be shut out of the palace of the King.

Holiness is Life Insurance. -- Regeneration registers the believer's name in the Book of Life. Holiness keeps it there. Unless you get the overcoming blessing you are likely to be quickly vanquished by the world, the flesh, and the devil, and your name be removed from that record. The fair pages of that book can not be defiled with the names of unholy people; but of all who gain and retain the overcoming

blessing, Jesus says, "I will in no wise blot his name out of the Book of Life." Here is the perseverance of the saints, and the only kind we find in the book; and that is, that all who get holiness and keep their garments white are entered upon the roll of life. Between the lines we also read that those who had their names entered upon this roll, and yet who neglected or refused to claim overcoming grace and keep their garments white, will have their names blotted out of that book. Reader, is your name written there? Has it been blotted out, and are you taking any steps to have it re-entered? Are you allowing Satan to deceive you with the awful fallacy that you can live in sin and at the same time keep your name upon that book?

Holiness gives Victory over Cowardice. -- Overcoming people are a misrepresented people. Satan accuses them to God and to each other. The wicked watch and seek to slay them. While I am writing this, I am being lied about in a way that gives me pain for the people that are doing it: and yet I rejoice, because it is for righteousness' sake, and because I am worthy to belong to the class here named. Of all such, Jesus says, "I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels." The black night of reproach will soon give place to glorious and eternal day. The black storm cloud of human disapproval and misunderstandings will soon be banished by the sunshine of Divine approbation. Every overcomer, from martyred Abel down to the more than murdered saints of the present day, shall be Divinely, publicly, and eternally vindicated. How little the persecutions and reproaches of a passing moment compared to the vindications and rewards of that glad hour! If this message to the Church be heard and heeded, as Christ commands, there will be fewer persecuting professors, and less complaining about reproaches and misunderstandings on the part of the true people of God.

A Holy Experience will bear the Inspection of a Holy God. -- Jesus revealed Himself to the Church at Philadelphia as "He that is holy, and He that is true." The Church at Philadelphia and the Church at Smyrna were the only ones that were living above the admonitions of the Savior. To them He had no word of reproach. People who live in the white light of a holy experience have nothing to fear from Divine inspection. Their souls worship a holy God, and delight in His presence. He reveals Himself to their soul's delight, and they are made "partakers of His holiness." He also reveals Himself as the truth. This they welcome. People who fear the truth, dodge the truth, and evade the truth, are not in harmony with the God of truth. An experience that fears the application of truth now, will not be able to stand before it at the judgment. Happy are the people who, like the Church at Philadelphia, can welcome the revealments and the inspections of the holy and the true God! Holiness puts in possession of the kingdom. To a holy people, Jesus also reveals Himself as "He that hath the key of David." A key is that which gives or prevents access. In the house of David there is a fountain opened for salvation. Jesus shuts out from that fountain all who will not meet the conditions of admittance; and He shuts into it -- blessed be His name! -- those who comply with them. In the house of David is a throne and a kingdom -- a kingdom that shall cover this whole earth and be from everlasting to everlasting. Jesus reveals Himself to His own as having the key to this kingdom. He shuts out of it all its foes, and shuts into it the saints of the Most High.

Open Doors to All who fully follow Him. -- To the Church at Philadelphia, Jesus says, "Behold, I have set before thee a door opened, which none can shut." True holiness people are a resistless people. Men and devils combined can not set before them any Red Sea which Jesus will not carry them through. They can build no Jerichos that Jesus will not shake down. They can erect no scaffolds on which they themselves will not be hanged. They can confine in no prisons that Jesus will not open and from which He will not deliver. They can banish to no starvation circuits, like the Isle of Patmos, but what Jesus will transform into crystal seas, and shining towers, and jasper walls, and golden streets. Those whom God calls to any work, if they but heed His voice, He opens the way for the same, and gives power for its execution. If mountains

of difficulty stand in the way, He gives a faith that will remove them. If He calls one to preach or work for Him, though Churches may raise objections, Official Boards may refuse to license, men may belie and try to close the door, God will open it, and give victory on the battle-field to which he summons. He hath a high tower in which He shuts His own people, and shuts all others out, and none of them can enter without His permission. The philosophy of the victory of true holiness people is, that God goes before them, He faces the foes, and none can withstand His power. But only those who keep close to Him can avail themselves of such victories. False professors substitute a dead religion for Bible salvation. No such open doors await them, and halting believers must receive their personal Pentecost before they can enjoy these privileges.

Victories. -- As a general, looking down upon his loyal soldiers on a battle-field, urges them on in the fight and commends them at the close, so Jesus seems to have looked down upon His loyal overcomers in Philadelphia. He was with them in their conflicts, and comforted them with the sweet and encouraging assurance, "I know thy works: behold, I have set a door opened, which none can shut; that thou hast a little power, and didst keep My word, and didst not deny My name." Who rejoices over the believer's victories more than Jesus Himself? What comfort to feel that, to the full extent of infinite capacities, He knows all about our conflicts and our trials, and knows all about our triumphs; not to censure because they were not greater, but to commend because of what they were.

Holiness is Perfect Love. -- Philadelphia means brotherly love. Regeneration gives us love for the children of God. Entire sanctification eliminates, not our infirmities or liability to sin, but our love of sin, and everything that is contrary to the love of God and His people. This Church was in possession of this celestial love; hence Jesus has no occasion to reprove them for defaming one another, or for censorious criticism or backbiting. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can not love God whom he hath not seen." Defense of holiness, and theoretical profession of the same which is destitute of this love, is simply a tree without leaves or fruit.

Holiness is Power. -- Jesus commends this Church because it had "power." The word translated power is *dunamis*, from which the word dynamite comes. Holiness people are an overcoming people because they are supplied with celestial dynamite, with which they defeat their enemies and all opposition which Satan sets before them. Professed believers who have not this power are like a cannon with no ammunition. The reason why so many Churches and professed Christians are captured by the world is because they are destitute of this impartation of the Holy Ghost. The only way to get and keep this power is to get and keep the Holy Ghost. Believers who have their Pentecost know what it is, and the victories which it gives them. Conversion makes candidates for it; the second work bestows it. It is God's provision to fortify the believer against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and the reason why the Church at Philadelphia stands out in such shining contrast from her sister Churches is because she was possessed of this defense. The great reason why the devil opposes entire sanctification is because it is the work of the Holy Ghost which invests the believer with this power.

Loyalty to Jesus. -- Christ also commends them because they kept His Word. Salvation is conditioned upon submission to Christ. Pentecost makes that submission a delight. Holiness people magnify the Word of God. True revivals are revivals of Bible-reading and Bible-keeping. Another secret of the strength of the Church at Philadelphia was her supreme loyalty to the Word of Christ. People who allow friends or foes, kindred or Councils, committees or Churches, preachers or popes, to come in between them and the Word of God, do so at their peril. A fallen ecclesiasticism is endeavoring to substitute loyalty to the Church for loyalty to Jesus Christ and His Word. Beware of this. If you have the grace that keeps you loyal to

Jesus and His Word, you then will be loyal to his true Church and to all who are in harmony with Him.

Holiness People are a Witnessing People. -- Initial salvation made them witnesses. Pentecost puts in their souls a testimony that spontaneously bubbles up. It gives them such victories over the apathy of the indifferent or the ridicule of the worldling that they witness, to the full extent of God's grace in their hearts, on every fitting occasion. No matter what may be the nature of the protests or opposition, they so testify that Jesus, who knows and sees, can always approvingly look down and say, "Thou dost not deny My name." There are multitudes of professed holiness people who have lost the real experience because they compromised at this point, and never will regain it until they have confessed their error and mended their ways.

Liars. -- Overcomers shall be vindicated. Jesus declares of the traducers of those who have received the Holy Ghost, and been true and not denied His name, that "I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." Thus saints shall be vindicated in the very sight of their foes. They will know in truth that we are God's people and that He loves us. This is continually being demonstrated in the holiness revivals now in progress. The holiness people are really the Philadelphians of the present day. And while they are opposed on every hand by those who "call themselves Jews and are not," yet their opponents are being convinced of the errors of their ways and being saved and sanctified. To Christ, who is giving these victories, be the glory forever! Jesus declares that those of the synagogue of Satan are all liars. It is an awful thing to live in sin and profess salvation. Church members, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, Catholics or Protestants, who profess to be Christians and yet live in known sin, and profess or preach a sinning religion, according to this explicit statement of Christ Himself, are liars, and must repent of their religious lies, as well as of all other sins, in order to have any place at all in the ark of salvation. The essence of the religion of Jesus Christ is truth and loyalty. The essence of the religion of the devil is untruth and disloyalty. All who live in sin, which is simply treason against God, and yet profess to be loyal to Him, belong to Satan's Churches and are Satan's slaves, and unless they repent they must go with him into eternal exile and imprisonment.

Preservation -- Jesus promises to give His true people victory over trial. Loyalty to Him and His Word is the condition upon which He promises to preserve them in time of trouble. Look to Jesus and He will keep you perfectly, no matter what the trial may be; and not only keep you, but transform it into a blessing that will bring blessing to your soul.

Deliverance. -- He not only will keep His people in every fiery trial through which they may be called to pass, but He will also deliver them "from the hour of trial, which is to come upon the whole world," and which precedes the final return of Jesus, when He will set up His throne and establish His everlasting kingdom. Translated in the twinkling of an eye, His saints will rise to meet Him in the air, and thus be delivered from the awful cataclysms of floods and fires, pestilences and wars, earthquakes and famines, that will be upon the earth during that short but awful period.

Quickly Coming. -- Jesus reveals Himself to those who are in the experience of the Philadelphian Church as soon to come. To such He says, "I come quickly." None are ready to welcome this message until they are clothed with the white garment. No bride is ready for the wedding arrayed in a soiled robe; but when the spotless robe is on, then her heart dances with rapture at the thought of the coming of her beloved. Hence, when God's people become clothed in the white robe of Bible holiness, and Christ is crowned within their hearts, they long for His personal coming as never before, and in response to that longing the Bridegroom lovingly whispers: "Be patient; the time is short; I come quickly." Her ears may be pained by

the human cry of those who proclaim, "My Lord delayeth His coming," yet she recognizes the Savior's voice, and rejoices in the thought of the soon appearing of the Bridegroom of her soul.

Our Only Safety. -- Jesus admonishes sanctified Philadelphia to "hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." What they had was the experience of the Personal Pentecost of entire sanctification. Some people object to referring to salvation as it instead of him; but when they criticize that, they criticize the teachings of Jesus Himself. He commands His people to "hold fast that which thou hast." The only way to keep Him is to keep the conditions met on which He stays, hence, the only vault that is proof against enemies which on every hand are trying to steal the crown of life from believers is the vault of entire sanctification. Unless you keep this treasure in that place, where Jesus continually abides and defends it, some of the devil's robbers will steal it from you.

Stability. -- Holiness grants victory over instability, and gives a permanent place in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus says, "He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God." A pillar in the temple is something that can always be found at the point where it is placed in the building. It is always on the interior of the building, and is one of the supports upon which the structure rests. Hence this promise includes, for every overcomer, a permanent place in the temple of God. A place where he will not be blown about by every wind of doctrine; not be moved away by tides of enthusiasm or emotion; but stand unmoved against the combined assaults of earth and hell.

Security. -- "And he shall go out thence no more." This clearly teaches that there is an experience of absolute security to the believer -- an experience where the soul will be as secure as the celestial temple of which it is a part. Satan banished, temptations ended, character established, environments preservative instead of destructive, the soul is as secure as the Throne of God itself. The sanctified believer here on earth is safely kept within the hollow of the Father's hand. So long as it nestles there it is Divinely protected; but those who reach the experience of this paragraph will be kept in the interior of the temple itself.

"Secure in Him for evermore,

They sing His praises and adore."

Utilized. -- This wicked world has never had a place for God's saints. The more one is like God, the less this world has use for him. It cried "Away" with the Perfect Man, and nailed Him to the cross. But when the war is over, and the smoke of sin's battle is cleared away, all will be changed. God, who rescues from Satan's power and gives victory down here on the battlefield, has a place of service for all of His own, which is beautifully typified by the pillar in the temple. A pillar in a building is a very necessary part of it. In like manner, God's chosen people are to have places in the interior of His kingdom; and as rulers over many things, are to be among its chief supports, and in this service sweet will find their joy perfected. Anticipatory of this, they care naught for the fading laurels of earthly honors.

Reflectors. -- Holiness people will reflect the glory of God forever. Jesus says of all who reach the experience here indicated, "I will write upon him the name of My God." Even here we are epistles, known and read of all men. Ancient conquerors, on their temples, were wont to inscribe their victories, and thus proclaim the valor of their heroes. In a similar way, saints, saved and sanctified by grace, will doubtless proclaim to multitudes of celestial beings the glory of the King of kings in rescuing a ruined world from Satan's power, redeeming its victims, and transforming them into the image of Himself. There seems to be a hint here that holiness people will be on the witness-stand forever, and that it will be their privilege and

delight to tell to the infinite creations of God the awful effects of sin, and magnify amazing grace that saves from all its power. When God's people are free and fully saved a stream of testimony flows forth from them like the crystal waters of an artesian spring. It is difficult to give them time to tell all that they would like of the marvels of transforming grace while here below. Their yearning for the privilege of telling the whole story will doubtless then be gratified. Evangelists, who are sometimes left without appointments now because of their fidelity to God and to His Word, and to the testimony of Jesus, will doubtless find themselves in demand by waiting worlds, where multitudes of beings will greet them with celestial joy, and listen unwearied as they magnify the marvels of grace Divine forever and forever.

Partakers of the Divine Nature. -- Each believer who is established in the experience promised to the Philadelphian Church, becomes a permanent partaker of the Divine nature. Jesus says, "I will write upon Him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God, and Mine own new name." A Scripture name embraces the nature of its recipient. Jacob meant supplanter, Israel meant the prevailing one, Jesus means Savior. Even here is "granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." We are still so suffering the effects of the fall that we do not reflect the perfect image of our Lord. Though sin may have been eliminated, and the heart made perfect in love and filled with the Holy Ghost, yet scars from the fall remain. In the resurrection, these will all be swept away; and, according to the promises of this chapter, the soul will become a pillar in the Divine temple, where people possess the nature of the Father, of the Son, and the nature of the new Jerusalem, which is the Bride of the Lamb. This nature is nothing more, nor nothing less, than love, the perfect love of Jesus.

"O love Divine, how sweet thou art!

When shall I find my glowing heart

All taken up with thee?

I live, I thirst, I die to prove

The fullness of redeeming love --

The love of Christ to me."

Is it any marvel, as the Holy Ghost through the holy messenger reveals such infinite vistas of unspeakable glories, that Jesus should say, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches?"

A Holiness Church. -- The Church at Philadelphia was evidently a Bible-holiness Church. It illustrates the graces and the privileges of God's true holiness people in every age, and particularly those who are now testing their loyalty to an uttermost salvation. God has a Church within a Church, like as the Holy of Holies was within the temple. That Church is always made up of people who are in the experience of holiness. Regeneration is holiness begun, and entire sanctification is holiness perfected. As the Shekinah was revealed in the Holy of Holies, so the Holy Ghost is revealed in the Shekinah of a fully sanctified experience, abiding in all who will receive Jesus as their Sanctifier, and in whom, as a purifying fire, He dwells. No Church, League, Union, or Society has ever embraced all of God's true people. He has had His overcomers in all ages and in all Churches. It is they who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and who are to reflect forever the glory of Him who has saved them.

Divine Revelation to Backsliders. -- To Laodicea, the backslidden Church, Jesus revealed Himself as the "Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God." To those who have been faithless to Him and His testimony He reveals Himself as the One who was faithful unto death. To those who have begun well, but have fallen by the wayside before reaching the end and the crown of life, He reveals Himself as both the beginning and the Amen.

Jesus knows. -- Jesus, with His eyes like a flame of fire, sees through the show and tinsel of a mere profession, and the worship of statistics and self-righteous works of a backslidden Church and a backslidden people. Of all such He says: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot." They had neither the frigidity of godless people, nor the holy heat which burns in the heart of all who really love God, and which is a consuming heat in those who have received their Pentecost. He knows the condition of all who have wandered from Him and accepted other lovers in the place of the Royal Bridegroom of the soul.

Divine Disgust. -- God is disgusted with this class of people. Indifferent professors make Him sick. Where His saints are on fire with holy zeal, His work prospers. Where the enemy is stirred up and opposes it with all his might, there is victory; but where His professed people remain indifferent, they block the wheels of his chariot, bring a blight to His Church and a curse upon themselves. Of such, Jesus says, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth." A stronger picture of disgust it would be hard to find; and yet it is the one that Jesus uses, and one that should awaken every backslider who realizes the repugnance of his character to a holy God. Wanderer, do you realize that God is thus disgusted with you at this very moment?

Deluded. -- Backslidden professors are victims of Satanic delusion. They profess what they do not have. They say, "I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing." Satan has persuaded them to believe that they are in possession of the treasure of the kingdom of heaven; then why should they seek it? He has persuaded them that there is nothing in Bible holiness; that they have no need of a second work; that Pentecost is for the chosen few, and not their privilege and duty; then why should they seek the Pearl of Great Price? This class of people may come to revival-meetings, but have no use for the altar of prayer. They oppose the tests and methods that would lead people out of a deceived state into the truth. And when the gospel feast is spread, and penitents fly to the feet of Jesus, and believers press forward to the foot of the cross to receive their Pentecost, they sit back in their seats and criticize, or stay away from the meeting and oppose God's messengers who are conducting it, thus by life and lip demonstrating that they feel that they "have need of nothing." The nominal Churches of the present day are filled with preachers and with people of this description. They favor High Church worship, a cold, cultured ministry, artistic music, paid choirs, and almost everything along religious lines but the real riches of regenerating grace and the pure gold of a holy experience. They say, "I have gotten riches." They attribute religion to growth, development, education, human works, instead of to the Blood. True believers humbly say, "Jesus has given me riches." Laodicean professors exclaim, "I have gotten them." Of all such, Jesus declares, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art the wretched one, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." "Wretched," because self-deceived and devil-duped and sinking in the quagmires of sin into the pit of hell. "Miserable," because victims to doubts that are damning and miseries that are eternal. "Poor," because, though professing the riches of a place in the kingdom of heaven, they are bankrupts for all worlds. "Blind," because, though professing sight, their eyes are closed to the light of God's truth, and the enormity of their wickedness and the awfulness of their true character. "Naked," because, though they may be arrayed in all the finery and

foolery of wealth and fashion, they are destitute of the wedding garment and the white robe, without which no one can please God, or have a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Salvation the Only Antidote. -- Jesus declares the only hope for deceived professors is the experience of salvation. Without holiness no man can see the Lord. To Laodicean Church members He comes with the Kingly counsel, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich; and white garments, that thou mayest clothe thyself, and that the shame of thy nakedness be not made manifest; and eyesalve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see." Deceived professor, fly to Jesus. You must do business with Him, at His counters, and on His terms. Your gold is all deceptive brass, your clothes are rotten rags; you are bankrupt, and Jesus is your only hope. He has riches and raiment and robes and crowns and kingdoms for you if you will come to Him, and yield to Him upon His terms. You must come as a little child, come as a bankrupt sinner; come, leaving your sham riches and your sham religion all behind.

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,

Weak and wounded, sick and sore;

Jesus ready stands to save you:

Full of pity, love, and power."

You must Come seeking the gold of a genuine experience. You must come accepting Jesus, and then press on until you claim the "gold refined by fire" of the Pentecostal experience of the purifying presence of the Holy Ghost. Come, acknowledging your poverty and claiming His riches. You must "lay aside the garments that are stained by sin," and put on the garments of salvation, and seek and obtain the white raiment of Bible holiness. Come, with those eyes of yours that have been so "sore" that they have been unable to see holiness in the Bible, and vision so impaired that you perhaps have thought Holy Ghost demonstrations to be wildfire. Come and receive the touch of saving power, which will give you spiritual sight, and the second touch which will enable you to see clearly. It may be very hard for you to come. The devil has you strongly bound in chains that no human power can break. Your pride of name, of reputation, of Churcharity, of office, of education, of ministerial rank, if you are a minister, will all have to be laid aside, and you, in your wretchedness and blindness and nakedness, must fall at the feet of Jesus, like the poor prodigal, crying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" Otherwise the shame of your nakedness will be made manifest. It will be made manifest through the preaching of ministers who declare the whole counsel of God, and more awful still it will be made manifest at the judgment before the assembled universe, from whence you will pass into eternal poverty, shame, and contempt. May the strivings of the Spirit, the agonies of the Cross, the warning of the Word, the terrors of the judgment, the awfulness of doom, and the glories of that heaven which you are forfeiting forever, lead you to listen this moment to the words of Jesus, fall at His feet, and claim the overcoming victory which He offers!

Infinite Love. -- Jesus loves the deceived professor. To Laodicean professors, including the multitude of unconverted and backslidden Church members of the present day, he says, "As many as I love, I reprove and chasten." He loves all, and understands the peculiar peril of the mere professor. Though you may have forgotten Him, He has not forgotten you. He shows you your poverty only that He may put you in possession of the true riches. He points to your deplorable nakedness that you may run to the celestial wardrobe, he mentions the grievous condition of your spiritual eyes that you may prove the healing power of the eye-salve that He purchased for you on Calvary's cross. Though you may have sinned against Him

ten thousand times, He loves you still, with the infinite passion that brought Him from heaven to save the lost world, and to brave earth's blackest night and Calvary's crudest agonies to save your soul.

"Though I forget Him and wander away,

Still He cloth love me wherever I stray;

Back to His dear loving arms would I flee,

When I remember that Jesus loves me."

By His Word and His providence, by His true ministers and by the testimony of overcomers, He has warned you of your danger. By adversity, and in many other ways, He has rebuked you, not because you were His child, but because, even while you have been yielding to the sins that are so peculiarly painful to Him, He loves you.

Repentance Imperative. -- Now He comes to you with one more commandment. On your obedience to this hangs your destiny. Neglect it and you perish; obey it and you live. All Laodicean professors He commands to "be zealous and repent." No indifference in seeking nor sham repentance will ever bring the victory. People sometimes come to our altars reluctantly and indifferently. They who do not earnestly open their mouths in prayer never get anything; but when people want something, and come rushing to the altar as if for life, and look into God's face and repent of all their sins, like the publican of old, then victory comes. Only those who seek God with a whole heart find Him. If you care more for reputation, or for what people say, or for your position, than you do for restoration, you will be debarred from it forever. There not only must be this burning zeal for victory, but there must be repentance of all sin. This embraces confession of it, abandonment, and restitution to the full extent of human ability. Drunkards and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before deceived professors, because they are more willing than they to confess and repent. The deceived professor is worse than they; for he is drunk on the wine of worldliness, and guilty of spiritual adultery with the enemies of the King. He is clothed in filthy, stenchful rags of self-righteousness, worse than that of the drunken tramp in the gutter. On top of all this, he has flaunted these rags in the face of Omnipotence and professed to be a true follower of God! There must be repentance, not only for gross sins, but for the polished, enameled sins which always accompany a sham profession. The sin of professing to be a Christian while unconverted, or, it may be, the sin of persecuting true holiness people under the mask of sanctity, needs to be repented of. The sin of teaching and preaching a sinning religion, instead of a religion that saves from sin, must be confessed. The reason why unsaved preachers and professors are opposed to Bible holiness is, that its teachings require these heart confessions, without which they can not enter heaven. When you are willing to confess that you have lived a double life in the pulpit, in the Church, in your home, in the community, and are glad to restore to the full extent of your power wherein you have done wrong, then salvation is near and victory is sure.

A Royal Caller. -- Jesus not only appeals to sinners through messengers and messages which He sends, but He comes in person. One of the marvelous mysteries of grace is, that the King of Glory should willingly come from heaven and die on the cross to save a lost world; but still greater that He should also personally appear and appeal to the conscience of each individual for whom He died. Our wonder intensifies beyond expression that He thus appears to false pretenders, who dare to profess His name with their lips when they are belying it by their lives. Even of this very class He declares, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." What condescension, that stoops to come down from glory, entering the gate of a human soul, though the yard may be full of weeds and snapping curs and loathsome serpents, and though

sickening stench from the pestilential diseases within must be met, yet pressing His way to the very door of the soul and standing ready to enter and forgive and cleanse and illumine and abide if welcomed! He sadly and tearfully departs if rejected. He not only stands, but He knocks. He knocks lovingly by His Spirit, earnestly by Holy Ghost testimony and Holy Ghost preaching, warning by His words and affective providences, gently and winningly by His mercies, loudly by His judgments, and persistently, not leaving as long as there is any hope. He not only comes and stands and knocks, but He also calls, He loves you, He died for you. He comes for you, He knocks for you, and finally He lifts up His voice and calls personally for you. Do you not hear Him? He warns you of your danger, He tells you of Satan's plot against your soul, He awakens you from the fatal slumber in which your enemy has chloroformed you, and offers you salvation full and free. He recognizes your sovereignty over the dominion of your own soul. Though He is your Creator and has all power, He will not cross your threshold without your invitation. If you refuse to hear His voice and open the door, you debar Him and welcome Satan.

"Knocking, knocking! Who is there?"

Waiting, waiting! O, how fair!

'Tis a Pilgrim, strange and kingly,

Never such was seen before.

Ah! my soul, for such a wanderer,

Wilt thou not undo the door?"

His Entering is Conditional. -- Though Jesus comes, stands, knocks, calls, and promises to come in and sup, yet His incoming and incleansing and infilling and indwelling and inreigning are all conditioned on the soul's opening the door. Close your heart to His incomings and His voice, slumber on, revel on, hug your idols, cover up your sins in the cellar, close your blinds, and lock the door, and you will drive Him away; and when He goes, all hope goes. Satan himself writes over that door, "Mine forever," and demons prepare tortures to inflict throughout all eternity. Awake, arise, throw wide your portals, and welcome your Kingly Visitor, and He will come in, and bring the sunshine and the melody of heaven. In order to shut Jesus out, you need not break His law, nor question His Divinity, nor persecute His true people. Neglect alone will keep Him out. But if you will open the door, He will come in, and henceforth be your abiding Guest.

Divine Companionship. -- Jesus not only promises to come in if you will open the door, but declares that He will "sup with you." This means that He will be your constant Companion, and that He will share with you all your joys and all your sorrows. He will be with you in all your dark days and all your bright ones. This means that there is no cup from which you drink but that He will drink it with you; that there is no trial but what you will have the sustaining grace of His sympathy and help. He will be with you and dwell in you, and be a constant sharer in every experience here; and then, by and by, when He shall come, all will be changed. You entertained Him with the best you had while down here on earth, where He was unpopular, in a log-house of your probationary experience, and tie points up through the broken shingles in your roof to His glorious appearing, to the wedding supper of the Lamb, and the many-mansioned house which He is preparing for you, and says, "Beloved, thou shalt sup with Me." We entertain Him for a few brief days, and He us forever and forever.

Holiness on the Throne. -- Jesus closes His message to the Churches with a promise which is the climax of all. To all who enter the Temple of Holiness, and take each degree until they reach the seventh, He says, "I will give to Him to sit down with Me in My throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with My Father in His throne." God created man to have dominion. Sin robbed him of it; grace restores it. Through the first Adam man lost his crown, through the Second it is replaced; hence, overcomers are candidates for kingly places, candidates that are to be elected to high offices in the administration of the government of the universe. Among the gifts which Jesus gives to those who overcome are these thrones and kingdoms. All who are willing to be "sat down on" by the opposition to holiness here, will finally and eternally "sit down with the King" of heaven in His throne. This is one of the blood-bought, Heaven-given appointments which is the heritage of all who fully follow Christ. As Jesus also overcame and sat down with His Father in His throne, so shall they overcome and sit down with Him in His throne. Human language is powerless to express the dazzling heights which thus invite. This promise doubtless embraces the sharing of the government of the earth with our Lord when He returns, and during the glorious years of His millennial reign below, as well as the royal places in the city of gold, where a holy people shall reign with Him forever.

Victories Conditional. -- All the victories which are promised by Jesus in these chapters are to only one class of people, and that is to overcomers. Not to sinners, but to those who have overcome their sins. Not to the worldlings, but to those who have overcome the world. Not to carnal Christians, but to those who have overcome carnality. Not to mere professors of religion, but to those who have opened the door and welcomed the Savior as their personal King. Not to those who are depending upon their own works for salvation, but to those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Not to people who oppose holiness and demonstrations of the Holy Ghost, but to those who welcome Him, and hear and heed "what the Spirit saith to the Churches;" for that is none other than the gospel of an uttermost salvation.

Preach Holiness. -- There is a mistaken view which Satan succeeds in palming off, even on some holiness people, that full salvation is to be preached only to believers. Because John Wesley declared that only believers should be pressed into its experiences, some have wrongly deduced therefrom that it is not to be preached before people who are not saved. This message of the Holy Ghost to the Churches, like an avalanche from the great mountain sides of Divine truth, pulverizes and buries this error. Even to the fashionable Church at Pergamos, Jesus preached the gospel of the "hidden manna" and the "white stone." To the deceived professors of Sardis, He proclaimed the glorious privilege of being arrayed in the "white garments" of holiness; and to the lukewarm Laodicean Church, He came with a message of Divine communion and of the privilege of an eternal place among His people in His throne. These messages of full salvation were sent by Jesus Himself, through the beloved apostle, and applied by the Holy Ghost; so they are the very highest authority upon this subject that can be had. Satan hates the gospel of holiness. He seeks to quench all its testimonies and muzzle all its ministers. Blessed are the preachers who, like John, bear the message of Jesus and of the Holy Ghost un mutilated, and thrice blessed the Churches that welcome it!

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