

Messages to the Churches

by Martin Knapp

The sermon emphasizes the importance of true holiness, repentance, and the role of Christ as the Head of the Church.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:19, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 2:1-26

Topics: "Church Holiness", "Pentecostal Revival"

Description

Martin Knapp preaches about the importance of Bible holiness, emphasizing the need for Scriptural organization within the Church. He highlights the dangers of compromising with worldly influences and the significance of remaining steadfast in faith and purity. Knapp urges believers to seek Pentecostal holiness, planting revival movements in every city to spread the fire of the Holy Ghost. He stresses the watchful care of Christ over His Church, warning against dead works and the substitution of good deeds for genuine love and surrender to God.

Transcript

God recognizes Churches in their organized capacity. He addresses His message to the angel, or pastor, of the Church in Ephesus. The Word of God clearly teaches that His invisible Church on earth has a visible body. As the human soul finds expression in a human body, so the spiritual Church has an outward organism. Christ Himself is its Head, and in this body He has set pastors, evangelists, teachers, helps, and all members that are needful. Hence, Bible holiness believes in Scriptural organization. Because this has in many instances been abused, captured by the devil and used to accomplish his purposes, is no more argument against the organization of the true Church than the existence of the devil is against angels that have not fallen.

True holiness places its possessors where they claim victory over subserviency to worldly clubs, which profess to be Churches of Christ when they are not, and also over the anarchistical effort of the devil that would keep them from organized union and the benefits which God has placed with it. Loyalty to this principle does not forbid the organization of Churches in places where existing denominations have apostatized.

A Pentecostal Holiness Movement claims Revival Victories under the Most Forbidding Circumstances. -- Ephesus was the proud, fashionable, and seemingly invulnerable metropolis of Asia Minor, yet Paul, after a two years' persistent revival effort, planted there one of the strongest Churches in the bright constellation of early organizations; and though Paul had long since been glorified, yet the Church remained. The writer

believes that God would have a Pentecostal holiness-meeting planted in every great center, where Holy Ghost meetings will be held at least twice a day, and whose fires will be always burning, and from which sparks will fly and kindle revival fires in surrounding regions. God wants men and women, possessed of the graces and gifts of the Holy Ghost to do this work; but only, those who are dead to everything but His will are fitted for such a work.

Christ watches His Church with Jealous Care. -- He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, has His omniscient eye constantly upon His ministers and Churches. He who sees the sparrow's fall is grieved at the slightest stain upon the robes of any of His people.

Christ Weighs the Works of His People. -- He says, "I know thy works and thy toil." Many of the works of modern Churchanity are dead works. Church activities, such as fairs, festivals, worldly socials, etc., are not born of God, and hence do not have His sanction; hence bring condemnation instead of blessing to those who participate in them. One of the most subtle substitutes for Bible religion is a religion of works. On every hand we find souls who are deceived by Satan into substituting what they have done and what they are trying to do for the blood and the work of Jesus Christ. In eternity they will have to face the appalling fact that, instead of being saved, they have been trying to climb up some other way by the ladder of good works, and are, as Christ declared, thieves and robbers. Good works are the fruit of a holy life; dead works, the outer sign of a sham profession. Works can not be substituted for the perfect love which puts God first.

Zeal for the Truth can not be Substituted for Perfect Love. -- Christ declares of the Church in Ephesus: "I know thy works, and thy toil and patience; and that thou canst not bear evil men; and didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false." They had a zeal that was tireless in its toil, that led to separation from evil men and a hatred of evil works, a strict discipline of false and unruly members and ministers, and yet they were "fallen." Though our righteousness exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, and though our zeal were to compass the land and sea to make proselytes to our views and creeds and denominations, yet if we have not love that puts God first, we are nothing. Even these very things frequently become an occasion to self-righteousness. This class of people are usually the very last to yield to the heart-claims of Jesus Christ.

Apostasy from Holiness is Destructive to Individuals and Churches. -- Paul planted the Church at Ephesus, and in the great revival in which it was born its members were led into the experiences of full salvation through the incoming and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost, so that the first love of that Church, like the first love of the Methodist Church in its primitive organization, was "perfect love." The charter members of the Church at Ephesus had gone home to heaven rejoicing, and the rising generation had evidently grown lax in discipline and experience, and departed from the piety of their fathers, and were substituting a formal religion for the Pentecostal. God's message to them, and all others who are following in their footsteps, is: "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come to thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." There are many Churches that in their early history were aflame and full of faith and fire, but their candlestick has long since been removed, and the worldly club has been substituted in their place, because they lapsed and refused to repent and do their first works. In all ages of the Christian Church, where existing organizations have thus refused to do this, God has given their candlesticks to other agencies. Methodism took the place of Episcopalianism in the days of Wesley as a soul-saving agency, and God is using the holiness movement today to do the work neglected by the fallen Churches on every

hand. What is true of Churches is also true of individuals. Lapse from perfect love, or refusing to seek it when the light comes, is followed by reliance on works, and zeal for denominationalism, and sticklerism for creeds and forms, which grieve the Holy Spirit, and the candlestick is removed from the heart, and finally apostasy reigns. This is one of the railroads on which Satan is rushing multitudes of souls down to the dungeons of doom.

Orthodoxy can not be Substituted for Holiness. -- The Church or individual may be full of religious works, and as orthodox as an archangel, and yet be in a fallen condition. The Ephesian people "hated the works of the Nicolaitans." This error taught that sin resided in the flesh, and hence that it was impossible for people to keep from sinning while in the body. Its prevalence now shows that Churches on every hand have fallen many degrees below the Church at Ephesus. Ephesus hated the works of those who taught a sinning religion, while ministers on every side, with open Bibles before them, preach the very error that Ephesus hated; viz., that sin is in the flesh, and that we can not keep from committing it. (See our tract on "Sin in the Flesh.") A bishop before a Conference recently declared that he had met a few men who were so "stupid as to witness that

they lived without committing sin." There are only two kinds of religion on earth. One is the devil's religion, and the other is the religion of Jesus Christ. An infallible mark by which each may be known, in whatever shape it appears, is this: The religion of Satan is always a sinning religion, a religion that commits sin and licenses it; while the religion of Jesus Christ is a religion that saves from sin. Any profession or religion that pleads for sin, no matter whether paganism, popery, or apostate Protestantism, is the religion of the devil. Jesus Christ came to save His people from their sins, and it is Divinely written that "he that doeth sin is of the devil," and "whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin." If a Church, full of zeal for good works, and full of hatred for the damning heresy that the religion of Jesus Christ can do no more for its followers than the religion of the devil, -- if that Church has fallen from its first love and must repent or be removed, what of the Churches and people who are sinking in the quicksands of a sinning religion, and yet dare to claim to be followers of Jesus Christ? Yet to all these the Holy Ghost offers hope, and extends promises of victory on the condition of repentance.

Holiness embraces Repentance. -- The keynote of the preaching of true holiness preachers, from John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles down to the present day, is, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The message of the Holy Ghost to every Church, and to every person that is fallen in any degree from a former experience, is, "Repent, and do the first works." One of the marks of the spuriousness of much that goes for gospel preaching is, that the doctrine of repentance from sin is eliminated. Regeneration is the only foundation upon which the temple of holiness can be built. Repentance is one of the chief stones in that foundation. Ministers who neglect to put this stone in the foundation will be responsible when their building crumbles and falls. Without a repentance of all sin and a godly sorrow for it, restitution to the extent of ability, and application of the Blood, there can be no salvation. All who are professing it without this are deceived, and unless awakened by the gospel trumpet here will soon be aroused by the awful blasts of the trump of doom.

Holiness gives "Ears to Hear." -- It confers victory over spiritual deafness. The sinner's ears are closed, and he is deaf to God's voice. Regeneration brings spiritual hearing. Entire sanctification quickens the spiritual ears to the highest receptivity. Happy are the people who have ears to hear! Those who do not have them, advertise the fact when they listen to a true gospel message by hearing that which they love to criticize, or which they can apply to their neighbor, instead of hearing the message which God has for them; while those who have ears to hear, indicate it by their rapt attention to the messages and truths

which fit them. Multitudes are as earless to the preaching of spiritual truth as if those organs were utterly cut off.

Holy Ministers are Divine Ministers. -- An Old Testament definition of a holiness preacher is, "Messenger of the Lord of hosts;" A New Testament definition is, "A flame of fire;" and hence, God's idea of a gospel preacher is a flaming messenger with a burning message. He is not commissioned to proclaim his own views, but to herald the instructions which he receives from God. This is beautifully illustrated in this instance. The messages to the seven Churches were sent by Christ Himself, the Holy Ghost imparted them to John, and he, the flaming holiness evangelist, who had received his personal Pentecost in the upper chamber, declared them unto the people. In the preaching of the gospel, God's plan is, Christ issues the message, the Holy Ghost imparts it, a holy ministry declares it, and the holy fire is the message itself. The preaching that is out of this order comes from some other source than the skies, and is the cause of much of the spiritual barrenness which parches the land today. The substitution of lectures, essays, scholarly disquisitions, and treatment of the topics of the day is an insult to the New Testament ministry, to the Holy Ghost, and to Christ Himself. I would as soon be a white-aproned bartender, and pass the bottle which contains the devil's substitute for the wine of the kingdom, as a white-necked preacher behind the pulpit, who is guilty of the crime here named. Both will have to answer at the judgment. Whose doom will be the greater will then appear.

Holiness means Conquest. -- It gives victory over sins, sin, evil tempers, propensities, circumstances, poverty, death, and the devil. It promotes from the ranks of Satan's victims to that of the invincible victors of Prince Immanuel. It rescues from the chain gangs of sin, and gives a place among those who are "more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them." We are to be either overcome or overcomers. Without holiness, dismay and defeat awaits; with holiness, victory over every foe.

Holiness confirms Eternal Life. -- Regeneration imparts eternal life; holiness confirms it. Its possessor is given "to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Paradise of God." Access to this Tree was forfeited with holiness in Eden. It is restored with holiness in redemption. That Tree is Jesus Christ Himself. Holiness gives access to Him, and participation in the life that flows from Him. All who may be compelled to live on short rations here because of their loyalty to holiness, can rejoice in the knowledge of having endless participation in the Tree of Life beyond. Who would not be willing to live on crumbs here for the sake of such a feast forever? This enables all believers to look death in the face and shout victory. What a change it is from the dark shadows of the tree of death to the participation of the Tree of Life in the Paradise of God here, and there forever in the skies! Sin shut man out of Eden; salvation unlocks the gate and reinstates him. Through disobedience, the Tree of Life was forfeited. Through submission to God and trust in Jesus, it is again restored, so that all who lay the foundation of a holy life through genuine repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ have access to the Tree of Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. The experience of salvation is, therefore, Paradise restored. All who have it have a garden placed in their hearts which outvies primeval Paradise. Regeneration places the Paradise there, and gives us access to the Tree of Life, which is Christ Himself; and entire sanctification through the baptism of the Holy Ghost expels all the weeds of carnality that hinder the fruits of the Spirit which in that garden grow.

Spiritual Nourishment is provided for Spiritual Life. -- One of the signs of spiritual life is a spiritual appetite. All who are really born of God hunger for spiritual food. This is a natural appetite, and is not created to mock its possessor, but because God has provided spiritual food to satisfy it. Without spiritual food there will be hunger, weakness, starvation, and death; hence, all who are born of God are given free access to eat of all the fruits which grow upon the Tree of Life in the paradisaical experience where God's grace has

placed them. Spiritual books, tracts, papers, and sermons are meals from this Tree, to which the believer having access may continually help himself. There is no cause for any of the children of God to live at a "poor dying rate," or starve on "crumbs," or stagger with weakness on the verge of spiritual starvation, in the midst of such spiritual provision. If you have no books, nor papers, nor Church, you can climb up in the Tree any time, day or night, and satisfy yourself with food such as angels delight in, "without money and without price."

God reveals Himself to His People according to their Needs. -- To the backslidden Church at Ephesus, he reveals Himself as the Defender and Preserver and Prover of the purity of the Church. To the holiness Church at Smyrna, He reveals Himself as the all-sufficient, resurrected Christ, who sympathizes with her in her afflictions, encourages her in her trials, and promises final reward. To her, He was the first and the last, her all in all. By His own resurrection He had demonstrated His victory and her victory over sin, death, and the grave.

Jesus takes Note of all the Trials of His People. -- Of them He says, "I know thy tribulation." He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of His eye; inasmuch as any neglect them or persecute them, they neglect and persecute Him. What a comfort to believers who are passing through the furnace of affliction, deprived of sympathy from every human source, to know that the Form of the Fourth is with them; that the sympathizing eyes of their Savior are beaming upon them; that

"Jesus knows all about our struggles;

He will guide till the day is done;

There's not a friend like the lowly Jesus--

No, not one; no, not one!

There's not an hour that He is not near us;

No, not one; no, not one;

No night so dark but His love can cheer us--

No, not one; no, not one!"

The darker the night, the sweeter will be His voice; the deeper the pain, the more comforting the ointment which He pours into the wound, and the sweeter the fragrance that He sheds to comfort and to cheer us. Even in the midst of the flames, rejoicing in the comforts which Christ imparts, the dying martyr can say, "I see the heavens open, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

Jesus sympathizes with the Poverty of His People. -- As a class, those who live nearest to Him have the fewest of this world's goods. Charmed by the beams which gleam from the Sun of righteousness, they have turned away from all the flickering lights of this world. To such He says, "I know your poverty." He knows it to sympathize in it, and to help in it, and to transform it into one of the agencies that shall help work out a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He declares that the poverty of His tried people is but seeming, and that they are really rich. They are rich in the grace that enables them to endure it; rich in the possession of the Pearl of Great Price, for which they have renounced all other things; rich in being co-heirs with Him to all things, visible and invisible; rich in the privileges of communion and

fellowship with God Himself, and in the possession of an inheritance eternal in the heavens. Though plainly clad and having nothing now, yet they are kings and princes on their way to thrones and kingdoms, where, with Christ, they shall reign forever.

Jesus sympathizes with His People in the Persecutions they receive from Sham Professors. -- He comforts them amid the "revilings" of those who "say they are Jews, and they are not." God's people have always received their bitterest persecutions from professors of religion. Many who revile them do so in the name of God and religion. It is a comfort to them to know that Jesus notes every frown, every shaft of ridicule, and every hand that is raised to harm them. He has declared that it would have been better for such revilers if a "stone be put about their necks and they cast in the midst of the sea," than that they should thus "offend one of those who believe on Him."

Jesus declares that Sham Professors belong to the Devil's Church. -- They are "a synagogue of Satan." One of Satan's most artful schemes of withstanding the truth and opposing the true people of God is, to mask his opposition as a Church, and his agents as ministers and members of it. It is here Divinely declared by Christ Himself that professors of religion who revile the truth, and are destitute of experimental religion, belong to the Church of the devil instead of the Church of God. The devil's object is to get his victims into hell, and he cares little how his diabolical work is done, if it only be accomplished. Whether people are drugged by poisoned whisky in a licensed saloon or by the wine of worldliness through a compromising Church, it makes but little difference to him, so that they be stupefied and be impervious to God's efforts to awaken them from the sleep of sin. The devil's Churches are saloons, brothels, bar-rooms, theaters, circuses, and so-called Christian Churches that profess to be the Church of Jesus Christ and yet revile the truth as it is revealed in the Word of God, and witnessed in the testimonies of His true people.

Holiness welcomes Sorrow. -- Regeneration puts people where they are resigned to sorrow; holiness, where they will rejoice and be glad in it. It puts people where they will cease to borrow trouble about the future. To them a Kingly voice assuringly says, "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer." Christ may thus forewarn His people when suffering awaits them. Before entering the dark tunnels in the mountains the light is always turned on. When this is done we know that there is a tunnel ahead, and the windows are closed, and preparation is made for it.

So when God's children are about to enter a dark tunnel of affliction, God gives especial illumination, and prepares them for the same; and if they stick to the train and trust Him fully, He will bring them out of every tunnel, higher up the mountain, in a sweeter atmosphere and brighter sunshine, and amid more luscious spiritual fruits and beautiful spiritual flowers than ever before. Hence, providential tunnels have no terrors for them. They learn to count it all joy that they are permitted to suffer for His name, and rejoice in the Divine assurance that if they suffer with Him, they shall reign with Him.

Furniture can never be polished and made beautiful until it is first sandpapered. The rough sandpaper is essential to the final finish. If we refuse to submit to the sandpaper of providential affliction and discipline, we can never have the celestial shine that will make us fit furniture for a place in the many-mansioned home above. Jesus was made perfect as a Savior through suffering. If we would be saviors in our sphere we must not shrink from following in His steps. He allows the devil to try His people; and although He hides His own in a "pavilion," and gives them power over all the power of the enemy, and allows no man to sit on them to hurt them, and declares that every weapon formed against them shall perish, yet He allows the devil at times to inflict what seems from a human standpoint to be an injury.

"Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried." God will have a tried people. He is preparing them for eternal positions in His celestial government. None but those who pass the rigid examinations of probationary trial can be given these places of honor and of trust. The whole universe of celestial intelligences doubtless have been skeptical in regard to the salvation and restoration of devilized humanity. They must be shown the mighty miracles of saving grace, and convinced of its power to save unto the uttermost.

Hence we are "made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men." Testing circumstances, and demons of darkness, and Satan himself, for these purposes, are doubtless allowed to test the people of God. Job is a marked example of such trial. Satan was given permission to try him to the uttermost. Jesus was thus tempted in the wilderness, and this is a part of the program of our probation. If we avoid the testing now, we will lose the triumph hereafter.

Jesus fixes the Limit of the Trial of His People. -- To the Church at Smyrna it was written, "Ye shall have tribulation ten days." That is, there was a Divinely prescribed limit to it. A believer, sorely tempted, was told by her pastor that she need not fear, the devil was a chained enemy. "That may be," she answered; "but it seems to me that he has a very long chain." Yet his chain is limited. Christ says to him and his agents, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." It is a finite limit; his schemes will all fail, and Omnipotence will put him to flight. He "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." He must be resisted in the strength of God and not in your own. He could whip you in a minute; but the Son of God, never. Hence, look him squarely in the face, and say to him, "I turn you over to Jesus Christ; He is my Savior, and you must settle with Him." Hold to this, and he will slink from the field and leave you conqueror.

Faithfulness is certain of its Reward. -- "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." True holiness people will cheerfully meet death. They "die daily," in the sense that they would suffer death rather than compromise their principles. Rewards in the kingdom of heaven are measured, not by gifts, but by faithfulness. The "faithful" steward is welcomed into the joy of the Lord, while the "unfaithful" is cast into outer darkness. All who are faithful are granted the crown of life, honor, infinite riches, royalty, and celestial companionships. Faithfulness for a time in earth's probationary furnaces of affliction and trial insures these infinitely great rewards, access to the Tree of Life, and possession of the crown of life.

Holiness People should be Influenced by these Infinite Considerations. -- Again, Jesus repeats the earnest and solemn admonition, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear." Satan would fill our ears so full of the din of our own fancies and imaginations and of the jargon that surrounds us, that we will not hear or heed these messages. If we really hear and believe and receive them, then we have motives to loyalty and trust infinitely greater than Satan and this world can ever bestow. This admonition in this place adds great weight to the following truths:

Salvation provides Perfect Insurance against the Second Death. -- The insurance companies of this world profess to insure against the loss of property and loss of life. Salvation covers all the ground that they do, and goes infinitely beyond. It puts its possessor where he is "immortal till his work on earth is done," guarantees that "no good thing" will God withhold from him, and that God will supply all his needs; and if he seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, "all these things shall be added" unto him, and that whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. It also embraces the future, gives access to the Tree of Life, and places the crown of life upon the heads of all whom it insures. It gives them an insured mansion in heaven,

and declares that they shall not be hurt by the second death. That means absolute insurance against eternal fire. Redemption thus insures against the awfulest calamity that threatens human beings. It gives a life-insurance policy that more than counteracts all the ravages that death has made. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. The second death is eternal separation of the soul from God, and banishment from His presence and from the glory of His power. Against the first, redemption offers the gift of eternal life. Against the second, a glorious resurrection and a glorified body like that of our Lord when He shall come, and a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." I would rather have this Divine insurance policy than all the insurances against floods and fires and lightning and death that this old world can give. Thus the message of Jesus to the Church in Smyrna shows that Bible holiness makes its possessor victor over trial, over poverty, over persecution, over sorrow, over imprisonment, over tribulation, over the devil, over death, and over hell, and gives a crown of life that fadeth not away.

God is no Respector of Persons. -- He speaks with equal authority to the humble holiness Church at Smyrna and the haughty Church at Pergamos. Pergamos was a city of temples, devoted to sensual worship. It was a "union of a pagan cathedral city and university town, and a royal residence embellished during the succession of years by kings who had a passion for great expenses and ample means for gratifying them." It was the first city in Asia Minor, a proud metropolis of wicked people. The Church at this place had yielded in a measure, and compromised under the seductive influence that had been brought to bear upon it; hence, He who had revealed Himself as the Defender and Comforter of the pure Church at Smyrna, comes to the Church at Pergamos as "He that hath the sharp two-edged sword."

The Gospel is a Balm to One Class of People and a Sword to Another. -- It is food, drink, wine, and light for those who yield to it; but to those who resist it, and to those who compromise, it is a hammer that breaks to pieces, a fire that burns, a sword that cuts, and light that destroys. Hence, the true gospel preacher becomes a comfort to saints, but a soldier with a flaming sword to the enemies of the King.

Compromise brings Condemnation. -- The devil had tried to destroy the Church at Smyrna by open persecution, but failed; but by giving social and ecclesiastical privileges and seductive indulgences, he succeeded in sapping the life of the Church. Temporal prosperity has proved a greater foe to the Church of Christ than persecution.

Christ credits His People with All their Virtues. -- He commends this Church in her faithfulness, and in holding fast His name and not denying His faith. Gospel teachers should learn a lesson here. Give persons and individuals whom you are called upon to admonish full credit for all the good that there is in them, and never condemn as a reprobate a person or persons or teachers on account of some defect, giving no credit for virtues, as some unwise teachers do. Jesus confirmed the Church in that which was good, revealed her error, and pointed to the remedy. O Thou Master Teacher, how wisely Thou dealest with the souls of men! Grant unto us wisdom from above to follow in Thy steps!

Christ is Omniscient. -- He "knows" the real heart-condition of every person and of every Church. Of fallen Ephesus, of holy Smyrna, and of compromising Pergamos, He could say, "I know." If Satan has substituted brass instead of gold, and profession instead of possession, Jesus knows it. If there is any dross in our souls He discovers it and reveals it to His true children, who welcome the revelation, no matter how humiliating it may be. When we become willing to stand before the Bible looking-glass under the electric-light of the Holy Ghost we shall see ourselves as God sees us. When we are willing to lie still, and let God permit us to look at our own hearts through the microscope of His truth, then shall we see as we are seen; and if unpurified through the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we will abhor ourselves, and cry,

"Unclean!"

God wants Witnesses, even in Worldly Churches. -- He commends Antipas for his faithfulness and fidelity to the cross. He did not condemn for not "coming out," as some do today, but eulogized him for being true to his testimony even unto death. The ecclesiasticism, culture, and wickedness of that proud city could not stand the humble holiness testimony of this faithful witness, who sealed his testimony with his blood.

It requires more Grace to Stay and Witness than to Run. -- There are many congregations and places where it requires far more grace to remain and boldly witness to the power of Jesus to save unto the uttermost than to run. You can not well kindle a fire from the outside. God wants Holy Ghost furnaces to melt the ice of formality that would freeze His people to death. If His Spirit and providence put you into such a place, witness there though it takes your head.

Jesus acknowledges the Existence and Kingdom of a Personal Devil -- Satan is the "prince of the power of the air," and his dominion is still on the earth. He hates Holy Ghost preachers, Holy Ghost people, and Holy Ghost testimonies. He mightily moves that Trinity of hell, the world and the flesh and the devil, to co-operate with himself in his fight against the holy fire. God's grace is sufficient, and enables holiness people to stand, like Antipas, firm, and be true unto the end.

Christ holds the Church Responsible for the Purity of its People and its Teachings. -- Now, as then, He has something against any Church which shields any of its members in putting any kind of a stumbling-block before His true children. Ecclesiastical Balaams, who preach for hire and who stir up secular officials of the State and the rabble against holiness people and teachings, must be banished by the Church or ruined by them. Clericals who preach the heresy of the Nicolaitans, that sin resides in the flesh and that salvation does not save from sin, must also be silenced. To all such Churches, Christ commands, "Repent, therefore, or else I will come quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth."

Bible Holiness means Separation. -- It has no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather reproveth them. A system of worship which exalts any thing or any one above Jesus Christ is an idolatrous system of worship, whether in paganism or in corrupt Protestantism; and any participation in such worship becomes a stumblingblock to all who would be like Jesus. Yielding to the gross sin of fornication is death to spirituality. Worldliness, of which this sin is a type, is one of the most poisonous vipers that destroys the life of the soul. Holiness can not be gained or retained without a complete separation from everything contrary to the will of God or even questionable.

Access is provided for God's People into the very Holy of Holies. -- "To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna; and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." This is the third overcometh. To the first was offered life; to the second, salvation from hell; and this comes and promises the blessing of the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which fully sanctifies the soul. The hidden manna was kept in the Holy of Holies, and no one could eat of it without entering there. It is a type of the experience of entire sanctification, which is received upon entering the veil and receiving the second work. One must pass through the holy place of regeneration and enter into the most holy, where the Divine Shekinah was received, in order to have access to the hidden manna.

Holiness is a Preserving Experience. -- The manna that fell for the children of Israel soon decayed and became loathsome; but this manna, Divinely preserved, is always sweet and always ready for use. So in

the justified life, the experience is changing and unsettled; while in the fully sanctified life it is preserved in the Divine Presence.

Holiness is Obtained through the Word. -- The hidden manna was kept in the Ark of the Covenant, and could be obtained from no other place. So the sanctifying baptism with the Holy Ghost is obtained through believing and obeying of the Word of God and trusting the "promise of the Father," which guarantees it to His people.

Full Salvation is to be Obtained by Faith. -- Jesus says, "To him will I give of the hidden manna." It was a gift, to be cheerfully welcomed and thankfully received, and not to be either earned or purchased. So with the baptism with the Spirit. It is a gift of God, purchased of Jesus, and freely bestowed unto all who will meet its conditions and take it by faith.

Holiness is Whiteness. -- Initial holiness, obtained in regeneration, washes away all actual transgressions, making the life as "white as snow." Entire sanctification, through the purifying fire of the Holy Ghost, purges the inner nature, and makes it "whiter than snow." It clothes its possessor in white raiment, gives him a place in the white-robed company, puts him in possession of the white stone, and makes it possible for him to stand spotless before the Great White Throne.

Holiness is a Priceless Blessing. -- This stone is of infinite value. It cost the suffering of the cross and the death of Jesus. As no one could enter into the holy place except through the blood, so no one can possess a holy experience except through the blood of Jesus. "Wherefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered without the gate." (Heb. 13:12.) All who seek it by works, or through death, or by growth, simply advertise their lack of knowledge of its value, and of the fact that Christ Himself has paid the infinite price. This white stone is a priceless pearl, to gain which people who know its value are willing to sell everything they have. If you esteem anything or any one above the possession of this treasure, you do not appreciate its real value, and Satan will be likely to keep it from you.

Holiness transforms the Nature. -- It bestows a new name. It changes supplanting Jacob to prevailing Israel. It transforms the "Bailee," my master, into "Ishi," my husband. Regeneration imparts a new nature; but the hidden-manna and white-stone experience eliminates everything that is contrary to that nature. It drives out the Ishmael of inbred sin and enthrones Isaac, the promised Son of God, as undisputed Sovereign in the soul. Regeneration brought love to God; but this experience brings the new name of perfect love, love with no alloy.

Holiness is a Secret Experience. -- It has heights and depths, pains and pleasures, songs in the night and communion with the King of kings, and visions of the land that is far off, which no one knows but those in this experience. It has its holy grips and passwords, which admit to all its circles on earth and in heaven. I have been in possession of it for years, and belong to no other secret order, and have no need of any; for it is worth more than them all.

Holiness embraces Deadness. -- It is said that pearls are formed through a peculiar transformation of a living animal, so that the shining pearl is simply the product of the crucifixion of animal life. In a similar way, Bible holiness is a product of the crucifixion of the self-life under the transforming power of the Holy Ghost, which merges it into a life of solidity and of beauty. It is only those who are crucified with Christ, and become dead to sin and self and the world and everything that is contrary to the will of God, that possess the experience of which the white stone is a type. A stone can take abuse and slander without

talking back; it never retaliates. Kick it, pinch it, and stamp upon it, and, like the sheep before its shearer, it is dumb. A stone can be placed anywhere; it is needed and used in any way that will best suit its owner. So this stone of a holy experience places its possessors where they can shine as stars in the celestial kingdom; but, like the stone in David's sling, without a single protest or question, it may be hurled into the faces of defiant Philistines. On every side we find little stones of holy people that are worth more against the hosts of sin and for the kingdom of heaven than mighty Sauls of ecclesiastical culture, prestige, and honor who are destitute of this white-stone experience.

Divine Revelments. -- Unto the Church in Thyatira, Christ revealed Himself as the very Son of God, with "eyes like a flame of fire," omniscient to know and almighty to consume, and immutable as "burnished brass." He commended this Church, saying, "I know thy works, and thy love and faith and ministry and patience." This picture shows a Church possessed of the graces of the Spirit and the works of the Spirit, and yet against this Church He brings a burning charge. Happy are the Churches and people to whom Christ reveals Himself both to commend and rebuke!

Churches must Test the Divinity of the Claims of their Preacher. -- Christ had something against this Church because it permitted a person who professed to be called of God to teach error in it. In this city, people often come into our meetings and claim to be Divinely inspired and Divinely sent; but when a few Scriptural tests are given, they collapse. There are multitudes of ministers on every hand who profess to be Divinely called and Divinely sent who, by their unholy lives, their unholy spirit, and unholy teachings, demonstrate that they are false instead of true prophets. No Church can harbor such persons and endorse their teachings and be clear. Christ prefers charges against them in every instance, and warns them that judgment will fall upon them except they repent. It is no proof that persons have a Bible experience or are Divinely called and sent because they sometimes preach on holiness or profess it. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Genuine New Testament ministers have a Pentecostal spirit, and bend all their energies to lead people into the Pentecostal life. Works and love and faith and patience can not shield a church that harbors members or ministers who neglect to preach the gospel, or teach that which is contrary to it, from the Master's rebuke.

The Woman Jezebel. -- Satan's leader against spirituality at Thyatira was "the woman Jezebel." Woman, devilized, becomes Satan's most efficient agent. The rottenness of Israel of old owed much to the union of Ahab with Zidonian Jezebel. She substituted the religion of her people for the religion of Jehovah, and persecuted the true ministers of God until an awful famine came as a judgment upon the nation, and Elijah was Divinely raised up to destroy the prophets of Baal, rebuke the king and queen, and restore the true worship of God. Worldly women in many Churches today manipulate the ministry, lead in fairs, festivals, worldly socials, carnivals, and concerts, which are among the greatest enemies to real spirituality; and in many places the Churches are having awful spiritual famines, of which that of the days of Elijah is a type. When God sends His evangelists, like Elijah, to hold a revival, such Churches are among the first to withstand them; and after the revival is over, like Jezebel, they are among the first to raise their voices against God's messengers and resume the reign of worldliness.

Holiness embraces Sexual Purity. -- Impurity and the crime of worldliness are sapping the life of multitudes of professed Christians. All Jezebels and Ahabs of professed worldlings in the Church, at the head of committees and societies and Official Boards, who, like Jezebel, profess to represent the true religion, lead multitudes to yield to carnality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Such idol worship has its counterpart in the carnal feasts and festivals of modern worldly Churches, where people, as of old, sit down to eat and rise up to play. The fornication referred to as existing in the Church of Thyatira is related

to that which exists in the Church today. Those who are guilty of it advertise the fact by what John Wesley called "softness and self-indulgence," by the substitution of carnal love for Christian love, "free love" for pure love, by needlessly seeking the society of the opposite sex, and by neglecting to "shun the very appearance of evil," and thus bring reproach upon the cause which they profess to love.

Time to Repent. -- Jesus says that it was given Jezebel of Thyatira to repent. He extends to modern Jezebels a like day of grace, and if they do repent He forgives and restores; if they refuse to do so, then come the lightning-bolts of certain judgments.

The Fruits of Spurious Churches soon Die. -- "I will kill her children with death." The reason of the fruitlessness of many so-called modern revivals is that their converts are bastards. They are born of the Jezebels of backslidden Churches and of the devil. They bring no reformation of life, no change of heart, no experiences of Pentecost, no likeness of Jesus Christ, no rectifying of past wrongs, no abolishments of fairs, festivals, and carnal fandangos, and, in the nature of the case, they soon subside. Of all such movements, Christ says, "I will kill her people with death."

God's Judgments advertise His Omnipotence. -- He declared that His judgments upon Jezebel would so reveal His power that the Churches would know "that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts." The desert condition of backslidden Churches demonstrates to all eyes that God is not in them and will not co-operate with them, and that they have brought these appalling judgments upon themselves because of their infidelity.

Hold Fast. -- God commends those in Thyatira who were loyal to Him and who had not been contaminated by the false teaching and example of Jezebel to "hold fast" in spite of surrounding circumstances. So people who have the experience of holiness should progress in its purity and its power and its aggressiveness all the more because of combined apostasy and false teachings. Unless they hold fast, Satan will rob them of the hidden manna and of the white stone, and they will be swept away.

Jesus is Coming. -- He commanded them to "hold fast till I come." Thus He magnified His final appearing in His gospel ministry. The preaching of His return is still a part of the gospel message. He preached its imminency; and all who fully follow Him will do likewise. He preached it as an incentive to steadfastness in holiness. Blessed are they who follow His example!

Steadfastness Rewarded. -- He extends great promises to those who overcome and keep His words "unto the end." Holiness is the blessing which brings perseverance.

Holiness guarantees an Office in the Kingdom. -- "To him will I give authority over the nations." Jesus here declares that when He comes this authority will be given to those who have overcome. It is them of whom Daniel wrote, "The government shall be given unto saints of the Most High." As Jesus taught in the Parable of the Stewards, those who have been "faithful over few things shall be made rulers over many." All people who are thus from the heart steadfastly loyal to Jesus and holiness, are guaranteed a place of authority with Him during His millennial reign on earth when He shall come.

Opposition Shivered. -- "He shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers." All godless nations, with their godless rulers and ecclesiasticism, shall then be dashed to pieces, and the prophecy in the Second Psalm will be fulfilled: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Saints of God be patient. The triumph of the wicked is short, and if faithful unto the end, you shall reign with Christ forever. All opposition to Jesus Christ and His holy

people shall be shattered, and you shall be given power over them that can not be broken, even as Jesus Himself has "received of the Father."

The Morning Star. -- All who thus persevere to the end are promised, not only these places of power, but to them is granted the revealing of Jesus Christ as a Morning Star. As after the dark, long night the morning star, in its beauty and brightness, appears a little while before the rising of the sun, heralding the dawn and the day, so after the long, dark, six-thousand-years' night of sin, Jesus will appear unto His chosen people. While carnal Christians and the wicked world are still sleeping, Jesus Christ will appear as the bright Morning Star to those who are expecting Him, and with them will shine during the thousand years of glorious millennial twilight, heralding the eternal day of the new heavens and the new earth. May we so overcome that this spiritual victory may be ours!

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