

TESTIMONY

FOR

THE CHURCH.

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### The Laodicean Church.

THE message to the church of the Laodiceans is a startling denunciation, and is applicable to the people of God at the present time.

“And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and True Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

### A PRACTICAL MESSAGE.

The Lord here shows us that the message to be borne to his people by ministers whom he has called to warn the people, is not a peace-and-safety message. It is not merely theoretical, but practical, in every particular. The people of God are represented in the message to the Laodiceans in a position of carnal security. They are at ease, believing themselves in an exalted condition of spiritual attainments.

“Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and know-

est not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

What greater deception can come upon human minds than a confidence that they are right, when they are all wrong. The message of the True Witness finds the people of God in a sad deception, yet honest in that deception. They know not that their condition is deplorable in the sight of God. While those addressed are flattering themselves that they are in an exalted spiritual condition, the message of the True Witness breaks their security by the startling denunciation of their true situation of spiritual blindness, poverty, and wretchedness. The testimony, so cutting and severe, cannot be a mistake, for it is the True Witness who speaks, and his testimony must be correct.

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

I was shown that many were flattering themselves that they were good Christians who have not a ray of light from Jesus. They have not a living experience for themselves in the divine life. They need a deep and thorough work of self-abasement before God, before they will feel their true need of earnest, persevering effort to secure the precious graces of the Spirit of God.

God leads his people on, step by step. The Christian life is a constant battle, and a march. There is no rest from the warfare. It is by con-

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

It is not enough to merely profess to believe the truth. All the soldiers of the cross of Christ virtually obligate themselves to enter a crusade against the adversary of souls, to condemn wrong, and sustain righteousness. But the message of the True Witness reveals the fact that a terrible deception is upon our people, which makes it necessary to come to them with warnings, to break their spiritual slumber, and arouse them to decided action.

In my last vision, I was shown that even this decided message of the True Witness had not accomplished the design of God. The people slumber on in their sins. They continue to declare themselves "rich, and having need of nothing." Many inquire, Why are all these reproofs given? Why do the testimonies continually charge us with backsliding and grievous sins? We love the truth. We are prospering. We are in no need of these testimonies of warning and reproof. But let these murmurers see their hearts, and compare their lives with the practical teachings of the Bible; let them humble their souls before God; let the grace of God illuminate the darkness, and the scales will fall from their eyes, and they will sense their true spiritual poverty and wretchedness. They will feel the necessity of buying gold, which is pure faith and love; white raiment, which is a spotless character, made pure in the blood of their dear Redeemer, and eyesalve, which is the grace of God, which will give clear discernment of spiritual things, and detect sin. These attainments are more precious than the gold of Ophir.

THE PEOPLE UNWILLING TO RECEIVE  
CORRECTION.

I have been shown that the greatest reason why the people of God are now found in this state of spiritual blindness, is because they will not receive correction. Many have despised the reproofs and warnings given them. The True Witness condemns the lukewarm condition of the people of God, which gives Satan great power over them in this waiting, watching time. The

selfish, and proud, and lovers of sin, are ever assailed with doubts. Satan has ability to suggest doubts and devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue and mark of intelligence in them to be unbelieving, and questioning, and quibbling. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind, and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence.

Eternal life is of infinite value, and will cost us all that we have. I was shown that we do not place a proper estimate upon eternal things. Everything worth possessing, even in this world, must be secured by effort, and sometimes by most painful sacrifice. And this is merely for a perishable treasure. Shall we be less willing to endure conflict and toil, and to make earnest efforts and great sacrifices for the infinite treasure, which passes all estimate in value, and the duration of life which will measure with the Infinite? Can Heaven cost us too much?

Faith and love are golden treasures, elements that are greatly wanting among God's people. I have been shown that unbelief in the testimonies of warning, encouragement, and reproof, is shutting away the light from God's people. Unbelief is closing their eyes, so that they are ignorant of their true condition. The True Witness thus describes their blindness in these words: "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

Faith in the soon coming of Christ is waning.

“My Lord delayeth his coming” is said not only in the heart, but expressed in words, and most decidedly in works. Stupidity in this watching time is sealing the senses of God’s people as to the signs of the times.

The terrible iniquity abounding calls for the greatest diligence, and for the living testimony, to keep sin out of the church. Faith has been decreasing to a fearful degree. Faith can only increase by exercise.

#### WANT OF A SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE.

In the first rise of the third angel’s message, those who engaged in the work of God had something to venture. They had sacrifices to make. They started this work in poverty, and suffered the greatest deprivations and reproach. They met determined opposition, which drove them to God in their necessity, and kept their faith alive.

Our present plan of systematic benevolence amply sustains our ministers. And there is no want and no call for the exercise of faith as to a support. Those who start out now to preach the truth have nothing to venture. They have no risks to run, no especial sacrifices to make. The system of truth is made ready to the hand. Publications are provided for them, vindicating the truths they advance.

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

upon them. The True Witness speaks to these ministers, "Be zealous, therefore, and repent." These ministers are some of them so lifted up in pride, that they are really a hindrance and a curse to the precious cause of God. They do not exert an influence which is saving upon others. There is need of these men being thoroughly converted to God themselves, and sanctified by the truths they present to others.

Very many feel impatient and jealous because they are frequently disturbed with warnings and reproofs which keep their sins before them. Says the True Witness, "I know thy works." The motives, the purposes, and the unbelief, suspicions, and jealousies, may be hid from men, but not from Christ. The True Witness comes as a counsellor: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

Those who are reprov'd by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, that has spoken to save them from ruin. Those who despise the warning will be left in blindness to become self-deceived.



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

#### MINISTERS SHOULD PRESENT THIS WARNING.

Ministers who are preaching present truth should not neglect the solemn message to the Laodiceans. The testimony of the True Witness is not a smooth message. The Lord does not say to them, You are about right, you have borne chastisement and reproof that you never deserved, you have been discouraged unnecessarily by severity, you are not guilty of the wrongs and sins of which you have been reprovèd.

The True Witness declares that when you suppose you are really in a good condition of prosperity you are in need of everything. It is not enough for ministers to present theoretical subjects. They should present practical subjects. They need to study the practical lessons Christ gave his disciples, and make a close application of the same to their own souls and to the people. Because Christ bears this rebuking testimony, shall we suppose that he is destitute of tender love to his people? Oh, no! He who died to redeem man from death loves with a divine love. He rebukes those he loves. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." But many will not receive the message Heaven in mercy sends them. They cannot endure to be told of their wrongs, and of their neglect of duty, of their selfishness, their pride, and love of the world.

I was shown that God has laid upon my husband and myself a special work, to bear a plain testimony to his people, and to cry aloud and spare not, to show the people their transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins. But there is a class who will not receive the message of reproof, and they raise their hands to shield those whom God would reprove and correct. They will ever be found sympathizing with those whom God would make to feel their true poverty.

The word of the Lord, spoken through his servants, is received by many with questionings and fears. And many will defer their obedience to the warning and reproofs given, waiting till every shadow of uncertainty is removed from their minds. The unbelief that demands perfect knowledge will never yield to the evidence God is pleased to give. God requires of his people faith that rests upon the weight of evidence, not perfect knowledge. The followers of Jesus Christ, those who accept of the light God sends them, must obey the voice of God speaking to them, when there are many other voices crying out against it. It requires discernment to distinguish the voice of God.

Those who will not act when the Lord calls upon them, waiting for more certain evidence, and more favorable opportunities, will walk in darkness, for the light will be withdrawn. The evidence given one day, if rejected, may never be repeated.

#### MANY DOUBT OUR WORK.

Many are tempted in regard to our work, and are calling it in question. Some, in their tempted

condition, charge the difficulties and perplexities of the people of God to the testimonies of reproof we have given to them. The trouble they think is with the ones who bear the message of warning, pointing out the sins and correcting the errors of the people. I was shown that many are deceived by the adversary of souls. They think that the labors of Bro. and Sister White would be acceptable if they would not be continually condemning wrong, and reproofing sin. I was shown that this work God had laid upon us. When we are hindered from meeting with the people of God, and bearing our testimony, and counteracting the surmisings and jealousies of the unconsecrated, then Satan presses in his temptations very strongly. Those who have been ever on the questioning, doubting side, feel at liberty to suggest their doubts, and will insinuate, their unbelief. Some have sanctimonious, apparently conscientious and very pious, doubts, which they will cautiously drop, which has tenfold more power to strengthen those who are wrong and to lessen our influence and weaken the confidence of God's people in our work, than if they came out more frankly. These poor souls, I saw, were deceived by Satan. They flatter themselves that they are all right, and in favor with God, rich in spiritual discernment, when they are blind, poor, and wretched. They are doing the work of Satan, and thinking they have a zeal for God.

Some will not receive the testimony God has given us to bear, flattering themselves we may be deceived, and they are right. They think the people of God are not in need of plain dealing and of reproof, and that God is with them.

These tempted ones, whose souls have ever been at war with the faithful reproof of sin, would cry, Speak unto us smooth things. What disposition will these make of the message of the True Witness to the Laodiceans? There can be no deception here. This message must be borne to a lukewarm church by God's servants. This message must arouse the people of God from their security and dangerous deception in regard to their real standing before God. This testimony, if received, will arouse to action, and lead to self-abasement, and confessions of sins. The True Witness says, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot." And again, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." Then comes the promise, "Beloved, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

These wrongs and sins, which have brought the people of God in their state of wretchedness, blindness, and poverty, must be seen, and they arouse to zealous repentance, and a putting away of these sins which have brought them into such a deplorable condition of blindness and fearful deception.

I have been shown that the pointed testimony must live in the church. And this alone will answer to the message to the Laodiceans. Wrongs must be reprov'd, sins must be called sins, and iniquity must be met promptly and decidedly, and put away from us as a people.

## FIGHTING THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

Those who have a spirit of opposition to the work we have been pressed by the Spirit of God to do for twenty-six years, and who would break down our testimony, I saw, were not fighting against us, but God, who has laid upon us the burden of a work that he has not given to others. Those who would question and quibble, and think it a virtue to doubt, and who would discourage those who have been the means of making our work hard, and of weakening our hopes, faith, and courage, have been the ones to surmise evil, to insinuate suspicious charges, and watch with jealousy for occasion against us. They take it for granted that because we have human weaknesses it is a positive evidence we are wrong, and they are right. If they can find a semblance of anything that they can use to injure us, they do it with a spirit of triumph, and are ready to denounce our work of reproofing wrong and condemning sin, as a harsh, dictatorial spirit.

But while we do not accept of their version of our case as the reason of our afflictions; while we maintain that God has appointed us to a more trying work than any others; we acknowledge with humility of soul, and with repentance, that our faith and courage have been severely tried, and that we have failed sometimes in trusting wholly in God, who has appointed us our work. When we gather courage again, after sore disappointment and trials, we deeply regret that we ever distrusted God, and gave way to human weaknesses, and permitted discouragement to cloud our faith, and lessen our confidence in God.

I have been shown that God's ancient servants suffered disappointments and discouragements as well as we poor mortals have. We were in good company; nevertheless this did not excuse us.

As my husband has stood by my side to sustain me in my work, and as he has had a plain testimony to bear in unison with the work of the Spirit of God, many have felt that it was my husband who was injuring them personally, when it was the Lord that laid upon him the burden, and was, through his servant, reproofing them, to bring them where they would repent of their wrongs, and have the favor of God.

Those whom God has chosen for an important work have ever been received with distrust and suspicion. Anciently, when Elijah was sent with a message from God to the people, they did not heed the warning. They thought Elijah unnecessarily severe. He must, they thought, have lost his senses, that he would denounce them, the favored people of God, as sinners, and their crimes, so aggravating, that the judgments of God would awaken against them.

Satan and his host have ever been arrayed against those who bear the message of warning and reprove sins. The unconsecrated will be united with the adversary of souls, to make the work of God's faithful servants as hard as possible.

If my husband has been pressed beyond measure, and has become discouraged and desponding; if we have at times seen nothing desirable in life that we should choose it, this is nothing strange or new. Elijah, one of God's great and mighty

prophets, as he fled for his life from the rage of Jezebel, an infuriated woman, a fugitive, weary and travel worn, desired to die rather than to live. His bitter disappointment in regard to Israel's faithfulness crushed his spirits, and he felt that he could no longer put confidence in man. In the day of Job's affliction and darkness, he utters these words: "Let the day perish wherein I was born."

Those who are not accustomed to feel to the very depths; who have not stood under burdens as a cart beneath the sheaves; who have never had their interest identified so closely with the cause and work of God that it seems to be a part of their very being, and dearer to them than life, cannot appreciate the feelings of my husband, any more than Israel could appreciate the feelings of Elijah. We deeply regret being disheartened, whatever the circumstances might be.

#### AHAB'S CASE A WARNING.

When Ahab ruled Israel, the people departed from God and corrupted their ways before him under his perverted rule. "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all of the kings that were before him."

Ahab was weak in moral power. He did not have a high sense of sacred things. He was selfish and unprincipled. His union by marriage with a woman of decided character, and positive temperament, devoted to idolatry, made them both special agents of Satan to lead the people of God into idolatry and terrible apostasy. The determined spirit of Jezebel molded the character of Ahab. His selfish nature was incapable of appreciating the mercies of God to his people, his obligation to God, as the guardian and leader of Israel. The fear of God was daily growing less in Israel. The blasphemous tokens of their blind idolatry were to be seen among the Israel of God. There were none who dared to expose their lives by openly standing forth in opposition to the prevailing blasphemous idolatry. The altars of Baal, and the priests of Baal who sacrificed to the sun, moon, and stars, were conspicuous everywhere. They had consecrated temples, and groves, wherein was placed the work of men's hands to worship. The benefits which God gave to this people called forth from them no gratitude to the Giver. For all the bounties of Heaven, the running brooks, and streams of living waters, the gentle dew, and showers of rain to refresh the earth, and to cause their fields to bring forth abundantly, they ascribed to the favor of their gods.

#### EXAMPLE OF ELIJAH.

Elijah's faithful soul was grieved. His indignation was aroused, and he was jealous for the glory of God. He saw that Israel was plunged into fearful apostasy. He was overwhelmed with amazement and grief at the apostasy of the



people when he called to mind the great things that God had wrought for them. But all this was forgotten by the majority of the people. He went before God, and with his soul wrung with anguish, plead for him to save his people if it must be by judgments. He plead with God to withhold from his ungrateful people dew and rain, the treasures of heaven, that apostate Israel might look in vain to their idols of gold, wood, and stone, the sun, moon, and stars, their gods, to water the earth and enrich it, and cause it to bring forth plentifully. God told Elijah he had heard his prayer. He would withhold from his people dew and rain, until they should turn unto him with repentance.

God had especially guarded his people from mingling with the idolatrous nations around them, lest their hearts should be deceived by their attractive groves and shrines, temples and altars, all of which were arranged in the most expensive, alluring manner, to pervert the senses, so that God would be supplanted in their minds.

Jericho was a city devoted to the most extravagant idolatry. The inhabitants were very wealthy. All the riches that God had given them they accredited to the gifts of their gods. Gold and silver were in abundance. Like the people before the flood, they were corrupt and blasphemous. They insulted and provoked the God of Heaven by their wicked works. God's judgments awakened against Jericho. It was a stronghold. But the Captain of the Lord's host came himself from Heaven to lead the armies of Heaven in the attack upon the city. Angels of God laid hold of the massive walls and brought them to

the ground. God had said that the city of Jericho should be accursed, and that all should perish except Rahab and her household. They should be saved because of the favor that Rahab showed the messengers of the Lord. The word of the Lord to the people was, "And ye in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it." "And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." Josh. 6 : 18, 26.

God was very particular in regard to Jericho, lest the people should be charmed with the things that the inhabitants had worshiped, and their hearts be diverted from God. He guards his people by most positive commands. Notwithstanding the solemn injunction from God by the mouth of Joshua, Achan ventured to transgress. His covetousness led him to take the treasures God had forbidden him to touch, because his curse was upon it. And because of this man's sin, the Israel of God was as weak as water before their enemies.

#### ACHAN'S CASE SHOWS HOW GOD REGARDS SIN.

Joshua and the elders of Israel were in great affliction. They lay before the ark of God in most abject humility, because the Lord was wroth with his people. Joshua and the elders of Israel prayed and wept before God. The Lord spoke to Joshua, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they

have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed; neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you."

I have been shown that God has here illustrated how he regards sin among those who profess to be his commandment-keeping people. Those whom he has especially honored with witnessing the remarkable exhibitions of his power, as did ancient Israel, and that will venture to disregard his express directions, will be subjects of his wrath. God would teach his people that disobedience and sin are exceedingly offensive to him, and not to be lightly regarded. He shows us that when his people are found in sin, they should at once take decided measures to put the sin from them, that his frown should not rest upon all his people. But if those in responsible positions pass over the sins of the people, his frown will be upon them, and the people of God, as a body, will be held responsible for the sins that exist in their midst. God, in his dealings with his people in the past, shows the necessity of purifying the church from wrongs that exist among them. One sinner may diffuse darkness which will exclude the light of God from the entire congregation. When the people realize that darkness is settling upon them, and they do not know the cause, then they should earnestly seek God in great humility and self-abasement, until the wrongs which grieve

God's Spirit are searched out and put away from among them.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SINS WE DO NOT  
REPROVE.

The prejudice which has arisen against us because we have reprov'd wrongs that God has shown me existed, and the cry that has been raised of harshness and severity, is unjust. God bids us speak, and we will not be silent. If wrongs are apparent among his people, and if the servants of God pass on indifferent to them, they virtually sustain and justify the sinner, and are guilty alike with the sinner, and will receive the displeasure of God just as surely as the sinner; for they will be made responsible for the sins of the guilty. I have been in vision pointed to many instances where the displeasure of God has been incurred by a neglect on the part of his servants to deal with the wrongs and sins existing in their midst. Those men who have excused wrongs have been thought by the people to be very amiable, and of lovely disposition, simply because they shunned to discharge a plain and scriptural duty. The task was not agreeable to their feelings; therefore they avoided it.

The spirit of hatred which has existed with some because the wrongs among God's people have been reprov'd, has brought blindness and a fearful deception upon their own souls, making it impossible for them to discriminate between right and wrong. They have put out their own spiritual eyesight. They may witness wrongs, but they do not feel as did Joshua, and humble their

souls in humiliation because the danger of souls is felt by them.

The true people of God, who have the spirit of the work of the Lord and the salvation of souls at heart, will ever view sin in its real, sinful character. They will always be on the side of faithful and plain dealing with sins which easily beset the people of God. Especially in the closing work for the church, in the sealing time of the one hundred and forty-four thousand, who are to stand without fault before the throne of God, will they feel most deeply the wrongs of God's professed people. This is forcibly set forth by the prophet's illustration of the last work under the figure of the men, each having a slaughter weapon in his hand. One man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side. "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

Who are standing in the counsel of God at this time? Is it those who virtually excuse wrongs among the professed people of God, and murmur in their hearts, if not openly, against those who would reprove sin? Is it those who take their stand against them, and sympathize with those who commit wrong? No, indeed! These, unless they repent, and leave the work of Satan in oppressing those who have the burden of the work, and holding up the hands of sinners in Zion, will never receive the mark of God's sealing approval. They will fall in the general destruction of all the wicked, represented by the

five men bearing slaughter weapons. Mark this point with care: Those who receive the pure mark of truth, wrought in them by the power of the Holy Ghost, represented by a mark by the man in linen, are those "that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done" in the church. Their love for purity and the honor and glory of God is such, and they have so clear a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that they are represented as being in an agony, even sighing and crying. Read Ezekiel, chapter nine.

But the general slaughter of all those who do not thus see the wide contrast between sin and righteousness, and do not feel as those do who stand in the counsel of God and receive the mark, is described in the order to the five men with slaughter weapons: "Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary."

God said to Joshua (in the case of Achan's sins), "Neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you." How does this instance compare with the course pursued by those who will not raise their voice against sin and wrong; but whose sympathies are ever found with those who trouble the camp of Israel with their sins? Said God to Joshua, "Thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." He pronounced the punishment which should follow the transgression of his covenant.

Joshua then began a diligent search to find out

the guilty one. He took Israel by their tribes, and then, by their families, and next, individually. Achan was designated as the guilty one. But that the matter might be plain to all Israel, that there should be no occasion given them to murmur, and to say that the guiltless was made to suffer, Joshua used policy. He knew that Achan was the transgressor, and that he had concealed his sin, and provoked God against his people. Joshua discreetly induced Achan to make confession of his sin, that God's honor and justice should be vindicated before Israel. "And Joshua said unto Achan, My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me."

"And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it. So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them out of the midst of the tent, and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord. And Joshua, and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they

brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast 'thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones."

God said to Joshua, that not only had Achan taken the things which he had positively charged them not to take, lest they be accursed, but had stolen, and also had dissembled. The Lord said that Jericho and all its spoils should be consumed, except the gold and silver, which was to be reserved for the treasury of the Lord. The victory obtained in taking Jericho was not through warfare, or the exposure of the people. The Captain of the Lord's host had led the armies of Heaven. The battle was the Lord's. The children of Israel did not strike a blow. It was the Lord who fought the battle. The victory and glory were the Lord's. The spoils were his. He directed it all to be consumed, except the gold and silver which he reserved for his treasury. Achan understood well the reserve made, and that the treasures of gold and silver which he coveted were the Lord's. He stole from God's treasury for his own benefit.

#### COVETOUSNESS AMONG GOD'S PEOPLE.

I saw that many who profess to be keeping the commandments of God are appropriating to their own use the means which the Lord has intrusted to them, and which should come into his treasury. They rob God in tithes and in offerings. They dissemble, and withhold from God to their own hurt. They bring leanness and poverty upon themselves, and darkness upon the church, be-



cause of their covetousness, and in dissembling, in robbing God in tithes and in offerings.

I saw that many souls will sink in darkness because of their covetousness. The plain, straight testimony must live in the church, or the curse of God will as surely rest upon his people as it did upon ancient Israel, because of their sins. God holds his people, as a body, responsible for sins existing in individuals among them. If there is a neglect with the leaders of the church, to diligently search out the sins which bring the displeasure of God as a body, they become responsible for these sins. But this is the nicest work that men ever engaged in, to deal with minds. I have been shown that all are not fitted to correct the erring. They have not wisdom to deal justly, while loving mercy. They will not be inclined to see the necessity of mingling love and tender compassion with faithful reproof of wrongs. Some will ever be needlessly severe, and will not feel the necessity of the injunction of the apostle, "And of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." There are many who do not have the discretion of Joshua, and who have no special duty to search out wrongs, and to deal promptly with the sins existing among them. Let not such hinder those who have the burden of this work upon them. Let them not stand in the way of those who have this duty to do. Some make it a point to question, and doubt, and find fault, because others do the work that God has not laid upon them. These stand directly in the way, to hinder those upon whom God has laid the burden of reproof, and of correcting the sins that

are prevailing, that his frown may be turned away from his people. Should a case like Achan's be among us, there are many who would accuse those who might act the part of Joshua in searching out the wrong, as having a fault-finding, wicked spirit. God is not to be trifled with, and his warnings disregarded with impunity by a perverse people.

I was shown that the manner of Achan's confession was similar to the confessions that some have made, and will make, among us. They hide their wrongs and refuse to make a voluntary confession, until God searches them out, and then they acknowledge their sins. A few persons pass on in a course of wrong, until they become hardened. They may even know that the church is burdened, as Achan knew that Israel were made weak before their enemies because of his guilt. Yet their consciences do not condemn them. They will not relieve the church by humbling their proud, rebellious hearts before God, and put away their wrongs. God's displeasure is upon his people, and he will not manifest his power in their midst while sins are existing among them, and fostered by those in responsible positions.

Those who work in the fear of God to rid the church of hindrances, and to correct grievous wrongs, that the people of God may see the necessity of abhorring sin, and that they may prosper in purity, and the name of God be glorified, will ever meet with resisting influences from the unconsecrated. Zephaniah describes the true state of this class, and the terrible judgments that will come upon them.

“ And it shall come to pass at that time, that I

will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees; that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wateness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord; and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy; for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land."

#### CONFESSIONS MADE TOO LATE.

When finally a crisis comes, as it surely will, and God speaks in behalf of his people, those who have sinned, those who have been a cloud of darkness, who have stood directly in the way of God's working for his people, may become alarmed at the length they have gone in murmuring and in bringing discouragement upon the cause, they will be terrified, and, like Achan, acknowledge that they have sinned. But their confessions will be too late. They are not of the right kind for themselves, although they may relieve the cause of God. Their confessions are not made

because of a conviction of their true state, and a sense of how displeasing their course has been to God. God may give this class another test, another proving, and let them show that they are no more prepared to stand free from all rebellion and sin than before their confessions were made. They are inclined to ever be on the side of wrong. And when the call is made for those who will be on the Lord's side to make a decided move, to vindicate the right, they will manifest their true position. Those who have been nearly all their lives controlled by a spirit as foreign from the Spirit of God as Achan's, will, when the time comes for decided action from all, be very passive. They will not claim to be on either side. The power of Satan has so long held them that they seem blinded, and have no inclination to stand in defense of right. If they are not taking a determined course on the wrong side, it is not because they have a clear sense of the right, but because they dare not.

I have been shown that God will not be trifled with. It is in time of conflict when the true colors should be flung to the breeze. It is then the standard-bearers need to be firm and let their true position be known. It is then the skill of every true soldier for the right is tested; shirks can never wear the laurels of victory. Those who are true and loyal will not conceal the fact, but will put heart and might in the work, and venture their all in the struggle, let the battle turn as it will. God is a sin-hating God. And those who will encourage the sinner, saying, It is well with thee, God will curse.

Confessions of sin made at the right time to

relieve the people of God will be accepted of him. But there are those among us who will make confessions, as did Achan, too late to save themselves. God may prove them and give them another trial, for the sake of his people to evidence to them that they will not endure one test, one proving of God. They are not in harmony with right. They despise the straight testimony that reaches the heart, and they would rejoice to see every one silenced that gives reproof.

The people of Israel had been gradually losing their fear and reverence for God, until his word through Joshua had no weight with them. "In his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun."

While Israel was apostatizing, Elijah was a true prophet of God. He remained loyal and true to God. His faithful soul was greatly distressed as he saw that unbelief and infidelity were fast separating the children of Israel from God. Elijah prayed that God would save his people. He entreated that the Lord would not wholly cast away his sinning people, but by his judgments, if necessary, arouse them to repentance, and not permit them to go on to still greater lengths in sin, and thus provoke him to destroy them as a nation.

The message of the Lord came to Elijah to go to Ahab, with the denunciations of his judgments, because of the sins of Israel. Elijah traveled day and night until he reached the palace of Ahab. He solicited no admission, and waited not to be formally announced. All unexpectedly to Ahab,

Elijah stands before the astonished king of Samaria in the coarse garments usually worn by the prophets. He made no apology for his abrupt appearance, without invitation. He raised his hands to heaven, and solemnly affirmed by the living God, who made the heavens and the earth, the judgments which would come upon Israel: "There shall be neither dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

This startling denunciation of God's judgments because of the sins of Israel fell like a thunderbolt upon the apostate king. He seemed to be paralyzed with amazement and terror; and before he could recover from his astonishment, Elijah, without waiting to see the effect of his message, left as suddenly as he came. His work was to speak the word of woe from God, and he instantly withdrew. His word had locked up the treasures of heaven, and his word was the only key which could open them again.

The Lord knew that there was no safety for his servant among the children of Israel. He would not trust him with apostate Israel; but sent Elijah to find an asylum among a heathen nation. He directed him to a woman that was a widow, who was in such poverty that she could barely sustain life with the most meager fare. A heathen woman, living up to the best light she had, was in a more acceptable state with God than the widows of Israel who had been blessed with especial privileges, and great light, and who did not live according to the light which God had given them. As the Hebrews rejected light, they were left in darkness. God would not trust his servant among his people who had provoked his divine anger.

Now there is an opportunity for apostate Ahab and pagan Jezebel to test the power of their gods, and to prove the word of Elijah false. Jezebel's prophets are numbered by hundreds. Against them all, stands Elijah, alone. His word has locked heaven. If Baal can give dew and rain, and cause the vegetation to flourish, if he can cause the brooks and streams of water to flow on as usual, independent of the treasures of heaven, in the showers of rain, then let the king of Israel worship him, and the people say he is God.

Elijah was a man subject to like passions as ourselves. His mission to Ahab, and the terrible denunciation to him of the judgments of God, required courage and faith. On his way to Samaria, the perpetually flowing streams, the hills covered with verdure, the forests of stately, flourishing trees, everything his eye rested upon, flourishing in beauty and glory, would naturally suggest unbelief. How can all these things in nature so flourishing be burned with drought? How can these streams that water the land, and that have never been known to cease their flow, become dry? But Elijah did not cherish unbelief. He went forth on his mission at the peril of his life. He fully believed that God would humble his apostate people, and through the visitation of his judgments would bring them to humiliation and repentance. He ventured everything in the mission before him.

When Ahab recovers in a degree from his astonishment at the words of Elijah, the prophet was gone. He made diligent inquiry for him, but no one had seen him or could give any information respecting him. Ahab informed Jezebel

of the word of woe that Elijah had uttered in his presence, and her hatred against the prophet was expressed to the priests of Baal. They unite with her in denouncing and cursing the prophet of Jehovah. The news of the prophet's denunciations are spread all through the land, arousing the fears of some and the wrath of many.

After a few months, the earth, unrefreshed by dew or rain, becomes dry, and vegetation withers. The streams of water that have never been known to cease their flow, decrease, and the brooks of water dry up. Jezebel's prophets offer their sacrifices to their gods, and call upon them night and day to refresh the earth by dews and rain. But their incantations and deceptions formerly practiced to deceive the people do not answer the purpose now. The priests have done everything to appease the anger of their gods, and with a perseverance and zeal worthy of a better cause, have they lingered around their pagan altars, while the flames of sacrifice burn on all the high places, and the fearful cries and entreaties of the priests of Baal are heard night after night through doomed Samaria. But the clouds do not appear in the heavens to cut off the burning rays of the sun. The word of Elijah stands firm, and nothing that Baal's priests can do will change the word spoken by Elijah.

An entire year passes, and another has commenced, and yet there is no rain. The earth is parched, as though a fire had passed over it. The flourishing fields become as the scorching desert. The air becomes dry and suffocating, the dust storm blinds the eyes, and nearly stops the breath. The groves of Baal are leafless, and the forest trees



give no shade, but appear as skeletons. Hunger and thirst are telling upon man and beast with fearful mortality.

THE IMPENITENT PEOPLE UNSUBDUED BY  
JUDGMENTS.

All this evidence of God's justice and judgment does not awaken Israel to repentance. Jezebel is filled with insane madness. She will not bend nor yield to the God of Heaven. Baal's prophets, Ahab, Jezebel, and nearly the whole of Israel, charged their calamity upon Elijah. Ahab had sent to every kingdom and nation in search of Elijah, and he required an oath of the kingdoms and nations of Israel, that they knew nothing in regard to the strange prophet. Elijah locked heaven with his word, and had taken the key with him, and he could not be found.

Jezebel then decided, as she could not make Elijah feel her murderous power, that she would be revenged by destroying the prophets of God in Israel. No one who professed to be a prophet of God should live. This determined, infuriated woman executed her work of madness in slaying the Lord's prophets. Baal's priests, and nearly all Israel, were so far deluded that they thought if the prophets of God were slain the calamity under which they were suffering would cease.

But the second year passes, and the pitiless heavens give no rain. Drouth and famine are doing their sad work, and yet the apostate Israelites do not humble their sinful, proud hearts before God. But they murmur and complain against the prophet of God who has brought this dreadful state of things upon them. Fathers and

mothers see their children perish with no power to relieve them. And yet they were in such terrible darkness that they could not see that the justice of God was awakened against them because of their sins, and that this terrible calamity was sent in mercy to them, to save them from fully denying and forsaking the God of their fathers.

It will cost Israel suffering and great affliction to bring them to that repentance necessary in order to recover their lost faith, and a clear sense of their responsibility to God. Their apostasy was more dreadful than drought or famine. Elijah waited, and prayed in faith through the long years of drought and famine, that the hearts of Israel, through their affliction, might be turned from their idolatry, to allegiance to God. Notwithstanding all their sufferings, they stood firm in their idolatry, and looked upon the prophet of God as the cause of their calamity. And if they could have had Elijah in their power they would have delivered him to Jezebel, that she might satisfy her revenge by taking his life. Because Elijah dared to utter the word of woe which God had bidden him, he had made himself the object of their hatred. They could not see God's hand in the judgments under which they were suffering because of their sins. They charged them to the man, Elijah. They abhorred not the sins which had brought them under the chastening rod, but hated the faithful prophet, God's instrument to denounce their sins and calamity. "And it came to pass, after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go show thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth."

Elijah hesitated not to start on his perilous journey. He had been hated, and hunted from city to city by the mandate of the king, for three years, and the whole nation had given their oath that the prophet could not be found. And now Elijah, by the word of God, is to present himself before Ahab. Through the apostasy of all Israel, the governor of Ahab's house has proved faithful to God, while his master is a worshiper of Baal. He had, at the risk of his own life, preserved the prophets of God, by hiding them by fifties in a cave, and feeding them. While the servant of Ahab is searching throughout the kingdom for springs and brooks of water, Elijah presented himself before him. Obadiah revered the prophet of God, and as Elijah sends him with a message to the king, he is greatly terrified. He sees danger and death to himself and also to Elijah. He pleads earnestly that his life might not be sacrificed; but Elijah assures Obadiah with an oath that he will see Ahab that day. The prophet will not go to Ahab but as one of God's messengers to command respect, and he sends by Obadiah a message, "Behold, Elijah is here." If Ahab wants to see Elijah, he has now the opportunity to come to him. Elijah will not go to Ahab.

The king heard the message with astonishment, mingled with terror, that Elijah, whom he feared and hated, was coming to meet him. He had long sought for the prophet that he might destroy him, and he knew that Elijah would not expose his life to come to him, unless guarded, or with some terrible denunciation. He remembers the withered arm of Jeroboam, and he decides that it