

Christ's Last Letter

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CHRIST'S LAST LETTER.

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 will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich . . . and knowest not that thou art . . . poor, and blind, and naked: I COUNSEL THEE to buy of Me GOLD . . . WHITE RAIMENT . . . EYESALVE. . . . As many as I LOVE, I rebuke and chasten: . . . 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 overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne. He that hath an ear . . . hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.—REVELATION iii. 14-22.

IT is evident that we are in the last days of the Church's history on earth, and that the Lord will soon come to take His own to be with Himself, before God's judgments are poured upon the earth. If so, we are in the days of Laodicea, and we ought to pay very great attention to Christ's last letter to the Churches, namely, that written to Laodicea.

The SEVEN LETTERS given to John to write, as found in these two chapters (Rev. ii. and iii.) were addressed to seven actual Churches in Asia when John was an exile in Patmos, and in his old age. But the state of things found in them at that time represented the state of things that would mark the professing Church during the

seven stages of her history on the earth, and give us seven different successive phases and characteristics which would mark the Church during the whole time, now nearly 1900 years. But only one phase is prominent at one time, though the last four exist concurrently at the close (for the Lord's coming is found in all four), so that one phase does not cease to exist when another becomes prominent.

HE PRESENTS HIMSELF IN A DIFFERENT AND SUITABLE WAY TO EACH CHURCH OR ASSEMBLY, according as He saw what would help in that condition of things. Also in each case HE GIVES A PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER. I want specially to speak about Laodicea, but will first look a little at the others.

1. To Ephesus He presents Himself as "HE THAT HOLDETH THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND, WHO WALKETH IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS." In this He alludes, as in most of the presentations, to the vision in the first chapter, and it is most suitable to the state of things which met Christ's eye in Ephesus, and which marked the Church generally, in the last days of the Apostle John. There was NO LONGER THE FRESHNESS OF FIRST LOVE, that love when Christ was simply everything to them. The works continued, but not the love. Now to help them, He lets them see Him as holding the Seven stars in His right Hand, and that everything depended upon Himself and the holding of His powerful right Hand. He was supreme and absolutely essential to them. Without Him there

would be no light at all. Then, too, He was "walking in the midst of the Seven golden candlesticks." He was examining the light, for they were responsible to be light bearers, and they had greatly failed in this respect, so that if they did not repent, the candlestick would be removed. There was nothing to be done but to get back to Christ, and to that early love when Christ was everything to them, and in all their thoughts, and the one Object of their life.

There is no expectation of all returning to the happy state of things which was at the beginning of Christianity, but there is a grand promise to the OVERCOMER—He should EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE which is in the midst of THE PARADISE OF GOD. What Adam never ate of, he should partake of in a higher and better way, he should have Christ in all His blessedness, not in an earthly paradise, but in the paradise of God Himself. Infinite eternal blessing for those who return to first love. And here I may notice that in each case He addresses the angel of the church, that is the mystical representative of the assembly to which He writes. In the angel we have what morally represented the Assembly in the eye of Christ.

2. To Smyrna Christ presents Himself as THE FIRST AND THE LAST, WHICH WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE. It was the persecution age which followed the fall of the Church from first love, the age when under heathen emperors Christians suffered ten terrible persecutions, the last one lasting ten years. That dear aged servant of the Lord, Polycarp of Smyrna, suffered

martyrdom when over ninety years of age in the presence of an infuriated populace. How beautifully does Christ present Himself at such a time to suffering saints! He is the First and the Last. Christ was the first to have to do with the Christian, and He is also the last. Satan may persecute and kill, but he is not the last, he can do nothing after death. The Christian is then with Christ and outside Satan's power for ever. He is entirely in the hands of Christ, who will raise him from the dead and glorify him. Then, too, what is death to a Christian who knows that **CHRIST WAS DEAD AND IS ALIVE**? It is only a friend to open a door of escape, that we may go and be with Jesus. Death is not the end, for Jesus lives, who once was dead, and He will bring all His own out of death for ever to live with Him in eternal glory. What comfort, too, to know that however terrible the tribulation, it cannot last more than the "ten days," that is, there is a limit to all the testing, when trial will be over for ever, and we shall be with Christ. Death has no horror for those who know that Christ has been into it and has robbed it of its sting by bearing the judgment in our behalf. Besides, the persecuted saint has this sweet promise from Christ: "Be thou **FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH**, and I will give thee the **CROWN OF LIFE**." Surely "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Further, the **OVERCOMER** shall not be hurt of the **SECOND DEATH**, the death of judgment, the lake of fire.

3. In Pergamos is represented the state of things in the Church which followed the persecution age, when the Church accepted the patronage of the world and allowed the Emperor Constantine, who was born at York, to be the head of the Church and to preside at a Christian Conference in A.D. 325, though himself unbaptized, and still holding the title of Pontifex Maximus, the leading heathen priest in Rome.

Very suitable, then, is the way Christ presents Himself at this stage of the Church's history—**HE THAT HATH THE SHARP SWORD WITH TWO EDGES.** If they did not repent, He would come to them quickly and fight against them with the sword of His mouth. The sword of the Word which, properly speaking, was to be used against sinners, would have to be used against themselves unless they themselves used it in self-judgment and true repentance. They were dwelling where Satan's throne is, in the place of honour and worldly glory. Pergamos expresses the thought of a citadel or tower. The Church, no longer persecuted, was seeking a place in the world. They ought to have been content with being a separate people in the midst of the nations, closely united together, but taking no part in national interests, politics and wars, whilst known for their kindness and willingness to serve anyone and to do good to all; instead of this, they sought to make Christianity a national religion, and they sank down to the level of the nations. People were baptized wholesale, and heathen temples and feasts were turned into Christian ones. All this has made it much more difficult for the true

Christian, for he has now to stand apart from so-called Christian nations, whereas in the first days he only had to stand apart from the heathen. But there were faithful witnesses even in the Pergamos state of things, and one of them, Antipas (whose name perhaps suggests that he was 'against all'), suffered martyrdom for his faithfulness. True saints still held fast Christ's name and did not deny His faith. But the error of Balaam (worldly association) was found taught in the Church, and also idolatry, and there were those who taught pretended sanctity with evil practice.

Very sweet is the promise to THE OVERCOMER—He should EAT OF THE HIDDEN MANNA. He should enter, in spirit now, and fully in the future day, into what Christ was under the eye of God in His whole pathway of humiliation and reproach in this world. Very little is said of the first thirty years of Christ's life on earth, except that He pleased God. But His pathway of humiliation is all known to God, and is to be given as a special delight to the overcomer. He is, too, to receive THE WHITE STONE of Christ's special approval (in contrast to getting the approval of the world), indicating His entire acquittal by Christ Himself. What holy sweet enjoyment for one who has refused association with the world and has sought to follow in the steps of Christ once humbled here! What holy joy to know Christ in glory as the One whose pathway here he had sought to walk in! What a tender holy link with Christ Himself! In the stone, too, he finds "A NEW NAME WRITTEN, WHICH NO MAN KNOWETH SAVING HE

THAT RECEIVETH IT," some expression of Christ's own satisfaction and delight, a secret known only to himself, conveying a name by which Christ alone would know him.

4. Now we come to the Thyatira period of Church history; for the Church, not content with dwelling where Satan's throne is, sought a higher place still. Having gained the favour and approval of the world, she must be the ruler of the world. Hence began the papal system, in which the Pope obtained a place above the kings, and the Church assumed the place of teacher and began to rule the world. The Church was never meant to teach, but to be taught by Christ, and by those whom Christ gives to the Church as teachers, and whom He alone can enable so to do. But Jezebel had got inside the Church. In the case of Israel of old, when Ahab married the heathen wife of that name, idolatry was introduced and Israel was speedily ruined by the heathen queen who cruelly persecuted the saints who stood against it. But far worse was the state of things when Roman Catholicism was in power. Idolatry was introduced in the worship of the Mass, and of the virgin Mary, and of images, and with that a persecution of the saints far more terrible than that under the heathen, the greatest possible cruelty marked the way they tortured and put to death the faithful saints. She taught spiritual fornication, so that the Church turned away from her love to Christ, to whom she belonged, and fixed her love on the world. Very suitable, then, is the way Christ presents Himself to the Church under such circumstances: "These things,

saith THE SON OF GOD, WHO HATH HIS EYES LIKE UNTO A FLAME OF FIRE, AND HIS FEET ARE LIKE FINE BRASS." Christ takes His place as Son of God, Son over God's house. This would keep the faithful, and would recover some who had entirely forgotten the place that belongs to Christ in the House of God. As Son of God, too, He will rule the nations with the 'rod of iron' according to Psalm ii., when all the kings will own Him. The Church was seeking to rule now, instead of waiting till Christ reigns. Christ's eyes "like unto a flame of fire" penetrated into everything. Nothing escaped His notice. "He searcheth the reins and hearts," and "His feet of fine brass," undefiled and undefilable, are presented in striking contrast to all the defiling condition of things in the Roman Catholic or Thyatira period of Church history—that is, in the Middle Ages, up to the time of the Reformation. But Popery, though not the prominent phase, goes on side by side with other phases till the end, for the Coming of the Lord is brought in here and in all the last four letters. Moreover, there is a division made between the first three Churches and the last four, in that the words "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches," are no longer put at the end of the letter, but before the promise to the overcomer. Christ now separates the faithful, the 'you' or 'the rest,' that is, a remnant, from all the others. Judgment would fall on this Jezebel or Romanistic state of things, and great tribulation. Jezebel had not repented, though space for repentance had been given her,

and piercing judgment would come upon her in consequence, also her children would be killed. The faithful remnant are encouraged to hold fast till Jesus comes, and there is a wonderful promise to **THE OVERCOMER**. Christ would give him **POWER OVER THE NATIONS**, and he should **RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON**, for when Christ reigns the saints will reign with Him, that is, "If we suffer with Him." But the present moment is one of suffering and of waiting for Christ who is to the faithful, **THE MORNING STAR**, the assurance that night will soon be over and that Christ's day is about to dawn. Any moment Christ may come and take His own to Himself, that they may come with Him when He comes to reign. Bright and glorious hope!

5. Next comes the Sardis period of the Church's history, when the prominent phase that met the eye of Christ (though Romanism still continued) was that of Protestantism. It was the outcome of the Reformation under Luther and other men whom God raised up as a witness against Rome. But faithful though many were, and glorious though the moment was when men separated from Rome, when the Bible became again an open book for all to read, when the Word of God began to have a place it had not had for centuries, and when the Gospel and justification by faith were freely preached, yet this state of things soon lapsed into cold formalism and mere Protestantism. It is well described by the words: "I know thy works, that thou hast **A NAME THAT THOU LIVEST**, and art **DEAD**." The way therefore in which Christ presents Himself to this Church

or state of things is most striking and instructive :
“HE THAT HATH THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF
GOD AND THE SEVEN STARS.” Now if
Luther and the Reformers had more fully under-
stood the meaning of these words, and acted upon
them, they would have separated not only from
the glaring evils of Rome, which they did, but
would have left behind the whole clerical system
of that church, and would have been content to
have CHRIST AS THE HEAD, and to own Him
as having the seven stars, as the One that has
supreme authority in the Church, and they would
have looked to Him to take the initiative in
everything, and would have given Him His
proper place in the midst of the Assembly. They
would have seen that He has “the seven Spirits
of God,” the fulness of the Spirit, and that Christ
alone is competent to order and bless in the Assem-
bly without any human ecclesiastical arrange-
ments. They would have returned to what was
at the beginning, to that simple state of things
when the saints were content to have Christ in
Heaven as their Head, and the Spirit acting for
Him here in the saints on earth. Man-made
ministers interfered with the free action of the
Spirit and with the prerogatives of Christ as Head
and as being everything to His own Assembly.
Forms of prayer were still continued, many of them
simply translations from the Latin prayer book
of the Roman Catholics. Thus the Spirit was
shut out from Christian worship. Very soon the
state of things was practically death. There was
lack of spiritual power, things were ready to die.
If they were not watchful, Christ would come

upon them as a thief and would treat them as the world.

But there were a few names even there "which have not defiled themselves," they should walk with Christ in white, as those who were practically righteous. To **THE OVERCOMER** He promises **THE WHITE RAIMENT**, they should be publicly justified. Yea, more—"I will not blot out his name out of **THE BOOK OF LIFE**, but I will **CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER, AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS.**" Many names of professing Christians in the carelessly enrolled registers of man would be struck out if inspected by Christ, but theirs would be retained, yea, they will even be confessed before His Father, who would welcome such with His own precious love, and also before the angels whose privilege and service it has ever been to minister "to those who shall be heirs of salvation."

6. The sixth period of the Church's history is marked by the return of some (if it be only a little remnant) to the bright state of things which was at the beginning of Christianity, to the freshness of that first love to Christ when Christ was absolutely everything to the saints. It is well called Philadelphia, "brotherly love," for when saints return simply to Christ in holy love, they are sure to find His brethren.

Very suitable is the presentation of Christ to this Assembly: "These things saith He that is **HOLY**, He that is **TRUE**, He that hath **THE KEY** of David, **HE THAT OPENETH, AND NO MAN SHUTTETH; AND SHUTTETH, AND NO MAN OPENETH.**" There was a remark-

able work of the Spirit of God nearly 100 years ago in the midst of the coldness and deadness of Protestantism, and far and wide over the world the saints became affected by the presentation of Christ as the Holy and the True. It led to the desire to answer to Him in this character, and to their separating from the unholy associations, religious and otherwise, with which they were connected, and returning simply and truly to Christ Himself apart from all the religious systems which the will and mind of man had formed. They left all the ecclesiastical associations, no matter how time-honoured, and were content to have Christ Himself alone as Head and Light and Lord. They met in His Name alone, in holy fellowship together with saints in all countries, shutting the door against evil and refusing all who disowned His Name and who detracted from the glory of His Person as Son of God. They were prepared, if necessary, to stand alone in a place rather than acknowledge ecclesiastical associations which virtually shut out Christ as the Living Head, and which hindered the liberty of the Spirit. People said they would lose all opportunity of doing good, and that they would find no sphere of usefulness by so doing. **BUT THEY SAW THE KEY IN THE HANDS OF CHRIST**, the key to all the treasures and resources of the kingdom and of God. Everything was in the hands, not of the clergy, but of Christ the Heavenly Administrator. They soon got the sweet approval of the Lord: "I know thy works: behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept

My word, and hast not denied My Name. Behold I will make them . . . to know that I have loved thee." Without claiming to be Philadelphians, they found AN OPENED DOOR, opened by the Lord, and that no human power, nor that of Satan, could shut it.

The Lord greatly honoured them, and gave them opportunities of serving Him far and wide, and the sheep of Christ soon found there was food amongst these despised saints for the whole flock of God. Yet outwardly to human eyes there was LITTLE STRENGTH. There was no great show, and the world had little idea that anything was going on. In some respects it was so even with Christ Himself, in His path of dependence here on earth. The world little knew what He was doing, and despised the little handful of disciples that gathered round Him. But to Him the porter opened, as we read in John x. He did more with that handful of disciples than the world has any idea of. So these Philadelphian saints, little though their strength might be or seem to be, KEPT CHRIST'S WORD and DID NOT DENY HIS NAME. They treasured His Word, all that He told out of God, the whole Christian revelation, and all that Christ revealed of the Father and of His purposes of love. All had been recovered to them by Christ who alone had the key to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and who alone could recover the precious truths the Church had long lost. Not only so, but like Ezra of old, who took the greatest care of the sacred vessels of the Temple which he brought from Babylon to Jerusalem, so these

saints kept and treasured the Word of Christ, and would not let it go. Besides this, they did not deny His Name. That Name was of little account all around, where man had place instead of Christ. But the Name of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, the Name of the Holy One and the True, of Him who alone had the Key, and who had the unique distinction of having been into death for us and of having conquered it, and Who now lives to administer all the blessed results of His work in dying for us. In His Name it was that these saints met together, to His Name alone they gathered together, nor did they deny it by carelessness of walk or by meeting in other names than that of Christ.

More than this, they "kept the word of Christ's patience," instead of asserting themselves. They waited for God to vindicate them in His own time. Christ Himself is waiting, and they would wait too. They had the approbation of Christ Himself, and that was enough for them. They had it too from Christ, that the day would come when those who pretended, like the Jews, to a divinely ordered system of religion handed down from the beginning, would be made to come and own that they were wrong, and that Christ loved those who had kept the Word of the Holy and the True. **THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS THE CHURCH'S SWEETEST PORTION**, and it belonged in a special way to them. Whatever the trials of the present moment of patience, they should not be exposed to the trial that was coming upon the whole world. They did not belong to the world when they were in it, and they should

be taken out of it before the terrible trial comes. Nor would it be long, the time of waiting—“Behold I come quickly”: only let them continue steadfast, “HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN.” They had gone back to what was at the beginning of Christianity, to Christ Himself and His precious love, and they were not to let go what they had.

The promise to THE OVERCOMER is very precious and in striking contrast to the place they had in the eyes of men down here. “I will make him A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD, AND HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT.” Insignificant he had been in the eyes of the ecclesiastics of this world; he should now be a pillar, indeed he had been a pillar and support in God's temple before, if only men had had eyes to see it. And if outside what man called the Church, he should never again have an outside place, he should be inside and go no more out. Further—“I will write upon Him THE NAME OF MY GOD.” What an honour for one who had no name here, the Name of the God of the long despised Jesus is stamped publicly upon Him. Morally he had borne that Name here. Yea, more, he who was outside the city life and politics of this world, whose politics were in heaven and centred in Christ, was to have written upon him “THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMETH DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD,” thus involving a very special place in the political system of the Coming Day. Lastly is added this sweet word from Christ—“AND I WILL WRITE

UPON HIM MY NEW NAME.” It is a name quite unknown to men who, like the Jews, have a religion according to the flesh; it is a Name Christ has taken as dead to this world where the false Church is at home, but as risen and living in another and a heavenly scene, a scene of glory where the natural man cannot enter at all. The overcomer is publicly identified with Christ and bears His new Name. He had known it here, he bears it there. Blessed is the association with Christ all through—“The temple of MY God,” says Christ, “the Name of MY God,” “of the City of MY God,” “MY new Name.” Wonderful compensation for faithful and suffering saints!

7. But whilst this bright and true condition of things so pleasing to Christ, no doubt continues in some way till Christ comes, and in saints well known to Him, though perhaps few in number, yet THE LAST and prominent phase is that of LAODICEA. The last state of Christian profession is that of LUKEWARMNESS. “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 [or am about to] spue thee out of My mouth.” It is a condition of things quite NAUSEOUS TO CHRIST and will be utterly refused in the end, when Christ comes. He is about to treat them so, but there is just time for any true souls in it to hear the word of Christ in this HIS LAST LETTER. They were not cold exactly, not infidels or avowed apostates like the Mahomedans. They still kept up the Name of Christ, and there were some works, but there was utter HEARTLESSNESS.

I have no doubt this marks the time in which we live, and therefore I would call special attention to these **THE LAST WORDS OF CHRIST**; written to meet the need at the last moment before He comes. For whilst the Thyatira (Roman Catholic), Sardis (Protestant), and Philadelphian condition of things still continue side by side till the Coming of Christ, the prominent mark of the moment is found in Laodicea.

Most instructive and helpful is the way Christ now presents Himself to this Church or state of things as represented in the angel: "These things saith **THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD.**" Christ was not "yea" and "nay," He was not one thing one day and the very opposite the next. He was **THE AMEN** to all God's thoughts for man. Whatever God desired man to be, whatever pleasure God wished to find in man, that Christ was. He fully pleased God, fully answered to all that God would have man to be. He never failed to please God, but gave Him the greatest possible delight as man. Every grace was there in divine perfection and in Man! He never said 'No' to God, but always 'Yes,' for He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. Not only so, but having died for us and risen again, He gave us His own Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ, **THE SPIRIT OF THE AMEN**, to dwell in us who believe. He did this that in the Church too might be found the Amen to all that God would have man to be, so that God might have His delight in men. But alas! we have utterly

failed, and can only know how greatly we have failed by looking at Christ the true "Amen." He is, too, **THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS**. He never falsified His testimony, but was true to God all through. We who have His Spirit ought also to have been a faithful and true witness in the absence of Christ, but alas! how we have falsified the testimony by joining with the world! He is, too, **THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD**. Nothing built on Christ could ever break up, but man is so utterly corrupt that he would spoil any creation in which he had a part. Christendom, as Christ sees it to-day, must break up, for it is built up on the pride and will of man and not upon Christ, and everything in us that is not Christ will have to go.

Laodicea is marked by **GREAT PRETENTIOUSNESS**. "Thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," and also by **GREAT IGNORANCE OF ITS TRUE CONDITION**, "and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Laodicea is said to mean "the judgment of the people," and it is just this that marks the present day, when every man claims a right to a vote, and thinks his own judgment is as good as that of any one. Saints get under the influence of what is around, and assert themselves, and their own judgment, and spoil their testimony by pretentiousness. Christ was the very opposite to all this; He did not trust His own judgment, nor had He one. He said, "As I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."

“ My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me.” Self-opinionated saints have spoilt many a meeting. How often have we exposed ourselves by our pride and self-importance, or by our ambition and vanity, or by our un-Christ-like ways without being aware how naked we were in the eyes of Christ and to those who are near Christ. I hope none of us would say: “ This letter does not apply to me, for I am in Philadelphia.” To say so would be to prove we were in Laodicea. It is right to desire to answer to the state of things in Philadelphia, but do we not feel how greatly we ourselves have failed, how careless and worldly and self-indulgent we have been, and that in many ways we have been greatly affected by the general Laodicean spirit? Let us be thankful, then, that the Lord has written us a letter to save us from such a state of things.

And first He gives FRIENDLY COUNSEL (for the Greek expresses this) to buy of Him GOLD tried in the fire, for He would have us rich with the well-tested righteousness of God which is found alone in Christ. But we must *buy* it. It costs us something to get it, for we must give up all thoughts of our own righteousness or worthiness, and find righteousness, not in ourselves, but in Him who died for us and rose again. Well for us if Christ can say to us what He said to Smyrna: “ I know thy poverty, but thou art rich.” The self-righteous man exhibits his poverty, he has no sense of having been enriched with Christ. He would have us to buy WHITE RAIMENT from Him, that we may be clothed. Nothing is so simple, and yet nothing so conspicu-

ous, as white raiment. It is Christ in His simple and beautiful life coming out in us. "The fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." How kind of Christ to come as a friend and give us this friendly counsel! He sees our nakedness and that of the professing Church, and He would have us clothed, and He is ready to clothe us with Himself. EYESALVE, too, to anoint our poor blind eyes, He is ready to supply, in order that we may see. The eyesalve is the Holy Ghost who, when ungrieved, loves to give us the sight of unseen and eternal things, and of the glory of Christ which the world knows nothing of.

But not only does Christ give friendly counsel, He even speaks of HIS LOVE! "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." How precious to find Christ speaking of His love in such a state of things! There were those He loved there, and He shows His love by rebuking them and disciplining them like children. How thankful we ought to be for His rebukes, and that He should chasten us and watch over us, instead of leaving us to our own foolish ways. May we listen to His loud call which the present terrible calamities seem specially to enforce: "BE ZEALOUS therefore, and REPENT." All over the world Christians are feeling that the Lord is calling us to repentance. May we heed the call!

Now let us notice THE ATTITUDE OF CHRIST — "Behold, I stand [have taken My 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." Christ has been forced outside the professing Church as it is to-day, for He could not own it as Christian. He has taken His stand outside and continues loudly knocking. It is for us to hear His voice and open the door. May He give us all grace to do so! and He will come in. What a favour! Yea, He will sup with us. He will link Himself up with us and with all our interests. He will be our guest! More than this, for He adds: "AND HE WITH ME." He will bring us to His own Table and make us feast with Him. There we find a much wider circle than our own, we find Him surrounded at His Table with all the dear saints for whom He died. He loves them all, and has never failed one. There, too, we find that all the Father's things are His, and that He loves to bring us into them. I cannot unfold the beauty and meaning of these words, but every one who opens the door will find it out for himself.

Lastly comes THE SWEET PROMISE TO THE OVERCOMER: "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." It is as if Christ said: "I will treat him in the same way as My Father treated Me—I overcame, and My Father gave Me a place on His throne; if you will overcome, I will give you a place with Me on My throne. You were with Me in suffering, you shall be with Me in Glory, you shall sit with Me in My throne." What a promise! "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches."

'He that hath an ear' is thus freely invited to hear the Spirit's word not only to Laodicea but to Philadelphia and to all the Churches. May we have the opened ear, for then all these precious things are open to us to hear and to get the good of.

H. D'A. C.



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