

Constant Diligence

THE WORDS FALL from the lips of One who cannot lie. The picture reveals eternal vigilance. Christ is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, walking from church to church, from congregation to congregation, from heart to heart. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. If the candlesticks were left to the care of human beings, how often the light would flicker and go out! But God has not given His church into the hands of men. Christ, the One who gave His life for the world, that all who believe in Him may not perish but have everlasting life, is the watchman of the house. He is the warder, faithful and true, of the temple courts of the Lord...

Christ walks in the midst of His churches through the length and breadth of the earth. He looks with intense interest to see whether His people are in such a condition spiritually that they can advance His kingdom. He is present in every assembly of the church. He knows those whose hearts He can fill with the holy oil, that they may impart it to others. Those who faithfully carry forward the work of Christ, representing in word and deed the character of God, fulfill the Lord's purpose for them, and Christ takes pleasure in them. {The Review and Herald, May 26, 1903}

In this scripture are outlined the conditions of acceptance with God. The first experience of the Ephesus church led to good works. God took delight in the fact that His church reflected the light of heaven by revealing the spirit of Christ in tenderness and compassion. The love that dwelt in the heart of Christ; the love that caused Him to give Himself a sacrifice for humanity, and to suffer with forbearance the reproach of men, even to the extent of being called a devil; the love that prompted Him to perform mighty works of healing during His ministry—this was the love that was to be revealed in the lives of His disciples.

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” Thine is a decay, a declension in holy zeal—not forsaken is the object of it, but lost is the fervor. The first affection of the convert to Christ is deep, full, and ardent. It is not necessary that this love should become less as knowledge

increases, as the more and increased light shines upon him. That love should become more fervent as he becomes better acquainted with his Lord....

God will accept nothing less than the whole heart. Happy are they who from the commencement of their religious life have been true to their first love, growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sure result of their intercourse and fellowship with their beloved Lord will be to increase their piety, their purity, their fervor. They are receiving a divine education, and this is illustrated in a life of fervor, of diligence and zeal....

It is our work to know our special failings and sins, which cause darkness and spiritual feebleness, and quenched our first love. {The Review and Herald, June 7, 1887}

In view of the many virtues enumerated, how striking is the charge brought against the church at Ephesus: “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” This church had been highly favored. It was planted by the apostle Paul. In the same city was the temple of Diana, which, in point of grandeur, was one of the marvels of the world. The Ephesian church met with great opposition, and some of the early Christians suffered persecution; and yet some of these very ones turned from the truths that had united them with Christ's followers, and adopted, in their stead, the specious errors devised by Satan.

This change is represented as a spiritual fall. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works”—as outlined in the preceding verses. The believers did not sense their spiritual fall. They knew not that a change had taken place in their hearts, and that they would have to repent because of the noncontinuance of their first works. But God in His mercy called for repentance, for a return to their first love and to the works that are always the result of true, Christlike love. {Manuscript 11, 1906}

Is it [our sin] the sin of the Nicolaitans, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness (The Review and Herald, June 7, 1887)? The doctrine is now largely taught that the gospel of Christ has made the law of God of no effect;

that by “believing” we are released from the necessity of being doers of the Word. But this is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ so unsparingly condemned. {The Signs of the Times, January 2, 1912, reprinted from The Signs of the Times, February 25, 1897}

Must we wait until we are translated before we eat of the leaves of the tree of life? He who receives into his heart the words of Christ knows what it means to eat the leaves of the tree of life.

When the believer, in the fellowship of the Spirit, can lay his hand upon truth itself, and appropriate it, he eats the bread that comes down from heaven. He enters into the life of Christ, and appreciates the great sacrifice made in behalf of the sinful race.

The knowledge that comes from God is the bread of life. It is the leaves of the tree of life which are for the healing of the nations. The current of spiritual life thrills the soul as the words of Christ are believed and practiced. Thus it is that we are made one with Christ. The experience that was weak and feeble becomes strong. It is eternal life to us if we hold the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.

All truth is to be received as the life of Jesus. Truth cleanses us from all impurity, and prepares the soul for Christ's presence. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory. {Manuscript 103, 1902}

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” If you “hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” and meditate upon the instruction given to them, your ears will be closed to the folly and nonsense which surround you. You will neither hear and repeat these things, nor will you ever hanker after them. When Christ satisfies the soul hunger, these trivialities are to you distasteful and disgusting. You have no desire to feast upon them, but choose instead the bread of heaven. {Ibid,

92, 1901}

Christ speaks of the church over which Satan presides as the synagogue of Satan. Its members are the children of disobedience. They are those who choose to sin, who labor to make void the holy law of God. It is Satan's work to mingle evil with good, and to remove the distinction between good and evil. Christ would have a church that labors to separate the evil from the good, whose members will not willingly tolerate wrong-doing, but will expel it from the heart and life. {The Review and Herald, December 4, 1900}

In that day of final punishment and reward, both saints and sinners will recognize in Him who was crucified the Judge of all living. Every crown that is given to the saints of the Most High will be bestowed by the hands of Christ—those hands that cruel priests and rulers condemned to be nailed to the cross. He alone can give to men the consolation of eternal life. {The Review and Herald, November 22, 1898}

In the message to the church at Sardis two parties are presented—those who have a name to live, but are dead; and those who are striving to overcome. Study this message, found in the third chapter of Revelation. [Revelation 3:1, 2 quoted.] Who are meant by those that are ready to die? and what has made them thus? The explanation is given, “I have not found thy works perfect before God.” [Vs. 3-5 quoted.]

To the church of the present day this message is sent. I call upon our church members to read the whole of the third chapter of Revelation, and to make an application of it. The message to the church of the Laodiceans applies especially to the people of God today. It is a message to professing Christians who have become so much like the world that no difference can be seen [vs. 14-18 quoted]. {The Review and Herald, August 20, 1903} ■

Message Notes



Five horizontal lines on the left and five horizontal lines on the right, intended for taking notes.