

FELLOWSHIP IN HIS SUFFERINGS

By Robert D. Brinsmead
A Sermon Report

I want to discuss something with you this evening, friends--something that I think might be helpful to us in our future experience. Sometimes there is a question among those of us who believe in true revival and reformation in the church, and in the present awakening as to just where we are going and what we may expect. What is to be our relationship to the church of God at large and what is to be our relationship with one another?

I read from Acts 14:21,22: "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

There are no "ifs" or probabilities about this passage of Scripture. It is definite. It is specific. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." I would like to refer you to another text in Acts 9. The Lord here was giving a message to Ananias to go and seek out Saul, who had just found Christ, because the Lord had chosen him to be a messenger for Him. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Acts 9:15,16.

What did the Lord reveal to Saul when He called him? Did He show him the glory and the honor that he was to receive from his mission? No, He revealed to Saul the great things that he was to suffer for Christ. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

I want to read this passage from Testimonies, Vol. 1, p. 78: "When the Lord appeared to Saul in his conversion, He did not purpose to show him how much good he should enjoy, but what great things he should suffer for His name. Suffering has been the portion of the people of God from the days of the martyr Abel. The patriarchs suffered for being true to God and obedient to His commandments. The great Head of the church suffered for our sake; His first apostles and the primitive church suffered. And why should we, who have the blessed hope of immortality, to be consummated at the soon appearing of Christ, shrink from a life of suffering? Were it possible to reach the tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God without suffering, we would not enjoy so rich a reward for which we had not suffered. We would shrink back

from the glory; shame would seize us in the presence of those who had fought the good fight, had run the race with patience, and had laid hold on eternal life. But none will be there who have not, like Moses, chosen to suffer affliction with the people of God. The prophet John saw the multitude of the redeemed, and inquired who they were. The prompt answer came: 'These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

This evening I could speak of the storm of persecution, relentless in its fury, that is to break upon God's people--the buy and sell decree when we will be threatened with derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. We could spend time discussing how the fires of persecution will be rekindled against the remnant. We could speak of the time of trouble, when God's people are apparently forsaken upon this earth and all the hosts of hell are marshalled against them and they cry day and night unto God for deliverance and how they suffer hunger, thirst, and weariness many days. Sometimes the question is asked, "Where are we going?" Well, if faithful, I'll tell you where we are going, friends.

In an unpublished letter Sr. White describes the voice of God under the seventh plague, rending the heavens; the voice of God is heard and the commandments are hung in the heavens. God's faithful people hear and understand and recognize the voice and they come forth for deliverance. The servant of the Lord goes on to tell how they come forth from mountains, rocks, dens, the caves of the earth, dungeons, prisons, torture chambers, hovels, and from garrets. If the faithful are coming forth from such places we ought to have a good idea as to just where we are heading? Isn't that true?

Yet, even that is not a true picture of the sufferings of God's people, because for everything that God has, the devil has a counterfeit. Yes, he even has a counterfeit for suffering. There are plenty of people in this world who endure privation. Just consider the poverty-stricken countries where people are living in hovels. I have read of one of the dictators in South America and his torture chambers. People there were placed in excruciating torture. But I dare say that most of them were not Christians anyway, and that wasn't fellowshiping with Christ in His sufferings. Sr. White says that we should pray that the Lord might baptize us with His sufferings and if we suffer with Him we shall be glorified together with Him, remembering that none will be there who have not, like Moses, chosen to suffer affliction with the people of God.

We can only have a true concept of what suffering means if we look at the Prince of sufferers, the Lord Jesus Christ. ". . . He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. 8:9. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." Isa. 53:3.

What were the sufferings of Christ? They did not just consist of privations in His physical life. That hardly counted. Surely, He knew what it was to be hungry, weary, and thirsty. He knew what poverty, hardship and toil were. But these things were not the real sufferings of Christ. Even when we look to the great passion of our Lord--to Calvary, and see Him dying on the cross, it was not the bodily pain that caused His sufferings. It is probable that there have been others in the history of the world who have suffered as much physical pain as our Lord, for men have devised ways and means that are perhaps even more cruel than crucifixion.

The servant of the Lord tells us in Education, p. 263: "The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God."

The suffering of Christ was the suffering that resulted from a rejection of love. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." John 1:11. He died of a broken heart. He suffered intensely because He loved intensely. Even human experience can teach us that the cruelest thing that can enter into any human heart, is a rejection of love. There is nothing worse than that.

To illustrate the point I would like to relate an experience. While I was in Australia and still farming, I met a man who was tramping the road. I offered him a ride, and upon finding that he was out of work I told him that he could come home and stay in the barracks and work until he got enough money to go where he wished to go. He was in a rather deplorable condition. After he started working on the farm I had occasion to talk to him and ask him how he got himself in such a state. I found that he was a talented man with a reasonable education. He had a good trade. What was he doing here in such a condition? He told me his story, perhaps just a common one. He was a man not much older than myself. "Well," he said, "my home broke up and that broke me up." Then he continued, "My wife is still alive. She's living with another man. I can't forget it. I love that woman and I'd still take her back. You needn't talk about a hell to me. I live it every day. That's hell." He had never learned to fix his love and his affections upon the great unchanging love of God. Now his life was smashed.

The fact is this: The more one loves, the more one suffers when that love is rejected. God, my friends, loves with an infinite love. We cannot comprehend this love but we can just see it dimly demonstrated in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord suffered much because He loved much. He could not see His message of mercy and His overtures of love rejected without great suffering and His heart was pierced. He wept over Jerusalem. "How can I give thee up?" He said. That, my friends, was the suffering of Christ. Because He loved with an infinite love, His suffering was in direct proportion to the love wherewith He loved. That was the suffering of Christ.

Now, my friends, we are told that we shall never enter the kingdom of heaven, we will never enjoy the tree of life, unless we have learned upon this earth to have fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. That does not mean that we should get a persecution complex. I think of a particular sect that are very zealous in their beliefs and have a reputation of making a nuisance of themselves as they go from door to door. If they don't get insulted they are disappointed. That is not entering into the sufferings of Christ. My friends, it is impossible for us to enter into the sufferings of Christ unless we are imbued with the love of Christ. If we are not imbued with this divine love and we go out to present His message, His truth, and we find only opposition and rejection, and are not always treated so nicely, what do we do? We wipe the dust off our feet and say, "Well, that serves them right. They'll get all they're looking for." That is only natural, isn't it? But through divine power, friends, we are to rise above the natural man, and unless we do, we shall never see the kingdom of God. The promises of God are to make us partakers of the divine nature and that nature is love, for God is love.

So we find that if we do not have the love of God, the love of Christ, abiding in our hearts, that when we present truth to our brethren and sisters and they reject it what is the human thing to do? What is the natural thing to do? Withdraw ourselves, isn't it? I'll go a bit further friends, and say it is the easiest thing to do, for at least you won't get hurt if you do that. It is the easiest way out. It is always the way out for those who do not receive the love of Christ.

But is it God's way out to withdraw ourselves? No, friends, that is not His way out, because, love does not withdraw. And love does not close the door. We often speak of the close of probation and say that God is going to close the probation of men. That is true, perhaps, in one sense. But we do not want to have a limited view of what the close of probation really is. Friends, God does not close any man's probation. If you study Desire of Ages through you will see that point clearly. Man closes his own probation, and God is forced to recognize the fact! God does not reject man. Man rejects God. Some people seem to have the idea that God's work is to keep man out of heaven. His everlasting work is to take men to heaven. But men refuse to go. God did not reject Lucifer up in Heaven. We are told in inspiration that he left the presence of God and went out. Jesus went out after him and it was only when Lucifer would not come back and when he made his decision forever that he would never submit to God, that he cut himself off. Jesus never closed the door on Judas. The Scripture says that Judas went out at the last passover supper. He went out and it was night. Jesus never gave up. He loved to the end. But Judas finally rejected Christ.

We see that God never withdraws Himself. Love does not withdraw itself. God does not close men's probation. Some people wonder if they fall back into the same sin again and again if the Lord really forgives them and if perhaps He might not lose patience

with them. There is no danger that God will not forgive sin, as such, or forgive the sinner. The danger is that through participation in sin man will lose all desire to be reconciled to God and that he will get to the place where he will not desire forgiveness any more. Thus he hardens his own heart and closes the door against the overtures of divine love.

I would like you to notice a few verses in 1 Cor. 13. The word "charity" as used here is sometimes translated "love" in other places in the New Testament. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." Verses 4-8.

I would like to read those verses from the Amplified version. Perhaps it might bring it out just a little plainer. This is the character, friends, that we must have if we are ever going to see God.

"Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy; is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited--arrogant and inflated with pride; it is not rude (unmannerly), and does not act unbecomingly. Love [God's love in us] does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful: it takes no account of the evil done to it--pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails--never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end."

This is a beautiful description, isn't it? It is the character of Christ. Love does not give up. It seeks to win. As the translation here says, "It is hopeful." It is not pessimistic. It has a very positive attitude. It does not withdraw itself.

The experience of Moses illustrates this principle. He loved the people as a type of Jesus. Although they did not appreciate his ministry, Moses still gave himself for them in unselfish service. When they rebelled and sinned, God said to Moses, "Moses, just stand out of the way a minute, let Me consume these people, and I will take you and make a great nation of you." What did Moses do? He fell on his face before the Lord and said, "Lord, you'll never do that. If you do, blot me I pray Thee, out of the book of life."

Paul had the same spirit for his own people. He said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my

kinsmen according to the flesh." Rom. 9:3. Love is never selfish. Moses even got to the place where he would have forfeited eternal life if it could benefit the chosen people. Only those who are imbued with that attribute will ever see God. And none of us have it. We are not born with it. We cannot manufacture it. This love is a gift of God.

Love never gives up. That is why Moses suffered. He is one of the examples in the Scripture of one who entered into the sufferings of Christ. Moses entered into the sufferings of Christ because he loved much. Therefore he suffered much. That will lead us to identify ourselves, as all God's true people have ever done, with God's people. That, my friends, is terribly important. Moses identified himself with his people. If they were to be destroyed, he said, "Destroy me too, Lord." Daniel, down in Babylon, identified himself with God's people. The Scriptures record that he confessed his sin and the sin of the people and he made the sin of the fathers his own sins. He identified himself with them. That is why the Scripture says that he was a man "greatly beloved."

You see, my friends, God calls us into fellowship with Christ. There is the principle of love, without which no man can see the Lord. If we lack that love, what are we going to do? We believe that God has given us light. I think if we search the Scriptures that we can see that this is true. God has called us to the sanctuary, to enter with Him into the last great experience that is going to prepare us for translation. And oh, my friends, we are responsible for the light that God has caused to shine upon our pathway. The Testimonies say that all those who have received light on these things are to bear testimony to the solemn truths that have been committed to them. So we have an obligation. But if we lack the love of Christ, what are we going to do and what is going to happen to us as we associate ourselves with the awakening message? We will withdraw ourselves, because where there is no love, that is the natural thing to do. But if we are imbued with the love of Christ we will give evidence of those attributes described in 1 Cor. 13. Love never gives up! It is hopeful. It is optimistic. It believeth all things, endureth all things, hopeth all things. That will give us a positive attitude toward the church, and to the destiny of the church, and just what God would have us to do.

We know that there is to be a separation in the church, the great shaking, but love doesn't do the separating. Just trace the experience of God's people in past ages. You will find that they never separated themselves from the churches to which they delivered the message. They were always violently thrust out. It was only then, when the rejection was deliberate and final and nothing else could be done that they sorrowfully accepted the fact. We are to identify ourselves with God's people.

Our attitude should be positive. God has a church. And if we identify ourselves truly with God's church, we must say absolutely

that it is our church. We belong there. Maybe some people do not recognize that you belong there, but it is God's church and not man's church. So you don't mind. You will be there delivering the message of divine love and you will stay there. Maybe they will reject you and you will enter into the sufferings of Christ, but you will never withdraw yourself--NEVER!

Sister White describes the people of God as the little company standing in the light. They are sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land, but especially will their prayers arise in behalf of the church because its members are doing after the manner of the world. They lament and afflict their souls because pride and selfishness and deception of almost every kind are in the church. As they see many swept aside with the strong current of evil, they mourn and afflict their souls. We are told clearly that those who do not mourn over their own sins or the sins of others will be left without the seal of the living God. When the time comes for the separation of the wheat and the tares in the church, where does the Lord find His people? Where does He see them? Does He see them over there somewhere? Does He see them out of Jerusalem? They are represented as being in Jerusalem holding forth the words of life. Sister White depicts them as being there. They had counseled. They had entreated. They are there identifying themselves with God's people and afflicting their souls. Unless we enter into that experience we are going to be left without the seal of God. Just think of it, friends. See this company sighing and crying for the sins of others!

Do we have this experience? Let us be honest with ourselves--Do we have this experience? If we haven't, we are not ready for the seal of God. Oh, we might be troubled with some of the evils in the church and very disturbed about it, but friends, we will never afflict our souls and cry over the sins of others until we learn to cry over our own. Let us apply these principles in a very practical way. God has a church in the world. It is His church. He loves it supremely. There are abominations in it. There is a great need of an awakening and there has begun an awakening in God's church. This awakening is not a call, in any sense of the word, to separate. I say in any sense of the word. It is a call to seek the Lord. It is a call to gather together, wherever we are, in any circumstances, because it is perfectly legitimate to search God's word and to seek the Lord for an experience which we do not have. But it is not a call to separate. It is not a call to organize, because God has an organization and it is a pretty good one, too. There may be evils in it. God will set them right. The Lord says that He is going to overturn, overturn, overturn, in the institutions which are called by His name. This church is doing a great and necessary work in the world. That work has to be done, doesn't it? God works through His organized church. Maybe He is not working there and can't work there as much as He needs to because of our own unconsecration and unpreparedness to work in harmony with Him.

What is the best way to relate ourselves to the awakening and to the church? First of all, let us seek the experience called for by the awakening. To enter into the experience of Christ, to have the attributes of His character, that we may indeed enter into His sufferings, is our great need. The sufferings of Christ are not just enduring bodily privations and being short of this and that. There are plenty of other people in the world who are far shorter of earthly comforts than we. Thousands in India can't even get enough food to put in their stomachs. But they aren't entering into the sufferings of Christ. We must have the love of Christ and a yearning for souls for whom Christ died. So let us seek that experience.

I would like to read a statement by E. G. White from the Review and Herald of March 29, 1898: "We feel as if we must belong to some organization if we would accomplish good. But John the Baptist did not work on this plan. His mission was to prepare the way for the Messiah by his God-given message; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he did the work appointed him without calling to his aid priest or rabbi. They (the apostles) were few in numbers, but under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they did more for the conversion of those in Jerusalem than the large religious organization had ever done. No man is to seek to bind the hands of God's instrumentalities. God has given to every man His work, and if His children will consecrate themselves to Him, no one has a right to specify who is to work, or who is not to work. Let God work through whomsoever He will."

We are told in Testimonies to Ministers, p. 411, "When God puts His Spirit upon men, they will work." Now, friends, no doubt you are wondering what is the best way to work for Christ and for the message you love. Here is the primary principle: When God puts His Spirit upon men they will work, for they can't do anything else but work. As Sister White says, it is not necessary to belong to some organization. I do not think she means this in the sense of the church at large, but if God puts His Spirit upon men they will work. She points us to the experience of others in the past who have gone before us.

There is a common weakness among humanity, friends, among us all. We like to see something. We want something that is tangible, something that we can get our hands on that we can put our faith in to do the work for us. When Moses went up into the Mount and the children of Israel lost sight of him, they said, "As for this Moses we wot not what has become of him. Up, let us make us gods and let us make us a golden calf here." So they made a golden calf to represent the diety. "Now, these be thy gods, O Israel, which will lead us into the land of Canaan." It was something that they could see. Here was something visible they could put their faith in, that they could point to that would lead them into the land of Canaan. Oh, friends, let us not be lured to put our faith in anything to lead us into the land of Canaan but our great invisible Leader. We must endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

How are we to reach God's people at this time with the urgent message of the call to the Sanctuary? It is certainly not to organize, because that would defeat the purpose of the awakening. There is only one way, friends. It is the way of Christ. We must seek the experience that the awakening calls for. We must by God's grace live the message that the awakening calls for so that everyone who is honest in heart, will see and accept the truth.

I would like to relate an experience that happened in Australia which illustrates the point. There was a man over there, a church elder, who was one of the most violent opposers of the awakening message in the whole of Australia. If ever there was one who you would be tempted to think would never see the light and who was hopeless, it was that man. However, since I have come to America I have heard that he is one of the foremost men who are holding forth the words of life in Zion. Do you know what aroused that man and what opened his eyes? There was a young man in the church, a school teacher, only about 19 years of age. He was a very talented person and a good speaker too, for that matter. But he did not win this church elder by his speaking. He went along to that church week by week and he was abused and insulted. They did some of the most frightful things to him and he sat there and took it and never said a word. He kept coming back and was so very nice about the matter. The church elder watched and watched. And do you know, after that went on for about two years, he said, "This young man has something that I don't have." He studied into the message and accepted it. Today he is rejoicing in it. Now he is holding forth the words of life in Zion.

I think that is what God is calling for from us more than anything else. We have the greatest work to do at this time. It is not so much to work for others, but it is to work for ourselves. Then we will be able to reach others. One young man asked Moody how to start a revival. Moody said, "I'll tell you how to start a revival. Go in your room, draw a circle, and don't come out until the revival has started." Good counsel, isn't it? We must pray that we might be baptized with the sufferings of Christ and enter into His joy. It will take more of the grace of God--infinitely more--than we experience now. But ah, my friends, it is well worth it. Our trial, in my opinion, is greater than any of those who have gone before, even the reformers. They were thrust out of the churches that had turned their backs upon God and had become Babylon. But God's true people in the church are going to be wounded in the house of their friends.

I would like to relate the experience of Moses when he died. You know that he was kept out of the land of promise because of his sin of speaking inadvisedly with his lips. Although he was a great and faithful servant of God, he knew he had to depart from his people and that he could not see the promised land because of his sin. One day God said to Moses, "Up into the mount for thou

shalt die." Moses called the people together for he loved them. "Still he forgot himself in his interest for his people. In the presence of the assembled multitude, Moses, in the name of God, addressed to his successor these words of holy cheer: 'Be strong and of a good courage; for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them; and I will be with thee.'" Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 470

As the people of God realized why he was calling them together, they thought of his long, patient unselfish ministry. They realized that it was because of their murmurings that their beloved leader would not now lead them into the land of promise. With great remorse and self-reproach they thought upon their own failings. They bitterly remembered that their own perversity provoked Moses to the sin for which he must die. And then Moses bade farewell to the people. He must depart on his mysterious errand. He must die alone. No earthly friend would be permitted to minister to him in those last hours. With unquestioning faith he went up the mount. He answered the call of God. It was a great struggle for him to leave the people that he loved. It was a tremendous struggle. But he obeyed the voice of God. He pointed to his people and said under inspiration, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in Thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Deut. 33:26,27. Then he left the people.

So Moses went up the mountain by himself and the servant of the Lord says that with undimmed eye he looked out upon the land of promise in the distance. He looked back upon the long wilderness stretches in which he had wandered with the children of Israel those forty long years. He thought of the burdens he had borne. He remembered the throne of Egypt that he had left behind in order to throw in his lot with the chosen people. He reviewed that life of suffering and it seemed as if his life had borne but little fruit. Was it worth it?

Then, as poor old Moses was sitting up there on that Mount, thinking it over, pleading with God to blot out that last sin he had committed, before him there passed a panoramic view of the history of Israel. He saw them enter the land of Canaan. He saw down through their history and their apostasies. He saw them go into the land of captivity for seventy years; he saw them delivered by the hand of God from captivity. Then the time had come and he heard the voice in heaven saying, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do Thy will, O God." Then he saw the eternal God--the great anti-type of himself--step down from the throne of deity and become a babe in Bethlehem's manger. Christ Himself, the great Antitype of Moses! Oh, Moses had stepped down from the throne of Egypt to cast in his lot with the despised people, but oh, how small this seemed in view of the great sacrifice of Jesus. To step down from the throne of deity and to come down upon this sin-cursed earth was indeed an infinite sacrifice. Moses saw in vision the life of Christ. He saw Him come

to His own and His own received him not. He saw God in human flesh being rejected by His own people. "He saw Jesus upon Olivet as with weeping He bade farewell to the city of His love." Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 475. He followed the Saviour to Gethsemane, and beheld the agony in the garden, the betrayal, the mockery and scourging,--the crucifixion. Moses saw that as he had lifted up the serpent in the wilderness so the Son of God must be lifted up, that whoever would believe on Him should not perish but have eternal life. He heard the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He saw the earth enveloped in darkness when Jesus lay in the tomb. He saw Him resurrected. "As he looked upon the scene, his countenance shone with a holy radiance. How small appeared the trials and sacrifices of his life, when compared with those of the Son of God! How light in contrast with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" Ibid, p. 476. He saw Christ ascend to heaven as a mighty Conqueror. He watched the ascension of Christ and he saw the pearly gate of the heavenly city swing wide. He saw himself in that vision as the one who would stand there to be the first to welcome Jesus into the city. Moses was the one. Because he had tasted somewhat of the sufferings of Christ, he was the one who was chosen for that honor.

As the scene unfolded he saw the history of the Christian church. He saw the Jewish people first, the ones who professed to keep God's law, but rejected the Lawgiver. He saw the Christian world professing to accept Christ and rejecting His law. He was horrified. He was taken down to the final conflict of the beast and the image, the baptism of the sufferings of the remnant church--the 144,000. He saw us in vision. He saw the covenant of peace under the seventh plague and Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven in great glory, and the resurrection of all the redeemed. And then he saw the earth made new--restored to its edenic state, the everlasting kingdom of God. God's people shall be with Him and they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads. Moses saw the everlasting kingdom ushered in.

And then, inspiration tells us, as he saw all that, the vision faded from his mind, and there he sat on Nebo's Mount and looked down upon the motley old earth and there wasn't much in it to be desired. How different it looked now. How mottled with sin after the eternal world that he had seen. There was one thing that caused Moses to rejoice. He had been privileged to have a part in the sufferings of Christ. He realized for the first time, as he had never realized before, that if he had no part in the sufferings of Christ that he would not have wanted to partake of the eternal glories of the kingdom of God. That place would not be for him. He was glad that he had some part in the sufferings of Christ. And, as inspiration says, "Like a tired warrior, he lay down to rest."

There is the experience of Moses set before us, friends. May we catch somewhat of the spirit of that faithful servant of God. May we indeed catch the spirit of Jesus. As we look unto Him may the great longing of our hearts be that we might be imbued with His Spirit that we might take up our cross and follow Him.

The Two Coverings

By Robert D. Brinsmead

A Sermon Report

Deep within his heart, man recognizes that he is in need of a covering as he stands before the infinite God Whose eyes are too pure to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity. Our first parents were deeply conscious of this, and when they had sinned away their robe of light and innocence, they were aware that they needed another covering. So they wove together a covering with their own hands and of their own devisings, to cover the shame of their nakedness. This example has been followed by the children of men almost consistently down through the years.

"Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of Me; and that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit, that they may add sin to sin." Isaiah 30:1.

God's people are rebellious, devising a covering that they may cover themselves, and the type of covering that God's people are represented as seeking is clearly stated, "that they may add sin to sin." Also it is implied in this text what the true covering is, but first let us consider what is meant by the false covering.

The False Covering

We have, of course, the supreme example of the covering of our first parents in the Garden of Eden—a covering of their own works, of their own devisings. This has been the way of man. But the best that man can do, and the best effort that we can produce is described very accurately in Galatians 5:19: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, . . ." Man can produce nothing better. That which is of the flesh is flesh.

As the Children of Israel departed further and further from the Lord, they sought to devise coverings. One of the main methods of doing this was in the multiplication of their forms and ceremonies and of their religious services. For instance, in Isaiah 1:3,4,6:

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. . . . From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

And yet in spite of all this, notice what we read in verses 11-17:

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto Me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth: they are a trouble unto Me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

A similar passage is found in Amos 5:21-24:

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer Me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

What beautiful passages! What striking passages of Scripture! Here Israel is portrayed as devising a covering for the nakedness of their soul, to try and prove to the Lord that they love Him, so that they would be accepted of Him and clothed in His sight. They multiplied their feast days, and their fat beasts, and their rams, and they brought them to the Lord with their incense and to their solemn assemblies, and they sang their songs, and the Lord says, "Take it away; it is all an abomination unto Me. I don't want it."

Oh yes, we read in the sanctuary service that God commanded these things. Yet here He says, "Take them away." The people were using these things to erect a barrier between themselves and God. As long as they were multiplying their ceremonies and their solemn meetings and their great convocations, they were complacent that they were the Lord's people. I wonder if these texts of Scripture are out of date.

Yes, my friends, today we have our solemn assemblies, our songs, and our great convocations, and yet there is no call for reformation. If it is to escape from our duty before God, from obeying His will; if it is just a cloak that we may "add sin to sin," God says, "Take it away. I don't want it." You can boast about your reports, and all your Ingathering. You can come before Me and boast of all your offerings numbering into the millions. You can bring the wealth of the world, and God says, "I don't want it." It is about time we learned the lesson. God says, "Let judgment run down as water, like a mighty stream."

The Marriage Relationship--An Illustration

The relationship between Christ and His church is represented as the relationship between a husband and wife. It is as if an unfaithful wife tried to make up and to appease her husband to cover her own evil ways, and to provide a cloak for her devious paths. She multiplied her services and became more particular in her outward attentions, thinking thus to make up for her continual unfaithfulness to her husband. How would any husband regard this? It would be an abomination, wouldn't it? This is how the Lord regards us when we cover our sins with a false covering.

The Lord primarily does not want our services nor our offerings. The cattle upon a thousand hills are His. He wants our hearts, our affections. He says, "My son, Give me thine heart." We can have everything, but if we have left our first love, we are devising a cloak of our own works, which is an abomination to God, that we may "add sin to sin."

Without the Wedding Garment

Let us consider another way that we may devise a covering which will add sin to sin. In Matthew 22 we find a man who was invited to come to the marriage. He was not an unbeliever. He presented himself to the marriage.

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Verses 11-13.

This man did not have the Lord's covering. He was cast out. He was lost. He was deceived. The state of this man without the wedding garment was exactly the same state as the foolish virgins in Matthew 25, who have no oil in their lamps. The servant of the Lord tells us that these were not hypocrites, but that they were deceived. This man accepts the gospel and professes to keep it. What is his mistake? When the king came in to see the guests and he was found without a wedding garment on, he was taken by surprise and he was speechless. He did not know his own destitution. In fact, he thought he had the right covering until the king came in and he saw that he was naked.

In Christ's Object Lessons, p. 315, Sister White describes this individual. He was one who professedly accepted the death of Christ on his behalf. He said, "Christ died for my sins. I accept His death for my soul. O wonderful provision, O wonderful provision." He misinterpreted the gospel. He did not know that he was to be saved by Christ's life, as we are told in Romans 5: 10. He did not put on the life of Christ. He refused to live the self-sacrificing life of Christ. He had made that covering, "but

not of My spirit, that they might add sin to sin." He did not put off his own defective character, and put on the garments of Christ's righteousness.

A Counterfeit "Righteousness by Faith"

Woe unto them that devise a covering, that they may add sin to sin. We hear a lot in our church today about righteousness by faith. But somehow it seems to be that this term, righteousness by faith, very often bears the connotation of a clever substitute for righteousness. It is not a real righteousness, but rather a clever substitute that you can have by faith. It is some vague sort of thing which you have by faith, and if you have this faith, you have righteousness by faith.

Let us illustrate it by reading a statement or two that perhaps will define the words "righteousness." What is righteousness? "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that commit-teth sin is of the devil; . . ." 1 John 3:7,8. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. There is only one way to do righteousness, and there is only one way to obey God. The Scripture says in Hebrews 11 that by faith Abraham obeyed God. He did it by faith, but HE OBEYED. Faith wasn't a substitute for obedience, was it? This was not a substitute for righteousness, but rather a real righteousness that was revealed in the life of Abraham. Righteousness by faith is in reality right doing, the very right doing of God manifested in the life of the believer. It comes through active, living faith, which works by love and purifies the soul.

"When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit." Selected Messages, Vol. 1, p. 382.

This statement is often quoted today. But it is not interpreted in the way that the servant of the Lord intended it should be. It is a pity that the paragraph preceding is not quoted in the book. That paragraph begins with the words, "There is no excuse for sin. . . ." The servant of the Lord is speaking of christian service. When we come to Jesus, we yield our members as instruments to God, to do His service. But because of the limitations of our flesh, and because of our defective bodies, we are defective instruments. God doesn't account that as sin, because sin is not in the instruments, but only in the heart.

In other words, if a man's heart is right toward God, and there is no sin there, and he yields himself as an instrument to God, his tongue to preach, his hands to do, and his feet to walk, although they are defective because of the flesh, (there is no such thing as "holy flesh" in this life) Jesus makes up for the deficiencies with His own divine merit, because this man's heart is right toward God. That is what the servant of the Lord is talking about in this reference. She is not here talking about sin and deficiency in the heart that God is going to cover with

a cloak. But, sad to say, that is exactly what that statement is being used to teach. This is a false covering, a false refuge. We cannot hide under that refuge when the time of trouble comes when our great High Priest rises up in the sanctuary, closes the door, and steps out. He is not going to be there making up for any of our deficiencies of character. Jesus has provided a way to overcome every fault in our character, that we might stand faultless before Him. Woe unto the rebellious people that devise a covering that they may add sin to sin.

The Cross of Christ

The devising of a false covering usually stems from a false understanding of the cross of Christ. The great controversy from the very beginning has been over the law. It is fundamental that we understand it. Satan has said to the Father from the very beginning, "That law is unjust, man cannot keep it." (See Desire of Ages, p. 24). Jesus came to prove Satan a liar. Standing in our place, He presented before God, as a man, the example of an unselfish life, a law-abiding life. He kept the law in our flesh and proved that the charges of Satan were false. When he came into this world, He came to reveal that law. This was the primary purpose of His coming into the world. He gave a revelation of God's law, not only to this world, but to the whole universe. Because Satan had challenged that law as a law of selfishness, and said that it would have to be altered, and that it was the enemy of man, Jesus came into this world to reveal that law, and to justify the character of God and His government. The work of Jesus to save man depended on this primary purpose. He revealed that law in His own life when He emptied Himself in unselfish love for the human race and lived upon this earth that self-denying life of service. He gave Himself for others. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He gave His life as a ransom for many. Jesus lived the law of God and He revealed it before the universe on the cross of Calvary. The cross of Calvary is God's supreme example of God's self-sacrificing, self-renouncing love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Calvary was God's demonstration before the universe of what the Law of God was.

The servant of the Lord tells us that it is only in the light of the cross that we can understand the exalted character of God's law. See Jesus giving Himself and denying Himself. See Him in the Garden of Gethsemane, making the decision to save us at any cost to Himself. See Him on the cross, giving Himself as a ransom for many. Unselfish love is God's law of the universe. Jesus revealed in His life and His death that God's law is a law of infinite love and that every command of God is an expression of infinite love. He revealed that there can be no excuse for sin.

This cross is to lead us to have great reverence to the great law of God because Calvary is really the law of God unfolded. But somehow we can obtain the idea even if it is not consciously, that the cross is a wonderful provision for sinful man. Subconsciously we think that it is a clever way by which we can receive forgiveness for our sins. It is like getting indulgences. We

can keep coming back. We don't have to be so particular with respect to the law of God. Of course, we have to make a stab at keeping the law, but it doesn't matter very much if we fail. We have the wonderful provision of the cross of Christ. He made a full and free atonement, and there is grace abounding for all men.

Now these facts are true—at least partly true—but how easy it is to pervert the whole thing. The cross is to lead us to reverence the exalted law of God. It is to lead us to see that every command of God is an expression of infinite love. It is to show us that Jesus did not die to give us an indulgence for sin. Rather He died to destroy the works of the devil, and to put to death the old man, and to destroy that old sinful nature that we love, and to provide us a new nature, a divine nature, that by His grace we might be obedient to the whole will of God.

Grace is not something just for the sins of the past. Grace is divine power. It is the life of Christ in the soul, to restore, to rebuild to reshape the life, and to bring it into harmony with the will of God. When we see the atonement revealed in the sanctuary service, we must remember that it is made for the sinner. Primarily it is not made for sin. The Scripture says that God can by no means clear the guilty. He does something better. He removes the guilt, taking it into the sanctuary. At the end of the sanctuary service the sin is put on Satan, and taken away into eternal oblivion. We are not to take the precious truth of the atonement and see in it something that is to cover us in our sins. It does not do that.

The basis Hebrew root of the word "atonement" means "to cover." But we are not to see in that a meaning that God covers sin in us. The righteousness of Christ does not and cannot cover one known sin, or one neglected duty. It covers the sinner, not in sin, but covers him from sin. The difference between those two concepts is life and death. "Woe to the rebellious children . . . that cover with a covering. . . that they may add sin to sin."

Devising a False Covering

What a fearful thing to be doing in this day of earth's history, when the Scripture says, "That there should be time no longer," that "the mystery of God should be finished." Revelation 10: 6, 7. That means that we live in an hour of earth's history when all sin is to be finished in the lives of God's people. What a fearful thing it is to be living in the time when all sin is to be finished in our hearts, and to be found devising a covering that we might add sin to sin and continue sinning. The basic problem is that we have not found the true remedy for sin. We have not found the way to break with sin through righteousness.

And so, after trying and trying for so many years (after all, the fundamental doctrine of this church was that God was to develop a people and present them perfect before the universe as proof that God's law can be kept) we are beginning to think that maybe there must be some other way. We have been on the road for 118 years and such a people has not been produced. There must be some eas-

ier way. There must be some covering which will make it possible for us to keep sinning in this life. All we need is this covering so God can somehow recognize us as righteous. We devise a covering but not of God's Spirit, that we may add sin to sin.

We think of this false teaching on the nature of Christ. An understanding of this subject is fundamental to the whole Christian foundation. The teaching of the gospel is that Jesus was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2:17. Thus He took upon His divine nature, our fallen nature, and living in our place, with all our weaknesses, and with all our heredity, presented perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah and proved that if a fallen man connects with the throne of God and partakes of the divine nature, through the power of the Holy Spirit, he can render obedience to the whole will of God. This is the fundamental truth of the incarnation.

But this very doctrine of the incarnation of Jesus which proves that God's law can be kept, is now being used, not just by Protestants, but is even being used by multitudes in the church of God today, as the very teaching which proves that man cannot keep the law of God in this life.

"Since the fall of Adam, men in every age have excused themselves for sinning, charging God with their sin, saying that they could not keep His commandments. This is the insinuation Satan cast at God in heaven. But the plea 'I cannot keep the commandments' need never be presented to God, for before Him stands the Saviour, the marks of the crucifixion upon His body, a living witness not that men cannot keep the law of God, but that they will not. . . ."

"In His human nature Christ rendered perfect obedience to the law of God, thus proving to all that this law can be kept. . . Each person as a rational being, is under the most solemn obligation to obey the law. The Spirit has been provided to enable all to do this." Review and Herald, May 28, 1901, quoted in Sanctuary Institute Syllabus #2, p. 149.

This is what the incarnation of Jesus proves to us. There is no need for us to devise a covering that we may add sin to sin, nor to leave any loophole for sin.

A Medical Analogy

We might illustrate this in the treatment of physical illness today. We see a sick man living in transgression of the laws of health (which is also transgression of the law of God.) He is sinning against his being. He goes to the doctor. He says, "Doctor, I'm sick. I want you to cure me. I'm a busy man, so don't take long to cure me. Give me something that will put me back on the job quickly." What he means is that he just wants to go along living the same as before, still sinning against his body, which is the property of God. If the doctor won't accommodate himself to his wishes, he will get another one!

So the average doctor, realizing what the true desires of the man are, gives him a quick cure. The man goes out and says, "That's fine. I'm cured." He is not cured. He has just changed the form and location of the disease and he goes back again to his old way of life. What the physician should have done is to say, "Now, listen. You must alter your way of life if you want to be a well man. I will not promise you any cure until you reform your life. When you bring your life into harmony with the laws of your being, you will recover health." But the sick man doesn't want that. He wants something that will enable him to continue his wrong way of living.

As it is in the realm of physical sickness, so it is in the realm of spiritual sickness. Men want a covering. They want a spiritual drug, a quick cure for sin rather than a change of life. They want anything but a reformation. Some think that they can devise a covering, but not of God's Spirit, and the purpose is that they may add sin to sin. The same is true of us today. We will do anything but suggest a reformation. One would almost gather that no suggestion should be made that there is need of anything like this. Oh, no! All we need is an outpouring of the Spirit of God.

No Outpouring of God's Spirit Without Reformation

We have been to some meetings where people spoke of the outpouring of the Spirit of God. If we could only receive those showers, we would go forth as flaming evangelists to finish the work of God on earth. It is almost blasphemy, my friends, to read from the last part of Joel 2 without reading from some of the earlier verses where we are told to rend our hearts and not our garments. Blow the trumpet in Zion. Call a solemn assembly. Sanctify the fast. Assemble the elders, gather the children, and sanctify the congregation. The Lord says when that work of revival and reformation at the sanctuary is carried forward, then, "I will send My Spirit, not to sanction sin, but to sanction that sanctification." Yes, we are almost in danger of blaspheming God unless there is a change first. We are living in a fearful time.

A Covering of Lies and False Teachings

Woe to them that devise a covering that they may add sin to sin. Now let us look at another covering mentioned in Isaiah 28. The servant of the Lord often quotes from these passages in Isaiah in the book Testimonies to Ministers. We read verses 15,17,20:

"Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: . . . Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. . . For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it."

A long man getting in a short bed, with a small blanket. He can't cover himself. They have made lies their refuge. The

Lord says, "I'm going to sweep it away." How many today have been turning to a refuge of lies and false teachings! There is no comfort in falsehoods. The Lord says, "My peace I give unto you," and that peace is only found in the truth. It is not found in falsehood.

Some today are trying to resist the Awakening, and the great truth of the sanctuary. But this is the covering that they are making. All these devious ways of man to cover himself are false coverings. It is all summarized in the words, "that they may add sin to sin." This is the wrong covering. When Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven, do you know what everyone who has made this false covering is going to say? "Rocks fall on us." "And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us." Hosea 10:8. ". . . and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." Revelation 6:16.

Why do the wicked cry when Jesus comes? They cry because they do not have the true covering, and the hail has swept away the false covering. They realize their lack of the true covering, and so they cry for a covering--the rocks and the mountains.

The True Covering

Let us now turn our attention to the true covering. What is the true covering? Isaiah says, "that cover with a covering, but not of My Spirit." The true covering is the covering of God's Spirit. This covering is also mentioned in Isaiah 61:10:

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

The Lord clothes His people with righteousness. Let us see how He clothes us with His righteousness. The Lord's covering is a covering of His Spirit. Now let us put some words on the blackboard to show what this true covering is.

The Covering

1. His Spirit
2. His righteousness

Now let us see the connection of these two. He covers with His Spirit, and He covers with His righteousness.

"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you." Hosea 10:12. How does the Lord give righteousness to His people? He rains it on them. In the Old Testament Scripture rain was used as a symbol of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This was true of both the former

and the latter rain. The Hebrew prophets spoke of the outpouring of the Spirit of God as rain, and the Lord says when His people break up their fallow ground, that He will rain righteousness upon them. There is only one way to receive the true covering--the robe of His righteousness. It is by receiving the Holy Spirit.

"This promised blessing, claimed by faith, brings all other blessings in its train." Desire of Ages, p. 672. Every spiritual blessing is brought to us by the Holy Spirit. This is the great gift that comprehends every blessing, and we must clearly understand that to speak of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, whether it is imputed or imparted, without receiving the Holy Ghost, is just to speak of vanity. There is but one way that the Lord can give any spiritual blessing, and that is through the Holy Spirit.

Repentance, which is represented in the sanctuary by the gate, is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The first fruit of the gift of the Holy Spirit is repentance. The Lord gives us the experience of death to sin and victory over self through the Holy Spirit. This promised blessing of the Spirit, claimed by faith, brings every other blessing in its train.

The Daily Atonement

The true covering is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit bestows righteousness upon the believer. The reception of the Holy Spirit is the reception of the life of Christ in the soul. The Holy Spirit is the representative of Christ, and Desire of Ages, page 805 says, "The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ." The Scripture says, "We are saved by His life." There is only one way to take hold of His life. It is by receiving the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit bestows righteousness.

But there is something else that we can see in the light of the sanctuary. The basic root word of this term "atonement" means "to cover." But remember, as we have said, not to cover the sin, not to cover a man in his sin, but to cover him from his sin; to take him and separate him from his sin; to cover him from the wrath and punishment that sin will bring, and from the power of sin.

We must understand the connection between the atonement and the Holy Spirit. If we do not understand this connection, we have not grasped the basic lesson of the sanctuary service. When Jesus died on the cross of Calvary, He cried, "It is finished." He stood in our place. He bought our nature, and He took our sins upon Himself. There, on the cross of Calvary was lifted up in Jesus my old sinful self when He was made to be sin for me. And Jesus, standing in our place, cried, "It is finished." And in Him the work was finished. It was a complete and perfect work. That phase of the atonement was complete. And Christ, having completed this phase of His work, ascended into the sanctuary that the work which was complete in Him as the man Christ Jesus might now become complete in us. This is the other phase of His work, the work of the atonement in the sanctuary.

In harmony with the type, there were two divisions in the sanctuary service, the daily, and the yearly. Every day the priest ministered in the first apartment, and once a year the High Priest ministered in the most holy place. When the blood was sprinkled on the horns of the altar in the first apartment, this was called the daily atonement (Leviticus 4-6). When the blood was sprinkled in the most holy place it was called the yearly atonement. This was the great covering service of God, to cover His people with righteousness and free them from the power and pollution of sin. Thus the work of the atonement was illustrated.

When Jesus provided His atonement at Calvary, the fountain was opened for sin and uncleanness. But He entered the sanctuary to make this atonement effective for His people, and in behalf of the individual sinner. So now we ask, "What does it mean to receive this atonement?" When Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary for the atoning service, He entered not as a mere petitioner, but as a mighty conqueror to claim the trophies of His victory. He went into the heavenly sanctuary to solicit from His Father one gift, one great gift, for His people, and this gift comprehends all gifts.

Thus we see in the sanctuary what Jesus does. We see the great work of atonement going forward represented by the daily sprinkling of His blood on the horns of the altar, the meaning of the table of showbread, and the lamps, as well as His work in the most holy place. It was all summarized. The benefits of the mediation of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary are all comprehended in one thing, i. e., that He might give us the Holy Spirit. That is all it is, because the Holy Spirit, claimed by faith, brings every other blessing in its train. It brings every blessing. It brings the covering that we need for the great day of God. The Holy Spirit, my friends, is the only covering.

There is no use speaking about righteousness by faith without the Holy Spirit. To speak of righteousness by faith without the Holy Ghost is to make the subject as dry as the hills of Gilboa. There is nothing to it. Something vital is lacking. Desire of Ages, page 671, tells us that without the Holy Spirit, the sacrifice of Christ would be of no avail. The sacrifice of Christ would be useless without the Third Person of the Godhead.

Now, let us see what these two phases of the atonement mean. Since it is all the work of the Holy Spirit, we have the daily atonement, and the yearly atonement. Jesus ascended into the heavenly sanctuary after His resurrection. The disciples gathered together in faith, confessing their sins and putting away their differences. They saw the meaning of the cross of Christ, and in the sight of the cross they were humbled. They broke up their fallow ground. And what did the Lord do? My friends, He rained righteousness upon them. What did they receive from that mediation in the first apartment? Jesus went in to make the atonement, the mediatorial phase of the atonement, the daily atonement. He went in to plead for His disciples, "My blood, My blood!" And what did they receive? The benefits of

that mediation was the Holy Spirit. He rained righteousness upon them. They were clothed with His righteousness.

Thus it is when we come to Christ seeking the atonement. As we come, bowing in penitence at the foot of the cross, pleading for the covering that only Christ can give to cover the nakedness of our souls, Jesus stands in the heavenly sanctuary before the altar (He is still standing there before that altar, we are told in the Spirit of Prophecy) and He says, "My blood, My blood!" What is the meaning of the blood? Christ poured out His blood. It means His life. So what is Jesus virtually saying? "My life, My life."

Now, here is the sinner. He comes inside the gate. What sort of life does he bring with him? It is at best only a sinful polluted old life, exceedingly corrupt from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head. He comes in and says, "Lord, this life of mine is exceedingly corrupt. I'll die to this life of sin." He yields upon that altar. He forsakes his old life. He enters into the death of Christ, and Christ sees that he needs His life. As Jesus ministers there in the sanctuary, He says, "Father, this contrite sinner has forsaken his old life. A broken and a contrite spirit Thou wilt not despise. My life, My life!" Jesus is virtually saying in His work of atonement, "Give him My life."

And how does the Lord give us His life? He gives us His life by giving us His Holy Spirit. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Galatians 3:27. This work is illustrated in the daily work of the first apartment, an experience which it is our privilege to have day by day. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in the former rain. We must have this experience every day. We must be clothed with His righteousness. The Holy Spirit is the covering of God. If we do not have the Holy Spirit, we are devising a covering that we may add sin to sin. Unless we have the Holy Spirit, we are destitute, having nothing.

The Final Atonement

Let us now look at the final atonement. In the most holy place the great work of the final atonement is going forward. God's people, having the experience of the former rain, are to gather around the sanctuary with broken and contrite hearts, pleading like the ancient Israelites on the great day of atonement. This is the day of atonement, and Jesus is standing in the judgment and making the final atonement, and there in the judgment He says, "My blood, My blood." (My life, My life.) And the command is given, "Remove the filthy garments and clothe them with the righteousness of Christ, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world." (See Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 475) Jesus stands up in the final atonement and says, "My blood, My blood!" What is He asking for His people? The gift of His life! The final atonement means the final bestowal of the life of Christ. The final atonement is the full atonement, the completed work. It means the full impartation of the new life. How does the Lord give us that? How does He give us His life?

"The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ." Desire of Ages, p. 805. The final atonement is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in full and final measure. It is called a special atonement. It is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is the latter rain. Is this a covering for God's people? What is the final atonement in reality but the final at-one-ment, or the final covering? It can be none other than the Holy Ghost. Testimonies to Ministers, p. 18: "The gift of His Holy Spirit, rich, full and abundant, is to be to His church as an encompassing wall of fire, which the powers of hell shall not prevail against." A great wall of fire surrounds God's people. In Early Writings, p. 271, the servant of the Lord saw them clothed with the armor of the Spirit of God from their head to their feet. They moved in exact order like a company of soldiers. Satan and his angels pressed around, but could have no power over them. "I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. . . . I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, 'It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.'"

What is the covering that the Lord is going to put upon His people? I wonder if there is going to be any sin found in this covering. The servant of the Lord says, "They will remain pure and spotless for eternity." This is the baptism of the Spirit of God that will prepare the church of God for translation.

The Difference Between the Two Coverings

Now do we see the difference between the true and the false coverings? The false covering consists of anything that we do or believe, even the true doctrine of righteousness by faith, which does not make an end of sin in our lives. We need the true doctrine, but the doctrine is not the covering. It is the result of this doctrine that is most important. We think of the lawyer who said to Christ, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Luke 10:25-27.

We should be amazed at the answer that this man gave. He must have been the greatest Bible student that the Jewish nation had at that time, because he was able to cut through all the ceremonies and useless ordinances and go to the heart of the law and the prophets, and take the Old Testament and sum it up in one brief text. "And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Verse 28.

Yes, the false covering consists in anything that we might devise whereby we go on from day to day, and from year to year, adding sin to sin, carrying along these old defects of character, these old faults. We cling to them as if we think they are precious garments, our own special peculiarity, which we con-

sider to be very needful and think we would die without. Isn't this true? Don't you think it is time that we laid aside those sins which so easily beset us? Isn't it time that we grapple with them as the servant of the Lord says we should? We have to do our part of the battle, striving in His strength. So, we see, there is only one covering, the atonement. And how do we receive His atonement? By the Holy Spirit. After we break up our fallow ground the Lord will rain righteousness upon us. Day by day we need the former rain to bring forth the precious fruit of the Spirit in our life, and then as we come to the sanctuary as He makes the final atonement, He rains upon us the latter rain. This ripens the grain, and it stands eternally secure, ready for the garner.

In Early Writings, pages 42-44, Sister White says she saw the Lord drawing a covering over His people, and all those who had this covering were going to be covered from the burning wrath of God. We must have that covering--the gift of the Holy Ghost. Isaiah 4 speaks of this covering and this righteousness, and it says upon all in Israel that glory shall be a defence, a covering. (verse 5) The glory of God and the outpouring of the latter rain is a covering to shield them from the plagues. Without that covering we have nothing.

The One Thing Needful

This is the one thing needful. This is the one thing that the Lord sees we poor Laodiceans are destitute of. We might think that we are rich and increased with goods, we might think that we have many virtues, but unless we have the Holy Spirit, we have nothing. Let us seek Christ, the Pearl of Great Price. As we look into the sanctuary and realize that we live in the time when iniquity is to be finished in our lives, there is only one way that we can get that covering, and be free from sin. We must receive the Holy Spirit. The robe of His righteousness is the impartation of His Spirit.

Clothe me with Thy robe of meekness.
Stained with sin this soul of mine.
Teach me first to feel my weakness,
Then to plead for strength divine.

Dear reader, have you been convicted by the message of this study, and would you like to add your testimony to the goodness of the Lord, accepting the covering that He has provided for you? And accepting, be clothed with this covering, and stop devising our own ways, and come and seek this blessing at the sanctuary as the Lord requires.

Having accepted of this covering which He offers, let us cease devising our own ways, and come and seek this blessing at the sanctuary as the Lord requires.



The Laodicean Message

By Robert Brinsmead

A Tape Transcription

"The Lord is high above all nations, and His glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, Who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill." Psalm 113:4-7.

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." Psalm 8:3-5.

When David considered the works of God, and the mercy of God, -- "What is man that Thou art mindful of Him?" Why does the Lord consider man? Who is a God like unto our God, so great, and yet He humbleth Himself to behold the things that are upon this earth, even we His creatures!

The Character of God

The character of God is here portrayed. The Lord is humble. In Eden, when man sinned and hid himself from the presence of God, we see that the Lord humbled Himself to go and seek after man who was lost and defiled--the captive of the devil. Consider the experience of ancient Israel. They were a degraded nation of slaves, and yet God humbled Himself to come and redeem them from Egyptian bondage. He brought them up to Sinai and endeavored to reveal to them the great privilege of being His inheritance, His peculiar treasure. He humbled Himself to dwell among them. He said, "Let them build a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." He revealed to them His character. He came down on Sinai. He loved the people, and extended to them the privilege of keeping His commandments and becoming like Him.

However, the people trusted in their own strength. They said, "All that the Lord hath said we will do and be obedient." Moses had no sooner gone up into the mount for a few days than the people corrupted themselves. Then he pled for the people.

I want you to turn with me to Exodus 34. Here the people had sinned against the Lord at Mt. Sinai. In their hearts they had turned back to Egypt. The Lord humbled Himself again to save them. Moses was pleading for the people before the Lord, that He would accept them once more.

"And he said, If now I have found grace in Thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray Thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for

Thine inheritance. And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee." Exodus 34:9,10.

The Lord again humbled Himself to take that people to be His inheritance--a stiffnecked people, a people who had corrupted their ways. "Who is a God like unto our God?" "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

The Lord humbled Himself when He took our flesh and tabernacled among us. We read in Colossians 1 of the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." (verses 15-17).

Now let us read Philippians 2:5,6: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He thought it not a place to be grasped, to be eagerly desired. He was equal with God from eternity, but "Who is a God like unto our God, who humbleth Himself?"

"But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Philippians 2:7,8. He humbled Himself by His incarnation. We are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that it would have been an almost infinite humiliation for Christ to take man's nature as he was in Eden before he fell. But Jesus took man's nature after man had wandered four thousand years in sin. He condescended to dwell with us. ". . . for the joy that was set before Him, (He) endured the cross, despising the shame." Hebrews 12:2. Actually that means, as another translation gives it, "Instead of the joy that was set before Him." Here was the Majesty of Heaven who created all things. He had the adoration of seraphim and cherubim, but instead of the joy that was set before Him, He humbled Himself. He loved us and gave Himself for us. He came down to take us as His inheritance, to lift up the poor and to save the beggar out of the dunghill. We see His humiliation supremely manifested in Gethsemane and the cross, when He hid not His face from shame and spitting, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Christ, the meek and lowly One, the One who took the humble lot of humanity, did nothing to bring Himself into notice. Most of His life was spent as a humble carpenter. There was no ostentatious worship, no act to gain applause. He was meek and lowly in heart! That is the revelation of the Father. Christ came to

us to tell us what the Father was like! "Who is like unto the Lord our God, Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in the earth?" That is His character!

The Character of Man

Now let us look at man's character. Of course, in the beginning he was like God. But Satan put his spirit in men. He said to Eve, "Thou shalt be as Gods." Some translations say "like God." That was the temptation that came to man. Instead of being God-like, possessing the character of Christ, he took the spirit of Satan, the desire for self exaltation. The love with which he was created became corrupted. Amos says, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. Can we really walk with God unless we be like Him?

We are warned by the apostle Paul in Romans 2:4: "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" The expression "despisest thou the riches of His goodness" indicates a spirit of aloofness. We sometimes use the expression that a man is said to "look down through his nose." Here we have the great God of the universe humbling Himself to take us for His inheritance. He came down, loved us, and gave Himself for us. Man is so proud that he despises and looks down upon the goodness of God. In face, our own hearts are so proud that God can't even walk with us! In Micah 6:8 the question is asked as to just what is required of us. The answer is given, ". . . to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." In other words, that we might humble ourselves enough to walk with God! Just think of it! We are given the privilege of having fellowship as well as deliverance and salvation of the God of the universe, Who humbles Himself to dwell with us and to save us. All that the Lord is asking of man is that he humble himself enough to accept the gift! That is why the Lord can only save the humble.

Psalms 40:17 tells us who only can walk with the Lord. "But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God." Again in Psalm 102:17,19,20: "He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. . . . For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death." The only one the Lord can bring His salvation to is the one who humbles himself. He is the only one who has any fellowship with God because God is humble! We see this humility manifested in the life of Christ.

An Open Door Set Before Us

We see this picture very clearly drawn in Revelation 3. In verse 8 the Lord says to His people, "I have set before thee an open door." This is a very simple statement but I don't think we as God's people have ever plumbed the meaning of that simple sen-

tence, "I have set before thee an open door." This is the door into the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary that was opened in 1844. When Jesus said, "I have set before thee an open door," it was an invitation to His church to enter the most holy place of the sanctuary. We see that Christ has gone to do a great work for us, which is the work of cleansing the sanctuary, blotting out sins, and finishing with transgression in our lives. In other words, the work of Jesus is complete deliverance from sin, an eternal separation from it, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost under the latter rain. When Jesus says, "Behold I have set before you an open door," He is virtually saying to us, "Behold I have set before you this experience." Now that is the experience that has been set before us as a people since 1844.

The Lord has humbled Himself. We have seen it in the incarnation and life of Christ. We see it throughout our history. He comes at this time to offer us the riches of His grace. He says to His church, "Behold I have set before you an open door." But what is our response? What is our response to the open door of the heavenly sanctuary?

A Closed Door

In Revelation 3:20, Jesus speaks again, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." Is that an open door? What sort of door do we find there? A closed door. There is a direct relationship between the two statements of Christ. In the first one He says to His church, "I have set before you this experience--the cleansing of the sanctuary, the latter rain! Here it is. I am offering it to you." But what is our response? In verses 17 and 18 of this chapter we read, "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: 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." We say, "We are rich." We say, "We see." "Are we not the people that God has chosen? Are we not the people upon the earth who have the truth? There is no other people who know about the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. No one but the Advent people knows about the ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary that began in 1844, the cleansing of the sanctuary." We say, "Yes, we have the truth. He has gone there to cleanse the sanctuary, to blot out sin."

We also have the Spirit of Prophecy, which gives us so much light on the way of salvation. How is it that Christ says that we are blind? Why, friends, don't we have the truth? The work of Jesus in the most holy place is the very center of our faith. We know that Jesus is in heaven cleansing the sanctuary. Yet the Lord says we are blind! "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." What Jesus is saying to His people is this: "You are the temple of God! The cleansing of the sanctuary is not just something to take place in heaven! You are the temple of the living God, and just as surely as there is a door open to the inner

sanctuary of heaven where Jesus has gone, of what profit is that to you unless you open the door of your hearts to receive this experience?" In other words, Jesus has been in the most holy place since 1844. He has gone there to cleanse the sanctuary, to blot out all sin, to bring us an eternal deliverance from sin so that we might have the seal of God. We say we know all about that truth. But Jesus says, "Ye are the temple of the living God, and by closing the door of your hearts, you have made My ministry ineffective."

We talk about the cleansing of the sanctuary, this work of completely cleansing the inner sanctuary of the soul, taking away the scars of sin and every defect of character. The Lord says, "You profess to know about the cleansing of the sanctuary. Why don't you open the door of your hearts that I might come in to do this work?" Friends, it is as simple and direct as that! Who is a God like unto our God, who humbleth Himself?

Jesus is not just content to open the door for us to the heavenly sanctuary and to tell us about that wonderful experience. We have gone to sleep and appear in our wretchedness, boasting that we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. Instead of the Lord leaving us to perish in our own ways, He humbles Himself, just like He came to seek Adam there in the garden of Eden. He comes to us now as the great Lover. "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." Revelation 3:20.

We are told in Testimonies, vol. 1, pp. 186, 187, that the acceptance of this message is to prepare the church for the latter rain.

Why Jesus Hasn't Finished the Work

Why hasn't Christ been able to enter these temples of ours to do this work of cleansing the sanctuary? Basically, it is because we are proud. There is not one of us who has received the latter rain, is there? Therefore, none of us have truly accepted the Laodicean message, and so we are all under the same condemnation, aren't we? And it is basically for the same reason. The Lord has humbled Himself to save us. Now He has offered before the church this great experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary and the refreshing showers of the latter rain. We have not received it because the Lord hasn't been able to get in to do that work. We have made His ministry in the most holy place ineffective, and we as a people have never received it.

I read in Steps to Christ, pages 28,29, these words, "We may have flattered ourselves, as did Nicodemus, that our life has been upright, that our moral character is correct, and think that we need not humble the heart before God, like the common sinner: but when the light from Christ shines into our souls, we shall see how impure we are; we shall discern the selfishness of motive, the enmity against God, that has defiled every act of life. Then we shall know that our own righteousness is indeed as filthy rags, and that the blood of Christ alone can cleanse us from the defilement of sin, and renew our hearts in His own likeness."

"One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. It makes apparent the unhallowed desires, the infidelity of the heart, the impurity of the lips. The sinner's acts of disloyalty in making void the law of God, are exposed to his sight, and his spirit is stricken and afflicted under the searching influence of the Spirit of God. He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ."

There is the reason that the work hasn't been finished in our lives! We don't think that we need to humble that heart of ours before God like the common sinner! But if we would come to the sanctuary, friends, look in there, and see one gleam of the glory of God, it would make apparent just what we are. Like Isaiah, we would exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isaiah 6:5.

The Lord is going to save and give this experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary to those only who fully see, as no other generation has ever seen, the desperate sinfulness of the human heart. He will save the poor and the needy and those who have a broken and a contrite spirit.

Detours Around the Message

There are other ways that we as a people have gone around the Laodicean message. I think Satan invents ways that we might professedly accept the message, but in verity reject it. Some people take this Laodicean message which states that God's people are wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked, and say, "Well, the thing to do, then, is to get out of the church, and that will be getting out of the Laodicean condition."

I think of a man who had a very impatient and rather violent disposition. He kept blaming it on his surroundings, his children, his wife, and everybody else. If only they weren't so annoying he could get along quite well. It wasn't him, of course. He went apart into a secluded place in the mountains. In the morning he went down to get a drink from the stream. He had a little bowl to put the water in, and he placed this on a mossy old rock where the water was dripping, and he bent over to do something else. The bowl began to slip, slip, down into the stream. He replaced it on the rock again and began to do something else, but the bowl just kept slipping down again, until he violently lost his temper, picked up the bowl and thrust it down violently on the rock. Then it smashed. Well, there he was, faced with the same problem again! It wasn't so much his environment—it was him. And the man saw it, and went home again. I think that would be a good lesson for some of us, don't you?

You see, that way of accepting the Laodicean message is not accepting it at all! It is in verity a detour around the message. Instead of accepting it we actually by-pass it. The danger is that

we imagine we have accepted the Laodicean message because we do certain things and we could easily have a "holier than thou" attitude. I notice that none of those who have thought that getting out of the church was an acceptance of the Laodicean message have received the latter rain as yet. The fact is that no one will receive the latter rain on that wise. I think perhaps that the greatest Laodiceans are those of us who do not think that we are Laodiceans.

There is another way that we can be led to professedly accept the Laodicean message but in reality by-pass it again. That is to set out in earnest upon a new life, on a program of "standards," living up to some of the things that the Lord has said we should live up to--health reform, dress reform, social reform, and many other reforms. I am not minimizing these reforms, either. God's people must come up on all those things! But in Philippians I read an experience of the apostle Paul, which I believe records a very precious lesson for us. I read from chapter 3:3-5:

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee." There was no one stricter than a Pharisee. Verse 6: "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." Here was a man who outwardly conformed his life to the letter of the law. He did everything that any human being could do. In face, he was blameless according to the letter of the law. But how did he feel when he really caught a vision of Christ and His infinite purity?

Verses 7, 8: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." How did he count all those things? As refuse, friends, that's all. Verse 9: "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." No, friends, an earnest program of standards will in no wise get us out of this Laodicean condition. The Lord is wanting something else besides that.

I think there is another thing that deceives many of us. It is our concept of perfection. Many have the opinion that they must first of all become perfect--fully perfected--before they can by faith enter into the most holy place, and stand before the judgment bar of God to receive this experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

The Pharisee and the Publican

We could use a parable that Christ used in the present tense today. Jesus spake of two men who came up to the temple to pray.

One man was a Pharisee and the other a publican. This parable is present truth. Today we are living in the great day of atonement when we must come up to the sanctuary, to the temple, or to the judgment. Each of us has an appointment at the judgment bar of God. Now, two men came up to the temple to pray--to the judgment, the one man a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee comes up to the judgment and he prays thus with himself, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." And he looks at the publican and he says, "I thank Thee, Lord, that I'm not like this publican." This man, you notice, believed in righteousness by faith, at least he professed belief in righteousness by faith, because he said, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." To whom did he give the credit for his righteousness, or his supposed righteousness? (Congregation: The Lord.) That is right. He thought he had received righteousness by faith. And so he says, "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men." He came up to the cleansing of the sanctuary, not asking for the special experience promised to God's people. He was among those that believe that first of all they must be pure, as pure as God is pure, as perfect as God is perfect, before they can come to the cleansing of the sanctuary. So when he came up to the judgment, you notice he never asked for anything! He came seeking commendation. He asked for nothing and he received nothing. We are shown clearly in the Spirit of Prophecy that the condition of this man represents the Laodicean condition.

This comes home very personally, doesn't it? Perhaps some of us say to ourselves, "Well, I didn't know that I was a Pharisee." It is time we checked up, isn't it? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9. Friends, we are not coming up to the judgment to present our measure of sanctification. That is not the way to come to the judgment. That is not the way to come to receive the cleansing of the sanctuary. We may look upon ourselves and see how much sanctification we are reaching in our experience and say "Well, I haven't quite arrived yet, but give me another two or three years and I might have enough sanctification to come to the judgment." We may think that when we have enough sanctification we can come to the judgment and receive the seal of God. We will be cast out, friends, if we come on that wise. Is that the way the Jews came on the day of atonement, the day of the cleansing of the sanctuary? How did they come?

Another man comes up to the temple, to the judgment, to pray. He comes to the day of atonement, and as he looks into the most holy place, he sees that he has to humble his heart just like the common sinner. In fact he feels himself just as a common sinner. Like Daniel the prophet, he classes himself among the really sinful of Israel. Now, how about us? Do we really class ourselves among the most sinful of Israel? I don't mean in a condescending sort of way. I mean really! Unless we do, friends, we are in no condition to receive the experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary. Only those who have that experience are going to be saved in the judgment. So the publican, as he looks into the most holy place and sees the terrible righteousness of God in contrast to himself, falls upon his face in repentance. Just like the Jews

on the day of atonement, he is around that sanctuary, afflicting his soul and he cries, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." He asks for something. He asks for mercy. Here is a man who comes to the cleansing of the sanctuary, to the judgment, and has the boldness to ask for mercy! To have mercy is to be treated better than one deserves. The Scripture tells us that as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him. In other words, the measure that the Lord treats us with is better than we deserve, and is as high as the heavens are above the earth. The publican comes and asks for that! He asks to be treated with infinite mercy. He has true repentance because he has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not practicing known sin because he is repentant! No man can have repentance unless he has seen the cross of Christ and has accepted Him, because He is the only source of true repentance. This man is saved in the judgment. This is the man who receives the experience of the cleansing of the sanctuary and the latter rain.

The Work for This Present Time

Well, it's all too simple, isn't it. That's the trouble with the gospel, friends. It is just too simple! Romans 9 depicts the experience of the Jewish nation. They were striving for the standard of the righteousness of God. But the Scripture says they never attained to it. Here were the Gentiles that were not running after the law of righteousness at all, and they attained to it. Why? They sought it and accepted it by faith.

You remember the experience of Naaman. He had leprosy. He came down to Elisha and wondered what he could do to be healed of his disease. Elisha didn't even come out to see him, but just told him to go and dip in the Jordan seven times. This Syrian was a proud man, so we find something in common with him, don't we? Naaman didn't want to dip in the water seven times. Why? First, he had to humble himself. It was a stumbling-block to his pride. Secondly, it was too simple. If he had been asked to do some great thing he would gladly have done it.

Thus it is with us. The Lord is waiting, friends, to cleanse the sanctuary and to make a complete end of sin in our lives. We want to come to the judgment in a respectable way to get the blessing. But there is no respectable way to come, at least not as the natural man conceives of being a respectable way. The only way to come is in the spirit of the publican who said, "Lord, be merciful unto me, a sinner." We must come with a broken and a contrite spirit, not wondering how much imparted righteousness we have, how much sanctification has been wrought into our lives that we might come to the judgment. We must not trust in that, friends, but only in the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting ourselves there in complete surrender to Him.

The Lord says in the Laodicean message that we are wretched and miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The reproof that the Lord gives us in this message is not that we are wretched and miserable, poor and blind and naked; let us not put the emphasis on

the wrong place. I think too often we do that, and that is where we get a scathing message of condemnation. It should not be presented in that way. This is not the emphasis of the Laodicean message. Rather, it is that in spite of our condition, we stand there before the Lord, in the very presence of the judgment, and in the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, saying that we are rich and increased with goods instead of afflicting our souls in deep repentance. We don't have a spirit of humility before the Lord. So the Lord pleads with His church, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." He wants to come in, come right into the inner sanctuary of the soul to give us that experience.

Christ is waiting to get into His own temple, friends, to cleanse it finally and forever. "If any man hear my voice and open the door. . ." Who has to open the door? I think of one statement in the Spirit of Prophecy that God's people cannot get the door open because there is too much rubbish there. The rubbish of the world, of unconfessed sin, of indifference, carelessness, appetite, and sinful passion. "If any man hear my voice and open the door," the Lord is pleading with the church, "I will come in." That is the same message that we have considered from Isaiah 40: 3,4: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." Make the crooked things straight. Malachi 3:1: "Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me." And then what does the Lord say He will do? "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple."

"If any man hear my voice and open the door." That is the work that God's people are called to do at this time. The Lord is waiting to enter fully into our lives to cleanse the sanctuary, to blot out our sins, and to give us the latter rain. "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him." These are the most sure words in Scripture. We read in Malachi what the Lord does when He comes to His temple for His last work. Verse 2: But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" First of all there is a work of judgment. With that there is a work of blotting out of sins, "for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." This is the cleansing of the sanctuary. The temple has been closed to this ministry, friends, too long. The Lord is calling His church to come to the sanctuary, and open the door of their hearts to receive this great blessing that they might be sealed with the latter rain and thus the work be finished.

"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him." That is the latter rain. When the temple is fully yielded and fully opened, and the way of the Lord has been prepared, the promise is that He will suddenly come to His temple, and He is going to come to blot out our sins. He comes in and does the cleansing. He takes away the record, the scars of sin. A first apartment experience, friends, is not sufficient for the day in which we are living. We must have complete deliverance. If we come to the sanctuary and open our hearts to the ministry of

Jesus and let Him into the soul temple, His promise is, "I will come in." The Lord will suddenly come to His temple. What will He do when He comes to His temple? Cleanse it, first of all, and then abide there with His own glorified presence. "If any man open the door, I will come in to Him."

When the Lord comes in and fully dwells in the life, what is that but the latter rain? You read in Vol. 1 of the Testimonies that it is the presence of Jesus. It is the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ fully in the life. The only thing, basically, that's hindering the outpouring of the latter rain is the acceptance of that message. We have not humbled ourselves before the Lord. He has humbled Himself, hasn't He? But we have not humbled ourselves as He desires us to. He can not get in and do the work. Now He is pleading, friends, and the time is late.

He is asking you to come to the sanctuary, open the door, and prepare the King's highway and do this work. If you do that the promise is that He will come in. He will suddenly come to His temple. He is going to give the latter rain to His people who have prepared the way before Him.

There is only one thing between us and the latter rain. It is the acceptance of the Laodicean message. The latter rain prepares God's people for translation. It says in the Laodicean message, "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." Revelation 3:21. Just think of it! There is only one obstacle between us poor wretched, miserable sinners and the privilege of sitting down with the Lord Jesus on the throne of glory. That is the acceptance of this message. "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."

May we indeed, friends, hear the call to the great day of atonement and set about in our lives to clear the King's highway and get the rubbish away from the door of our hearts. The latter rain is coming, and it is coming suddenly, and if we are not ready we will lose out. May we indeed enter into a diligent work of preparation, of repentance and confession of sins, and restitution, making everything right with God and with our fellow-men, that we might prepare the King's highway, for He is coming to give us the greatest blessing of all the ages, the outpouring of the latter rain! May we indeed, each one, enjoy that wonderful experience.

(Ed. Note: This sermon was given in January, 1961, at Colton, California)
