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The Victorious Remnant of the Laodicean Church

From the time sin entered the world through our first parents, fear of, and estrangement from God has been the lot of humanity. By partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve had given Satan access to their minds, and he could now speak to the brain centers that were created to be used only for the voice of God speaking to them through the Holy Spirit. But God was not willing to leave us in our fallen condition. From the beginning He has had a plan to restore us back to an unbroken relationship and companionship with Himself and erase forever the effects that sin has caused. This plan of restoration is revealed and demonstrated to us through the Sanctuary.

The earthly Sanctuary was a visual demonstration of the work of Jesus for the redemption of humanity. Each of the three sections of the Sanctuary represented a time period in which the progress of this plan would be in effect. The first phase was enacted in the Court. In this section repentance and restitution was required only for behavioral sins. The deeper levels of the sin problem were taken care of through the rituals of the inner Sanctuary and were not necessarily comprehended by the worshippers. Only when Jesus came in person and revealed to His hearers the necessity of cleansing the thoughts and feelings of the heart, did the realization dawn upon them that they were responsible to God for their inner life.

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.... You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Matt. 5:21, 22; 27, 28.

It is always hard for people to move from one stage of responsibility to God for our sins to a deeper level of comprehension of what God desires for His people. In this case the leaders and teachers of the people wanted to kill Jesus for tearing away the hypocrisy of their hearts and revealing to them that their outward righteousness was not acceptable to God. So it is in every generation. When Jesus ascended back into Heaven and began His mediatorial work in the First Apartment of the heavenly Sanctuary, He left to His disciples the legacy of His perfect righteousness and cleansing blood for the forgiveness of sin as the Gospel that they were to teach the new believers. After Pentecost, Peter preached with power this vital truth to the crowds who assembled to hear his explanation of the great change that had taken place among the sorrowing disciples: "God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted

to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.... When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 2:32-38.

Years later the apostle John was shown in vision the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the Holy Place. He saw Jesus as our High Priest walking among the candlesticks in the heavenly Sanctuary: "On the Lord's day I was in the Spirit and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said, 'Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches.'... I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone [like unto the Son of man - KJV] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars and out of his mouth came a double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: 'Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.'" Rev. 1:10-18.

What was Jesus' specific goal during His ministry in the Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary? It was to move His people from the understanding of salvation as being focused upon behavior only, into a relationship with Jesus which provided sanctification of heart and mind through connection with Him.

"As the blood of the slain lamb sheltered the homes of Israel, so the blood of Christ was to save their souls; but they could be saved through Christ only as by faith they should make His life their own. There was virtue in the symbolic service only as it directed the worshippers to Christ as their personal Saviour." DA 82.

"The truth is kept altogether too much in the outer court. Bring it into the inner temple of the soul, enthrone it in the heart, and let it control the life. The word of God should be studied and obeyed, then the heart will find rest and peace and joy, and the aspirations will tend heavenward; but when the truth is kept apart from the life, in the outer court, the heart is not warmed with the glowing fire of God's goodness." 5T 547.

Unfortunately, the Jewish leaders had a very difficult time comprehending or accepting this transition from a works-based religion to one that required a heart relationship with God in order to produce holiness of life and righteousness of character.

The "Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law.... They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding." AA 188, 189.

The natural desires of the human heart to have salvation by works is as old as the sin problem itself. Adam and Eve fashioned garments of fig leaves for themselves after their robes of light, signifying holiness and perfection of character through a relationship with God, had disappeared. Likewise, all heathen religions are based upon a system of works; and eventually Catholicism emerged by the combining of heathenism with Christianity.

In all God's designs to heal the sin problem in humanity, He has sought to establish loving relationships with His people. The great men of the Bible, such as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, knew God and had a personal close relationship with Him. But the sinful mind desires to have salvation through something we can produce by human effort rather than self-sacrifice. When Jesus came to earth in person, He was the visible example of what it means to have a continual relationship with God, which produces holiness of mind, character, and behavior. When He ascended back into Heaven and began His work in the Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, His purpose was to lead His people into the same relationship with Himself through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that He had with His Father while He was on Earth.

This special, close relationship that Jesus desires to have with His people is exemplified in the book of Revelation. Through the eyes of John, we see Jesus holding seven stars in His hand and walking among the seven golden lampstands in the Holy place of the heavenly Sanctuary, ministering to His people throughout the Christian era. In answer to John's questions about the meaning of what he saw, Jesus explained to him: "The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches." Rev. 1:20.

Everything that follows in the book of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus' work in the heavenly Sanctuary as He walks with His people in every generation who will be the product of His life and ministry, both while He was on Earth, and then His ministry in Heaven, until His work in the Sanctuary is finished and He comes to claim His Bride.

"What is Christ doing in Heaven? He is interceding for us.... As the prayers of the sincere and contrite ones ascend to Heaven Christ says to the Father, 'I will take their sins. Let them stand before you innocent.' As He takes their sins from them, He fills their hearts with the glorious light of truth and love." 7BC 930.

Let it be clear that the intercession of Christ is not for the purpose of covering our sins in order to allow us to go on sinning. Christ's intercession is for the purpose of removing our sins and replacing them with the perfect character of Jesus.

"Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith. He will cleanse them from all defilement if they will let Him. But if they cling to their sins, they cannot possibly be saved; for *Christ's righteousness covers no sin unrepented of*. God has declared that those who receive Christ as their Redeemer, accepting Him as the One who *takes away all sin*, will receive pardon for their transgressions. These are the terms

of our election. Man's salvation depends upon his receiving Christ by faith." 7BC 931 (emphasis supplied).

"The Son of God... has fulfilled His pledge and has passed into the heavens to take upon Himself the government of the heavenly host. He fulfilled *one phase of His priesthood by dying on the cross* for the fallen race. He is now fulfilling *another phase by pleading before the Father the case of the repentant, believing sinner*, presenting to God the offerings of His people. Having taken human nature and in this nature having overcome the temptations of the enemy, and having divine perfection, to Him has been committed the judgment of the world." 7BC 929 (emphasis supplied).

"Christ's humanity was united with divinity, and in His strength, He would bear all the temptations that Satan could bring against Him, and yet keep His soul untainted by sin. And this power to overcome He would give to every son and daughter of Adam who would accept by faith the righteous attributes of His character." 7BC 927.

Through the centuries since Jesus ascended back into Heaven, He has been caring for His church by His intercessions. The prophecy of the seven churches as recorded in Revelation 2 and 3 give a cryptic description of the character of the true believers in each period of history from the time Jesus ascended until His Second Coming. For each church Jesus points out their strengths and weaknesses, and what He requires of them in order to fulfill the purpose for their time. Here is a brief description of Jesus' counsel for each of the churches:

#1. Ephesus

Commendation - good works; hate the practices of the Nicolaitans*.

Rebuke - lost their first love.

Counsel - return to their first love and do the deeds they did in the beginning.

#2. Smyrna

Commendation - endured afflictions, poverty, persecution, and martyrdom, and the slander of those who claimed to be God's people but were actually a synagogue of Satan.

Counsel - be faithful even to death and receive the promise of the crown of eternal life.

#3. Pergamum

Commendation - stayed true to Jesus and did not renounce their faith even under persecution.

Rebuke - had some who taught idolatry and immorality, and others who held to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Counsel - repent and come back to the pure teachings of the Word of God.

*The Nicolaitans taught "that the deeds of the flesh had no effect upon the health of the soul and consequently no relation to salvation." 8BC 771. [Not EGW.]

#4. Thyatira

Commendation - possessed love and faith, service and perseverance, and exceeded in good deeds.

Rebuke - tolerated the development of the apostate church and her teachings.

Counsel - resist the presence of satanic doctrines in the church and hold on to the truth until the end.

#5. Sardis

Commendation - a few people remained who had not soiled their garments and accepted the false teachings of the apostate church.

Rebuke - had a reputation of being alive but were actually spiritually dead.

Counsel - awaken and strengthen what remains and is about to die. "Remember...what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent." Rev. 3:3.

#6. Philadelphia

Commendation - a door was placed before them by Jesus that no one could shut. Although they had little strength, they kept the word of Jesus and did not deny His name. Since they had kept His command to endure patiently, He would keep them from the hour of trial that is to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the Earth.

Counsel - "Hold on to what you have so that no one will take your crown. Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God." Rev. 3:11, 12.

#7. Laodicea

Commendation - none

Rebuke - "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm - neither hot nor cold - I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked."

Counsel - "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes so that you can see. Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne." Rev. 3:15-21.

It is comforting to know that for each of these prophetic periods in the history of the church, Jesus foreknew what they would go through and the challenges they would meet, both within and without of the church itself. And for everyone who heeded His counsel, He interceded for them before His Father and gave them the strength to be overcomers. But for the church of Laodicea, there is no commendation. Because they feel they are spiritually rich and have need of nothing, they are in grave danger of being spewed out of the mouth of Christ.

"The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that *He cannot offer up your prayers or your expressions of love to God*. He cannot endorse your teaching of His Word or your spiritual work in anywise. *He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you.*" 6T 408 (emphasis supplied).

How has the Laodicean church come to this point of lukewarmness? It is because there is an outward performance of religiosity while at the same time there is compromise with

the world, its influence, and its standards. This is a deadly combination for Christians who wish to be among those who live through the end of Earth's history and be saved when Jesus comes. If they cherish this divided condition of their hearts, Jesus will already have ceased His intercession for them, for they have chosen another master.

"No man can serve two masters.' We cannot serve God with a divided heart....

"If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.' Purity and steadfastness of purpose are the conditions of receiving light from God. He who desires to know the truth must be willing to accept all that it reveals. He can make no compromise with error. To be wavering and half-hearted in allegiance to truth is to choose the darkness of error and satanic delusions....

"Only those who live the life of Christ are His co-workers. If one sin is cherished in the soul, or one wrong practice retained in the life, the whole being is contaminated. The man becomes an instrument of unrighteousness." DA 312, 313.

The church has now come to the last period of history, when the collective truths of all ages is shining upon the remnant of God's people, and we are being called to be a finished product of the intercession of Jesus. Each period of the Christian church was given a specific work to do in resisting the lies of Satan for their time in history. As long as they lived up to their calling, they were given the approval of God and pronounced as overcomers. But the last church has been privileged to receive all the truths of the past, as well as new truths about the final work of Jesus in the heavenly Sanctuary to produce a perfected generation of His people.

The Laodicean message is spoken to Christians who feel that they can continue in their common besetting sins, and trust that Jesus' grace will make up for the difference in their lives between their failures and the perfect righteousness of Christ's life. But Jesus is asking His last church to cooperate completely with Him by allowing Him to reveal to the Universe that His plan of redemption produces perfection in all who permit Him to work out His righteousness in their lives.

"Those who are in this condition [Laodiceanism] are *willfully* ignorant. They do not discern the real character of sin. By their wrongdoing they constantly misrepresent the character of Christ and put Him to open shame." 7BC 963 (emphasis supplied).

"God's ideal for his children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.' This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning.

"The tempter's agency is not to be accounted an excuse for one wrong act. Satan is jubilant when he hears the professed followers of Christ *making excuses* for their deformity of character. It is these excuses that lead to sin. There is *no excuse for*

sinning. A holy temper, a Christ-like life, is accessible to every repenting, believing child of God.

"The ideal of Christian character is *Christlikeness*. As the Son of man was perfect in His life, so His followers are to be perfect in their life." DA 311 (emphasis supplied).

"The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the Sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He *began* that work which after His resurrection He *ascended to complete in Heaven*. We must by faith enter within the veil whither the Forerunner is for us entered. There the light from the cross of Calvary is reflected. There we may gain a clearer insight into the mysteries of redemption....

"If those who hide and excuse their faults could see how Satan exults over them, how he taunts Christ and holy angels with their course, they would make haste to confess their sins and to put them away. Through *defects in the character*, Satan works to *gain control of the whole mind*, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. Therefore, he is constantly seeking to *deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome*. But Jesus pleads in their behalf His wounded hands, His bruised body; and He declares to all who would follow Him, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'... Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. *God will give faith and grace to overcome them.*" GC 489 (emphasis supplied).

This cleansing that God is offering to us will require us to go through fiery trials that reveal where Satan has written his character upon our minds throughout our lives. As these defects become apparent to us, we must flee to Jesus and ask Him to cleanse us, remove these defects, and put His perfect pattern of thoughts, feelings and behavior into our minds through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus loves to make this exchange for us and give us *peace and freedom from the temptations and taunts of the evil one*. Thus, we will have the gold of His righteous character implanted in us in place of our defects of character.

This experience will necessitate our having open minds to recognize the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to us, for of ourselves we cannot even discern our sins and defects. The eye salve that God offers us helps us to see the difference between our thoughts and feelings and the thoughts and feelings of Jesus. Thus, we can make this exchange and allow Him to take our filthy rags of character and give us His perfect robe of righteousness.

The subject of the perfection of Christ's character in His people is becoming less and less popular throughout Christianity today, and even in the Adventist Church. In a recent issue of Adventist World, p. 4, a quotation was taken from a speech given at the third Global Conference on Health and Lifestyle at Loma Linda University, by Adventist psychiatrist Torben Bergland, in which he stated: "Fanaticism is a flight from fallibility, and to be a human being is to be fallible."

While it is true that human beings are fallible, to leave us with this thought and not give the antidote for our fallibility through the intercession of Jesus in the heavenly Sanctuary

in which He imparts His righteousness into our daily lives, would indicate that we should accept fallibility, which is the essence of Laodiceanism, as the norm.

Jesus, however, in His counsel to the Laodiceans, challenges them to be overcomers and sit with Him on his throne -- the finished product of His intercessions in the Most Holy Place of the Sanctuary. He invites them to become the wise virgins who are cleansed and brought into complete agreement with Him on every issue in their lives.

"Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be *purified, made spotless and refined*, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand." Dan. 12: 9, 10.

It is this honor to which the last church is called. The destiny of the Laodicean church is to be the final product of the work of Jesus in the heavenly Sanctuary. With characters cleansed as pure gold, spiritual eyesight honed and guided by the Holy Spirit, and wearing the perfect white robe of Christ's righteousness, they stand before the Universe as the living proof that Jesus is able to save His people from their sins and restore mankind to the original condition in which they were created. As such a representation of the complete salvation provided by our Lord and Savior, they will sit with Him on His throne forever and ever.

To each of the other churches Jesus promised a reward. But to no other church was promised the reward of sitting with Jesus upon His throne. In order to more fully understand the significance of this promise, I will record here a short scriptural study to encourage us to be a part of the overcomers in the church of Laodicea.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats." Matt. 25:31, 32.

"Jesus said to them, I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Matt. 19:28.

"You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:28-30.

"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!" 1 Cor. 6:2, 3.

Isn't it amazing that Laodicea, the church who receives no commendation from Jesus, is also the church that receives the promise that those who overcome as He overcame will sit with Him on His throne! This indicates that just as the 12 disciples were spiritually equipped to judge the nation of Israel, their own people, so will the overcomers in the

church of Laodicea receive the right to sit with Jesus in judgment concerning the completion of the character of Christ for all the Christians who have lived since Jesus ascended back into Heaven and began His ministry in the Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary. Note these interesting comments from 7BC 761:

"The name Laodicea implies the final step in the Christian process of history, that of perfecting 'a people adjudged'.... It implies that the preparation of such a people and the divine process of adjudging them righteous will be achieved by the close of the period.... and the period of time thus represented may be characterized as the Age of Judgment.

"The Laodicean message is applicable to all who profess to be Christians (see 6T 77). For more than a century Seventh-day Adventists have recognized that the message to the Laodiceans has a special application to themselves (cf. 1T. 141-144). A recognition of this application stands as a constant rebuke to self-satisfaction and an encouragement to live wholeheartedly according to the pattern of a perfect life in Christ Jesus."

Although the church of Laodicea, in a larger sense, applies to all Christians who have lived since Jesus went into the Most Holy Place of the heavenly Sanctuary, the final distillation of God's people will come through the Seventh-day Adventist church which teaches the necessity of keeping all the commandments of God and has the gift of prophecy as displayed in the writings and work of Ellen White: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Rev. 12:17, KJV. cf. Rev. 19:10.

Please note that in the chronology of last day events in Revelation, Jesus does not permit the final display of the man of sin until He has a people who are cleansed, filled by the Holy Spirit, and ready to meet the foe.

Immediately following the introduction of the remnant church in Revelation 12:17, we see the healing of the fatal wound in chapter 13: "And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had 10 horns and 7 heads, with 10 crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.... The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was astonished and followed the beast.... All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast -- all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." Rev. 13:1-3, 8.

At this point the lamb-like beast is introduced, which gives power to the image of the first beast and forces "everyone, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, so that no one could buy or sell unless he had the mark, which is the name of the beast or the number of his name." Rev. 13:16, 17.

This sequence pinpoints the time in which the cleansed remnant of the Laodicean church (Rev. 12:17) faces the beast -- or papacy -- and his image, which is made up of

those in the Protestant churches who have not responded to the last warning message given to the world by God's faithful followers: "After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: 'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. ... Then I heard another voice from heaven say: 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes.'" Rev. 18:1-5.

Note: It is significant that the rise and power of the papacy at the end of time, supported by the United States of America, is not recorded in Scripture until the church has been cleansed and described as being the church who keeps God's commandments and has the testimony of Jesus. This indicates that the overcomers from the Laodicean church must be present and functioning before Jesus allows the final events of earth's history and the passing of the Sunday law. This is a warning to those in the church who are waiting for the Sunday law in order to get ready for Jesus' coming, for all such are in grave danger of waiting too late to prepare, for the cleansing of the church and the preparation time will have already passed by. This is why the disappointed ones in the church of Philadelphia were told, "you must prophesy again;" and this will only be fulfilled by those who are the cleansed remnant of the church of Laodicea: "I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. Then I was told, 'You must prophesy again [before-KJV] many peoples, nations, languages and kings.'" Rev. 10:10, 11.

Only when the final remnant of God's people are cleansed and perfected and representing Jesus fully in their lives will He be able to fulfill His promise to bring to an end the great controversy, and come to receive His people to Himself. Then the prophecy of Revelation 10:6, 7 will be fulfilled: "There will be no more delay! But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be accomplished, just as he announced to his servants the prophets."

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment -- to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." Eph. 1:7-10.

"I have become its (the church) servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness -- the mystery which has been kept hidden for ages and generations but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:25-27.

Do you see how the final events of Earth's history as recorded in Revelation 13 must be held back until the cleansing and perfecting of God's people into the image of Christ has been accomplished? Those who think they will stand firm during the Sunday law and

the persecution that follows without the protection of the robe of Christ's righteousness both within and without, will find themselves too late to be among the elect of God who are the wise virgins.

"Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be *purified*, made *spotless* and *refined*, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand." Dan. 12:9, 10.

"The book of Daniel is now unsealed, and the revelation made by Christ to John is to come to all the inhabitants of the earth. By the *increase of knowledge*, a *people is to be prepared to stand in the latter days*." 2SM 105 (emphasis supplied).

In past ages, the full cleansing of the heart, mind, and emotions, has not been completely understood. But by the *increase of knowledge that is available for us today, both in science and in spiritual experience and understanding*, this cleansing is now available. Therefore, those who do not avail themselves of this knowledge and experience will be among the foolish virgins who wake up too late to prepare.

"The class represented by the foolish virgins... have not... permitted their old nature to be broken up.... They have been content with a *superficial* work. They *do not know God*. They *have not studied His character*, they *have not held communion with Him*; therefore, they do not know how to trust, how to look and live. Their service to God degenerates into a form." COL 411 (emphasis supplied).

"If they cherish hereditary and cultivated traits of character, while professing to be His disciples, they are represented by the foolish virgins." 4BC 1179.

"Inherited and cultivated tendencies to wrong must be crucified." MYP 68.

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God and they will be my people.' Therefore, come out from them and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty.... Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1.

It is clear from the Word of God and the Spirit of Prophecy that God expects of His remnant church a perfected character as a representative of all His faithful people throughout the ages. By the *increase of knowledge*, these will stand before the Universe as the completed work of Christ in His plan of redemption. We must not compare our lives with those who have gone before us, although they lived up to all the light they

knew, for the light that is shining upon us now is sufficient to finish the work in the lives of His remnant people who overcome be the price what it may.

Do you see now why the overcomers in the church of Laodicea will represent all the ages of the Christian church, and sit upon the throne of judgment with Jesus? Just as the disciples were a cleansed remnant of the Jewish people and will sit in judgment of the children of Israel, so will God's remnant church represent not only the Christian church but also the saved of all ages as the finished product of the plan of salvation.

"All these people [from Abel down through history] were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised, they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.... These were *all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised.* God had planned something better for us so that *only together with us would they be made perfect.*" Heb. 11:13, 40 (emphasis supplied).

"God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind. The Lord Jesus Christ is the author of our being, and He is also the author of our redemption, and *everyone who will enter the kingdom of God will develop a character that is the counterpart of the character of God.* None can dwell with God in the holy heaven but those who bear His likeness. *Those who are to be redeemed are to be overcomers; they are to be elevated, pure, one with Christ.*" 6BC 1105 (emphasis supplied).

"All who give themselves to the service of Christ will follow the example of Christ and will be perfect overcomers." SDG 141.

Do you see a releasing of the winds in the world both physically and in society right now? Do you see the present new efforts of the papacy to join the world together under the control of the Catholic Church? Then be assured that around the world God's people are moving forward in their cleansing and preparation to face the foe with all the armor of God in place for their protection through the time of trouble that is just ahead of us. Soon Jesus will finish His work of intercession and throw down the sensor and pronounce these final words: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:11, 12. KJV.

May each of us be found as overcomers in that day!

Note: All scriptural quotations are taken from the NIV, except when noted as taken from the KJV.

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