



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

LAODICEA A FAILURE? OR IS THE CHURCH GOING THRU?

If there is one question above another which is troubling the "concerned" in the Adventist Community today, it is the question of Laodicea. The Seventh-day Adventist Church identifies itself with Laodicea. This self-identification has been brought into sharp focus through the recent publication by Elder R. J. Wieland - "As Many As I Love". In the very first chapter, Wieland states emphatically - "Christ's direct rebuke 'to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans' applies specifically to us." (p. 1) Thus to everyone who identifies himself as a Seventh-day Adventist, the very thought of the question - Laodicea, a failure? - causes deep emotional distress.

The self-perception held by conservative Adventists is well stated by Wieland. He introduces the theme of his book with the following:

We begin with a deep conviction: this church is the prophetic "remnant" of Revelation 12:17, a unique people with whom the dragon is "wroth" and makes "war" because they are called to "keep the commandments of

God, and have the testimony of Jesus." This same group tell the world the true good news of "the everlasting gospel" (ch. 14: 6-12). They are a vital ingredient in world stability. (p. 1)

Just as positive as the above expressed human conviction derived from Revelation 12:17 and 14:6-12, so are the words of the True Witness - Who does not lie - "I will spue thee out of my mouth." (Rev. 3:16) Does not faith come from "hearing" the word of the Lord? Then will not true "righteousness by faith" be both manifest and proclaimed in the acceptance of the verdict and decision of the True Witness? Or does the True Witness not mean what He says - and we should supply the word - perhaps - into His statement? Just what does the Word of the Lord really say?

Some Historical Background

Within the Adventist Church up to at least 1911, two different views of the Churches of Revelation, Chapters 2 & 3, have been held and set forth in the published literature of the Church. What could be called "the original view" was expressed by Joseph Bates in the first issue of the Second Advent Review, and Sabbath Herald (November, 1850) Bates considered the prophecy as giving the "states" of the Church. In his article - "The Laodicean Church" - he based his presentation solely of Revelation 3. He wrote: "As the first four states of the church were in the past (about A.D. 1798) let us confine our exposition relative to the last three, which are all in an organized state, at the present time."

Bates defined "Sardis" as "the present nominal church, the Babylon, which God's people came out from under the second angel's message." To him, the "Philadelphia" state

represented those who followed by "faith" the open door into the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary. He wrote - "The Philadelphia church kept the Saviour's word and have not denied His name. Those that left this state, and became Laodiceans, took the opposite, i.e., they did not hold fast His word, and hence they denied His name." (Emphasis his) Bates termed Laodicea, "the nominal Adventist."

This view by Bates was expressed as late as 1911 in the Signs of the Times. (January 17) There Milton C. Wilcox, the editor, in a copyrighted article wrote:

The last three churches present three present-day conditions: (1) Great worldliness, dead while professing to live, having not the life of Christ, seen in the great popular churches; (2) Devoted, earnest seeking of God, manifested among a far smaller number who are looking for their Lord's coming; (3) Those who possess an outward knowledge of God's truth, who feel rich because of that knowledge, proud because of their superior morality, but who do not know the sweetness of God's grace, the power of His redeeming love.

There is hope in neither Sardis nor in Laodicea. Out of these conditions must come the victors into that of Philadelphia - brotherly love. He pleads with the few names in Sardis. Upon the greater part of those in Sardis, Christ will come as a thief in swift judgment, but He will save some. He has no promise to Laodicea as a whole. "If any man hear My voice," - He pleads with the individual; but the individual who opens the heart's door and lets Christ in, who comes into that wonderful communion with his divine Lord, will by that very process come into the condition of brotherly love. They will constitute the remnant who keep the word of His patience, against whom there is no condemnation, who are ready for translation. Out of that condition of lukewarmness means a hard struggle, earnest zeal, severe conflict; but he who wins shall share Christ's kingdom eternally. (Emphasis his)

The other view of the Seven Churches was expressed by Uriah Smith in his first edition of Thoughts on the Revelation, in 1865. He perceived of the churches of Revelation as "stages" of one historical church. He wrote of Laodicea:

It is the last stage of the church. It

consequently applies to believers under the third message, the last message of mercy before the coming of Christ, chapt. xiv, 9-14, while the great day of atonement is transpiring, and the investigative judgment is going forward upon the house of God, - a period during which the just and holy law of God is taken by the waiting church as their rule of life." (pp. 58-59)

It is this view of the Seven Churches as "stages" which prevails at the present time.

A Re-Examination

A careful restudy of the Seven Churches beginning with Thyatira cast some very interesting light on the key question as to whether Laodicea will fail, or not.

Thyatira is a duality. There are some who permitted "that woman Jezebel... to teach and to seduce" the servants of "the Son of God." (2:20) There are others who did not have "this doctrine," and who did not know "the depths of Satan." To this latter group, "the Son of God" declares - "Hold fast till I come." (2:24-25) This is the first introduction of the concept of the coming of Christ into the "states" of the seven churches. This admonition would have no meaning unless this church were also in existence at the Second Advent.

Sardis recognized as the "Reformation" state had a "few names" which "had not defiled their garments." (3:4) The One having the Seven Spirits of God warns the church that if they do not "watch," He "will come on (them) as a thief." (3:3) This is the language used by Christ in connection with His second coming. (See Matt. 24:42-44) This would justify the conclusion that this church, too, will be in existence at the return of Christ.

Philadelphia also receives the counsel - "Behold I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." (3:11) Thus all three church "states" - Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia - are warned and counseled with respect to the Second Advent of Christ.

When we come to the Laodicean state, there is no association, no such warning. There is not a single suggestion in regard to the second Advent. Why? The conclusion is inescapable - she has been spued out! To those who desire to continue in the

THE MESSAGE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Today in Seventh-day Adventism the terms "1888" and "the Minneapolis Conference" are synonymous with the term "Righteousness by Faith." Many books have been written on the history of the 1888 General Conference session and the message there presented. The scope of the thought paper, "Watchman, What of the Night?" does not give room to present to the reader what volumes have already done. However, it is the conviction of the editors that the message of righteousness by faith must be put before our people today as never before. What happened at the Minneapolis Conference? Let the following quotation from Testimonies to Ministers pp. 91-93 give us a brief sketch of the message that was presented, and the background to that message.

The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.

The uplifted Saviour is to appear in His efficacious work as the Lamb slain, sitting upon the throne, to dispense the priceless covenant blessings, the benefits He died to purchase for every soul who should believe on Him. John could not express that love in words; it was too deep, too broad; he calls upon the human family to behold it. Christ is pleading for the church in the heavenly courts above, pleading for those for whom He paid the redemption price of His own lifeblood. Centuries, ages, can never diminish the efficacy of this atoning sacrifice.

The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ.

The efficacy of the blood of Christ was to be presented to the people with freshness and power, that their faith

might lay hold upon its merits. As the high priest sprinkled the warm blood upon the mercy seat, while the fragrant cloud of incense ascended before God, so while we confess our sins and plead the efficacy of Christ's atoning blood, our prayers are to ascend to heaven, fragrant with the merits of our Saviour's character. Notwithstanding our unworthiness, we are ever to bear in mind that there is One that can take away sin and save the sinner. Every sin acknowledged before God with a contrite heart, He will remove. This faith is the life of the church. As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness by Moses, and all that had been bitten by the fiery serpents were bidden to look and live, so also the Son of man must be lifted up, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Unless he makes it his life business to behold the uplifted Saviour, and by faith to accept the merits which it is his privilege to claim, the sinner can no more be saved than Peter could walk upon the water unless he kept his eyes fixed steadily upon Jesus. Now, it has been Satan's determined purpose to eclipse the view of Jesus and lead men to look to man, and to trust to man, and be educated to expect help from man. For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel's message, in clear, distinct lines. (Emphasis supplied.)

The first paragraph of this quotation taken from Testimonies to Ministers pp. 91,92 is quoted in Arthur G. Daniells' book Christ Our Righteousness page 36. Then Daniells proceeds to give the following outline:

1. A Most Precious Message.—"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people."
2. The Object.—"The message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world."
3. The Scope.-
 - a. "It presented justification through faith in the Surety."
 - b. "It invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God."
4. The Need.-
 - a. "Many had lost sight Jesus."
 - b. "They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family."
5. The Resources.-
 - a. "All power is given into His hands,"
 - b. "That He may dispense rich gifts unto men,"
 - c. "Imparting the priceless gift of His own

righteousness to the helpless human agent."

6. Extent.—"This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world."

7. What It Really Is.—"It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure."

What a truly wonderful message! What was the reception? One only needs to read 1888 Re-Examined, by Elders Wieland and Short to discover the reaction of the leadership to the "most precious message" that God sent to His remnant people. On page 26 Wieland and Short give the following quote from the servant of the Lord:

In Minneapolis God gave precious gems of truth to His people in new settings. This light from heaven by some was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ. (Ms 13, 1889.)

What is the reception of the message by the people today? A Warning and its Reception compiled by A. L. Hudson gives the reaction to the message by the leadership when Wieland and Short tried to re-introduce the message more than thirty years ago. The light sent from heaven was again rejected "with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ." It is the conviction of the editors that God sent Elders Wieland and Short to bring this message again to His people, just as He sent Waggoner and Jones to the church almost 100 years ago. Has the message been received any better as of late? No! Again the answer is not hard to find. Today in Adventism the standard according to the popular vote of both the laity and the hierarchy is the theology of Morris Venden. Students of the Bible are quick to perceive that the standard of today does not match up with the "precious message" that God sent His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones.

What has been the cause of the rejection of this heaven-sent message? Page 25 of 1888 Re-Examined gives two Spirit of Prophecy quotations that help to reveal what the problem was in the years after the famous Minneapolis Conference.

For nearly two years, we have been urging the people to come up and accept the light and the truth concerning the righteousness of Christ, and they do not know whether to come and take hold of this precious truth or not. They are bound about with their own ideas. They do not let the Saviour in. (R. & H. Mar. 11, 1890.)

Why were the people bound about with their own ideas? Why were the people so reticent and perplexed? Sister White gave the reason why in the next week's issue of the Review and Herald.

Our young men look to our older brethren, and as they see that they do not accept the message, but treat it as though it were of no consequence, it influences those who are ignorant of the Scriptures to reject the light. These men who refuse to receive truth, interpose themselves between the people and the light. (R. & H., Mar. 18, 1890.) (Emphasis supplied.)

Please do not read the above quotation without giving it careful thought. The young men had been looking to the older men to see how they treated the message. Since the leaders had refused to receive the truth, the young men had also. When the reference from Testimonies to Ministers was given earlier, more than just the last part of page 91, and the first part of page 92 was quoted. Where Daniells starts is excellent, however it is not far enough for us to get the picture of what is needed today. On page 93, Sister White said that for years Satan had been trying to get and keep the people's eyes off of Jesus. How could he do that? By leading "men to look to man, and to trust to man, and to be educated to expect help from man." What would cause the younger men to look to the older brethren for help? The answer is in the testimony, the young men were "ignorant of the Scriptures." The pride of the leaders with the ignorance of the young men; this is the heart of the matter. (Please see 1888 Re-Examined pp. 19-21 for further study concerning the pride of the brethren.) If the young men had known the Scriptures, then they would have recognized the message as Sister White had done. They would have recognized Jesus as the heart of the message.

"It is the work of true education ... to train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought." Education page 17. This was the work that was not being done prior to the 1888 Conference. The youth were not taught to think for themselves, instead they had been "educated to expect help from man." Even though God may use men as His instruments in the spreading of the gospel, (see Matt. 28:19,20), David in the 108th Psalm verse 12 says, "Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man."

Is it any different today? Are we training

our brethren to be thinkers, or mere "reflectors of other men's thought." In the Adult Sabbath School Lessons for the first quarter of this year, on page 92 is the following comment concerning the interpretation of prophecy.

One thing is certain, nothing is gained by dogmatism and controversy. In such areas of unfulfilled prophecy we must tread humbly and softly. It is our responsibility to study the Scriptures for ourselves, to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to submit our understanding to those in the church who are able to judge our findings, and then to abide by the decisions of the church in order to maintain the unity of the church. (Emphasis supplied.)

Thus it is today, just as it was during the time of Sister White; men refuse to receive the truth, and then interpose themselves between the people and the light. When one considers such projects as the "1000 Days of Reaping" and "Harvest 90", could not the words of Jesus well apply: "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." Matthew 23:15.

How eager we are to gain converts. Yet most are converts to organization and not converts to the Lord Jesus Christ. People are looking for the waters of salvation, and instead we give them polluted water from the cisterns of Babylon. The great tragedy of today is that not only the world is confused about the message that God designed them to have, but that His professed people are also in confusion. Today most have no concept of what the true message of righteousness by faith is. To help God's people to have a Bible understanding of the true message of righteousness by faith "Watchman, What of the Night?" will be printing basic Bible study guides under the title: CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. The first series of these lessons will be based largely upon the book Christ Our Righteousness, by E. J. Waggoner. Most studies will have 12 - 15 questions with Bible text answers. This is the method of study that the Holy Spirit gave to Elder Stephen N. Haskell at the southern California camp meeting in May of 1883 and later endorsed by the Spirit of Prophecy.

May God bless us in our personal study of the Scriptures.

A. Stump

CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lesson # 1

Why We Should Consider Christ

Question	Answer
1. Whom should we consider?	Hebrews 3:1
2. What happens when we consider Christ and His glory?	2 Cor. 3:18
3. Whom did Paul center <u>all</u> his preaching around?	1 Cor. 2:2
4. What is the gospel (the good news) the power of?	Rom. 1:16,17
5. Through whom <u>only</u> does salvation come to men?	Acts 4:12
6. Who is our only access to the father?	John 14:6
7. Why is it necessary for Christ to be "lifted up"?	John 3:14,15 (See note 1)
8. What will happen to men when Jesus is "lifted up"?	John 12:32
9. Who is both the Author and Finisher of our faith?	Heb. 12:1,2
10. Why also should we consider Jesus Christ?	Hebrews 12:3 (See note 2)
11. What does God instruct us to do when we need wisdom?	James 1:5
12. Where is all true wisdom contained?	Col. 2:1-3
13. What does the Bible call any wisdom not from God?	Rom. 1:21,22
14. What are two things Christ is declared to be?	1 Cor. 1:24
15. Why else should we consider Christ?	1 Cor. 1:30 (See note 3)

NOTES

- "This 'lifting up' of Jesus, while it has primary reference to His crucifixion, embraces more than the mere historical fact; it means that Christ must be 'lifted up' by all who believe in Him, as the crucified Redeemer, whose grace and glory are sufficient to supply the world's greatest need; it means that He should be 'lifted up' in all His exceeding loveliness and power as 'God with us.'" Christ Our Righteousness p. 6.
- The Greek word for "contradiction" is antilogia (an-tee-log-ah) which means hostility or strife.
- "We are ignorant, wicked, lost; Christ is to us wisdom, righteousness, redemption. What a range! From ignorance and sin to righteousness and redemption. Man's ...need cannot reach outside the bounds of what Christ is to us." Christ Our Righteousness p.8.

From p. 2, col. 2 - Laodicea

Laodicean state, and sustain a "vain hope" that perhaps the True Witness does not mean what He says, would have us believe that mellō, the word translated, "will", in the pronouncement of Jesus - "I will spue thee out of my mouth" - does not mean that for sure, but really means, "perhaps" He will. Further, if we "only believe" that concept hard enough, we can turn the divine decision around. Just "only believe" - don't look at the facts!

How Is Mellō Used in Revelation?

According to the sources available - not counting them myself - mellō (μελλω) is used by John in the book of Revelation, 13 times (1:19; 2:10 [2x]; 3:2, 10, 16; 6:11; 8:13; 10:4; 10:7; 12:4, 5; 17:8). In each use of the word, whether as a verb, or a participle, it is connected with an infinitive expressing the purpose or result. When used as a verb, it appears in the present tense (6x) and in the imperfect (2x), and once in the subjunctive mood.

Since in the text under consideration - Rev. 3:16 - mellō is used in the present tense, let us check each of the other uses in the present to see if there is a conditional element that would negate the stated purpose:

1:19 - "Write thou therefore the things which thou sawest, even the things which are and the things which are (mellō) to occur after these things." (Literal)

2:10 - "Do not fear the things which thou art (mellō) to suffer. Behold, the devil shall (mellō) cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried." (Literal)

12:5 - "And she bore a son, a male, who shall (mellō) shepherd all the nations with a staff of iron." (Lit.)

17:8 - "And the beast which thou sawest was, and is not, and shall (mellō) come up out of the abyss." (Lit.)

It should be obvious that each stated intent or purpose as defined by the infinitive modifying mellō IS to occur - not perhaps, nor maybe. In the case of Rev. 12:5, the book itself tells the time when it will take place, and states it in the same language. See Rev. 19:15.

There are two uses of mello in Revelation which indicate "perhaps" or that the stated purpose can be altered - BUT, in each instance, mello is in the imperfect Greek tense, and not in the present. Note:

3:2 - "Be thou watching, and establish the things remaining which were (emellon) dying." (Literal)

Robertson in his Word Pictures of the New Testament, comments relative to the use of the imperfect - "The imperfect looking on the situation 'with delicate optimism' (Swete) as having passed the crisis, as sort of epistolary imperfect." (Vol. VI, p. 314)

10:4 - "And when spoke the seven thunders, I was going (emellon) to write, and I heard a voice out of heaven saying: Seal thou the things which spake the seven thunders, and not them write." (Literal)

It is obvious in this verse (10:4) that the intent is not carried out - but John was even forbidden from doing so. To convey this use of mellō the Greek imperfect is used, NOT the present as is found in Rev. 3:16. Furthermore, the use of mellō in Rev. 3:16 is followed by an infinitive in the Greek aorist, and not by a present infinitive as with the five other uses of mellō in the present tense. The use of the Greek aorist infinitive indicates "punctiliar" action, or as happening immediately upon the decision of the one acting, and not an indcusive prolonging of the contemplated action. (See An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament, p. 105) In simple language, the True Witness gave Laodicea time to repent with a special call to repent in 1950, and when she did not do so, He acted! It was not a temporizing to see if some "messengers" could persuade Laodicea to turn around, and then the True Witness could change His mind. The present indicative is used in the verb form - it will or has taken place; it is certain - and the aorist infinitive confirms a decisive judgment, and not a prolonged haggling.

This is exactly the picture in the Writings:

In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. [Definite] She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do the work entrusted to her, on her will be pronounced the sentence, "Found wanting." By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged." [Punctiliar] (8T:247)

The parable of the Ten Virgins indicates that the Philadelphians and the Laodiceans were to be mingled together for a period of time. This was the concept perceived by Wilcox as he studied the existing states of the church in Revelation 3. (See p. 2, col. 1, Groups 2 & 3) "The state of the Church represented by the foolish virgins, is also spoken of as the Laodicean state." (EGW, R&H, Aug. 19, 1890) The parable, however, indicates there will be a separation. The light supplied by the oil - the Spirit of truth - goes out in the hearts of the foolish virgins. They go to the vendors who sell oil, but in so doing, on them the door is shut!

Bates emphasized this loss of truth in describing the difference between these two states of the Church. Note again his comment:

The Philadelphia church kept the Saviour's word and have not denied His name. Those that left this state, and became Laodiceans, took the opposite, i.e., they did not hold fast His word, and hence they denied His name. (R&H, Nov. 1850)

This is indeed the picture. Corporate Laodicea has not kept Christ's word - committed in sacred trust - but compromised the final atonement in seeking to reach an accord with the Evangelicals. Thus they denied His name as understood by Bates. The verdict - "I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16) - could not be escaped.

The message to the individual - "if any man hear my voice" - is the call of Jesus as He stands at the door knocking. This is the call to every Seventh-day Adventist today.

WHG

[We have placed in tabular form the uses of mellō in Revelation with the modifying infinitives. This table may be obtained on request. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.]

IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT - III

From April through November in 1986, we covered over 30,000 miles in meeting speaking appointments, and making personal contacts. A number of times as we drove along the Freeways, we saw signs indicating certain towns or communities, and noted mentally that a certain person on the Thought Paper list lived there. If during the coming year, you would like to have a visit, or

would like to sponsor a meeting in your area, please let us know early, so that we can, if possible, include your request in our schedules.

In looking back upon two decades of ministry in research and publication, we sense that there is a need to review some key points of truth which have been presented during this time. Over this period of time many new names have been added to the Thought Paper mailing list. We are sure that certain references to past issues leave some of these new readers wondering just what is referred to by what is written. A review would benefit these readers. We also need to sink "the shaft of truth" deeper in some critical areas of study. This we will endeavor to do during this year.

The program this year will include as in the past year, the monthly convocations and the Annual Fellowship meeting here on the campus. More about the Annual Fellowship meeting will be given in the next issue. Plans are now in progress to increase our facilities to accommodate those who will be attending the Fellowship meeting.

We thank God for the bright prospects ahead, and more so, that the coming of Jesus the second time draweth near. Pray for us, as we pray for you. If you have prayer requests, send them in; and we will remember them at set times for prayer.

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This Thought Paper carries the first article by Allen Stump as Contributing Editor. (See pages 3-5) He is presently Pastor of the Smyrna Gospel Ministries in the area of Welch, West Virginia.

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