

# **THE LAODICEAN MESSAGE, THE SIFTING AND THE LOUD**

**CRY** by ELDER JOHN A. BRUNSON.

It is interesting yet mind boggling, to see how a once sought-after Adventists ordained minister in the years 1898 to 1904, portrayed the Laodicean condition of the Seventh-day Adventists Church as a hindrance to do its last gospel work, the Loud Cry. Elder John A. Brunson contribution to the article **The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald in February 4, 1902**, poses strong and staggering questions to our today teachings, eschatological standpoint and surprising gospel themes. The spree to get so many souls yet we seem to be unconscious of our real lukewarm state, the vehement ambition to receive the second Pentecost and finish the gospel work regardless of the Church's condition, and the stout denial of the need of another or additional message to prepare us for the Loud Cry is put to balances through the reflection of this excerpt. To every Adventists scattered around the globe, a time for heart-searching reflection has come; where do you stand with the current lukewarm condition of God's people? Are you not a hindrance to fulfilling God's mission through His church? What are your views in relation to the latter rain and the last gospel work? What is your understanding of the Loud Cry and the judgement before it? We invite every earnest Adventist, to take some time, to prayerful consider what is reflected in this paper and send your views and comments on the contact details given below.

“From a careful analysis of Rev. 18: 7, taken in connection with the preceding context, we conclude that selfishness is the principle of Babylon. By comparing this text with Isa. 14: 12-15 and with Eze. 28: 12-19, we trace the origin of this principle back to Satan, and see that it was selfishness that changed "the anointed cherub that covereth," Lucifer, the light-bearer (for such is the meaning of Lucifer), into Satan, the malignant accuser, the enemy of righteousness and truth; led to his expulsion from heaven; and will ultimately bring him to utter annihilation. Selfishness is sin, and "the wages of sin is death." Man is not selfish because he is a sinner; he is a sinner because he is selfish.

“Now contrast for a moment this satanic principle of selfishness, which disturbed the symphonies of heaven, and marred the beauty of God's fair creation, with the opposite principle, which was perfectly embodied and accurately reflected in Christ. The mind which was in Christ led Him, though He was on an equality with God, to empty himself, take upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, to humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the shameful death of the cross. Wonderful, wonderful condescension, far exceeding our ability to comprehend and appreciate! In the presence of

such unselfishness and disinterested love, we prostrate ourselves in the dust, and cry, unclean, unclean!

“On the other hand, the mind which was in Satan led him to attempt acts of self-exaltation, saying within himself, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High." Discontent found a lodgment in his heart, and soon ripened into envy. But it did not stop here, for envy is prolific, the mother of many evils. She, dark-faced, deceptive, and revengeful, formed a hellish coalition with disappointed wounded Pride, and in her womb conceived seed of anarchy, and gave birth to the offspring of cruel Rebellion. Selfishness is satanic, unselfishness is heavenly. Selfishness is the most of that foul, malignant brood, — envy, jealous injustice, cruelty, hatred, murder, — yea, of that is sinful. Unselfishness is the benignant parent that gives birth to, and presides over, the household of patience, long-suffering, gentleness, tenderness, love — all that is Christlike. The fleshly embodiment of the one produces Babylon. The incarnation of the other is Zion. When satanic principle of Babylon, which is selfishness prevails, the heavenly principle of Zion, which unselfishness, must be suppressed, and vice versa.

“Now with these facts in mind, give heed the injunction of the Holy Spirit given by the, mouth of His servant Paul, "Let this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." We the followers of Christ, standing in His stead are expected by Christ to do the works that He did; for His own words are, "He that believe on me, the works that I do shall he do and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." "The works that I do shall he do also." But in order to do the works of Christ, we must have the mind of Christ that mind of unselfish love. This alone can qualify the believer to fulfil Christ's expectation. Christ certainly expects us to do the works He did, and He has made all necessary provision therefore. Hence, we hear His disciples praying "that signs and wonders may be done by name of thy holy child Jesus." Why do a such prayers now arise? and why do not corresponding works in answer to these prayers a pear? The answer is clear: We have not the mind in us that was in Christ Jesus, 0 for more of the meekness of the Master, who "was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He openeth not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and a sheep before her shearers dumb,- so, He openeth not His mouth." Christlike quality of mind must be incarnated between this and the giving of the message with great power. The sin of selfishness in God's people is the source of their weakness, the cause of their barrenness. Ponder well the following words: "The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted, a those who were once converted, but have backslidden. What influence would these unconsecrated members have on new

converts? Would they not make of no effect the God-given message which His people are to bear? "—*Testimonies for the Church, Vol. VI, page 371.* [underlining ours].

What are your thoughts on these points in connection with our ambitious soul-winning goals to get everyone Christianised? Are we going to accomplish them or the Church will be paganised as chronicled in **Hosea 2 verse 7**, "And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find [them]: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then [was it] better with me than now."?

"Please, dear reader, consider prayerfully appalling statement that the condition of church members is now hindering the Lord from bringing many souls into the truth. Are you on those stumbling-blocks? Examine yourself in the light of the exhortation, "Let this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Achans in camp are cowards in action, and the defence of Ai will surely follow. The selfishness of Babylon in the heart effectually disqualifies one the unselfish work of Christ. Now we can clearly see why there must be sifting of God's people before the loud cry can be given. The cause of weakness must first removed before valiant service can be expected in the field. A Gideon's band is mightier than the hosts of Midian. God's people will never be prepared to attack the sins of Babylon as long as the principle of Babylon is in their hearts. Therefore, the giving of the loud cry must be preceded by a message to God's people, will accomplish an entire separation from Babylon. This message must be clear, definite, penetrating, turning the search-light of truth to the darkened corners of the heart. The messenger must unite the fervor of Jeremiah the fearlessness of Elijah. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." The effect produced by this heart-searching message will be twofold. Some will heed, humble themselves, confess their sins, and be sanctified by the truth. Others will rebel, reject the light, and fall into darkness." [underlining ours].

Do you believe that we need a message to prepare us for the Loud Cry? If not, what do you think is the solution to God's church which is "steadily retreating toward Egypt"? Does the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy point to an additional message before the Loud Cry? If so, where? Has the message come and how are we to see it? What is the message and who is to bear it?

"I asked the meaning of the shaking I had seen, and was shown that it would be caused by the straight testimony called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans. This will have its effect upon the heart of the receiver, and will lead him to exalt the standard, and pour forth the straight truth. Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it, and this is what will cause a shaking among God's people." —*Early Writings, pages 131, 132.*

“The effect of this straight testimony is more fully described in the following words: "As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the Third Angel's Message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side. Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren." — *“Great Controversy,” page 608.*

“Please, dear reader, observe who will be disaffected by the straight testimony. They are professed Christians who unite with the world and partake of its spirit, and in consequence, when the test comes, they "view matters in nearly the same light " as the world, grow offended, and ultimately fall out by the way. Are you one of these worldly-minded Christians? If so, you may justly tremble for your safety. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."

“But the fact we wish especially to mention in this connection is the division that is caused among the professed people of God by the close message that precedes the loud cry. This division causes a line of separation to be made among them, the result of which is that the true and tried remnant, freed from Babylon, will stand apart by themselves, like Gideon's three hundred, while the disaffected ones return to the world, and oppose the cause they once advocated. To this remnant, purified by obedience to truth, and separated from the selfish principle of Babylon, will be intrusted the cry, “Come out of her, my people." They have the mind of Christ, and are made great by His gentleness. Their lives are the exponents of heavenly purity, their characters the embodiment of Christ's principles. Consequently, they are invincible. They will penetrate to earth's remotest bounds. The dark corners of earth will be lightened with the truth of salvation, and the far-distant hills will be made to resound with the gospel call. "Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers." —*“Great Controversy,” page 612.*

Will the latter rain be poured out at an individual level as some assert or to the purified Church as a whole? Was it not that in Christ's day, the disciples received a message first which prepared them for the 1<sup>st</sup> Pentecost, then the miracle working power? Are we not to expect the same so that type meet antitype?

“Now the question arises, What is the message that causes the "shaking among God's people," and prepares the remnant to give the loud cry? Answer: It is "the straight testimony

called forth by the counsel of the True Witness to the Laodiceans." But what is the basis of that testimony? Answer: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH. Turn to Rev. 3: 14-19, and see the truthfulness of this statement. In verse 17 we see that the message is given to a people, a professedly godly people, who say to themselves, in a self-gratulatory way, We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. Here is an exhibition of self-importance. Its spirit is similar to that of the self-righteous Pharisee who said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men;" or, in other words, it is the principle of Babylon. But all agree that the Laodicean message is for Seventh-day Adventists. Therefore, there is among Seventh-day Adventists the principle of Babylon. Is there any of it in you?

"But, praise the Lord, this message is given to eradicate that every principle of self-exaltation. Therefore, it reveals to us first our true condition as God sees us. It plainly declares that we are "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." How different God's opinion of us is from our opinion of ourselves! Do you wonder that we are barren? that we are weak and cowardly? Can a people that are miserable, poor, and blind, produce mighty results? Can you expect such to be valiant soldiers, ready to rush to the battle's front when duty's call is heard? — Nay, we expect to find them hiding away in places of ease and safety, praying that others may go, but excusing themselves. Such are the people of God when the trumpet tones of the Laodicean message fall upon their ears, to arouse them from their spiritual lethargy, and prepare them for effective service.

"Now carefully mark the burden of the message, the heaven-born remedy that is offered: (1) "Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich. "The gold is faith and love; (2) "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ; (3) "anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." "The eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan, and shun them." It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. From this analysis it is clear that the righteousness of Christ is the antidote for the miserable, poor, blind, naked selfishness of Babylon. But the righteousness of Christ is righteousness by faith. And when righteousness by faith is accepted truly, and we are clothed with the "white raiment," then is given the eyesalve, the heavenly anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit which prepares us for the loud cry. "Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life,— it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognized as laborers together with God." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, page 402. "We cannot receive the Holy Spirit until we break every yoke that binds us to our objectionable traits of character." — *Review and Herald*, April 25, 1899.

“Righteousness by faith is the message for the hour. It is the straight testimony of the True Witness. It will puncture the bubble of Babylonian selfishness, humble the creature, exalt the Creator, and prepare a people to give the cry, with mighty power, "Come out of her, my people." May God raise up messengers to give it, and prepare hearts to receive it.”

Is it the message of righteousness by faith brought by Elder A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner being referred to here or it is another since the former was denominational rejected? Is it not that the 1888 message did not accomplish its God given work, if so, how can it be? It sounds as if it's another which is foretold in **Early Writings page 277**, “This message seemed to be an addition to the third message, joining it as the midnight cry joined the second angel's message in 1844.”

### **Conclusion**

In our closet of prayer, let us contemplate on these words “The Lord often works where we least expect Him; He surprises us by revealing His power through instruments of His own choice, while He passes by the men to whom we have looked as those through whom light should come. God desires us to receive the truth upon its own merits--because it is truth.”—**Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, p. 106**. Your thoughts and reflections will be appreciated on this topic.

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