

# Thyatira

Revelation 2: 18.

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## Part Fourth. LATER MINISTRY.

These epistles to the churches are divided into three and four. The first three and the last four go together. The difference is marked by the place of the exhortation: "He that hath ears to hear," etc. This epistle to Thyatira is the first of the last four. In *Ephesus* we get the failure of the Church in forsaking its first love, Christ as the eternal Lover, and that love known by faith; but they had forgotten it, and He could not be satisfied with anything save their love. When there is love, it cannot be satisfied to find in the object of its love coldness and indifference. *Smyrna* brings out how, when there is failure in first love, Christ meets the difficulty. He lets in a terrific persecution to stop the progress of the evil. If a saint, or a company of saints, get into ease and forgetfulness of the love of Christ, He kindles the fires to touch that which is holding them back — the flesh — and to throw them back upon the Lord. *Pergamos* gives us corruption let in through the doctrine of Balaam and that of the Nicolaitanes.

In Thyatira we get an awful picture — a strong appeal on God's part to His saints. People say, "We do not see any strong appeal on God's part." Then your ear is stopped. All these calls remain in the power of the love of the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ for every person down to the end of time — for everyone who says, "I have heard the voice of my Beloved, who will not be satisfied till my walk is responsive to His heart." The insignia He takes here are very peculiar; "the Son of God," a title above all; bringing out what He is essentially as well as the immutability of His character. Having saved a people, and brought them into a position of responsibility, never could He give up the question of their responsibility.

"Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire." We get the same thought in Heb. 4. There it is you have got a great High Priest, and when you come to Him He will read to you, and to you only, what is in your heart, It is love, not to the world but to His own people. His is an eye that searches and makes everything manifest. A flame gives us the idea of something rising; but it need not be so always; it may be as a sunbeam coming down like a sword of light, making manifest all that lies hidden in a dark valley. Take any brilliant light and turn it, say, on a garden; it will disclose everything that is in the garden. When the eye of the Lord comes down (He is up there in pure light), it discovers everything; and when He looked at Thyatira in that character, He said, "I will let you know how I read things."

"His feet like unto fine brass." In the tabernacle there were three metals used. *Gold*, which always figured divine glory; *silver*, which had to do with the title of the Son of God as born of the Virgin, the Son of the Highest; and *brass*, which figured Him as the Son of man displayed among men. The silver in the tabernacle was connected with quite different things from the gold, and so also the brass. We get the brazen altar — a *Man* is my substitute. "God manifest in the flesh" it is true, but a Man. The Gnostic says that it was a phantom that hung on the cross; but that takes away all peace. It will not do to say that God took an appearance on the throne. The Man who took His place in heaven was the Man who hung upon the cross. He was Man actually, in body, soul, and spirit. "His feet like unto fine brass," etc. Whatever the ways of man in connection with Him on earth, He was thoroughly prepared for it, and went right through it. And now, as Head, He thoroughly understands all about it. He can come and

deal with me, and bring out all about me. He can take us up, and say, "You have to go on a thorny path; but I tread down the briars before you. I will go through the furnace before you, and be to you exactly what you want."

"The Son of God, who hath His eyes like a flame of fire" (making manifest), "and His feet like fine brass," says, "I know thy works" — love, faith, service, patience, etc., "and the last to be more than the first." This is a very remarkable expression; there were not many churches to which He could say that. Was the state of the assembly then very good? No; the state of the whole was such that He had to take up a remnant. (Rev. 2: 24.) It shows a bad state when even inside the Church, every one that nameth the name of the Lord is called upon to depart from iniquity. (2 Tim. 2: 19). We have come to that in the present time. Infidelity quietly tosses Scripture aside; superstition buries it! Are things getting better? My conviction is that the time is now come when you must either walk with God, or go with the stream — constrained, if you want to keep your conscience in purity before God, to say, "I have got my cross on my shoulder, and I must go to heaven after Christ if others go with me, well; if not, I must go without them." Christ says, "I cannot say the whole mass at Thyatira, but *'if any man,'*" etc. He recognizes the extreme of weakness, the body as a body corrupted. All I can do is to give the exhortation. "Let people save themselves if they cannot save anybody else."

There is a remarkable difference between this church and Pergamos. There it was Balaam, the son of Beor, from Pethor, in Mesopotamia; i.e., he was from beyond the Euphrates. He was not a Jew, nor a good man either; he was a wicked man, though the power of God's testimony was with him, so that he could not but speak the word of God. Yet his heart was set on gold. Sent for to curse the people God delighted in, he goes; but when he gets there he finds God too strong for him, and he cannot curse them. If God takes up anything, the question becomes, Was He justified in taking it up? He takes care of what He does Himself. Ask Him if He is justified in taking up Israel or the Church, and He will say, "Yes, I will be just, and the Justifier." When a charge is brought against that which God has taken up, what is the first question? Is it, Are they walking consistently? No; it is, Is God justified in having taken them up? All Balaam could do was to raise the question. God says, "That is a question against Myself. I will meet it." What did Balaam do? Like Satan himself, he says, "If this way will not do, I will try another way. If you can get this people to do what God does not like He will break them up. He insists on purity — you get in fornication, you will have them smashed up and forsaken!"

Could there be anything more Satanic? Yes, there was Jezebel. Balaam was but a stranger brought in to try what he could do against a people of whom he was not one; he was outside them, though he was identified with the one who wanted to curse them. Jezebel was worse — she was brought inside, because connected with the person put by God to take care of His people, and she had children inside. This was far worse. Balaam said, "We cannot change them; let us spoil them;" but this was nothing like Jezebel being brought in and giving the sanction of the king's name to the false worship inside the house of God. God recognized Balaam as a prophet; but of her He says, "Thou sufferest thy wife" (not woman merely) "Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess." What brought her in and made her queen, putting her in a place of government? There is something very remarkable in the meaning of the words. Here Balaam means "no people" (giving the idea of desolation); Beor means "consumption;" Jezebel means "no dwelling" (desolation in another form), patronized by Baal, the abomination of false gods. Christ says, "You have confessed Me as your Saviour; I hold you responsible."

My conviction is, that if we live down here ten years longer, we shall find a line traced of people walking as those who have God dwelling in them, and who are dwelling in God, and no other line whatever — infidelity everywhere else. The break-up there depicted, is in principle working now. We

find that people do not mould their walk on the fact that Christ has been here, and now is in heaven. If false standards corrupt the soul, and mine is a false standard, not only am I not on a right level, but I am on that which corrupts my soul. But if I go where Christ is, all is open. *I* do not know what is in *me*, but I have an open bosom before Him, and I can know what is in His heart towards me. He in heaven says to me, "I laid down My life for you; I came off the throne of God to do it; I have gone back to heaven, and there have talked of you, cared for you, and I am coming again to fetch you." What sort of a person ought you to be? And do you say, "Do not be too particular, do not be too particular?" "Are you *surprised* that I am making claims on you? It was no little love led Me to die for you, no little love led Me to *go* into heaven before the hosts of darkness, and talk about you." It Christ's love is before you, do you not say, "How strange that He should so love me, care for me, that not a word of my lip, not a thought of my heart, but He loves me so that He likes to have all in me according to His own mind"?

Rev. 2: 25. There He is putting a soul in the position of having received a deposit from Him. You have received this; now clutch it, hold it fast. My mind is not occupied with evil only — I noticed the good first — now hold it fast. What are you and I doing? Have we got the truth that has made us free? Then are our faces towards the glory where He has gone? Are we holding His words on to the end? "He that overcometh," etc. It is not a very high promise, but there is a great principle involved in it. In looking at each promise, we find that the Lord picks out the only thing that will help them out of the difficulty in the state of things they are in. Here He had been speaking of the evil brought into Israel by Balaam and Jezebel. So in the Church of the living God, where the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ought to have been the subject of testimony, corruption from the Gentiles had come in. Hence we get the promise, "I will give him power over the nations;" or, taking the essence of it, "I, Jesus, am not only the only One who brought in good, but the only One who will triumph over evil. Have I given you an ear to hear, and have I not given you a good thing? When I come to triumph over evil, you will like to be with Me. Another time is coming when I shall be victorious over all, and I mean you to be with Me." What special love! Shall I not take care not to identify myself with the evil He is coming to put down? Would you like, when He comes to judge the evil of the nominal church, to be found to have been identified with the spiritual corruption? No, I should not. I should like to be found outside it all.

Rev. 2: 27. "Even as I received of my Father." He says to each individual, "Not only shall you come forth among the invincibles, but you will like to be identified with Me when I take the things given Me of My Father; not merely as in a place of power, but that part of the glory connected with Me as delighted in by My Father." The Father delights in Him, and there is no glory that will not put a crown on the head of Christ. "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them." As if He said, "He has given Me a throne; you shall sit there with Me. I have got to come and put down My enemies; you shall share the glory with Me." Oh, what a thought! When you think of what you *were* — born in sin, shapen in iniquity, children of wrath, so that *nothing* but the death of Christ could break the bonds of sin, and save you from eternal death; and of what you *are* — poor stupid things, rebelling against the grace of God, and *then* to think of such things as you were, pitiful things as you are, being identified with the Lord when He comes in the triumph of His power. What should the effect of this be on our life now?

"I will give him the morning star." It is one thing to watch for the morning star, another thing to *have* it. I shall not *have* the morning star till I enter into the thoughts of God, that this Son of His love should have a bride, and that all honour must be His, and that the Father's delight is in Him. Some manna was put by in a pot before God, as if He said, "I will not only give My Son as manna in the wilderness, but I delight in the thought of Him, and I will put some before Me to show that I know how to take care of My people." Christ, as the manna down here, feeds me. Christ, as the manna amongst

God's treasures, shows God's delight in Him. Christ, as the morning star, will appear in the right time, and the Church will be wafted home; but to possess the morning star is now to see God's delight in it. Christ will not be ashamed of His Church. He will not bring her in at the backdoor. He will say, "I have got a companion in glory, and I am not in the least ashamed of her."

Then He winds up with the exhortation, "He that hath an ear." The body as a body will not have an ear; but there may be some *one* heart reached by that promise. These are critical days we live in, a day where there is no standing still; as in climbing a precipice, if you sit down to rest, you will at once slide downwards. But we have got Christ up there, and all help ready. We cannot climb the precipice of the day without Christ up there to help us; but we must go upwards if we want to *stand*. We must get into God's presence, and walk there; if not, down we shall go.

May God in grace keep our eyes steady on Christ, and give us to abide in Him, with whom all wisdom is folly, and all strength weakness. If it is to be glory *then*, *now* it is the cross, and now the wilderness, and nothing but Christ for me in my walk through it.