

XVII. A CHURCH NEITHER COLD NOR HOT

~Other Speakers S-Z: John Sung:

(Revelation 3)

Vs. 14. Jesus told John to write to the Church of Laodicea. Laodicea represents the Church of the end-times. So this letter is sent to us of the Church of the end-times. Look at the tribulations and woes, from heaven above to the earth beneath. The farms are wasted, the finance frontiers are broken down, society is in turmoil. So, this letter, which Jesus told John to write at the end of a series, has much to do with us. A most precious letter. Jesus says, "Amen!" Amen means He is at one with God in giving a true witness. Jesus says, "I am the Mighty Creator." Hence Jesus has the honour to address us of the Church of the end-times. May we all take every word of His to heart.

. Vs. 15. Jesus says, "I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot." I have often described the condition of the end-time Church like this, "Sloppy and slouchy, neither hot nor cold, neither alive nor dead." But Jesus has used these four words only, "neither cold nor hot," and these speak a lot already. Brothers and sisters, are you neither cold nor hot? How many there are that pray a slovenly prayer. When they preach there is no zeal. They read their Bibles perfunctorily.

As to what zeal the Church has at present, this can be divided into four kinds: 1) Sloppy zeal: Many old ladies are zealous everyday to confess their sins to God, but whether they are born again or not they do not know anything at all. How sloppy! 2) Fanatical zeal. Many Church members seem very zealous, shouting hallelujah till they have no time to sleep or eat. But they know not what they say in their fanaticism. 3) Mercenary zeal. There are Church members who wax zealous for the sake of their rice bowl. When that rice bowl is broken, that zeal fizzles immediately. 4) Courtship zeal. Some young people wax zealous for an opportunity to courtship. Jesus is not happy with such hypocritical zeal, What Jesus desires is the zeal that generates from a sincere heart.

Vs. 16. Jesus say, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold or hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." "Do not brag that you can read the Bible and pray, that you're immune from evil habits. I do not like you already because of your lukewarmness." Beloved brothers and sisters, Jesus wants you to wax glowing hot during these end-times, to fight a good fight with Satan.

Vs. 17. Many Churches become complacent in having schools and scholars, hospitals, preachers with master's and doctor's degrees. They think that the modern church is better than its predecessors. To Jesus, however, she is wretched and miserable, blind and naked. She is like the foolish virgins carrying lamps without oil.

Of the five foolish virgins, No. 1 is Miss Miserable. Her family is miserable with a bad fortune. She likes to gamble, and she is deceitful in her dealings. No. 2 is Miss Wretched. Though a believer for years, she has no power. Her faith is small. She is short-tempered. Pitiful! No. 3 is Miss Poor. She has neither power of action nor of speech. She can't lead one soul to Christ. She has neither appetite for Bible-reading nor for prayer. Poverty-stricken indeed! No. 4 is Miss Blind. She does not see her sins. She does not understand the Bible doctrines. She has believed the Word, but is not born again. Many are like Miss Blind. No. 5 is Miss Naked. She likes gambling, sex and opium. She breaks the sabbath! She has no sense of shame whatever. These five virgins have lamps but no oil. They are a picture of Church members of the end-times. Jesus says, "Church members of the end-times are hollow Christians, oilless lamps.

They lack three things: --- Vs. 18. 1) Gold tried in the fire. 2) White raiment. 3) Eye-salve. Beloved brothers and sisters, Jesus wants you each one to buy three things: 1) Strong faith, unquenchable faith, gold that is tried in the fire of temptation, and persecution. 2) Purity of heart, spotlessly pure and flaming hot, which is the white raiment. 3) Quest for truth. Truth gives clear vision to the blind. Truth is eye-salve. It is a pity that church members today get all worked up during a revival, but wilt away at the first impact of temptation. If each believer will buy these three things, they have nothing to fear. These three things are "the three bounties" from Jesus, quite different from the "three bounties" of Chinese concept (happiness, longevity and sons).

Vs. 19. Very precious is this verse. Jesus says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent." Though you are zealous. Jesus rebukes and admonishes you, while the Holy Spirit undergirds you. Sometimes we come under God's chastisement and groan, as if so say, God loves us no more. Not at all. Sometimes we meet with business failure, family quarrels, or other troubles. Why? Because we

have been lukewarm, so God must teach us a lesson. So when we meet with troubles, let us wake up. Let us repent.

A certain elder who had cooled off and had committed all kinds of sins got very sick. He asked me to pray for him. But he had no genuine heart to repent. His illness got worse. During my preaching campaign he wouldn't come to listen, but took to smoking opium instead. However, when he saw a 23-year-long paralytic healed of his paralysis, he sought for my prayers again. But he refused to confess his sins. When he "died", they countercharged that his "death" was caused by my prayer. His sons wept bitterly, so I prayed for him again. When his eyes re-opened, I confessed sins on his behalf to the Lord. He could now speak. He said his illness was due to opium-smoking. I told him to repent every whit, for God is Love. Thereafter he confessed 34 big sins in bitter tears, This brought him slowly to recover. Ah, the chastisement of God upon you is to restore your zeal.

Praise the Lord! Man's extremity is God's opportunity When you grow cold, God will use His wonderful ways to make you zealous. Though you don't love God, yet God loves you.

Vs. 20. Beloved brothers and sisters, Jesus is knocking on your heart's door to go in. Why won't you get up to open the door? Though you won't open to let Him in, the Lord will keep on knocking. He will make you miserable and restless

If you persist not to answer, Jesus still calls you with loving, gentle voice. Many after hearing me find their hearts troubling them. Beloved brothers and sisters, this is none other than Jesus knocking on your heart's door. How can you bear not to let Him in? Shut Him outside? Be sure to sweep away all your sins that He may enter in. Won't you be happy? Zealous? Welcome the Lord into your heart. Or would you still keep some residue of sin. If you let Him in when you hear Him calling, then as Jesus has said, He will sup with you at the same table with joy. How happy to have Jesus! What peace!

THEME SONG

I am coming to the cross;

I am poor and weak and blind;

I am counting all but dross;

I shall full salvation find.

I am trusting, Lord, in Thee,

Blessed Lamb of Calvary;

Humbly at Thy cross I bow,

Save me, Jesus, save me now.