The Straight Way = The straight testimony

For biblical reference, see Hebrews chapter 12.

The straight message is given to the Laodicean church that represent the last-day church. Here is the message to the church of Laodicea, from Revelation 3:

"Revelation 3:14–22
To the Church in Laodicea *"And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation. "**I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.** I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent**. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' "*

First let's look at what Ellen White has to say about those who believe they have received all truth and think they have no need for more light:

"*The shaking, and The straight message to the Laodiceans Discernment of Duty, August 7 Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing: and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Revelation 3:17.*

*What is it that constitutes the wretchedness, the nakedness of those who feel rich and increased with goods?—**It is the want of the righteousness of Christ. In their own righteousness they are represented as clothed with filthy rags, and yet in this condition they flatter themselves that they are clothed upon with Christ's righteousness.** Could deception be greater? As is represented by the prophet, **they may be crying, "***

The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we" *(see Jeremiah 7:4), while their hearts are filled with unholy traffic and unrighteous barter.*

The courts of the soul-temple may be the haunt of envy, pride, passion, evil surmising, bitterness, and hollow formalism. ***Christ looks mournfully upon His professed people who feel rich and increased in the knowledge of the truth,*** *and who are yet destitute of the truth in life and character, and unconscious of their destitute condition.* ***In sin and unbelief, they lightly regard the warnings and counsels of His servants, and treat His ambassadors with scorn and contempt,***

while their words of reproof are regarded as idle tales. Discernment seems to have departed, and they have no power to discriminate between the light which God sends them and the darkness that comes from the enemy of their souls.... *When Jesus went away, He intrusted to men His work in all its varied branches, and every true follower of Christ has some work to do for Him, for which he is responsible to his own Master, and that work he is expected to do with fidelity, waiting for command and direction from his Leader.* ***We are the responsible agents of God, and have been invested with the goods of heaven, and we should have an eye single to the glory of Him who has called us.*** *On our part there should be a faithful execution of duty, doing our appointed task to the full measure of our intrusted capability. No living being can do our work for us.* ***We must do our work through a diligent use of the intellect which God has given, gaining in knowledge and efficiency as we make progress in our work.***
—The Review and Herald, August 7, 1894.

"The gold that Jesus would have us buy of him is gold tried in the fire; it is the gold of faith and love, that has no defiling substance mingled with it. The white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the wedding garment which Christ alone can give. The eye-salve is the true spiritual discernment that is so wanting among us, for spiritual things must be spiritually discerned.

To our brethren who are standing in this self-confident, self-satisfied position, who talk and act as if there was no need of more light, we want to say that the Laodicean message is applicable to you. Many professed Christians are without Christ because they refuse to weave his principles of truth into their life. The word of God declares, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." **We should pray earnestly and inquire with sincere hearts as to what the will of the Lord is,** that we may be ready to receive the blessing we so much need.

We must have oil in our vessels with our lamps, and not be like the foolish virgins of the parable whose lamps went out as they slumbered and slept, and who had no oil to replenish them, and so failed to be ready to meet the bridegroom. We should seek for a living experience, and obtain the grace of Christ. We need his love and gentleness; we need our faith revived. **Let no one disregard the counsel of God, but let us all buy of him gold, and white raiment, and plead for the anointing of his Holy Spirit. Jesus desires us to have a personal knowledge of the truth, and we should search the heart carefully, critically, cease to do evil, and learn to do well. Jesus says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent." No one should feel like rebelling, like standing in defiance of God, because he rebukes you on account of your lukewarm condition and spiritual pride.** God condescends to entreat you that he may talk with you, and invites you to open the door of the heart, that he may come in and sup with you, and you with him. He declares, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The Review and Herald

April 1, 1890 *Chapter 50—The Divine Teacher*
Those who are daily learning of Jesus Christ are fitted to take their position as laborers together with God, and whatever their trade or business may be, they may exert their God-given powers after the similitude of Christ's character while He tabernacled in the flesh. The young will carry with them just the influence they received in their home life and school education. God holds teachers responsible for their work as educators. They must learn daily in the school of Christ, in order to uplift the youth who have had a lax training at home, who have not formed studious habits, who have little knowledge of the future immortal life, for which the highest price was paid by the God of heaven in giving His only-begotten Son to live a life of humiliation and die a most shameful death, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." ***God has given us a probation in which we may prepare for the higher school. For this school the youth are to be educated, disciplined, and trained by forming such characters, moral and intellectual, as God will approve.*** *They are to receive a training, not in the customs and amusements and games of this worldly polluted society, but in Christ's lines, a training which will fit them to be colaborers with the heavenly intelligences. But what a farce is that education obtained in literary lines, if it must be stripped from the learner if he is accounted worthy to enter upon that life which measures with the life of God, he himself saved as by fire.*
In the past, education has consisted in laboriously loading the minds of the students with material which cannot be of the least value to them, and which will not be recognized in the higher school.

The teachers of the Jewish nation professed to educate the youth to understand the purity and excellence of the laws of that kingdom which is to stand forever and ever, but they perverted truth and purity. Though they said of themselves, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we," yet they crucified the Originator of all the Jewish economy, Him to whom all their ordinances pointed. They failed to discern the veiled mystery of godliness; Christ Jesus remained veiled to them. *The truth, the life, the heart of all their service, was discarded.* ***They held, and still hold, the mere husks, the shadows, the figures symbolizing the true. A figure for the time appointed, that they might discern the true, became so perverted by their own inventions, that their eyes were blinded.*** *They did not realize that type met antitype in the death of Jesus Christ. The greater their perversion of figures and symbols, the more confused their minds became, so that* ***they could not see the perfect fulfillment of the Jewish economy, instituted and established by Christ, and pointing to Him as the substance. Meats and drinks and divers ordinances were multiplied until ceremonial religion constituted their only worship.***
In His teaching, Christ sought to educate and train the Jews to see the object of that which was to be abolished by the true offering of Himself, the living Sacrifice. "Go ye," said He, "and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice." ***He presented a pure character as of supreme importance.*** *He dispensed with all pomp, demanding that faith that works by love and purifies the soul, as the only qualification required for the kingdom of heaven.* ***He taught that true religion does***

not consist in forms or ceremonies, outward attractions or outward display. *Christ would have taken these to Himself if they had been essential in the formation of a character after the divine similitude. But His citizenship, His divine authority, rested upon His own intrinsic merits. He, the Majesty of heaven, walked the earth, shrouded in the robe of humanity. All His attractions and triumphs were to be revealed in behalf of man, and were to testify to His living connection with God. Christ's prediction regarding* ***the destruction of the temple was a lesson on the purification of religion, <u>by making of none effect forms and ceremonies.</u>*** *He announced Himself greater than the temple, and stood forth proclaiming, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."* ***He was the one in whom all the Jewish ceremony and typical service was to find its fulfillment.*** *He stood forth in the place of the temple; all the offices of the church centered in Himself alone.*
In the past, Christ had been approached through forms and ceremonies, but now He was upon the earth, calling attention directly to Himself, presenting a ***spiritual priesthood,*** *and placing the sinful human agent at the footstool of mercy. "Ask, and it shall be given you," He promised; "seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: ...and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."*

These lessons Christ gave in His teaching, showing that ***the ritual service was passing away, and possessed no virtue.*** *"The hour cometh," He said, "and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.* ***God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."***

Then we have those who are affected by lukewarmness. Though, by all means, they could be affected by both. The straight and narrow way = the path of holiness/righteousness = the sanctification. The way of the cross.

Crucifying the flesh, not to have pride in the flesh, the physical (body), thinking we achieve salvation in the flesh/physical body and physical energies (This is the way of the world and of spiritualism. The way of the pharisees). This is salvation by works of the flesh! Not by the spirit, by grace through faith. **Grace is both pardon for repented sins and SPIRITUAL energy/ power from the spirit of God, not physical energy.** For our innermost, our character, our hearts and minds FIRST and foremost. **The physical, and outer is of a secondary nature and priority. Always number 2, as it is in the category of creation, and of a temporary value (the seen), not what represent Christ and His Law, the law of the new pact**. The law/order from the letter, the outer and physical circumcision, to the law of the spirit and faith, of the heart and mind. Hebrews 8:10.

We also see this in the priority of the two great commandments, where:
1. Love for Creator, God (that sum up the first 4) is referred to as the greatest.

2. Love for creation (that sum up the last 6). See Matthew 22:37.

"*At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."* ***The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.***

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29 for our "God is a consuming fire." **-Hebrews 12:26-29 As we can see it is not works of the flesh. Nor is it the smooth message of cheap/easy grace or salvation. Believing in the sacrifice of Christ as the only requirement for salvation, without walking the walk ourselves and taking up our cross and follow Him, which again is sanctification, is neither in the category of the straight testimony that produces the shaking of the people of God. Rather crucifying our flesh (the spirit and law of the flesh and of the world).** ***"Not Circumcision but the New Creation***

See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!
Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh *are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.* ***13*** *Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that* ***they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. 14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world****.* ***15*** *Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything;* ***what counts is the new creation. 16*** *Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God.* ***17*** *From now on, let no one cause me trouble,* ***for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."*** **Here Paul is speaking of what counts. It is to follow Christ, which is also the way of the cross. This is the sanctification, the path toward holiness/righteousness. Crucifying the flesh and the world. And then he likens it to the sanctification, the way of the cross, as to bear the marks of Jesus. We also receive the mark/seal of God, by walking the path of holiness which is done by grace, which is by the spirit of God through faith. So it is to walk after the law and spirit of Christ. His law written on our hearts and minds. The flag of the sanctification, the seal in this greater seal, is the sabbath because it identify whom we worship, who our master is, the Creator (God) and all the characteristics of God. The heavenly, the spiritual, the inner, the deeper. By the spirit (God), not the physical, the literal and observable (creation).**

" *so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.*" - 2. Cor 5:12 **The sign of Jonah is also connected to those who look for physical, apparent signs, who walk by sight (this characterize the spirit of the world, but also an immature church, an immature Christian, an evil generation), rather than to walk by faith, in the spirit.**

(*for more on the sign of Jonah, read separate article on this blog)* **Ellen G. White states:** ***"God, in His Word, has placed His stamp of condemnation upon the***

heresies of spiritualism as He placed <u>His mark upon Cain</u>. *The godly need not be deceived if they are students of the Scriptures and obedient to follow the plain path marked out for them in the Word of God.*

The boastful spiritualist claims great freedom, and in smooth, flowery language seeks to fascinate and delude unwary souls to choose the ***broad path*** *of pleasure and sinful indulgence, rather than the narrow path and the straight way. Spiritualists call the requirements of God's law bondage, and say those who obey them live a life of slavish fear. With smooth words and fair speeches they boast of their freedom and seek to cover their dangerous heresies with the garments of righteousness. They would make the most revolting crimes be considered as blessings to the race.* ***They open before the sinner a wide door to follow the promptings of the carnal heart, and violate the law of God****—especially the seventh commandment. Those who speak these great swelling words of vanity, and who triumph in their freedom in sin, promise those whom they deceive the enjoyment of freedom in a course of rebellion against the revealed will of God. These deluded souls are themselves in the veriest bondage to Satan and are controlled by his power, and yet promising liberty to those who will dare to follow the same course of sin that they themselves have chosen.*

The Scriptures are indeed fulfilled in this, that the blind are leading the blind. *For by whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. These deluded souls are under the most abject slavery to the will of demons. They have allied themselves to the powers of darkness and have no strength to go contrary to the will of demons. This is their boasted liberty. By Satan are they overcome and brought into bondage, and the great liberty promised to those they deceive is helpless slavery to sin and Satan.*

We are not to attend their circles, neither are our ministers to engage in controversy with them. They are of that class specified whom we should not invite into our houses or bid them Godspeed. We have to compare their teachings with the revealed will of God. We are not to engage in an investigation of spiritualism. God has investigated this for us, and told us definitely that a class would arise in the last days who would deny Christ who has purchased them with His own blood. The character of spiritualists is so plainly described that we need not be deceived by them. If we obey the divine injunction we shall have no sympathy with spiritualists, however smooth and fair may be their words..» Confrontation p. 90-91. ***"To become a disciple of Christ is to deny self and follow Jesus through evil as well as good report****. Few are doing this now. Many prophesy falsely, and the people love to have it so; but what will be done in the end thereof? What will be the decision when their work, with all its results, shall be brought in review before God?*

The Christian life is a warfare. *The apostle Paul speaks of wrestling against principalities and powers as he fought the good fight of faith. Again, he declares, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Ah, no. Today sin is cherished and excused. The sharp sword of the Spirit, the word of God, does not cut to the soul. Has religion changed? Has Satan's enmity to God abated?* ***A religious life once presented difficulties, and demanded self-denial. All is made very easy now. And why is this? The professed people of God have compromised with***

the powers of darkness.

There must be a revival of the strait testimony. The path to Heaven is no smoother now than in the days of our Saviour. All our sins must be put away. *Every darling indulgence that hinders our religious life must be cut off. The right eye or the right hand must be sacrificed, if it cause us to offend. Are we willing to renounce our own wisdom, and to receive the kingdom of Heaven as a little child? Are we willing to part with self-righteousness? Are we willing to give up our chosen worldly associates? Are we willing to sacrifice the approbation of men? The prize of eternal life is of infinite value. Will we put forth efforts and make sacrifices proportionate to the worth of the object to be attained?*" -Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 222.1 **In the following quote. Ellen G. White link the straight testimony directly to the straight and narrrow path:** *"Men who are mixed up, as you are, will not lead others into the narrow path. Just as long as you are unconverted, you will be among the number of whom Christ speaks as being lukewarm, neither cold nor hot.* ***I bear you a straight testimony,*** *because you do not understand yourself. I want you to be saved. You are far from being a perfect man and far from the kingdom of heaven.* ***"Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." [Matthew 7:13, 14.] I want you to walk in the path that leads through the strait gate into the city of God****. I want you to come out of the world and be separate. When you follow where Christ leads the way, you will lead others in safe paths."* - Lt 219, 1905 **The Straight testimony produces a shaking:** ***"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.****I saw that the testimony of the True Witness has not been half heeded. The solemn testimony upon which the destiny of the church hangs has been lightly esteemed, if not entirely disregarded.* ***This testimony must work deep repentance; all who truly receive it will obey it, and be purified."*** - Christian experiences and teachings of Ellen G. White, page 176