

PRIMARY TEXT - Revelation 3:20

REVIEW

Is this a description of Jesus Christ dealing with the unbeliever, or of Jesus Christ dealing with the erring believer?

The right interpretation of this line of Christ's letter to a congregation can be found in comparing it with a line from Christ's apostle's letter to another congregation.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.
12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. 13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

So, I understand the Lord Jesus to mean:

-My heart is open to you; now open your heart to me.

-I am zealous for you; now you be zealous for me.

INTRODUCTION

In studying, I found something in the old commentaries that first I found interesting, then I found very edifying.

Henry: ...though this is not expressly quoted, yet probably it is referred to (Rev_3:20)

JFB: Compare SS 5:4-6, which is plainly alluded to here...The spiritual state of the bride there, between waking and sleeping, slow to open the door to her divine lover, answers to that of the lukewarm Laodicea here.

So, let's look at that passage in Solomon's Song of Songs.

SECONDARY TEXT

Song of Solomon 5:2-8

[wife] I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,
[husband] Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

[wife] 3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? 4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. 5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. 6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer. 7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. 8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

LESSON

Henry:

it is applicable to the too common case both of the churches and particular believers, who by their carelessness and security provoke Christ to withdraw from them

Song of Solomon 5:2-8

[wife] I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,

Trapp: He knocketh and bounceth by the hammer of his Word and by the hand of his Spirit,
{Rev_3:20}

Henry:

She slept, that is, pious affections cooled, she neglected her duty and grew remiss in it, she indulged herself in her ease, was secure and off her watch.

[husband] Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

Geneva:

Declaring the long patience of the Lord toward sinners.

Trapp:

i.e., I have suffered much for thy sake, and waited thy leisure a long while; and must I now go look my lodging? Dost thou thus requite (repulse) thy Lord,

Henry:

Those that by faith are espoused to Christ he looks upon as his sisters, his loves, his doves, and all that is dear

Consider what a grief it is to me to be thus unkindly used, as much as it would be to a tender husband to be kept out of doors by his wife in a rainy stormy night.

[wife] 3 I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

Trapp:

And is that the part and posture of a vigilant Christian? Might it not better have beseemed you to have had your loins girt up, your lamp in your hand, and yourself to have waited for your Lord's return, that when he came and knocked you might have opened unto him immediately?

Henry:

Frivolous excuses are the language of prevailing slothfulness in religion...Those put a great contempt upon Christ that cannot find in their hearts to bear a cold blast for him, or get out of a warm bed.

4 My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. 5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. 6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

Trapp:

that is, he touched mine earthly heart by his Holy Spirit; and notwithstanding my discourteous dealing with him, left a sweet remembrance of himself behind him...the smell of the gospel, and those spiritual blessings which the presence of Christ had left behind it, did notably attract and draw after him the Church's affections.

This was repentance from sin

She sought him by serious and set meditation of the word and promises...the Church here doth after her beloved, in many strong cries and bitter tears, continuing instant in prayer. {Rom_12:12}

Henry:

Sometimes the word has not its effect immediately upon the heart, but it melts it afterwards, upon second thoughts.

7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

Geneva:

These are the false teachers who wound the conscience with their traditions.

Trapp:

And such is that man of sin, that antichrist of Rome, who, for so many hundred years together, hath smitten with the fist of wickedness, hath wounded and drawn blood from Christ's dearest spouse, and despoiled her of her veil; that is, laboured to disprivilege her, and deprive her of that purity and soundness of doctrine that he hath committed unto her, as a means to hold her in the duty of all holy obedience and subjection unto him. {1Co_11:5-6; 1Co_11:10} Of these false friends and deadly enemies the Church here heavily complains

Henry:

They took her for a lewd woman (because she went about the streets at that time of night, when they were walking their rounds), and beat her accordingly. Disconsolate saints are taken for sinners, and are censured and reproached as such. Thus Hannah, when she was praying in the bitterness of her soul, was wounded and smitten by Eli

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

Pray to Christ for me.

Henry:

It is better to be sick of love to Christ than at ease in love to the world.

Trapp:

The Church here, for instance. That she sorrowed after a godly sort appears by those seven signs set down in 2Co_7:11, and here in this chapter exemplified and evidenced. "I sleep"; "there is indignation." But "my heart waketh"; there is "apology," or clearing herself. "I arose to open"; there is "study," or "carelessness," and diligence. "My soul failed when he spake"; there is her "zeal." "I called on him, I sought him"; there is her "vehement desire." "The watchmen found me; they smote me, they unveiled me"; there is her "self-revenge,"