

THE GREAT DELUSION

INTRODUCTION

“Satan looks with great satisfaction upon those who profess the name of Christ, yet closely adhere to the delusions which he himself has originated. His work is still to devise new delusions, and his power and art in this direction continually increase.” — EW 221.

For many years Seventh-day Adventist publications tamed articles by prominent denominational writers declaring that “the church,” meaning the S.D.A. organization—is destined to “go through to the coming of Christ.” A few such statements are quoted here which are representative of all:

“. . .the organized body with headquarters at Washington, D.C., . . .the advent movement. . . God’s movement. . . God is leading today the same people He has led for a century, . . .He will continue to lead them to a glorious climax.” —From the “Forward” of, *THE REMNANT CHURCH*, pages 34 (1950).

“The Laodicean Church is the translation church...I have great consolation and gratitude in remembering that this is the very church that will be translated into the Kingdom of God.” —J.L. McElhany, (President of Gen. Conf.) *RH*, Nov. 30, 1939.

“it is a heartening truth that the Laodicean church is also to be the translated church.” —Nov. 11, 1950.

“When we read that the condition of the laodicean church is deplorable, we are not lightly pass by the matter of little consequence. . . . Will the church repent? Will Laodicea turn to the Lord with a full heart? . . .It is an individual question which each one must settle for himself . . .(but) the case with the Laodicean church, as a church, is different. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The last church will not be spewed out; it will not be rejected; it will go through triumphantly. We have already stated that there is no eighth church. The Laodicean church here brought to view as being in need of everything, is the same church that will gain the victory over every besetment and stand at last on the sea of glass, victorious over even the beast and the image.” —Week of Prayer Reading, *RH*, Nov. 9, 1939. (This erroneous conclusion is the result of a misunderstanding of the Laodicean-Philadelphian question.)

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church will triumph gloriously and will go through triumphantly, as a corporate body, to the sea of glass.” —From the well known book—*The Early and the Latter Rain*—used extensively by S.D.A. ministers and leaders, world-wide, page 183.

THE GREAT DELUSION

WE ARE living in an age of deception. Everywhere we turn we see falsehood and misrepresentation. It enters into business and into social life, and saddest of all, it has come to full fruit in religion. This

is because Satan is a liar from the beginning and the father of it. He has through six thousand years of experience become expert and he plies his art where it can do the most harm to the cause of God. Since he has always had the vast majority of our fallen race on his side he has made his main target the professed people of God.

In every age God has sown His “good seed” of truth into the hearts of men but the enemy has always followed with “tares” of error and deception. This last generation is no exception. Sacred history records repeated instances in which God has established His work, the wondrous plan of salvation, upon pure principles of truth and entrusted it to men, only to have the ones thus honored eventually succumb to Satan’s sophistry, lose sight of their privileges and responsibility, and betray the work into the hands of the enemy by imbibing his errors and insidiously mixing them with truth.

This was the condition of things in the religious world when, a few years prior to 1844, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy God sent a message that was to arouse His professed people to prepare themselves and help others to prepare for the soon coming of Christ. As is well known, the Reformed Protestant churches had become so infiltrated with error that the message from heaven was not recognized nor accepted and the result was that after the great disappointments of 1843 and 1844 the Lord had to start all over again with a handful of honest, earnest seekers after truth who were willing to test all doctrine and practice by the pure word of God.

This company grew quite rapidly and in addition to their being divinely guided in their personal and united search for truth, the priceless gift of the Spirit of prophecy was given for counsel, warning, and instruction in the gigantic task that lay before them of preparing the world for the coming of Jesus. They were entrusted with a vast mine of precious truths and new light was constantly being unfolded to them as they went forward with the sacred work of the Advent movement. The movement was unmistakably ordained of God and was to continue until the culmination of all things in the great second Advent, and the little company who were entrusted with it felt highly but solemnly honored.

True to his former cunning, when the devil saw that this was really the work of God he determined to hinder it in every way possible by putting into operation the strategy that had proved so successful with God’s people in other ages. Consequently, many who had begun so zealously to carry forward the work God had entrusted to them, lost their first love, became careless and indifferent, and as their vital connection with Christ was broken they began to lean toward the world and be influenced by its spirit. In an effort to check this evil trend, God sent as early as 1852 through the Spirit of prophecy, a message of rebuke and warning. This was the first record we have of the giving of the Laodicean message and the results were very disappointing.

By 1863 this company of believers who had had such a rich experience with the light and power of God as it was manifested in the beginning of the Advent movement, had grown until the need was felt of organizing into a corporate body. This corporation became known as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, so named because of its two most distinctive doctrines,—a belief in the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath, and the literal and soon coming of Christ.

But the backslidings continued in spite of the increasing flow of inspired warnings to the church. In

1882 came this startling message through the Spirit of prophecy:

“I have been shown that the spirit of the world is fast leavening the church. You are following the same path as did ancient Israel. There is the same falling away from your holy calling as God’s peculiar people.” 5T 75-6.

EXAMPLES FROM HISTORY

In order fully to appreciate the significance of this statement we should examine the history of ancient Israel and the Jewish Church in the time of Christ. What were some of their outstanding weaknesses and errors that called forth the rebuke and even the retribution of God?

1. Unbelief always stood in the way of their spiritual progress.
2. Insubordination was seen in both leaders and people whenever God sent a message of counsel or reproof.
3. They were always influenced and corrupted by their neighbors—the surrounding nations.
4. Pride and self-righteousness cut them off from receiving and displaying the beautiful character—the righteousness of God and Christ.
5. Last, but not least, was the terrible bigotry and national pride over their spiritual privileges and possessions and their human ancestry.

“The Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights.”—COL 294.

Then the servant of the Lord adds:

“But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.”

The Jewish Church plunged on under their fatal delusion until they could crucify the very Son of God and yet think they were doing a noble deed. They despised and rejected every overture of divine love manifested for their salvation until Christ was forced to declare with mournful tones, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

The Apostolic Church after the death of all the apostles and their associates, fell into a similar deception. They, like the Jews, knew that the founder of their church was God and that the apostles and early leaders had been divinely appointed. They knew that their original doctrines and usages had been given them by divine authority. Resting on this foundation they forgot that the purpose of all doctrine, the object of every ceremony is the fruit of righteousness—the spotless righteousness

of God manifested in the character of the human agent. So, trusting in what the church *had been* they departed farther and farther from the pure Gospel of Christ until a system had evolved that was so corrupt that it had to be designated in prophecy as “the man of sin,”—the papacy. And yet they considered themselves the only true and universal church outside of which there could be no salvation!

Again, at the time the Advent movement had its rise, the Reformed Protestant churches who during the Reformation of the 16th Century had left the darkness of papal error and had begun to walk in the light of Bible truth, had become so stagnated, resting in the glory of their beginnings and the experience and zeal of their founders, that they could reject the very message from heaven and still flatter themselves that they were in the light and were under the favor of God, while He pronounced them “fallen.” So artfully has Satan all through the ages cast his deceptive spell over the professed people of God!

THE CHURCH OF TODAY

The Advent movement had a glorious beginning and we are assured by the Spirit of prophecy that its close will be even more glorious. But what of the church organization that accepted the responsibility of carrying the message of the Second Advent to all the world with all that pertains to a personal preparation for that great event? Is there any guarantee that it would do its entrusted work and remain faithful unto the end? God did not give such assurance even to His own dear Son when He sent Him into the world to take man’s place and accomplish our salvation. He came “at the *risk* of failure and eternal loss.”—DA 49. When in a vision of heaven, Ellen White begged of Jesus to let her stay and eat of the fruit of the glory land, He told her that she must come back to earth again and relate to others what He had shown to her. Then He said, “*If faithful*, you shall both eat of the fruit of the tree of life and drink of the water of the fountain.”—EW 19-20. God knows fallen human nature too well to give anyone an unconditional promise of their salvation or success.

Listen to these solemn words:

“As a people the Jews had failed of fulfilling God’s purpose, and the vineyard was taken from them. The privileges they had abused, the work they had slighted, was entrusted to others.” “The parable of the vineyard applies not alone to the Jewish nation. It has a lesson for us. The church in this generation has been endowed by God with great privileges and blessings, and He expects corresponding returns.”—COL 296.

“Because they failed of fulfilling God’s purpose, the children of Israel were set aside, and God’s call was extended to other peoples. If these too prove unfaithful, will they not in like manner be rejected?”—Id. 304.

“The result of Israel’s sin is before us. Will the church of today take warning?”—Id. 396. (Written in 1900.)

The conditional nature of the appointment of the church is further seen in the following message sent to it in 1903.

“In the balances of the sanctuary the Seventh-day Adventist church is to be weighed. She will be judged by the privileges and advantages that she has had. If her spiritual experience does not correspond to the advantages that Christ, at infinite cost, has bestowed on her, if the blessings conferred have not qualified her to do *the work entrusted to her*, on her will be pronounced the sentence, ‘Found wanting.’ By the light bestowed, the opportunities given, will she be judged.”—8T 247.

A few months earlier the servant of the Lord had borne a similar testimony to the professed people of God:

“Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and *will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent.*’

“I am instructed to say that *these words are applicable to Seventh-day Adventist churches* in their present condition. The love of God has been lost, and this means the absence of love for one another. Self, self, self is cherished, and is striving for the supremacy. How long is this to continue? Unless there is a reconversion, there will soon be such a lack of godliness, that the church will be represented by the barren fig tree. Great light has been given to her. She has had abundant opportunity for bearing much fruit. But selfishness has come in, and God says, ‘*I . . . will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*’

“Jesus looked upon the pretentious, fruitless fig tree, and with mournful reluctance pronounced the words of doom. And under the curse of an offended God, the fig tree withered away. *God help His people to make an application of this lesson while there is still time.*”—RH Feb. 25, 1902.

A pioneer Adventist worker and author explains what is meant by the removing of the candlestick:

“The removal of the candlestick would denote the taking away from the church of the light and privileges of the gospel, and the committing of these advantages to other hands, unless the church should better fulfill the responsibilities of the trust committed to it. It would be the rejection of them by Christ as His representatives, to bear the light of His truth and gospel before the world. This threatening would be just as applicable to individuals as to the church as a body.”—D&R 365.

A similar warning was sounded as early as 1890:

“The church is like the unproductive tree which, receiving the dew and rain and the sunshine, should have produced an abundance of fruit, but on which the Divine Searcher discovers nothing but leaves. Solemn thought for our churches! Solemn, indeed, for every individual! Marvelous is the patience and forbearance of God; but, ‘except thou repent,’ it will be exhausted; the churches and our institutions will go from weakness to weakness, and from cold formality to deadness; while they are saying, ‘I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’”—Mrs. E.G. White, in RH Extra, Dec. 23, 1890 (Reprinted in RH Nov. 7, 1918).

Can any denominational worker or layman point to a time since the foregoing testimonies were given

when the church has truly repented and been revived spiritually and given evidence of the genuineness of the work by a thorough reformation?

None of the statements we have quoted make a very flattering picture. They certainly give no ground for the assumption that the corporate Seventh-day Adventist Church is by divine decree destined to carry the pure Advent message with all that this includes, triumphantly through to the coming of Christ. Then, whence comes the much-publicized and oft-repeated assurance that “the church is going through to the kingdom?”

TWO CLASSES ANALYZED

Let us analyze what is involved in this issue. What will be the attitude and course of those who are led to believe that the denominational organization will continue until the coming of Christ and that God is with the church and leading it and using it and will continue to use it to the end as His only agency on earth for the salvation of souls in spite of any course of apostasy it might pursue?

1. They will be determined to “stay by the ship”—remain a part of the church and loyal to it (the corporate body), regardless of what compromises it might make with principle, what connections with the world, what worldly, policies and practices it might adopt.
2. They will remain silent and throw a cloak over the existing evil to obtain favor, and excuse the wickedness in the church when they should be crying aloud and sparing not. Thus they will forfeit the reception of the seal of God. (5T 209-2 10).
3. They will continue to support the church financially and by their presence and their influence, thus supporting and encouraging apostasy and becoming partakers of it. They will worship the church—above God.
4. They will labor to bring individuals into a backslidden, Laodicean church, being more concerned about their becoming members than their being truly converted to Christ. These new members will become Laodiceans and will be in a worse condition than they were before. (see Matt. 23:15)
5. Like the Catholic Church, the leaders will deny the individual right of conscience and personal responsibility to God and will practice the principle that “the end justifies the means,” and this will be used to discipline or disfellowship members who will not conform.
6. Believing that the church is God’s sole agency on earth and that it can not err, they will accept any error or heresy the church might adopt, rationalizing that it *must* be right and that all objectors must be wrong. They will condone the relinquishing or modifying of any fundamental Advent doctrine that the church might presume to tamper with.
7. They will be bigoted and intolerant toward other Christians who may not be members of the church or who do not agree with them, considering that nothing done outside the church can be of God. Their prejudice will eventually lead them to betray and persecute these.

To what depths of apostasy can Satan lead a church whose members and leaders cherish such a satanic delusion! There are no brakes by which God can check them in their downward plunge to perdition.

On the other hand how will those relate themselves to God and to their fellowmen, who recognize that, although organized under divine guidance, the church *could* stray from God and fall into apostasy like the Jewish church and others, although given a platform of pure and eternal truth at its beginning, it *could* lose sight of this and be led into error by subversive forces infiltrating into its organization and leadership, although having been entrusted with the sacred work of carrying the final message of salvation to the world, it *could* yield to the great beguiler and prove unfaithful and unworthy of the trust and the honor?

1. They will remain loyal to the church and uphold it with their tithes and offerings, their presence and their influence as long as they can exert any influence for truth and righteousness leading toward a genuine revival and reformation. But they will be alert and cautious, looking to God and His word for guidance, not to the church.
2. When they are forbidden to speak or to act any part in the work of the church, when the principles of the Bible and the Spirit of prophecy presented and upheld by them are resisted, refused, and ridiculed by the leaders, when their characters and motives are maligned and denounced before the church locally and generally, and when finally, they are disfellowshipped for carrying out the divine instructions, they will have no alternative but to consider as did the true believers in 1844, that the church is no longer the true church, “the pillar and ground of the truth.” (GC 376)
3. They will realize that salvation is an individual matter, that Christ died for individuals, not for organizations, that if “*any man* hear my voice and open the door,” he may have the living, saving presence of Christ, and be numbered with the “faithful souls” who make up His true church and whose names are registered in the record books in heaven.
4. They will recognize that even though the church as an organized body should fail, this is no reason or excuse for *them* as individuals to fail and lose eternal life. They “draw warmth from others coldness,” and work all the harder for Christ in rescuing souls.
5. They will study carefully the Scriptures and the Spirit of prophecy writings for themselves and by the grace of God, follow these so carefully that they will readily discern any departure of the church from the foundation principles and the guidelines of the Advent movement.
6. As the church departs from the movement, they will stay by the movement and, in obedience to the divine command, they will separate themselves from those who are departing from the faith and giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. They will worship God—not the church.
7. They will then work under God directly, wherever He might indicate,—for the work of God *must* and *will* go on to completion as He takes the closing work into His own hands and

appoints His own chosen agents.

The foregoing analysis enables us to see how impossible it would be for Seventh-day Adventists who have fallen under the great delusion—that the Church is sure to go through—to follow in the advancing light and to fellowship and work in harmony with those who recognize the conditional status of the denominational organization as a carrier of the final message to all the world, and who can see in the present state of the church, the fulfilment of the conditions which prophecy has foretold would bring its rejection as God’s agency on earth for the salvation of souls.

WHY HAS CHRIST NOT COME?

This brings us to one of the most solemn and heart-searching questions that could ever be asked of a Seventh-day Adventist:

Why has not Christ come long before now?

The work of God on earth today has come to a crisis, but the crisis is not with God. He has all power. The crisis is with the church, His professed people. For more than 138 years the church has been telling the world that Christ is coming soon, yet year after year rolls by and still He has not come. The pain and anguish on our planet has steadily increased until the cry of agony that reaches heaven from suffering humanity is moving the great sympathetic heart of God to action. He will not delay much longer. But what of the church that has been responsible for this delay? The leadership of the denomination today deny any responsibility in the matter. A few clear statements from the pen of inspiration should forever settle this question:

“If those who claimed to have a living experience in the things of God, had done their appointed work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would have been warned ere this, and the Lord Jesus would have come in power and great glory.”—RH, Oct. 6, 1896.

“Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people in giving the message of mercy to the world, Christ would have come to the earth, and the saints would ere this have received their welcome to the city of God.”—Aus. Union Record, Oct. 15, 1898. (see also 6T 450, 1900, nearly identical words.)

“The history of ancient Israel is a striking illustration of the past experience of the Advent body. God led His people in the Advent movement, even as He led the children of Israel from Egypt. In the great disappointment their faith was tested as was that of the Hebrews at the Red Sea. Had they still trusted to the guiding hand that had been with them in their past experience, they would have seen of the salvation of God. If all who had labored unitedly in the work in 1844 had received the third angels message and had proclaimed it in the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lord would have wrought mightily thru their efforts. A flood of light would have been shed upon the world. Years ago the inhabitants of the world would have been warned, the closing work completed, and Christ would have come for the redemption of His people.

“It was not the will of God that Israel should wander forty years in the wilderness. He desired to lead

them directly to the land of Canaan, and establish them there a holy, happy people. But they could not enter in because of unbelief! Because of their backslidings and apostasy they perished in the desert, and others were raised up to enter the promised land. *In like manner*, it was not the will of God that the coming of Christ should be so long delayed, and His people should remain so many years in this world of sin and sorrow. But unbelief separated them from God. As they refused to do the work which He had appointed them, others were raised up to do the work.”—GC 457458 (1888).

“For forty years did *unbelief murmuring* and *rebellion* shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The *same sins* have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the *unbelief the worldliness, unconsecration* and *strife* among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years.”—Ms. 4, 1883.

“The lesson of this record is for us. The Lord had prepared the way before His people. They were very near the promised land. A little while and they would have entered Canaan. They themselves had delayed the entering. . . .Had they put their trust in God they could have gone straight in. God would have gone before them. . . .Brethren and sisters, from the light given me I know that if the people of God had *preserved a living connection with Him*, if they had *obeyed His word*, they could today be in the heavenly Canaan.”—Gen. Conf. Bull, March 30, 1903.

Few church members today are sufficiently concerned even to ask the questions as to why Jesus has not come. Some of the older ones and those who are greatly afflicted do long for His appearing, but with the majority, life is going along quite satisfactorily, they have been enjoying themselves with the things of earth and it really doesn’t matter to them. Naturally, those who really are responsible for the delay will fight to the death to prove that they are not responsible. They will use every means in their power—fair or foul—to discredit and destroy the influence of anyone who would dare to involve them. But the time has come for everyone who values his soul to face reality, to search and find out where the trouble lies, and personally to determine under God to act accordingly.

The facts are plainly presented by Inspiration. Christ wanted to come long ago. He sent to the church the very message that would prepare a people—“the remnant”—for His coming. They did not accept nor act upon this message—although there are of late, increasing denials of this fact. Year after year has passed, decade after decade until a generation has arisen in the leadership of the church who are almost wholly ignorant of the 1888 debacle and the reason for the delay in the coming of the Saviour. If faced with the pointed question,—Why has not Christ come?, their answers would be anything else but the correct one,—that the one vital message ordained of God to prepare His people for the latter rain and Christ’s coming has been rejected, withheld, ignored. Everything else has been put in the place of this message. Yet the church boasts that it is “going through!” Could deception be greater? (3T 252-253)

DELUSION MUST BE BROKEN

It is time for this master delusion to be broken. God is at work at this very hour enlightening the earth with a message that will break this spell and set free all who have honestly been deceived but

have cherished a love for the truth. To all others He is sending strong delusions that they might believe a lie. (II Thess. 2:10-12) The angel of Rev. 18 has again come and is entrusting his precious message—rejected for so long—to humble instruments scattered all over the earth who have been praying for light and for a preparation to recognize and receive this light.

It does not take any special prophetic gift today to enable us to see that all of Satan's forces have been turned loose to destroy the earth and everything upon it. And then he would accuse God of being the cause of it all. This makes the soon coming of Christ to rescue His people an absolute necessity. The honor of God's throne is at stake and He intends that there shall be delay no longer.

Although for nearly a century, calls to repentance have come through various heaven-appointed channels to the church, the responsible leadership has refused to accept the rebuke, to acknowledge their backslidings and apostasy, and that of their predecessors in office—as the leaders of Ancient Israel did when seeking for a revival and reformation—and turn wholeheartedly to God with fasting and mourning and humility, as called for in Joel 2, for this very time. They have shut their eyes to the multitude of evils, that have steadily been crowding into the church and have declined to rebuke these sins for fear of losing popularity and reducing the membership. Thus is fulfilled the 4 prophecy of Isa. 2:6-8, and the result is clearly pointed out.

“Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots: Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.”

How true a picture of the church at the present time! It is being filled up with accessions “from the East” (East of Palestine were the heathen) and “the children of strangers” (the unconverted), and because of this and the other abominations mentioned in the text, “Therefore *Thou hast forsaken Thy people, the house of Jacob.*” This is a very much-misunderstood latter-day prophecy (see verse 2) and it is being fulfilled before our eyes today.

God foresaw exactly what the Seventh-day Adventist Church would do. He saw from the very beginning just how it would turn out, just as He foresaw the outcome of the Jewish Church and of Adam's test. But God's foreknowledge never influences Him in His dealings with men—unless it be to cause Him to bestow even more blessings upon those He knows will not come off victorious. (Witness Judas' experience). His foreknowledge in no way makes necessary a certain outcome. The choice is left with the individual or with the church. The Bible and Spirit of prophecy contain many statements showing the condition and pointing out the destiny of the S.D.A. church as a church, but as with all prophecy, God would not reveal these until the conditions should warrant it. One by one these conditions have been reached and God is uncovering the outcome. The prophecy of Isa. 2, already mentioned, is one of these, and there are more. Pointing to the immediate future as of now, the Lord's servant declared:

“The class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God. The Lord commissions his messengers. . . ‘slay utterly old

and young... and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house.’

“Here we see that *the church—the Lord’s sanctuary—was the first to feel the stroke of the wrath of God. The ancient men*, those to whom God had given great light, and who had stood as guardians of the spiritual interests of the people, had betrayed their trust. They had taken the position that we need not look for miracles and the marked manifestation of God’s power as in former days. Times have changed. These words strengthen their unbelief, and they say, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil. He is too merciful to visit his people in judgment. Thus *peace and safety is the cry* from men who will never again lift up their voice like a trumpet to show God’s people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins. *These dumb dogs*, that would not bark, are the ones who feel the just vengeance of an offended God. Men, maidens, and little children, all perish together.”—ST 211.

“At the time when the danger and depression of the church are greatest, the little company who are standing in the light will be sighing and crying for the abominations that are done in the land. But more especially will their prayers arise in behalf of *the church*, because its members are doing after the manner of the world.” “These sighing, crying ones had been holding forth the words of life; they had reproved, counseled, and entreated. Some who had been dishonoring God, repented and humbled their hearts before him. But *the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel; although many still continued the forms of religion, his power and presence were lacking.* (This sighing, and crying for abominations, and reproving, counseling, and entreating is called by the leaders, “criticism” and “accusing of the brethren.”)

“In the time when his wrath shall go forth in judgments, these humble, devoted followers of Christ will be distinguished from the rest of the world by their soul-anguish, which is expressed in lamentation and weeping, reproofs, and warnings. While others try to throw a cloak over the existing evil, and excuse the great wickedness everywhere prevalent, those who have a zeal for God’s honor and a love for souls, will not hold their peace to obtain favor of any. . . .they lament and afflict their souls because *pride, avarice, selfishness, and deception of almost every kind are in the church.* The Spirit of God, which prompts to reproof, is trampled under foot, while the servants of Satan triumph. God is dishonored, the truth made of none effect.”— 5T 209-211.

“The church has turned back from following Christ her Leader, and is steadily retreating toward Egypt. Yet few are alarmed or astonished at their want of spiritual power. Doubt and even disbelief of the testimonies of the Spirit of God, is leavening our churches everywhere. Satan would have it thus. Ministers who preach self instead of Christ would have it thus. The testimonies are unread and unappreciated.”—5T 217. When have conditions improved since 1882 when this was written?

“The church is in the Laodicean state. The presence of God is not in her midst.”—N’B’ Leaf., Ed. No. 6, p. 3. (They even boast of being Laodiceans today).

“Of those who boast of their light, and yet fail to walk in it, Christ says, ‘But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgement, than for you. And thou, Capernaum (Seventh-day Adventists, who have had great light), which art exalted unto heaven (in point of privilege), shalt be brought down to hell.’—(Parentheses by E.G. White) RH Aug. 1, 1893.

LESSON FOR US

“Because they failed of fulfilling God’s purpose, the children of Israel were set aside, and God’s call was extended to *other peoples*. *If these too, prove unfaithful*, will they not in like manner be rejected?”—COL 304.

God warns the church that claims to be Laodicean:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” —Rev. 3:15-16.

Many read into this startling denunciation, an “if.” But there is none. This Laodicean question is so completely misunderstood that the church which boasts of having that name believes and teaches that God will yet save the Laodiceans, and that the “Laodicean church is the translation church.” But the word of God teaches differently:

“Unless divine power is brought into the experience of the people of God, false theories and erroneous ideas will take minds captive, Christ and His righteousness will be dropped out of the experience of many, and their faith will be without power or life. Such will not have a daily living experience of the love of God in the heart; and if they do not zealously repent, they will be among *those who are represented by the Laodiceans, who will be spewed out of the mouth of God.*”—RH, Sept. 3, 1889. (Note that last significant comma.)

“To those who are indifferent at this time Christ’s warning is, ‘Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.’ Rev. 3:16. The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers or your expression of love to God. He cannot endorse your teaching of His word or your spiritual work in any wise. He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you.” —6T 408. (total rejection by Christ as were the Jews)

To understand this subject correctly we must read further:

“He (Christ) told His disciples the story of the ten virgins, by their experience illustrating the experience of the church that shall live just before His second coming. The two classes of watchers represent *the two classes who profess to be waiting for their Lord.*”—COL 406.

“In the parable, all the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. All had lamps and vessels for oil. For a time there was seen no difference between them. So with the church that lives just before Christ’s second coming. All have a knowledge of the Scriptures. All have heard the message of Christ’s near approach, and confidently expect His appearing. But as in the parable, so it is now. A time of waiting intervenes, faith is tried; and when the cry is heard, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.’ *many are unready*. They have no oil in their vessels with their lamps. *They are destitute of the Holy Spirit.*”—Id. 408.

“The class represented by the foolish virgins are not hypocrites. They have a regard for the truth, they advocated the truth, they are attracted to those who believe the truth; but *they have not yielded themselves to the Holy Spirit’s working.*” —Id. 411.

“The state of the Church represented by the foolish Virgins is also spoken of as the Laodicean state.”—RH, Aug. 19, 1890.

Since the word of God (Bible and Spirit of prophecy) designates the Philadelphian church (symbolic of the brotherly-love condition) as the translation church, then the wise virgins must be synonymous with the Philadelphians while the Laodiceans are the foolish virgins who were shut out.

“The ten virgins are watching in the evening of this earth’s history. All claim to be Christians. All have a call, a name, a lamp, and all profess to be doing God’s service. All apparently wait for Christ’s appearing. But five are unready. Five will be found *surprised, dismayed*, outside the banquet hall.” —COL 412.

OUR ONLY HOPE

So, the only hope for a Laodicean is for him individually, to repent and be truly converted. Then he will be a Philadelphian and will no longer boast of being a Laodicean. Further, he will find little satisfaction in trying to fellowship with Laodiceans, and the Laodiceans will find his presence just as undesirable, for it will be a constant rebuke to their sinful lukewarmness and indifference. We must remember that the two conditions represented by the sixth and seventh churches of Rev. 3:7-21 (see also AA 585) are found existing concurrently in the last body of professed believers in the soon coming of Christ (COL 406), until the cry is heard, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him.” This cry is beginning to be heard at this very hour and will continue in everwidening circles and increasing volume.

Since the Seventh-day Adventist Church as a whole—from the pulpit and in their publications—insist on identifying themselves as Laodiceans and refuse to accept the messages that would remedy their hopeless condition, they are sealing their own destiny and pronouncing their own doom.

“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.” “Some will not bear this straight testimony. They will rise up against it.” —EW 270.

The terrible struggle that is brought about in the experience of the individual Laodicean who accepts and heeds this remedial message is portrayed in Early Writings, pages 269-271. Many shrink from this conflict, preferring to take the easier course of self-indulgence and are lost at last.

This work of purification is accomplished for *individuals*, just as Christ lived, died, and intercedes today before the throne of God for individuals. His gracious invitation to us is, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if *any man* hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to *him*, and will sup

with *him*, and *he* with me.” —Rev. 3:20. Whether we consider that Christ is knocking for entrance at the door of the Laodicean church or at the door of the individual soul temple, it is the individual (any man) who must hear His voice and open his own heart for the Savior’s presence—the Holy Spirit.

“The Spirit is poured out upon all who will yield to its promptings, and *casting off all man’s machinery*, his binding rules and cautious methods, they will declare the truth with the might of the Spirit’s power. Multitudes will receive the faith and join the armies of the Lord.” —RH, July 23, 1895.

Since God so values the worth of every soul and all heaven stands ready to spare no effort to rescue every one who desires to be saved, why should the leadership of a denominational organization be so concerned that their human, earthly corporation continue intact and “go through to the coming of Christ?” Do they think that God is dependent upon human wisdom and numbers and wealth and imposing institutions to finish His work of saving souls and gathering the “remnant” for His kingdom? Or are they jealous for the magnificent, smooth-running, machinery that is so conducive to pride and a love for prestige and human approbation, as the Jews were proud of their beautiful temple and would rise up in self-induced horror and fanatical indignation at a word spoken against it? What says the Scripture?—“Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.” —Zech. 4:6.

“Organizations, institutions, unless kept by the power of God, will work under Satan’s dictation to bring men under the control of men; and fraud and guile will bear the semblance of zeal for truth, and for the advancement of the kingdom of God.” —TM 366.

“The world must not be introduced into the church, and married to the church, forming a bond of unity. Through this means the church will become indeed corrupt, and, as stated in Revelation, ‘a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.’ —TM 265. (See Rev. 18:1-5.)

HOW MAY WE KNOW?

In view of the seriousness of the issue at stake and of the shortness of time, the question now arises: How can we know whether the church is walking in the light, has the approval and blessing of God, and is doing the work and filling the place appointed it by God as His agency on earth for the salvation of souls? If the evidence shows this to be true, then every loyal child of God should rally to the standard and put all that he has and is, into the work of the church. If, when tried by the infallible test of the word of God, it is found that the church has united with the world, is partaking of its spirit, has repudiated its pure and holy character as God’s peculiar people, had not accepted the warnings sent to it from heaven and repented of its backslidings and apostacy and in humility made confession, is not rebuking sin and sighing and crying for the abominations done in its midst and in the world, is not following the Scriptures implicitly and accepting and acting upon every principle of the writings of the Spirit of prophecy, is not living and giving the specific message that prepares the world for the coming of the Son of man and for want of which His coming has been delayed lo, these 94 years, if it has not yielded itself wholly to God for the mighty infilling of the Holy Spirit as the believers did in preparation for its outpouring on the day of Pentecost,—then no other conclusion can be drawn than that the church meets every specification of a barren fig tree, a

fruitless vine, a spewed out church whose candlestick has been removed and from whom the vineyard has been taken away and entrusted into other hands. Every true follower of Christ, then, who values his own soul and the souls of his fellowmen should heed the warning that is a part of the light brought by the mighty angel of Rev. 18 whose glory is beginning again to lighten the whole earth as it did in 1888 when he was spurned, rejected, and ridiculed by the majority,—he should hasten to separate himself from the unclean as Lot was hurried out of Sodom before its destruction.

“THE ADVENT MOVEMENT ILLUSTRATED”

Since the Advent movement is still in progress and will continue until the Second Advent of Christ, we would do well to study carefully the illustrations given by Inspiration as recorded in *Early Writings*, pages 240-245, and pages 245-250, which had application at the beginning of this movement and are again being signally fulfilled now at its close. “Past history will be repeated.” —TM 116.

“I saw a number of companies that seemed to be bound together by cords. Many in these companies were in total darkness; their eyes were directed downward to the earth, and there seemed to be no connection between them and Jesus. (“Many, I saw, were flattering themselves that they were good Christians, who have not a single ray of light from Jesus.” —iT 190.) But scattered through these different companies were persons whose countenances looked light, and whose eyes were raised to heaven. Beams of light from Jesus, like rays from the sun, were imparted to them.

“A glorious light then rested down upon these companies, to enlighten all who would receive it. Some of those who were in darkness received the light and rejoiced. Others resisted the light from heaven, saying that it was sent to lead them astray. The light passed away from them, and they were left in darkness. .

I saw those who were in darkness thrusting them with side and with shoulder. Then many who cherished the sacred light, *broke the cords which confined them and stood out separated from those companies*. As they were doing this, men belonging to the different companies and revered by them passed through, some with pleasing words, and others with wrathful looks and threatening gestures, and *fastened the cords which were weakening*. These men were constantly saying, ‘God is with us. We stand in the light. We have the truth.’ I inquired who these men were, and was told that *they were ministers and leading men who had rejected the light themselves, and were unwilling that others should receive it.*” —EW 240-241.

“Those who have not been in the habit of searching the Bible for themselves, or weighing evidence, *have confidence in the leading men and accept the decisions they make*; and thus many will reject the very messages God sends to His people, if these leading brethren do not accept them. . . . Even if all our leading men should refuse light and truth, that door will still remain open. The Lord will raise up men who will give the people the message for this time.” —TM 106-7.

COUNTERFEIT REVIVAL

“I saw that God has honest children among nominal Adventists (Evangelical Adventists in name only, not in character) and the fallen churches, and before the plagues shall be poured out, ministers

and people *will be called out* from these churches and will gladly receive the truth. Satan knows this; and before the loud cry of the third angel is given, he raises an excitement in these religious bodies, that those who have rejected the truth *may think that God is with them*. He hopes to deceive the honest and lead them *to think that God is still working for the churches*. (The “nominal Adventists” are called a “church” and a “religious body,” along with the fallen churches.) But the light will shine, and all who are honest will leave the fallen churches, and take their stand with the remnant.” —EW 261.

“He (Satan) also comes as an angel of light, and spreads his influence over the land by means of false reformations. The churches are elated, and consider that God is working marvelously for them, when *it is the work of another spirit*. The excitement will die away and leave the world and the church in a worse condition than before.” --Id.

This “excitement” and “false reformation” or revival has been sweeping over the land and swelling in all the churches (including SDA) for a length of time now. This tells every enlightened Christian that the loud cry of the third angel is right upon us and that the time has come spoken of in the foregoing prophecy when *God is not with the churches mentioned, nor is He still working for them*.

“Said the angel, ‘. . .Satan has taken full possession of the churches as a body. The sayings and doings of men are dwelt upon instead of the plain, cutting truths of the word of God. The spirit and friendship of the world are at enmity with God. When the truth in its simplicity and strength, as it is in Jesus, is brought to bear against the spirit of the world, it at once awakens the spirit of persecution.’” —Id. 273-274.

“ ‘All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.’ Why is it, then, that persecution seems in a great degree to slumber? The only reason is, that the church has conformed to the world’s standard, and therefore awakens no opposition. . . .Let there be a revival of the faith and power of the early church, and the spirit of persecution will be revived, and the fires of persecution will be rekindled.” —GC 48.

EVIDENCE OF THE GENUINE

The greatest evidence of all that the message of salvation has entered its final phase is that humble, earnest souls in every quarter are simultaneously, under a mighty manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the early rain, being taught the true meaning of justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ and are triumphantly entering into the experience. The fruits of the Spirit are being manifested in their characters. But this is not being done under the direction or influence of the church.

“They had obtained the victory and it called forth from the deepest gratitude, and holy, sacred joy. . . .Evil angels still pressed around them but *could have no power over them*. I heard those clothed with the armor speak forth the truth with great power. It had effect. . . .I asked what had made this great change. An angel answered, ‘It is the latter rain, the refreshing from the presence of the Lord, the loud cry of the third angel.’” —EW 271.

“Clad in the armor of Christ’s righteousness, the church (this is God’s *true* church of “faithful souls,”

the “little company,” the true “remnant”) is to enter upon her conflict.” --PK 725.

“The loud cry of the third angel has already begun (*again*) in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth.” —RH, Nov. 22, 1892.

“THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH.” —1 JOHN 5:4.

(*All emphasis ours unless otherwise stated.*)

THE REFORMATION AND THE ROMAN CHURCH

(Chapter 5 from the book, *Lessons from the Reformation*, by AT. Jones)

“How came The Reformation?

“The Reformation did not and does not consist in exposure and denunciation of the iniquities of the Roman church.

“That is included in The Reformation, as an incident; because it is of the essence of Christianity to hate iniquity, as it is to love righteousness.

“It was the iniquities, enormities, and desolations, wrought by the Roman church, that caused the universal desire and the pressing demand that there should be a reformation. Yet The Reformation was not wrought by magnifying or dwelling upon those things.

“The men whose preaching made The Reformation could have said all that they ever said, and more, in denunciation of the iniquity in the church, and the enormities of the Popes; and yet could have remained in good standing in that church, all their days: *if* they had still held that church to be the only and true church, and have held themselves in conformity with her accordingly.

“All men saw the iniquities practiced. They actually felt them on every side. Nobles, kings, emperors, priests, bishops, cardinals, and councils called for reformation. Even Popes confessed the sore need of it.

“Princes and peoples wanted it for relief. The more observant of the clergy wanted it because of the fear that without it there would be such an universal uprising of the people in wrathful retaliation as would literally wipe out the whole order of the clergy.

“But from whatever cause a reformation was desired, it was always attempted without righteousness, It was from men only, and not from God. And it was in this way from the very men who were essentially the cause of the demand for reform, and were essentially of the thing that must be reformed: that is, the church.

“Inevitably all such attempts must be flat failures. How dismal was the effort—the failure—of the Council of Constance at reformation, when what was considered the best that it could do to save the church,—the burning of Huss and Jerome—was the worst thing that it could possibly do, for any cause or for any reason!

“The explanation of this blank incongruity, and the key of the whole vicious circle of self-involved contradictions, is in the fact that all those men who denounced the Popes and their evil practices, and the extortions and oppressions of the clergy, held that the church of which all these evils were but the expression, was the true and only church!

“Even when they were compelled to admit that the church was inextricably involved in it all, and when they were thus required to reflect even upon the church, this was always done with the reservation and apology that in spite of all this she was the true and only church.

“They denounced the *men* and the activities of the *men*, even of the Popes and the papal court, but still apologized and pleaded for *the machine*.

“They condemned the evil *practices*, but justified *the system* by which alone it was possible that those practices could not only be perpetuated, but could even exist.

“The *times* were evil, but “the church,” which made the times what they were, was “righteous!”

“Church-men were bad; but “the church,” whose members and the expression of whose life those church-men essentially were, was “good!”

“Customs were pernicious; but “the church,” whose the customs essentially were, was “the abode of sanctity!”

“Practices were abominable; but “the church,” which invented *many* and profited by *all* of these practices, was “holy!”

“Popes were demoniac; but “the church,” of which the Popes were “the head”—the acting will, the guiding mind—was “divine!”

“See the grand churches, and magnificent cathedrals! Hear the “heavenly” music of the “divine” chants! Catch the impressive odor of the “holy” incense! Feel the awe of the “solemn” services, as the richly-robed ecclesiastics minister at the “altar,” kneel before the “host,” and move in “holy” procession! Think of the wide extent of her “missions!” Behold her “perfect organization,” by which she executes as by one man the wonders of her will, holds empires in awe, and rules the world! Isn’t that the true and only holy church?

“The church was “the ark of God,” the “ship of Salvation.” The pilot, the captain, and the crew, might all be pirates, and use every motion of the ship only for piratical purposes, and load her to the sinking point with piratical plunder, and keep her ever headed straight toward perdition, yet the grand old ship herself was all right and would come safely to the heavenly port. Therefore, “cling

to the ark," "stand by the old ship," and *you* will be safe and will land at last on the heavenly shore.

..

“So long as this delusion was systematically inculcated, blindly received, and fondly hugged, of course reformation was impossible.

“But as soon as there arose men with the courage of conviction and confidence of truth and spoke out plainly and flatly that the Roman system is not The Church at all in any feature or in any sense, *then* The Reformation had begun.

“That is how The Reformation came. And without that The Reformation never could have come.”

ABBREVIATIONS

COL	Christ’s Object Lessons
RH	The Review and Herald
DA	The Desire of Ages
TM	Testimonies to Ministers
EW	Early Writings
1T, 5T, etc.	Testimonies for the Church
GC	The Great Controversy
D&R	Daniel and Revelation
PK	Prophets and Kings
N.B. Leaf.	Note Book. Leaflets

Ms Manuscript

Gen. Conf. Bul. General Conference Bulletin

Aust. Union Record Australian Union Record

All quotations are from the Spirit of Prophecy writings except D&R, by Uriah Smith and those inside front cover.)

“Thus the message of the third angel will be proclaimed. As the time comes for it to be given with greatest power, the Lord will work through humble instruments, leading the minds of those who consecrate themselves to His service. The laborers will be qualified rather by the unction of His Spirit than by the training of literary institutions. Men of faith and prayer will be constrained to go forth with holy zeal, declaring the words which God gives them. The sins of Babylon will be laid open. . . Thousands upon thousands will listen who have never heard words like these. In amazement they hear the testimony that Babylon is the church, fallen because of her errors and sins, because of her rejection of the truth sent to her from heaven. As the people go to their former teachers with the eager inquiry, Are these things so? The ministers present fables, prophesy smooth things, to soothe their fears, and quiet the awakened conscience. But since many refuse to be satisfied with the mere authority of men, and demand a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ the popular ministry like the Pharisees of old filled with anger as their authority is questioned, wilt denounce the message as of Satan, and stir up the sin loving multitudes to revile and persecute those who proclaim it.”—GC 606-7.

“Who can now feel sure that they are safe in respecting the voice of the General Conference Association? If the people in our churches understood the management of the men who walk in the light of die sparks of their own kindling would they respect their decisions? I answer No, not for a moment I have been shown that the people at large do not know that the heart of the work is being diseased”—E. G. White, Special Instruction to the RH Office in Battle Creek, p. 19, 20 (1896).

“You (the leadership) have no right to manage, unless you manage in God’s order. Are you under the control of God? Do you see your responsibility to Him? . . . That these men should stand in a sacred place to be as the voice of God to the people, as we once believed the General Conference to be,—THAT IS PAST”—E. G. White, Gen. Conf. Bul., 34th Session, Vol. 4, Extra No. 1, April 3,1901, p. 25,Cols. 1&2.

