

THE IMPENDING STORM

The purpose of this article is to explore some troubling developments in the last 75 years.

In 1957, the Review and Herald Publishing Association introduced a book, called *Questions on Doctrine*, as an authoritative book on Seventh-day Adventist doctrine. In place of the author's name on the title page, it says, "Prepared by a Representative Group of Seventh-day Adventist Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors." This book sold out Adventist theology; we are even now reaping the consequences. Only two years later, on January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII announced the Second Vatican Council, also known as Vatican II, which convened in 1962 to 1965; and, according to many, the Catholic Church "forever changed." In February 1967, the Catholic Charismatic Movement (which eventually became "the Catholic Charismatic Renewal") started, resulting in a secret meeting between Catholics and high-level Protestant Charismatics, in 1974, for the purpose of furthering Christian unity.

In a court case in 1975, the president of the General Conference, Neal C. Wilson, under oath, said the "Anti-Catholic" attitude that marks every true Protestant "has now been consigned to the historical trash heap as far as the Seventh-day Adventist Church is concerned." In line with the General Conference president's expressed sentiments, in 1977, Bert Beverly Beach, secretary of the Northern Europe-West Africa Division, gifted Pope Paul VI with a unique gold medal from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1981, unification of Catholics and Charismatics became open, only 7 years after secret unity began. By 1985, there was a steady stream of Charismatic literature, calling for Christian unity. This time line was discovered from an older source and ended at this date. These things occurred before the current writer's time; it is fully possible that some important events will be missed. We will now take a more in-depth look at some of these events and see their effects in our Church today.

Heresies have taken place in our Church since its beginning; in Galatians 5:19-2; heresies are listed as works of the flesh. It should be expected, as we near the close of probation, that more and more will manifest themselves. Heresies help the Church to grow; they cause us to diligently search the Scriptures on our knees, to find the Truth of God. For example the apostasy of Desmond Ford forced the Church leaders to diligently study Dan-

iel to refute the Fordite doctrines. They made the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (DARCOM). This committee has handed down to us a very solid defence of the sanctuary message. What a blessing it has been!

Followers and leaders, in more recent heresies, instead of calling others out of the Church, have chosen to remain inside the Church and take it over. This is also true of the Counter-Reformation (the reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church), which was clearly and openly designed to oppose the effects of the Protestant Reformation, which was largely sparked by Martin Luther's teachings and actions. The work of the Jesuits is to infiltrate a Church and bring them into sympathy with Rome, but not call people out of the Church.

As previously mentioned, many believe that Vatican II changed the Catholic Church forever. Why do they think this? There are a few reasons. Falsehood can easily adapt to meet whoever is willing to compromise. One of the changes that has likely had the most impact on us today was their change in the worship service format.

The bishops at the Second Vatican Council wrote *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, including its introduction. Pope Paul VI announced and publicized the document on December 4, 1963. According to Vatican II, in *Sacrosanctum Concilium, Introduction 1*:

"This sacred council has several aims in view: It desires to impart an ever increasing vigor to the Christian life of the faithful; to adapt more suitably to the needs of our own times those institutions which are subject to change; to foster whatever can promote union among all who believe in Christ; to strengthen whatever can help to call the whole of mankind into the household of the Church."

Through the encouragement of the Jesuits, the Catholic Church sought to impart more life into its services that could change. They looked no further than the Charismatic Movement that emerged from the Pentecostals. The Jesuit, Cardinal Augustine Bea, who, in 1960-1968, was designated first president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian unity by Pope John XXIII, focused on fostering dialogue and unity with other Christian denominations, including Catholicism, primarily through the Second Vatican Council. He saw it as a "fresh infusion of energy into the Vatican effort to achieve unity." True to prophecy, they saw a power in music and emotion-

2 alism that could transcend all barriers of doctrine and language. Catholics looked to Pentecostalism to learn how to get the world to unite with them. There they saw everything that suited them: the confusion of “speaking in tongues”; a charismatic movement promoting love and unity; the false gospel of lovesick sentimentalism; the false charity of muting (compelling or reducing to silence) rebuke; and the music of the world. They saw this could call all mankind into the fold. From this union, the Celebration Churches were born. They recognized the importance of educating Christian laity in this worship layout through their many voices in the education system; and, by 1966, their efforts were highly effective and far-reaching.

What is a Celebration Church? A “Celebration style” church service typically emphasizes joyful expression, lively music, and personal testimonies. It is a focus on community, which often incorporates elements like multiple worship songs; upbeat praise music; spontaneous sharing; and a celebratory atmosphere around the sermon, with the overall goal to create a vibrant and uplifting experience for the congregation. It is essentially a church that convenes (meets, gathers, assembles) not to worship God, but to feel good. They achieve this in several ways; some are appropriate and others are not. We will focus on the inappropriate ways. First and foremost, the music of Babylon is played to encourage an emotional response. This emotional response is seen as experiencing the Holy Spirit. The Alpha of Apostasy, as explained by Ellen White, is believing the Holy Spirit is not a distinct person but a feeling or influence. The sermon must be a positive and uplifting message centered around God’s goodness, often with personal anecdotes (short, interesting, or funny stories about a real person or event) and stories highlighting God’s work in people’s lives. There can be no plain and cutting words because this does not bring “the joy of the Holy Spirit.” The whole service is to foster interactive elements by incorporating (blending in) questions to the congregation, testimonies from members, or short group discussions in order to encourage active participation and contribution from all attendees in the conversation. This includes raising hands, clapping, shouting praise, and other physical expressions of worship during music and prayers. The atmosphere is a casual one with less emphasis on formal attire and a more relaxed setting, to encourage participation. The key characteristics of a Celebration style service are:

High-Energy Music

A strong emphasis on contemporary praise music with a lively tempo (the speed and rhythm of a piece of music being played) and positive lyrics (the words of a song)

Congregational Participation

Encouraging active participation through singing, clapping, raising hands, and sharing testimonies

Positive Focus

A focus on celebrating God’s goodness and the joy of being part of the Christian community

Visual Elements

Using multimedia, like video projections and stage design, to enhance the celebratory atmosphere

Have you, reader, experienced any of this in your church? This is the work of Rome. This atmosphere is incredibly disrespectful to our Almighty God, described as the Judge of all the earth. Do we dare give earthly judges more respect than God? Those who go to court are quiet; they remove their hats; they listen in silence; their phones generally do not enter the courtroom. There is no casual chatting or greetings, no lively music, and no shouting of praises. Why? Out of respect for an earthly judge. God gets very little respect in most of our churches, and the seat of Satan would have it so.

The World Council of Churches held several meetings in 1973; and, in the concluding sentence of the account of one meeting, an amazing change of attitude took place as described in these words: “The participants in the dialogue have become increasingly aware of the growing extent and dimension of the Pentecostal Churches and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal; and they realize that these movements could have profound repercussions on the renewal of the churches and progress towards Christian unity.”

The book, *Baptism and Eucharist: Ecumenical Convergence in Celebration* reveals a two-prong movement. The first prong seeks to demonstrate unity through worship format, specifically the “Celebration” style. The second prong seeks to bring all Churches under the control of Papal Rome, who will regulate all of human life “according to the times.” In this second prong, the Eucharist is also seen as the basis for Christian unity. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1396*, sums it up very effectively:

“Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body—the Church.”

We may gather, from this, that the Pentecostal Charismatic Renewal is the chariot that Rome will use to unite all Churches. Once united, the pope will regulate all human life for the greater good of all mankind in the times in which we live.

The purpose of this movement, as mentioned, is not to unite everyone in one Church. The book, *Unity of the Churches: An Actual Possibility*, written by Heinrich Fries and Karl Rahner, in 1985, reveals much of their plans. Karl Rahner was a very influential Jesuit and is known to have had an influence on Vatican II theology. In the world Church

that the Jesuits envision, each Church will keep its own structure; each will have its own fundamental beliefs, but they will work together in an atmosphere of “reconciled (in friendship and harmony) diversity (variety).” Each ecclesiastical leadership is responsible for maintaining discipline in its own ranks along with the drive to unity with Rome. The Jesuits do not need to control the Church; they only need to influence the thinking of the leadership. This they are seeking to accomplish through their work in the higher learning centers of theology. There was concern that, upon seeing this move toward unity, there would still be a vital element of Protestantism that would rise up in opposition to it. Rahner notes this, but thinks the danger is “overestimated.” He says:

“However, even if one recognizes a significant difference in the parish life between Catholic and Protestant congregations with respect to ecclesiastical leadership, the average congregation in the Protestant churches actually practices the kind of obedience to their Church leaders that is customary in the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, one should not overestimate the danger of a rebellion at the grass roots against their ecclesiastical leaders’ decisions regarding unification. On the basis of their theological expertise and their religious conscience, the representative of this ecclesiastical leadership can decide in favor of church unity, and can also work with sufficient zeal among church members to gain their understanding for this decision.”—*Unity of the Churches: An Actual Possibility*, by Heinrich Fries and Karl Rahner, p. 54.

Rahner thinks the danger is overrated because of the respect held for leadership in Protestant denominations. Thus, it was seen to be far more effective to influence the Church from the top down than the bottom up. The only difficulty would be getting leadership with sufficient zeal and tact that can steer a Church into the desired unity. If this will not work, one could slowly, step by step, change the Church until only “fanatics” would oppose unity with Rome.

What is the “reconciled diversity” that leadership will enforce? “The fundamental truths of Christianity, as they are expressed in the holy Scriptures and in the Apostles’ Creed, are binding on all partner churches of the one Church to be (*Thesis I*, by Heinrich Fries and Karl Rahner). This means partner Churches are not allowed to denounce specific doctrine held by the Catholic Church. Some of these doctrines are indeed the Truth, but others are great errors. Our Church has unfortunately come to possess a similar view of unity. Let us look at the *Church Manual*:

“Safeguarding Unity of the Church—Christians should make every effort to avoid tendencies that would divide them and bring dishonor to their cause. ‘It is the purpose of God that His

children shall blend in unity. Do they not expect to live together in the same heaven?...Those who refuse to work in harmony greatly dishonor God.’—*8 Testimonies*, 240. The church should discourage actions that threaten harmony among its members and should consistently encourage unity. Although all members have equal rights within the church, no individual member or group should start a movement or form an organization or seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the church. Such a course would result in the fostering of a divisive spirit, the fragmenting of the witness of the church, and thus in hindering of the church’s discharge of its obligations to the Lord and the world.”—*2022 SDA Church Manual*, p. 65

No SDA should “seek to encourage a following for the attainment of any objective or for the teaching of any doctrine or message not in harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the church.” We don’t stand on the Bible but on the fundamental beliefs, the creed of the Church. (Creed: a brief authoritative formula of religious belief, a written set of fundamental belief) No matter how closely that creed may parallel the Bible, this is a very troubling statement. Whatever contradicts the creed of the Church is a work of disunity. An offense is anything not in harmony with the changeable fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church; and, according to the manual, “Adherence to, or taking part in a divisive or disloyal movement or organization” calls for discipline. This refers to actively supporting or participating in a group or activity that seeks to undermine the unity, teachings, and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, essentially going against the established doctrines and creating division within the community. Who determines if it is divisive? Who determined Conrad Vine and Ron Kelly were divisive? The Church dominated the conscience during Covid in such a way as to maintain reasonable deniability; any protesters were removed or ignored, and the majority of the Church body defended the action. This section in the *Church Manual* lays bare the battle that is taking place in the Church. Who is above the individual? “Although all members have equal rights within the church,” all must be in “harmony with the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church.” Essentially, you have no right to oppose the Church in matters of conscience; because what the leadership determines as truth is the Truth.

“The Roman Church reserves to the clergy the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics alone are competent to explain God’s word, it is withheld from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scrip-

4 tures to all, yet the selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teachings as interpreted by the church; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established teaching of their church.”—*Great Controversy* 596.

Let us take a moment to explore the Protestantism that shaped our country; it seems that the Jesuits already have. John Courtney Murray was a Jesuit who is known for the key role he played in persuading the assembly of the Catholic bishops to adopt the Council’s ground-breaking Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, during Vatican II. He wrote a book called *We Hold These Truths*. In this book, he attacks the foundation of the U.S. Constitution’s philosophy—specifically, the concept of inalienable rights, a concept from John Locke, supported by people such as Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. The idea of Inalienable rights, also known as natural rights, expresses that all men have rights that cannot be removed from them. These include the right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, and due process. (Due process is the legal process that ensures that the law is applied fairly and that people’s rights are protected in the courts as well. It applies to both civil and criminal cases.) Each of these rights strikes at Roman Catholic natural law. Catholic natural law allows the Church to restrict all of these, including due process, if one does not adhere to its customs and teachings. In his book, Murray calls these inalienable rights selfish; he says America needs Roman Catholic natural law. The great struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism is this: **Will conscience be above the Church or will the Church dominate the conscience?** Our inalienable rights are an expression of vital Protestantism that the Catholic Church seeks to abolish. Catholic philosophy is expressed in the phrase, “Community of faith.” This nice-sounding phrase places the Church before the individual. We are not a community of individuals, but a community of faith. Therefore, the Church takes priority over the individual conscience. This philosophy places the Church above the Word of God. If you do not accept “the fundamental religious objectives and teachings of the Church,” you are in apostasy from the Truth and divisive, worthy of excommunication. Protestant philosophy holds that the Word has priority over the Church, and the Church is in submission to the Word.

Let us not forget that the inquisition was an ef-

fort to impose uniformity and unity in the Church. Brothers and sisters, in the name of unity people were burned and tortured. We must be aware that another spirit is always at work in our church. This spirit also seeks to bring about unity, not through faith but force.

“Now the church is militant. Now we are confronted with a world in darkness, almost wholly given over to idolatry.... But the day is coming when the battle will have been fought, the victory won. The will of God is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven.... All will be a happy, united family, clothed with the garments of praise and thanksgiving—the robe of Christ’s righteousness. All nature, in its surpassing loveliness, will offer to God a tribute of praise and adoration. The world will be bathed in the light of heaven. The light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold greater than it is now. The years will move on in gladness. Over the scene the morning stars will sing together, and the sons of God will shout for joy, while God and Christ will unite in proclaiming, ‘There shall be no more sin, neither shall there be any more death.’ ”—*Child Guidance*, 568.

“A day of great intellectual darkness has been shown to be favorable to the success of the papacy. It will yet be demonstrated that a day of great intellectual light is equally favorable for its success. In past ages, when men were without God’s Word and without the knowledge of the truth, their eyes were blindfolded, and thousands were ensnared, not seeing the net spread for their feet. In this generation there are many whose eyes become dazzled by the glare of human speculations, “science falsely so called”; they discern not the net, and walk into it as readily as if blindfolded. God designed that man’s intellectual powers should be held as a gift from his Maker and should be employed in the service of truth and righteousness; but when pride and ambition are cherished, and men exalt their own theories above the Word of God, then intelligence can accomplish greater harm than ignorance. Thus the false science of the present day, which undermines faith in the Bible, will prove as successful in preparing the way for the acceptance of the papacy, with its pleasing forms, as did the withholding of knowledge in opening the way for its aggrandizement [to increase the power, wealth, prestige] in the Dark Ages.”—*Great Controversy*, 572-573.

Please note that we are specifically warned that false science prepares the way for Rome.

“Rome withheld the Bible from the people and required all men to accept her teachings in its place. It was the work of the Reformation to

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restore to men the Word of God; but is it not too true that in the churches of our time men are taught to rest their faith upon their creed and the teachings of their church rather than on the Scriptures? Said Charles Beecher, speaking of the Protestant churches: "They shrink from any rude word against creeds with the same sensitiveness with which those holy fathers would have shrunk from a rude word against the rising veneration for saints and martyrs which they were fostering... The Protestant evangelical denominations have so tied up one another's hands, and their own, that, between them all, a man cannot become a preacher at all, anywhere, without accepting some book besides the Bible.... There is nothing imaginary in the statement that the creed power is now beginning to prohibit the Bible as really as Rome did, though in a subtler way."—*Great Controversy*, 388-389.

"The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat. This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it must take place."—*2 Selected Messages*, 380.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church organization will not fall. There are faithful men in the leadership of the conferences who are warning and reproving behind closed doors in a spirit of love. Does God not work in His Church? Judas recognized every secret call to him; he felt every tug at His heart that infinite love could devise. God is calling to each and every one of us, not just the leadership.

"All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people."—Romans 10:21. (Gainsaying: Paul uses the term, in this verse, to describe Israel's refusal to accept the truth of God's gospel.)

The night is coming, when God will say:

"Ye have set at nought [nothing] all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of My counsel: they despised all My reproof. Therefore shall they

eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."—Proverbs 1:25-31.

Let us lift up our voices, exposing false doctrine and calling sin by its right name, especially the sin of Sabbath breaking. Let us continue the protest against papal tyranny. Let us be clothed with humility and grace, continually pointing to the Scriptures, which are able to make one wise unto salvation.

"Let every one who is seeking to live a Christian life, remember that the church militant is not the church triumphant. Those who are carnally minded will be found in the church. They are to be pitied more than blamed. The church is not to be judged as sustaining these characters, though they be found within her borders. Should the church expel them, the very ones who found fault with their presence there, would blame the church for sending them adrift [without guidance, support, and security] in the world; they would claim that they were treated unmercifully. It may be that in the church there are those who are cold, proud, haughty, and unchristian; but you need not associate with this class. There are many who are warm-hearted, who are self-denying, self-sacrificing, who would, were it required, lay down their lives to save souls. Jesus saw the bad and the good in church relationship, and said, 'Let both grow together until the harvest' [Matthew 13:30]. None are under the necessity of becoming tares because every plant in the field is not wheat. If the truth were known, these complainers make their accusations in order to quiet a convicted, condemning conscience. Their own course of action is not wholly commendable. Even those who are striving for the mastery over the enemy have sometimes been wrong and done wrong. Evil prevails over good when we do not trust wholly in Christ and abide in Him. Inconsistencies of character will then be manifested that would not be revealed if we preserved the faith that works by love and purifies the soul."—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 294-295.

We have hope. The Bible is not withheld from us, but many members place their trust in the understanding of the leadership. They shirk the soul-searching work; this is how our churches stance has been altered, how these errors have crept in unawares. People are comfortable leaving their salvation in the hands of their leaders. They are walking in the footsteps of ancient Israel, and

6 will just as surely be led to reject the Messiah. Let's be honest; 20 or so of our "28 fundamental beliefs" are written in an ecumenical way. We are like Peter, standing in the outer court, trying to be like everyone else. Let us individually determine to study the testing truths for our time, then share these truths with others. Arm yourselves with knowledge. While the errors that have crept into our Church are discouraging, there is every reason to remain on the ship. There are many Seventh Day adventists that act as if our prophet never said that our Church would appear as about to fall. They say that the Church is a business organization and therefore cannot be God's true Church. What does our prophet say?

"When men arise, claiming to have a message from God, but instead of warring against principalities and powers and the rulers of the darkness of this world, they form a hollow square and turn the weapons of warfare **against the church militant**, be afraid of them. They do not bear the divine credentials. God has not given them any such burden of labor. They would tear down that which God would restore by the Laodicean message. He wounds only that He may heal, not cause to perish. The Lord lays upon no man a message that will discourage and dishearten the church. He reproves, He rebukes, He chastens; but it is only that He may restore and approve at last. How glad my heart was made by the report from the General Conference that many hearts were softened and subdued, that many made humble confessions and cleared away from the door of the heart the rubbish that was keeping the Saviour out. How glad I was to know that many welcomed Jesus in as an abiding guest. How is it that these pamphlets denouncing the Seventh-day Adventist Church as Babylon were scattered abroad everywhere, at the very time when that church was receiving the outpouring of the Spirit of God? How is it that men can be so deceived as to imagine that the loud cry consists in calling the people of God out from the fellowship of a church that is enjoying a season of refreshing? Oh, may these deceived souls come into the current [obsolete: running and flowing like a body of water], and receive the blessing, and be endued with power from on high."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 22-23; *Review and Herald*, October 17, 1893.

"Beware of those who arise with a great burden to denounce the church. The chosen ones who are standing and breasting the storm of opposition from the world, and are uplifting the downtrodden commandments of God to exalt them as holy and honorable, are indeed the light of the world....

"I tell you, my brethren, the Lord has an organized body through whom He will work. There may be more than a score of Judases among them; there may be a rash Peter who will under circumstances of trial deny his Lord. There may

be persons represented by John whom Jesus loved, but he may have a zeal that would destroy men's lives by calling down fire from heaven upon them to revenge an insult to Christ and the truth. But the great Teacher seeks to give lessons of instruction to correct these existing evils. He is doing the same today with His church. He is pointing out their dangers. He is presenting before them the Laodicean message."—*3 Selected Messages*, 17.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church has problems, but do they not preach the commandments of God? Christ is presenting before us the Laodicean Message as the solution to our problems. If the things we hear about leadership cannot be verified or negated, ignore it. Numbers 32:23 tells us: "Be sure your sin will find you out." If people are disobeying, it will be revealed in time. Do not turn your weapons of warfare upon the church militant. The church needs messages of warning and rebuke, but nobody has ever been regained by reproach. Will mortals bite and devour what Jesus is seeking to heal? The message for our time is to build up, not tear down. It is the members of the church militant who remain through the shaking, that become the church triumphant.

"The work is soon to close. The members of the church militant who have proved faithful will become the church triumphant."—*Evangelism*, 707.

"The mighty shaking has commenced and will go on, and all will be shaken out who are not willing to take a bold and unyielding stand for the truth and to sacrifice for God and His cause. The angel said, 'Think ye that any will be compelled [forced] to sacrifice? No, no. It must be a freewill offering. It will take all to buy the field.' I cried to God to spare His people, some of whom were fainting and dying. Then I saw that the judgments of the Almighty were speedily coming, and I begged of the angel to speak in his language to the people. Said he, 'All the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai would not move those who will not be moved by the plain truths of the Word of God, neither would an angel's message awake them.'"—*Early Writings*, 50-51.

I encourage each of you to continue the protest. Do not allow the Church to determine whether or not something is a matter of conscience for you; read and accept your Bible and the light given us through Sister White; obey God, not man; bear the consequences of obedience with joy and grace. Do not listen to those promoting the false charity of silence in the face of sin, but most importantly never receive or promote accusations. Do not destroy what God would heal.

To the Church—with Love, in Love

The solution to our problems is the Laodicean

message. Let's take it verse by verse, to see what

7 God is telling us:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."—Revelation 3:14.

Here Christ identifies Himself as the faithful witness. Proverbs 14:5 tells us: "A faithful witness will not lie." We are in a court case where God, the Judge of all the earth, is determining, through investigation of words and works, whether or not those who have professed the name of Christ are His people. The wheat and the tares, the fish and the unclean sea creatures, the sheep and the goats, those who wear the robe and those who do not; God is sorting His people. Christ is the faithful witness; He either confesses our names before the Father or denies them. He identifies Himself as the Creator (John 1:3).

Revelation 3:15: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot." [In the Bible, "wert" is used in place of the modern "was" or "were."]

Christ identifies us by our works, saying they give evidence that we are neither hot nor cold. Our works demonstrate that we are neither zealous, nor indifferent to God. We are far from the source because we are in our comfort zones. We do not take a position on anything too seriously and do not make sacrifices for the cause of Christ that are uncomfortable. We find Him attractive; we want to be with Him, but we are not committed to Him. If we are overzealous, Christ will temper us with knowledge; if we are indifferent, He will woo us to Him with the Holy Spirit. As it stands, the only thing He can do is wait on us or spit us out.

Revelation 3:16: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth." [Spue: an archaic spelling of spew, meaning to vomit]

The shaking has come, to remove those who will not commit to Christ and make sacrifices. The wedding is soon to be here; and the lukewarm bride who accepts the gifts and attentions of Jesus but looks upon Him "like a brother" or "just a good friend" will be rejected if she will not prepare to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). We have to choose Him to be our Master, our God, and our King.

Revelation 3:17: "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."

The worst part about our condition is that we are convinced that we are not abusing the grace of God. We think of ourselves as righteous; we think we don't have anything we need to repent of. We think that the faithful witness is speaking about the same person that we think is being lukewarm. But this is a delusion, reader; Christ is bearing witness

of you and me.

He calls us wretched because we have not been delivered from our body of death. The carnal nature still rules; we do the things we don't want to do, but don't do the things we want to do (Romans 7:14-24).

He calls us miserable because we are yet in our sins and our hopes of eternal life are vain (1 Corinthians 15:19).

He calls us poor because we do not have faith. We profess to be teachers of the gospel, but we need to have the gospel taught to us. Christ came to set us free from our sins, but we are still in them.

He calls us blind because we have forgotten we were cleansed of our sins. We have forgotten there is a heaven to win and a hell to shun. We have forgotten that we are to grow in faith by climbing the ladder in 2 Peter 1:5-9.

He calls us naked because we have not been sober and vigilant, watching to keep our garments clean (Revelation 16:15).

He says all of this to you, me, and every other member of His Church. And we try, in every way, to excuse ourselves; we try, in every way, to defend ourselves, to justify ourselves. We think we are of the class that this message does not apply to; the message is for those who think they have need of nothing. We are too easily satisfied with what we did yesterday or last week. We look back to our success, but today is the day of salvation—not yesterday. If you will hear His voice today, harden not your hearts. Christ, the faithful witness, will not lie. When was the last time you left your comfort zone for Christ? Yesterday or last week is simply not enough. It must be now; it must be today. Let us not forget Philippians 3:13-15.

Revelation 3:18: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Here we see the deep love that Christ has for us. He wounds to heal instead of leaving us to reap the consequences of our self-satisfaction. He provides us with an opportunity to repent. He offers to sell us faith that has been purified and refined in trial; His righteousness that will cover our shame; and the Holy Spirit; so we can have the spiritual discernment to know good from evil, to recognize sin in every guise, and see our own condition. What does it cost? Jesus says in Luke 16:8 "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." In the time of Joseph the people of Egypt sold themselves to Pharaoh to buy food and preserve their lives. If you will buy gold, white raiment and eyesalve it will only cost self.

"In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him. Hence the Saviour says, 'Whosoever he be of you

that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.' Luke 14:33. Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such entirely."—*Steps to Christ*, 44.

"You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him; your thoughts will be in harmony with Him."—*Steps to Christ*, 47.

"God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by Him who knows what is best and who plans for the good of His creatures. The path of transgression is the path of misery and destruction."—*Steps to Christ*, 46.

"Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith."—*Steps to Christ*, 48.

"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."—*Early Writings*, 270.

"We are too easily satisfied with our attainments. We feel rich and increased with goods and know not that we are 'wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked' [Revelation

3:17]. Now is the time to heed the admonition of the True Witness."—*5 Testimonies*, 214.

"No one need say that his case is hopeless, that he cannot live the life of a Christian. Ample provision is made by the death of Christ for every soul. Jesus is our ever-present help in time of need. Only call upon Him in faith, and He has promised to hear and answer your petitions.

Oh, for a living, active faith! We need it; we must have it, or we shall faint and fail in the day of trial. The darkness that will then rest upon our path must not discourage us or drive us to despair. It is the veil with which God covers His glory when He comes to impart rich blessings. We should know this by our past experience. In that day when God has a controversy with His people, this experience will be a source of comfort and hope."—*Counsels for the Church*, 334.

Those who yield to circumstances rather than engage in stern conflict with self will not know how to stand in the day, when anguish will be upon every soul.

We are living in the antitypical day of atonement, and our cases must soon come in review before God."—*5 Testimonies*, 359; *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1884.

(As each of the ceremonies, furniture, etc., in the earthly sanctuary was a type, we can know that it was a representation of the heavenly Sanctuary that we want to enter, and "antitypical" is the adjective form of the noun "antitype," which is the reality of that thing.)

"We are in the great day of atonement, a time when a man must be afflicting his soul, confessing his sins, humbling his heart before God, and getting ready for the great conflict."—*Counsels to Writers and Editors*, 78.

Our Church has problems, but we as individuals have greater problems. How can we help others if we have not received help? How can we inspire others if we are not inspired? How can we lead others to Christ if we have not found Him? How can we enter heaven if we have not overcome? The solution to these problems is the Laodicean Message. Now is the time to heed the admonition of the True Witness.

For a finished work,



Jonathan Taylor

Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35