

What is the church?

"Paul writes to the Romans, 'if it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men.' But there is a point beyond which it is impossible to maintain union and harmony without the sacrifice of principle. *Separation then becomes an absolute duty.*" *The Signs of the Times*, November 8, 1899

We are to unify, but not on a platform of error. That which has been said in the testimonies in regard to "Living Temple," and its misleading sentiments, is not overdrawn. Some of its theories are misleading, and their influence will be to close the minds of those who receive them against the truth for this time. Men may explain and explain in regard to these theories, nevertheless they are contrary to the truth. **Scriptures are misplaced and misapplied, taken out of their connection and given a wrong application.** Thus those are deceived who have not a vital, personal experience in the truths that have made us as a people what we are. {SpTB02 47.2}

"God has a church. It is not the great cathedral, neither is it the national establishment, neither is it the various denominations; **it is the people who love God and keep His commandments.** "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." **Where Christ is, even among the humble few, this is Christ's church, for the presence of the High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity can alone constitute a church. Where two or three are present who love and obey the commandments of God, Jesus there presides,** let it be in the desolate place of the earth, in the wilderness, in the city, [or] enclosed in prison walls. The glory of God has penetrated the prison walls, flooding with glorious beams of heavenly light the darkest dungeon. His saints may suffer, but their sufferings will, like the apostles' of old, spread their faith and win souls to Christ and glorify His holy name. The bitterest opposition expressed by those who hate God's great moral standard of righteousness should not and will not shake the steadfast soul who trusts fully in God." {17MR 81.4}

"But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines, and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority,-- not one or all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain "Thus saith the Lord" in its support." {GC88 595.1}

There is a little hope in one direction: Take the young men and women, and place them where they will **come as little in contact with our churches as possible,** that the low grade of piety which is current in this day shall not leaven their ideas of what it means to be a Christian. {12MR 333.1}

The Lord hath a controversy with his people, and, although in his great mercy he bear long with them, yet if they persist in living in transgression of his law, they will not stand in the day of his rebuke. He has seen the backsliding and iniquity of his professed people. He has noted the unbelief, the

What is the 'Church'?

hypocrisy, the pride, the selfishness, the disobedience to his law, and he will punish for these things. God cannot be in harmony with the people who will not obey his commandments who are wickedly departing from his precepts and by their example of disobedience at leading their children and their neighbor in the way of transgression. The professed church of Christ is strengthening the hand of sinners in their evil work by making void through their traditions, the commandment of Jehovah. {ST, March 12, 1894 par. 6}

The professed church of Christ has wandered from her privilege, her duty, and her God. Like ancient Israel, she has forsaken the covenant, and joined herself in harmony with the world. Pride, luxury, and pleasure are invited into the sanctuary, and her holy places are defiled. Those who have pledged their allegiance to God, enjoy the company and spirit of his avowed enemies. Their choice determines their character. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth them. {ST, October 4, 1883 par. 22}

Every Yoke to be Broken

I write thus fully, because I have been shown that ministers and people are tempted more and more to trust in finite man for wisdom, and to make flesh their arm. To conference presidents, and men in responsible places, I bear this message: **Break the bands and fetters that have been placed upon God's people.** To you the word is spoken, "Break every yoke." **Unless you cease the work of making man amenable to man, unless you become humble in heart, and yourselves learn the way of the Lord as little children, the Lord will divorce you from His work.** We are to treat one another as brethren, as fellow laborers, as men and women who are, with us, seeking for light and understanding of the way of the Lord, and who are jealous for His glory. {TM 480.3}

God declares, "I will be glorified in My people;" but the self-confident management of men has resulted in putting God aside, and accepting the devisings of men. If you allow this to continue, your faith will soon become extinct. God is in every place, beholding the conduct of the people who profess to represent the principles of His word. He asks that a change be made. He wants His people to be molded and fashioned, not after man's ideas, but after the similitude of God. **I entreat of you to search the Scriptures as you have never yet searched them that you may know the way and will of God.** Oh, that every soul might be impressed with this message, and put away the wrong! {TM 481.1}

"The past fifty years have not dimmed one jot or principle of our faith as we received the great and wonderful evidences that were made certain to us in 1844, after the passing of the time. The languishing souls are to be confirmed and quickened according to His word. And many of the ministers of the gospel and the Lord's physicians will have their languishing souls quickened according to the word. **Not a word is changed or denied. That which the Holy Spirit testified to as truth after the passing of the time, in our great disappointment, is the solid foundation of truth.** Pillars of truth were revealed, and we accepted the foundation principles that have made us what we are--Seventh-day Adventists, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus." {SpTB07 58.1}

"In the future, deception of every kind is to arise, and we want solid ground for our feet. We want solid pillars for the building. **Not one pin is to be removed from that which the Lord has established.** *THE ENEMY WILL BRING IN FALSE THEORIES, SUCH AS THE DOCTRINE THAT THERE IS NO SANCTUARY.* This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith. Where shall we find safety unless it be in the truths that the Lord has been giving for the last fifty years?" -- RH May 25, 1905.

As the end draws near and the work of giving the last warning to the world extends, it becomes more important for those who accept present truth to have a clear understanding of the nature and influence

What is the 'Church'?

of the testimonies, which God in His providence has linked with the work of the third angel's message from its very rise.--5T 654 (1889). {LDE 44.1}

Men may get up scheme after scheme and the enemy will seek to seduce souls from the truth, but **all who believe that the Lord has spoken through Sister White and has given her a message will be safe from the many delusions that will come in these last days.**--3SM 83, 84 (1906). {LDE 44.2}

One thing is certain: **Those Seventh-day Adventists who take their stand under Satan's banner will first give up their faith in the warnings and reproofs contained in the Testimonies of God's Spirit.** {3SM 84.3}

Many will stand in our pulpits with the torch of false prophecy in their hands, kindled from the hellish torch of Satan. If doubts and unbelief are cherished, the faithful ministers will be removed from the people who think they know so much. "If thou hadst known," said Christ, "even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." {TM 409.3}

We have a testing message to give, and I am instructed to say to our people, "Unify, unify." **But we are not to unify with those who are departing from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.** With our hearts sweet and kind and true, we are to go forth to proclaim the message, giving no heed to those who lead away from the truth.--Manuscript 31, 1906. {3SM 412.2}

October 2, 1868, I was shown the state of God's professed people. Many of them were in great darkness, yet seemed to be insensible of their true condition. The sensibilities of a large number seemed to be benumbed in regard to spiritual and eternal things, while their minds seemed all awake to their worldly interests. Many were cherishing idols in their hearts and were practicing iniquity which separated them from God and caused them to be bodies of darkness. I saw but few who stood in the light, having discernment and spirituality to discover these stumbling blocks and remove them out of the way. Men who stand in very responsible positions at the heart of the work are asleep. **Satan has paralyzed them in order that his plans and devices may not be discerned, while he is active to ensnare, deceive, and destroy.**

Like ancient Israel the church has dishonored her God by departing from the light, neglecting her duties, and abusing her high and exalted privilege of being peculiar and holy in character. Her members have violated their covenant to live for God and Him only. They have joined with the selfish and world-loving. Pride, the love of pleasure, and sin have been cherished, and Christ has departed. His Spirit has been quenched in the church. Satan works side by side with professed Christians; yet they are so destitute of spiritual discernment that they do not detect him. They have not the burden of the work. The solemn truths they profess to believe are not a reality to them. They have not genuine faith. Men and women will act out all the faith which they in reality possess. By their fruits ye shall know them. Not their profession, but the fruit they bear, shows the character of the tree. Many have a form of godliness, their names are upon the church records; but they have a spotted record in heaven. The recording angel has faithfully written their deeds. Every selfish act, every wrong word, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling, is faithfully chronicled in the book of records kept by the recording angel. {2T 441.3} date 1868!!

1903; They did NOT change in 1901!

One who sees beneath the surface, who reads the hearts of all men, says of those who have had great light: "They are not afflicted and astonished because of their moral and spiritual condition." **Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their**

What is the 'Church'?

delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not." "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie," because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," "but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Isaiah 66:3, 4; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 10, 12. {8T 249.2}

The heavenly Teacher inquired: **"What stronger delusion can beguile the mind than the pretense that you are building on the right foundation and that God accepts your works, when in reality you are working out many things according to worldly policy and are sinning against Jehovah? Oh, it is a great deception, a fascinating delusion, that takes possession of minds when men who have once known the truth, mistake the form of godliness for the spirit and power thereof; when they suppose that they are rich and increased with goods and in need of nothing, while in reality they are in need of everything." {8T 249.3}**

God has not changed toward His faithful servants who are keeping their garments spotless. But many are crying, "Peace and safety," while sudden destruction is coming upon them. Unless there is thorough repentance, unless men humble their hearts by confession and receive the truth as it is in Jesus, they will never enter heaven. When purification shall take place in our ranks, we shall no longer rest at ease, boasting of being rich and increased with goods, in need of nothing. {8T 250.1}

Who can truthfully say: "Our gold is tried in the fire; our garments are unspotted by the world"? I saw our Instructor pointing to the garments of so-called righteousness. Stripping them off, He laid bare the defilement beneath. Then He said to me: **"Can you not see how they have pretentiously covered up their defilement and rottenness of character? 'How is the faithful city become an harlot!' My Father's house is made a house of merchandise, a place whence the divine presence and glory have departed! For this cause there is weakness, and strength is lacking." {8T 250.2}** (NOTE- this is addressed to SDA church!)

A Call for Reformation

Unless the church, which is now being leavened with her own backsliding, shall repent and be converted, she will eat of the fruit of her own doing, until she shall abhor herself. When she resists the evil and chooses the good, when she seeks God with all humility and reaches her high calling in Christ, standing on the platform of eternal truth and by faith laying hold upon the attainments prepared for her, she will be healed. She will appear in her God-given simplicity and purity, separate from earthly entanglements, showing that the truth has made her free indeed. Then her members will indeed be the chosen of God, His representatives. {8T 250.3}

When men engage in labor for the souls of others, they are not to be made amenable to the will of their fellow-laborers. **God is well able to direct the course of action of those who work for Him.** But when His laborers, instead of calling upon Him, seek first and regard as of first importance the counsel and advice of human minds, He is dishonored. The method of sending one minister to another minister to learn his duty is a plan of working that should not be encouraged. Greater evils will result from such a course than finite and erring man can foresee. {LLM 241.2}

My brother, God lives and reigns. Let your brethren have the right of way to the footstool of Christ. Encourage them to carry their burdens to the Lord, and not to any human being. Never take the responsibility of becoming conscience for another. **As brethren, you can counsel together, and pray together, and seek instruction from the source of all wisdom; but you are not to seek to direct**

What is the 'Church'?

another regarding his duty. Let all work of this character be done away. God forbids that this spirit shall again come into His work while time shall last.

We are to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." No man or woman is to bind himself or herself to serve for a certain number of years under the control of a medical association. This is not God's plan, but a plan of human devising. Human beings belong to the Lord, body, soul, and spirit, and they are to be guided and controlled by him. He has bought us. We are under obligation to be laborers together with him. No one should bind himself to serve for a certain number of years in any institution. {SpM 307.3}

I know that some have thought it advisable for the workers in our sanitariums to sign certain contracts. But I know also that it is not in accordance with God's plan for the workers to sign these contracts. They are pledged to God, and if he moves upon them to take the message to a certain place, shall they be bound by a pledge that hinders them from going? Never, never, We are not contracts to do this or that. **We are to work under our Master, Christ Jesus, looking to him for directions. We are to pray and work and believe, following always the course that he marks out.** {SpM 307.4}

"The Lord is not pleased when men go to men, and yield up their own will and judgment to follow their counsel. When the one giving it has not more wisdom and faith than themselves, it is all a mistake. Erratic movements will be made, according to present appearance, and not according to the mind and will of God. All must stand in God. If there was not another person on the globe but ourselves, we should be Christians, for our own individual present and eternal good. **Life can be pure only when it is under God's control. No man is to rule his fellow men.**" {SpM 61.3}

What is the 'Church'?

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