

Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them, and spent much time in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer. Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul; he lived in the very atmosphere of heaven. {PP 85.4}

The messages given to the churches in Asia, portray the state of things existing in the churches of the religious world today. *The names of the churches are symbolic of the Christian church in different periods of the Christian era*; the number of the churches--seven--indicates completeness and is symbolic of the fact that the messages extend to the end of time, and are enforced today; while the figures used are symbolic of the state of God's professed people,--*the wheat developing among the tares*; truth standing on its own eternal basis in contrast with error. Ms 81, 1900, pp. 17, 18. ("Solomon's Reign," 1900.) {1MR 372.2}

The tares represent a class who are the fruit or embodiment of error, of false principles. "The enemy that sowed them is the devil." Neither God nor His angels ever sowed a seed that would produce a tare. The tares are always sown by Satan, the enemy of God and man. {COL 70.3}

Note: Then the tares are preaching and organizing church functions! Is it safe to listen, participate where ERROR is actively promoted!

The tares and wheat are now commingled, but then the one hand that alone can separate them will give to everyone his true position. Those who have had the light of truth, and heard the warning message, *heard the invitation to the marriage supper--farmer, merchant, lawyer, false shepherds* who have quieted the convictions of the people, unfaithful watchmen who have not sounded the warning or known the time of night--all who have refused obedience to the laws of the kingdom of God, will have *no right therein*. Those who have sought an *excuse to avoid the cross of separation from the world* will, with the world, be taken in the snare. *They mingled with the tares from choice. Like drew to like in transgression.* It is a fearful assimilation. Men choose to stand with the first rebel, who tempted Adam and Eve in Eden to disobey God. The tares multiply themselves, for they sow tares, and they have their part with the root of all sin--the devil. {TM 235.1}

Satan's Vehement Work

The conflict is to wax fiercer and fiercer. Satan will take the field and personate Christ. He will misrepresent, misapply, and pervert everything he possibly can, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Even in our day there have been and will continue to be *entire families* who have once rejoiced in the truth, but who will lose faith because of *calumnies* and *falsehoods* brought to them in regard to those whom they have loved and with *whom* they have had sweet *counsel*. *They opened their hearts to the sowing of tares; the tares sprang up among the wheat; they strengthened; the crop of wheat became less and less; and the precious truth lost its power to them. For a time a false zeal accompanied their new theories, which hardened their hearts against the advocates of truth* as did the Jews against Christ. {TM 411.2}

Under the *zeal of Satan*, some have for a time the appearance of men in a flourishing condition; but it is only for a season. Satan carried them so far that *they do despite* to the Spirit of God. They spread themselves like a green bay tree. The Lord suffers them for a time. He allows them to manifest their envy and hatred against the people of God, as He has allowed Satan to develop his character, that he might stand before the heavenly universe, before the worlds unfallen, and the fallen world, in his true attributes, as a deceiver, an accuser of the brethren, a murderer at heart. {TM 412.1}

It has been truly said, "Show me your company, and I will show you your character." The youth fail to realize how sensibly both their character and their reputation are affected by their choice of associates. One seeks the company of those whose tastes and habits and practices are congenial. He who prefers the society of the ignorant and vicious to that of the wise and good shows that his own character is defective. His tastes and habits may at first be altogether dissimilar to the tastes and habits of those whose company he seeks; but as he mingles with this class, his thoughts and feelings change; he sacrifices right principles and insensibly yet unavoidably sinks to the level of his companions. As a stream always partakes of the property of the soil through which it runs, so the principles and habits of youth invariably become *tinctured with the character of the company in which they mingle*. {AH 456.1}

There are some, who upon accepting erroneous theories, strive to establish them by *collecting from my writings* statements of truth, which they use, separated from their proper connection and perverted by association with error. Thus *seeds* of heresy, springing up and growing rapidly into strong *plants*, are surrounded by many precious *plants* of truth, and in this way a *mighty effort* is made to vindicate the genuineness of the *spurious plants*. {TDG 126.2}

"God has a church upon the *earth* who are His chosen people, who keep His commandments. He is leading, not stray offshoots, not one here and one there, but a people. The truth is a sanctifying power; but the church militant is not the church triumphant. There are tares among the wheat. 'Wilt thou then that we . . . gather them up?' was the question of the servant; but the master answered, 'Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.' *The gospel net draws not only good fish, but bad ones as well, and the Lord only knows who are His*. {TM 61.2}

Christ has plainly taught that those who persist *in open sin must be separated* from the church, but He has not committed to us the work of judging character and motive. He knows our nature too well to entrust this work to us. Should we try to uproot from the church those whom we suppose to be spurious Christians, we should be sure to make mistakes. Often we regard as hopeless subjects the very ones whom Christ is drawing to Himself. Were we to deal with these souls according to our imperfect judgment, it would perhaps extinguish their last hope. Many who think themselves Christians will at last be found wanting. Many will be in heaven who their neighbors supposed would never enter there. Man judges from appearance, but God judges the heart. The tares and the wheat are to grow together until the harvest; and the harvest is the end of probationary time. {COL 71.3}

There is in the Saviour's words another lesson, a lesson of wonderful forbearance and tender

love. As the tares have their roots closely intertwined with those of the good grain, so false brethren in the church may be closely linked with true disciples. The real character of these pretended believers is not fully manifested. ***Were they to be separated from the church,*** others might be caused to stumble, who but for this would have remained steadfast. {COL 72.1}

Even though you may not feel able to speak a word to those who are working on wrong principles, ***leave them. Your withdrawal and silence*** may do more than words. Nehemiah ***refused to associate with those who were untrue to principle,*** and he would not permit his workmen to associate with them. The love and fear of God were his safeguard. He lived and worked as in view of the unseen world. And David said, "I have set the Lord always before me." {RH, May 9, 1899 par. 18}

The time has come when things must be called by their right names. The truth is to triumph gloriously, and those who have long been halting between two opinions must take their stand decidedly for or against the law of God. Some will take up with theories that misinterpret the Word of God, and undermine the foundation of the truth that has been firmly established, point by point, and sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit. ***The old truths are to be revived, in order that the false theories that have been brought in by the enemy may be intelligently met. There can be no unity between truth and error. We can unite with those who have been led into deception only when they are converted.*** {UL 88.2}

Satan holds under his control not a few who pass as friends of the truth, and through them he works against its advancement. ***He employs them to sow tares*** among the people of God. ***Thus when danger was not suspected, great evils have existed among us.*** But while Satan was working with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, ***staunch advocates of truth have stemmed the tide of opposition and held the word uncorrupted amid a deluge of heresies.*** Although the church has at times been weakened through manifold discouragements and the rebellious element they have had to meet, ***still the truth has shone brighter with every conflict.*** The energies of God's people have not been exhausted. The power of His grace has quickened, revived, and ***ennobled the steadfast and the true.*** {4T 594.1}

The tempter often works most successfully through those who are least suspected of being under his control. The possessors of talent and education are admired and honored, as if these qualities could atone for the absence of the fear of God or entitle men to His favor. Talent and culture, considered in themselves, are gifts of God; but when these are made to supply the place of piety, when, instead of bringing the soul nearer to God, they lead away from Him, then they become a curse and a snare. The opinion prevails with many that all which appears like courtesy or refinement must, in some sense, pertain to Christ. Never was there a greater mistake. These qualities should grace the character of every Christian, for they would exert a powerful influence in favor of true religion; but they must be consecrated to God, or they also are a power for evil. Many a man of cultured intellect and pleasant manners, who would not stoop to what is commonly regarded as an immoral act, is but a polished instrument in the hands of Satan. The insidious,

deceptive character of his influence and example renders him a more dangerous enemy to the cause of Christ than are those who are ignorant and uncultured. GC 509