

Discord in the Church:

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Few would deny that we are living in a most solemn time of this world's history. A time of crisis not only in the secular world but also crisis in the Church. The enemy goes about as "a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour".

One of the most effective ways he works is to bring "discord among brethren". The seven deadly sins described in Scripture tells us that: "...six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him". The seventh that seems to be the deadliest is: "he that soweth discord among brethren" Prov 6:16-19. This is the sin seen most frequently in the church.

An example. The current pandemic is an especially fertile field to sow discord. Issues that divide are such as vaccination, specific treatment, masks, quarantine, mandates, etc. There are people that present the notion that if one doesn't believe according to their position, you are not being a "good person". Seminars are held to preach their beliefs. Often, the "Right of Choice" is discouraged, but it is taught that the "experts" should be followed, and they are frequently on opposite sides of the question. So, who can we be believed and how do we choose, when truth can be so elusive?

A search of The Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy (SOP) teaches us how. Here are some thoughts:

1. Do not accuse nor rail against anyone for: "the accuser of the brethren" is the enemy. Rev 12:10
and
Jud 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst **not bring against him a railing accusation**, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.
2. Do not allow any man to think for you
Jer 17:5 Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.
3. Take all your problems to Jesus.
Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.
4. Maintain a humble, teachable attitude.
1Co 8:2 And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know
5. Follow The Law
Gal 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
6. Acknowledge our Creator in all things
Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
7. Have respect for others
Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The SOP presents a wonderful lesson in 5T Chapter 53—Joshua and the Angel. Here are some excerpts. I would urge you to study the entire chapter 5T pages 468-576

There is a “Great Controversy” going on between Christ and Satan, “concerning the redemption of man.” Each person’s soul is at stake. In the prophecy of Zechariah 3, the power of our Mediator is seen at work to vanquish the accuser of His people. Here is seen the vision of Joshua the High Priest. Joshua is viewed as; “clothed with filthy garments”, standing in the presence of Jesus.

In response to Satan’s accusations, Jesus replies, “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?” Please note that The Lord does not deny nor defend the deeds of His people, for “In their penitence and humiliation the compassionate Saviour will not leave His people to the cruel power of the heathen.” Christ response is to give the command “Take away the filthy garments..”

“As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, “Take away the filthy garments from him,” and to Joshua the Angel declares, “Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.” “So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.” His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel were clothed with “change of raiment”—the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The miter placed upon Joshua’s head was such as was worn by the priests and bore the inscription, “Holiness to the Lord,” signifying that, notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary. { 5T 469.2 }

Our attitude should be one of praying for our brothers and sisters even though we may not agree with them. There is the risk of presenting an “air of superiority” when we insist on maintaining our own opinions. We are all weak, defective human beings. Continuing Mrs. White states:

“The fact that the acknowledged people of God are represented as standing before the Lord in filthy garments should lead to humility and deep searching of heart on the part of all who profess His name. Those who are indeed purifying their souls by obeying the truth will have a most humble opinion of themselves. The more closely they view the spotless character of Christ, the stronger will be their desire to be conformed to His image, and the less will they see of purity or holiness in themselves. But while we should realize our sinful condition, we are to rely upon Christ as our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption. We cannot answer the charges of Satan against us. Christ alone can make an effectual plea in our behalf. He is able to silence the accuser with arguments founded not upon our merits, but on His own.” { 5T 471.1 }

We are all brothers and sister in Christ and He has given each one of us a specific task to do for the building up of the church: “Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:” Matt. 13:30 informs us that the wheat and tares will grow until The Lord separates them. But those who accuse and work to tear down the church are serving under the leadership of the enemy. Please note the following words:

“Do not forget that the most dangerous snares which Satan has prepared for the church will come through its own members who do not love God supremely or their neighbor as themselves. Satan is continually striving to wedge himself in between brethren. He seeks to gain control of those who claim to believe the truth, but who are unconverted; and when he can influence these, through their own carnal nature, to unite with him in trying to thwart the purposes of God, then he is exultant.” { 5T 477.1 }

Let us, therefore, follow the admonition of the Apostle Paul:

Rom 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

Rom 6:2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

Rom 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

In conclusion: During this time of intense chaos, conflict, and coercion let us not be divided by Satan's snares but come together in the UNITY of CHRIST.

May our LORD JESUS Christ live in each of us,