

from the nominal churches under the proclamation of the advent message, as well as those from whom they had thus separated, are addressed in the testimony to the fifth and sixth of the seven churches of the Revelation. The admonition to the fifth, the Sardis, church reads, "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." From this language it is evident that the persons thus addressed had heard the proclamation of the Lord's coming. They had professedly received it, but were now about to renounce the same. (J.N. Loughborough, *Great Second Advent Movement*, p 217).

"If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." (Rev 3:3). By watching they could avoid being overtaken as by a thief. It is only to those who are in this condition that the day of the Lord comes unawares. "Ye, brethren," says Paul, "are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." (1 Thess.5:4).

There are few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. (Rev. 3:4). This language would seem to imply a period of unparalleled worldliness in the church. But even in this state of things, there are some whose garments are not defiled, - some who have kept themselves free from this contaminating influence. James says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James1:27).

To the true Christian, the promise is sure that he "shall be clothed in white" and be fed by "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne" and "lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7:17). Being clothed with white raiment is a symbol of exchanging iniquity for righteousness. "Take away the filthy garments from him," is explained by the language that follows, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." (Zech.3:4, 5). The fine linen is "the righteousness of saints." (Rev.19:8).

References

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THE LOUD CRY HERALD MINISTRY
Box 315, Katima Mulilo, Namibia, 9000
Website: www.theloudcryherald.com
Email: josh@theloudcryherald.com

The church of
Sardis

Sardis signifies, "song of joy, or that which remains." The last signification is mentioned in verse 2. "Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain." If we are correct in the application of the first four churches, then Sardis represents the nominal churches for the last half century, or more.

THE CHURCH OF SARDIS

This church has a name that it lives but is dead. Look at the exalted position, and name which the nominal churches have had among the nations of the earth. Look at her high-sounding titles, and the applause she receives from what is called the world. The nominal churches have the name of the churches of Jesus Christ, and have the credit of doing much for the world. But they are dead - dead to the pure principles of the gospel, and to good works, as laid down by Christ and the apostles.

But there are "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments," &c. To this church the message of the coming of the Lord is given, and the cry, Come out of her my people. A few hear, believe and obey. These came out of all the several denominations, and united upon the glorious theme of Jesus' coming, leaving their denominational tenets behind... (*Review and Herald*, vol 8, October 16, 1856, #24, p 189)

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast,

and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." (*Rev. 3:1-6*).

The fifth church is SARDIS meaning a song of joy or that which remains and covers the church history between 1798-1833. We then have before us, as constituting this church, the reformed churches, from the date above named to the great movement which marked another era in the history of the people of God. (*DAR 392.2*).

This church is admonished to be watchful and repent lest the Lord should come and find them unprepared. Some of this church would live during the judgment. The overcomer would have his name retained in the book of life. The great fault found with this church is that it has a name to live, but is dead. And what a high position, in a worldly point of view, has the nominal church occupied during this period! Look at her high-sounding titles, and her favor with the world. But how have pride and popularity grown apace, until spirituality is destroyed, the line of distinction between the church and the world is obliterated, and these different popular bodies are churches of Christ only in name! (*DAR 392.3*).

Church of Sardis. This word signifies prince or song of joy, or that which remains. For the period covered by this church, we come down this

side of the Reformation, and of papal supremacy. By the Sardis church is undoubtedly meant, the churches brought out by the great Reformation; and the definition of the name answers well to the condition of the church during this period. What high position has it held? What favor has it had with the world? But how has pride and popularity grown apace until spirituality is almost entirely destroyed.

This church is to hear the proclamation of the second coming of Christ in all its power; for the true witness says, "If thou shalt not watch I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." The coming here brought to view is unconditional. By watching they would be prepared for it; and by not watching they would be overtaken as by a thief by this event. This proclamation they have heard in the great Advent movement of the present generation.

In the 5th verse we have some solemn facts stated in regard to the book of life. He that overcometh will not have his name blotted out; and this implies that all those who do not overcome will have their names blotted out from the book of life. This work of blotting out, as we have seen in our investigation of the sanctuary, takes place at the close of Christ's priestly work in Heaven.

There will be at the conclusion of that work but two classes: one class having their names retained in the Lamb's book of life, and their sins blotted out of the book of God's remembrance; the other having their names blotted from the book of life and their sins retained to appear against them in the Judgement. (*Uriah Smith, Biblical Institute, p 248-249*).

The people who had separated themselves