



ways, but the inner strength, the love, which is the full motivation for all deeds - it has become weak. The text suggests that the traditional teaching is no longer being properly observed! Here the problem becomes visible that a deviation from the correct teaching has corresponding consequences! When such a deviation occurs, one is no longer properly supported by the grace of truth and the clear orientation is lost! The adherence to the handed-down truth is therefore in principle not a form of immobility and anxious legalism - although these deficiencies also exist - but the drawing from the sources of truth! This clinging is an inner assurance, given again and again, that the grace of God unfolds in those paths that God himself has given! Outside this path of truth disorder arises!

It is important for me to point out this reality again and again, as the Holy Scriptures do, and especially in these days when some Christians do not consider teaching to be so important anymore, taking it only as a general orientation, but no longer considering it binding. They are very much in error, because in time this will also have an effect on the whole Christian life, because the light of right doctrine will illuminate the mind less and less, and deviations or even errors will become easily accessible. Deviations or errors, however, have a negative effect in the long run, because instead of divine light, human considerations, worldly thinking or even demonic delusion can dominate.

The call to repentance to the church of Sardis is logically connected with the admonition to hold on to the teaching! Also in Sardis there is the "Holy Remnant" - those who have remained faithful and thus remain recorded in the Book of Life! They must have given the full confession and testimony for Christ, because for them it is said: *"I shall not blot that name out of the book of life, but acknowledge it in the presence of my Father and his angels."*

Together with the seriousness of the admonition, the reference to the way of healing and overcoming is given - it is the way God deals with us! It is clearly said what does not correspond to His will, and just as clearly how one can return to this will! Also the consequences are mentioned if the conversion does not take place! Those who do not make an effort to live in all truth will become blind to the coming of the Lord, they will not notice the hour that is approaching, they will be unprepared (*cf. Mt 25:11-13*)!

Even more far-reaching is the admonition to Laodicea! If one follows certain interpretations, then the description of the seven churches in Asia Minor can also be like different types of communities in the Church! If we follow this trail, then we would be dealing with a community with material prosperity, but poor in its

spiritual strength! But she does not even notice this state of affairs, for it is precisely this wealth that gives her a kind of security that is an illusion! Perhaps such a community is even given an influence on other communities through its wealth, and therefore takes a position that it does not deserve! Spiritually speaking, however, she belongs to those who are far from God! This corresponds to the state of lukewarmness: there are no clear contours, no real fire, a bending according to the current of the time, an inability to swim against the current! The state of lukewarmness is spiritually a miserable and very worrying state!

It is striking that the Lord does not mention any good deeds in this church to which one should return! He calls for urgent repentance and a complete turning to him! He will only be able to bring this church back to life if it perceives its riches in God, if it sees with His eyes - in the anointing of the Holy Spirit - and does not remain blind because it has taken over the vision of the world. It must wash the baptismal robe in the blood of the Lamb (*cf. Rev 7:14b*) and thus renew its garment of grace!

The conversion to God is urgent and no time must be lost! Even the church in Laodicea, whose condition is so worrying, is offered a way by God! “*so repent in real earnest*” the Lord says! The invitation is present, but it must not be missed!