

A LOOK



AT

THE ORIGIN and THE FRUIT



OF

W. S. GOODNIGHT'S

REVELATION

TEACHING

By Harlan Sorrell

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**“Study to shew thyself
approved unto God, a
workman that needeth not
to be ashamed, rightly
dividing the word of truth.”**

2 Timothy 2:15

Preface

Ninety-two years have come and gone since W. S. Goodnight introduced Church of God people to a new concept of interpreting the book of Revelation based on a theory of **seven church ages**. Goodnight's concept (one he evidently borrowed and modified) proclaimed that a seventh and final "church age," was ushered in by the opening of the seventh seal of the book of Revelation and the sounding of the seventh trumpet. He believed that a "silence" had come over the Church of God (Evening Light Reformation) movement of 1880 because of compromises that had been made by many of the leaders and that this supposed silence (which he believed was signified at the opening of the seventh seal – Rev. 8:1) needed to be broken by the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15-19). He fixed the beginning of this supposed final age for the church, the opening of the seventh seal and sounding of the seventh trumpet, as starting about the year 1930. This supposed final age was to last until about the year 1980 and end with the second coming of Christ and the final judgment, according to his interpretations. A "second gathering" of God's people was supposed to take place during this 50-year period of so-called "preliminary judgment." Various modifications were made to the ideology during the 50 years that followed 1930, but events did not come to pass as the proponents prophesied.

The year 1980 came and went and the end of the supposed seventh and final church age did not come as the original propagators of this teaching had assumed it would. However, another man came on the scene in the year 1980 by the name of Daniel Wilburn Layne, a converted drug addict from California. Layne became very attracted to Goodnight's teachings regarding the prophecies of Revelation. Between 1980 and 1989, he adopted them for his own with further modifications and began teaching that the date for the opening of the seventh and final church age was **1980** (the year of his conversion) **instead of 1930**. He applied Goodnight's seventh seal/seventh trumpet message to his personal ministry and agenda and, in the year 1989, he launched his own new movement. He then, with the followers he had gathered, began to proclaim they were breaking the supposed "silence" of the seventh seal and sounding the seventh and last trumpet!

This book is divided into two parts. **Part One** focuses on the origin and introduction of the concept of **seven church ages** and what I believe was wrong with the doctrine from its very inception. Fallacies relating to it are cited and explanations of the prophecies in question are given as I understand them and as they were originally taught before the theory of **seven church ages** was introduced to Church of God people through W. S. Goodnight's teachings. **Part Two** focuses on my personal acquaintance with and memories of Daniel Wilburn Layne and how he came to adopt Goodnight's Revelation teachings and apply them to his own agenda. It is my prayer that the facts I have shared in this book will be enlightening to honest seekers for the truth. Complete honesty of heart as well as humbleness and openness of mind will allow the Holy Spirit to enable the reader to discern truth from error as all prejudices are laid aside. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." Psalm 25:9.

– THE AUTHOR
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INTRODUCTION

This book may be considered a follow-up of my book, “Windows to the Past and Warnings for the Present.” As is brought to view in that book, when the Gospel Trumpet publishers of Anderson, Indiana, conceded to the innovations of 1910 to 1920, the changes they made in doctrinal stance and teaching during those years was generally accepted as “new light.” It was thought to be a move toward “progress.” But few comprehended just how far that “progress” would go! This book reveals another chapter of church history. Any progression that is not led by Jesus Christ, the Captain of the Lord’s host, is bound to end in disaster! It only takes the sowing of one corrupt seed to produce a bountiful harvest of “corruption!” The result can never be known until the seed germinates, grows, and brings forth its fruit.

Before the end of the following decade of the 1920’s, many were becoming alarmed at just how far they had “progressed” into worldly conformity. Although they had accepted and approved the initial changes, they did not feel comfortable with the ever-progressing trend toward worldliness and the likeness of the denominational world around them. Among them was W. S. Goodnight. He came up with what, to his mind, seemed a solution to the problem. But was it?

I would here like to quote a few words from the late Church of God minister, Clifford Wilson. This quote is taken from a message he preached at the Monark Springs, Missouri camp meeting on July 24, 1984.

“The church of God is here, it’s been here, and it’s going to be here. Some of these days, He’s coming after what’s left of it here and [will] gather it to Himself. We can be in that number! That’s what I’m interested in ... I want to make it to Heaven! ... That’s where I started – that’s what I had in mind. I want everyone else to go that possibly can, and that will. I’m willing to do everything I can to be an assistance in that direction. **Fix this in your mind: the church of God is not going to change. People may change, individuals may change, but the church of God is going on the same.**

“(Matt. 7:15-20.) Jesus gave some counsel to His disciples. He said, ‘beware!’ That’s enough to put us on the alert already, isn’t it? If the Son of God gives us that admonition, I need to take that into consideration. ‘Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep’s clothing.’ Notice the description now! ‘But inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.’

“You’re dealing with black and whites now. ... A good tree will bring good fruit; a corrupt tree will bring corrupt fruit! There is no intermixing or intermingling between the two, according to this instruction. ‘A good tree **CANNOT** bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.’ ...

“Let’s look at this text – let’s analyze it. ... First of all, what is a ‘prophet?’ The first thing that associates in your mind is religion, isn’t it? Why sure! A ‘prophet’ is a Bible term, and the Bible has to do with religion. And so, a prophet has to do with religion; a false prophet will have to do with false religion. That’s a reasonable deduction, isn’t it? **But that’s not the only definition there is of a prophet!** Let’s not straitjacket the English language. Another definition, another application of a prophet, is ‘**an effective or leading spokesman for a cause, a doctrine, or a group.**’ It doesn’t necessarily have to have anything to do with religion. A leader, a spokesperson, can be the prophet of that particular presentation, whatever it happens to be. This can run into lots of avenues!

“I remember a time when I was a young man, a good many years ago (I wasn’t saved at the time) working with the extension service in the state of Iowa, for the agricultural extension service, and the extension dairyman from over at the state college came out ... to give us the usual pep talk that they do in business meetings. ... I thought we were there dealing with the dairy business, and we were, but one of the statements that he made shocked me! ... He said, ‘One of our jobs is to preach the doctrine of better dairying.’ And I thought, ‘Well, he’s got this all mixed up!’ No, he was simply propagating the thing that he was interested in – then he became its ‘prophet!’ Do you see what I’m talking about? He is a spokesman for it! Then he could be designated, according to the dictionary, ‘the prophet of better dairying.’ That puts a whole new dimension on it, doesn’t it? There are prophets of government – political issues. These things surround us all the time, don’t they?

“Now listen to what He [Jesus] said: ‘**Beware of false prophets!**’ We automatically have involved here now a degree of dishonesty – you cannot be false and maintain honesty at the same time. If you have a candidate, a spokesman, or representative who will not present to you the truth consistently, you have a false prophet, propagating whatever it is that he has in mind to promote ... **whatever it is, if there’s a spokesman upholding that, it becomes a doctrine, he becomes its prophet, and any time that he relieves himself of basic honesty in it, he becomes a false prophet.**

“Let’s get ahold of a pattern here now. Jesus said, ‘beware of false prophets’ – **beware of any individual who will come presenting to you intelligence for your consideration any kind of proposition that is not absolutely true!** Anyone who will deal with you in a condition of dishonesty, you better watch him! Be careful where you put your trust!

“Now, He said ‘beware of false prophets’ ... They come along with sheep’s clothing, but on the inside, when they get down to the real motive, when the hard-shell cracks off the front and you really see what it was, here is a thing that if you don’t watch out, it will devour you!

“Do you see a pattern forming here? I can see a pattern forming here. How will I identify them? He said, you’ll know them by what is produced in their doings. I can listen to a theory, and it can sound so good! ... The Lord taught us ... you beware of this very

thing! They will come to you in sheep's clothing ... **you will know them by the results that they produce.**

"Then He gave some logic – some clear-thinking reasoning: 'do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' ... This is clear thinking, isn't it? If these symptoms are here, **if I recognize the fruit, the produce of a corrupt tree, I'm a fool to put my trust in it, am I not?** My own logical mind will tell me different than that. ... Would you expect to go to the thistle bush and gather figs off of there? You'd say, 'why, that's ridiculous!' You see a man pick up his bucket and start to a field full of thistles and you say, 'where are you going?' He says, 'I'm going to get a bucket of figs.' You'd kind of grin, wouldn't you? Why? Because you know that he's not going to find that out there.

"You and I are not going to find righteousness amid crooks and perversions! We're going to find righteousness where men live that kind of lives. Even so, He said, 'every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.' You needn't expect anything else from either one of them. 'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' ...

"Let's look at this and sort of reduce it to a pattern, if we can. If I have unfaithful representation – a false prophet – dishonesty – if it comes to me in harmless appearance – sheep's clothing – just wants to snuggle in and identify, ... and yet, every once in a while, I find a devouring disposition, and along with this combination I begin to detect produced results, I've got a pattern established, haven't I? This is what the Lord was talking to us about. Along with that, He also proclaimed its ultimate destiny! ...

"It's an interesting thing to me that the Savior started out with the thought of 'false prophets,' He dealt with 'sheep,' He dealt with 'wolves,' He dealt with 'fruits,' and ultimately, He got to 'trees!' It seems like a strange combination, doesn't it? He was teaching us something! I want us to look at some trees today. ... We're standing in a forest today! Let's don't fail to see the trees!" (End of quote.)

In this book, we're going to take a close look at a tree in the great forest of religious ideology that has produced numerous branches over the past 90-plus years. According to Jesus, its fruit tells us something about its root. Mark well, "if the root be holy, so are the branches" (Rom. 11:16), but if the branches be not holy, neither is the root!

**“Be not carried about with
divers and strange
doctrines.**

**For it is a good thing that
the heart be established
with grace; not with meats,
which have not profited
them that have been
occupied therein.”**

Hebrews 13:9

PART ONE – A NEW SEED IS SOWN!

Origin of the Seventh Seal/Trumpet Doctrine

Keep in mind that, over the past 200 years, a great many movements and sects have sprung up on the premise of some prophet's speculative interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures. By accepting their interpretations as accurate, the followers of each prophet, or prophetess, have greatly missed the mark and have become both confounded and confused. Some have even lost faith in the Bible altogether! The Millerite movement, which sprang up in the 1840s was a prime example of this. Rest assured that the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15) stands upon no other premise than the solid Rock, Christ Jesus, upon which He built it 2000 years ago. "All other ground is sinking sand!" The church is immortal, unchangeable, and indestructible. Consider the following truths that were penned by H. M. Riggle in his younger years:

"Though great and popular counterfeits of the church have been formed on earth, which are very mutable in all their elements; and though it is also true that the real membership of God's church may increase and decrease in numbers, and during the middle ages they were trodden down, and so worn out by the persecuting powers of darkness, that but few remained on earth to keep alive the holy seed: yea, and though it be also true that the truth itself, and nearly all the doctrine and principles of the church of the living God, were trodden under foot by the adversary and almost entirely hidden out of sight beneath the traditions and inventions of men, yet it still remains true that every doctrinal element of the divine structure is eternal and unchangeable. Many factious bodies have arisen since Christ purchased and founded his holy community, but, "The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things." Jer. 51:19. The fold of Christ is the same thing on earth to-day that she was before the first "molten image" of sectism was evolved from strife and spiritual ignorance. We have seen that God is the builder and maker of the church; and the wise man says, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past." Eccl. 3:14, 15.

"... No power short of the throne of God can change one thing in the divine church. 'Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it. . . . That which hath been [in the church at the beginning] is now; and that which is to be [in the church in all future time and eternity] hath already been [in it from the beginning]; and God requireth that which is past.'

"... The same purity, unity, glory and power and perfect peace that God put in his church, are yet there, though only appropriated by few men on earth. The same miraculous gifts that the Lord set in the body have never been taken out. Gifts of wisdom and knowledge, healing and discerning of spirits, and the gift of casting out devils, these are all yet in the church ... and *awaiting the faith once delivered to the saints to grasp and develop them into use*. There is not one non-essential incorporated into the Word of God, nor yet one element that was to drop out after the death of the apostles, or at any

subsequent time. ... So we repeat that the church as it stood in its primitive glory, and unity exists unchanged to-day.

“... Upon the erroneous supposition that the church Christ built was entirely destroyed, Mormon fiction has built her house. **They argue that the apostasy destroyed the church, hence it became necessary for man to build another; and that under divine inspiration Joseph Smith reestablished the church of God upon earth. But if we can prove that the church of God was never destroyed, but exists to-day, we establish the fact that the Mormons, with all their modern sects, are but human frauds imposed upon the people.**

“In Daniel 2:44 the New Testament church was prophesied of as a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, “which shall never be destroyed: . . . and it shall stand forever. This accords with the language of Jesus in Matthew 16:18: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” These solemn declarations of Heaven’s truth are sufficient to establish the fact that the church Christ built will stand forever. If the gates of hell could not prevail against it, it exists today. **Yes, dear reader, that divine temple exists just as solid, and firm, and shines with as much luster and brilliancy as in days of yore.** Though it has waded through bloody seas of martyrdom, and for centuries has been largely hid from human view under ecclesiastical rubbish of men, yet **IT NEVER WAS DESTROYED. NEVER! ...**

“Let us briefly view the elements which compose this temple. **Christ is its head** (Col. 1:18), **foundation** (1 Cor. 3:11), **door** (John 10:7, 9), **and governor** (Isa. 9:6, 7). **Its walls are salvation.** Isa. 26:1. **Its law, the truth.** Gal. 6:2. **Its bond of union, the love of God.** Col. 2:2. **Its membership, the saved of all nations.** Now then it will be seen at a glance that, to destroy the church, you would have to destroy its foundation (Christ), which the apostle Paul declares “standeth sure”; its head (Christ), who is “alive forevermore”; its door, which “no man can shut”; its law, which “endureth forever”; its walls (salvation); yea, all the people of God who compose it. But **since there never has been a time but what God had a people, and all the above elements are eternal, the church of God is indestructible. Its walls of salvation no man can batter down.**

“But one phase of the church went into apostasy – **the people** – and not all of them. For there were millions who, rather than bow down and acknowledge the ungodly doctrines of popery, sealed their testimony with their blood. **The foundation, head, door, government, unity, purity, etc., of the church never went into apostasy; and in these last days as we come out of apostasy, we simply return to those primitive elements again. We come to the same Zion which Christ established in the beginning. The church of God is a spiritual institution.** 1 Pet. 2:5, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Its door of admission is a spiritual door. Jesus says, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” John 10:9. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” 1 Cor. 12:13. Its foundation is spiritual, “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 3:11.

“That spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” 1 Cor. 10:4. **Thus we cover every specification of the New Testament church and find it wholly divine, spiritual, and eternal.** Therefore, it is utterly impossible for men to build an organization like it, because they cannot manufacture spiritual things. This church is the finest organism the world has ever seen. It is truly worthy of God himself. It is his temple, in which he dwells; therefore, there is nothing so august as this church, seeing it is the temple of God. Nothing so worthy of reverence, seeing God dwells in it. Nothing so ancient, since it existed before all modern religious sects. And, thank God! there is nothing so solid, since Jesus is its only foundation and it is declared to be the pillar and ground of the truth. There is nothing more closely united and indivisible, since all hearts are knit together by the perfect love of God, and Christ is its cornerstone. Nothing more lofty, since it reaches as high as heaven. Nothing so regular and well proportioned, since Christ and the Holy Spirit are the architects. Nothing so beautiful, since it is adorned with Christ’s holiness. Nothing so brilliant, since Christ is its light. Nothing so strong, since salvation is its walls and bulwarks. There is no institution in the world so spacious, since it is spread over the whole world, and takes in all who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. No institution so spiritual, since all its members are living stones, animated and inhabited by the Holy Spirit. No institution so lasting, since it is destined to stand forever. In it the poor, the wretched, and distressed of every nation find shelter. It is the place where God does his marvelous works, where he is to be sought and found, and worshiped. Such is the sanctuary of the New Testament. She is a strong tower, into which we have run and are safe.” (End of quote.)

Psalm 90:1 says, “LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place IN ALL GENERATIONS.” Since the church of God is non-existent outside the Lord, her Maker, and He is eternal and unchangeable, so is His building, the church. Note the words of H. M. Riggle, “**The foundation, head, door, government, unity, purity, etc., of the church never went into apostasy.**” This is so true! When movements change their course, the substance that constitutes the church does not change. Too often, men turn their focus *on people*, or “movements,” and think that has something to do with the direction the church is going, but it doesn’t. The church is a constant! Not realizing this, some suppose there is a need for another movement – another message to steer the church in the right direction or correct the direction the majority of the people are going. This is a great mistake! The real church will be found in the same place she has dwelt IN ALL GENERATIONS – HIDDEN AWAY WITH CHRIST IN GOD! All we have to do is just come to and stay in that “place” and we’ll be found a part of the church of God. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psal. 91:1. Here we enjoy sweet fellowship with all others who abide in this “secret place.” Christian fellowship is not produced by confederation but comes as the natural result of drinking of the same Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13).

“Thus the saved in Christ together dwell in sacred unity
In the secret of His presence – hid away, dear Lord, in Thee.”

In the late 1920s, Walter Sanford Goodnight, a Church of God minister of the Anderson, Indiana fellowship who was concerned about the direction *that movement* was

going at that time, began to study a new method of interpreting the prophecies of the book of Revelation. The objective behind the new method of interpreting prophecy was to promote the idea of a new movement, or a new message for God's people to rally around, and to convince them that this new message had a place in prophetic scriptures. The concepts Mr. Goodnight endorsed did not agree with those taught by F. G. Smith and others who had taught and written regarding the book of Revelation. In his own book, Mr. Goodnight explains that he began to receive this new understanding of interpreting Revelation in the year 1928. By the year 1930, he believed he was ready to teach, preach, and promote this "new light," regarding the Revelation prophecies. He said that, in that year, he went to the North Carolina State Camp Meeting of the Church of God and there presented his new teaching to the brethren and to the church, and it spread from there.

It only takes a little seed to produce a great tree of many branches. The quality of the seed becomes more fully known when the tree grows up and starts producing fruit. This little seed that was sown at the North Carolina State Camp Meeting that year has indeed grown into a tree of many branches bearing various flavors of fruit. Surely, we have not only a right, but a duty before God and to our own souls to scrutinize the fruit it has produced.

Mr. Goodnight says, "In the year A.D. 1930, I wrote and mailed a small booklet, 'Chart Explanation of the Revelation,' to the ministry of the Church of God for their consideration, asking that they might study the line of thought contained therein with me. Some gave the booklet some study and consideration, and through their cooperation and the help of the Lord, deeper thoughts regarding the Revelation have been arrived at. Sixteen months past I conceived an idea of having a hand-painted chart made covering the entire book of the Revelation. This I did, then took the chart to the North Carolina state camp meeting, gave a short explanation of *my line of thought* on the Revelation to the ministry in attendance at the camp meeting, and it was generally accepted as in line with truth. Next, I attended the Virginia state camp meeting, giving the ministry in attendance there the outline in short, which was accepted by them as in line with truth. Since that time, I have been out in the work in a number of states, busy practically all of my time. By the help and cooperation of the ministry I have visited in their congregations, and also by the help of the Lord working with us all, we have been able to arrive at many more truths in line with what we already have had as given from the beginning for consideration, insomuch that in all the places I go I have many calls for my lectures in print. **Some errors have been culled out** and many more truths added."

– W. S. Goodnight, *Chart Explanation of the Revelation*, page 3.

Notice that Mr. Goodnight himself acknowledges that there were "some errors" involved with his "line of thought" from the beginning! If there were some, then does that not suggest the possibility that the entire "line of thought" itself could have been an error? How does he know that what he added is not error as well as what he "culled out?" Time has proven that there were *many more errors* than what he culled, especially the one that proclaimed that the seventh and final age of the church would only last for fifty more years, and that Jesus would return and the world would end around the year 1980! This should put any honest soul on the alert that there was something seriously wrong

with Mr. Goodnight's "line of thought." This is very similar to the error of William Miller, from whose prophetic speculations emerged the Adventist movement in the 1840s! If Mr. Goodnight could miss the mark that far on one line of prophecy, how far off may he be on others? We have legitimate reason to call ALL his prophetic interpretations into question.

Concerning the Millerite movement, Wikipedia says, "Following the Great Disappointment most Millerites simply gave up their beliefs. Some did not and viewpoints and explanations proliferated."

It's amazing how that, once men put their faith in a certain belief structure, they are unwilling to admit that it was built on a wrong premise, or that it came from a corrupt tree, even when time proves various aspects of their beliefs to be wrong. Instead of acknowledging that the premise was wrong, and that it was motivated by a spirit of error, they begin to modify the belief structure and say that God is giving them "new light" or "better understanding." This was what happened in the ranks of "Millerism," and the same thing has happened in the ranks of Goodnight's followers.

On pages 89 – 90 of *Chart Explanation of the Revelation*, Mr. Goodnight says, "The first angel herein mentioned (Rev. 14:6-12) is spoken of as having the everlasting gospel to preach to every nation and kindred and tongue and people and is seen as *another angel*. In chapter 18 an angel came down and the earth was lighted with his glory. Now this one comes with the everlasting gospel. ... The everlasting gospel must mean in the full light of **all the truth. We did not have it in its fullness in the sixth seal age, as in the seventh. So, this angel starts ... beginning with the year 1928 (at this time I began this study), with this line of thought, and will continue to pour out till the end.** People will be receiving this light to the end of the seventh seal, just as they did in the sixth, in regard to the church divine. One may say, 'What light?' The light in full **regarding the Revelation**, and in regard to the true and false powers in combat spiritually throughout the gospel day. Much more light is brought with the seventh seal age."

I would like to ask, what did Mr. Goodnight have to present to the church of God that was BETTER, or more perfect or complete than what the Holy Ghost revealed in what he refers to as "the sixth seal age," or "Evening Light Reformation" era? [Note: we shall show hereafter that his idea of this reformation being "the sixth seal age" was in itself an error!] D. S. Warner wrote in one of his songs, "**The light of the sun is NOW equal to seven [complete]**, so bright is the glory divine!" In his book, *The Church of God – What It Is and Is Not*, he says, "The blood of Christ not only purifies from 'all sin' and 'all unrighteousness,' but **also sweeps away all erroneous doctrines. The Comforter guides into all truth, which involves the removal of all error.**" What error does the Holy Ghost leave to be removed when He brings souls to a state of completeness in Jesus Christ?

Mr. Goodnight would have us to believe it took the opening up of a new "church age," which he calls the "seventh seal" age, beginning with the year 1928, when he began his

study of a new outlook on interpreting the book of Revelation, in order to remove all error and bring the full light of the truth. But why did God's people have to wait until he began this study and proclaim his new line of thought for the Holy Spirit to guide them into "all the truth?" Was the Holy Ghost incompetent in guiding His saints into all the truth without the aid of Mr. Goodnight's studies and writings? And was the Spirit of God incapable of guiding into all truth and removing all error until some man arose to declare the supposed opening of a new "seal?"

One of the saints of what Mr. Goodnight liked to refer to as "the sixth seal age" of the church had this to say:

"I was talking the other day with my uncle about God's Church, as it is in the Bible. He said that it might be so if Christ were here in person to govern it. Why, said I, is it possible, Uncle, that you have been so long a Christian, and yet know so little about the Comforter that Christ sent to take the place of His personal presence? Could Christ, if here in the flesh do more than lead us into all truth and teach us all things, what we should do and say? But all this is just what the Lord promised that the Spirit should do for us. Now if He is not capable of organizing, and governing the Church, and Christ was capable, then it was *not expedient* for us that Christ went away and sent the Comforter in His stead.

"But glory to God, the Holy Spirit, I find, is able to organize me into the body of Christ, keep me from all sin, and so govern me as to bring my whole life into harmony with God, and all others that are under His reign.

"It is the work of the Holy Spirit to unite the saints, but that of the devil, carnality, and human works to divide them into different sect names and interests. Glory to Jesus, for the Comforter, who fully represents the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and is *more* than the personal presence of Christ could be.

Your brother in Christ,

A. C. McCurdy, Churubusko, Indiana,
Published in *The Gospel Trumpet*, August 1, 1883.

This was exactly what caused all the saints of what Mr. Goodnight refers to as "the sixth seal age" to be able to sing with full assurance, "the light of the sun is NOW equal to seven." The presence of God, the Father, and Christ, the Son, in them through the Spirit led and guided them into ALL TRUTH and brought them into natural harmony with all others who were under the Holy Spirit's control. That was why they didn't need to teach "church ages" to understand what, who, and where the church was. It simply consisted of those who submitted themselves to the ruling authority of the Holy Ghost and allowed Him to fully purify their hearts and lead them into all truth. But Mr. Goodnight's problem with them was simply that they did not understand and interpret "prophecy" according to his line of thought – what he believed to be "the light in full **regarding the Revelation.**" Apostle Peter said, "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy

men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” 1 Pet. 1:20-21. Was Mr. Goodnight’s line of thought an enlightenment from the Spirit of God, or was it a “private interpretation?” More importantly, what has the fruit of that interpretation been?

On page 4 of the same book, Mr. Goodnight says, “Many books have been written, both long and short, explaining the last book of the gospel of Christ, the Revelation. Many interpretations have been placed upon this book. Some have tried to twist the symbols to mean things altogether literal. Some make them symbolize things political and spiritual; while others bring them out as political, literal, and spiritual. **I am persuaded to believe that the truth of the book will never be arrived at with anything other than a line of thought altogether spiritual.**”

But is this line of thought balanced? Is it wrong to “twist the symbols to mean things altogether literal,” and yet, at the same time, acceptable to twist them to mean things “altogether spiritual?” Let us compare this with what F. G. Smith taught in his book, *The Revelation Explained*, under the heading, “The Nature of Symbolic Language,” page 24. He says, “The department of **human and angelic life is chosen to set forth the spiritual affairs of the church**, while the department of **nature and of animal life represents the political affairs of nations.**” He goes on to mention that there are some exceptions, such as, when symbols are drawn from Old Testament holy things like the temple, altar, candlesticks, etc. Also, “stars,” in some instances, obviously represent gospel ministers – spiritual luminaries in the ecclesiastical heavens (Rev. 1:16, 20).

W. S. Goodnight’s “line of thought” was quite different than F. G. Smith’s. Mr. Goodnight felt that the truth of Revelation could ONLY be arrived at through a line of thought **altogether spiritual**. But does this not exhibit extremism and a state of being unbalanced? Was the purpose of the Revelation of Jesus Christ to foretell events in the spiritual realm only, having nothing to do with things political or literal? Obviously not! Was Jesus speaking altogether spiritually when He said in Revelation 2:10, “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life?” No, He was not speaking altogether spiritually but He was speaking both literally and symbolically here. These saints were *literally* going to be cast into prison and tried and have tribulation for **ten prophetically symbolic days**, or **ten years**, which F. G. Smith traces in history. But the Lord gave this church the promise that, if they would be faithful unto death (literally), He would give them a crown of life (spiritually). Here we see clearly the combination of both literal and spiritual language. The book of Revelation was not intended by the Lord to be understood through a line of thought “altogether spiritual.” There must be a balance to it. I would never promote the idea that F. G. Smith was absolutely correct in every detail of interpretation either, but I do see good *balance* in his interpretations of the prophetic Scriptures.

Goodnight taught that a new “church age,” the seventh and the last, began with the year 1930. He believed that the 1880 reformation represented the opening of the sixth seal of the book of Revelation (which we shall see hereafter was a false concept) and that, by the end of the 1920s, that era had come to an end. The “sixth seal age” was from 1880

to 1930 A. D., a fifty-year period, according to his teaching. The seventh age of the church was to begin in the year 1930 (the year he began publishing and teaching the “line of thought” he began studying in 1928), and it was to be the “seventh seal age,” the final age for the church of God. It was to last another 50 years, until 1980, then the Lord was supposed to come and take the church home. This final 50-year period was to be a “second harvest,” or a second gathering of the Lord’s people into one body through the preaching of “preliminary judgment” against sect Babylon.

But what Mr. Goodnight failed to recognize was, that those who were dwelling in that “secret place of the most High,” were already gathered into one body. Their “gathering together” was **not to a “movement,” or some special “seal” message, but unto Christ** (2 Thess. 2:1; Gen. 49:10). They had not departed from their “native home” in the bosom of God – love’s sacred dwelling place – which was what the “evening light” message was all about. The focus of that message never was about someone opening up a “seal,” or sounding a “trumpet,” or introducing a new message or new church age. Rather, it was an invitation to all God’s children who had found themselves captivated within and hindered by the spiritually fallen movements and organizations of men to simply return to their “native home” – **to find their dwelling place in the bosom of God – the “Ancient of days.”** D. S. Warner and his associates believed and taught it like this:

“He that dwelleth in love ever dwelleth in God,
Sweet home never clouded by fears;
And this heaven of love is our native abode
Through time and eternity’s years.

“We are only at home in the bosom of God,
On earth or in Heaven above;
Ev’ry one who would enter must pass through the blood,
And reign in the kingdom of love.

“We will enter no door that is opened by men
Who promise a home for the soul;
For in Christ we abide in the church that will stand
While ages eternally roll.”

– D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs*, #30.

“Glorious things divinely complete
Within thee are found – thy love is replete;
Down through the ages, spotless and pure,
Thy God hath preserved thee, thou art secure.

Zion of God, thou home of the free,
Washed in the blood, I’m dwelling in thee;
Glorious home, oh, gather us there,
Church of the firstborn, thou art so fair.”

– B. E. Warren, *Evening Light Songs*, #26.

As we can readily see from Mr. Goodnight's own writings, he was very zealous to spread his new line of thought around the United States, wherever he could find an open door. And, as with most any new idea, or line of thought, it soon began to take root. A great number of people soon rallied to his new message. Among them were G. W. Pendleton, C. S. McAlister, J. F. Lawson, P. D. Turnbow, and D. W. Rogers. All these men began zealously promoting this "new light." Church of God congregations (of the Anderson, Indiana fellowship) in various locations across the United States began accepting the new doctrine and method of interpreting Revelation. [Note: most of them had, at that time, already departed from many of the original teachings of D. S. Warner.] As we observed in Goodnight's own writing, the state of North Carolina was the first place he began to teach and promote the new doctrine.

But did this line of thought fully originate with W. S. Goodnight? A brother who has researched church history quite extensively presented me with the following historical information regarding the "seven church-age" theology. I present what he wrote here for your consideration.

"Most folks don't realize the seventh seal/trumpet message traces its roots to C. I. Scofield who produced the Scofield Commentary Bible in 1909. To support his theological agenda, he [Scofield] modified **John Nelson Darby's seven dispensational ages** and joined them prophetically to the Seven churches of Asia in the book of Revelation. His personal mantra was 'Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth,' and because his 'Scofield Commentary Bible' used the framework of the most commonly used version of the time (King James Version), it became the singularly best seller, known as 'The Student's Bible,' eliminating the need to pray, study, think, and seek God for wisdom and revelation.

"Scofield claimed to interpret the difficult-to-understand scriptures, ending with pretribulation rapture and the 1000-year age of the Millennial Kingdom, coining the phrase: **'We have favored spectacles upon our eyes, to see what others cannot see, and if you don't get on board, you'll be left behind!'**

"In 1930, W. S. Goodnight, a Church of God minister in North Carolina, again adapted the seven ages of Scofield to represent what he perceived to be the history of compromise by the 1880 Church of God (Evening Light) Reformation.

[More than 50 years later], "Danny Layne acquired a chart that presented the Goodnight perspective of Revelation interpretation, modified 1930 to 1980, and alleged it to be a unique Revelation he received from God.

"In reality, it appears that each of these [Scofield, Goodnight, and Layne] used second-handed information, originating with Darby, who is known as the 'Father of Dispensationalism' and founder of 'Church of the Brethren.'"

– Kenneth Probst

Darby's Dispensational Theology Spawned Plagiarism

“Plagiarism – 1. The act of plagiarizing. 2. An idea, passage, etc., that has been plagiarized.” – Webster’s Dictionary.

“Plagiarize – To take (ideas, writings, etc.) from (another) and pass them off as one’s own.” – Webster’s Dictionary.

I recently decided to do some personal online research regarding the origin of the idea of “seven church ages.” I typed in “Who founded the concept of seven church ages?” as my internet search and I was amazed at what came up! The information I found did point to John Nelson Darby, an Anglo-Irish Bible teacher (born November 18, 1800 – died April 29, 1882), as the father of dispensational theology. Following is a small piece of information from www.westendbiblechapel.org

“JOHN NELSON DARBY AND DISPENSATIONALISM”

“Dispensationalism is a movement in theology that began in the 1800s and came on strong in the 1900s. The story of dispensationalism begins with John Nelson Darby. He was born in 1800 in Westminster, London, but his family roots were Irish, so when he came of age to go to college, he was sent to Trinity College, Dublin. He excelled as a student there and won the Classics Prize. That skillset would come in handy for him later. He would be involved in translating the Bible into German, Dutch, and French. He even had his own English translation of the complete Bible. Darby died in 1882. He’s known for two things.

- (1) He was one of the early founders in what is called the Plymouth Brethren Church, and
- (2) he was the father or founder of dispensationalism, which came about in the 1830s and 1840s.

“There are four significant features to dispensationalism that Darby began and then were further developed by others.

“The *first* is to see a distinction between Israel and the church. Prior to dispensationalism, the understanding was that there is one people of God. We could call it *covenant theology*. And there is a connection between Israel and the church. But Darby made a distinction between those two, teaching there are two peoples of God, as it were. He taught that God had a distinct and unique plan for Israel, and a distinct and unique plan for the church.

“This led to the *second feature* of dispensationalism, which is to see Scripture as divided into dispensations. **Darby had seven of them.** The Scofield Reference Bible had seven of them. Dispensationalists did not always agree on the number of dispensations, but they did agree on the concept. The idea was that God dealt with humanity in different ways as he moved through the dispensations of Scripture.

“The *third feature* is a literal hermeneutic [method or theory of interpretation] that gets applied to prophecy and apocalyptic literature. Once that literal hermeneutic is applied, it leads us to the *fourth feature*, which includes end times events and charts. ...

“These ideas come from applying that literal hermeneutic to the books of Daniel and Revelation, and seeing literal timetables for the end times, or eschatology.

“**Three things** helped dispensationalism become very popular in the twentieth century.

“The *first* was the beginning of the Bible Institute movement. D. L. Moody had one in Chicago; his was not the first, but it was certainly the flagship institution. These institutions sprung up all over both the United Kingdom and the United States, and they taught dispensationalism.

“The *second* thing was prophecy conferences. These were popular in the early 1900s. They were held in Winona Lake, Philadelphia, and Dallas. They were everywhere.

“The *third* thing that popularized dispensationalism was the Scofield Reference Bible, named for Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, who was born in 1843 and died in 1921. He used the dispensations as the framework to understand the Bible and its structure, and he applied that dispensational hermeneutic to texts. Scofield also put forth the dispensational distinction of a separation between Israel and the church.

“That’s dispensationalism, started by John Nelson Darby and furthered along by the Bible Institute movement, the prophecy conferences, and the Scofield Reference Bible in the early 20th century.”

– from *5 Minutes in Church History*, an outreach of Ligonier Ministries.

In my research I was amazed to see how popular dispensationalism has become among various religious groups, especially cults! The seven-church-age concept did not by any means originate with W. S. Goodnight in 1930, and most certainly not with Daniel Wilburn Layne in 1980! It had been around a long time before either of these men were ever born! William Branham began teaching a similar doctrine to that of W. S. Goodnight around 1933, except on a different platform. Branham’s followers, who also believed he was the seventh angel restoring the original Bible faith to the church, say he was not plagiarizing, but merely filling in the gaps! But was he filling in gaps or merely establishing his own version of a borrowed concept? I found the following interesting information online.

“Seven Church Ages”

“William Branham claimed that God revealed the meanings of many Biblical ‘mysteries’ to him including some of the more significant mysteries in the book of

Revelation. One such mystery is the ‘mystery of the seven stars’ and ‘seven golden candlesticks’ in Revelation Chapters 1-3, which had already been revealed to St. John by the angel of the Lord as follows:

“‘The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest **are the seven churches.**’ *Revelation 1:20.*

“Those seven churches are churches in Asia to which John was to write and send a book, as is evident in Revelation 1:4 and 1:11:

“‘John to the seven churches **which are in Asia**’ and ‘I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, **write** in a book, and **send it** unto the seven churches **which are in Asia**; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.’

“The angel of the Lord's instructions to John of what he was to specifically write and send to each of those seven churches in Asia are provided in Revelation 2-3.

“Notwithstanding the above, Branham claimed that the ‘seven churches’ of Revelation 1-3 are not real or literal churches, but instead are only figurative and symbolic of seven ‘church ages’ or time periods in history that had the **same characteristics** of the ‘seven churches’ in Asia. He also claimed that the ‘seven angels’ are seven angel ‘messengers’ of those ‘church ages’ who had the ‘message of truth’ for each of their respective ‘church ages.’

“The origins of the “Seven Church Ages” concept and Branham's related teachings.

“The concept of the ‘seven churches’ in Revelation 1-3 not being real churches but being figurative or symbolic of ‘seven church ages’ did not originate with Branham.

“It originated with John Darby, Cyrus Scofield and Clarence Larkin who were ‘the leading proponents of dispensationalism in the preceding generation.’ All three men had published works equating the ‘seven churches’ to ‘seven church ages’ before Branham adopted the theory into his ministry and claimed his related teachings came from God.

“Branham, in fact, owned and referred to a copy of Scofield's best-selling annotated Bible, which popularized futurism and dispensationalism and promotes the idea of ‘seven church ages.’

“Branham also used and relied significantly on Clarence Larkin's, 1909 ‘Dispensational Truth’ publication when formulating his ‘Seven Church Age’ teachings. In fact, **most of the dates that Branham used as the seven ‘church age’ time periods**

came directly from that publication of Clarence Larkin. And Branham did so without recognizing or crediting that work of Larkin for those ideas.

“Branham not only improperly used Larkin's dates as the ‘church age’ time periods, but he also failed to recognize that those dates do not even align correctly with the lives of all of the men he chose as the seven angel ‘messengers’ of Revelation 1-3.

“Once Branham accepted and adopted the ideas of other men as his own, he then proceeded to incorporate them into his own teachings and led countless people around the world to believe that they were new illumination and revelation from God.

“The main construct of Branham's ‘Seven Church Age’ teachings.

“On December 4-11, 1960, Branham preached a series of sermons that are collectively known as his ‘Seven Church Age’ sermons. In 1965, he also published a 381-page book entitled, ‘An Exposition of The Seven Church Ages’ (a.k.a. the ‘Church Age Book’) that expands on those sermons. Therein, he provided the names of the alleged seven ‘church ages’ and their corresponding time periods, as well as the names of six of the alleged ‘angel messengers’, as follows:

“Church Age” Name	“Angel Messenger”	“Church Age” Period
Ephesus	St. Paul	53–170 A.D.
Smyrna	St. Irenaeus	170–312 A.D.
Pergamus	St. Martin	312–606 A.D.
Thyatira	St. Columba	606–1520 A.D.
Sardis	Martin Luther	1520–1750 A.D.
Philadelphia	John Wesley	1750–1906 A.D.
Laodicea	—	1906–Rapture

“Branham omitted the name of the seventh angel ‘messenger’ and did not explicitly identify the seventh angel ‘messenger’ by name. However, he implied and led countless people around the world to believe that *he* was the seventh angel ‘messenger.’ He did so by claiming that the ‘seven seals’ of Revelation 5-6 would be opened by the seventh angel ‘messenger’ and preaching a series of sermons on March 17-24, 1963, to allegedly open the seals.

“Branham was not the first alleged ‘seventh angel messenger’ of Revelation 3:14 & 10:7.

“Although Branham presented his ‘seven church age’ teachings as new ‘revelation’ from God, **Jehovah Witnesses’ founder, Charles Taze Russell**, who lived from 1852-1916, had already adopted the theory into his ministry and persuaded his followers to believe that he was the ‘seventh angel’ messenger of Revelation 3:14.

“Russell, however, used different dates than Larkin and Branham and assigned different ‘angel messengers’ to the ‘church ages,’ as shown in the table below.

“Church Age” Name	“Angel Messenger”	“Church Age” Period
Ephesus	St. Paul	33–73 A.D.
Smyrna	St. John	73–325 A.D.
Pergamus	Arius	325–1160 A.D.
Thyatira	Peter Waldo	1160–1378 A.D.
Sardis	John Wycliffe	1378–1518 A.D.
Philadelphia	Martin Luther	1518–1874 A.D.
Laodicea	Charles T. Russell	1874–1918 A.D.

“Like Branham, Russell also led his followers to believe that he was the ‘seventh angel messenger’ of Revelation 10:7:

“But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he began to sound the trumpet - **Pastor Russell** was the seventh angel (Rev 3:14). **He began to blow the trumpet in the autumn of 1881**, ...” – Russell (p. 169). See also: 1917 -- Writing Studies – Vol. 7 – The Complete Mystery, page 190.

“So convinced were Russell's followers that he was the ‘seventh angel, Laodicean messenger’ of Revelation 3:14 that they erected a marker at his gravesite in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania after his death in 1916 with the inscription ‘The Laodicean Messenger’ on it. They also erected a pyramid memorial several feet from the marker.

“When Branham died forty-nine years later in 1965, a similar, but lighter-colored pyramid memorial was erected at his gravesite in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Branham's pyramid memorial has an engraved book on it like Russell's. It also has a smaller unfinished part at the top of it, which is not unlike the Masonic symbol. Branham's followers were also so convinced that he was the ‘seventh angel, Laodicean messenger’ of Revelation 3:14 that his name was inscribed as such on his pyramid memorial.

“How Branham chose the duration of each of the seven ‘church ages.’

“Branham claimed the Holy Spirit helped him find ‘the duration of each age,’ as follows:

““With this key, so simple, yet so wonderful, I was able, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to read the Book of Revelation and the histories and find therein each age, each messenger, the duration of each age, and the part each played in the purpose of God from Pentecost to the consummation of those ages.” *Church Age Book*, p. 68.

“However, that claim of Branham is false because he actually copied the duration of the ‘church ages’ directly from Clarence Larkin's ‘Dispensational Truth’ publication, as is evident by a comparison of Larkin's dates to the ones he used in the table below.

“Church Age Name”	Larkin	Branham
Ephesus	70-170 A.D.	53-170 A.D.
Smyrna	170-312 A.D.	170-312 A.D.
Pergamos	312-606 A.D.	312-606 A.D.
Thyatira	606-1520 A.D.	606-1520 A.D.
Sardis	1520-1750 A.D.	1520-1750 A.D.
Philadelphia	1750-1900 A.D.	1750-1906 A.D.
Laodicea	1900-Rapture	1906-Rapture

“Branham's use of Larkin's dates is also misleading because he used the dates as his own without ever recognizing or crediting Larkin as his actual source.

“With the exception of only two years in the table above, Branham took and used all of the same years from Larkin for his ‘church age’ teachings.

“Instead of using Larkin's date of 70 A.D. to mark the alleged start of the first ‘church age,’ Branham said the first ‘church age’ started in 55 A.D. for the following reasons:

““Can anybody say right off who the angel or the Light was (minister) of that church age? Paul. The Ephesus Church Age, A.D. 55 to 170. The reason I picked up 55, that's when he started his missionary journey, and it was then when he established the Ephesian church and the different churches along there.’ 60-1210 *The Philadelphian Church Age*.

“The only other date Branham did not use from Larkin's publication is the date marking the alleged end of the sixth and start of the seventh ‘church ages.’ Larkin used 1900, but Branham changed it to 1906, which coincides closely with the year of his own birth.

...

“Despite the falsity of the ‘Seven Church Age’ teachings, Branham was able to lead countless people around the world to believe that he was the seventh angel ‘messenger’ who would lead the Bride to the rapture and convince them that his ‘church age’ teachings preceded the opening of other ‘mysteries’ in the Book of Revelation:

““This is necessary in order to study and to understand the rest of the revelation, for out of the ages come the seals, and out of the seals come the trumpets, and out of the trumpets come the vials.”” – *Branham, Church Age Book, Introduction*.

...

“The original Bible faith is to be restored by the seventh angel. Now, oh, how I love this! All of the mysteries of the seals that the reformers never understood fully. – ‘*The First Seal*,’ 3-18-63, *Seals*, page 147.








...

“Because Branham’s teachings offer Christians an alternative form of the gospel, enlightenment, and even higher understanding with God if they are accepted as truth, it is important to bear 1 John 4:1 in mind, which states, ‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: for many false prophets are gone out into the world.’”

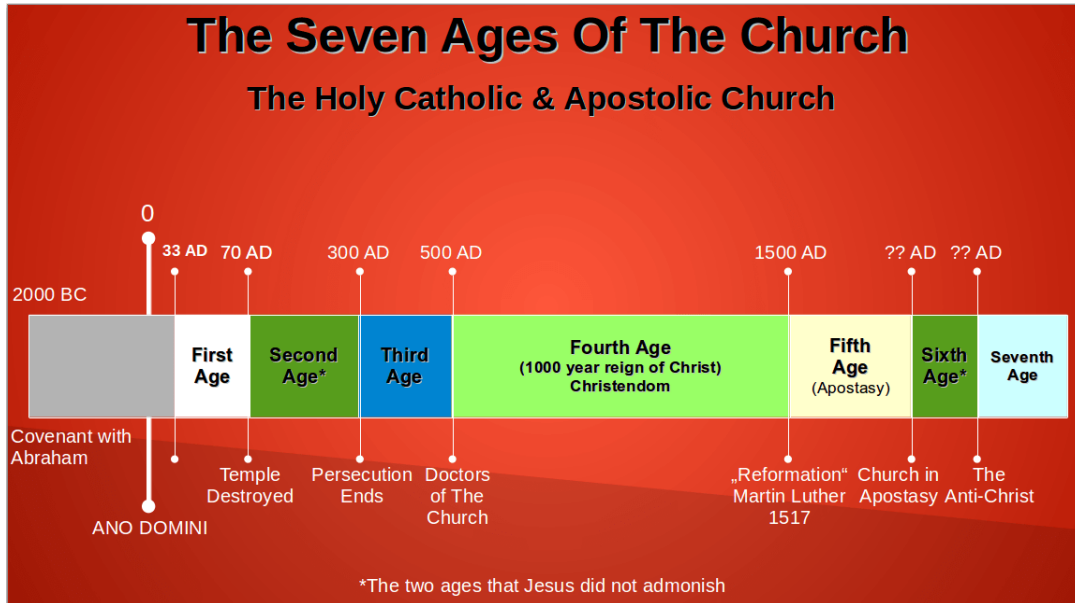
– An excerpt from *Prove the Claims – Seven Church Ages*.

Notice Branham’s teaching, “**The original Bible faith is to be restored by the seventh angel.**” Does this not sound very familiar? This tone has echoed and re-echoed from one copycat to another for nearly a century and a half now!

The following are charts I found online that teach seven church ages as other religious groups view them. The names of those groups were not available. This is just a sample of a few. If the reader wishes to do an online search, a multitude can be found! Later in this book, we’ll look at what the Bible teaches regarding *the constancy of the church* throughout the entire Gospel Age.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION							
							 RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH
	EPHESUS The Apostolic Church Rev. 2:1-7	SMYRNA The Persecuted Church Rev. 2:8-11	PERGAMUM The Indulged Church Rev. 2:12-17	THYATIRA The Pagan Church Rev. 2:18-29	SARDIS The Dead Church Rev. 3:1-6	PHILADELPHIA The Church Christ Loved Rev. 3:7-13	LAODICEA The Lukewarm Church Rev. 3:14-22
	A.D. 30-100	A.D. 100-312	A.D. 312-606	A.D. 606-Tribulation	A.D. 1520-Tribulation Protestant Reformation	A.D. 1750-Rapture	A.D. 1900-Tribulation
COMMENDATION I know your...	Good works, labor, patience. Hated Nicolaitans.	Works, tribulation, poverty.	Works. Held fast my name. Has not denied my faith.	Good works, love, service, faith, patience.	Works. A name that you live.	Works. Missions. Little strength. Kept my word. Not denied my name.	Not one word!
CONDEMNATION	You have left your first love.	Not one word!	You have false teachers of Balaam and the Nicolaitans.	You allow Jezebel to teach idolatry and compromise.	You are dead. Works not complete.	Not one word!	You are lukewarm, wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.
COUNSEL I counsel you...	Remember from where you are fallen and repent.	Fear not. Be faithful.	Repent.	Hold fast what you have until I come.	Watch. Strengthen the things that remain. Remember, hold fast and repent.	Hold fast what you have.	Buy gold tried by fire and white raiment. Anoint your eyes. Be zealous and repent.
CHALLENGE To him that overcomes...	Will give to eat of the tree of life	Will not be hurt by the second death.	Will give hidden manna and a white stone.	Will give millennial leadership and the Morning Star.	Will be clothed in white raiment. I will not blot his name out of the book of life.	Will make him a pillar and write upon him the name of God and My new name.	Will grant to sit with me on my throne.

This one appears to be a Catholic version. Interestingly, they show 1517, Martin Luther and beyond, as the age of “apostasy!”



The Seven Churches of Revelation							
THE 7 CHURCHES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	Ephesus REV. 2:1-7	Smyrna REV. 2:8-11	Pergamos REV. 2:12-17	Thyatira REV. 2:18-29	Sardis REV. 3:1-6	Philadelphia REV. 3:7-13	Laodicea REV. 3:14-22
MEANING OF NAME	"To Let Go"	"Anointing Oil"	"To Be Married To Power"	"To Be Ruled By A Woman"	"A Precious Stone"	"Brotherly Love"	"Power of The Laity"
PERIOD IN CHURCH HISTORY	A.D. 96	A.D. 100-313	A.D. 313-606	A.D. 606-1517	A.D. 1517-1739	A.D. 1739-1850	A.D. 1850-1917+ END of AGE
CHARACTER OF EACH CHURCH	Effort Relaxed	Martyrdom & Tribulation	Union of Church and State	Counterfeit; Anti-Christian	Reformation	Evangelical; Missionary	Modernism; Spiritual Poverty
CHRIST'S TITLE AS JUDGE	"Walks In Midst of Candlesticks"	"Which Was Dead And Is Alive"	"He Which Hath The Sharp Sword"	"The Son Of God"	"He That Hath The Seven Spirits"	"He That Is Holy And True"	"The Faithful Witness"
GOOD POINTS	Labor & Patience	Endured Tribulation	The Faith Not Denied	Faith & Patience	A Name That It Lived	Kept The Word	NONE
FAULTS	Left First Love	NONE	Balaam's Doctrine, Idolatry	Ruled By "Jezebel"	But Dead Spiritually	NONE	Lukewarm
REWARD TO OVERCOMERS	"Paradise"	The First Resurrection	"A White Stone"	Reign With Christ	"Name Confessed"	"The New Jerusalem"	"With Christ On David's Throne"

Did W. S. Goodnight Plagiarize?

Below is a scanned photo of the chart W. S. Goodnight included in his book, *The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy*, published in 1936. As you can see, the dates he chose for the seven supposed “church ages” are different than those dates chosen by others who taught the seven-church-age theory before him as well as some who taught it contemporaneously – 1930 and beyond. However, the concept is the same. Where did Goodnight get this idea? Was it original with him? There is reason to doubt it, especially since others had promoted it before him and William Branham was also promoting his version at approximately the same time. There is reason to believe that Goodnight created his own version after he borrowed the concept from others. There is no reason to believe that he received it from God by divine revelation.

DIVIDING OF THE REVELATION									
Seven series of the Revelation reaching from the advent of Christ, to the end of the seventh seal, and over into the Camp. The Revelation retraces seven times through the Gospel dispensation. The Gospel day is also divided into seven periods of time, in which the seven spirits of God are carried into all the earth, Rev. 5:6; The seven letters to the seven churches of Asia describe each period of time. Chapt. 21 & 22, are directing from the Camp into the New Heaven and New Earth.									
Prophetic age	Seven Series	Ephesus	Smyna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea	Camp Of Saints
		A.D. 33	A.D. 270	A.D. 530	A.D. 1530	A.D. 1730	A.D. 1880	A.D. 1930	A.D. 1980
	1	Chapt. One is an introductory to Series one.				C-3.....			C-4.....
	2	Chapt. Five is an introductory to Series two.					C-7.....		C-8:1.....
	3	C-8:2-13.....				C-9.....		C-10.....	
	4		C-11.....						
	5	C-12.....							
	6		C-13.....				C-14..... C-15..... C-16..... C-17..... C-18.....		C-19.....
	7	C-20.....							C-21 & 22.....

In the preface of the book from which this chart was scanned, Goodnight says, “In the year 1930, I wrote a small pamphlet on the Revelation containing a chart outline of the seals, trumpets, and vials, mailing a copy to a number of the ministers of the Church of

God in the United States for their consideration. A goodly number gave the pamphlet some study, while others cast it aside without considering it. ... There may be some minor interpretations that will be understood more clearly in a future study of the Revelation in connection with Gospel and prophecy, however, it is made clear, that now the seventh trumpet and seventh seal are opening to the Church.”

The seventh seal/trumpet message proclaimed by Goodnight was supposed to produce a second gathering together of the people of God, according to his own doctrine. But, as time went on, the followers of his line of thought began to have disagreements among themselves and, as a result, they split up into quite a variety of factions. I do not know just how many factions have actually developed over the past 90 plus years, but I have become acquainted with several of them in my lifetime. Some retained the doctrine of sanctification as a definite second work of grace, as it was believed and taught by John Wesley, D. S. Warner, and the original holiness movement, while others chose to endorse the “Zinzendorf” doctrine and incorporate it with their seventh seal/trumpet message, accepting it as “new light” also.

The Zinzendorf doctrine, or “anti-cleansing heresy,” as it came to be called, was a line of thought propagated by Count Zinzendorf in the days of John Wesley, advocating that a person is wholly sanctified at the moment of conversion, or regeneration, and that there is no need for any further cleansing thereafter. John Wesley stood in opposition to Zinzendorf’s teaching regarding this. The doctrine surfaced again not long after D. S. Warner’s death in 1895. In *The Gospel Trumpet* publications of 1897 – 1898, especially, much can be read about this old heresy that was being propagated as “new light” among the people of God at that time. Again, it was thoroughly scrutinized by the ministry and its fallacy exposed and refuted, but not before it wrought great havoc and division among the people of God. The propagators of the “new light” sought to undermine the faith of the saints in the very experience of “entire sanctification” that brought forth the Evening Light Reformation in the beginning. Many who fell for it did, however, acknowledge their error later and repent of their heresy. Among them was W. J. Henry, author of several of the *Evening Light Songs*. He was, for a while, sidetracked by the contentious doctrine but later saw his mistake and repented.

During my lifetime, from the time I was a boy, our family received different publications from different factions of the seventh seal/trumpet movement. Even as a young teenager, ignorant about the origin and nature of this doctrine, I can remember feeling an awareness in my own soul of a “strange” spirit that accompanied each one of these publications. I was saved at age 10 and later sanctified at age 11 and had found a very deep experience and personal relationship with the Lord. The “unction” of God’s Spirit was resting on my soul, and that “anointing” taught me many deep and heavenly things, even in my youth. In my spirit I sensed something “foreign” about the spirit of this seventh seal/trumpet doctrine. Although there was a lot of truth connected with it, I could sense an underlying “something,” not so easy to pin-point, but that just didn’t seem quite right. After growing up and getting out on my own, I continued to receive, from time to time, publications from various seventh seal/trumpet groups. I have filed many of

them, just for my own information and reference purposes. For the information, benefit, and enlightenment of my readers, I will here list a few.

1. *THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER*, published at Newark, Ohio. This, I understand, became one of the larger of the original seventh seal/trumpet factions and this group also incorporated the “Zinzendorf” doctrine with its message. This was one of the main seventh trumpet publications that we used to receive when I was a boy.
2. *THE SEVENTH TRUMPET*, published at Mountain Home, Arkansas, originated by G. W. Pendleton in the year 1932 (according to its editorials). G. W. Pendleton was a former associate of W. S. Goodnight. This publication retained the doctrine of sanctification as a second definite work of grace, in theory at least. It also proposed to be proclaiming the “last days message of Revelation – the seventh trumpet.” Its founder, G. W. Pendleton, passed away in the year 1988, but his widow, Martha Pendleton, continued to publish the paper with the assistance of others for many years thereafter. I had the opportunity to meet and talk with her on at least one occasion. Mountain Home, Arkansas is only about 80 miles from Myrtle, Missouri, where I live, and she attended a camp meeting here at Myrtle at least once.
3. *THE GOSPEL TRUMPETER*, published by the Church of God of Ashville, North Carolina. I only received one copy of this publication in June 1991 and, since I did not request any further copies, I ceased to receive it. I do not know if it is still being published. That publication also claimed to be **“SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET,”** and to be standing for **“Justification, Sanctification, Unity and Truth.”**
4. *THE GOSPEL TRUMPET*, published by the Church of God of Ontario, California. I received this publication for several years during the 1980s. It also claimed to be sounding forth the seventh and last trumpet and proclaimed a so-called “seventh seal” message. This paper was edited by Brian Duff, who I met and had some correspondence with. Brian was very educated in the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine. He had quite a lengthy series of articles in this publication concerning the “Seventh Seal Message” during the late 1980s, which was later printed and made available in book form. [Note: Brian Duff was also a personal acquaintance of Danny Layne and, during Danny’s early ministry, he received permission from Brian and his congregation to use their meeting house for church services. Whether or not Danny Layne received a portion of his seventh seal/trumpet indoctrination from Brian Duff, I cannot say, however, the possibility seems likely.]

All the various groups that have resulted from W. S. Goodnight’s “line of thought” are very sincerely devoting themselves to the proclamation of what they believe to be the final message for this gospel age. Although divided on various issues, they all agree on one thing – that we are living in the “seventh seal age,” or seventh and final age of the

church, and that they are obligated to sound forth a special message for the church – a message which they believe is portrayed in the prophecy of Revelation 8:1 and 11:15-19.

In December of 1995, I had the privilege of visiting Bro. O. C. Porter in his home in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Brother Porter was an elderly minister of the Church of God who was in his 90s at the time (born just 7 years after the death of D. S. Warner) and who lived to be over 100 years old. His memories of church history encompassed almost the entire 20th century. During our visit, he gave me two books and a chart which he had had in his possession for many years, explaining the doctrines of the seventh seal/trumpet movement. One of them was written by W. S. Goodnight himself, titled “Chart Explanation of Revelation.” The other book was titled “The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy,” and had J. F. Lawson, P. D. Turnbow, and D. W. Rogers’ names as the authors.

In visiting Martha Pendleton later, the widow of G. W. Pendleton, she told me that her late husband actually wrote the book that Lawson, Turnbow, and Rogers ascribed their names to. She said they removed his name and put theirs in its place. He just let it go and never did anything about it, she said. Whether this is true, or not, God knows.

There ARE two books that bear the title *The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy*. One of them is attributed to “W. S. Goodnight, assisted by G. W. Pendleton & C. S. McAlister,” printed in 1936. The other book is attributed to “J. F. Lawson, P. D. Turnbow, & D. W. Rogers,” revised 1955. This may explain why G. W. Pendleton’s widow, Martha, said that her husband was actually the author of the book, but these other men forged their names to it. It is likely that they slightly “revised” the 1936 edition of the book and then published it as their own, not giving credit to the original authors. The wording in both books is very similar.

If I remember correctly, Brother O. C. Porter knew all these men personally. He gave me their writings and wanted me to read them and educate myself regarding their erroneous teaching and then use the knowledge to refute it.

After examining the contents of the books, I was struck with the realization of the subtlety of the error involved in the lines of thought they promote. To give the reader some idea of what I speak about, I will quote from their writings later in this book, but first, I want to give some consideration to the real significance of the opening of the seventh seal and the sounding of the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets, **specifically – the three “woe” trumpets**. I ask the reader to lay aside all preconceived ideas and prejudices and let us approach this subject with an open mind.

The Opening of the Seventh Seal and Breaking of the Silence

“And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” Rev. 8:1-6.

All the various groups who have adhered to W. S. Goodnight’s interpretations of prophecy have sought to apply the “silence” mentioned in this text to a cessation of proclaiming the full Gospel message that they *suppose* took place sometime following the 1880 reformation. They claim that, due to the compromise that took place among the majority of the leaders of that movement, the message was silenced for a while. But **that simply is not true! The message was NEVER SILENCED** and the light of truth that reformation brought forth was never obscured again. Although many turned away from it and went into darkness, the light continued to shine as brightly as ever (see my later chapter on “The Morning Cometh and Also the Night”). There were many who continued walking in the light and never compromised one jot or tittle of Bible truth, regardless of what others did. They never went into darkness nor became partakers of any of the works thereof. **The heavenly message of full salvation and perfect freedom in Christ was NEVER SILENCED in the ecclesiastical realm!**

In the early stages of the compromise that finally engulfed the Gospel Trumpet publishing company and those who followed its teachings, Charles E. Orr, one of the pioneer ministers of that 1880 reformation movement who had served as a contributing editor and writer for the *Trumpet*, began publishing another paper called *The Herald of Truth*. The purpose was to counter the compromise element that was making inroads among the people of God through liberal teachings that had become condoned in the *Trumpet*. I am not sure of the exact date of the first issue of *The Herald of Truth*, but it seems it was around the year 1913, if not prior. It was published for a while in California but was later moved to Carthage, Missouri, around 1917. It continued to be published at Carthage until September 1922. I have a Xerox copy of the last issue published as well as an original copy of another issue that was found in the files of my grandfather, Alsia Sorrell, after his death in 1977. In the last issue of *The Herald of Truth*, dated September 6, 1922, the editor says:

“Dear Saints, don’t feel that the Church of God will fail because we are without a paper. God will take care of His church and keep everyone who will trust Him. ... To those who feel as if they cannot get along without the paper, we say: **Just read the Word more and be more often hid away in secret prayer with the Lord.** You will increase spiritually and be more useful in His service. ...

“Until about the year of 1910, *The Gospel Trumpet* [published at Anderson, Indiana] was considered a messenger from God, and much good was accomplished through its pages. After a short time, the enemy began to work among the ministers, causing so much confusion that the editor sent out warnings through the paper, such as, “Marching Along the By-Path,” published in the editorials of *The Gospel Trumpet*, September 15, 1910 (as you will see in this issue). After a few years the enemy succeeded in deceiving and winning those who had so faithfully warned the Saints through the columns of the *Trumpet*. Then the rest was easy; because as soon as their ideas and fair speeches began to go through the paper, many of the dear Saints became deceived, because they looked at the publishing work as being the head of the church, and it was very natural for them to think that what was decided at the Gospel Trumpet office must be right. This brought about a great division and many, many souls became discouraged, and some sank to rise no more. Eternity will only reveal the many souls that were lost through the great compromise that swept over the land at that time, but God has a few people **and has always had**, that will stand for this reformation that He let shine upon this old dark world of confusion about the year 1880; but oh, what few considering the many that have stepped into by-paths that are leading to a broad-minded way. Since that time *The Herald of Truth* has been endeavoring to set forth the old-time truths of the Gospel through its columns

“... The Bible teaches you, just what it teaches me; so, if we measure to its standard, it will make us see eye to eye, and all speak the same thing. Dear ones, we are living in perilous times. **Let us keep our eyes on Jesus and measure up to the standard of God’s Word.**”

Interestingly, a subscriber from West Plains, Missouri (a town about 40 miles from Myrtle, Missouri, where I live), wrote as follows in this final issue of *The Herald of Truth*:

“Received a Benefit”

“To the Saints and *Herald of Truth* readers, Greetings in the precious name of Jesus:

“I desire to send in my testimony once more before the paper suspends. I am still saved and sanctified and kept by the power of God. It was a precious privilege, the dear Lord granted me, to attend the camp meeting at Carthage this year; and while there were some serious problems to be taken care of, I desire to say that it was one of the best meetings I have had the privilege of attending. ...

“There have been some dark hours for the church, but dear ones, let us try to save all we can. Our paper is gone but let us earnestly pray God to heal all that are bruised, awaken all who have fallen in error, and lead us on to victory. Amen. **We have the truth, it is still ours; let us earnestly contend for it, as watchmen on the walls of Zion. Let us still carry the blessed message of the evening light.** ...

“Yours in the one body of Christ,
“F. A. Newville”

Below is a photocopy of the front page of the last issue of *The Herald of Truth*, published September 6, 1922.

The Herald of Truth

THY WORD



IS TRUTH.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
Make his paths straight.—Matt. 3:3.
This is the way, walk ye in it.

Volume 8.
Carthage, Missouri, Wednesday, September 6, 1922.
Number 17.

WHERE ARE YOU BUILDING?

Oh, where will you stand when the trumpet is calling?
Oh, where will you be in that day?
When the elements will melt and the fire will be falling,
Oh, what will your soul have to say?

CHORUS:

Oh, where are you building?
Oh, where are you building?
Oh, where are you building?
On the rock, solid rock or on the sand?

~~Are you building on that rock, on the rock of ages?~~
Where the floods and the fire cannot come,
Are you building on the sand, on the weak foundation,
Oh, where are you building your home?

There are people today in the many churches,
Who are building their homes on the sand,
When their conscience was stirred they became a member,
Just by giving the preacher their hand.

Oh, be sure you are not deceived, for the storm is coming,
That will try every house, one and all,
If you are built on the rock, it will stand forever—
But if on the sand it will fall.

And others there are who reject God's Bible,
And turn to opinion of man,
They do away with hell and eternal torment,
But they, too, are building on the sand.

They'll be crying to the rocks and highest mountains,
To hide them away on that day,

LAST ISSUE

From the presence of the Lord, for His mercy is ended,
And your building is swept far away.
—Selected.

WORSHIP GOD ONLY.

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. (Joshua 24:15).

As I read this part of this text, my prayer to God is: Oh! Lord, help souls to make the wise choice. By reading the account given here in the Bible, we see that a man of God of old, moved by the spirit of God boldly says to that people: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." They could serve the God of Heaven and earth, the God of their fathers, or they could serve the Gods of the people. They were among the gods of wood and stone and this people did the right thing, for we hear them saying in verse 24: "The Lord our God will we serve and His voice will we obey." This was the wise choice, but sad to say; we find that the spirit of obeying the Lord did not remain in the majority of the people. Eight hundred twenty one years later, we hear another man of God saying: "How long halt ye between two opinions," (1 Kings 18:21) here the man of God is bold again to put the people to the test, and by reading this account, we see that he (Elijah) does not flinch from testing God's power to answer prayer; and the long praying of the prophets of Baal did not bring the answer, as did the little short prayer that came from the heart of the man of God, as we see in verses 36 and 37. "For they prayed from morning until night, but no answer came, but the

God of Heaven answered and sent fire, consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and all the water that had been poured round about the altar, see verse 38. And then the people put away their idols and killed the false prophets and served God again. But that spirit of idol worship was not killed when they killed the prophets of Baal, for all the way down to this present time, people worship some kind of idols. But God has had a few all that time that have served Him and Him alone. Paul tells us of many of them in Heb. 11, that trusted in the God of Heaven and earth, the God of their fathers, and let us look to a time of more recent date, about forty years ago, the masses of people had gotten to worshipping gods that were no gods, again, then the God of heaven raised up men of God of the type of Joshua and Elijah and they began to boldly set forth the truths of the Bible and preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, and exhort people to choose whom they would serve, and saying: "Come out of her my people. (Rev. 18:4.) "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you," (2 Cor. 6:17). And then still there was a few that heard the cry and said, "His voice will we obey." Praise God forever! My soul rejoices as I read these words and I am glad the time came when I said: His voice will I obey. But that same spirit of idolatry was loose in the world and people began to worship gods of iron and paper and you could hear of printing presses called, "The Big Preacher," and the people began to look to that god, that it took more than a day sometimes to get an answer from if they got sick, or in trouble, (namely a letter to the Gospel Trampet Com-

The following announcement was on page 2 of that last issue of *The Herald of Truth*. These national camp meetings for the Saints were eventually relocated to Monark Springs, Missouri, about 25 miles south of Carthage (near Neosho), and are still held annually, beginning on the third Friday of July, and continuing for ten days.

1923 CENTRAL ANNUAL CAMP MEETING
 To Beheld At Carter's park

CARTHAGE, MO.
July 19 To 29-1923

The purpose of this meeting, is for an ingathering of the Saints in general from all parts of the United States. Don't fail to attend this meeting all who can.

Every congregation should see that their Pastor has their expense to and from this meeting.

All who wish Tents or Rooms should order them 30 days before the meeting begins.

Accommodations First Class

Beautiful shady lawns, Free, Ice water, Shower baths. Meals served on the free will offering plan.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION WRITE TO—H. G. PLETCHER CARTHAGE, MO

In March 1923 (just 6 months after the last issue of *The Herald of Truth* was published), another paper began to be published in Guthrie, Oklahoma. The editor was Fred Pruitt, on whose heart God had moved to publish Gospel literature in the interest of perpetuating the truths the Gospel Trumpet Company had compromised and abandoned. In the editorials of the first issue, he says:

“The fact that Satan uses the printed page to deceive and sidetrack souls is a good sign that it can be used mightily of God for good. We believe God has people everywhere in the land to whom He can talk and teach His ways, and who will willingly do His bidding, and therefore eat the good of the land (Isaiah 1:19).

“Brethren, we all have our calling. Let us labor in our calling **that our labor will be in the Lord, which is not vain labor**. As we keep yielded to Him, He will perform that good work which he has begun in our souls until the day of Jesus. For if we keep dead and our life hid with Christ in God, when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. ... Dear Brothers and Sisters, pray much for us that God keep us filled with the Holy Ghost, and that by the working power of His Spirit, *Faith and Victory* will be like unto a river of water, pure and clear, flowing down from the throne of God and out to the people of every land.”

— Fred Pruitt

Below is a photocopy of the front page of the first issue of *Faith and Victory*, published in March 1923. C. E. Orr, founder of *The Herald of Truth* publication, later joined Fred Pruitt's publishing efforts and was co-editor of *Faith and Victory* at the time of his death in 1933.

Faith and Victory

Arm thyself with FAITH and LOVE; this brings VICTORY from above.

VOLUME I.
NUMBER 1.

"This is the VICTORY that overcometh
the world, even our FAITH." 1 Jno. 5: 4.

GUTHRIE, OKLA.
MARCH, 1923.

PEACEABLE FRUIT

Smite on! It doth not hurt me now;
The spear hath lost its edge of pain;
And piercing thorns that bound my brow
No longer leave their bleeding stain.

What once was woe is changed to bliss;
What once was loss is now my gain;
My sorrow is my happiness;
My life doth live by being slain.

The birth-pangs of those dreadful years
Are like the midnight changed to morn;
And daylight shines upon my tears,
Because the soul's great life is born.

The piercing thorns have changed to flowers;
The spears have grown to scepters bright;
And sorrow's dark and sunless hours
Become eternal days of light.

—UPHAM.

DIVINE DISCIPLINE

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten"
(R.v. 3: 19).

It is said of our Lord Jesus Christ that He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and that, as the Captain of our salvation, He "was made perfect through suffering." Such seems to be the case also with His disciples. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 12: 7, 8, declares that afflictions and chastisements are indispensable evidences of real discipleship; and that without them we have reason to question our saving relation to God.

The Savior declared to the church at Laodicea what may be accepted as a general principle in the divine administration, that all those whom God loves as a parent He rebukes and chastens as His children. And as our heavenly Father does "not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men," (Lam. 3: 33), we are led to believe that there must be an actual necessity for these chastenings. That necessity will be considered in the proper place. For the present

we will consider some of the methods by which our heavenly Father chastens His children. There are many rods at His disposal, among which are:

1. The rod of *poverty*.

All the wealth of the universe belongs to God, and is distributed by Him as it meet and proper in His sight; and from the fact that the majority of Christians are poor in this world's goods, it is evident that this condition is best for them. The Scriptures and general observation establish the fact that worldly prosperity is not the most favorable for vigorous and progressive piety. It usually, if not universally, leads to alienation from God and overmuch care for the interests of the present life. Is it not, then, wise and good for God to withhold or take from His children that which proves an evil rather than a blessing? Do not affectionate and intelligent earthly parents act according to this principle toward their children? Says St. James: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?"

To the rich man in the parable it was said, "Remember that thou in thy life-time receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." The disadvantages and privations of poverty under which so many of the children of God labor are not, then, arbitrary nor accidental, but are by special, providential arrangement. It is altogether likely that in no other way than through the vale of poverty could the majority of believers ever reach heaven; and our heavenly Father, looking to our highest and greatest good, places us in the condition best adapted to the promotion of that which is of such priceless value to us. In heaven, ample compensation will be made for the temporary disadvantages of this preparatory and probational state. Well, then, can we endure the privations of a few years for our eternity of gain.

There is, also,—

2. The rod of *bereavement*.

The safety of the Christian for the present and future depends upon his loving God above all other

So, was there ever a time, since the “dark ages,” when the voices heralding God’s universal message of truth were silenced? Absolutely not! There was certainly no silence to be broken in 1930! The truth was still being heralded loudly and clearly. All that was needed then, or that is needed now, is **hearing ears**. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22. Detailed promises to those who hear and overcome have been spelled out in God’s Word for the church in ALL AGES!

In my personal reading and studying of the book of Revelation several years ago, it became clear to me that **what is brought to view in the opening of the seventh seal includes ALL that is written from chapters 8 through 22 (the rest of the book)**. In consulting the writings of F. G. Smith, I found that he understood it the same way it was impressed upon my mind. Here is what he wrote (I have added the words in brackets for greater clarification):

“The remainder of the book [chapters 8 – 22] is embraced in the contents of the seventh seal. This may appear a little singular at first, being so much larger than the preceding ones. But it is easily understood when we consider **the [first] six [seals] as being a synopsis of the whole book**, containing a history of the church apostate to the final consummation, and also the contemporaneous history of the true church of God; while **the seventh [seal] gives in detail** the account of these great persecuting powers, civil and ecclesiastical, and the trials and triumphs of the saints in the New Jerusalem – **developing more fully the events described under the [first] six [seals].”**

– *The Revelation Explained*, page 131.

This was the same conclusion I came to in my personal studies. For years I was puzzled how anyone could perceive a special “seventh church age” described in the seventh seal. There’s nothing about the language or symbols that naturally suggests such an idea. **The opening of the seventh seal takes us back to the beginning of the gospel dispensation and picks up beginning events.** The contents of the seal then follow the events of the gospel dispensation from beginning to end through several series of prophetic visions that run parallel to each other, each series ever broadening the view of what was introduced in the first six seals. So **the seventh seal age includes the entire Gospel age.** Are we living in the seventh seal age? Yes, we are, and so were Apostles James, John, Peter, and Paul!

The first thing that is stated concerning the opening of the seventh seal is that “there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” F. G. Smith says, “Whether this interval of silence is intended to be symbolical of any event on earth I do not know ... ‘a half hour,’ according to prophetic time would signify only about one week, ... whether it has any special signification, I am unable to say; perhaps not.”

I personally believe it does have significance. Let’s turn our minds back to the beginning of the gospel dispensation for a moment. This is where the seventh seal themes begin. We find in the Scriptures that Jesus stayed on earth 40 days after his resurrection, before He ascended back to Heaven and took His place at the right hand of God. Before

ascending, He instructed His eleven remaining apostles to return to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit, which He said would come “not many days hence” (Acts 1:5). They were not to engage in any preaching or evangelistic efforts during this time but wait for the promise of the Father which would endue them with “power.” This waiting period was to be a short period of “silence.”

On a Thursday, 40 days following His resurrection, Jesus led His eleven Apostles out to Bethany, to Mount Olivet (not far from Jerusalem), where He ascended back to Heaven and out of their sight (see Luke 24:49-53; Acts 1:1-12). In obedience to His command, His Apostles returned to Jerusalem and went into an upper room where they “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:14), and with other disciples, numbering about 120 in all. On the day of Pentecost, just 10 days following Jesus’ ascension back to Heaven, the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, came and **the silence was broken!** The Holy Spirit set the church in order and the gospel message began to be sounded, its message destined to reach all nations. But 10 days of silence (“about the space of half an hour,” or about one week) preceded this glorious manifestation of the power of God that brought forth “voices” (the gospel proclaimed to many nations by the gift of tongues), “and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.” Think about it. “And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.” Rev. 8:6.

The Trumpets

W. S. Goodnight’s Revelation theology has led many people to believe that the opening of the seventh seal and the sounding of the seventh trumpet somehow parallel and coincide in representing a seventh epoch, or age, for the church of God. But an unbiased and careful examination of the scriptural context reveals no foundation for such an interpretation. The interpretation is nothing more than a figment of human imagination. The first series of prophecies introduced by the opening of the seventh seal, following the breaking of the silence (which I believe signifies Pentecost), is the sounding of seven trumpets that portrayed events that were going to take place chronologically, from the morning of the Gospel Day, up to the evening time and final consummation of the church at the end of the age. There can be no time parallel with the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the opening of the seventh seal, for the sounding of the seventh trumpet is merely the climax of the first of the several series of prophecies brought to view after the opening of the seventh seal. **Mark well, the seventh seal age covers the *entire* gospel dispensation – all that was introduced in the first six seals.**

It is also folly to presume that the sounding of each trumpet represents some special “church age.” There is nothing in all the Word of God that so much as hints at such a thing. Without delving into the signification of the symbols brought to view following the sounding of each trumpet, **let us observe that the last three trumpets are special “WOE” TRUMPETS, and signify terrible woes that must come to pass “to the inhabitants of the earth”** (See Rev. 8:13). The fifth and the sixth trumpets also have prophetic time periods allotted to the woes that they bring to the earth’s inhabitants. The

time period of the fifth trumpet woe was five months (Rev. 9:5), or 150 prophetic days, which equal 150 years. The time period of the sixth trumpet woe was “an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year (Rev. 9:15) which, in prophetic time scale equals 391 years and 15 days. This conclusion is reached from the Biblical method of prophetic time calculation spoken by God Himself: “I have appointed thee each day for a year” (Ezek. 4:6b). The days are calculated according to Jewish calendar: 360 days per year, 30 days per month, etc. One hour equals 15 days out of a prophetic year.

Regarding the second woe, signified by the sixth trumpet, F. G. Smith says, “With these specifications before us, we shall have no difficulty in identifying the power intended – **the Turkish, or Ottoman, empire**. Its agreement with the symbolic representations of the vision will be manifest from a statement of the facts of history.” – *The Revelation Explained*, page 165. After proceeding to show by quotation from history how the fierce conquests of the Ottoman Turks fulfilled the prophetic symbolism to a T, he continues:

“Calculating now the time during which these horsemen were prepared to extend their conquests – ‘an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year’ – we find according to prophetic, or symbolic, time – thirty days in a month, three hundred and sixty in a year – that it signifies three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. This is exactly the period of time that elapsed between their first victory in A. D. 1281 and their last conquest in A. D. 1672. I cannot verify the fifteen days, because no history at my command states the exact days of the month on which these victories occurred.

“One more point of importance must be considered ... that is **the continuance of the Ottoman power**. The first, or Saracen, woe [of the fifth trumpet] had power to torment men ‘five months,’ or one hundred and fifty years, during which time they continued their ravages. The second woe [of the sixth trumpet] began when the command was given to loose the four angels, or [four Sultanies, the heads of which were at Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium at] the beginning of the Ottoman conquests. ‘An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,’ or three hundred and ninety-one years, marked the time during which they were ‘prepared’ to extend their conquests. **But it is not stated that the woe itself, or the Ottoman power, would then cease**; for it is not represented as ending until after the death and resurrection of the [two] witnesses (chapter 11:14), immediately following which the coming of Christ and the general judgment, or the third woe, is described (verses 15-18). ... **It furnishes us a waymark by which we can determine our position along the pathway of time; for when it [the Ottoman empire] falls, we may rest assured that the coming of Christ is imminent.**” – *The Revelation Explained*, pages 170, 171.

F. G. Smith wrote this in the year 1906. At that time the Ottoman empire was still intact and had not yet fallen. But in 1922, following World War I, it fell and passed out of existence forever. That marked “the second woe is past,” Revelation 11:14. **Take special note of this, as this is a point of great significance and marks just where we are right now in the onward stream of time. The second woe of the sixth trumpet ended in A. D. 1922!** And immediately the announcement is made, “Behold, the third woe cometh

quickly.” **The third woe will be ushered in upon the inhabitants of the earth with the sounding of the seventh trumpet!** But before we focus on that, let’s go back and focus on what Revelation shows happened **during the sixth trumpet woe period, between 1281 A. D. and 1922 A. D.** Within the same time frame there came also a complete triumph for the two witnesses, the Word and Spirit of God!

The Rainbow Angel and Opening of the Little Book

(Revelation Chapter Ten)

In reading from the ninth chapter of Revelation on into the tenth, the scene changes from the 391-year period of Ottoman conquests portrayed in the second woe, or sixth trumpet woe, to something beautiful and glorious, which would also take place **BEFORE** the second woe would completely pass. An angel comes down from Heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow upon his head, and his face as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: **AND HE HAD IN HIS HAND A LITTLE BOOK OPEN!** (See Rev. 10:1-2.)

What does this represent? It represents a glorious revival and opening of the truth of God’s Word to mankind. Following this 391-year period of the Turkish Ottoman (Muslim) scourge that God used to punish apostate Christians throughout Europe, there was going to come a world-wide revival of true Christianity! (Read the entire 10th chapter of Revelation.) The “little book,” the Word of God was going to be prophesied (preached) “again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” This great revival should not be misconstrued by endeavoring to apply it to any particular “movement,” “reformation,” “reformer,” or “group” of people. This is where some have made a great mistake. The focus of this prophecy is not on that. The focus is the opening of the little book – the prophesying, or preaching of God’s Word again before many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings.

Now, here it gets very interesting! The rainbow angel brought to view in this chapter “set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,” and cries “with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth,” and seven thunders utter their voices. John was about to write what they uttered, but he was then commanded to seal those things up and write them not. Why? My speculation is, had he written them they would have revealed **TOO MUCH DETAIL** regarding the remaining history of time. It would have made the time of Christ’s second coming too obvious.

Instead of allowing John to write those things, the angel lifted up his hand to Heaven and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever “that there should be time no longer. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets” (verses 6 & 7).

For a clearer understanding of this passage, it is necessary to consult the original Greek text. The clause that says, “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall **begin** to sound,” the direct translation from Greek to English says, “in the days of

the voice of the seventh angel, **when he may be about to sound.**” In other words, the message is this: **in the days when the seventh angel is “about to sound” the mystery of God is going to be finished, or wrapped up, as it was revealed to God’s servants, the prophets.** The text is not necessarily teaching that the sounding of the seventh trumpet will be what finishes the mystery of God, but that the mystery of God is going to be finished “when he may be about to sound.”

Now, what is the mystery of God? The Apostle Paul speaks very clearly in the book of Colossians about it. Let’s take a close look.

“And he [Christ] is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence. For it pleased *the* Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, *I say*, whether *they be* things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in *your* mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil **the word of God; *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:** Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Col. 2:17-28. (Emphasis is mine.)

Here we have it spelled out plain and simple – the mystery of God, the precious Word of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His fullness now made available to all mankind by its proclamation to all the world. This is the mystery that was to be “finished,” or completed, when the seventh trumpet “may be about to sound.” This is the whole focus of the tenth chapter of Revelation. It is letting us know that the gospel is once again going to go forth in its fullness. It is going to happen **BEFORE the second woe is past** – the woe signified by the sixth trumpet. Despite the terrible woe, all “peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings” are going to have an opportunity to eat and digest the “little book,” the Word of God. The “little book” will taste sweet in their mouth but, when they digest it, it will become bitter in their belly as they, in obedience to the Word, enter into the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings for His body’s sake, which is the church.

Some have implied that the vision revealed to John in the tenth chapter of Revelation is specifically significant of the Evening Light Reformation of 1880 and the gospel in its fullness being proclaimed to the world during the great revival that swept the world at that time. Although ***that is included***, to so interpret the prophecy of Revelation chapter

ten is, in my opinion, a far too narrow view. In this way, some have mistakenly applied the sounding of the sixth trumpet to D. S. Warner specifically, and the “evening light” ministry. W. S. Goodnight interpreted the entire sixth trumpet era of time as beginning in 1880 and ending in 1930, a period of only 50 years. What a narrow vision! He sought to interpret all prophecy as signifying things “altogether spiritual,” which has greatly misled many well-meaning people in their basic understanding of the prophecies themselves. The prophecies were never intended by God to signify things that were “altogether spiritual.”

As we have already observed, **there is a 391-year prophetic time period related to the second woe introduced by the sixth trumpet.** Neither does the second woe of the sixth trumpet have any particular relevance to the opening of the “little book” in chapter ten, or the spreading of the gospel to all “peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” This was something that was to take place **within the same time frame – between the beginning and the ending of the second woe of the sixth trumpet.** In consideration of the evidence that the second woe began in 1281 A. D. and ended in 1922 A. D., we must look for the fulfillment of the opening of the “little book,” and all that is relevant to it, within this period of time. Since 1880 is very late in the stream of time, we must begin our search much earlier than that.

We will do well to turn our focus back to as early a time as the life and labors of John Wycliffe, who translated the Scriptures into English so that the common people could read the Word of God for themselves. Consider these facts from Wikipedia:

“John Wycliffe (/ˈwɪklɪf/; also spelled Wyclif, Wycliff, Wiclef, Wicliffe, Wickliffe; c. 1320s – 31 December 1384) was an English scholastic philosopher, theologian, biblical translator, reformer, priest, and a seminary professor at the University of Oxford. He became an influential dissident within the Roman Catholic priesthood during the 14th century and is considered an important predecessor to Protestantism.

“Wycliffe questioned the privileged status of the clergy which had bolstered their powerful role in England and the luxury and pomp of local parishes and their ceremonies. Wycliffe advocated translation of the Bible into the common vernacular. In 1382 he completed a translation directly from the Vulgate into Middle English – a version now known as Wycliffe's Bible. It is probable that he personally translated the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and it is possible he translated the entire New Testament, while his associates translated the Old Testament. Wycliffe's Bible appears to have been completed by 1384, additional updated versions being done by Wycliffe's assistant John Purvey and others in 1388 and 1395.

“Wycliffe's followers, derogatorily nicknamed Lollards, followed his lead pondering ideas such as theological virtues, predestination, iconoclasm, and the notion of caesaropapism, while questioning the veneration of saints, the sacraments, requiem masses, transubstantiation, monasticism, and the existence of the Papacy.

“From the 16th century, the Lollard movement is sometimes regarded as the precursor to the Protestant Reformation. Wycliffe was accordingly characterized as the evening star of scholasticism and as the morning star of the English Reformation. Wycliffe's writings in Latin greatly influenced the philosophy and teaching of the Czech reformer Jan Hus (c. 1369–1415), whose execution in 1415 sparked a revolt and led to the Hussite Wars of 1419–1434.”

Wikipedia has this to say regarding the execution of Jan Hus (or John Huss):

“When Alexander V was elected as a pope, he was persuaded to side with Bohemian Church authorities against Hus and his disciples. He issued a Papal bull that excommunicated Hus; however, it was not enforced, and Hus continued to preach. Hus then spoke out against Alexander V's successor, Antipope John XXIII, for his selling of indulgences. Hus' excommunication was then enforced, and he spent the next two years living in exile. When the Council of Constance assembled, Hus was asked to be there and present his views on the dissension within the Church. When he arrived, he was immediately arrested and put in prison. He was eventually taken in front of the council and asked to recant his views. He replied, **‘I would not for a chapel of gold retreat from the truth!’** When he refused, he was put back in prison. On 6 July 1415, he was burned at the stake for heresy against the doctrines of the Catholic Church. He could be heard singing Psalms as he was burning.”

It is also said that the last words of John Huss were, **“O, holy simplicity!”** And as his executioners were about to burn him, he told them that they were now getting ready to roast a goose (that was what his last name meant in Bohemian) but that, in one hundred years, there would come a swan that they could neither roast nor boil! This was a prophetic utterance of the coming of Martin Luther and the sixteenth century reformation. The Catholic Church tried to do away with Martin Luther also, but the providence of God did not allow them to succeed.

There were thousands in the course of history who laid their lives on the line as well as literally laid their lives down to eat the “little book.” Like John Huss, they “would not for a chapel of gold retreat from the truth!” The “little book” became bitter in their bellies, but they loved it and ate it anyway. Among these were a great number of what came to be called “Anabaptists.” They were so called by their enemies because of their rejection of infant baptism by the Catholic Church and their obedience to the Word of God to be “baptized again” in answer to a good conscience toward God which they received through a real “born again” experience. This was considered a criminal offense by the authorities of the day and was punishable by death. Many gave their lives for simply obeying God’s Word on this line and rejecting the tradition of the Catholic Church. These people were real saints, **members of the church of God** by spiritual connection with Jesus Christ. They were our brethren.

The opening of the “little book” of Revelation chapter ten includes (in my view) a progressive series of events (great spiritual revivals and reformations) that began as early as the 14th century and culminated in the 19th century, just prior to the passing of the second woe of the sixth trumpet. **The Evening Light Reformation was merely the**

climax of the entire series. Mark well, **the sixth trumpet does not signify any reformation, reformer, or spiritual awakening but rather signifies the duration of the period of the second woe**. During this period of time, the rainbow angel from Heaven descends and opens the little book. F. G. Smith says (and I totally agree), the rainbow angel represents “**the glorious assembly of God’s reformers.**” (See *The Revelation Explained*, page 26.)

Andrew L. Byers writes, “It could not have been expected that all the Scriptural truths and principles should at any time or by any one reformer be recovered from the rubbish under which they had been buried for a thousand years. There have been numerous reforms, bringing out various truths that had been obscured by the apostasy. Thus, **truth in her progress upward to the Scriptural level, has arisen only by successive steps**, God having to use human instrumentalities that were limited by the prevailing tendencies and beliefs of the times. Each reformer naturally dealt with conditions that were most conspicuous from his viewpoint and was exercised in questions of truth that applied only to such conditions. His reform work was not final in character, inasmuch as it left some errors still uncorrected. Hence **the progress upward was by a succession of reforms**, each, as a general thing, springing from a higher level of truth and spiritual attainment than those preceding. With the great decline into apostasy now in the past, **the church of God was disposed to rise out of confusion, her destiny being the attainment of her original standing, when it could be said that her sun should ‘no more go down.’**”

– *Birth of a Reformation*, pages 15 – 16.

Consider this quotation from the late church historian, Charles E. Brown:

“As a matter of historic fact, D. S. Warner stood rather in the historic tradition of radical [fundamental] Christianity, extending from the dissidents from Roman Catholicism in the eleventh century down through the Anabaptists into the radical Christianity of modern times. It was with this school of historic Christianity that Warner had deepest affinity. ...

“Actually, **as the historian of theology can show, every doctrine save one which D. S. Warner taught had been taught in large groups of Christians at one time or another throughout Christian history.** ... Men like Luther, Wesley, and other reformers did not introduce novelties into the church’s theology. They set old and neglected truths in a fresh, new light. They changed the arrangement of some themes and placed fresh emphasis upon old and forgotten truths. This is what Warner did. ...

“In [the] foregoing paragraph we reserved one point of Warner’s teaching as a novelty. This was **his doctrine concerning the identity, or at least the possible identity, between the visible and the invisible church.** When we say that the doctrine of the identity of the visible and invisible church is a novelty, we mean in modern theological thinking. **IT WAS THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH DURING THE FIRST CENTURY THAT THE NORMAL CHURCH IS BOTH VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE AT THE SAME TIME.** ... It is easy for the historical student to verify this assertion by study of the ancient patristic literature.

“Numerous authorities concur in the statement that Augustine was the first authoritative writer in the church who drew the distinction between the visible and the invisible church, and this he did to contrive a defense against the Donatists, a widespread sect of his time and country who said that the Catholic Church could not be the church of God because it was composed so largely of sinners. Augustine countered this attack by the defensive claim that there was a visible and invisible church, and many false professors had found their way into the visible church.

“When the Protestant reformers were accused of dividing the church they fell back upon the arguments of Augustine and maintained that they had divided the visible church only but had done no injury to the unity of the invisible church of Christ. From that time forward the doctrine of a visible and invisible church was prominent in Protestantism, being regarded as one of its foremost dogmas, since upon it rested the primary defense against the charges of Roman Catholicism concerning dividing the church.

“In the beginning of the Friends movement under George Fox there was for a short time a vision and acceptance of the principle of the identity of the visible and invisible church, and the Quakers practiced this doctrine for a short time. It was not long, however until the exigencies of their struggles with the courts, their persecutions, and their efforts to hold property and carry on Christian work caused them to drop this doctrine. Warner preached this doctrine assiduously from the first issues of *The Gospel Trumpet* throughout his life.

“While D. S. Warner spent a great deal of time in a fresh study of Christian doctrine from the Bible direct, it must be repeated that he was not a technical theologian, neither was he a dogmatist. In fact, the chief accent of his preaching was not dogmatic and didactic, but evangelical and evangelistic. In other words, he was more interested in getting people saved, sanctified, and healed of their afflictions than in any other aspect of his work. He was concerned about the doctrine of the church and the great principles of Christian living, not because he was obsessed with a theory, but because he believed that the doctrine of a pure church intelligently preached and earnestly practiced would actually tend to the salvation of souls and the increase of the kingdom of God.”

– *When the Trumpet Sounded*, see pages 83 – 87.

The one thing that gave the Evening Light Reformation its special unique character was, as C. E. Brown said, the fresh emphasis it placed on the neglected Bible “doctrine concerning the identity, or at least the possible identity, between the visible and the invisible church.” The reformation message proclaimed it was time for the uniting of all Christians into one *visible* body in Jesus Christ, led, directed and controlled by the Holy Spirit, to the exclusion of all ecclesiastical systems led, directed, and controlled by men. This message had never been maintained by any other body, or group, of Christians since the original apostasy. D. S. Warner saw this unity, or gathering together unto Christ alone, as the ultimate desire of Christ for his followers and that it is only made possible through the Christian’s receiving of the “fullness of Christ” through the grace of “entire sanctification.”

Now, in the eleventh chapter of Revelation, John is given “a reed like unto a rod” whereby he could measure “the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” Again, this reed represents the Word of God. It is by the Word of God that the temple, or church, of God is measured, including them that worship therein and the sacrifices they offer to God. (See also Eph. 2:18-22.) Revelation chapter eleven focuses on God’s “two witnesses,” the role they play in the operation of His kingdom work on earth, and their treatment by apostate ecclesiastical powers. By comparing what the prophet Zechariah says about these two witnesses in Zechariah chapter 4, we have conclusive evidence that they signify the Word and the Spirit of God.

In Revelation chapter eleven, verses 11-12, we find life from God enters into these two witnesses and they stand upon their feet, then ascend up into the ecclesiastical heavens in the sight of their enemies. **THIS HAPPENS JUST PRIOR TO THE PASSING OF THE SECOND WOE OF THE SIXTH TRUMPET!** (See verse 14.) It is at this resurrection of the two witnesses where the Evening Light Reformation particularly comes into the picture – a reformation, or time of great spiritual revival, when the Word and the Spirit of God were given complete and full right-of-way to operate unhindered by the straps and yokes of men’s creeds and organizations.

Contrary to the misperceptions of some, **this reformation was NOT the result of the leadership or thought processes of any individual, such as D. S. Warner. It was rather the result of a world-wide moving of the Spirit of God upon Christendom.** It was the result of a spiritual awakening that took place because of the moving and enlightening of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the Word. As one songwriter of that era put it:

“There’s a sound of a going in the mulberry trees, [2 Sam. 5:24]
News of nations awaking borne upon every breeze.”

One has but to read the literature of that era of time to get the big picture of what was taking place. D. S. Warner happened to be a brother in Christ upon whom the Holy Spirit moved to publish a paper called *The Gospel Trumpet*, which God used mightily to spread His light and truth around the world. That publication proved, in the long term, to be the most effective one, no doubt, but **it was not the ONLY one!** There were others that D. S. Warner himself advertised and recommended in *The Gospel Trumpet* for his readers to subscribe to and read. Take note of this:

“The Sword”

“We feel it our duty to recommend to all our readers *The Sword*, a solid, pure and straight, 16-column monthly, published by T. P. Dolan. 50 cents per year. 142 Eighth St., Washington, DC. Each *Sword* has a cut designed for the paper, and strikingly illustrating the popular sins and living issues of the day.

“The Sword is jousting steel, something that really cuts – hews Agag to pieces before the Lord. From its present unsparing sweep, we think it will yet deal definite blows upon sectism, the root of all church sin. The editor says, ‘There is not a denominational journal in the world that dare publish all the truth that its denomination need to know.’ *The*

Sword needs and deserves help, and we hope many of our readers will send in their names.

– *The Gospel Trumpet*, November 15, 1881.

“We Praise God for *The Sword*”

“It cuts better and better. May the Lord continue to send Bro. Dolan hundreds of subscribers. God bless the *Sword*. We rejoice in its prosperity, and in its cutting and slashing upon the works of the devil.”

“*The Radical Christian*”

“On most all points of present needed reform and radicalness is true to its title. We recommend that paper to our readers as good solid food. God bless Bro. Sims. Send for the *Radical*, Galt, Ontario.”

– *The Gospel Trumpet*, December 15, 1882.

The spirit of the “Evening Light Reformation,” as it came to be called, was by no means a “we are it” spirit, but it was altogether a “**Christ is it**” spirit. The message was not, “come out of Babylon and be gathered unto us,” but “come, let us be gathered together unto Christ.” “Now **IN CHRIST we’ve found a freedom, which eternally shall last.**” “Quickly sound the proclamation of the glorious jubilee.” It was a glorious time in the history of God’s people! The jubilee proclamation was welcomed by thousands of God-hungry souls worldwide. They came out from Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Mennonites, Adventists, Cambellites, Winebrennerians, and many other backgrounds and all found their identity in Jesus Christ through “entire sanctification” – complete abandonment of themselves to God and the leadership of His Word and Spirit. They wanted the whole world to experience the love, the joy, the peace, the freedom, and the oneness that they found in Jesus Christ simply by drinking of His Spirit in its fullness. Think about this good article:

“That They May Be One”

“It is very manifest that God wants His people to be one. Such was the prayer of Jesus, and such has been, and is the desire of all good men. But there has been a good many mistaken efforts to bring about this result. **One of the most common blunders that has been made on this subject is that of trying to unify God’s people by making them one sect who accept one creed.** A rallying cry has been made of some dogma or of ecclesiasticism, or yet again of some ritualistic observances. But all these efforts, instead of securing unity, have only resulted in division.

“It has been manifested in every age that the efforts to unite God’s people on dogma, or on rites, has been futile and divisive. How zealous some have been about baptisms, close communion, and apostolic succession. But alas, what bigotry and division has this zeal, ‘but not according to knowledge,’ begotten. All efforts to unify on this plane have only resulted in adding another sect to the many existing divisions, and unity has been really hindered by those who professed to promote it.

“But God proposes unity. Shall it not come to pass? What then of the existing *isms*? Must they not pass away? Must there not in the nature of the case come in a new order of things? **Our beloved *ism* must be set aside.**

“That God never intended unity on the plane of the *rudiments of Christianity* is manifest from the fact that He commands, ‘Therefore *leaving* the principles of the doctrine of Christ, **let us *go on* unto perfection**’ (Heb. 6:1). **We are to ‘*LEAVE*’ them and ‘*go on*,’ because unity is one of the chief elements of perfection and that [unity] is not in these rudiments.** How many, instead of obeying God and *leaving* ‘the doctrine of baptism’ and ‘going on,’ have halted; just halted right there and begun to wrangle over *into* and *out of*. Had all who came to these rudiments, after meeting their demands according to the light God gave them, left them, and *gone on* to perfection, what divisions and heart burnings might have been avoided.

“On this advanced line God has provided ‘for the perfecting of the saints;’ and it is to result in our coming to ‘the unity of the faith,’ and ‘the knowledge of the Son of God’ (see Eph. 4:11-13). This unity is reached only when the saints, having begun in the Spirit (Gal. 3:3), ‘go on’ until they reach the unifying baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12: 13). This baptism comes when the believer is sanctified wholly (Rom. 15:16).

“We have attended holiness camp meetings where four kinds of Methodists, two kinds of Presbyterians, Congregationalists, United Brethren, Catholics, Quakers, and Christians [also known as ‘Disciples,’ or ‘Campbellites,’ or more commonly today as ‘Church of Christ’], have been worshipping together as one. They had been baptized by one Spirit into one body and were drinking into one Spirit. The fact that they belonged to different sects, and not to one, was unknown until called out by someone who desired to show, to the glory of God, how holiness united the children of God and destroyed all sect lines and isms.

“Now it is just here we come to ‘the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God; unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.’ Now what would the multiplication of such meetings be but the destruction of sectism and the unifying of the body of Christ? Well, *that is just what holiness does*. And it is destined to increase in its influence and power. If people say holiness will break up the churches, meaning the sects, we say, “yes.” But it will save THE CHURCH. **The divisions, the tall-steepled ecclesiasticism, the pride of our beloved *isms*, must pass away; they ‘shall not be remembered nor come into mind.’”**

Written by the editor of *Good Way*, another anti-sectarian holiness publication.
Published and shared in *The Gospel Trumpet*, November 15, 1882

When God’s two witnesses, the Word and the Spirit, stood upon their feet, and then ascended to their rightful place in the ecclesiastical heavens (Rev. 11:11-12), as a result of the great holiness movement of the latter 1800s, it drew great attention from Christendom worldwide. It was not something that merely happened in a corner and went unnoticed. It got the attention of friends and foes alike. God confirmed His Word with

signs following. Great grace was upon all those who set themselves apart to God in entire sanctification. Many miraculous healings took place in answer to their prayers, such as the opening of blind eyes, and healing of many incurable diseases. At this time, God restored all the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians, chapter 12, to the church and manifested His great power through His sanctified host in a mighty way. The earth was illuminated with His glory! It was the light of the evening time!

But mark well this fact: **this was not a restoring of the church itself, but rather, a returning to, or embracing again all the doctrines and principles of the Word of God** that had been hidden or buried by apostasy. It was affected by a moving of God's Spirit upon the hearts and minds of the people, redirecting them back to the right foundation and revealing to them how to build on it. **The substance for the building had always been there!** *The restoring of light and understanding* of what the church really is enabled those who were blood-bought members of the church already to sever their relationships with every religious element that was foreign to the Word of God, and thus discard the wood, hay, and stubble from their foundation (see 1 Cor. 3:4-15). This was accomplished by the sanctifying grace of the Spirit as they set themselves apart to God alone and fully yielded to His Spirit's control.

[Note: **It still works the same today!** No one needs to worry about restoring the church – just simply get on the right foundation and let the Master Builder fitly frame you into His indestructible, unchangeable building! This structure consists only of living stones (1 Pet. 2:5) which, like Solomon's temple of old, are "made ready ... before brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building." (1 Kings 6:7.) **The Holy Spirit tempers and fitly frames this building together!** All we need to do to get fitted and framed into it is just simply yield ourselves so completely to the leadings of the Holy Spirit that He can guide us into all truth and mold us into the image of Jesus Christ. It is this shaping and molding into Christlikeness that fits us in. No foreign material has ever been accepted into this building; therefore, we must allow the Sanctifier to thoroughly purge everything that is unlike Christ out of us.]

The 1880 reformation produced a notable manifestation of the light and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ worldwide, because of the multitudes of believers who embraced the Word of truth in its fullness and received the sanctifying work of the Spirit in their hearts and lives at that time (2 Thess. 13-14). It was by no means a thing done in a corner, but a mighty moving of God was evident throughout the world as His Word was preached with the unction of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. In thirty years (1880 to 1910), the message had pretty much spread around the globe. As one poet and songwriter of that era, C. W. Naylor, penned:

“Evening has come at last, the earth is now aglow,
Truth in its beauty shines and ALL its way may know:
 Welcome, O wondrous light, illuminate each heart,
 Knowledge of God's blest will to ev'ry soul impart.”

This resurgence of the Gospel message in its fullness was prophetically due to take place *just prior* to the passing of the second woe of the sixth trumpet. (Rev. 11:11-14.) God saw to it that every jot and tittle of His holy Word was once again openly made manifest and available to the whole world **before the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which will usher in the third and FINAL woe upon its inhabitants.** There was nothing that had been done in darkness that was not openly declared in the light. All the works of the devil were uncovered at this time and the path to freedom and victory clearly revealed. It was the light of the evening time.

“But all things that are reprov’d are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” Eph. 5:13-17. “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3) – the complete setting apart and devoting of yourself to God and to the truth of His Word. “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” John 17:17.

But there was ***ONE MORE GREAT EVENT*** that must also take place before “the second woe is past,” and it is portrayed in verse 13. Let us now take a close look at it.

The Great Earthquake and the Passing of the Second Woe

“And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.” Rev. 11:13.

Notice that this is the last great event to take place just before the second woe passes away (verse 14). Also take note that the symbolism here is drawn from both the realm of nature as well as human life. This indicates that **it has both a political and spiritual significance.** Where shall we look for a great worldwide upheaval (earthquake) that produced both political and spiritual ramifications just as the Word and the Spirit reached the height of their testimony in the ecclesiastical heavens, or church realm? I believe we find it demonstrated very clearly when we turn our focus on the decade of 1910 to 1920 A. D.

What happened in this remarkable decade of world history? The first great World War took place! World War I was a worldwide political upheaval that shook governments and nations out of the places they had held for centuries! (World War II was no doubt an aftershock of this great “earthquake.”) Now, observe carefully this quotation from Wikipedia:

“The Ottoman entry into World War I along the Central Powers occurred on 11 November 1914. The Middle Eastern theatre of World War I ended with the signing of the Armistice of Mudros on 30 October 1918. The Occupation of Constantinople by British, French and Italian forces occurred on 13 November 1918. ... **The abolition of**

the Ottoman Sultanate by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) on 1 November 1922 ended the Ottoman Empire, which had lasted since 1299. On 11 November 1922, at the Conference of Lausanne, the sovereignty of the GNAT exercised by the Government in Ankara over Turkey was recognized. The last sultan, Mehmed VI, departed the Ottoman capital, Istanbul, on 17 November 1922. The legal position was solidified with the signing of Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923.”

Now, let’s read what F. G. Smith wrote in 1906:

“At the time the witnesses [the Word and the Spirit] reach their greatest exaltation, a great earthquake takes place upon earth, and the tenth part of the city falls. **The nature of the symbol would point us to some political upheaval.** Since the great city of Babylon is composed of different divisions ... it is a matter of doubt as to which part of the city is here referred to; but most probably that of the hierarchy as embraced in one of the ten divisions or kingdoms. Since the fulfillment of this prediction is yet future [he didn’t know in 1906 just how close it really was!] I speak with hesitation and wait for the event to make all clear. It is probable, however, that either in this political revolution, or about that time, the Ottoman power will be overthrown” – *The Revelation Explained*, pages 209, 210.

It was the great earthquake of World War I that brought about the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire which led to its complete dissolution in 1922. Notice the very next announcement that followed the description of the great earthquake in Revelation 11:13, is, **“The second woe is past; and, behold the third woe cometh quickly.”** Rev. 11:14. But before we proceed to consider the third woe, which is ushered upon the inhabitants of the earth by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, let’s take a closer look at the details of the great earthquake that ended the second woe. The following quote is again taken from Wikipedia:

“World War I (or the First World War, often abbreviated as WWI or WW1) was a global war originating in Europe that lasted from 28 July 1914 to 11 November 1918. Contemporaneously known as the Great War or "the war to end all wars," it led to the mobilization of more than 70 million military personnel, including 60 million Europeans, making it one of the largest wars in history. It is also one of the deadliest conflicts in history, with an estimated 9 million combatant deaths and 13 million civilian deaths as a direct result of the war, while resulting genocides and the related 1918 Spanish flu pandemic caused another 17–100 million deaths worldwide, including an estimated 2.64 million Spanish flu deaths in Europe and as many as 675,000 Spanish flu deaths in the United States.”

Now, **here is where this subject gets VERY interesting to me!** With the “great earthquake” (a phenomenon from the department of *nature*) described in Revelation 11:13 came also the slaying “of men seven thousand” (objects from the department of human life). “Slain of men seven thousand” would naturally signify a massive, wholesale slaughtering of men, “seven” standing as a symbol of completeness. Obviously, there was a *literal* historic record of unprecedented destruction of human life during World War I.

But this symbol, being drawn from the department of “human life,” may also signify a massive *spiritual* slaying of souls! It signifies, to me, that something takes place at the same time this great political upheaval transpires that affects the state of affairs in the ecclesiastical heavens, or church realm! There comes with the great earthquake, a slaying of the spiritual lives of men. In looking back on history, we find that this was EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED!

World War I took place during the years 1914 – 1918. What else took place during those same years? The Gospel Trumpet Company, the greatest voice and influence in the earth at that time for radical Christianity was shaken out of its place also! These gospel publishers compromised their fundamental teachings during the very time World War I was taking place. [For an in-depth look at details, see my book “Windows to the Past and Warnings for the Present.”] Not only was the Gospel Trumpet publishing work affected, but the entire realm of Christendom was affected. **The second decade of the 20th century not only changed the course of political affairs and nations, but it also changed the course of spiritual affairs and churches.** Nothing was ever the same after that. **That decade set the course for the ending of the gospel age.**

In the year 1999, *Time-Life Books* released a series of ten books covering the major events of each decade of the 20th century. How would you suppose they titled the book that covered the events of 1910 to 1920? It was titled, “**The End of Innocence.**” While that decade brought an end to political establishments (which included the overthrowing of the Ottoman power – the second woe of the 6th trumpet), it also brought an end to established landmarks, standards, and sacred Biblical traditions that had been held in the ecclesiastical realm for centuries. The spiritual course of religious institutions was altered in that turbulent decade, as well as the political course of nations. This set the stage for the liberalization and moral corrupting of society in general. In other words, the way was opened for the moral decline and decay that Jesus prophesied would take place just before His second coming, when conditions would become “as it was in the days of Noah” and “as it was in the days of Lot” (Luke 17:26-30). Who cannot see the steady progress of moral corruption that has taken place throughout the world ever since the time of World War I? It has progressed steadily from then until now. This is bringing about the quick approach of the third woe, the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Referring to the state of affairs He foresaw would be prevailing at this time, Jesus said, “When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” Luke 18:8.

The Morning Cometh, and Also the Night! (What is Signified in the Opening of the Sixth Seal?)

“The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, **The morning cometh, and also the night**: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.” Isa. 21:12.

D. S. Warner comments on this scripture as follows:

“The morning and evening of God’s church on earth are spoken of in the Scriptures. The time from which this inquiry is represented as going forth is expressed by the ‘burden of Dumah.’ The word [Dumah] means ‘silence,’ and leads our minds to the time just prior to the coming of Christ, when no prophetic voice was heard on earth, and all the world sat musing in the dark. To understand the lesson, place yourself back in Bible times. People carried no watches, nor did city clocks and electric lights reveal the time of the night. But the watchman upon the walls knew the watch or hour of the night. To him therefore the lone traveler in the silent hours of the night called out, ‘Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?’ The watchman saith, The morning cometh and also the night.’ When we consider that the night of the apostasy so soon followed the morning of Christianity, we see the propriety of the watchman’s announcement, that the morning was nigh, but alas! a dark dismal night was soon to shut out the light of the new day.

“The morning did come! The silence of Dumah was broken by the ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ A few months later the Messiah appeared; and the people that sat in darkness saw a great light, as it had been foretold, ‘For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.’ Isa. 60:2-3.

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.’ John 8:12. So the first advent of Christ was the dawning of a ‘clear day.’ And in that morning of the new dispensation the church of God shone out with the following glorious attributes: she was wholly a divine institution: founded, built, owned and governed by God; and the same God worked all things in all the members (1 Cor. 12:6). She was ‘built up a spiritual house,’ ‘an holy nation’ (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). She was ‘one body,’ and her members one as Christ and the Father are one (John 17). She had ‘one Spirit,’ ‘one God,’ ‘one faith.’ Christ was her only door, and salvation the only manner of entrance (John 10:9). She had also various spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12), and bore the name given by the mouth of the Lord, ‘Church of God.’ ...

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.’ Amos 8:9. The clear day was the Holy Spirit dispensation ushered in by the Savior. But its light did not shine throughout the dispensational day. Her sun went down at noon. And by reading verses 11

and 12 we learn how the light was obscured. ‘Behold, the days come saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.’ **The Word of God was taken from the people**, and though the priests had access to the Bible, being corrupt hirelings, darkness covered them as well as the people. ...

“‘Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine, and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God.’ Micah 3:6-7.

“Over both prophets and people the sun went down. This awful night of ignorance, superstition and papal supremacy continued for the long space of 1260 years. It had been foretold by Isaiah, 63:18, 1:21-23; by Christ, Matthew 24:11, 12, 29; by Paul, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-10; by Peter, in his second epistle 2:1-2; also by John, 1 John 2:18; Revelation 13 and elsewhere.”

He then goes on to give more detail about the well-known fact of the apostasy of the papal “dark ages,” followed by a cloudy day of gradual recovery of Bible truths through Protestant reformations, then he says:

“But turning back to Zechariah 14:6-7, we find after the night had passed away, the cloudy day which followed it was also to clear up near the close of time, and so it is written, ‘But it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light.’ This time has arrived. And this is what we mean by the ‘Evening Light;’ namely, God has brought forth his own church to view again, which was long hid under the rubbish of human creeds and inventions. ... This reformation is pre-eminently the work of God. And ‘His going forth is prepared as the morning,’ from which it is justly inferred that the light of the evening shall be as the morning.

“The same is proved in Isaiah 58:8-12: ‘**Then shall thy light break forth as the morning**, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; **then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday**; And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.’

“... The yoke of sectism, of sin, pride, popular sentiment, in fact every yoke of Satan is being consumed by the fires of this reformation (see Isaiah 10:17-23, 27). ‘That ye break every yoke.’ Isaiah 58:6. Let all who would stand in the evening light carefully read, attain unto, and exemplify the above description of holy character that shall be ‘as the morning.’ It requires the same holiness, unity, power, and gifts that shone out in the divine church in the morning of her dispensation on earth. All this is promised by many scriptures and must be manifest. ...

“We simply add that, while the ‘evening light’ expresses a great truth, a present truth in prophecy, which God’s people appreciate, **it is neither given for, nor used by the saints as a denominational title.** We utterly repudiate any and all names except such as the inspired Word uses to designate God’s children, such as ‘Christians,’ ‘saints,’ etc. And the body of Christ is only properly denominated ‘the church of God,’ as named by the Lord Himself – Isaiah 62:2; John 17:11-12; Acts 20:28. Amen.” (End of quote.)

In this writing, D. S. Warner cited several scriptures that clearly revealed what brought about the apostasy and darkness that followed the “morning” of the Gospel Day. One of them was Amos 8:11, which spoke about spiritual famine because of ***not hearing the words of the Lord. I would like to focus now on the “darkness” that has followed the ushering in of the evening light!***

Interestingly, just about 30 years following Pentecost, Apostle Paul wrote about the mystery of iniquity that was already working that would eventually lead up to the revelation of the “man of sin,” the papal hierarchy of Rome. Also, just about 30 years following the complete restoration of the Gospel truth in the evening time, the mystery of iniquity again began to work to undermine the effect the pure light of the Gospel was having on the world.

“In Revelation 6:12-17, we read, “And I beheld **when he had opened the sixth seal,** and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and **the sun became black as sackcloth of hair,** and the moon became as blood; And **the stars of heaven fell unto the earth,** even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand.”

While W. S. Goodnight taught men to believe that the sixth seal denoted the labors of D. S. Warner and his associates in proclaiming the evening light, it is obvious by examining the above text that the opening of the sixth seal has to do with **the darkening of the sun, or obscuring of the light,** as well as a great upheaval and shaking wherein the “stars of heaven” would fall unto the earth. Jude also spoke about “wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 13).

Remember, the contents of the first six seals, Revelation chapter six, are *an introduction* to the contents of the seventh seal, Revelation chapters 8 through 22. The seventh seal reveals the bigger picture of what was introduced in the first six seals and covers the events of the entire Gospel Dispensation in detail from beginning to end, while the first six seals merely give introduction to them from beginning to end. This is what F. G. Smith believed and taught and is also what was revealed to my understanding, through study and meditation, independently of reading F. G. Smith's writing.

F. G. Smith says, and I concur, "In these six seals (Revelation chapter 6) we have a vivid outline of mighty events, **political and ecclesiastical**, extending from the earliest stage of Christianity to the end of time. ... It takes divine wisdom to understand the true position of the church in the present, and she can scarcely read her past history by natural wisdom alone, much less outline the future. First, the establishment of Christianity is symbolized, then the violence of the Pagan party, the apostasy, and final establishment of the 'man of sin,' until the millions of earth are crushed by the spiritual tyranny or by the arm of civil power, and the cry of the martyrs goes up 'How long, O Lord?' But they are told to rest 'a little season,' when they shall witness the hand of God laid upon these persecuting nations of earth, convulsing them in the most fearful revolutions, and **ending finally in their complete overthrow in that last 'great day of God Almighty.'**" – *The Revelation Explained*, page 122.

The opening of the sixth seal clearly reveals the final winding up of the Gospel Day. I do not believe (nor did F. G. Smith) that it has any reference to D. S. Warner or to any reformation movement. I believe it has reference (at least in part) to the very things I've been discussing in the preceding chapter – the great earthquake that happened just before the passing of the second woe of the sixth trumpet – World War I – the revolutions that overthrew nations and moved them out of their places, the shaking of established society in general out of its place, and the great spiritual darkness that would come over the earth before the soon-coming third woe – the second coming of Christ and final judgement. As we know, during the decade of 1910 – 1920 and thereafter, many spiritual luminaries (ministers of the Gospel) also left their first estate. In other words, many "stars of heaven fell unto the earth." But what could have caused the sun to become ***black as the sackcloth of hair*** with the opening of the sixth seal, as the Gospel Day is ending? Pay close attention to the following presentation of scriptures.

"Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." John 11:9-10. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9:4.

David of old foresaw **the Gospel Day** when in Psalm 110: 1-4, he said, "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. **Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; thou hast the dew of thy youth.** The LORD

hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.”

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. **This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.**” Psa. 118:22-24.

What a day to rejoice in! THE GOSPEL DAY – the final dispensation day! It is the day of the Lord’s power, when God has stretched forth His mighty hand to all mankind, so save all who are willing to come to Him through Jesus, His Son, whom He has made our Mediator and Intercessor at His right hand. **But whether that day is one of light or darkness unto men depends upon their response to what it has to offer.** The offer has remained the same to all men from Pentecost until now, but their perception of the day of Christ’s power and what is offered has not remained the same in all generations. Barney Warren wrote, in his generation, about his perception of the evening of this glorious Gospel Day in a song, the chorus of which says:

“We are in the evening of the dispensation day,
When the Gospel light has scattered all the night away;
On the sunny mountain where the melody of song
Floats upon the breezes as we swiftly pass along.”

Truly, the evening of the Gospel Day was made light as the morning and the darkness of night was driven afar by the proclamation of God’s Word by the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. Darkness was dispelled for as many as hungered and thirsted for God’s truth and righteousness! However, more than a century has transpired since this song was written, and we have swiftly passed along now **to the *midnight hour* of this Gospel dispensation day.** No longer is the earth aglow with the fervent fires of spiritual revival. Men are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness as they did in generations past. For that reason, they are not being “filled” (Matt. 5:6). Neither are they “poor in spirit,” as those to whom the kingdom of heaven is promised (Matt. 5:3), but they have become “heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (see 2 Tim. 3:1-5). The Bridegroom is at the door. Darkness is again covering the earth, and gross darkness the people (Isa. 60:2). **So, what happened to the evening light, and what is the reason for the gross darkness covering the earth at this time?**

Jesus gives us a clear answer. “And **this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.** For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” John 3:19-21. “Then Jesus said unto them, **Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.** These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.” John 12:35-36.

Darkness is the inevitable result of refusing or failing to walk in light. **The presence of darkness does not mean that light is not there!** As John also tells us in the first chapter of his gospel, **“the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”** “He [Christ, the light] was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” (See John 1:4-14.) The world did not perceive the Light when He came. **Spiritual night, or darkness, comes automatically with the rejection or turning aside from spiritual light.**

This is the condition of our world today. **The evening light is shining as brightly as it ever did. The sun has not gone down again, however, the world is lying in darkness, not comprehending the glorious light that is now shining and available to them.** The “little book” that the rainbow angel of Revelation, chapter 10, opened is still available to all peoples, nations, and tongues. Whosoever will, may now take it and eat it up. But as the prophet Isaiah said, “... Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, And the LORD have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.” Isa. 6:9-12.

Apostle Paul said, “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts**, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” 2 Cor. 4:3-6.

The light is here and readily available to anyone who chooses to believe in the light, flee darkness and night, and come to the light of day. The “little book” – the Bible – the Word of God – is even available on the world wide web. It is not obscured from the people as it was in the papal “dark ages.” But who now cares enough to put forth the effort to take it and eat it up? Some don’t want to eat it because they know it’s going to make their belly bitter (Rev. 10:10), and their god is their belly (Phil. 3:18-19) – living for their flesh. To eat the Book would mean suffering the cross of self-denial.

But Paul said, “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ [the Light], and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.**” Rom. 13:12-14. Peter said, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and **the day star arise in your hearts.**” 2 Pet. 1:19.

The heart is where the light shines and must be comprehended. That is where men receive knowledge of the glory of God and behold the face of Jesus Christ, “the bright and morning star” (Rev. 22:16). Christ is “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9), but only with their hearts can men believe in the light, receive the light, and become the children of light. As many as turn away from the light go into darkness and remain there. Over the past 100 years, because of so many turning away from light and hating the light, because their deeds were evil and because they wanted to make provision to fulfill fleshly lusts rather than put on the Lord Jesus Christ and become clothed with the armor of His light and His righteousness, they went into darkness. For this reason, darkness now covers the earth and gross darkness the people, while at the same time **the evening light of the Gospel Day is still shining as brightly as it ever did. The darkness is simply not comprehending it because men’s hearts are not in a condition to receive it.**

An anonymous writer from China very accurately pinpointed the time in which we now live in an article titled, “**Just Before Jesus Comes.**” Think about this:

“It would be noticed in the scriptures that the apostasy is not concerning education or fine churches or able ministers or large congregations or the progress of intellectual and material prosperity. **But it would be a breaking down of faith and a denial of the power of God in Holy Ghost experience.** There is at present well-nigh a universal landslide toward higher criticism which is lower infidelism. There is also a denial of the supernatural working of God in regeneration, definite answers to prayers, and the revelation of divine things to the soul by the Holy Spirit, which make up the religion of the apostles and their successors.

“We are then to expect great deceptions and delusions, deceiving if it were possible the very elect. We may also expect great advances in *forms* of godliness in the last days. **Faith will not become low through worldliness and the denial of the Scriptures only, but also through the remarkable imitative faiths which will work on in their deceptive power.** These movements will become an unseen influence in the air around us and the atmosphere will be peopled with evil spirits and heavy with the depression of hell. These evil spirits will do their utmost to injure, mislead, confuse, and depress the children of God. Our bodies will be afflicted. It will press in on our minds and becloud our souls. All kinds of strange feelings and new and peculiar trials will come to us, a surprising lack of desire and energy Godward, a spiritual deadness, a mental heaviness, a lethargy of soul; an alarming desire for forbidden things and a peculiar delight and fascination in any of the world’s pleasures we dare to taste.

“It will be very difficult to preach the Word in liberty and power. It will be very difficult to give attention to the Word when it is preached. It will be very difficult to get real earnest and continue in prayer. This is the atmosphere in which we must battle as the last days darken around us. Oh, **let us be strong in the Lord, for Satan will no doubt bring a mysterious power to bear on our minds and wills which will make it exceedingly difficult to walk closely with God and very easy to live in the flesh.**

“We will be amazed at the power he can use against us, and it will become very hard to serve God faithfully and to pray earnestly for it will seem as if everything without us and almost everything within us has conspired to keep us from following Christ all the way, and to influence us to compromise. We will be surrounded by a worldly atmosphere that will draw us away from God, that will render prayer half-hearted and that will deaden our spiritual senses to the realities of heavenly things and the glorious presence of our Lord. It will become very easy to slip out of communion with God, and harder than ever to keep communication open between our souls and Heaven.

“Already we feel the beginning of the influence of the inrush of these things upon us. [This was written several decades ago!] Worldliness in various forms weaves the ever-expanding power over many congregations. Things are not only allowed but are unblushingly organized, yes, organized now, which would not have been possible a generation ago. The craze of the drama and the exciting round of pleasure is catered to in connection with many places of worship to the destroying of deep spirituality and bringing to an end of revivals and also the furtherance of the spirit of compromise with doubtful things and associations.

“There is a terrible decline of faith and true religion all over the world at this moment. We do not deny that there may be here and there a few exceptions. But looking at Christendom as a whole, it presents a sad picture. Reviewing these matters, do they not constitute a loud call to the servants of Christ to arise and seek during the intervening short period to make the most of this the day of opportunity before their Lord and Master summons them to give an account of their labors at the Judgment Seat of Christ?”

What solemn truth this anonymous writer from China has set before us! Apostle Paul prophesied of this very time, saying, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Tim. 3:1-6. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 Tim. 4:2-4.

We are now in the time when the preaching of the unadulterated Word is “out of season” as far as society in general is concerned. Fabulous religion is what most people are attracted to today, if they are inclined toward any religion at all. When it comes to the true religion of Jesus Christ, which involves denying oneself, taking up the cross daily, following in His steps, and sacrificing all that pertains to one’s own life for His sake and the gospel’s (Luke 9:23-24), you can scarcely find one among ten thousand who is interested in doing that. But what brought our society to this place?

During World War I, women found themselves moved out of the place they had traditionally held as “keepers at home” (Tit. 2:5) and taking their place in the work force to replace the men who had gone to fight the war. The “long hair” that had been for centuries traditionally esteemed as a woman’s “glory, given to her for a covering” (1 Cor. 11:15), began to be regarded as a nuisance in the workplace. So, they cast that old godly tradition aside and began to cut off their long hair. But that was only the beginning! By the next decade, the 1920s, women of the world, in general, had taken on a completely different look. Departing from traditional standards of “modest apparel,” they began to expose their flesh in a bolder manner than previous generations would have dared. (Remember, women are the sex model, and “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world!”) There was also a fashion trend in the 1920’s toward apparel that exhibits the pride of life and promotes the lust of the eyes. The popular attitude toward past traditions became: “Those were merely cultural standards of an older society – we have progressed and advanced beyond that now – those old customs were just merely ‘traditions of men.’”

The fact is all men endorse traditions of some sort. There are good traditions and bad traditions – godly traditions and ungodly traditions. In the beginning of the gospel age, Apostle Peter told the Gentile converts that they were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ from the vain conversation, or conduct, they had *received by tradition* from their fathers (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Salvation through the blood of Jesus introduced a new manner of life and new traditions to them. The new Christian traditions were wholesome, godly ones, that encompassed all aspects of their lives, including their manner of dress, as Peter states in chapter three of this same epistle. It takes the leadership and guiding light of the Holy Spirit to direct a Christian into behaviors and practices that are pleasing to the Lord and in harmony with the spirit of holiness and the principles of the Word of God.

But what manner of spirit is it that causes people to cast aside wholesome, godly traditions based on godly principles in exchange for traditions that give license to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life? We can be sure it is NOT the Spirit of Christ! The Spirit of Christ always directs men and women to “make not provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof” (Rom. 13:14). As I have said before, I say again, **it only takes a little sowing to the flesh to reap a bountiful harvest of corruption!** “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” Gal. 6:7-8. **We are now reaping the harvest of seeds that were sown to the flesh a hundred years ago when professed Christians made compromises regarding those “little things” the Holy Spirit had given them a sensitivity in their consciences about.**

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.” 1 Tim. 4:1-2.

Who would have thought in 1915 that a hundred years later such a thing as “gay marriage” would be made legal in the United States of America, a nation founded on, and that once practiced, “Christian” principles. The consciences of men and women have

become “seared,” “Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Eph. 4:19. “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ... And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient [not proper].” Rom. 1:24, 28.

The corrupt tree has taken deep roots and is now loaded with ripened fruit. Times have indeed become “as in the days of Lot!” The corruption and moral decay of our present-day society seems to be getting just about as full-blown as it can get, or as God has ever allowed it to go in the history of past societies. The cup of iniquity is very near full to the brim! Not only have the “nations” been shaken out of their original places; so have the so-called “Christian” denominations. Some denominations are even condoning homosexuality now to the point of allowing those who practice this gross sin to officiate in positions of church leadership! How much farther will God allow things to go? We don’t know. But this we do know: “... now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven (the ecclesiastical [church] heaven). And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made [all denominations are man-made], **that those things which cannot be shaken** [the real, faithful followers of Jesus Christ] **may remain.**” Heb. 12:26b, 27. Jesus also said that before His second coming “the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” (Matt. 24:29). Thank God, there is still a faithful “remnant” who, though “affrighted” by the shaking, are remaining steadfast and holding on to the faith that was once delivered to the saints, giving glory to God.

We are now at the time when, as portrayed in Revelation 20:7-9, the hosts of Gog and Magog are gathered together, “the number of whom is as the sand of the sea,” and have gone up on the breadth of the earth and compassed the camp of the saints, the “beloved city” (the “heavenly Jerusalem” – “the general assembly and church of the firstborn” – Heb. 12:22-23), about on every side. The compassed, embattled church of the living God is now passing through that little, short span of time just before fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours every enemy of truth. It is “the battle of that great day of God Almighty” – the spiritual battle of “Armageddon” – the great and final conflict of truth versus error, light versus darkness. Satan is now applying pressure to the utmost to prevent souls from obtaining and maintaining a relationship with Jesus Christ that will make them a part of the city of God. “My soul, be on thy guard, ten thousand foes arise, and hosts of sin are pressing hard to draw thee from the skies. Oh, watch, and fight and pray, the battle ne’er give o’er, renew it boldly ev’ry day, and help divine implore.”

Now, just as it was in the days of Noah, **few souls are responding to the wooing call of God’s tender Spirit.** God said then, “My spirit shall not always strive with man.” And, as then, God is seeing now that the wickedness of man is becoming GREAT in the earth. The thoughts and imaginations of men’s hearts in general are only evil continually. The earth is corrupt and full of violence, and the end of all flesh is coming up before Him. Television and Hollywood’s movies have hastened the process right along! And now, the internet has opened another avenue through which the devil is working to

captivate the minds of the masses and dull their sensitivity to the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit. (This is not to say that the internet is evil, but it is a tool the devil is taking full advantage of to promote his agenda.) The time is fast approaching when, as in the days of Noah, God's Spirit will no longer be able to strive with man. Fornication, adultery, lasciviousness, multitudes of children being born to parents out of wedlock, with no one to teach them anything about morality or righteousness; no one to lay any ***basic foundation*** in their hearts or minds for God to work with – these are the things that have created a society of morally calloused, spiritually insensitive souls; seared consciences that God's holy, tender Spirit cannot penetrate or work with. And it is because of these very things that God's wrath comes upon the children of disobedience (see Eph. 5:3-6). As God looks on the rapid corruption and violence that is now filling the earth, time is winding down, and He is *finishing* the mystery of His redemptive plan for mankind; getting ready to wrap things up very shortly! Just as when, in the days of Lot, God could not find enough righteous people in Sodom to justify sparing the city any longer, so it will be throughout the whole world at the ending of this gospel age. Think once more about the words of Jesus: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8. **Indeed, the seventh angel is "about to sound!" When he does, time will be no longer, and the last of the last three woes will come!**

There are those who have promoted the idea that, just before Christ returns, there's going to be a great revival or spiritual awakening, and multitudes are going to be brought into the kingdom by the sounding of the seventh trumpet. That is a nice thing to dream about, but the fact is, the Bible teaches the exact opposite! And not one of us is able to keep the Gospel dispensation from ending any other way than God's Word has prophetically declared that it will.

"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." Gen. 6:13. "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:26-30. Then shall men say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Rev. 6:16-17.

The Seventh and Last Trumpet – The Third and Final Woe!

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because **thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned**. And **the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged**, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; **and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.**” Rev. 11:15-18.

The third and final woe comes with the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet, at which time the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, who will dispose of them all according to His righteous judgment. He will resurrect the dead of all ages in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (I Cor. 15:52); and will show Himself “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (I Tim. 6:15). Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess at that time that He “is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). That number will include all the scribes and the Pharisees, those who smote Him in the face and spit upon Him, and those who nailed Him to the cross and pierced Him. The third woe of the seventh trumpet will bring the whole world of those living at that time, as well as every soul that was ever created from the time of Adam, to stand before the tribunal of the supreme King. It is “the time of the dead, that they should be judged,” that awful and final “hour ... in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29).

Verse 17 clearly shows that **the sounding of the seventh trumpet ends the redemptive reign of Christ** – “thou hast taken unto thee thy great power and *hast reigned*” – **past tense**. Also, the beginning of verse 18 reads: “And the nations **were angry** [past tense], and **thy wrath is come** [now present tense – **at the sounding of the seventh trumpet**].” In other words, the sounding of the seventh trumpet brings Christ’s wrath upon the nations because of their reaction toward Him in the dispensation wherein He took unto Himself His great power and reigned. What dispensation of time was that?

After His resurrection, Christ said to His disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” Matt. 28:18-20. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16. David also prophesied in Psalm 110:1, “The LORD [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Jesus Christ], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Peter, speaking of Christ’s position following His resurrection and ascension, said, “Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” 1 Pet. 3:22. In Ephesians 1:17-22, Apostle Paul speaks of the great and

marvelous power that God gave to Christ when He “set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places” and “put all things under his feet.” And in Eph. 4:8 he says, “When he (Christ) ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” This is speaking of **Christ’s redemptive reign** – the time when He became Mediator between God and man, and the gift of salvation and all the benefits that accompany salvation (see Psa. 103:2-5 for insight to those *benefits*) became freely offered to the entire world. It is in the present dispensation that all men have the privilege of being made “complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10). In reference to this wonderful dispensation, Paul says, “For he (Christ) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 1 Cor. 15: 25-26. Jesus Christ proclaimed to His servant, John, on the isle of Patmos, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and **have the keys of hell and of death.**” Rev. 1:18. Jesus Christ is the only King in history who ever gained control and power over hell (hades – the realm of departed spirits) and death and holds their “keys” in His own hand. And He will sit and reign triumphantly at His Father’s right hand until the appointed time for the last enemy, death, to be destroyed.

The sounding of the seventh trumpet marks the destruction of this last enemy. It also marks the end of the redemptive reign of Christ and His office as Intercessor and Mediator on behalf of man’s salvation. It is the time when all who despised His gospel and free offer of salvation that was extended to them during His redemptive reign will be subdued and made his “footstool.” He will leave His seat at the right hand of the Father and will come to judge the world at that time. The Gospel Dispensation will be over. Opportunity for repentance and hope of mercy and forgiveness of sins will be forever past. All who refused, or neglected, to “kiss the Son” (Psa. 2:12) in this present day of grace will then fall beneath His awful wrath (the entire 2nd Psalm parallels with Revelation 11:15-18). The Stone that the builders rejected will then fall with fury on every soul who refused to fall on Him and be broken, and “will grind him to powder” (Matt. 21:42-44). Those who heard the gospel message, but responded in their hearts, “we will not have this man to reign over us” (Luke 19:14, 27), will then fall prostrate before Him, pleading for mercy, only to hear Him say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). So shall Christ, the Judge of the whole earth, put all His enemies under His feet as He ushers in **the final and GREATEST WOE** ever known to humanity since the beginning of creation! At the sounding of the “last trump” He will “destroy them which destroy the earth” along with the earth (2 Pet. 3:10-13).

Thus, committing all His enemies to eternal destruction, “according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” (Phil 3:21), “then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.” 1 Cor. 15:24. This delivering up of the kingdom to God, the Father, will take place when Christ, the Son and the King, *returns from His “far country”* (see Luke 19:11-28) to take account of His servants and *receive the kingdom His Father gave Him during His redemptive reign*, while seated at His right hand. This is the kingdom that men have been pressing into since the days of John the Baptist (Luke 16:16) – the one of which Jesus said to Nicodemus, “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter ...” (see John 3:3-8). All who thus did

enter and, like the apostle John, were *faithful* “in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9), He will deliver up at this time to God, even His Father, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump” (2 Cor. 15:52). And, at this same moment all His enemies, and all who refused to allow Him to reign over them, will be *instantly* subdued for all eternity! **As surely as all opportunities for entering Noah’s ark ceased at the moment God shut the door, so will all further opportunities for entering into the kingdom of God cease at the moment Christ splits the atmosphere of this planet earth with the sounding of the “last trump.”** “... Behold, **NOW is the accepted time; behold NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION**” (2 Cor. 6:2), while Christ is yet seated for a little while at His Father’s right hand, interceding for the lost, “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). Friend, if you are still outside the kingdom, will you not hasten and enter by being “born of the Spirit,” before the redemptive reign of Jesus Christ ends? If you wait until He leaves the right hand of the Father and comes in the clouds of heaven, it will be too late!

So just where are we in the stream of time right now? As I understand the prophecy, ***the second woe of the sixth trumpet passed in A. D. 1922***, when the Ottoman Empire was totally abolished. We are now passing through that little, short space of time just before the seventh trumpet sounds and the third woe comes. Could the third woe follow the ending of the second by approximately one century? Other significant historic events have followed one another at century intervals. This is a sobering thought to ponder! The times and seasons are in God’s hands, but He has warned us that **the third woe (ushered in at the sounding of the seventh trumpet) will come “quickly,” after the second woe is passed.**

“Lo! The angel now is standing On the sea and on the land;
How his voice the air is rending, As to God he lifts his hand! [Rev. 10:5-7]
What an awful, awful message! Help us, Lord, this truth to see:
When the seventh trumpet thunders, Then shall time no longer be.

“One more trumpet yet to summon Us before the judgment seat;
Then the time of our frail planet Will be said to be complete.
How the wicked will be wailing, And the righteous overjoyed,
When with fire the heavens are burning, And the earth shall be destroyed.”

– W. G. Schell, *Evening Light Songs*, #398.

“We have reached an awful era, in the onward flight of years,
While the nations are in slumber, crying peace ‘mid drowning fears;
Lo, the shadows of creation lengthen to the eventide,
The Lord is surely coming to receive His holy bride.

“Oh, our glorious King is coming from His country far away,
For He has received a kingdom that shall stand eternally;
And the Saints, in all the greatness and the glory of His reign,
Shall rise with songs of triumph and extol His holy name.

Chorus:

“We shall hear the trumpet sounding, and shall see the Savior coming,
In the glory of the angels, and His Father’s awful throne;
Oh, how sweet will be the greeting, in that happy golden morning,
He will come to crown His own.”

– D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs* #357.

Darkened Counsel and Perverted Interpretations

“Who *is* this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” Job 38:2.

I doubt there has been any ideology in modern history that has better served in diverting the focus of professed *Church of God* people from the true basis of Christian unity than the introduction of Mr. W. S. Goodnight’s “line of thought” regarding dispensationalism, or seven church ages. The original proclamation of the Evening Light Reformation was:

**“We are in the evening of THE DISPENSATION DAY,
And the gospel light has scattered all the night away”**

– B. E. Warren, *Evening Light Songs* #14

What “dispensation day” was the songwriter talking about? The same one that Apostle Paul wrote about in Eph. 1:10: “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might **gather together in one all things IN CHRIST**, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, *even IN HIM*.” (Emphasis mine.)

There is ONE dispensation day – the Gospel Day. “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. 4:4-5. **The entire Gospel dispensation marks “the fulness of times.”** Don’t ever forget that. God’s purpose throughout the entire dispensation, from start to finish, has been to gather together all things on earth and in Heaven **IN CHRIST**. Paul said, “For this cause I bow my knees unto **the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named**.” Eph. 3:14-15. As one of D. S. Warner’s songs says, “**Above, below, ONE FAMILY ...**” Jesus proclaimed, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” John 10:16. Again, Paul said, “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and **by our gathering together UNTO HIM**.” 2 Thess. 2:1.

God’s whole purpose in extending His providential hand toward the evening of the Gospel Day and bringing His Word forth once again from the rubbish of apostate religion was **that He might once again gather together all things IN CHRIST** – that He might gather together His sheep from all places where they had been scattered by the cloudy

and dark centuries of oppression by false shepherds. And He did gather them together, not to a movement, but **to Christ**, through the proclamation of His gospel in its fullness once more “by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Pet 1:12). This is how “the mystery of God should be finished” when the seventh and last trumpet “may be about to sound” (Rev. 10:7). As Colossians 1:17-28 clearly reveals, the “mystery of God” “is Christ in you, the hope of glory, whom we preach ... that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” This is the message of the evening of the gospel dispensation day. This is the “reformation glory” in its completeness.

But the simple message got distorted by some and counsel became darkened and perverted by dispensational fables. These fables served as a smoke screen that have dimmed and obscured the truth and simplicity of the Gospel to many minds. Let us take a look now at some of these fables.

I will now quote a few passages from “The Seven Churches of Asia,” by J. F. Lawson. Lawson was one who endorsed and helped to promote W. S. Goodnight’s “line of thought.” He says:

“The gospel day, from Christ to the end of symbolic language, which, no doubt, is near the time of His second coming, is divided into seven candlesticks or church ages. The first ended about 270 A. D., the second about 530 A.D., the third about 1530, the fourth about 1730, the fifth about 1880, the sixth about 1930, and the seventh about 1980. The day and hour of the coming of our Lord is not known, but surely we can see the ‘fig tree budding,’ and can know the end is nigh even at the door.

“I see a spiritual application, of the conditions and surroundings of each city, in which the church was located, which fit the spiritual conditions and surroundings of the church, in that particular age of time. A more detailed explanation of some of these points touched on in this booklet are given in our book, ‘Revelation, With Gospel and Prophecy.’”

He then proceeds to focus on each of the seven churches of Asia in Scriptural order and to show how he believes each one symbolizes a particular church age. After endeavoring to show how the “Philadelphia” church symbolizes a church age from 1880 to 1930 A. D., he says, “Near the end of this Philadelphia candlestick age, which ended 1930, some began to depart from the faith and slip from the standards of the Word of God which were being taught.”

[Note: That departure from the faith actually began about 20 years prior to 1930, but some were too blinded by the subtle spirit of compromise to understand what was going on until some of its fruit began coming to a head around 1930. Mr. Lawson then endeavors to show how, in 1930, the church entered into the “Laodicean age.”] He says:

“We are now coming to the last candlestick age. We are told in Rev. 1:20 that the seven candlesticks are the seven churches of Asia. We are told that those who overcome in the Philadelphia age God would make pillars in His church in the Laodicean age.

There is **new truth to be revealed in this last age** which will never be accepted by those who are not victorious in the truth of the previous age. ...

“Now let us notice the city of Laodicea which is located southeast of Philadelphia and due east of Ephesus, the church of the apostles’ time. This would mean the spiritual climate is getting warmer and more light as it has moved east from Philadelphia. **The seventh candlestick age carries light on the Revelation and prophecy that the Philadelphia church age did not have.** Its site being located on seven hills would mean that the light of the seven candlestick ages is revealed. We are told in Rev. 10:1-3 that **a mighty angel (the ministry of the seventh candlestick age)** ‘set his right foot upon the sea (Catholicism), and his left foot upon the earth (man-made earthly institutions), and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth, and when he had cried seven thunders uttered their voices.’ This is the ministry who came out of the Philadelphia age with victory in all the light they had, **who now have received the accepted the light of the seventh seal age**, whom God is making pillars in His temple. The voice of the seven thunders is bringing the understanding of the seven ages corresponding to the seven mountains on which the city of Laodicea was located. **Only a few accept this message, consequently only a few will become ‘pillars in the temple of our God.’**”

“This city on seven hills was drained by two brooks. In this seventh seal age, there are two streams which drain the city, the true church, keeping it clean and removing those who will not walk in the light. One is, those that say, ‘What I have is good enough for me, and I am not looking for anything else; I am with a group whose prestige and honor I will not sacrifice.’ There are a great number who have accepted the light of the sixth candlestick age, but who will not have the light of the seventh. They fall into a stream of spiritual stagnation, ‘drawing back,’ refusing and fighting the truth of God. This is one of the streams that drain the spiritual city, and many are drowning in its waters of fearfulness. I am personally acquainted with many preachers who accepted the light of the Revelation message of this seventh candlestick age, had it preached to their congregations, and said it was the best thing they had heard. As time went on, they found the group they held to had rejected the message. They decided to recant rather than to lose their prestige and standing with the group. This proved conclusively that they loved the applause of the group of old association more than they loved light and truth.

“The second stream, which is draining the Laodicean candlestick age and causing the unstable ones to fall, is the stream of compromise. About the closing of the Philadelphia candlestick age (1930), many who called themselves *Church of God* had slipped from the practices of the standards of truth they claimed to stand for. The standard of holiness was lowered so as to tolerate worldliness, movie-going, and such like. Some ministers scarcely mention divine healing and, of course, they do not practice it. Jesus is the head of the church **ONLY IN NAME**. The governing power, that Jesus should have, is now vested in the ministerial body, who meets annually at a certain headquarters, with all minor details and schedules working out of that. All local pastors and preachers, in order to be in good standing, must center all things toward this centralized movement. I say this to show how some have compromised the truth once preached in the sixth candlestick age. Such things were absolutely preached against and condemned, with plenty of Bible

to condemn them. Such a group of people will not accept the seventh candlestick message, because it condemns such unscriptural procedure. We must preach and practice the truth for which God commended the saints of the Philadelphia church age; this still stands in full force and binding upon the church. The seventh candlestick age has brought understanding of the symbolic language of the Revelation and prophecy which condemn this compromise trend. This is the main reason it is not accepted. ...

“... Dear saint of God, there is much poison in the borders of this Laodicean city of today. **The only thing which will make you immune from this deadly poison is the truth of this seventh seal age.** ...”

– *The Seven Churches of Asia*, quotations taken from pages 4, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32 & 35.

While I do not doubt the sincerity of those who have promoted “dispensational theology,” I perceive serious flaws in their “line of thought.” They would lead us to believe that every “candlestick” (or church), every “seal,” and every “trumpet” of the book of Revelation are parallelly symbolic of some specific “church age,” all of which total seven. This ideology does great injustice to the *context* of the book of Revelation. For example, as we have already noted, the entire volume of the book, from chapters 8 – 22, is obviously the content of what John saw when the seventh seal was opened. Everything from that point on was a part of what the seventh seal brought to view. Therefore, the seventh seal content covers the *entire* gospel dispensation. Also, the sounding of the seventh trumpet clearly symbolizes the consummation of the kingdom of Christ at the ending of the gospel age. The efforts of dispensationalists to spiritualize it and make it fit some special “church-age message,” just prior to the end, has served as a twisting and perverting of the actual context as well as creating divisions among the people of God. Any unbiased mind can easily perceive that no such thing is even hinted at, much less symbolized, in the context of Revelation 11:15-18. But as C. I. Scofield stated (their forerunner of dispensational theology), so Mr. Goodnight and those who promoted his brand of dispensationalism seemed to believe: **“We have favored spectacles upon our eyes, to see what others cannot see, and if you don't get on board, you'll be left behind!”** As we shall see, this Scofield mindset has followed all who have plagiarized his seven-church-age theory up until the present time, no matter what modifications they have made to it.

Unfortunately, W. S. Goodnight taught his followers “to believe that the truth of the book [of Revelation] will never be arrived at with anything other than a line of thought *altogether spiritual*.” Surely, such an unbalanced line of thinking was not in the mind of Jesus Christ when He “signified it by His angel unto His servant John.”

I would now like to quote from an article written by Lawrence D. Pruitt many decades ago, titled “The Meaning of the Seven Churches of Asia in Revelation.”

“... The entire universal church throughout the gospel age is symbolized by the figure ‘seven.’ The scope of the prophetic feature of this symbolization is not derived from the churches themselves as such, or the messages to them, but rather from the symbolic number ‘seven’ alone.

“Any congregation of the church in any period of the Christian dispensation is subject to the same condemnation or commendation as any one of the seven churches if it is found in a similar condition. One authority has rightly said, ‘Many expositors *have imagined* that these epistles to the seven churches were mystical prophecies of seven distinct periods, into which the whole term, from the apostles’ days to the end of the world, would be divided. **This theory, though very old, has arisen from imagination, and finds no basis in reason or fact from the Scriptures.**’

“Adam Clarke writes in A. D. 1831: ‘I do not perceive any metaphorical or allegorical meaning in the epistles to these churches. I consider the churches as real; and that their spiritual state is here really and literally pointed out; and that they have no reference to the state of the church in all ages of the world, as **has been imagined**; and that the notion of what has been termed the Ephesian state, the Smyrnanian state, the Pergamenian state, the Thyatirian state, etc., is **unfounded, absurd, and dangerous; and that such expositions should not be entertained by any who wish to arrive at a sober and rational knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.**’

“F. G. Smith writes, ‘These churches can scarcely be symbols of chronological epochs for the reason that they are themselves the object of symbolization. We know that type and antitype cannot be united in the same things, that they are mutually exclusive; and I fail to see how a particular church can be a direct object of symbolization and at the same time a symbol of something else. ‘The seven candlesticks which thou sawest ARE the seven churches.’ (Rev. 1:20b.)

“Again, Smith says, ‘Some have assumed that the seven were selected in order to set forth seven successive historical epochs in the Christian church. The record shows, however, that instead of the seven being symbols, they are themselves the objects of symbolization. Furthermore, the actual facts of ecclesiastical history, in their successive order of unfolding, do not agree with the messages as given to these churches.’

“... Brethren, let us endeavor to hold fast to sound doctrine, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

– Lawrence D. Pruitt

As we have noted on page 3 of his book, *Chart Explanation of the Revelation*, W. S. Goodnight made the statement, “***Some errors have been culled out and many more truths added.***” But oh, what a wonderful thing it would have been if he had simply “culled” the entire error and returned to the original “truth” of what he termed “the sixth seal age!” Goodnight stated, “We did not have it in its fullness in the sixth seal age, as in the seventh.” But let us now examine the “basis” of the truth that was taught at the beginning of what Goodnight calls “the sixth seal age” and ask ourselves how much “fuller” it can get.

Those who have accepted Goodnight’s seven-church-age theory often refer to the early saints of the Evening Light Reformation as the “sixth seal people.” Those people, however, did not categorize themselves in that manner, and that was far from being their

identity or their message. They were later branded as “sixth seal people” by Goodnight and those who adhered to his “seven church age” ideology, but they only found their identity in Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Their message was all about being gathered together UNTO HIM; not a call for people to gather themselves to a “sixth seal message,” or to any method of interpreting prophecy. CHRIST WAS THE FOCUS! The message was all about people being “woven together by His Spirit.”

This, dear reader, is what the Evening Light Reformation was, and is, all about. **Christ, His power to deliver from the bondage of sin, and the fullness of His grace made available to mankind through the administration of the Holy Spirit, is the message of the church of God we read about in the Scriptures.** When the focus of any group of people becomes anything other than that, or if the message becomes diverted to “seals,” “trumpets,” and “church ages,” that people have entered a by-path of error. Inevitably, when people go down that road, the focus becomes themselves and their “special message” for the church, rather than Christ, whose substance alone creates the church. It becomes a form of idolatry! Their special message becomes their god, and to it and to themselves they seek to gather the people. A “look on us” mentality accompanies the message, and the “preachers” of the special message begin to view themselves, more or less, as mediators between God and man. Exaltation of man and “ministerial authority” has obviously characterized many groups that have promoted the seventh seal/trumpet message since its beginning.

Jesus said, **“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me.”** John 12:32. An old song, written by Johnson Oatman, Jr., says:

**“Don’t exalt the preacher, don’t exalt the pew,
Preach the gospel simple, full and free;
Prove Him, and you will find that promise is true,
‘I’ll draw all men unto me.’”**

– Echoes From Heaven, #5, verse 3

When the focus of the people whom God uses, or who are involved in any particular reformation movement, becomes “the movement” itself, instead of Christ, the glory of the reform departs from those people whose focus becomes thus diverted. This was basically what happened during the decade of 1910 – 1920 to many who were involved in the Evening Light Reformation movement that had begun about 1880. The pure gospel message, which God had been honoring and blessing for 30 years was taking effect worldwide. Christ was being lifted up and the results were exciting – all men were being drawn! My grandfather, who was born in 1899 and remembered the marvelous events that were taking place in his boyhood days, said it looked like the Gospel Trumpet movement was going to take the whole world for Christ. It has been reported that, at that time, it was one of the fastest growing religious movements in the world! It was a Christ-oriented movement bearing a Christ-oriented message. But the devil went to work to divert the focus and get many of the leaders to become “movement-minded” instead of “Christ-minded.” And that was where the “reformation glory” began to depart from those who allowed their focus to become thus diverted! As the song says, Lord, “Keep me, lest

diverging, I should miss the goal!" To avoid "diverging," we must never find our identity in anything else but Christ, the living Vine. It is only through the sap of His Spirit that those fruit-bearing branches who abide in Him are identified. They alone are God's church.

In Numbers 21:8-9, we find that God directed Moses to make a brazen serpent and put it on a pole for the people to look at and be healed of their snake bites. This serpent was actually a type of Jesus Christ being lifted up on the cross (see John 3:14-15). But in 2 Kings 18:4, we find that the very brazen serpent God used to bring blessing and healing to the children of Israel became a stumbling block and an object of worship or idolatry. Their focus became diverted from what the serpent was meant to represent to the serpent itself, and they worshiped it. This very thing has happened regarding "reformations" of the past that God has used to bring blessing and spiritual healing to mankind. Some have allowed their focus and their admiration to be turned upon "the reformation" instead of what it represented. In so doing, they lost the essence of what the reformation was about in the first place.

God is a jealous God. His glory will He not give to another. He intends that men should never glory in anything but "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (See Gal. 6:14.) It is His Son Jesus, the Savior of the world, that He wants to see glorified and lifted up. "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, [or John Wycliffe, or Martin Luther, or Menno Simons, or John Bunyan, or John Wesley, or D. S. Warner], or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." 1 Cor. 3:21-23. **When anyone's "reformation glory" becomes anything other than "the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. 2:13-14), they are glorying in the wrong thing, and their glorying is not good.**

In his book, "Birth of a Reformation – Life and Labors of D. S. Warner," A. L. Byers says, "The great movement is in the world, and any attempt to 'corner' it or to limit it to a particular body of people could only result in making that body a sect, or faction, while **the movement itself would proceed independently.** [Note: That is because Christ was, and is, the animating force of what the movement really was, and Christ cannot be cornered or limited.] The true spirit of the reformation will be, however, with those who measure to its standard, whether they be few or many, and God will manifest himself accordingly. ... Many are the counterfeit movements today. **One must ignore every influence of man and then rely on the witness of both the Word and the Spirit in order to be guided aright.**" – *Birth of a Reformation*, pages 28, 29.

W. S. Goodnight said that people did not have the light in its fullness in what he called "the sixth seal age." But they had "Christ" and had obtained the glory of Christ "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." They were "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," Christ was abiding in their hearts by faith, they were "rooted and grounded in love," and "filled with all the fulness of God." The fullness of God within them caused them to "be able to comprehend with all saints what is the

breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” (See Eph. 3:16-19).

This doesn’t sound like they were lacking any spiritual illumination to me! God’s Word says in 1 John 1:5: “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.” Whenever people get filled with the fullness of God, in whom is no darkness at all, His saturating presence in them dispels all their darkness too!

In Colossians 2:8-10 we read, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” What light is fuller than the discovery of completeness in Jesus Christ? Notice the words of this song, written by one of those old brethren whom Goodnight would have us to believe was a “sixth seal” man:

“In Jesus Christ I am complete, My soul is cleansed from sin;
His love in me is ever sweet, His grace abounds within.

“In Jesus Christ I am complete, My sins are all forgiv’n;
To do His will, it is my meat, My name’s enrolled in Heav’n.

“In Jesus Christ I am complete, My needs are all supplied;
In Him I have a safe retreat, My soul is sanctified.

“I’m in the living Church of God, In Christ I am complete;
Supported by His precious Word, I’ll worship at His feet.

Chorus:

“Complete, complete, I’m all complete, Oh, glory to His name!
Redeemed, redeemed, just now complete, His love I will proclaim.”

– S. L. Speck, *Songs of the Evening Light*, #15, published in 1897.

On page 116 of *The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy*, attributed to Goodnight, Pendleton, and McAlister, Isaiah 30:26 is quoted: “Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”

The authors go on to say on page 117, “The moon, the Old Testament, is to be bright as the sun, and the sun, the gospel, **seven times brighter in this seventh seal and seventh trumpet age**. All six of the past ages are to be understood in the fulness, making light clear in the gospels, Revelation, and prophecy.”

But D. S. Warner, whom these men declared to be living in what they called “the sixth seal age,” when they supposedly did not have truth “in its fullness,” said:

“We stand in the glory that JESUS has given,
The moon as the Dayspring doth shine;
The light of the sun is NOW equal to seven,
So bright is the glory divine.”

– *Evening Light Songs*, #2, verse 2.

“My darkness now is passed away, **In JESUS all is perfect day;**
And peace and comfort ever stay, **Since CHRIST IS MY PERFECT LIGHT.**

**“O Jesus, to my heart so sweet, Thy Word’s a light unto my feet;
How holy, happy, and COMPLETE, I walk in the precious light.”**

– *Evening Light Songs*, #114, verses 2 & 3.

D. S. Warner perceived no need for a seventh church age to usher in the fullness of light for him. He found the light that was “equal to seven” (complete) by simply walking “in the light with Jesus, He shines in the narrow way” (*Evening Light Songs* #192, verse 2). He found that Christ was his “perfect light.” That does not mean that the path of the just is not as a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day (Prov. 4:18), but it does mean there’s no need for the opening of some new “church age” or some new way of interpreting prophecy to bring men to the light. The light has always been here. As Apostle John said, the truth “dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.” 2 John 2. The focus of “reformations” has simply been about returning to the light of that eternal truth; not introducing it. Thus, we have songs like, “Back to the blessed old Bible, back to the light of its Word ...” (*Evening Light Songs* #12). The light of that “Word” has been **the Rock of ALL AGES**.

So, how is it that Mr. Goodnight and his associates assumed that those they thought to be in the “seventh seal” church age, following 1930, had more completeness of light than those before them? What was the “light” that those before them lacked, or what completeness did they lack? Their deficiency of light, obviously, was not Christ or His Word! So, what did they lack? Ah, it was merely that **they lacked their “line of thought” – their understanding and interpretation of prophecy!**

But Jesus said, “Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” Luke 11:35. There are some kinds of light that people will do well to never accept or walk in! Beware of Goodnight light!

A differing view or interpretation of Scripture does not necessarily constitute heresy. But when such interpretations divert the focus of the people from the real substance of the church, which is Jesus Christ, then it does become heretical. The Greek word for “heresies” is “hairesis,” which comes from “haireomai,” meaning “to take for oneself, i.e., to prefer: choose. A choice, i.e. (specifically) a party or disunion: heresy [which is the Greek word itself], sect.” Any doctrine that is promoted in such a way that it compels those who subscribe to it to make “party” choices can be rightly classified as a “heretical

doctrine.” Is this not exactly what some who have promoted the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine in the past have done? Let us allow them to answer for themselves.

In the 1955 version of the book, *The Revelation with Gospel and Prophecy*, which is attributed to Lawson, Turnbow, and Rogers, reference is made on pages 213 – 215 to Gideon’s army and to Zechariah 13:8: “And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein.” Their comments on this go as follows:

“The **first part cut off would be the compromise element of the church** [the Anderson, Indiana group]. Many are rejecting the truth that would restore the sixth seal standards of holiness and a divinely organized church. ... We notice in Gideon’s army the ‘Fearful’ were the largest group. They were the 22,000 of Gideon’s army that chose to turn back. ...”

“We notice **the second group cut off would be typified by the 9,700 of Gideon’s army, who were put to a test and failed** [the Guthrie, Oklahoma, or *Faith and Victory* group]. There are many today who are contending for the standards of the sixth seal age of truth – do not fellowship the compromise group, who will not have more light and truth **on the Revelation message**. God does not condemn them for standing for the truth they have, but for refusing more truth. Like the second group of Gideon’s army, **they are tested with more light and truth; then to refuse means to be cut off**. There are groups today, calling themselves *Church of God*, earnestly contending for the sixth seal standard of truth, as revealed unto Warner and others, **who refuse to accept the Revelation message as revealed in the seventh seal age. This is the second group that will be cut off, for when Jesus moves out, they are no better off than the compromise group. He will move out with the rejection of new light.**

“Two groups having rejected light and been cut off, God has a remnant typified by the 300 left of Gideon’s army. ... God took 300 and defeated the 135,000 Midianites; **in like manner God can today take a small remnant, who will stand for this seventh seal message of revealed TRUTH and defeat all the Babylonian forces combined.**”

Here we can clearly discern the heretical spirit of the doctrine! According to its earliest proponents, even those who were “standing for the truth” that was revealed under what they refer to as the “sixth seal age” were going to have to either “choose” to accept their “new light” on the prophecies of Revelation or else Jesus (the truth and the light) was going to move out and leave them for rejecting this *new light*. And here again, we see the C. I. Scofield mentality coming to the surface: “**We have favored spectacles upon our eyes, to see what others cannot see, and if you don’t get on board, you’ll be left behind!**”

Now, what about that? Remember, the original Greek definition of the word “heresy” meant “to prefer, choose; a choice, i.e., (specifically) a party or disunion; sect.” These men were clearly saying that saints must choose to join their seventh seal Revelation message party or Jesus was going to leave them and cut them off! This is clearly a

“heretical” message – a sectarian spirit! Should we be surprised at all that now that over 90 years have come and gone since W. S. Goodnight introduced it, there are more splits and divisions among the adherents of this seventh seal message than any one of us could count on our fingers and toes combined? Instead of gathering a united remnant that would defeat “all the Babylonian forces combined,” the message has produced one of the worst environs of “we are it” spirits in all of Babylon combined – a confusing maze of opposing groups, each claiming to be “The Church of God,” each claiming to have the final message for the church, and that its ministry is sounding the seventh and last trumpet!

Sadly, many precious souls have accepted dispensational fables regarding the seals and trumpets of the Book of Revelation as truth when gross error lies behind these private interpretations.

This does not mean that ALL who have endorsed these teachings have imbibed erroneous or bad spirits. There are, without a doubt, true saints who, for lack of better understanding, have sincerely endorsed the seventh seal/trumpet ideology in good faith. There are also many in the present generation who were taught it from childhood who have no clue where or how the doctrine originated. This is not their fault, and in no way do I mean to cast a bad reflection on innocent or sincere souls or withdraw my hand in fellowship from any blood-washed one.

D. S. Warner wrote: “Fellowship is of the Spirit (Phil 2:1) and exists where heart-purity exists. It is the conscious blending of hearts filled with the same Holy Spirit. One may have been led into all truth, the other not. This does not interrupt fellowship. Nevertheless, it is the duty of such as ‘know the truth,’ *in meekness* to instruct others who do not. Ignorance of some truth does not destroy fellowship but resisting the truth does We must not sanction people’s errors, but if saved, show our love and fellowship to them, so long as they do not give the evidence that their wrong doctrines have become willful, or they have in some way lost salvation. ... **To ignore fellowship simply because of some doctrinal error is bigotry. To agree to disagree, or to put on an equality truth and error, is babel confusion. To know the truth is our privilege; to teach the truth our duty; but to have fellowship with the pure and upright of heart is an involuntary and spontaneous fact.**

“All tinkering up platforms of union is wasted time. [Note: **This includes platforms of interpreting prophecy.**] Each effort has only molded another sect calf for the people to worship and wrangle over. **Freedom from sin knits together in love. ... Bible salvation is all that is needed.** This obtained, both union of heart and soul, and harmony in outward worship and life, will follow as a result or fruit of the Spirit. When ‘baptized by one Spirit into the one body,’ and made to drink in the one divine Spirit in His fullness, there will be no trouble to ‘worship God in Spirit and in truth.’ For all such ‘know the truth, and the truth makes them free.’”

– Quotation from *The Church of God – What the Church of God Is and What It Is Not*, pages 18 & 19, note inserted for emphasis.

PART TWO – A NEW BRANCH SPRINGS UP!

Lawrence D. Pruitt's Dream

In March 1967, Lawrence D. Pruitt, a son of Fred Pruitt who was at that time the editor of the *Faith and Victory* paper, published by Faith Publishing House of Guthrie, Oklahoma, had a dream that seemed very strange to him, but significant – so much so that he published it in the May 1967 issue of the *Faith and Victory*. He then wrote as follows:

“The prophet Jeremiah wrote: ‘The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.’ Jer. 23:28. All dreams are not from the Lord, but in the Bible are accounts where God frequently revealed what was coming in the future by giving men dreams.

“In the early morning of March 29, 1967, this writer had a dream, and now he records it as a dream. It seemed that I was with Bro. C. E. Orr, a pioneer minister of the Church of God with whom I had been well acquainted in his last years, but he had gone to Glory in September 1933. In the dream I could see that familiar form kneeling in prayer and hear him praying very earnestly. He was greatly burdened for the unsaved world in general and for a number of souls in particular. In his earnest petition before the throne, he uttered these words: **‘Lord, you know that in about twelve years something very tragic is coming to pass, ...’** With the hearing of these words, I awoke instantly, and the dream was deeply impressed on my heart and mind. The meaning of the dream, if any, I do not know. Whether this tragic event about 1979 A. D. is another global war or the end of the world, I cannot say. Obviously, it is a warning.”

Bro. Lawrence Pruitt had this dream just 8 months prior to my conversion and entrance into the kingdom of God by a heavenly birth, November 24, 1967. He republished this dream in the February 1975 issue of the *Faith and Victory* paper. As a young Christian, I pondered Bro. Lawrence Pruitt's dream deeply in my heart. I wasn't sure, but I felt in my heart it must have some meaning. However, the year 1979 came and went and nothing of any significance happened; or **so we thought!** But hindsight is always clearer than foresight! Now that years have come and gone, and I look back on events as they began to unfold about 1979, or shortly thereafter, I believe I see the “something very tragic” that did come to pass. This, I believe, is what Bro. Lawrence Pruitt's dream was warning us about.

In my meditations and ponderings of events as I saw them unfold, I have become very much aware that, around the year 1979, something very tragic did indeed begin to happen among the remnant who were endeavoring to maintain the purity and integrity of the original Evening Light Reformation truths. But it happened so stealthily, so subtly, and so underhandedly that hardly anyone, if anyone, realized what was happening until it had come to pass. It took the incremental process of 10 years for the enemy of souls to develop what he had in mind, but he successfully accomplished his purpose.

Just as the birth of a child is preceded by a secret conception, so the conceptive element which brought forth the birth of a new seventh seal/trumpet sect in the year of 1989 was hidden and generally undetected in its embryonic stages. I recall attending a camp meeting, or maybe it was an assembly meeting, at Guthrie, Oklahoma, in the early 1970s and hearing a message preached by the late Bro. Archie Souder, who was then pastor of the Oklahoma City Church of God congregation. I was a young person in my early teens at the time, only having been saved a few years. I can't remember a lot of details about that message Bro. Souder preached 50 years ago, but there was something that caught my attention and I never forgot it. I went home pondering it in my heart. He spoke in his message about affinities developing in our midst with proponents of seventh seal/trumpet doctrine and how the leaven of that doctrine could potentially overthrow unstable souls. He also talked about "vulture" spirits and "hawk" spirits, as I recall, and how that vultures feed on things already dead, **but hawks catch their prey and then devour it alive.** He compared the spirit that carries the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine to a "hawk spirit." It preys, not necessarily on people who are spiritually dead, but upon people who are saved and sincerely endeavoring to live for the Lord. As I recall, he warned that hawks were laying some eggs in our midst that were going to hatch out and catch and devour some among us.

It was around the year 1979 when the subtle leaven of the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine began to work in one of the congregations of the saints in the state of Ohio. It worked to such an extent that, by late 1980, the young sister who was ministering in that congregation defected and took her stand with one of the old factions of the seventh seal/trumpet movement located in Springfield, Ohio. This threw the congregation in Dayton, Ohio, where she had been ministering, into a state of turmoil, as well as causing doctrinal instability among some of its members. They too, began to entertain W. S. Goodnight's "line of thought" regarding the "seven church ages," etc.

In October 1981, Bro. O. C. Porter, of Guthrie, Oklahoma, made a trip to Dayton, Ohio, to hold a series of Revelation studies for the benefit of that congregation. Bro. Porter, being an elderly pioneer minister of the Church of God, born just seven years after the death of D. S. Warner and possessing a broad field of knowledge regarding history and prophetic interpretation, explained to the congregation the significance of the rainbow angel of Revelation, chapter 10, and the meaning of the seventh trumpet of Revelation 11:15-18. He also included in that study a history of the origin of the seventh trumpet doctrine founded by W. S. Goodnight in 1930 and advocated by his followers. He was personally acquainted with many of those men. He also gave a firsthand report of the behavior in which some were involved and the agitations and problems their followers caused in the Guthrie, Oklahoma, congregation and elsewhere. I later received a copy of a cassette-tape recording of his discourse regarding those things. Unfortunately, the recording was not of good quality, but was understandable. The historical information he presented was very interesting! Not only is it interesting, but I believe it is important enough that it should be documented for following generations to read. Therefore, I have taken the time to transcribe the historical portion of the discourse he gave on the evening of October 23, 1981, and present it here for the information of my readers.

O. C. Porter Shares Memories of W. S. Goodnight And the Beginnings of the Seventh Seal/Trumpet Movement

“Well, some advantages of having years of experience – I have witnessed the growth of different movements. I have witnessed *Church of God* down through the ages. Brother Warner passed away about 7 years before I was born. We got a pretty early glimpse of those things. When I think about the church ... and how she’s marching on, even as the Revelation has taught us, that she’s going to have much persecution, but she is a victorious, triumphant church and she’s marching on as a great army. And she’s going to keep marching right on. What are you going to do with the church of God when the government is on His shoulder? We don’t have to be all worked up and it’s about to blow away, and things like that.

“Now here is the chart that they [those who propagate the seventh seal/trumpet theory] use. ... (He then puts out W. S. Goodnight’s Revelation chart for the congregation to see.) 1930 is when Brother Goodnight received some other ideas about Revelation. I have his books and I have the other books of Revelation – a lot of them. But 1930, here, is when this idea came through Brother Goodnight. And he brought it to two or three others of the ministers, and they agreed that it would be alright to publish, and from there it started to move out. Brother Goodnight, I think, lived down south of us, there in Oklahoma City.

“Then, when this started to move out – there’s a congregation in Moore, Oklahoma, just about 18 miles south of Oklahoma City – and that’s where there seems to be a headquarters in the south. I don’t know very much about things up here, but the headquarters in the south was at Moore, Oklahoma. I’ve been in that church a number of times. I knew a sister (I know her now) that was in that congregation, coming up through this. An old Brother Matheson, an old German that was pastor in that congregation – he said to this sister (he was very aged, just about ready to pass out, but he said), ‘**Sister Hornbeck, you better be getting out of here!**’ And he was the pastor of this congregation when this was building up. And if you want to talk to her, that is Maude Hornbeck, and she’s a sister of Maybelle [Maybelle Pruitt – wife of Lawrence Pruitt, the son of Fred Pruitt who became editor of the *Faith and Victory* paper after his father’s death in 1963]. Maybelle’s sister is Maude Hornbeck. We’ve known her 60 years, or so, and she was in that congregation. ...

“The spirit is the thing that we want to detect. You can have a wrong doctrine, not being instructed along certain lines, but if you have the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of humility, the Lord can correct and rectify and bring more light and help us along, but if we don’t have the Spirit of Christ, He can’t

“Now, the pastor’s wife, from this congregation (I was pastoring Guthrie then), she came to our camp meeting, came right up into the building and came to me as the pastor [and said], ‘Where are we living, under the seventh trumpet?’ And I said, ‘Well, I don’t think we are.’ [She said], ‘You’re a back number – you’re behind!’ How bold! ... Just

labeled me – just criticized me! Right in the home congregation, I being the pastor in the congregation!

“‘Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God’ 1 John 4:1. **Now tonight I’m going to talk about some of the actual facts.** In praying and looking to the Lord about these things, what we’re going to tell, and how ... I was impressed, ‘By their fruits ye shall know them.’ By their fruits – individually or collectively. By their fruits – meekness and quietness and longsuffering and patience and kindness and a burden and sacrifice – by those fruits you will be determined.

“Now we have emphasized much in this Bible study why we think the ‘seven’ might have some particular reference to congregations and individuals, but **we do not go along with the idea of the seven church ages.** We believe it’s damaging, we don’t believe it’s right. And by their fruits – the fruits that we have seen from this!

“Now, in following Brother Goodnight (he’s passed on), he was showing his charts around (but I didn’t ever go – didn’t have any desire), then Brother Turnbow, Brother Lawson, Brother Rogers, and Brother Pendleton (whether you want to Brother them, or not) – they came up with a book with a doctrine following this teaching up. Brother Pendleton lived out at Cordell, Oklahoma, a little way from Oklahoma City, and he had a radio program, he had a printing outfit there, and the first thing we knew, he ran off with the secretary down in Arkansas and he got married in adultery! By their fruits you shall know them!

“Now, Brother Turnbow, he passed away a year or two ago there at the Golden Rule Home. He had been in our congregation different times. He would come to our camp meeting at Oklahoma City when we’d have a tent. If he’d get a chance, he’d get up and pour out some of this doctrine, when he knew that we didn’t tolerate that at all. So the spirit of it is a bold, unchristian-like spirit. And we brand it that way from the beginning because we have dealt with it all the way through.

“Brother Rogers, Brother Lawson, and Brother Turnbow have their names on this book, and I have the book at home, and I wish I had brought it along. [Note: This is the same book that Bro. Porter later gave to me. – H. S.] From its beginning, as they began to write, you can’t tell hardly what they believe. They’re so confused and mixed up, and they’ll teach a little while this way and a little while that way. ...

“Now these brethren, in writing their books, they would say, ‘There’s no sin in the church.’ Well, that’s alright. We agree with it, don’t we? But then they would say, ‘When you get saved, you’re not in the church; you are in the kingdom.’ Now, the thought that they had to prove there’s no sin in the church, they’d say a justified person has sin in their heart. Now that’s quite a problem! And it’s where a lot of people get led off in the beginning. When a person is justified and his sins are all forgiven, and they say there’s sin in their heart, so you’re not in the church ... you can’t get in the church until you get sanctified. That’s right in their book! I’d read it out to you if I had the book. The very fact of the thing, a **justified person DOES NOT HAVE SIN IN THEIR HEART!** Sin is a

willful transgression or a lack of doing what you know you ought to do and there's no willful sin in [a justified person]. There's a principle, a nature in there that must be eradicated, but sin is not in a justified person! I don't believe that, do you? I believe the blood of Christ forgives all those sins and He carries it into a place that is uninhabited, and He remembers them no more.

"So, [they taught] after you're saved and you kind of learn how to serve the Lord, then He will put you in the church. I don't believe that. That's false doctrine. That has been all the way through – confusion in their books! Sanctification has been their problem. So many different times, things would show up. In that book I have a lot of places marked where they just missed the truth. That is Turnbow and Rogers and Lawson and Pendleton. By their fruits ye shall know them.

"If we would want to get closer to home, we had a brother named [George] Winn, Brother and Sister Winn. And they were elderly then. [They were African American, and Bro. George Winn was an ex-slave.] ... So Brother Winn bought the lot there in Guthrie and the church came together – that was the beginning of the church there in Guthrie. [The year the congregation was established was 1905. Because blacks and whites worshiped together there, it was sometimes called 'the Holstein church' by the locals. Brother Winn had a son named 'Stafford.'] And his son, Stafford Winn, when the church was established there a while, there was a spirit got among the church. You know, there's different spirits – that's why He said 'try the spirits!' Now I'm just going to be plain tonight. I looked to the Lord diligently that I don't want to cast any reflection on anyone. I'm not able to handle this truth like this, and I need your prayers that the Lord will help us. We know that saints ought to act like saints.

"Now, they had in their services a fanatical spirit come in. Now there's two sides of this. I'll give you a thought here about a compromising spirit and a fanatical spirit. I've looked at that and I wonder which one is the worst. They're both bad, aren't they? If I would draw the conclusion that the fanatical spirit is the worst, then I would be more apt to compromise. But if I would draw the conclusion that the compromising spirit is the worst to come against us, then I would be on the side of fanaticism. If I were weak in any line, then that would be the way I would go, wouldn't it? So, both of them are wrong – **fanaticism – compromise – they're both wrong!**

"Alright, the spirit began to work this way: in singing songs and holding the service, [they started] walking up and down the aisles, going and shaking hands, the meeting all disturbed, just no order to it, going over there hugging and kissing and jumping around. ... That is a spirit that shows that there's a lot of room for other things to come right along and gather in there. These spirits will sure make their abode upon the human wherever it's possible.

"So there was a division in the church. A group went out. Old Brother Winn stayed there, but Stafford ... and Brother Winn's other son's wife – she was a power in the hands of the Lord in the early ages – Sister Josie Winn – she's still living yet down in Oklahoma City, but not with the saints. [He goes on to say that Stafford never recovered

from that division, but I couldn't distinguish the details. Stafford died. He goes on to talk about Stafford's funeral.]

"There was a congregation from Ohio (they said it was from Springfield) came there to hold Stafford's funeral. They came to us and wanted to use our chapel to have the funeral. We were glad that we could let them have the chapel for the funeral. So they went ahead and had their funeral, and while they were having their funeral (a few of us saints came there), they criticized and bombarded the saints and cast them down in the funeral service, jumping and hollering, and amening, and waving their hands like they were having a swap meet, or something like that!

"Now, this spirit reached out and gathered the off-scouring of the people around about Guthrie and Oklahoma City that would not fit with the saints. They'd come to our assemblies often. And oftentimes the ministers dealt with Stafford and those different ones, trying to get them to come along with the saints. But at that funeral service, all the birds began to flock together. ... By their fruits ye shall know them – all down through the ages. And I heard different ones express, by attending that funeral there, 'I detect the spirit that that thing is from and how awful it is to be under other spirits and get separated from the church of God.' So I haven't had any desire to go along with that.

"... He [Apostle John] said to try the spirits. He said there would be many anti-Christ. We have a job for the church combined – that we all be joined together and be combined together in love and unity and oneness to face the oncoming things that's right before us today. It's going to take all we can get. And if you think that there is new grace and more grace, reach out and get it! And prove to us that you are holy, and you are gentle and you're kind, you're easy to be entreated. You'll have lots of love and lots of burden for the lost and all of those things. And you'll find the saints coming right along with you. ... Get me closer to God – that's the thing that I'm concerned with! Give me something that will draw me close to God! I don't want something like throwing a bone of contention out among some dogs! You know what a trouble that makes? You can throw a bone of contention and get the saints looking around, and all of that, or you can just look down in the Scripture, with the Holy Spirit, and get out something that will bless all the saints.

"I get so tired of all of those complications and problems, when it doesn't come from a source that's manifesting the Spirit of the Lord. It's not the necktie that's a test of fellowship. It's the spirit that we have. Are we teachable? Can we be admonished? He said, 'Able to admonish one another.' If we pick up someone's opinion and go along with that, we're going to be in confusion. **It's time for us to turn loose of mankind! Men are humanity, and we make mistakes and fail. Get ahold of God, and if man goes down, we can go on to glory! Following after one another – there's too much of that!** Paul, he had the same thing there – some of Apollos and some of Cephas and some of Christ. What did Paul tell them? It was GOD – one planted and the other one watered but GOD gave the increase! **Give us more of the Spirit of God!** Give us understanding of your precious Word, where we [or I personally] can dig in and get the blessing for my soul,

where I can have a foundation to stand on! And when the doctrines come by, the winds of the doctrines – they won't have any effect on us.

"I don't want to show disrespect to anybody. But we're going to have to stand for the truth, aren't we? **Stand for it in love and meekness.** If you have something better, show it to me, that's what I want. But you're going to have to show me some fruits before I'm going to just reach out and get something. That causes us to look to the Lord for more of His love, and more of His mercy and His gentleness and His kindness. The ABCs of the Bible, or of Revelation – the things that are easy to understand – we ought to look to them more than the XYZs. But **I do believe that, if the Lord could just get His people together, all in harmony, He might be able to shine His light a little brighter.** And when He does that, I want to walk in it. I want to live for the Lord, I want to make Heaven my home. Only a few more trips, and only a few more chances to give out His Word and it will all be over.

"Oh, it's good to just dig into the Bible, get for yourself. I think about prayer – it's real good, but I'm persuaded that meditation and study of God's Word, getting right on in there and rubbing the Word of the Lord, and that living Word of God will wipe off on your soul somehow and you'll be blessed as you study God's Word. ...

"... [About studying Revelation] Some will just grab this thought, and this will fit in there; and if you're not careful, when you press a truth, you're desiring to know (and it would be good if we knew about these things), but if you press that too much, you're opening yourself for a mistake ... a deception, to be deceived. God does want us to know, but **don't press any point too much in the Bible. You open yourself; you expose yourself to deception.** ...

"Brother Barton used to tell us about the brick building. He said, 'you put the brick there, you put the mortar in to hold the brick together, you put the mortar in there also to hold the bricks apart!' What does that mean? We are lively stones in the building, and we need the mortar to hold us together, and **we need some mortar to allow the other person room enough to think and to move around without me pointing my finger at him and getting right at him.** That's what Brother Barton used to teach us. And I believe it was scriptural and right."

Brother O. C. Porter, born January 2, 1902, was 79 years old when he brought this message at the Church of God chapel in Dayton, Ohio, on the evening of October 23, 1981. He lived for another 22 years after that and died November 30, 2003, at the ripe old age of 101 (lacking just about a month reaching age 102). During the last 22 years of his life, following this discourse, he witnessed another seventh seal/trumpet movement come into existence which manifested much of the same spirit and fruit as this original one he described to us, and to which he stood equally opposed as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. On the following pages you will find a detailed history of the evolution of the newest and latest version of seventh seal/trumpet ideology and those promoting it.

Daniel Wilburn Layne Endorses Seventh Seal/Trumpet Ideology

As strange as it may seem, even after all the facts Bro. Porter brought to light concerning the history and origin of the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine and movement, there were still some members of the Dayton congregation who found Goodnight's concept of seven church ages intriguing. Instead of laying the issue aside, they began to share the idea with others among the church beyond their local congregation. One whom they shared it with was a young convert and zealous new preacher from California named Daniel Wilburn Layne (known as Danny Layne), who had been converted from a life of drug addiction in May 1980.

Also, about this time, another element of idealism emerged. A prominent evangelist among us, who had not been in the ministry many years but had become very effective and was obviously being used of the Lord in the salvation of souls, began advocating the idea that there needed to be a revival of the zeal and fervor of the 1880 reformation. He envisioned 1980 as being a proper time for a resurgence of what the 1880 reformation had produced. He began publishing a little paper, around 1982, called *The Evening Light*. He was in hopes that this publication would stir up enthusiasm among the people of God to *resound the 1880 reformation message*. I never doubted his sincerity and good intentions, but a hindsight view of all that took place during those years has caused me to clearly see how the emergence of this idealism also helped pave the way for a diverting of proper spiritual focus, especially for young converts and those new to the faith.

It was the combining of this ideology with the seventh seal/trumpet ideology that ultimately produced a movement that came to be called *Church of God Restoration*. In the following pages I'm going to share my memories of how it all came about.

In the summer of 1983, Brother Danny Layne made his first appearance at the national camp meeting of the Church of God, Monark Springs, Missouri. What a camp meeting that was! Danny seemed to be floating in a cloud of ecstasy. Several times he broke out shouting and/or leaping for joy during the song services. It seemed so refreshing just to see one who had such a great testimony of deliverance from a life of drug addiction rejoicing so in his salvation. Of course, God's people have never been opposed to outward expressions of joy and praising the Lord when it is the natural outflow of that well of living water springing up within the soul.

But shortly thereafter, an element began to work that seemed to be just a little foreign to the true Spirit of God. The zeal and enthusiasm for promoting a revival, or a *repeat*, of the 1880 reformation was beginning to take root among us. Although the idea of a repetition of the 1880 reformation seemed like a good thing to me, at first, as I was thoroughly convinced that reformation was truly moved by the Spirit of God and no harm could come from promoting what it represented, I can see now that the "repetition concept" was actually a working of the enemy of truth to subtly divert our focus from what the reformation was really all about (the unifying of God's people as a *result* of them each one individually allowing His Spirit to mold them into the image of Christ) to a "movement-animated" or "group-driven" mentality. **The 1880 reformation happened**

as a spontaneous *result* of people responding to the moving of God's Spirit in gathering them unto Himself; not their own efforts to stir up or create a movement for people to rally to or identify with. Their unity was the product of the Spirit, the *result* of allowing the Holy Ghost complete right-of-way in their lives.

In April 1962, Fred Pruitt, the founding editor of the *Faith and Victory* publication, wrote as follows:

"The time has come when men should not say that they are merely in a reformation, but they should say that they are gathered unto Christ and will be led of His Spirit that they may be His sons and daughters. In Genesis 49:10 we read, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and **unto him shall the gathering of the people be.** ...'

"Jesus tells us in the 15th chapter of John that **He is the true vine, and we should attach ourselves unto Him and Him only**, for there is a multitude of false vines in the world who work hard to get you and me to join them. They make a big show of fleshly worldly religion, but be ye not deceived, for God is not mocked. If a man sows unto the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption or eternal death, but if he sows unto the Spirit, he shall reap life everlasting. If we are abiding in the true Vine, we will bear the fruits of the Spirit and will keep ourselves unspotted from this world, which is the enemy of God. If we are faithful unto death, He will give us a crown of life which, Peter says, will never fade away.

"... Brother and sister, abide in Christ and let the light of heaven shine out to this dark, sin-cursed world. ... Let Christ destroy that sin nature out of your heart, and you will not conform to the world, nor love its ways. 'Hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' Eccl. 12:13,14.

– Fred Pruitt, (excerpted from *Faith and Victory*, April 1962.)

This, dear reader, was what the 1880 reformation movement was indeed all about! It was about detaching ourselves from every identity except Jesus Christ and abiding in Him alone – becoming exclusively "Christ oriented." By abiding in Him alone, we connect with other branches who are also attached to Him and receiving of the sap of His life-flow. All those individuals, and only those individuals, who have a direct connection to Christ, the true Vine, compose His church. And all who walk in the light as He is in the light will, naturally, have fellowship one with another (1 John 1:7).

But whenever people become "movement oriented," or especially **"preacher oriented,"** they become attached to the wrong thing and their identity becomes less than Christ. Thus, they open the door to sect idolatry – man worship – being puffed up for one against another (read 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 4:1-2, 6-7). There's nothing wrong with endorsing the Bible truth that a preacher or movement advocates but, if that preacher or movement steps aside from Bible truth, don't follow the preacher or the movement; **follow Christ!**

Many preachers and many movements have, sooner or later, erred at some point. But those who have remained steadfastly focused on following Jesus and personally knowing Him and the power of His resurrected life have remained free from error. **He is the true Vine and those who abide in Him are safe!**

Also, **any time the focus of any people becomes an effort to mimic the works that Christ has done in the past through others who walked with Him, instead of simply following Jesus Christ Himself, conforming to His likeness, and being personally led by His Spirit, they place themselves in an unhealthy spiritual environment.** Christ, our Shepherd, wants to be the direct focus and the personal Leader of every one of His sheep. “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest *thy flock* to rest at noon: for **why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?**” Song of Solomon 1:7.

This diversion of spiritual focus was what I observed take place with some of the people of God from the year 1979 to 1989. There were those in our midst who would often urge the saints to express themselves by leaping and shouting in the services, like some saints did in D. S. Warner’s time. They believed there needed to be a revival of reformation fervency and that there ought to be more outward demonstration in our services than what we were used to seeing. Of course, leaping and shouting is never out of order if truly prompted by the Holy Spirit, but **when it becomes a focus and effort must be put forth to make it happen, there is great danger of Satan getting an advantage!** Those who were entertaining the seventh seal/trumpet ideology were especially in favor of this drive toward emotionalism.

Bro. Danny Layne made a trip to Dayton, Ohio, in the early 1980s. I believe it was around the year 1984. If I remember correctly, he held a revival meeting while there. Bro. Donald Sharp, who had been our pastor here at Myrtle, Missouri, had moved to Dayton and was pastoring there at that time. He was endeavoring to guide that congregation back into proper doctrinal perspectives following the chaos and confusion that arose when their previous minister had defected and taken her stand for the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine. While Bro. Danny Layne was in Dayton, he visited with Bro. Donald Sharp, and during their visit, Bro. Danny Layne talked with Bro. Donald Sharp about the seventh seal/trumpet theology. He told Bro. Sharp that he did not know much about it. (This information was relayed to me by Bro. Donald Sharp himself.)

Although Bro. Danny Layne confessed that he knew very little about the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine at the time, it became evident that he began receiving an education in the ideology through his close friendship and association with those members of the Dayton, Ohio, congregation who were seeking to promote it. (I learned later that he also reached out to other sources – other seventh seal/trumpet teachers – for doctrinal information as well.) This proved to be a great snare for the feet of this young minister, who was a novice, having only been saved for a short time himself from a life of drug addiction. He went from knowing little about the doctrine in the early 1980s to being a full-fledged propagator of his own new version of it by the year 1989. And worse than that, he led his followers to believe that the doctrine was given to him as a revelation

from God regarding a new age and message for the church that commenced about 1980, the year he was converted. He even borrowed a Revelation chart that belonged to someone from one of the older seventh seal/trumpet groups, and modified the chart, changing the date 1930 to 1980. Thus, he used that same “line of thought” W. S. Goodnight had promoted more than 50 years before him to promote his new modified version of seventh seal/trumpet theology, starting the seventh church age at the year 1980 instead of 1930. **If this is not “plagiarism,” what else would it be?** On a later page of this book, I will show you a picture of the original chart from which Danny copied.

But I would like to rehearse some more of my memories of how the devil worked during the process of time that led up to this gross error that resulted in such awful spiritual calamity, disillusionment, and destruction of souls. I want to focus on some of the “undercurrents” that led up to what surfaced in 1989.

One of the elements of W. S. Goodnight’s seventh seal/trumpet doctrine that became very attractive to Bro. Danny Layne was the “preliminary judgment” concept. Danny had a temperament that seemed to gravitate toward judgmental-styled preaching, so he embraced that facet of seventh seal/trumpet ideology very quickly. There is a place for judgmental preaching when it is directed by Holy Spirit inspiration and backed by the Word of God. But when dogmatism and personal opinions are incorporated into the message, it becomes man’s judgment rather than God’s, and holds the potential to wreak havoc among the sheep of His pasture. This it did, as we shall see in succeeding chapters.

As the 1980s progressed, it became evident that there was a “special group” forming in our midst who had a definite agenda. It was not “Christ oriented,” but very definitely “movement oriented!” Their presence in the camp meetings was accompanied by much shouting and demonstration. There was also among them a spirit of exaltation or superior spirituality. To be a part of this special “spiritual” group you almost had to become a “shouter” or engage in outward demonstration of some kind. It was definitely a “party spirit” – a sectarian spirit. You had to fall in line with the agenda to be a part of the group.

On one occasion, I truly felt inspired to jump up and shout, so I did so, not to impress anyone, but because I wanted to glorify the Lord. However, that was not my normal or natural mode of expression in worship. After the service, one of the “special group” came to me and told me she appreciated my “freedom” in the Spirit. I was free in the Spirit alright and felt no obligation to make that mode of expression my practice. But the push of this “special group” was that you need to make this a practice or normal mode of worshipping.

It has often been said that history repeats itself. On pages 154 - 157 of his book, *Life Experiences*, under the heading “In Contact with False Doctrines,” E. E. Byrum says:

“The enemy generally makes his attacks on the church under the plea of ‘advanced light,’ or superior spirituality and power. In the year 1906 something somewhat different was started, which was afterward sometimes called the ‘shouting’ or ‘jumping spirit.’ A

few evangelists decided to show greater demonstrations in the camp meetings by not only doing more leaping and shouting themselves, but to have the congregations participate.

“At first they were almost alone in their extra demonstrations, then they began to teach that it was a command of the Bible to ‘shout his praises’ and ‘leap for joy.’ Others began to leap and shout, and at times it spread like wildfire.

“At first the demonstrations did not seem to be actuated by a false spirit. Some doubtless were moved by the Holy Spirit in their manifestations, but the majority leaped and shouted of their own accord because others were shouting or because they were told to leap and shout.

“Such self-exertions do not often continue to be repeated in such a general manner without the enemy’s taking advantage of some by pushing them into extreme measures bordering on fanaticism, which unless properly held in check bring reproach.

“These happenings occurred at two or three places where camp meetings were being held at the same time. At one place, after a sermon was preached, about four hundred people were on the floor at one time leaping and shouting. That of itself perhaps could not have been considered objectionable as they were rejoicing and having a good time in the name of the Lord. But it began to draw near the danger line when a few ministers under a spirit of harshness began boldly to command those to arise and shout who had not been leaping and shouting.

“There were a number of old fathers and mothers in Israel who had been faithful for many years, who were of more quiet dispositions. They did not feel led to leap and shout and did not do so. Then they were told if they did not it was because they were not right in their souls and that their place was at the altar to get an experience of salvation. Some of them went to the altar, thinking that perhaps something might be wrong with their experience, as they could feel that there was something wrong somewhere.

“... Upon my arrival at the camp, just at the close of that unusual shouting service, I found there were quite a number of good brethren who were not in full accord with the trend of things. Several brethren and sisters assembled in a tent that evening and entered into an agreement of prayer that the power of that spirit of extremism be broken. At the night service a good brother, while preaching, tried to leap and shout and create a similar demonstration in the audience. He could not lift both feet from the floor at the same time when he would try to leap, neither could he get a demonstration started by the audience. He did not know the source of his difficulty, but those who were praying knew. The power of extremism was broken.

“... There had been many people saved at this camp meeting, and those who were leaping and shouting were not just a set of ignorant people, but were good, intelligent, and most of them true, faithful followers of Christ. The enemy took advantage of a few whom he undertook to push forward into extremism by their leadership but was defeated.

“I would not decry any good that was accomplished, nor any unusual manifestation of the Holy Spirit even by way of leaping and shouting, but I detest the operations of the evil one, even through good-meaning people.

“The enemy has made a special effort to undermine or destroy almost every fundamental principle and doctrine of the church within the last few years and would discard the Bible altogether if possible.

“... **The church which Jesus said He would build** (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 20:28) **includes every Christian, and excludes none, and will stand forever despite false teachers, false doctrines, and the creeds of men.** The work of the reformation in the church at the present time is the preaching and practice of **all the Word of God**, to bring God’s people into the unity of the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) in fulfilment of the prayer of Jesus (John 17:20-24).” (End of quote.)

After a similar spirit began working in our midst in the 1980s, someone copied the above writing by E. E. Byrum and began circulating it among the saints. The “special group” who were by that time rallying around Danny Layne and his ministry did not like this article at all. Most of them were not honest and open enough to acknowledge the fact that they too had fallen under a spirit of extremism and fanaticism such as E. E. Byrum described in the article. They found themselves willing, rather, to exclude and disfellowship even fathers and mothers in Israel who had set before us the godliest examples of Christian integrity.

Division is never the result of people preaching and practicing **ALL the Word of God** in precept and principle. It is most often the result of people placing some private interpretation, wrong slant, or wrong emphasis on some *portion* of God’s Word, or contending for some man’s opinion. This is always the result of not being led by the Spirit of God. The Spirit leads all who become truly filled with Him and follow Him into ALL TRUTH, not just partial truth. It takes the Holy Spirit to put all truth into proper perspective and balance it out for each of us as we, through drinking into Him, assimilate “the mind of Christ.”

On pages 197 and 198 of his book, *The Cleansing of the Sanctuary*, D. S. Warner, commenting on Exodus 30:9 and Leviticus 10:1-2, wrote: “The ‘strange incense,’ we see was caused by ‘strange fire.’ **This represents prayer or praise that is moved by some other spirit than that of the true fire of God, the Holy Spirit; some unseemly devotion arises from the spices of unholy desire, and the wild-fire of will-worship, self-righteousness, or fanaticism.** Upon all who are led of Satan to thus offer wild incense by means of wild-fire, the true fire of God goes forth and devours them. **Then let us be honest in the sight of God, and guard against every hypocritical prayer, and every worked-up shout of empty praise;** for ‘God knoweth all hearts and understandeth the imagination of the thoughts.’ Only fire that comes down from heaven can burn the incense of prayer and praise that will ascend to heaven.”

In October 1986 I attended a revival meeting held by Bro. Danny Layne at Nowata, Oklahoma. Upon arriving at the place of the meeting, I was met by a sister from the Dayton, Ohio, congregation who spoke her greetings to me with a big smile, saying, **“Brother, this is the old-time reformation glory!”** I thought, “How strange! She speaks as if it were something new!” I had been experiencing the old-time reformation glory ever since, on the night of November 24, 1967, at Hammond, Louisiana, heaven came down and glory filled my soul after I bowed at that old altar and gave my heart to God. I also received a definite experience of sanctification and infilling of the Holy Spirit in July 1968, so glory was nothing new to me! I was used to daily living in the presence of the Lord and drinking of the living water, and there’s nothing more glorious than that! I pondered in my mind, “what is it about this meeting that is supposed to be so *special*?”

As far as the meeting went, the truth was preached. Yes, I heard the same truth I grew up hearing, but there was something different about it – some kind of strange spirit seemed to be in the air. As far as the old-time reformation glory was concerned, I had certainly experienced it to a much greater degree in many gatherings of the saints that I had attended in the past.

Then, something else caught my attention. There were a lot of folks staying in the same home of the saints in whose home I was staying during the time I spent at that meeting. I slept in the basement where a few other brethren were also staying. In the upstairs area of the home many of the women would gather and talk. From my bedroom area in the basement, I could sometimes overhear some of their conversations. And oh, what conversations! I had never heard anything quite like it! If ever I got to listen in on a series of female gossip sessions, surely that was the time! The conversations went something like this: “Did you hear what Brother _____ did?” “Did you hear what Sister _____ was wearing?” “Did you hear how _____ has compromised?” “I just don’t have any confidence in Brother and Sister _____ anymore.” Then I heard a familiar voice from the Dayton, Ohio, congregation say, **“I believe we’re living in the seventh seal age.”**

This alone was enough to sound an alarm in my soul, and it did. I left that meeting pondering many things in my heart. “Lord, what is going on among us?”

About this time, this seventh seal/trumpet leaven began to take effect in our midst. Congregations in California, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and British Columbia, Canada, began to become affected by it. There were many new converts among us at that time, and they seemed to be the most vulnerable. Most of them had never heard of this teaching and knew nothing about its history or origin. How true the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 5:6, “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” And how important that we be not in darkness or ignorance concerning these things! Through cunningly devised fables Satan deceives the hearts of the simple or unenlightened. And he will deceive the very elect if possible.

As the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine began to take root in our midst, the same kind of spirit that Bro. O. C. Porter described in his discourse to the Dayton, Ohio, congregation in 1981, as he had observed it in past decades among the earliest promoters of the

doctrine, began to manifest itself again. I had been among pure and holy saints of God all my life, had received a genuine born again experience myself at age 10, after which I had developed a close personal relationship with the Lord, and I had never observed this kind of behavior or manifestation in any of the saints I had grown up around. I had grown up around several of the old Evening Light Reformation pioneers whose personal experiences and knowledge went back to the beginning of the 20th century, prior to the compromise era of 1910 – 1920. I knew their spirit and manner of life. It carried with it a gravity that always drew me to the Lord. But this new spirit that was manifesting itself among this “special group,” who seemed to think themselves more spiritual and more enlightened than everyone else, was foreign to me. I tried to overlook it, have confidence in all, and hope for the best, but my heart told me there was something wrong with certain individuals.

I believe it was after I had attended the revival meeting held by Bro. Danny Layne at Nowata, Oklahoma, in October 1986, that I attended the Loranger, Louisiana, Assembly Meeting in November of the same year. While there, something else happened that flashed a caution light across my pathway. One night, after service, I was casually visiting with Bro. Danny Layne. While we were visiting, some of the members of the Dayton, Ohio, congregation came walking up to the area of the chapel where we were. They were his special friends who had been educating him in the seventh seal/trumpet doctrine. When he saw them walking up, he quickly excused himself from our conversation and walked over and joined them. Then something happened that really caught my attention! They gathered in kind of a little huddle and began to talk in low voices one to another. Then I overheard Bro. Danny Layne say, **“I believe the Lord is giving us just a little more time.”**

Immediately an alarm went off in my soul! The thought flashed into my mind, “A little more time to do what?” As bad as I hated to acknowledge it to myself, my heart told me from that hour on, “These people are conspiring a defection from the general body of saints!” But I still tried to hope it wasn’t so. Later, I heard, however, that Bro. Ostis Wilson (one of the most senior ministers among us) made this statement from his observations: **“It is definitely a defective movement.”**

Evidently, the Spirit of God was faithful, however, to deal with Bro. Danny Layne. You can be sure he did not enter into all of this without checks and pleadings from the Holy Spirit. On one occasion, he came to Bro. Ostis Wilson personally and told him God was dealing with him and that he saw himself. He wanted Bro. Ostis to pray with him. Bro. Ostis said to him, “I’m on your corner,” and they prayed together as Danny acknowledged his faults before the Lord. But later, for whatever reason, Danny turned aside again and went back to basking in the glory of those who were exalting him and revering him as their leader. When he finally did completely defect, he even used Bro. Ostis’ own words against him, telling his followers that Bro. Ostis had said, “I’m on your corner,” and then later he wouldn’t support and stand behind him. So, dishonesty was manifested in Danny as well. He knew full well when and why Bro. Ostis was “on his corner.” It was when he was humbling himself and repenting of the path of error he had entered. But he later led his followers to believe it was Bro. Ostis who had changed, not

himself. Bro. Ostis Wilson relayed this information personally to Bro. Donald Sharp, who later relayed it to me.

Obviously, it was not altogether Danny Layne's fault that he got side-tracked either. Of course, every man is responsible for his own choices and the destiny of his own soul, ultimately, but sometimes others are partly responsible. The Word of God commands us, "**Let no man glory in men**" (1 Cor. 3:21) and "not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another (1 Cor. 4:6). The people who gave Danny an intoxicating dose of "great praise ointment," and set him up on a pedestal above others are partly responsible for his errors. On one occasion, when in the company of some of his special friends, Danny said, "**I may be another D. S. Warner!**" One of our older ministers, who discerned what was taking place, spoke to us on another occasion words after this fashion: "Ministers, if anybody tries to give you praise or lift you up, don't you accept it! That is dangerous and will prove detrimental and damning to your soul!" It certainly proved to be so in poor Bro. Danny Layne's case. The spirit of self-exaltation and religious pride took possession of him and those who followed him, as we shall clearly see in a succeeding chapter.

Those who knew D. S. Warner personally said he was one of the humblest men they ever knew. Listen to this testimony of one who knew him:

"One of the most striking examples of true humility that I ever saw was on the day I first met and became acquainted with Brother Warner. With his company of workers, he came to the place where I was expected to preach that day. ... He insisted that I should preach and did not seem to care to take the pulpit. I pled with him to do so, and said, 'Brother Warner, I simply could not preach in the presence of such a great man as you are.' He came up to me and placed his arm around my neck and his head on my shoulder, and said, 'God bless you, my brother, I am only one of God's little ones.' This action seemed very strange to me, as I was not acquainted with such a spirit in a man of such reputation. ... I was greatly helped to try to sink into deeper humility, and through the grace of God find my place in the body, the church. This impression of humility has remained with me these years and has often been a protection when at times there would be presented temptations to self-exaltation." – J. W. Byers.

Oh, that Bro. Danny Layne had indeed been "another D. S. Warner" in this way, but alas, he imbibed quite the opposite spirit – not a spirit of humility but a spirit of religious pride.

In the process of watching this spirit take root in our midst, I often pondered what my former pastor, Bro. Donald Sharp, said to me on one occasion, when we were visiting and discussing this "special group" that was forming under Danny Layne's leadership. Bro. Donald said something along this line: "I perceive in them a real **lack of sanctification**." I perceived it too. Although they seemed to think themselves above others in spirituality, there were many manifestations of carnality in their attitudes and in their actions. A relative of mine, who was also closely observing what was going on, commented to me that the devil doesn't care how he gets people to promote "self;" whether it's through a

love of the world that pursues the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, or whether it's in a religious, self-righteous way. It is the fruit of carnality, pride, and a lack of sanctification whichever side of the pendulum it may swing. **Both compromise and fanaticism spring from carnality.**

As time progressed on into the years of 1987, 1988, and 1989, it became clearer and clearer that a false spirit was at work in our midst. It became evident in the camp meetings. Little clannish groups could be seen banding together. Special meetings began to be held by Danny Layne here and there across the country, announced by telephone or through correspondence, but NOT through the *Faith and Victory* paper, published at Guthrie, Oklahoma. Variances, strivings, and contentions began to be raised. Sisters who once possessed sweet, meek, and quiet spirits took on bold, brazen, and excessively forward dispositions after attending these special meetings. I said very little but observed very closely. One thing I did observe was that most of the older, more spiritual established saints had nothing to do with these special meetings. Neither were their spirits affected by this new element working in our midst. They just remained the same old solid pillars they had always been. I marked who it was among us that was really doing the changing in doctrine and in spirit. **It was not the ones whom they were accusing of “compromise,” but the change became evident in the accusers themselves.** A definite manifestation of carnality, the lack of a Christ-like spirit, and the absence of true humility (which is the seat of all true holiness), became clearly obvious among those who were raising the contentions. At the same time, they envisioned themselves breaking a supposed “silence” and beginning to sound the seventh trumpet.

There was just something about the spirit of it all that did not blend with the spirit of true holiness. The precious Holy Spirit with whom I had been so intimately acquainted from my youth bore witness in my heart, **“This is NOT the way; don’t walk in it!”** Every time I happened to be in a meeting where that spirit was working, the Holy Spirit in my bosom would raise a “red flag.” Thank God for His precious Spirit which guards and keeps our souls in an even path if we will heed His gentle, still, small voice. I’m so glad I got to know Him intimately when I was very young! He has been my Guide through the years, and the Protector of my soul. I pondered all these new and strange things that were taking place among us during the 1980s and wondered just what the final outcome was going to be.

A High-spirited Horse Pulling a Cart!

Sometime around 1987, I believe, I was kneeling in prayer one evening, or perhaps had just knelt to pray, when a quick panoramic vision flashed before my mind. In the vision I saw what seemed to be a rather large group of saints walking together up a narrow, dusty road on an incline that was leading upward. They seemed happy and contented as they walked along together at a steady pace. I only recognized one person in the group. That was Bro. Mart Samons, from Green Bank, West Virginia. He was walking along in the middle, toward the front. Then, all of the sudden, there was a big stir, and a commotion, and out of the group came a white horse, harnessed to and pulling

a small cart. He pulled to the front of the group and stopped. Then, it seemed I could hear a cry rending the air, “All aboard for the old-time reformation truth!” Immediately, a bunch of excited people came running out of the group and began piling onto the small cart. As soon as the cart was full of people, the horse took off with the cart at a high speed. As the horse and the cart took off, I saw one person on the cart whom I recognized. It was the sister from the Dayton, Ohio, congregation who had met me upon my arrival at the Nowata, Oklahoma, revival meeting held by Bro. Danny Layne in October 1986, who said to me, “Brother, this is the old-time reformation glory!” As she was smiling and waving goodbye the scene faded from my view. But my first impression was, “That horse is going to wreck that cart and its passengers, and we are going to have to come along behind them and try to bind up the wounded and save the dying!”

As I pondered this vision, it came to my mind that the horse I saw represented Danny Layne. The cart that was harnessed to the horse represented the movement he was spearheading, and the people piled on the cart represented his followers. The one woman I recognized on the cart who was waving “good-bye” as the cart took off was one of his main supporters at the time. Then, as I thought about the group they left behind, our elderly Bro. Mart Samons being the only one I recognized in that group, I remembered the slogan he so often repeated: “**STEADY AS YOU GO!**” It’s not the rabbit that wins the race, necessarily, but the steady-paced tortoise.

Beware of any hobby-horse religion! Unbalanced thinking and a narrow focus will generally accompany a hobby-horse message. An old song says, “Teach me from Thy blessed Word lessons precious to my soul: help me understand it, Lord, by it make and keep me whole. By Thy Word we stand or fall, by Thy Word we live or die; **if by part and not by all, then we make Thy Word a lie.**” – *Evening Light Songs* #281, verse 3. Whenever people make a certain doctrinal accent the focus or pivotal point of their religion, they open themselves to a spirit of error, whether the emphasis be on “baptism,” “shouting,” “prophecy,” “seals,” “trumpets,” “church ages,” “dress standards,” or whatever. The emphasis will blind the mind to the bigger picture and obscure the full scope of Bible truth, thus throwing the hobby-horse rider spiritually out of balance.

The following warning from D. S. Warner, which was published in *The Gospel Trumpet*, November 15, 1883, is as applicable to our present time as it was to that time. Listen closely:

“If men and women will not get their eyes open to the peril of these times, they will be sure and fall by the same. I tell you; Satan is loosed and is now gone forth to deceive the nations. We ... wish to cry aloud, spare not, lift up our voice as a trumpet, and warn all men to **hide away in the secret place of the Most High.** ‘This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.’ ‘Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.’ Read the whole chapter – 2 Timothy 3.

“And now we are led to say to all men, **YOU ARE NOT SAFE UNTIL YOU GET IN SUCH CLOSE RELATION TO GOD, THAT HE WILL BE THE ONLY ATTRACTION OF YOUR SOUL; AND WHERE YOU CAN HEAR THE**

SOFTEST WHISPER OF HIS LOVE AND NOTE EVERY BREATHING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO YOU. If you are not there you had better take time to wait before God for the sanctifying and anointing grace of God. We must be like Christ – of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; not judging after the sight of the eyes, neither reproving after the hearing of the ears, but with righteousness shall He judge. (Isa. 11: 3, 4.) Yea, we are positively commanded to ‘judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment’ (John 7:24). To do this we must be so illuminated by the Spirit of God, that we may read the inward condition of man, and fellowship, and disfellowship as we discern by the real Spirit of God.

“A man’s temperament and education may be such that his ideas of plainness of dress may be much different from those of another who may nevertheless be God’s special anointed, while at the same time *one of the devil’s angels of light may just meet his standard of outward apparel. Now if he is not careful, he will reject God’s man, and join himself to one who is possessed with devils, and before he is aware he has fallen a victim to seducing spirits. Never take sides hastily, stay upon God, and time will tell who is true to God in heart, and who is not.* You may see two conflicting spirits, and in one of them you may detect a vein of character that you know is not of God: do not therefore rashly conclude that the other party IS of God, and join yourself unto him: for the defect you see in the one may be a guileless weakness or mere temperamental peculiarity, whereas the very devil may be concealed in the heart of the other; and by joining to such the eyes become blinded so that the poor deceived soul cannot see the good way. O fast and pray and become so full of God, that you will be devil-proof. Get the real gift of discerning spirits and wait before God until every mystery is solved. He will guide you with His eye. He that walketh with Christ shall have the light of life, and he that walketh in the day shall not stumble.

“Religious Devils”

“Perhaps, dear reader, your only ideal of men possessed with devils, is that of hideous looking, cursing and raging maniacs. If so, may God quicken your understanding of these perilous times of deception. Remember that ‘Satan is transformed into an angel of light’ (2 Cor. 11: 14). He is possessing men with religious devils. The evil spirits enter men and deceive unwary souls. **THEY ASSUME ALL THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE OF PIETY.** They talk just as reasonable in business matters, sit just as courteously in social intercourse, and are not soon excelled in outward acts of devotion, and yet to the holy, anointed soul they are known to possess a devil. ... Flee away from such, lest in fellowshipping them the devils enter you!” (End of quote.)

Human temperament is something that the devil can easily take advantage of. We humans come with all kinds of personalities and temperaments and from many backgrounds and channels of thought. We may get genuinely born again, but if we fail to follow on and die a perfect death to “self,” allowing the Holy Spirit to temper our humanity with perfect charity (1 Cor. 13:4-7), religious devils may later enter us and use our own temperament to throw us off balance in our religious perspectives. All it takes to end up with an improper or unbalanced application of the Word of God is to get out of sync with the Spirit of God. This is how some preachers end up becoming “false apostles,

deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” while, in reality, they are ministers of Satan “transformed as ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). They accomplish the devil’s work of confusion by presenting to the people an unbalanced and twisted version of the Gospel that is oriented around their own religious perspectives. It takes the Holy Spirit working with our humanity to temper our understanding of the Word and bring it into a proper consistency, “rightly dividing the Word of truth.” Paul said, “Let your **moderation** be known unto all men” (Phil. 4:5). This is VERY important! An unbalanced gospel always damages and ultimately destroys souls.

Satan is the best scripture twister in existence! He twisted God’s Word in the beginning when he tempted Eve in the garden. He also twisted it when he came quoting it to Jesus in the wilderness. Jesus rebutted his twist with “It is written again ...” (Matt. 4:7). Unless we remain honest and open to the checks and balances of the Holy Spirit, Satan is apt to twist the Word of God to our understanding and thereby lead us into a state of religious deception.

One of Danny Layne’s stumbling blocks was his personal temperament. He had a disposition to manipulate and control others, to push and compel them to measure up to a standard that he believed demonstrated holiness. He had a hard time allowing others their *personal space* with the Lord to be led by His Spirit in matters of external things. I believe it was this temperament of Danny’s that paved the way for the erroneous spirit that finally took full possession of his soul and mind. **He placed great emphasis on “dress standards” and became seriously unbalanced.** He wanted everyone to conform to his idea of appropriate saintly attire. Among other things, he forbade the wearing of sandals, even though Jesus Himself said to His apostles, “Be shod with sandals (Mark 6:9). Somehow, with Danny’s followers, his commands seemed to take precedence over the words of Jesus! They came to consider it an immodest thing for a person’s feet to be exposed. But evidently, Jesus did not think so – He even allowed a woman to wash his feet with her tears and then wipe them with the hairs of her head (see Luke 7:36-50). He didn’t condemn her for having her hair down either! But Danny started teaching that women should always put their hair up in a bun. It was supposed to be pulled tight to the head too, and not be fluffed out much, if any. Danny said, regarding one good Sister I know, who is around my mother’s age and has lived a consistent Christian life, that her hairdo was unacceptable because, even though she had it done up on her head, he thought there was too much wave or body to it. The color “red” became a condemned color of clothing, or any color of brilliant hue for that matter, while black or dark shades combined with solid whites were encouraged. Wearing vests was recommended and finally, I understand, became a requirement. Somehow, this style of dressing was supposed to bear witness to holiness and spirituality. It seemed that emphasis began to be put on the “outward person,” more than the “inward person.” On one occasion I overheard one of Danny’s followers say, **“You just can’t get the way too strict for me!”** Is that not unbalanced thinking? Consider the following comments excerpted from a sermon delivered by one of God’s humble, Holy Spirit-filled servants, Brother Ivan Eck, on November 26, 2022, at the Loranger, Louisiana, Assembly Meeting of the Church of God:

“... The Lord wants us to have good boundaries in our life. The Lord also wants us to have **His boundaries**. Sometimes we, as humans, can set boundaries. I will never argue for us to let down on the standard. But I will argue for us to have standards that are based on Scripture, that are based on the principles that are there. ... **Strictness is not glorifying to God if He Himself hasn't asked us to set that boundary. In fact, a man-made strictness is actually damaging to the cause of Christ. ... Instead of our eyes on Christ, it gets people's eyes on man. And it's very damaging, especially in the long run.** And God is interested in us having a gospel that calls to people, calls them out of sin, not to ME, but to CHRIST! ... **He wants us to follow the godly spirit of righteousness and let GOD put boundaries in our life.** And the way those are established in our life is when we are praying men. ... Be a praying man. Be a God-hungry man. I want to serve You, Lord. I want Your character painted all over me. ... Our dress does say something, but it really says something about who I am inside. **And be careful that our righteousness isn't attached to some dress. ... I believe in modesty, I believe in being very careful with our dress, but be careful that that's not our identity! Our identity is yet Christ. Because outside of Christ, a standard of dress means very, very little!**”

It was in these things that Danny Layne and his followers became out-of-balance with the teachings of the Word of God. Ultimately, they adopted a “uniform standard” of dress to which they required all members of their group to adhere. These are some of the indications of a misdirected focus and a fanatical, sectarian spirit. I heard that Danny stated at some point that there is no such thing as “fanaticism.” Of course, it is always hard for a person to see a thing when they are engulfed in it! But **the old-time saints taught that there IS such a thing as fanaticism and that it is just as bad and damaging to the soul as compromise.** Mark well the words of C. W. Naylor in the following article regarding

“Divine and Worldly Conformity.”

“The Scriptures say, ‘Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind....’ Romans 12:2. They also say that we should be ‘conformed to the image of his Son.’ (Romans 8:29.) We have here two sorts of conformity, one of which is condemned and the other approved. Much is said by some classes of religious professors about worldly conformity while little is said about divine conformity. It is my purpose herein to point out the essential nature of these two kinds of conformity.

“By worldly conformity most religious teachers mean outward likeness of dress, manner, customs, etc. This, however, is not its true significance. Conformity to Christ does not mean dressing as He dressed, speaking the language that He spoke, eating the same kind of food that He ate, or observing any of those externals that went to make up His life.

“In the true meaning of the word, conformity goes deeper than externals. Two things may look very much alike and yet be very different in their natures. Pyrites of iron looks so much like gold that it has deceived many a person into thinking that he had found riches. For this reason it is called “fool’s gold.” Likewise, things may outwardly

seem very different while in reality they are very much the same. A sparkling diamond seems very different from a lump of coal, but the chief difference is only in the arrangement of their particles. Both are composed chiefly of carbon, so in nature they conform closely to each other.

“Conformity is a thing of nature, not of external appearance. We are ‘by nature the children of wrath.’ Our likeness to the world consists in a likeness of character, and for that reason we are told that we must be transformed. This transformation is a change of character; **it has to do, first of all, with internals, not with externals.**”

“Conformity to the world in most externals is not only advisable but necessary. We wear clothing as the world does; we live in houses built like those around us; we speak the same language as sinners; we have the same habits of thought and speech, in general, that they have; we use the same implements and tools; we raise the same crops; we employ the same methods of work and business; in fact, we conform to the world in all these things. We cannot avoid doing this without sacrificing what is vital and proper in our lives. Conformity to the world in these externals becomes evil only when such conformity has its origin in an evil principle in the heart or when it produces an evil effect.

“When Christ prayed for His disciples, He said, ‘Keep them from the evil.’ Paul said, ‘As using and not abusing.’ It is that which is evil, or the evil use that is made of externals, that is obnoxious to God. A proper use of all things is permissible, and if our hearts are conformed to God, we naturally desire and seek only the proper use of things. But the natural heart is wicked; it is set on pleasing itself; it is full of vanity and pride. So long as this condition exists, the heart is not conformed to God. There must be a transformation, and **this is not one which starts from the outside and works inward for such at best could be only a reformation. The real transformation is a thing that begins on the inside and works a vital change in the spiritual condition and character.** When this internal change is wrought, it gives a new quality and direction to the whole range of thought and activity. It manifests itself in new desires and aspirations, in new habits and customs, in newness of speech and looks and behavior. When we are transformed so that we become new creatures in Christ Jesus, we begin to act like new creatures. But our bodies are not transformed; we still have bodies of flesh which retain their natural desires and appetites, and these we may gratify in a lawful way without sin.

“When the heart is transformed and purified from its vanity and pride, these qualities [characteristics] will not be manifested in external things. But so long as pride and vanity remain in the heart, preaching to people and requiring them to cease wearing worldly adornment is like trying to kill a tree by pulling off some of its leaves—the people may lay off such things under pressure, but they are no better than before. People must be taught the Bible standard of externals, but **the chief thing is to get their hearts right.** When the heart is conformed to the image of Christ the words of the old song are true of it:

‘There’s no thirsting for life’s pleasure, Nor adorning rich and gay;
For I’ve found a richer treasure, One that fadeth not away.’

“Neither force nor persuasion is required to get persons with such an experience to act properly regarding external things.

“In carrying out their idea of nonconformity to the world, some bodies of people have adopted a special garb or a special form of speech to distinguish them from others. This, however, is not a mark of real nonconformity but a mark of sectarianism. The true and only difference needful between ourselves and the world in externals is that we are to reject those things that are evil or that produce evil. All things else are lawful to us, though these lawful things must also be judged by the law of expediency.

“Conformity to Christ means conformity in character. It means purity of desire so that our hearts reach out for only those things that are pure, and we are moved by pure motives and actuated by holy purposes. It means that we have a conscience toward God in whatever we do. It means to put His will before everything else. It means that the dominating purpose of our life will be to please Him in every detail and not ourselves. A heart like this is not attracted by the vain and sinful things of the world; on the contrary, it is repelled by them.

“When the person is adorned with gold, jewels, costly or gaudy array or immodest clothing, we must needs look for the root in the heart. There is where the trouble lies; there is the seat of the desire. It is useless to take off the externals while the internal corruption is permitted to continue. **God hates ALL vanity and pride.** There is no such element in His character. If we are conformed to Him, there is no such element in our character; and if our character is purged from these things, we have no desire for their external manifestations. God loves meekness and modesty, and these are the opposites of display. If we are meek and modest in character, our dress and deportment will manifest these qualities. If we do not manifest them, it is because we do not possess them.

“It may not be out of place here to call attention to the Bible principles relating to the subject of dress and personal adornment. In beginning this phase of the subject, we should note that **the gospel is not a set of rules but a revelation of moral principles. It is intended for all people in all countries, climates and ages.** We should not, therefore, expect that these principles, as they relate to dress, would be revealed in other than the most general terms or applied to the details of the subject. There is just one principle involved; we may sum up the whole subject under that one heading.

“The Bible standard of dress consists of just three words, but these three words cover the whole scope of life. They are: **‘in modest apparel.’** (I Timothy 2:9.) **This is the standard and this is the whole standard.** We are given a hint regarding how to apply this standard, but our own good judgment is sufficient to draw the line in the right place, provided our hearts are conformed to the divine image. **There is no excuse for fanaticism, any more than there is for pride. Sound judgment and good sense will help us avoid both extremes.**

“A definition of modesty is, ‘Restrained within due limits of propriety; free from indecency or lewdness; not excessive or extreme; moderate.’ A Christian’s apparel

should be modest in cut, that is, in the way it is made; it should cover the body as a modest person would cover it, not displaying those parts that the prevailing standards of modesty require to be covered. Judged by this standard, very many religious professors come far short, their clothing being less than decency really requires. Such a thing, of course, does not have its origin in a pure heart. The woman who displays herself to attract attention is anything but modest.

“Clothing should be made to conform to modesty in all other respects also. **Useless things added to one’s apparel for the purpose of display and show do not conform to modesty.** ‘Loud’ and flashy colors are not modest. **The Bible does not forbid us to wear any particular shade, but there are shades and combinations that are showy and gaudy and by their extremeness violate modesty, for modesty is the avoidance of extreme.** Whatever we wear, it should be modest in color, just as well as in other particulars.

“Christian apparel should be modest in texture; that is, it should not be so thin that it displays the body or the underwear. No man thinks a woman modest who wears goods so thin as to display her under-garments. Such things are very unbecoming to saints and of course not less so to other people. Sisters, dress so that a modest man will not feel embarrassed in your presence.

“Apparel should be modest as to cost. It should not be what the Scriptures term ‘costly array.’ It is well to buy good material and for such we must pay a good price, but this is not what the Bible means by ‘costly array.’ It means not to be extravagant. We should not waste money but make the best possible use of it.

“Some have thought it wrong to try to make our clothes becoming. This is not the case. The Bible says ‘that women adorn themselves in modest apparel;’ that is, their apparel should be such as adorns or becomes them, so long as it is modest clothing. **It should be adapted in cut, color, etc., to harmonize with the complexion, size and height of the person. We owe it to ourselves to make a good appearance. To make ourselves outlandish in any way is neither wise nor right. It is violating modesty, and this is not consistent.** It is only when we make a proper appearance that we can have a proper influence and so be effective for God.

“God delights in modesty in dress, in words, in actions—in all things. Pride and show are an abomination to Him, and if we conform to Him in our inner life and character, outward conformity will naturally follow; but if inward desire runs out after that which is immodest and gaudy, if the heart desires to display upon their person gold and jewels and finery, it is because it does not conform to the image of God’s Son but to the world.” (End of quote.)

Certainly, C. W. Naylor has set the matter before us in a balanced perspective! My maternal grandfather, Bro. Murphy Allen, who was also an old-time Church of God minister, said this: **“It takes the Holy Spirit to show us where to draw the lines.”** That is so true! If we simply seek a close relationship with Jesus, seek to be filled with His

Spirit, and walk with Him in the Spirit, He will show us where to draw the lines in every detail of our lives, including dress. We won't need some authoritarian-styled preacher dictating those details to us. The "unction from the Holy One," "the anointing" will show us what pleases God (1 John 2:20, 27).

This unction from the Holy One will also guide us regarding *expediency* in our manner of dress. For example, it would not be morally wrong to clothe our bodies with a two-pieced robe (a "cloak" and a "coat") like our Lord and His apostles and members of the primitive church wore. It would be modest, but would that manner of dressing be expedient in the culture we live in? Would it bring any real glory to God? Would it not cause our neighbors and those around us to regard us as weirdos and freaks? Likewise, there would be nothing morally wrong with dressing like people did in the 1800s. But is that expedient in today's culture? While it is true that the culture of today's society has deviated so far from modesty, decency, and propriety that anyone who adheres to those principles is going to seem strange or odd to those who do not, yet, there is no need to extend the differences beyond what God requires or what would be expedient to His glory. He is able, by His Spirit, to reveal to each one of us individually how to please Him in the way we clothe our bodies in whatever culture we happen to find ourselves, as we seek to carefully apply the principles of His Word to each detail of our lives. There is even room for some variation in the details of application from one individual to another. The ministry of the true Church of God has always recognized this. Every saint has their personal space with God to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). No preacher has a right to invade that space, make himself a lord over God's heritage, and assume the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those to whom he preaches the Gospel. Here again, Danny Layne greatly erred and stepped outside his place as a gospel minister.

A sister who lives in Guthrie, Oklahoma, told me that Danny approached her personally, in the mid 1980s, and told her that he wanted her to be his spy and report to him, in California, all that goes on in the Guthrie congregation! She replied, "Brother Danny, I could never do that!" She said he then became very upset and angry with her. She said she knew from that time on that there was something wrong with this man. His spirit was not right.

As C. W. Naylor accurately states in his article, "**God hates ALL vanity and pride.**" Provisions made for the flesh may come through spirits of "compromise" or they may come through spirits of "fanaticism!" Both are related to a subtle desire to portray a "self-image" rather than a humble desire to conform to the true likeness and character of Jesus. **Spirits of fanaticism**, though they may make an outward "show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body" (Col. 2:23), **are characterized by religious pride**. This pride is often manifested in outward observances, such as the mandating of dress standards that go beyond the Biblical requirement of "modest apparel" and that which simply glorifies God and reflects purity of heart. Those who imbibe a spirit of fanaticism generally manifest a "holier than thou" attitude and will often manifest ugly spirits despite their outward cloak of piety. They commonly become contentious, uneasily entreated, and intolerant of others. They are not content to allow

others their God-given space to simply follow Jesus and walk in His light at the pace He leads them personally in their relationship with Him. They want to manipulate and control others, forcing them to do as they do and think as they think. This stems from selfishness and provides gratification for their religious pride. **Wherever pride exists, whether religious or otherwise, there you will find fleshliness and a lack of the true Spirit of God.** Therefore, both compromise and fanaticism are alike “earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” James 3:15b-18. “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matt. 7:20. **You will find “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”** Gal. 5:22-24.

“There is a grace few mortals find, A star all heaven loves to see;
It is a meek and lowly mind, The gem of pure humility.

“Within my hidden man, dear Lord, That glorious ornament bestow,
The sweetest gift in all thy Word – **O Father, keep me meek and low.**

“No ornament on earth so rare, No jewel in all Heaven’s mart,
Can beautify a soul so fair, As deep humility of heart.”

– D. S. Warner, *Echoes from Heaven*, song #15.

**“Humility, how pure thy place! Thou seat of holiness!
Thou door of entrance into grace And everlasting bliss!**

– William G. Schell, *Evening Light Songs* #201, verse 2.

HUMILITY, not *uniformity* in externals, is one of the main identifying elements of the real body of Christ, the church! I have often been amazed at how the Christ body operates so much like the natural human body. Any time anything enters the human body that is foreign to the body’s natural organic structure, the body automatically rejects the foreign element. It is the same with the body of Christ. Whenever any type of spiritual element that is foreign to the body’s natural organic structure makes an inroad into the body, the body automatically identifies that element and rejects and expels it by natural process of elimination. God, in His great wisdom, made the human body, as well as Christ’s spiritual body, the church, that way for its own benefit and protection. For example, in the human body, sometimes when foreign material invades the body, the body’s natural processes somehow bring that foreign element to a head and, when the process is ripe, with the application of just a little pressure the foreign substance, or infection, erupts and spews out. This is true in the natural sense, and it is also true in a spiritual sense. The body of Christ will relieve itself of anything that invades the body that is not ***of the body*** – anything foreign to the Spirit of Christ. Pride or self-exaltation of any kind is foreign to the Spirit of Christ!

By the summer of 1989, this foreign element of which I have been speaking had come to a fully ripened head among the body of Christ. The ministry had for some time been applying pressure to the ugly, infectious boil it had created. Finally, it erupted, and the corruption came spewing out! In June 1989, Danny Layne let his followers know it was time to come out and separate themselves from those among whom they had been worshipping. Of course, this “special group” had been separated in spirit for quite some time, but now, at Danny Layne’s command, they withdrew themselves from the general body of what is known as the *Church of God (Evening Light)* to form a distinct body of their own. They had already launched their own publishing efforts in Prince George, British Columbia, and had named their paper *The Gospel Trumpet* as early as August 1987 (the date of issue #1). They purposely took the same name that D. S. Warner gave the paper he published in hopes of leading people to believe they were of the same spirit and promoting the same thing that D. S. Warner did. They later named their group the *Church of God Restoration*, insinuating that they were restoring the truths and the spirit of the 1880 reformation. Interestingly, it seems all seventh seal/trumpet groups want to get that “Trumpet” name ascribed to their publications in some form or another. But, as time has more than proven, this group was animated by a far different spirit than that of D. S. Warner. (We will reveal more about that in the succeeding chapter.) Following their defection, they began to proclaim *the Faith and Victory people* (as they referred to those whom they left) a fallen, backslidden group of compromisers and urged all to follow their example and “come out from among them.”

Thus, in 1989 a new and zealous seventh seal/trumpet sect was born; one whose roots can be traced to its earliest stages of conception and development beginning about 10 years prior to this – 1979. Could this have been what Bro. Lawrence Pruitt’s dream in 1967 was about? In that dream he saw Bro. C. E. Orr praying, “Lord, you know that in about twelve years something very tragic is coming to pass.” Whether your answer is “yes,” or “no,” when I think of the many precious souls who have been thrown out-of-balance, disillusioned, and had their spiritual focus diverted away from Christ, the truth, the life, and the way, by the “spirit” of this movement, **it is indeed a TRAGEDY!**

Danny Layne and his followers, as men of past decades had already done, claimed they were sounding the seventh and last trumpet, that they had the final and last message for the church. But the seventh and final *age* of the church, they said, **began in 1980, instead of 1930**, as W. S. Goodnight originally thought. Also, according to this new seventh trumpet doctrine, the half hour of silence, after the opening of the seventh seal (Rev. 8:1), was supposed to represent a period of time from 1910 to 1980, the latter date supposedly being when the seventh trumpet began to sound through God’s messenger, Danny Layne, and thereby the true Church of God began to be restored.

Listen folk, this entire message is built upon foolish “fables” – vain imaginations of men of misguided minds, vainly puffed up in their own conceits. Satan, through them, has darkened counsel by the injecting of fables *with truth* and concocting a mixture to allure and deceive the very elect, if possible. It is like rat poison, which contains enough good food to entice the rat but includes enough poison to kill him! It is a wrong focus and a perverted message! Run for your life and “cling alone to Jesus, as

did the saints of yore.” (*Evening Light Songs* #33.) **Seek a life of true humility and conformity to the Spirit and nature of Jesus Christ.** “I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.” Psa. 16:8. **“They looked unto him, and were lightened:** and their faces were not ashamed.” Psa. 34:5. Keep your eyes on **JESUS** and stay **CHRIST-ORIENTED**.

One thing I watched and observed closely, after Danny Layne launched his new seventh seal/trumpet movement, was that “the *Faith and Victory* people,” whom he declared had compromised and backslidden, **DID NOT CHANGE!** The *Faith and Victory* publishers simply ignored the accusations of Danny Layne and his followers and continued with the same Christ-oriented focus they had always had – the same as the founding editor, Fred Pruitt, expressed in the April 1962 *Faith and Victory* paper I quoted from earlier in this book. The following comments appeared in the June 1997 editorials of the *Faith and Victory* and echo the same sentiment, same message, and same focus as was expressed by Fred Pruitt in 1962:

“So what are we to rally around and what is our identity? **Our identity is found in CHRIST.** He is our rallying force. **Our purpose should be to lift Him up in our daily lives, and in our individual spheres of influence.** This we must do so that others will **come to Him and be saved.** **To accomplish this task, we must keep the Holy Spirit fresh within us and our energies focused on becoming more like our Savior.”**

I have observed that this has remained the focus of these humble, gentle, sweet-spirited people unto this day, even though Layne and his followers claimed they took the Holy Spirit with them when they left. However, the moving and working of the Holy Spirit among these people has remained just as real, intense, and definite as it ever was. When Danny left them, he slandered and defamed them before his followers. His present successor, Ray Tinsman, recently made a public mockery of them at the November 2022 doctrinal meeting of the *Church of God Restoration* in Oklahoma City, where he called them “the faithless and non-victorious people!” But I find them still doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8). What more does God require? Certainly, He doesn’t require them to accept Danny’s and Ray’s borrowed and twisted private interpretations of the prophecies of Revelation!

I find that God continues to manifest His presence in the midst of these so-called *Faith and Victory* people, saving and sanctifying souls, answering their prayers, and pouring out His sweet Spirit on their assemblies. Every time I attend one of their camp meetings, I experience the words of the song that says, **“Lo, I feel the Holy Spirit like a peaceful, heavenly dove, witnessing within my bosom that THE LORD OUR GOD IS LOVE.”** While Danny Layne’s followers are now preaching **“Love US, and hate the enemy, and the more you love US, the more you’ll hate the enemy ...”** [quote from Apostle Patrick O’Shea, Sr., May 26, 2022, West Milton, Ohio, meeting], I find these *Faith and Victory* people are maintaining the “faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6). Which would you rather have? A faith that teaches you to hate and fight your enemies, or a faith that teaches you to love your enemies and do good to them? If I mistake not, the Laynites consider anyone who opposes anything they believe or teach to be “the enemy.”

A brother in the Lord who recently came among these *Faith and Victory* people from one of the older seventh seal/trumpet groups told me that the thing that drew him into fellowshiping with them (although he had also priorly received much false, negative information about them) was **the love and spirit of meekness** they manifested. He said, “I came among them with a critical attitude and wanting to take issues with them about certain things, but **I couldn’t even get their preachers to argue with me!** I thought, at first, it was all a façade, that nobody could really be this humble! I had never seen this kind of humility demonstrated before among any ‘Church of God’ group I had tested. But I finally came to realize, this isn’t fake! This is real!” Just being exposed to the influence of the spirit these people manifested melted this brother’s heart and he finally laid down the “issues” he wanted to contend about just to receive the spiritual strength and nourishment he felt coming from real joints and bands of a body truly connected to a heavenly Head. They make no claim of being the *whole* of that body, but by virtue of a connection to and relationship with its Head, *a part of it*. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” 1 Cor. 6:17. **Anyone can be a part of the true church of God by simply being “joined unto the Lord.”** As many as partake of Christ’s flesh and drink His blood (John 6:53-58) receive His life and thus become “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones” (Eph. 5:30). His life in them is what fits them into His body and makes them one with all others who are assimilating Him by drinking into His Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). It is in this spiritual life flow that we discover the church.

Here, in this “secret vale unknown to proud in heart” (see *Evening Light Songs* #201), each member of the *Christ body* finds their identity in the meek and lowly Nazarene. It is a place where men become hidden away with Christ in God – a place where we lose ourselves in Jesus and become hidden behind the cross. Here we experience an inner glory – the glowing witness of the Spirit of Christ witnessing within our own bosom. It is not a place of glorying in men, in movements, or demonstration of any external kind, but it is the glory of an inner relationship – our spirit united and harmonized with His Spirit! “Is the Spirit glowing in thy heart? Oh, my brother, can you say **that you feel the burning love of God** in thy bosom day by day? **Yes, ’tis love, ’tis burning love divine, filling all my soul’s desire;** oh, how sweet its glories ever shine! Now I feel the glowing fire.” – D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs* #222.

This divine love and the grace of humility go hand in hand. Think about the words of this song written many years ago by D. S. Warner’s close associate and co-worker, C. E. Orr:

“Sweet Humility”

“Humility, O grace so sweet! Come, dwell within my heart;
O press me to my Savior’s feet; There lowliness impart.

“Humility, in Christ complete, I seek thy pleasant ways;
For lowly place at Jesus’ feet My heart with longing prays.

“Humility, the sweetest cup Of which my heart e’er drank!
I’ve taken but one little sup, But deep within it sank.

“Humility, O gift divine, Thine odors fill the air;
And while our hearts to thee incline, Oh, shed thy fragrance there.

**“O sink my heart to nothingness, Down, down, to lowly planes;
Then up, far up in joyfulness, My soul in glory reigns.**

“O Heaven’s grace – humility! Thy cherished charm I’ll wear;
I must be humble, Lord, like Thee, Thy holy image bear.

Chorus:

**“Come softly from thy throne above, O grace so sweet and fair;
Come touch my heart in gentle love, And scatter meekness there.”**

– C. E. Orr, *Echoes from Heaven* #113

It is here, in this lowly vale of humility that we experience the presence and glory of God! “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” Isa. 57:15.

“Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Prov. 16:19

“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit.” Prov. 29:23.

“... And be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” 1 Pet. 5:5b-6.

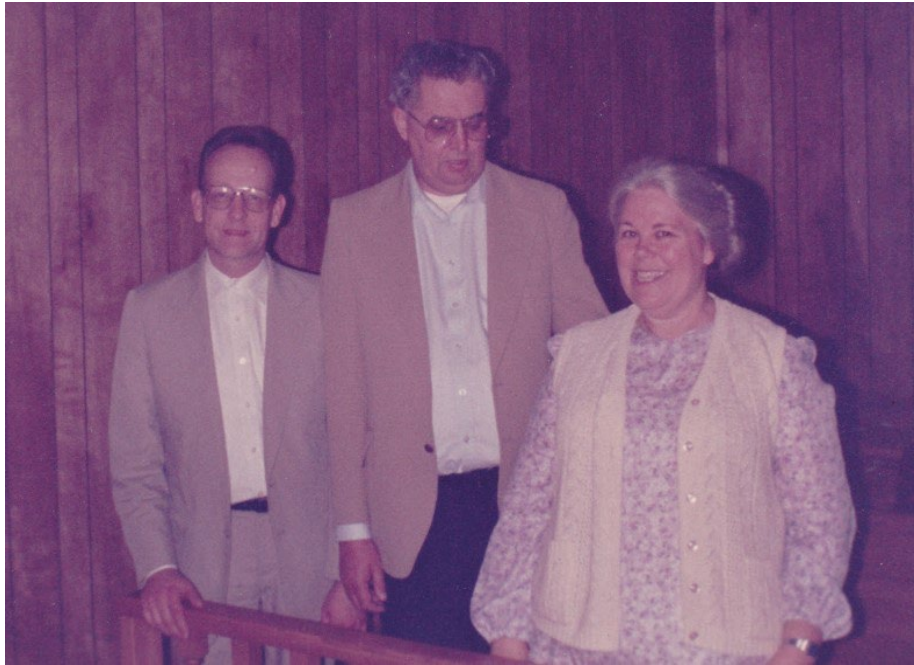
Of all the graces to which a Christian should aspire, it should be a meek and lowly mind and a humble spirit. “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5:3.

“Let not the foot of pride come against me ... There are the workers of iniquity fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise.” Psa. 36:11a, 12.

“No people have more occasion to be afraid of the approaches of pride, than those, who have made some advances in a pious life; for pride can grow as well upon our virtues as our vices and steals upon us on all occasions.”

– Author of quote unknown to the author of this book

Danny Layne Before



From left to right: Bro. Danny Layne, Bro. Ray Garges and wife, Sis. Betty Garges.

Photo taken at the Loranger, Louisiana, Assembly Meeting of the Church of God, November 1986. Bro. Ray and Sis. Betty Garges were members of Danny's congregation in Ontario, California. This was **before** Danny mandated the wearing of dark uniforms.

Danny Layne After



Danny Layne with close friend, Ray Tinsman, seated on his right (left in the photo).

This was **after** Danny and his followers adopted an Amish-like style of dressing.

The Incredible Fruit of Religious Pride!

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts. ... An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.” Prov. 21:2, 4.

I must say that, in writing these things it is not my purpose or intention to malign or hurt anyone. I have no malice toward anyone named in this writing. I only have a love for the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and as His Spirit has revealed it to my understanding. Therefore, I am willing to speak plainly and without fear of men or devils. There are people involved in the errors of which I write whom I dearly love. Some of my own relatives and friends have been included. Yet, I do not hesitate to say that they have been deceived by the cunning craftiness of the adversary of their souls. They are promoting a doctrine that is wrong and associated with their wrong doctrine (as with all wrong doctrines) is a wrong spirit. My continual prayer is that God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. I would welcome any and all of them into my fellowship again with open arms if they would recover themselves from this awful error and the spirit of it. **It is not the people, but the false doctrine and the false spirit that carries it, that we take a firm stand against.** Oh, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened to comprehend the truth concerning the issues in which they are involved! But before that can happen, they are going to have to enter the door of true HUMILITY! Only then can the spirit of revelation be imparted unto them through a more perfect knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ! Oh, that in His light we might all see light! (Psa. 36:9.) Only as we walk in the light as He is in the light can we have fellowship one with another and experience the cleansing of His sanctifying blood, Word, and Spirit from all carnality and divisional elements.

Apostle Peter said, “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; **by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.** And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

Apostle Paul said, “Who **changed the truth of God into a lie**, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.” Rom. 1:25.

The church is God’s “new creation” in Christ. But **God never intended the church (the creature) to be worshiped.** The Creator alone is to be worshiped. When men enter a path of “church exaltation,” or extolling the church above the Creator, they inevitably change the truth of God into a lie. This was exactly the plan that was devised by Satan in the 10-year scheme of his workings that led up to 1989. He was concocting something by which he could bring a reproach upon the cause of Christ such as had not been known in modern times – something by reason of which the way of truth would be evil spoken of. What better way could he do it than to mix a lot of God’s truth with a few fables and a spirit of error?

Before Danny Layne made his departure from the general body of the evening light saints* back in the 1980s, many discerned that he was operating under an exalted spirit that was foreign to the Spirit of Christ. But few would have imagined that spirit would carry his followers as far into deception as it has carried them today! But the working of a false spirit never draws men toward or into truth. It always leads farther and farther away from truth. And thus it led Danny Layne and the “special group” that piled onto his cart. Of all the seventh trumpet groups born up to this point, the leaders of this one have become the harshest, most intolerant, controlling, and proud-spirited. They proclaim themselves and their followers to be the one and only true church and that all men must come through their leaders, especially their now chief one, Ray Tinsman of Greenville, Ohio, to be saved.

[*By “general body of the evening light saints,” I refer to those who retained the integrity of the teachings and principles of the 1880 reformation and did not adulterate them with compromise, fanaticism, or other forms of doctrine.]

Danny Layne built himself quite a little empire of ecclesiastical hierarchy, pope-like authority, and rigid man-rule before his death. To my knowledge, he never repented before his death. His soul is now in the hands of a just God who will render to every man according to his works. His position as “chief apostle” of his so-called *Church of God Restoration* was taken by his friend and close associate, Donald Ray Tinsman, after his death.

Tinsman grew up under the religious leadership of another impostor and dictatorial-type preacher, Victor Orr, of Farmland, Indiana. So the spirit of harshness and authoritarianism was nothing new to Donald Ray Tinsman. His boyhood pastor, Victor Orr, a son of C. E. Orr who did not follow his father’s example of humility, rose up in variance and strife against the general body of the evening light saints back in the 1950’s, some 30 years before Danny Layne came along. (“**Only by pride cometh contention ...**” Prov. 13:10.) **The spirits of Orr and Layne, however, were very similar.** My grandmother, Sis. Natalie Allen, who lived to observe each of these two impostors rise up and gather their followings, said concerning Victor Orr: “**A bunch of ‘silly women’ [2 Tim. 3:6] just went crazy over the man! They would say things, like ‘He’s another D. S. Warner!’**” But he was far from being another D. S. Warner! The poor man was possessed with a legalistic and fanatical religious spirit.

He published a paper there at Farmland, Indiana, called *Church of God Truths*. As with all false movements, some truth was published in the paper, but it was also used to propagate Victor Orr’s false doctrines and fanatical ideas. Our family received the paper for a while, and I clearly remember some of those things. Also, Ray Tinsman’s Aunt Jo Ann (his father’s sister) was married to my father’s cousin, Leon Sorrell, and they attended Victor Orr’s congregation for a while. (Ray Tinsman and I share some of the same cousins, by the way.) Leon and Jo Ann eventually left the place, disgusted with the fanaticism and Victor’s stringent requirements. Jo Ann had many stories to tell us

regarding what they witnessed while attending services there. Some of her stories are forever stamped on my mind.

One of them was how Victor Orr preached to the congregation, on one occasion, that they should not eat ice cream! But some time later, a member of the congregation saw Victor's wife in a grocery store with a box of ice cream in her grocery cart! The congregant asked her why she had the ice cream in her cart when her husband had just recently preached against eating it. Victor's wife replied, "Oh, a little now and then won't hurt!"

Jo Ann said he told the women in the congregation to wear the darkest colored hosiery that they could find. Since the darkest color was black, that was what they started wearing. He preached against receiving any kind of government aid, such as social security benefits, against having any kind of insurance policies, against using commercial fertilizer on farms, against artificial breeding programs relative to cattle farming, and against having chickens in cages relative to egg farming, just to name a few things. I clearly remember a pamphlet that was mailed out (which I still possess a copy of) wherein he stated that hens should not be in cages and should have a rooster with them!

Although some of these ideas might be good, what business does a minister of the Gospel have laying down these kinds of rules for people to follow? What does this have to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? I clearly remember the harsh spirit of Victor's writings, how he said (in the above-mentioned pamphlet) there are those who "justify themselves for taking the plans of the world" (drawing social security, etc.) by saying, "I have it coming." Then he went on to say that, when they end up in hell, they "can truthfully say all through endless eternity in a lost world, 'I have it coming.'" – Quote from *Life as God Has Planned*, page 41, by Victor Orr.

My mother's uncle, Brother Egbert Allen, also followed Victor Orr in his defection for a little while, along with his close friend and fellow minister, Brother Edward Atnip. But they soon saw clearly that Victor Orr was off course and had a wrong spirit, so they repented and renounced his heresy. Later, Brother Atnip moved here to Myrtle, Missouri and pastored our little congregation for about two years. I clearly remember him saying (in reference to Victor Orr, no doubt), "Some people like to be a big duck in a little puddle rather than just be a little duck in a big puddle."

Uncle Egbert also told us about a conversation he heard among some of those who were affected by the fanatical spirit Victor and his followers were promoting. He said one brother mentioned to another brother that Sister _____ seemed like a good sister in the Lord. The other brother replied, "**But Brother, what kind of stockings was she wearing?**" As if that was the determining factor of whether she was really saved and worthy of their confidence!

Unfortunately, it was in this kind of fanatical religious environment that young Ray Tinsman grew up. So naturally, Danny Layne's stringent and fanatical ideas did not seem extreme to him. He was already used to a **man-controlled** religious environment.

The spirit of *man-worship, authoritarianism, and man-rule* that cropped up when Danny Layne came on the scene was very similar to that which accompanied Victor Orr's heretical contentions in the 1950s. And interestingly, Victor Orr and Danny Layne each incorporated, with their similar extremisms and authoritarianism, old doctrines that had been proposed as "new light" some 50 years before them. Victor Orr adopted the "Zinzendorf doctrine" or "anti-cleansing heresy" of 1897 - 1898 as his special emphasis. [See my book, "The New Testament Doctrine of Sanctification and Holy Spirit Baptism" for details about that.] But Danny Layne adopted W. S. Goodnight's "seventh seal," or "seventh trumpet" doctrine of 1930 as his special emphasis.

I know the man who owns the Goodnight Revelation chart that Danny Layne borrowed as a model for creating his own chart. I visited with him in his home, and he showed me the original chart that Danny borrowed and copied from. Danny then promoted his version of the prophetic interpretations as though he had received them from God by revelation, thus misleading his followers to think so. It was, however, nothing more than a modified version of Goodnight's doctrine which he concocted to fit his own agenda – **a true case of plagiarism!**

Following this paragraph is a picture of the chart that Danny Layne borrowed from a former member of one of the older seventh seal/trumpet groups. I, accompanied by another brother in the Lord who is witness to this, visited the chart owner, and took this picture. The owner told us how Danny borrowed it then, after borrowing it, made alterations to it. Danny painted (or had someone to paint) a long dress and long sleeves on the images depicting "the mother of harlots" (Revelation 17) and changed the date for the seventh and final church age from 1930 to 1980. After Danny finally returned the borrowed chart, the owner had some work to do to try to restore it to its original condition. He was able to restore the original date for the seventh seal/trumpet age to 1930 but was unable to remove the long dress and long sleeves from the images depicting the mother of harlots. On the back side of the canvas, we could clearly see the bleed through where Danny had made his alterations. This original chart was painted by the owner's mother in the 1960s and is a keepsake to him, although he no longer subscribes to the teachings it portrays.



One thing that I have noticed in my observations through the years is that people never seem to take up with the doctrine of seven church ages as a result of pursuing a close relationship with the Lord, but rather, they endorse it as a result of their exposure to others who have been influenced by or who are promoting that line of thought. This fact, to me, says a lot about the nature and origin of the doctrine itself! Had Danny Layne never been exposed to people who advocated this idea, who knows if he would have ever conceived such a notion?

Other than the differences in their doctrinal accents, the spirits of Victor Orr and Danny Layne were very much the same – legalistic, harsh, dogmatic, and controlling. Danny Layne told me personally, not too long before he launched his new movement, “Victor Orr is wanting to meet me. I don’t know why.” Later, I thought to myself, “It’s probably because he discerns a kindred spirit!” Bro. Salvatore Didio, of Hammond, Louisiana, told me that, after the ministers had a special meeting with Victor Orr at a Monark Springs, Missouri, camp meeting in the mid 1950s, dealing with him regarding the “line of thought” and the issues he was agitating, he (Bro. Salvatore) pled with Victor thus: “Brother Victor, whatever you do, don’t leave the saints.” Victor’s reply was: “Let the division come – the sooner, the better!”

When the ministers had to deal with Danny Layne in the late 1980s regarding the issues he was agitating, he took a similar attitude as did Victor Orr. And, like Victor Orr, he led away with him “a bunch of silly women!” Within a very short time he succeeded in separating one of them, whom I had been acquainted with from childhood, from her husband of approximately 50 years. This trend of separating wives from husbands has followed the movement he initiated until this present day. (In some cases, husbands have been separated from wives, but it’s usually the other way around.) The numbers of separations, divorces, broken family relationships, and the grief, the sorrow, and heartache that has accompanied the movement Danny propagated is known only to the all-seeing eye of God.

It has been interesting to me to observe how that impostors such as these tend to influence *women*, the weaker vessels, seemingly more so than they do men. It was one such as these, Mr. R. S. Stockwell, who came among the people of God in D. S. Warner’s time and influenced Warner’s wife, Sarah, to become his follower, to leave her husband, and pursue a false and unbalanced gospel. In so doing, the poor woman fell under an awful spirit of bitterness and hostility toward her husband. This seems to be the case so often when women become attracted to and follow these kinds of leaders. They end up despising their own husbands and following the leaders they admire.

Naturally, Danny Layne became an attractive figure to some of Victor Orr’s followers. Victor died in 1988, just at the time Danny was launching his movement. I don’t know if his desire to meet Danny was ever granted. But young Donald Ray Tinsman of Victor’s congregation was a prime prospect of Danny’s zealous proselytizing efforts, and Danny wasted no time spreading his umbrella of influence over the young man, eventually making him his right-hand man and closest associate. Upon Danny’s

death, in 2011, Ray took Danny's place as leader and chief apostle of the movement Danny founded.

The fruit that is now being produced under Ray Tinsman's leadership is utterly appalling! I seriously doubt that Danny Layne himself would even approve some of the things that Ray and his associate "apostles" are now condoning and promoting! In a meeting held at what is now the group's headquarters in Greenville, Ohio, in February 2019, John Friesen, a preacher among them, made the following shocking statements:

"... I'm here to tell you tonight that I have been **wonderfully saved by the wonderful working power of the church.** ... I knelt down to pray and I knew I wasn't going nowhere fast, or anywhere at all, really. Well, there was something working in my bosom that was something that needed more than just the average go on my knees and pray for a few minutes. And as I was praying, I knew I was getting nowhere. I got up on my knees and I looked up at the ceiling knowing that I couldn't see any farther than that, but I said, 'Lord, I'm going to do something – I'm going to start praying another way.' And I began to pray, and I said, 'Lord, I come to you in the name of our chief apostle, Brother Ray Tinsman.' That's what I did! And I'm telling you, I knew I had tapped into something! I did know that! Something was already changing just from that announcement! I got encouraged in my praying! I said, 'I know I'm on the right track now!' So I started out and I said, 'And in Brother Steve, and in Brother Benjamin, and in Brother Everett.' And I went through the whole list! I'm telling you, the room filled with the glory of God that night! There wasn't a doubt in my mind that heaven was in that room! There's no question! I didn't quite know, actually, where to go from there. I had opened up something I didn't quite know what to do with! But I just want to announce to you quickly, heaven has been open to me ever since! And I'm telling you tonight, this doesn't even need a disclaimer, really. We're not talking about man worship, although we could be educated some right here on this point. And brethren, tonight I'm a free man! I'm telling you tonight, I'm free! Free like I've never been free! I'm telling you what happens, dear brethren. **If you'll turn your hearts THIS WAY** – there are temptations and problems in the room tonight that will disappear! You won't have to come here to pray about them, you won't have to fast about them, they'll vanish away. **There are things in my life that have passed away at Brother Ray's feet. And I invite you to join me, and this I can tell you, follow me as I follow them!**" (End of quote.)

"We're not talking about man worship?" What else could he be talking about?

Mr. Stephen P. Hargrave, one of Ray's chosen apostle associates, who is now considered to be number two, or next in prominence under Ray, made these shocking comments on Revelation 21:14 in a sermon he delivered not long ago:

"I want to share with you real quickly, that the names of these apostles of the Lamb are not talking about Peter, James, and John, and the original twelve. It's not talking about that. It's talking about a different twelve! It's not disconnected, because there's one ministry, one church, and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. So, there is no disconnection, and we don't do wrong to refer to the original twelve. But in context

it's not talking about the original twelve. This is talking about another twelve! Do you want to know the names? **One of the names is THE ONLY NAME, THE NAME THAT IS ABOVE ALL NAMES ON THIS CREATURE EARTH, OF GOD'S CREATURES – THE GOVERNOR OF THE WORLD, THE JUDGE OF ALL THIS WORLD, IS THE CHIEF APOSTLE, OUR VERY OWN, BROTHER D. RAY TINSMAN!"**

In November 2020, a few hundred of Ray's followers were gathered in a convention at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The main focus and drive of the speakers at this convention seemed to be:

- (1) Honoring the leaders, the main one being their chief apostle, Donald Ray Tinsman, who now presides over eleven other so-called "apostles." (They also refer to these "apostles" as "fathers." Ray himself stood before the crowd and said, **"I believe that I'm due some honor."**)
- (2) Insisting that all the followers pool their finances and "lay them at the apostles' feet."

This drive was forceful and, obviously, persuasive. In a message titled, "The Great Reset," preached by chief apostle, Donald Ray Tinsman, Tuesday evening, November 24, 2020, he tells his followers that "It's time to go for broke!" It's time to empty their IRAs, their 401(k)'s, their savings accounts, etc., and come lay it all at the "apostles' feet." He tells them that, if they don't, Bill Gates is going to get it all anyway, so it's not going to do them any good if they do decide to hold on to it. He insists that we are getting ready to enter into a time when the government is going to take all our wealth, therefore they, as a community of believers, need to pool all their money together and plan for being self-sustaining in the future.

In a message Saturday night, Nov. 28, 2020, apostle Stephen Hargrave enthusiastically backed Tinsman, appealing to the people to begin turning their IRAs, 401(k)'s, and savings over to the apostles as early as Monday morning, Nov. 30, 2020. He went so far as to say, "What are the apostles going to do with your money? It's none of your business!" He even told them that, after the soon-coming calamity befalls the world, people in general are going to be flocking **TO THEM (the Church of God Restoration)** for sustenance, just like they now flock to Wal-Mart for the things they need!

What a delusional and fanciful dream! Even if they were preaching "sound doctrine" and had something of value to offer the world, God's Word itself testifies that, in the last days, men's hearts and minds will be turned away from the truth in preference of fables (1 Tim. 4:3-4). Therefore, no one should expect any great congregating of the masses even where there is an expounding of truth and sound doctrine. But alas, fables are what these "blind guides" are offering the people, and you may rest assured, they are not the kind that are going to appeal to the masses! They have now made their folly too glaringly obvious before all men!

Tinsman then got up, following Hargrave's sermon, and confirmed that this is right, and **people everywhere are soon going to be realizing how right they, the apostles, are.** He even went so far as to assure them that there is NOBODY who has spiritual and prophetic insight and vision such as he, Steve, and Randy Hargrave have! Again, how similar to the words of C. I. Scofield, **"We have favored spectacles upon our eyes, to see what others cannot see, and if you don't get on board, you'll be left behind!"**

Interestingly, in the announcement portion of his closing comments, Ray asked who had the oversight, or control, of a certain task that needed to be performed relative to the present meeting. But he then had to "clarify" his question by saying, **"I'M IN CONTROL,** but I mean, who has control of this particular task?"

The display of pride and arrogance is shocking, to say the least! I've personally never witnessed anything like it! Below is an excerpt from the sermon Ray preached on Monday night, Nov. 23, 2020. One brother who read it, said, **"If SELF was left out, it would be very short!"** It would indeed! The spirit of the sermon reminds me of Apostle Paul's words: "For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face." 2 Cor. 11:20.

Excerpts from Apostle Ray Tinsman's sermon on "Change," Nov. 23, 2020,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

"It is not possible that the Apostle Paul and his writings can meet all your needs. ... It's not possible that the entire Bible in its written form fully suffice your needs. You say, 'Brother, that sounds bad!' No, because the Bible itself says it can't. It says there's **A MINISTRY** that will perfect you, and who will cause you to be at one, and will help you.

"I'll even tell you that **you don't have the opportunity to pick and choose what you fellowship or whom you fellowship with. You fellowship whom THIS MINISTRY, THIS APOSTLE BODY fellowships with – that's who you fellowship with.*** ... I would further say that some of the things in which we have experienced as change has been changed from a temporary status from the beginning, and that we are more presently in line with the holy Scriptures today than we've ever been in the course of the entire *Restoration*. ... Somebody recently told me, talking about some situation which I won't make clear to you, 'don't you realize that there are some brethren who have some struggles with that?' And I said, 'Well, I could assume so. I hope they'll come through. But, if they think that because so and so has a struggle with it might deter the way I think about it, they've got another think coming, because it don't mean anything.' Not to me. It does to you. **What you think about it means a lot to you, but to me it don't mean anything.** [Ha! Ha! Ha! – he laughs.]

*"We concur with the feeling of John, the apostle, that it is not up to a proud Diotrephes or anyone else to dictate with whom we shall or shall not have fellowship. **SURELY THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT AND WORD ARE SUFFICIENT WITNESS FOR OR AGAINST ANYONE.**" – Danny Layne, *The Gospel Trumpet*, issue 11, page 2, Nov-Dec, 1988, Rosedale, B.C.
"I must stand with anybody that stands right, stand with him while he is right, and PART WITH HIM WHEN HE GOES WRONG." – A quote from Abraham Lincoln, *The Gospel Trumpet*, issue 11, page 8, Nov-Dec, 1988, Rosedale, B.C. Canada.
Has the leadership of the Church of God Restoration gone wrong? Indeed, the Spirit and the Word bear sufficient witness!

“Might be some of you who feel like you have some insight and that some changes are needed. And let’s assume tonight that you are correct. **It’s not likely that you are, but let’s assume that you are.** If you want to hinder that change, you could do so by trying to force that change over on me. Those of you that know about horses, you know them back haunches when they sit down? ... I’m good at that. **I’m good, and ain’t little either.** I need to be littler in some ways. **But I ain’t little, and in this way, I need to stay big.** ... You’re not making any changes. I don’t care how much you have fasted, I don’t care how much you have prayed, I don’t care how spiritual you might be, you ain’t making no changes. I don’t care if you’re right! If somehow in your perception and in your deep spirituality you was able to **surpass ME in vision** (if that were possible, I don’t know, but if it was), **if you were able to pass ME and you could see where we need to make the change, brother, you open your little lips about it, Brother Ray’s sitting down!** ... Now, don’t you think, any young people, that you’re going to tell me what to do! I love you, and you know I love you, but don’t you think you’re going to tell me what to do. **There’s only a few people who would dare to make some suggestions. Not even all the apostles!** I’m just telling you. Bro. Steve might look at me, say, ‘Now Brother Ray, we got to talk.’ And I’ll say, ‘Yeah brother, we better talk. Yeah brother, come on, what do you have to say to me?’ I’ll walk over, we’ll sit down – ‘Yeah brother, I see that.’ **Don’t you think YOU might try that! That would be a suicide mission!**

“But having said that, there ought to be some comfort. By the time that you hear a little bird peep, and you hear that **Bro. Ray feels like that we need to make a little change**, by the time that you have heard it, you can rest assured it’s been through the fire, it’s been through the flood, and it’s been through the blood, and brother, it’s been thought in every way, and then **the Holy Ghost, through the help of a few brethren WHO GET IT THROUGH MY HAND**, I say, Amen. And by the time you hear, it’s way too late! In fact, **it ought to be a little embarrassing to say, ‘Brother have you considered?’** Look, I’ve considered LONG! ... ‘Well, can I not even say anything?’ I’m not going to say you can’t say nothing. **If you dare, go ahead! But, I wouldn’t advise it!**

“I remember the time when camp meetings were always filled with one kind of singing. ... Bro. Danny said that we need to have some other kinds of music. And there was a small little move, like ... rather than having the southern gospel sound, they had a little bit of black gospel, maybe. And there were people that left us, and are gone till this day, because they said we went worldly. I can name them to you – they couldn’t deal with the change – who now might be listening and be happy they left. And **we’re happy they’re gone!** ...” [Note: They’ve now taken up Michael Jackson style music!]

“So we have taken up sensitive subjects. **One of them is about your money!** In the beginning of the days of the *Restoration*, we used to brag about not preaching about money. We ain’t bragging that no more! We’re preaching about your money. ... And don’t tell me that’s a deviation from the Bible. ...

“We’ve talked about sensitive issues that are very real in the world today, that have been crushed and suppressed, and hidden, and put down – the issue of racism. ... That’s

why it took a Baptist preacher to deal with the civil rights and the Church of God folks did terrible. Brother, there's somebody out of Anderson, Indiana, that should have went out on the streets of Washington, D.C., and stood beside our brother in the flesh ... and preached with him when he preached, 'I had a dream,' but where were they? Martin Luther King did what Church of God folks should have been doing. And Church of God folks got out of it by saying, 'That's just the world, we don't have to deal with the world.' Brother, that wasn't the world, that was their brothers. And they actually cried, 'Am I my brother's keeper' in their heart and in their spirit, and they divided and joined the worldly system. I say, Church of God folks joined the world. Had to cancel the Hammond, Louisiana camp meeting because too many black folks were moving into town – I'm talking Church of God!"

[Note: the fact is, the Hammond, Louisiana camp meetings were canceled and moved to Loranger because those residing in the neighborhood were causing problems and vandalizing the campground; not because the Church of God congregation there was against black people. One little black boy living in the neighborhood, named Lewis Kimble, who was peeking through the bushes and observing the congregants, ended up being converted and became a prominent minister of the Church of God, greatly loved and highly respected. How nice it would have been if Ray would have told what the real issue was instead of insinuating it was "racism."]

"... We've never involved ourselves into politics. What are we doing? We're doing what we should have been doing. ... It's the church that ought to have the voice in everything that happens in the society that we live in. From Washington DC to every municipal, wherever we go, it ought to be Church of God folks who are out crying 'holy, holy' in the streets. You say, 'We've never done that.' You're right, we never have, but we are now!

"Well, I hope it's been a help to you. ... I trust that I've helped you that you don't think that maybe the Lord's talking to **YOU** about changes that are going to be made **that you're going to be the leader in**. Because the Lord's not! You say, 'Brother, you can't say that.' Yeah, I can. ... 'Well, if they can, I can.' No, you can't! 'Well, why can't I?' **Because I said so!** **And that's good enough!** That will make you happy. It ought to make you happy! Say, 'Well, thank the Lord, it's not out of control!' No, it's not! **It's very controlled.** ..."

An Excerpt from a Sermon Preached by Apostle Addison Everett
February 2, 2021, at Greenville, Ohio

"... But what I want to say next is that, really, **THIS IS ONE MAN'S GOSPEL! THIS DISPENSATION BELONGS TO ONE MAN!** ... He's smarter than you are, he's got a bigger deeper burden than you do, he's better at prayer than you are, he understands the Bible better than you do, he cares more about the standard than you do, he's more in love with holiness than you are, he has a better burden for souls than you do, he's sacrificed and given up more than you have, and more than you probably ever will. I'm right tonight! Say, 'Why are you preaching this, brother?' Because you need to know

it, if you don't. You need to have it clear – **THIS IS ONE MAN'S GOSPEL!** I'm thankful that there is a Peter and a James and a John, and I'm thankful for the others, and I'm thankful for everybody in the room, but I want to tell you tonight, I'm especially thankful – **I owe my life, I owe my soul, I owe my salvation to the ministry of one man** – someone who has poured out their life in utter abandonment, made personal sacrifices that you cannot number, that you have not numbered, who's prepared not only to be bound, but to die also for the gospel. ... Brethren, there is a father of the gospel whose shoulders are big enough that we can all piggyback, and by whose gospel we are saved. So [you say] 'I got saved by the Bible.' Lord bless you. **You got saved by Bro. Ray's ministry!** Well, 'I got saved by what John wrote in first John, and I read the scriptures in first John.' **I'm telling you about the one that went to John and started expounding the prophetic deep things of God to John the apostle!** [Note: They believe and teach that the rainbow angel of Revelation chapter 10, who gave the little book to Apostle John represents Ray Tinsman!] It's a miracle, it's a marvel that someone can come at the end and hold the message from the beginning. **Stop thinking of Paul the apostle as greater than Brother Ray. Stop it! You're wrong when you think like that.** You're wrong! You're wrong about that! I love Paul, the apostle and, God willing, he'll be one of the first people I'll talk to when I get to Heaven. Oh, I love Paul, ... but brother, I'm telling you something, and some of you all don't get this tonight, **there's someone in this room whose ministry is greater, whose ultimate understanding is greater, whose prophetic significance is greater than James, John, Peter, and yes, Paul, the apostle.**

"I said to Sister Tamara [Ray's wife] one time (I believed it then, and I believe it now), **'Sister Tamara, what's it like being married to the most important person in the history of the world except for Jesus Christ Himself?'** You don't have to say 'amen,' I'm right anyway. You don't have to say, 'amen,' I'm right! I'm so right, I'm going to say it again for my own sake – it makes me feel good to say it, it makes me feel safe to say it: **Sister Tamara, what's it like being married to the most important person whose soles of their shoes, or sandals, or bare feet ever touched the soil of this earth, EVER, from Adam to Isaiah, to Moses who parted the Red Sea, to all the minor prophets to John the Baptist himself, and everybody else, save only the man Jesus Christ? I believe that. I'm convicted about it. And I'm in love with the idea, and I can follow someone like that.** And I want to exhort you to understand that, and to have the same heart. ... **Ultimately, everything that we accept, everything that we believe, everything that we know, filters through the person of one individual human being. If he don't say it, we don't believe it.** If he says 'no,' the answer's 'no.' If he says 'yes,' the answer's 'yes.' And, you know what, **IT'S RIGHT!** I know you didn't understand, and you didn't see all the things that got us there, and you haven't worked out this scientific equation in your brain for why it should be that way, but I'm telling you, it's right! **And here's how you know – because of who said it! ... Ultimately, it's one man's word. Just one!** ... And I'm so happy about it. And I feel so safe with that. Because I'm going to get [things] wrong sometimes, but there's someone that can keep me right. And I'm going to get down sometimes. There's someone that can lift me up. And I want to tell you, I live utterly free from the concern and the worry that this *Restoration* is ever going to go off the deep end. That is utterly void from my mind and

heart. ... **I live utterly void of that concern, because of one man – one man to whom is committed the dispensation of the ages. In one man’s gospel is validated the ministry of Paul, and Peter, and Moses, and Elijah – in one single man.**

“And I want to tell you something else (I’m about to close). Well, if one man were to pass away, [would] someone else raise up? Not in this case. Not in this case! Because not just anybody can do what that one man does. In fact, **NOBODY can do what that one man does. Nobody can – NOBODY!** ... And I, for one, am happy about it. And I want to throw in a little bonus before I sit down. And this is me speaking, not the Lord, but it might be the Lord, because I have also the Holy Ghost. **I think that Brother Ray is a perfect human being.** I know somebody knows I’m right. ... It’s amazing that God gave us somebody that doesn’t have the same struggles that you have – I mean, yes, he can be moved with the feeling of your infirmity, but brother, he’s not messed up like some of us are. I don’t know how God preserved it and worked it out and called him and saved him – I don’t know how all that worked out, I just know I’m glad He did. Because he’s not messed up like me, and he thinks clearer than I think, and he has better judgment than I do, and his person is capable of doing what my person is not. And **on this I stand, and I’ll stake my everlasting soul** until I split the sky with you and leave these vile bodies behind. God bless you, love you, and **Brother Ray, God bless you!**”

After this, Chief Apostle Ray Tinsman arose and stood before the congregation amid shouts and cheers and confirmed that what Apostle Addison Everett had preached to them was right!

Any true apostle or minister of Jesus Christ with a heart tuned to the Spirit of God, would have done as Paul and Barnabas did in Acts 14:11-18, when the people tried to exalt them as gods. “*Which*, when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein” (verses 14-15).

In Revelation 19:10, Apostle John tells us how he fell at the feet of the angel who gave him the Revelation and tried to worship him, but the angel said, “See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: **worship God:** for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (See also Rev. 22:8-9.) On the other hand, Apostle Ray Tinsman, who claims he has the correct understanding and interpretation of the prophecies of Revelation, and who Addison Everett says was “the one that went to John and started expounding the prophetic deep things of God to John the apostle,” seems to have no objection to men falling at his feet and worshiping. John Friesen publicly stated in Ray’s presence that he came to God another way, saying “Lord, I come to you in the name of our chief apostle, Brother Ray Tinsman. ... There are things in my life that have passed away at Brother Ray’s feet. And I invite you to join me ...!” In another videoed worship assembly, I saw one actually fall at Ray’s feet, and Ray was smiling and acting like he was enjoying it! Why didn’t Ray do as Apostle Peter did in Acts 10:25-26, when Cornelius fell down at his feet and worshiped him? The Scripture

says, “Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.” Evidently, self-proclaimed Apostle Ray Tinsman is of a different spirit than the Christ-ordained Apostle Peter!

A sister in the Lord, who was for a while involved with this movement, but later saw their error and came out, told me that she heard another woman in their fellowship say, “**Who wouldn’t want to follow Ray? He’s so good-looking!**” Evidently, women do follow such men for reasons beyond spiritual ones!

In reply to Addison Everett’s statement, “I live utterly free from the concern and the worry that this *Restoration* is ever going to go off the deep end,” I say, “**it obviously went off the deep end A LONG TIME AGO!**”

A Quote from a Sermon Preached by Apostle Benjamin Tovstiga
May 23, 2022, at West Milton, Ohio

“... By the way, I love Brother Layne tonight. ... Let me just say, I did everything Brother Layne told me to do. I did all that I could to honor him, and he could drop a pen and I would jump and do anything. I say that proudly! ... He would actually be thrilled to hear the message tonight. He’d be so happy!”

This so-called *Church of God Restoration* went off the deep end from its very beginning when its founder, Daniel Wilburn Layne, persuaded his followers to believe he had a revelation from God, (which he actually received from a seducing spirit), and his deluded followers, in their naïve folly, elevated him to a place that our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles warned us to *never* give to any man.

An Excerpt from a Sermon Preached by Apostle Patrick O’Shea, Jr.
May 29, 2022, at West Milton, Ohio

“... This revolution has been rumbling for a long time. It’s been working in the people for a long time. It’s working strong right now. It started to be sounded in 1980, but I’m going to tell you, there was a shot that was heard around the world – **when those apostles took their seats** [referring to Ray Tinsman and the eleven others he appointed under him], that shot was heard around the world. **When the throne is here, you can’t stop it.** [They believe these 12 apostles make up *the throne*.] ... I’m going to tell you, **WE are a special people! There has never been a people that has looked SO good as this people does!** I’m glad to be a revolutionary. I’m glad that I became a revolutionary when I identified myself with that [he points to the Revelation chart behind him which shows what they believe to be the *Church of God Restoration* movement in prophecy]. ... I have nothing to do with COG (Evening Light). I have nothing to do with COG (Seventh Seal). I don’t have anything to do with conservative religion. I’ve left that system and I’m leaving it more and more every day. ... That’s the problem with a lot of these Church of God places. They want to preach the message. [For a proper understanding of what the real message is, read the last four chapters of this book.] But they don’t want to be

identified with that throne [again referencing Ray Tinsman and his 11 co-apostles]. And that's the problem with a lot of people. ..."

No, Mr. O'Shea, that is nobody's problem at all! All men will do well to **ignore that throne** and, as A. L. Byers said many years ago, "ignore every influence of man and then rely on the witness of both the Word and the Spirit in order to be guided aright." (See *Birth of a Reformation, Life and Labors of D. S. Warner*, page 29.)

In another sermon Patrick O'Shea, Jr. brought during this same meeting, I believe, he preached as follows (the words you find in brackets were added to fill in the sentences where he spoke so rapidly and enthusiastically he left out words he obviously intended to say):

"... The Bible says **follow the apostleship**." [No chapter or verse is given to back the assertion. But he goes on to say]: "Moses didn't eat pork, so you don't eat pork. But **the apostleship was always the basis**. Who is greater, the house, or the builder? **This is the house that God built, yeah, through Paul, through Brother Ray, through Brother Steve, through Brother Randy, through our preaching!** ...

"Let me tell you something more – this may surprise some of you! The medical world is not wrong. There's nothing wrong with the medical world – it could be a godly thing. There's nothing wrong with the entertainment industry. There's nothing wrong with the music industry. There's nothing wrong with the sports industry. There's nothing wrong with the political industry. There's nothing wrong with these things that everyone acts like [there's something] wrong with. You know what their problem is? They've been Christianized. And what we're saying is we're leaving that. **We're coming to a throne! I don't want to be Christianized. I want to be apostle-ized!**

"We don't dress the way we dress – let me just clear a few things up with you right now. **We don't dress because of modesty** – I think I said that a little bit – I'm going to explain it now. We don't dress [the way we do] because this is modest. We could put canvas bags and potato sacks over our head. **You know why we dress this way? Because we're Laynites!** And receive it how it's meant – I hope you get a good sound bite out of this: **if Brother Layne wore a tank top and a baseball cap backwards, and shorts, that's what I'd wear!**

"Here's another one for you all. I would rather have wrong doctrine with the right people than to have right doctrine with no connection to Calvary. The Gospel was never about the letter of the law – the letter kills but the spirit brings life. **The Gospel was about a predestined savior and his throne!**" [Note: he's not talking here about our Intercessor at God's right hand, but another whom the *Church of God Restoration* sect esteems Jesus in the flesh! O'Shea goes on to say]: "This isn't about you. It's about Jesus Christ and *the throne* set before the foundation of the world." [Notice his reference to "the throne" again! He's talking about the throne on which their own twelve apostles sit! Listen]: "Let me say another thing, we are not being restored back to the Book of Acts. God save us from the Book of Acts! **We are being restored to the revelation of Jesus**

Christ through His apostles!” [Namely, chief apostle Ray Tinsman and the eleven others he appointed.] “We’re not looking for the signs they looked for in Acts.” [Naturally, they are not going to follow, because these apostles don’t have the connection to the chief Corner Stone that the ones in the Book of Acts had!] “We’re not looking for that – that does not judge who we are. We are entering into the sufferings of Jesus Christ **through the ministry of the apostles**. And that’s where the current is, and that’s where the power is.” [What power?] “We’re not ashamed to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ to you. We don’t got to get on the streets and start preaching some A. W. Tozer little *repent* message. What they want to know is, ‘**is there a man, is there a man who has a hold of Calvary?**’” [Again, referring to Ray Tinsman!]

“... We have, as the apostolic body, endured the cross and experienced the shame. And you know what we’re going to do for the joy set before us? It’s about time we sit down and finish this thing up. The hardest part isn’t winning the multitudes. The hardest part is getting through our thick heads the faith in the blood of Christ Jesus, overcoming conservative beliefs, overcoming Protestant beliefs, overcoming these ridiculous lines that are drawn around things that are not. As if piety were defined by someone who’s been everywhere but the cross. Piety is defined in hours of prayer, and in hours of reading your Bible [?]. Annas and Caiaphas were quite pious. Joab died on the altar. Piety isn’t defined – our holiness, our experience – those things may come with it, but **they’re defined by our relationship and our standing with the apostles and the ones they appoint over us.**”

An Excerpt from a Sermon Preached by Apostle Patrick O’Shea, Jr.
November 25, 2022, at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

“... Prophecy is not some crazy art. You just look down the line. And the better your eyes are the farther you see. And some of those prophets had good eyes. They’d talk about Jesus, and then they’d say, ‘Oh, what is this? What is this whole line? It says **the latter is going to be better than Jesus!**’ They didn’t know how, but they looked on down the line. They said, ‘We just hold to zero, then look down.’ Well, that’s what John was doing. He knew the line told them there was an **apostolic government**. The line told them Gentile apostles would come. The line told them that these things had to happen. So he said in his mind, ‘What else would have to happen?’ He began to see beasts that would rise up ... beasts that would forge and make and cause events to happen so that more apostles could be made. You see, it takes time to make an apostle. It takes time to make an apostle that will preach to the world. It takes years, it takes people mingling and events happening. It takes a stirring and a shaking and people who don’t want to go places forced to go places – people who don’t want to be carried away, carried away. And through the process of time, as it followed the line of prophecy, ... **just as sure as Jesus Christ was slain before the foundation of the world, Brother Ray was elected to sit where he sits!**”

“Now it’s illegal for you to not count the vote! And it’s already been made! And the reason I acknowledge Brother Ray, although I think he’s a wonderful person

that's nice, and he's a good man, he's a good leader, because the line says so. And I would have to vary from it to change.

“Someone says about us today, ‘You all are doing things that we don’t agree with. I don’t like that beat. I’m worried about the direction our clothing is going to go, especially with certain peoples. I heard you are watching movies. Let me tell you something: I don’t fear anything! I’m not worried about what’s going to happen with our clothing standard, with our video watching, with our music, with our dress, with our standards. Well, why don’t you fear anything, Brother Pat? Because I look down at my feet and I feel electrical current going through my body and it says, ‘We’re at zero in 2022!’ And if we will hold to the line, His seed remaineth in us and **WE CANNOT SIN!**”

“There is no power in an apostle to stop somebody from being saved, because of the power of the line. But to be saved that person’s going to have to come to zero, and you can’t get there **without going through the portals of salvation.**” [Now observe closely who he proclaims the portals to be!] “I can’t stop your gifting, but in order for your gifting to work, with the power it’s supposed to have – it may work as a fragment, varied in a shadow of perversity – but it’s not going to work until it comes through the portal of salvation. Because around the line He built the city come down from Heaven. But don’t worry, **there’s twelve doors, if you can get through one of those.** Oh, someone says, ‘I’m going to go for grace.’ Well, He said you had to go before His *throne* to get grace! There’s no grace except before the throne of God, which means **you have to find your way to the line of prophecy.** And that’s where we hold tonight. That’s why we’re assured – no other reason – Peter says, ‘the more sure word of prophecy.’ It’s really not about these clothes. If it were, may I ask a question? ‘Why are you all not wearing robes tonight?’ Because Peter sure did. Why don’t we wear sandals tonight? Peter did. Because that’s not the essential item. And, if we did, we would deny the line. I might add, if we did not move in the ways we are, in dress, music – those things you’re concerned about – then we would deny zero. We would deny humanity and find ourselves in perversion, in corruption. **That’s how all those people lost out with Brother Layne – it had nothing to do with whether he was mean or nice, or anything. They would not step into the prophetic line! And they stepped outside, and they were lost, and that’s what lost means.**

“So, I think we’ve established that fairly well – we’re the only people saved! How do you know? We’re the only one at zero. And you know it because the circuitry works. It says, you’ll be a light. But these people have no power to be a light. Because their power’s off. Because they’re so busy worrying about why they have been made thus, and why Brother Ray has been made this way, when they ought to just come in, get on the line, come through the doors, come through the portals, and get connected.

“I guess there’s one last question we should ask, because we have some keen-eyed men tonight. ‘Watchmen, oh watchmen, where does this line go next?’ Well, we know there’s going to come in a bunch of people. But I’m going to tell you right now, the power of the line (maybe you don’t see it, but you should feel it) is dragging them to face the truth face to face. The power of the line is forcing them! Because **when you see an apostolic throne,** there’s a resurgence in the dazzling power and visibleness of the line. When the city set on a hill begins to shine, you cannot deny it. And the creatures of the

dark are forced to account for this line. And those who've been in the dark are coming. That's already happened in one sense. We should already be building bigger meeting houses because they're already – if you would listen you would hear the crackling and the moving, the sound of static electricity – you could feel it in people. They're not able to resist it. Our clothes are not going to turn them off. Our way of dress is not going to turn them off. Our people are not going to turn them off. ... The call, the Bible says the line has gone out to the ends of the earth. Someone, somewhere, is saying in the Amazon, the sun must be from God, and they step into the electromagnetic field, and it begins to pull. It only takes a little while until they say, '**And there he is!**' [O'Shea then points to Ray Tinsman.] **IT WAS HIM ALL THE TIME!"**

Many more quotations could be given of absurd statements recently made by the ringleaders of this "Laynite" sect, but these are enough to cause hell to blush and angels to weep! They cause my heart to ache for the dear souls who are groping in this spiritual darkness! When people become blinded by religious spirits such as this, they become harder to reach with the truth than the most calloused and hardened of sinners. They receive in themselves the "mark of the beast" – the very spirit and identifying characteristic of Roman Catholicism – the spirit of exalting, worshiping, and following man in the place of God. **In creating their so-called "apostleship," who they obviously believe to also be "portals of salvation" or "doors" into the church, this Laynite sect has made an image to the beast and are blasphemously worshiping it and demanding all men to bow down to it and receive its mark in their foreheads.** Whoever does not become brainwashed, receive the mark, and enter through these "doors" cannot spiritually buy or sell in their midst! What a strange and devious doctrine they preach when compared to what D. S. Warner and other reformers preached! One of D. S. Warner's associate songwriters wrote a song based on John 14:6 and 10:9 which says,

"Only one narrow way, 'I am the way;' **Only ONE OPEN DOOR**, 'I am the door;'
Only one Shepherd kind, to heal the sick and blind;
Only one reeking cross for souls that are lost."

– Birdie E. Fink in *Echoes from Glory*, 1893, now song #11 in *Evening Light Songs*.

D. O. Teasley also wrote the following words of inspired song:

"Church of the living God, Thou lovely one so pure,
No strangers come within thy gates, For **Jesus is THE DOOR**:
By Him if any come, They must from sin be free;
[Perhaps a better wording here would have been "They are from sin made free."]
He guardeth well the only door, And holds the only key.

"Church of the living God, Thy sons are born of love;
In Heaven's golden book of life Their names are kept above:
**And God shall count His saints, Preserve them by His grace,
And naught but sin against His Word Shall e'er their names erase."**

– D. O. Teasley, *Truth in Song* #17, published by the Gospel Trumpet Company, 1907.

Mark well, there is only ONE PORTAL of salvation, not twelve! This whole idea of there being an “apostolic throne” raised up in these last days, through which all men must come to receive salvation is *a heresy of the grossest kind!* The Word of God neither teaches nor endorses any such thing! It comes from men who, by satanic inspiration, are preaching a perverted gospel – “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.” (See 2 Cor. 11:13-15.)

Paul, a true apostle of Jesus Christ, said, “... there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Gal. 1:7-9. “For we **preach not ourselves**, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and **ourselves your servants** for Jesus’ sake.” 2 Cor. 4:5. On the contrary, these *Church of God Restoration* apostles preach not Christ Jesus the Lord, but themselves, and themselves our lords in Jesus’ place!

Paul also said, “**Let no man glory in men**” (1 Cor. 3:21). **To esteem any man or group of men above that which is written is “idolatry” – a sin of one of the worst kinds!** “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, **FLEE FROM IDOLATRY.**” 1 Cor. 10:14. “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” 1 Cor. 7:23. Idolatry in any form is an abomination in the sight of God and to give any “creature” (religious leaders included) a place of worship in our life is idolatry.

Again, Paul says, “**Let no man deceive you by any means:** for *that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. ... And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *Even him*, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” 2 Thess. 2:3-4, 8-12.

This prophecy was fulfilled to a T in the Roman Catholic system of popery (the first great establishment of man worship and church worship), and it is being fulfilled again in the so-called *Church of God Restoration* (COGR). Just as the Catholic Church has its headquarters at Rome, Italy, so the COGR has its headquarters at Greenville, Ohio. And just as the Catholic Church has its “vicar of the Son of God,” so the COGR has its “vicars” – its twelve apostles sitting on what they term “the throne,” whom they also believe to be “portals of salvation.” In fact, in the same sermon from which I quoted a

while ago, Apostle Addison Everett said that the difference between them and the Catholic Church is that **they have “twelve” apostles** as their ruling head. Yet, he went on to admit that even the edicts that come from the other eleven must be filtered through **ONE MAN, their chief apostle, Donald Ray Tinsman**. And he thinks this system is infallible, that “Brother Ray is a perfect human being,” and further says, “on this I stand, and I’ll stake my everlasting soul!” What a faulty foundation and quagmire of sinking sand to stake one’s everlasting soul! May God somehow have mercy on his soul and lead him to the Rock that is higher than Ray!

This so-called *Church of God Restoration* movement has restored nothing to the realm of Christendom except a system of religious hierarchy and tyranny like that of popery itself – another “man of sin,” sitting in the temple of God showing himself that he is God.

The following quotation is from the autobiography of Allie R. Fisher, one of D. S. Warner’s earliest co-workers and assistant songwriters. Notice how totally foreign the spirit of the COGR is to what was believed and taught back then!

“... We saw God did not intend that anyone should be exalted as the head of this Reformation, as had been the case in other reforms. This thing was not done in a corner, but the movement spontaneous, and simultaneous, and Christ the headstone we were extolling as we came out of Babylon, bringing the headstone, crying, ‘Grace, grace unto it!’ [Zechariah 4:7.] This is as it should be, for **Christ is the Head of all things to the body, which is His church.**

“Brother Warner was a very humble man, and one who exemplified the life of Christ more perfectly than any person that I ever knew. He had so much patience and sympathy for the erring and those who were weak and vacillating, helping them unto their feet time and again, and speaking encouraging words to those under trial. ... He lived very close to the Lord. He started the day with an early morning walk, and somewhere on his walk he would find a place to pray. He would start out about four o’clock, if the weather would permit, and return about five-thirty or six, in time for breakfast, strengthened and refreshed soul and body for the day’s toil, for he always worked hard. ...

“Let us always be careful to remember that the Lord is the Head of all things to the church and we shall not make the mistake that brought about the apostasy in the beginning – BY EXALTING MAN until finally the Holy Spirit and Word were entirely crowded out and man took the reins of government into his own hands and the blessed, precious privilege of looking to the Lord for all things became a thing of the past, or unknown to the generations following. **SO LET US EXALT JESUS ONLY,** as Brother Warner wrote: ‘We are coming, hallelujah! **We are coming home to God; Jesus only we’re beholding, who has washed us in His blood.**’ ... If we keep low down at His feet, He will exalt us in due season. When we hear His welcome voice saying, ‘Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,’ surely we shall then be exalted.”

Notice that Bro. Warner said, **“we are coming home to God.”** He didn’t say we are coming home to the church of God. That was because he possessed the true, scriptural vision of the church! He knew that people simply coming home to God is what creates the church of God. He didn’t believe in worshiping the creature, the church, but rather the Creator of it. By finding our home in the Creator we discover what He created. This is where these *Church of God Restoration* people have so grossly missed the mark! Poor souls! God have mercy on them! By putting their focus on the church, what they believe the church should be like, and the special place they think they have in *prophecy*, they created their own idol and are worshiping it. What they need to do is to turn away from their idol and come home to God and discover the church He created two millennia before Danny Layne brought theirs into existence!

But false Apostle Patrick O’Shea, Jr., says, **when “people lost out with Brother Layne” and “would not step into the prophetic line ... they stepped outside, and they were lost, and that’s what lost means.”** Here again, we see the mentality of C. I. Scofield, the twentieth century promoter of John Nelson Darby’s seven dispensation ages, coming to the surface: **“We have favored spectacles upon our eyes, to see what others cannot see, and if you don’t get on board, you’ll be left behind!”**

Fear not, precious soul, **you will be blessed to be left behind – you will do well to flee!** **Never step into that prophetic line! Don’t dabble with its “circuitry” or its “electromagnetic field,” as false Apostle Patrick O’Shea, Jr. calls it!** Yes, you may feel a pull, as they, by satanic inspiration speak great swelling words to deceive the hearts and minds of the simple! But don’t be deceived by their magnetism! That pull is NOT the pull of God’s Spirit! This Laynite sect is built on the circuitry and electromagnetic field of twisted and perverted interpretations of prophetic scriptures. Theirs is not the “sure word of prophecy” of which Apostle Peter spoke. The real church of the living God is built upon the solid rock, Jesus Christ, to whom that sure word of prophecy pertained. He built a tabernacle which has never been taken down and not one cord thereof has ever been broken (Isa. 33:20), a sanctuary of which He is the ministering High Priest (Heb. 8:2), of which He alone is the door, and into which you and I may freely enter and dwell safely.

I also thought about Sis. Fisher’s testimony of the humble man, D. S. Warner, how she said, **“he had so much patience and sympathy for the erring and those who were weak and vacillating, helping them unto their feet time and again, and speaking encouraging words to those under trial.”** Then I thought, “What a contrast to the spirit of Ray Tinsman, who openly declared that if anyone would even dare to open their little lips suggesting a change of church policy, “that would be a suicide mission” for them! He openly stated before a crowd of witnesses (documented on video) that he believes he has the power to take away people’s salvation! And rather than being patient and sympathetic toward those who disagree with or oppose him, he, like the pope of Rome, has excommunicated and cut them off.

How different the spirit of Ray, the head of the *Church of God Restoration*, and the Spirit of Christ, the Head of the one true church! D. S. Warner wrote as follows concerning the Head of the one true church:

**“Jesus comes IN MELTING LOVE, Drawing you to joys above,
 Gently knocking for admittance in thy soul;
 Harken to His voice within, Warning thee to flee from sin,
To the kingdom of the Savior’s sweet control.”**

Yes, dear reader, this Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is the only one who controls the one true church – God’s kingdom here in this world. Its government rests entirely upon His shoulder (Isa. 9:6-7). Lofty sect leaders, such as Ray Tinsman, have absolutely nothing to do with it. They are not even a part of it, and most certainly have no control over it! The only control they are able to exercise is over their own empires – those ecclesiastical domains that their followers have given them. If you are one who has been cowed down by such a lord and made to believe that he has authority over your life and can pronounce you “saved” or “unsaved,” be encouraged and fear no more! It’s all fake – a mere exhibition of a deceived man’s foolish pride! The Head of the true church says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matt. 11:28-30.

All you have to do is just YOKE UP WITH JESUS! Walk with Him and learn of Him. He’ll teach you of His meek and lowly ways. He’ll also yoke you up to everyone else who is joined to Him. This is how you’ll find the one true church! Think about the following scripture:

“In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: **they shall go, and seek the LORD their God.** They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, **Come, and let us join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.** My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, **they have forgotten their resting place.**” Jer. 50:4-6.

Remember, dear soul, **JESUS is your resting place.** You’ll never find “Zion” anywhere else. Only when we “join ourselves to the LORD in a perpetual covenant” do we discover “the heavenly Jerusalem ... the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven” (Heb. 12:22-24). It is only by connecting with God through Christ, through the access he now gives us “by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18), that we enter into fellowship with “the spirits of just men made perfect” – those made “complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10). And mark well, the headquarters of this holy fellowship is NOT located in Greenville, Ohio!

Ray Tinsman has been telling his followers quite frequently of late that **it is their place “in prophecy” that identifies them as “the church.”** But the Bible teaches us that it is our place “in Christ” that identifies us as the church, and it is our covenant relationship with Him that makes us a part of it. Jesus Christ, not groups or movements, is the object of prophecy and the cornerstone of the church. **“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”** (Rev. 19:10), and whatever does not line up with that is false prophecy!

Apostle John said, “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; ... **That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**” 1 John 1:1, 3.

Despite the fact that Apostle Steve Hargrave told us that Chief Apostle Ray Tinsman’s name is “the name that is above all names on this creature earth,” and Ray Tinsman himself has declared that “it is not possible that the Apostle Paul and his writings can meet all your needs” and “it’s not possible that the entire Bible in its written form fully suffice your needs,” and “that you don’t have the opportunity to pick and choose what you fellowship or whom you fellowship with – you fellowship whom THIS MINISTRY, THIS APOSTLE BODY fellowships with – that’s who you fellowship with,” yet **you can count on the testimony and writings of the true apostles – Jesus’ chosen ones – to bring you to the fullness of the truth and into the right fellowship.**

Again, I will remind you of the words of D. S. Warner: “All tinkering up platforms of union is wasted time. [**This includes platforms of men’s private interpretations of prophecy.**] Each effort has only molded another sect calf for the people to worship and wrangle over. ... **Freedom from sin knits together in love. ... Bible salvation is all that is needed.** When ‘baptized by one Spirit into the one body,’ and made to drink in the one divine Spirit in His fullness, there will be no trouble to ‘worship God in Spirit and in truth.’ For all such ‘know the truth, and the truth makes them free.’” – Quote from his book, *The Church of God – What It Is and Is Not*.

Jesus, our chief Shepherd, and Cornerstone of the church, has given us this promise: “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” Rev. 2:17. In other words, He will bring you into a personal relationship and comradeship with Himself and you won’t have to go through some man or group of men to receive it. All who enter into this fellowship know that new and secret name that Christ, the true Shepherd, gives them. And “he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” (See John 10:3-5.) It is for this very reason that we flee from Ray Tinsman and his apostolic body! They have a strange voice – one that is completely foreign to the voice of the good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep.

Our Shepherd said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John 10:10. Therefore:

**“Comradeship with Him I love, Satisfied if He approve,
His the Name, all names above – What a blessedness is mine!”**

– T. O. Chisholm, *Songs of Zion* #40, verse 3.

The fact is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Potentate, the stone which many religious builders have rejected (Matt. 21:42-44) and are yet rejecting, is going to consume and grind to powder every man-ruled religious system headquartered on this earth. All “church idols” are going to be confounded on that day! He will destroy them all “with the brightness of His coming” (2 Thess. 2:8). Oh, what weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth there will be when multitudes stand before Him in that day and hear Him say, “Depart from me, ye who preached and believed your own gospel; I never knew you!” May God have mercy on every misguided soul who is yoked up with man-made religion and help them to flee to the one and only refuge, Jesus Christ, before it is eternally too late! “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after [His] righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Matt. 5:6. Blessed are they who count what things were gain to them as loss, and do count them but dung, that they may win Christ and be found in Him, not having their own righteousness, but that which is of the faith of Christ, that they may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death (see Phil. 3:7-17). **He has a church into which no man can admit you and no man can expel you. You will find its headquarters are neither in Rome, Italy, nor in Greenville, Ohio, or anywhere else on this earth, but in Heaven where its Head resides.** The members of this church are “ALL taught of God” (John 6:45) through a direct spiritual connection with the Head, known as “anointing” (1 John 2:27). This “anointing” operates independently of human headships. “But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.” Matt. 23:8-12.

Which One Shall We Believe?

Each of the following men believed they had the final message for the church and that they were sounding the seventh and last trumpet.

Charles Taze Russell, 1881

Charles Taze Russell was born February 16, 1852, in Allegheny, Pennsylvania and died October 31, 1916, in Pampa, Texas, at the age of 64 years. Having rejected orthodox Protestantism early in his life, he founded *Zion's Watchtower and Tract Society* in 1881. He proclaimed himself to be sounding the seventh and last trumpet of the Book of Revelation. His followers later became known as “Jehovah’s Witnesses.”

William Marion Branham, 1933

William Marion Branham was born April 6, 1909, and died December 24, 1965, at the age of 56 years as the result of a car accident.

“In the confusion immediately following Branham's death, expectations that he would rise from the dead developed among his followers. Most believed he would have to return to fulfill a vision he had regarding future tent meetings. ... The expectation of his resurrection remained strong into the 1970s, in part based on Branham's prediction that the rapture could occur by 1977. After 1977, some of his followers abandoned his teachings.

“His followers believed his ministry was accompanied by miraculous signs from its beginning, and that when he was baptizing converts on June 11, 1933, in the Ohio River near Jeffersonville, a bright light descended over him and that he heard a voice say, ‘As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Jesus Christ, so your message will forerun His second coming.’ ...

“In his later years, Branham began to preach almost exclusively on biblical prophecy. In 1960, Branham preached a series of sermons on the seven church ages based on chapters two and three of the Book of Revelation. The sermons used the dispensational system of C. I. Scofield, Clarence Larkin, and Jehovah's Witness founder Charles Taze Russell. As in their dispensational systems, Branham said each church represents a historical age, and that the angel of each age was a significant church figure. Branham identified historical Christian figures as church age messengers, naming some of the same men as Russell.

“Whereas Russell had claimed to be the seventh messenger himself during the 1890s, Branham's sermons differed and he described his own characteristics as the attributes of the Laodicean church age messenger; Branham believed the age would immediately precede the rapture. ...

“Branham also asserted the final messenger would be a mighty prophet Branham preached a series of sermons in 1963 on the Seven Seals, which he regarded as a highlight of his ministry. ... Weaver wrote that ‘the importance of the revelation of the seals to Branham's 'prophetic' identity cannot be overestimated.’ Branham viewed the revelation of the seals as the crowning achievement of his ministry and the ultimate fulfillment of his purpose as a prophet.

“According to Weaver, the sermons were primarily ‘a restatement of the dispensationalism espoused in the sermons on the seven church ages.’ The sermons focused on the Book of Revelation 6:1–17 and provided an interpretation of the meaning of each of the seals, which Branham connected with his prior sermons on the church ages. Like his sermons on the church ages, Branham's sermons on the seals were largely borrowed from the writings of Charles Taze Russell and Clarence Larkin. ...

“In his sermons on the seven seals, Branham again indicated he was a prophet who had the anointing of Elijah and was a messenger heralding the second coming of Christ. Branham did not directly claim to be the end-time messenger in either of his sermons on the church ages or the seven seals. Weaver believed Branham desired to be the eschatological prophet he was preaching about but had self-doubt. At the time, Branham continued to leave the identity of the messenger open to the interpretation of his followers, who widely accepted that he was that messenger.

“Beginning in 1958, Branham began to claim Luke 17:30 was being fulfilled. By the 1960s, he began to make frequent references to the scripture claiming that **through his ministry** the ‘Son of Man was being revealed.’ According to Weaver, Branham’s ‘obsession with Luke 17:30 and Malachi 4:5-6 dominated the end of his ministry,’ In 1964 and 1965 he began to make special emphasis that the Son of Man could **only be revealed through the ministry of a prophet**. Branham’s teachings on the subject caused confusion among his followers who repeatedly asked him to clarify his relationship to Christ. Some of his followers believed he was claiming divinity and were prepared to accept his claims.”

– Copied from Wikipedia.

Walter Sanford Goodnight, 1930

Walter Sanford Goodnight was born February 20, 1878, and died November 29, 1953 (12 years before the death of William Branham), at the age of 75 years. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Hickory, Catawba County, North Carolina. According to his own writing, he believed the seventh seal began to be opened in 1928, the year he began his special study of the Book of Revelation, and he set 1930, the year he began to expound his views on the prophecies as the date for the beginning of the final church age and sounding of the seventh and last trumpet. This final age was supposed to last for 50 years, until 1980, then Christ was supposed to return for the church.

Daniel Wilburn Layne, 1980

Daniel Wilburn Layne was born March 30, 1944, in Ashland, Kentucky, and died September 21, 2011, in Upland, California, at the age of 67 years. His burial was in Greenville, Ohio, in a new cemetery established by his followers. He set the date for the beginning of the seventh and last church age to be 1980, the year of his conversion from a life of drug addiction. Like men before him, he too believed that he was a special messenger chosen by God to sound forth the seventh and last trumpet, although he did not become schooled in that ideology until later in the 1980s.

Whom should we believe?

What did Jesus tell us? “Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; **believe it not**. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; **believe it not**.” Matt. 24:23-26.

The Constancy of the One True Church

On page 2 of the booklet, *Catholic Answers*, it says, “The Catholic Church is the only universal Christian Church that has existed since the time of Jesus. Every other Christian group is an offshoot of the Catholic Church. The Eastern Orthodox churches broke away from unity with the pope in 1054. The Protestant communities were established during the Reformation, which began in 1517. (Most of today’s Protestant groups are actually offshoots of the original Protestant offshoots.)”

This is a good example of how men tend to view and trace what they perceive as “the church,” or “churches,” or “church groups.” Their discernment seems to go no farther than human institutions, organizations, groups, and who split away from who, etc.

Obviously, whoever wrote those words above, regarding the Catholic Church and her offshoots, did not discern Christ’s body, the real church! And there are multitudes of others just like that author. I once read another book titled, “Baptist Churches in All Ages.” In it, the author tried to identify the church from the time of Christ until now within the parameters of so-called “Baptist” congregations and their theological dogma. Similarly, the so-called *Church of God Restoration* is now endeavoring to identify the one and only true church by a measuring rod that extends no farther than themselves, their interpretation of “prophecy,” and their established hierarchy of ecclesiastical authority. They have even boldly declared that that authority comes directly from Greenville, Ohio, where their Chief Apostle Ray Tinsman, who assumed the place of Danny Layne at his death, now issues the edicts. They believe that he is receiving his edicts from God, just as the Catholics believe their pope is receiving his from God. Any time any church acknowledges an earthly headquarters it thereby acknowledges that it is of earthly origin, is under a human headship, and is, therefore, a “man-made” church – a sect. It is sad that mankind tends to become so foolish and narrow-minded. But that is just a natural outcropping of man’s carnal nature. The natural man naturally perceives not and receives not the deep things of God but tends rather to identify what he perceives as righteousness according to his own religious orientation and experience. And this he will often do in preference to identifying righteousness based on the manifestation of the spirit and the “fruit” of a thing.

The real church that Jesus founded, built, organized, and established in the earth, and then sent the Holy Spirit to administrate the functioning thereof, is a divine and spiritual institution. It is, in fact, the very “habitation of God through the Spirit” (Eph. 2:22), and it is “builded together” through the Spirit. Being such an institution, and only receiving its structure, and existence, through the operation of God’s Spirit, it, like all other things divine, can only be “spiritually discerned.” Therefore, **in order to discern and understand the true church, we must allow the Holy Spirit to bring us personally into a spiritual alignment with what makes it the church in the first place!** There’s simply nothing that can be identified in all the New Testament that even resembles an institution such as the Roman Catholic Church is! Her humanly controlled, hierarchical

government is most certainly not endorsed in the New Testament, neither the priestly mediation that she claims between God and man! Neither can there be anything identified in the New Testament that resembles any of her “offshoots” within the so-called “Protestant” realm or any other realm of religious practice directed by man, the ***Church of God Restoration included!*** It remains then, that none of these groups, or bodies, are a representation of the body of Christ, the true church. The divine church is not an “offshoot” of any humanly controlled, humanly governed institution, but she stands clearly identified with Jesus Christ Himself. She stands side by side with Him – His holy Bride – one with Him in spirit and in substance, having received into herself His own life and holiness through the Holy Spirit. “He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.” 1 Cor. 6:17. The church consists of all those in whom Christ’s Spirit dwells, and who submit themselves to the working of that divine Spirit. As Anabaptist, Peter Riedemann, accurately stated 500 years ago:

“The children of God become His children through the unifying Spirit. Thus, it is evident that the church is gathered through the Holy Spirit; **the church has its being, and continues to exist, through the Spirit.** ... The church of Christ is a pillar and foundation [ground] of truth and continues to be that. Truth itself is expressed, confirmed, and put into action in the church by the Holy Spirit. Thus, **whoever endures and submits to the working of the Spirit of Christ, is a member of this church. Whoever does not want this and allows sin to rule over them, does not belong to the church.**”

Peter Riedemann clearly discerned what the church, the body of Christ is. It can hardly be more clearly defined than in his above words.

One important fact that some restorationists have overlooked regarding the divine church is the fact of its constancy. While men may find themselves in a state of needing to be “restored” to a spiritual condition that will qualify them as members of Christ’s church, or they may find themselves entangled in, and needing to come out of, an “ecclesiastical system” that is not governed and led by the Holy Spirit, as the true church is, yet **the church itself has NEVER needed to be re-formed or restored.** The substance that makes the church the church has always been available since the day of Pentecost. Therefore, the divine church has had **constant existence** throughout the Gospel dispensation within the parameters of that system God set up on the day of Pentecost, whether its adherents were few or many. The true church still existed even when the adherents to its Holy Spirit-led system were forced to go “underground,” or hidden from general public view, when the Word and the Spirit had to prophesy “clothed in sackcloth” for 1260 years, as was the case during the papal “dark ages.” The same Holy Spirit that baptizes true believers into the body of Christ today, has faithfully done so throughout the entire Gospel dispensation, wherever and in whomever He was allowed the privilege to operate in conjunction with the Word. **Wherever you find the joint operation of the Word and the Spirit of God, unhindered by the usurpation of human authority, there you will find Zion** – “the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, ... God the Judge of all, and ... the spirits of just men made perfect” (see Heb. 12:22-23). “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God,

they are the sons of God.” Rom. 8:14. “... And where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty.” 2 Cor. 3:17b.

“Zion of God, thou home of the free, **Washed in the blood, I’m dwelling in thee;**
Glorious home, oh, gather us there, Church of the firstborn, thou art so fair.

“Glorious things divinely complete Within thee are found – thy love is replete;
Down through the ages, spotless and pure, Thy God hath preserved thee, thou art secure.”

– B. E. Warren, *Evening Light Songs* #26, chorus & verse 4.

There never has been a need, and it is impossible, for fallible man to *re-form* or to *restore* the “rock” upon which Jesus Christ builds His church, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail (Matt. 16:18), and never have prevailed. But, while that foundation stands unmovable, men have often needed to be reminded how to properly build on it – how to incorporate gold, silver, and precious stones, and omit the wood, hay, and stubble (read 1 Cor. 3:9-15). Because they incorporated wood, hay, and stubble (human wisdom and organization) into their efforts to build for Christ, many sincere Christians have suffered great loss. They forgot that “Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” Psalm 127:1. Through the generations that have come and gone since the day of Pentecost, A.D. 33, there has often arisen the need for those principles of truth that make the church the church to be restored to the minds of men and re-formed in their hearts. Even before the decease of all Christ’s apostles, the mystery of iniquity was already at work (2 Thes. 2:3-7) and there was a “falling away” among many congregations (see Revelation chapters 2 – 3). The apostle Paul said concerning the Galatian congregation, “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed [re-formed] in you.” Gal. 4:19.

There is no Christian group or movement that holds or owns any patent on “the church.” God, the Father, has safely and securely established “the church” within the substance of His own dear Son. Anything outside of that, or foreign to that, He just simply doesn’t recognize or accept. And He freely extends the substance (life) of His Son to us, through the Holy Spirit. That substance, when accessed through the Spirit, will certainly make us a part of the church He owns and recognizes. We can count on the Holy Spirit to always do things right, and to always lead us right. **He never baptizes anyone into anything but Christ.** While men baptize converts into various groups and denominational bodies, the Holy Spirit faithfully baptizes souls into Christ, and *only* into Christ. And herein we discover the true, divinely functioning church. No man can take us into it and no man (including Ray Tinsman) can exclude us from it or put us out of it. Christ Himself is the door. And it is He Who writes the names of His members who overcome by His grace, through faith, on the great membership roll of the church – the Lamb’s Book of Life in Heaven. He is also the One who blots out the names of those who do not overcome (see Rev. 3:5; Exo. 32:31-33).

When we get a hold of these truths, then we can re-echo the message of the “evening light” reformers as they sang it back in the 1800s:

“Then **COME TO CHRIST**, oh come today! The Father, Son, and Spirit say,
The Bride repeats the call;
For he will cleanse your guilty stains, His love will soothe your weary pains,
For **CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL.**”

– W. A. Williams, *Songs of the Evening Light* #28, verse 5,
Published by the Gospel Trumpet Company, 1897.

These brethren of the past were able to sing songs like this one and *Evening Light Songs* #3 “Thy children are gathering home from all the divisions in which they were scattered,” because they had learned where HOME is. And **HOME IS STILL WHERE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN!** Home never moved or went anywhere!

“Have you heard a voice from Heaven, calling in a solemn tone,
Come, my people, from confusion, This is not your native home?
Yes, I heard, and **to my vision, Zion’s glory brightly shone;**
Then I rose and fled the ruin, Taking not a Babel stone.”

– D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs* #24, verse 2.

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.” Isa. 60:1. How does that happen? Simply by coming to Christ and taking Him as our all in all.

“My darkness now is passed away, **IN JESUS ALL IS PERFECT DAY;**
And peace and comfort ever stay, Since **CHRIST IS MY PERFECT LIGHT.**

“O Jesus, to my heart so sweet, **Thy Word’s a light unto my feet;**
How holy, happy, and complete, I walk in the precious light.”

– D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs* #114, verses 2 & 3.

This is how we become a part of that “city that is set on an hill” that cannot be hid (Matt. 5:14). The church is simply a reflection of Christ through people who have put on Christ (see Rom. 13:14). Therefore, the church is portrayed in Revelation 12:1 as “a woman clothed with the sun.” That sun with which she is clothed is THE SON – the “Sun of righteousness,” who rises with healing in His wings upon those who fear His name (Mal. 4:2).

There has never been a need for any man to restore the church. The substance of the church has been freely available to all mankind since the day of Pentecost. There has only been a need for men to understand and return to its substance – to measure themselves to the “plumbline” that identifies the parameters “of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man” (Heb. 8:2). The plumbline reveals just how to build our lives on Jesus Christ so that we can be “fitly framed” into God’s building (Eph. 2:21).



Return to the Plumbline

“Thus he shewed me: and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, **I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.**” Amos 7:7-8.

We sometimes hear people say, “There needs to be another great reformation,” or “another great revival!” As appealing as that may sound, **the fact is there’s not going to be one! The one that directed us to the plumbline and proclaimed Jesus Christ to be the substance and life of His own body, the church, and that our ENTERING THROUGH HIM AND ABIDING IN HIM makes us members of the church, was the last one.** The “little book” in the hand of the rainbow angel of Revelation chapter ten has now been made available to all “peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” Whosoever will may now receive “the testimony of Jesus,” which “is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). He is that living Word that “was made flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), and declared “I am the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). All people are invited to freely take the Word and eat it up! And all who do, find it to be “spirit” and “life” (John 6:63). As they eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood (John 6:53-

58), by the little book, they discover the substance of His “glorious church” that is without “spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing” – sanctified and cleansed “with the washing of water by the word” (Eph. 5:26-27). People of all nations, kindreds and tongues can now be baptized into that glorious body by simply drinking into the substance of it by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Through Christ, both Jews and Gentiles now “have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:18). But, if we so choose, we can eat and drink at other tables and access other spiritual substances that animate other bodies that are foreign to, and antagonistic to, the substance of the Christ body. That is why we’re exhorted to not be “carried about with every wind of doctrine,” but grow up into him (Christ) in all things, which is the head” (Eph. 4:14-15).

The message of the 1880 reformation offered the cure for all apostasy and division among Christians. For that reason, it was sometimes referred to as the “last reformation.” Those who were originally involved in it understood the true nature of it. They were not responsible for false teachers coming along later and diverting men’s focus from the real message by smoke-screening it with the fables of “another gospel.” **Their focus was upon the plumbline that God set in the midst of His people – the living Word, that reveals Christ to men’s hearts by the ministration of the Holy Spirit.** This plumbline was what they measured themselves to and measured themselves by. And nobody can proceed any farther into “reformation” or “revival” than that! **“All my soul can wish forever, I do find in Christ replete;** every blessing and the Giver in my peaceful bosom meet.” – D. S. Warner, *Evening Light Songs* #97, verse 2.

Some today have deviated so far from the plumbline that they don’t perceive where they are at. Winds of doctrine and human reasonings have blinded their spiritual perception and diverted their focus. Nevertheless, the plumbline remains just where God placed it. God is not going to pass by anymore with any further revelation of truth. He has already given us His truth. **“What more can He say than to you He hath said – To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?”** – *Evening Light Songs* #37, verse 1. “Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and **he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.**” 1 Pet. 2:6. All we need to do is simply focus on the plumbline and, by it, line up with that chief Corner Stone and He will fit us right into His building. The plumbline has not moved at all in the last 2000 years.

“The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; For the truth’s sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.” 2 John 1-2. God has set the plumbline of His eternal truth before us all and now He is requiring us all to focus on it and measure ourselves to it. All we need to do now is just take the “little book” and eat it up! All who eat it, digest it, and assimilate it into their spiritual being will experience a glorious reformation and revival within themselves! “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20b-21.

Committing our souls without reserve to the operation of the living Word and the Spirit of God will measure us to the plumbline. It is then that we find, as the Word declares, that **Zion is a “quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down;**

not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be [or ever has been] removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars [no man-ruled system], neither shall gallant [proud] ship pass thereby.” Isa. 33:20b-21. There are no exalted or arrogant spirits in God’s church. Only “the spirits of just men made perfect” (complete) **IN CHRIST!** (Heb. 12:22-23.)

By simply returning to the plumbline, we find ourselves “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God” ... and we build “upon **the foundation of THE APOSTLES**” OF JESUS CHRIST; not some modern-day, self-serving chief apostle, or any other shoddy foundation of humanly controlled ecclesiasticism. Jesus Christ Himself is the “chief corner stone” of the church and the government thereof rests upon His own shoulder – of the increase of His government and peace there is no end (see Isa. 9:6-7). In this household of God, we find **JESUS IS THE ONLY CHIEF**, and in Him “all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (See Eph. 2:19-22.) As we come, “unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” by the help of His administrating agent, the Holy Spirit, whom He has sent to guide us into all truth (John 16:13-14), we find ourselves “no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love,” we “grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (See Eph. 4:13-16.)

“**SANCTIFY THEM THROUGH THY TRUTH: THY WORD IS TRUTH.**” John 17:17. The Lord wants to bring us all to the place that we can say with the songwriter:

“From the state of condemnation, Pride and all formality,
And from selfish exaltation, Through Christ’s Word and blood I’m free,
Blessed Bible! What a comfort! Its dear pages shine so bright;
’Tis the way from earth to Heaven, I am walking in its light.”

– Maggie Stratton, *Evening Light Songs* #335, verse 3.

Let us all eat the little book! “... Take it, and eat it up ...” Rev. 10:9.



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The Bible Way

B. E. W.

B. E. WARREN.

1. The Lord in - vites you in, O come to Him, I pray;
 2. A name to live while dead, Will on - ly God be - tray;
 3. No hu - man creed or church Will an - swer in that day,
 4. The man - y ways of strife Are lead - ing souls a - stray;

He'll save your soul from sin The Bi - ble way.
 Then come as He hath said The Bi - ble way.
 When God each heart will search; Then choose His way.
 The Word of God is life, The truth, the way.

CHORUS.
 There is but one true way, There is but one true
 but one true way, just

way; He'll save your soul from sin's con - trol The Bi - ble way.
 one true way;

– Copied from the *Evening Light Songs* hymnal.

The Bible Church

A holy religion each one may possess
 That's not bounded by sects or by creeds;
 The fullness of God in your bosom to bless
 And to satisfy fully your needs.

Now, let it be known unto all from the start:
 By Christ's blood, which makes free from all sin,
 We enter His kingdom and thus become part
 Of His church – when we've been born again.

Its government rests on the shoulder of Christ, (Isa. 9:6-7)
 It's established by the Prince of Peace; (Psa. 87:5)
 Its organization no group has franchised, (1 Cor. 3:6-7)
 For 'tis God who gives all its increase. (Col. 2:19)

The names of its members are written with love
 In the Lamb's Book of Life at God's throne;
 For there's its headquarters, in Heaven above,
 And no other by God's church is known.

Christ is the Foundation and also the Head (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph.
 Of the church; He's the Chief Corner Stone. 2:20; Col. 1:18)
 By His Holy Spirit it's guided and led (See the Book of Acts)
 Through a perfect system all His own. (Rom. 8:14)

If in Heaven's book, friend, your name is enrolled,
 In this Bible church you have a place;
 Because on the pages of God's Word we're told
 That He adds such as he saves by grace. (Acts 2:47)

Its fellowship pivots on God and His Son
 And on walking in heaven's pure light; (1 John 1:3-7)
 It embraces ev'ry regenerate one
 Who has cast off the dark works of night.

It's not a religion of some man-made form,
 But the true life and power of Christ's blood;
 It breaks sinful habits, calms life's raging storm,
 And brings heartfelt communion with God.

Have you been confused, have you oft' stood in doubt
 Of religion, and which way is right?
 Have you often wondered what it's all about
 As the sects in carnality fight?

Behold, there's a "highway" above all that maze,
 Whereupon the unclean have not trod -- (Isa. 35:8)
 Most beautiful sight upon which man can gaze (Psa. 48:2-3)
 Is Mount Zion, the dwelling of God! (Heb. 12:22-23)

The church that is built upon Jesus, the Rock, (Matt. 16:18)
 High above all confusion and sin; (1 Cor. 10:4; Matt. 5:14)
 The heavenly kingdom, the heaven-born flock, (1 Pet. 2:5-9)
 Where the Shepherd Himself takes them in.

Enfolding His lambs in His bosom of love, (Isa. 40:11)
 To the conscience of each He makes known
 That they by His Spirit are born from above,
 And the Father has made them His own.

Christ says, "I'm the door, if by me any man
 Enter in, he'll be saved;" thus we find
 That this is the God-given church-joining plan,
 And the only one, true Bible kind. (John 10:9)

He's part of the church who abides in the Lord,
 Has the Spirit of Christ in his breast;
 We try ev'ry spirit by God's holy Word – (1 John 4:1)
 This alone is the fellowship test.

The Spirit of Christ is the Bible church brand
 And the Bible church fellowship bound;
 In fellowship they gladly give their right hand
 Unto all in whom JESUS is found.

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ,"
 As the Word says, "he is none of His;" (Rom. 8:9)
 Hereby we discern the true body of Christ,
 Who is not in the church and who is.

All children of God who abide in His love
 Are the church, the divine family;
 The spirit's the same here on earth and above –
 It's a heavenly society.

If you are a branch of the heavenly Vine, (John 15:1-8)
 You are part of Christ's body, you see:
 If Christ's life is yours, and if Christ's life is mine,
 We're united spontaneously!

That substance which sustains Christ's body on earth
 Is His own Spirit's life-giving flow;
 It quickens His Word and gives spiritual birth
 And anointing to men here below.

We're "The Church of God," not if that name we own,
 But if "Christians" without and within;
 By being in line with the Chief Corner Stone,
 Jesus Christ, who's the standard for men.

Yes, Christ is the length and the breadth and the height
 And the depth of the true church of God; (Eph. 3:14-21)
 He is the whole boundary of all that's right,
 And His Word is the measuring rod. (Rev. 11:1)

A counterfeit church was established around
 The year two hundred sev'nty A.D.;
 Today her headquarters and head can be found
 In a city called Rome, Italy.

Her daughters have their headquarters scattered abroad
 Where their governing bodies reside;
But still the headquarters of the church of God
Are in heaven, where her Head abides.

Thus, none of her resource has she ever lost,
 For **to man-rule she simply won't bow;**
What set her in motion back at Pentecost
Is what's leading and guiding her now.

And thus has her purity e'er been maintained,
 For God's church and all functions thereof
 Originate from her Head, and are sustained
 By the Spirit of life from above.

Wherever these wonderful truths were not lost,
 And men's hearts were revived by the same,
 Down through all the centuries since Pentecost
 God has had a pure church, without blame.

She passed through the wilderness of Romish night
 And the Protestant dark, cloudy day,
 Then into the glory of the evening light, (Zech. 14:7)
 As the truth swept sect idols away. (Isa. 2:17-18)

Love from God, the Father, grace from Christ, the Son,
 And communion of the Holy Ghost: (2 Cor. 13:14)
 This is the inheritance of ev'ry one
 Of God's ransomed and sanctified host.

The gates of this "city" are open to all, (Rev. 21:25)
 For she covers the breadth of the earth; (Rev. 20: 9)
 No darkness e'er comes inside her jasper walls,
 Where men enter by heavenly birth.

The nations of them that are saved walk therein (Rev. 21:24)
 And the Lamb is their life and their light; (John 1:4, 9;
 And inside her walls there can enter no sin, (Rev. 21:27)
 Nor an element that is not right.

This church of the firstborn, written above, (Heb. 12:22-24)
 Is a kingdom which ever shall stand; (Heb. 12:28)
 Her Maker, her husband, compacts her by love (Isa. 54:5; Rom 5:5)
 Through His Spirit – she’s made without hands! (Eph. 2:18-22)

Through Christ all have access by spiritual birth (John 3:3-8)
 To this city God built without hands;
 She is a great mountain that fills the whole earth (Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45)
 She’s accessible now in all lands.

Oh, heav’nly Jerusalem, home of our souls, (Psa. 46:4-7)
 Where the glorious LORD, the Most High,
 Becomes our own refuge, and broad rivers flow, (Isa. 33:20-24)
 Where no galley with oars* passes by.

The LORD is our Judge, our Lawgiver, and King,
 He has saved us and made us His own;
 His Spirit bears witness to this very thing (Rom. 8:16)
 In our hearts where He reigns on His throne. (1 John 5:10)

Those dwelling within Zion’s walls are not “sick,” (Isa. 33:24)
 They’re forgiven, they’re healed, and made whole;
 The Shepherd who holds the supreme bishopric (1 Pet. 2:24-25)
 Is the One who restores every soul. (Psalm 23)

He knows all His sheep and they do all Him know (John 10:1-18)
 From the least to the greatest of all; (Heb. 8:11)
 He makes them lie down where the green pastures grow,
 By still waters, as they heed His call.

Friend, this is the way you’ll discover God’s church,
 It is simple and basic indeed:
 Yoke up with the Shepherd and He’ll end your search
 As you follow where His Spirit leads.

You’ll recognize Christ in whomever He’s found
 And you’ll recognize wrong spirits too.
 The voices of “strangers” won’t have the right sound,
 But **the Shepherd’s voice always rings true.**

*A galley with oars represents religious organizations that are paddled and navigated by men – directed and controlled by human wisdom rather than by the Holy Spirit. **In the Bible church there are no “big I’s” and no “little you’s.”**

Conclusion

**“The Bible is our rule of faith and Christ alone is Lord,
All we are equal in His sight when we obey His Word;
No earthly master do we know, to man-rule will not bow,
But to each other and to God eternal trueness vow.”**

Every member of God’s church has their own personal “space” to yoke up with Jesus, learn of Him, walk with Him, and to abide in Him and be taught by the “unction” and “anointing” of His Spirit indwelling their own hearts (see 1 John 2:20-29). Of course, this does not discount the benefit we receive collectively from the “gifts” He bestows by His Spirit to various members of His body, such as “pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, Till we all come in the unity of the faith ... **unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**: that we ... be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may **grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ**” (see Eph. 4:11-16). **Becoming like Christ, growing up into Him and attaining to His fulness is the focus and the goal of His body, the church.**

Apostle Paul said, **“Therefore let no man glory in men.** For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas (Peter), or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; **And ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s. Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.** ... And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; **that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.** For who maketh thee to differ from another? And **what hast thou that thou didst not receive?** Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” 1 Cor. 3:21-23; 4:1-2, 6-7.

“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. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; **So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.** ... **Let love be without dissimulation.** Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. **Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.”** Rom. 12:3-5, 9-10.

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. **And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful.” Col. 3:12-15.

In concluding this book, I want to admonish all who have found themselves enslaved in man-ruled religion, and have come out and renounced the same, to be especially careful to focus on following and patterning your life after Jesus and His written Word. Pursue a *personal relationship* with Him. You have been used to following the dictates of your religious leaders. What they have told you, you have believed and acted accordingly. You have accepted the commandments of men as law and gospel rather than seeking a personal understanding and knowledge of the principles and precepts of the true Gospel. False Apostle Patrick O'Shea, Jr., demonstrated this fact when he stated, "We don't dress [the way we do] because this is modest. ... **You know why we dress this way? Because we're Laynites!**"

When people whose religious experience runs no deeper than this finally come to realize that they have been duped and then turn away from the man-ruled systems they trusted in, they generally tend to run too far the opposite direction and end up in the ditch of "liberalism" and living after the flesh. "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction," is a law of physics. It is also a law of human nature and decision making. So, if you have been in bondage to a fanatical, man-ruled religious organization, be careful of the course you take in coming out! Audra Amelia DeLaney, of Bowling Green State University, has wisely written: "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction, and how we take both of those reactions after we set a track in motion, is how we will end up viewing the life we are living. **Choose the lens through which you look carefully, and choose your path the same way as well.**"

I want to exhort all my readers to carefully choose their path through the lens of Jesus Christ, by looking "into the perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25) and continuing therein. In so doing, you will be blessed in your deeds! Paul says, "Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." Gal. 5:13. Peter speaks of those who promise liberty, but are themselves the servants of corruption, and goes on to say, "for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Pet. 2:19). If we end up overcome by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, we fall under another form of bondage and become servants of the flesh, which wars against the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-18). Let us focus on becoming **love slaves of Jesus! This is the bondage that will set you perfectly free!** As songwriter George D. Watson once wrote:

"O sweet will of God! thou hast girded me round
Like the deep, moving currents that girdle the sea;
**With omnipotent love is my poor nature bound,
And this bondage to love sets me perfectly free."**

So, as Helen Howarth Lemmel also wrote in her song: "**Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face; and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.**" She was inspired to write the words of this song after reading the words of a small booklet by Isabella Lilius Trotter entitled "Focused," and hearing of her life story. Below is a small excerpt from that little booklet written by this devoted sister in Christ who went to Africa in March of 1888 as a missionary and spent the remainder of her life sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and His wonderful

salvation with the Arab tribes of Algeria. Think about her words, and ask yourself, “Where is my focus?”

“It is easy to find out whether our lives are focused, and if so, where the focus lies. **Where do our thoughts settle when consciousness comes back in the morning? Where do they swing back when the pressure is off during the day? Does this test not give the clue?** ... Dare to lay bare your whole life and being before Him and ask Him to show you whether or not all is focused on Christ and His glory. ...

“All aims, all ambitions, all desires, all pursuits – shall we dare to drop them if they cannot be gathered sharply and clearly into the focus of ‘this one thing I do?’ (Phil. 3:13-14.)

“Will it not make life narrow, this focusing? In a sense, it will – just as the mountain path grows narrower, for it matters more and more, the higher we go, where we set our feet – but there is always, as it narrows, a wider and wider outlook, and purer, clearer air. **Narrow as Christ’s life was narrow, this is our aim; narrow as regards self-seeking, broad as the love of God to all around.** Is there anything to fear in that?

“And in the narrowing and focusing, the channel will be prepared for God’s power – like the stream hemmed between the rock-beds, that wells up in a spring – like the burning glass that gathers the rays into an intensity that will kindle fire. **It is worthwhile to let God see what He can do with these lives of ours, when ‘to live is Christ.’**

“**Turn full your soul’s vision to Jesus, and look and look at Him,** and a strange dimness will come over all that is apart from Him, and the Divine attrite by which God’s saints are made, even in this 20th century, will lay hold of **YOU**. For **‘He is worthy’ to have all there is to be had in the heart that He has died to win.**”



Isabella Lilius Trotter (1853–1928)

COPY JESUS

By Harlan Sorrell

(Written in the year 1987, slightly revised and abridged)

Reader dear, are you a “Christian?”
Do you bear that sacred name?
Then, that means you “copy Jesus,”
As He lived, you live the same.

Do you say that He’s your Master,
And that you revere His Word?
It is said a perfect servant
Shall be even as His Lord. (Luke 6:40)

Let us now consider Jesus,
He who says, “Come, follow Me.”
Just as He has been before us,
So ought we to also be. (1 John 2:6)

Holy Jesus, separated
From this world and all its sin;
Yet, while living here within it,
Reaching out to fallen men.

Harmless Jesus, not returning
Harm for harm that He received;
Kind and loving to the sinners,
Yet, with sin forever grieved.

Humble Jesus, never forward,
But with selfless, holy aim,
In a meek and quiet manner
Sought to glorify God’s name.

Lowly Jesus, filled with meekness,
By the common people heard;
Gentleness – it gave Him greatness;
Grace proceeded from His words.

Tender Jesus, showing mercy
And good will unto all men:
With a heart of love outreaching
To forgive, and not condemn.

Caring Jesus, with compassion
Toward humanity in need,
Like a tender, loving Shepherd
Seeking hungry souls to feed.

Sharing Jesus, never selfish:
Always something He could give;
Seeking how to be constructive,
And for other’s profit live.

Praying Jesus, interceding
With His Father, oft’ alone;
Keeping day by day communion,
Bearing burdens to God’s throne.

Faithful Jesus, waxing valiant
In the battle against sin;
Marching all the way to Calv’ry
That He might the vict’ry win.

Is there in your heart a longing
Just to be like someone grand?
Then aspire to “copy Jesus,”
In His faith and life to stand.

Copy Jesus, He’s the model
For a perfect Christian goal;
You’ll not fall below the standard,
And you’ll never lose your soul.

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