

The Teachings of D. S. Warner and his Associates

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OCCASION FOR THIS PAPER

For several years I have been making a careful and prayerful study of our teachings with the motive of finding their underlying principles and whether or not these teachings are soundly based. I know that the more truth is investigated the brighter it shines, therefore I have had no hesitation in seeking to know to the limit of my capacity the facts, and all the facts, that I might discover. I have earnestly and prayerfully sought the truth without respect to what anyone else thought, believed, or taught. Truth will stand by itself; it needs no support. It vindicates itself, so I have sought it eagerly and without restraint.

When the last two books on prophecy were issued by the Gospel Trumpet Company I procured copies of each and have given them thorough and intensive study. For the past six months, with the help of a ministerial student from Anderson College, I have studied the life and teachings of D. S. Warner in our literature, past and present, in The Cleansing of the Sanctuary by D. S. Warner and H. M. Riggle; The Birth of a Reformation by A. L. Byers; and other works. I knew D. S. Warner personally; I read his articles and editorials in the Gospel Trumpet for three and one-half years just prior to his death. I have read all the books and tracts he wrote and had published. I knew nearly all of the ministers who were associated with him. In my early ministry I was intimately associated with many of them, such as B. L. Warren, A. J. Kilpatrick, J. N. and George Howard, S. L. Speck, Otto Bolds, Mother Sarah Smith, and others who had been very closely connected with Brother Warner for many years. For some years I was a worker at the Gospel Trumpet Office. I attended several of the general camp meetings, also state camp meetings and assembly meetings. I was, so to speak, in the center of our work, and had full opportunity to know all that was believed and taught in those days. I have followed our teaching closely in all the days since. I believe, therefore, that I am competent to speak of our teachings for the last fifty years.

In this paper I am setting down some of the conclusions I have drawn from all these years of study, and expressing some of the convictions I have regarding those teachings. In the first place, I agree with all those principles we have taught that are clearly taught in the New Testament. These things we do not have to guess at. The doctrines of Christ are positive and clear. What we have taught about God, Christ, unity, and the evils of division are all settled and secure except, perhaps, in the details of exegesis, the application of terms, theological opinion, and the like. It is chiefly the field of prophetic interpretation and application that seems to demand rethinking.

WARNER AS A MAN

I knew D. S. Warner and loved him with reverential affection. I shall never forget his kindness to me, and the wise advice and counsel he gave me. I shall speak of his personality only in an attempt to give a portrait of him as I knew him. He was a highly spiritual man, very devoted and earnest, sincere, with the utmost loyalty to what he conceived to be the truth. He hated error as much as he loved truth, and attacked it on every possible occasion. With the weak, the suffering, or the discouraged, he could be as tender as a woman. With his associates he was humble, brotherly, kind. He loved to exalt the grace of God. He was bold, fearless, and a man of boundless energy. When aroused he was like a lion and roared mightily against evil. He was a poet, a dreamer, an idealist, and a perfectionist. He was not a logical thinker. He got most of his ideas which he did not absorb from others through his intuition rather than by careful logical thinking. Having an idea, he would go to the Bible to find scriptural support for it. In hundreds of instances he misinterpreted and misapplied texts, as do all who use his method. We have been compelled to reject a very large portion of his exegesis because it has proved to be unsound. Nevertheless, he was a great and good man of God, worthy of our highest regard, and we should cherish his memory. His teaching on a pure and spiritual church, incarnating anew the Christ and speaking to the world as the voice of God, was a potent message which should remain central in all our teaching.

BROTHER WARNER'S THEOLOGY

Brother Warner probably got his theology mostly as follows:

1. Ecclesiology: largely from the Baptists, through Winebrenner and Alexander Campbell.
2. Salvation and holiness: largely from the Holiness Alliance.
3. Imminence of the second coming of Christ: from the Holiness Alliance and the Seventh Day Adventists.
4. Prophecy: from Newton, Adam Clarke, Campbell, Miller, and Uriah Smith.
5. Many ideas came through his opposition to doctrines taught by other people, such as are included in his book The Cleansing of the Sanctuary. He taught little that was original with him.

The sources of his ideas are not important except as a matter of information.

Leaving consideration of Brother Warner as a man and considering him no further as an individual, I turn to consideration of the doctrines he taught in order to analyze them quite apart from the man himself.

ASSUMPTIONS BY BROTHER WARNER

1. The imminence of the second advent and the end of the world.

On this as a primary assumption all his prophetic teaching and that related to the reformation was based. Whether the advent is imminent will be discussed later on.

2. Upon this assumption of the speedy return of Christ were based the following secondary assumptions:

a) The time was short, so whatever was to be done must be done during the lifetime of many of the people then living.

b) The bride must be speedily Prepared.

c) The sects were not the church, so a church must be brought into being as a distinct body by calling Christians out of the sects and into the "one body." There was not and had not been since the apostasy, any true and apostolic manifestation of the true church.

d) The harvest of souls was past. There was now only a "gleaning time" and only a "remnant" to be saved.

e) God would no longer save souls in the sects. He had moved out of "Babylon" and forsaken her. "No candle should shine" there and "no sound of grinding be heard."

f) The preachers were to constitute a "flying ministry." This led to all being evangelists and to the neglect of the local churches.

g) Babylon was to be "threshed." This idea led to great extremes and bitter attacks on other movements and all who were members of them.

h) The idea of unity was limited to one group. All must come to that group. Just leaving a sect did not avail anything. People must come to us.

i) No "Babylon stones" could be used, so whatever was done in the sects was wrong. Even the experience of Christians in the sects was contaminated by the sect relation, so all who came out were expected to "come by way of the altar."

j) Unity meant, not so much unanimity as uniformity. It meant all must see "eye to eye" and "speak the same thing." This left no place for individual thought. A few leaders formulated the doctrines, and all perforce must agree with them or he adjudged "crooked in doctrine." Complete doctrinal agreement was held necessary for acceptance or unity.

k) The advent being imminent, all the prophecies as to what should occur before it, which had not already been fulfilled, must be fulfilled in the immediate future. *Now* was the "day of his preparation." The year 1880 was accounted a "prophetic year" and must mark the beginning of the work of preparation for the advent. There could be no doubt of the time--it was *now*.

3. The church must prepare herself. Certain things were assumed to constitute that preparation.

a) The Scriptures were interpreted to teach that the early church was to be reproduced in form and character, free in every respect from all denominational characteristics or connections.

b) To be prepared, the bride must be *one* . . . There must be "perfect unity" among all Christians, internally and externally, including doctrinal unity.

c) Since the denominations constituted "Babylon," it was evident that they were not the church nor any part of it, so the church must be "called out" and reestablished at once or she would not be ready for the advent.

d) Since only Brother Warner and the few associated with him "saw the light," upon them was laid the responsibility of proclaiming it and bringing about "the reformation" of the church, which must needs come at once.

e) Since those who accepted the call "Come out" formed the nucleus of this "reformation movement," it naturally resulted that they felt and taught, directly or by implication, that all other Christians should and must leave their sects and come to this "one body" and become a part of this group exclusively.

f) It was assumed that all Christians would at once recognize and accept "God's call" to leave their sects when they heard that call. Those failing to respond would go into darkness and be lost.

g) The success of this method was not questioned. The results were prophesied and could not fail.

NOTE: Brother Warner accepted the imminence of the advent as did the premillennialists, but rejected the millennium and associated the advent with the end of the world, thus making the latter imminent, and so making necessary the fulfillment of all prophecies not already fulfilled almost immediately. Most others believing the advent imminent did not associate it with the end of the world, but with the setting up of an

earthly kingdom. These rejected Brother Warner's assumptions, and will continue to do so. Since Brother Warner's assumptions are directly opposed to the premillennial assumptions of what the advent signifies, their position constitutes a denial of most of his assumptions. The great increase of the premillennial teaching and emphasis makes acceptance of the "reformation message increasingly difficult and improbable to all premillennialists, therefore the realization of Brother Warner's expectations becomes less and less likely.

To the premillennialists the advent will automatically settle all church problems as all Christians will be caught up together to meet Christ, and in the kingdom set up each will take his proper place and be in his proper relation. To the premillennialist, only personal preparation for the advent is necessary.

h) The movement was carried forward by the enthusiasm of attack, the zeal of conflict, and the sense of having a mission.

EFFECTS OF BROTHER WARNER'S ASSUMPTIONS

By classifying all religious movements except his own, including the holiness movements, as "Babylon" and all their adherents as "Babylonians," he alienated his former associates and finally all denominational adherents. He vigorously condemned and bitterly attacked all those who did not agree with him even in matters of little importance. When aroused, and his emotions stirred, he became aggressive in attack and denunciation almost to abusiveness, and his language was often quite intemperate. By the use of such methods he further alienated his many friends and former associates, even his own wife, and needlessly made many enemies for himself and his cause. The chasm that came to exist between him and the other holiness bodies resulted very largely from his own actions and attitudes. Had his methods been different, his doctrines might have been tolerated if not accepted.

Brother Warner was a product of the time in which he lived, when intolerance and emotion in controversy were the usual thing. Today the scientific method of thought in general vogue leads to greater tolerance and poise in both manners and methods.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE ASSUMPTIONS OF BROTHER WARNER

1. If the assumption of the imminence of the advent is not correct, then it follows that--

a) Brother Warner's secondary assumptions based upon it are not soundly based, therefore are probably equally incorrect.

b) This is not the time for the bride to be prepared in the prophetic sense.

c) Brother Warner's teachings on this point, then, were premature and untimely.

NOTE: Our whole prophetic teaching hangs on the correctness of the assumption of the imminence of the second advent of Christ. If the time is not at hand, then none of the prophecies we have applied to our movement have any reference to it.

2. If the assumption that 1880 was a prophetic year, the beginning of his preparation is not correct then our whole prophetic reformation system has no scriptural foundation in prophecy. The only chronological basis is the three and one-days of Revelation 11 :9-11. If this day-prophecy does not specifically mean exactly 250 years, ending in 1880, then there is no basis in scriptural chronology for our movement as a prophetic movement.

IS THE ADVENT IMMINENT?

A few quotations from Brother Warner's songs will indicate how near he thought the second advent to be.

No.487, in HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

In the morning of the Lord that is drawing nigh

We'll behold our King Corning in the sky.

No. 123, verse 1

See, the signs proclaim Him near;

In the awful thunders of His word,

Now His coming steps we hear.

Verse 2

Soon we'll hear the trumpet's sound!

Verse 3

Judgment's coming, O how soon!

Verse 5

Christ is coming, O the heavenly sight!

Our beloved can't delay;

For His bride is robed in snowy white,

Ready for the crowning day.

Chorus

Quickly coming in Thy glory.

No. 125, verse 2

The Bridegroom is returning and already at the door.

No.544, chorus

O that last great day is coming very soon.

These quotations are so clear and definite that no others need to be given.

Brother Warner, in a meeting I attended, made the statement that the Lord has promised him that he should live until Jesus returned. Another brother recently told me that he heard him make this same statement in Missouri on more than one occasion. However, Brother Warner died about six months after I heard him make the statement.

Is the advent really imminent now? We hear a great deal over the radio about the signs of the advent. Are there really definite signs that Christ will soon return?

SIGNS OF THE ADVENT

Are there positive "signs." which, independent of chronology, definitely indicate the imminence of the advent?

ng the advent cannot be a sign.

ent. A sign must have some special significance with relation to the advent.

rk 13-32).

chronological statement concerning his second advent into the world. Hence nothing that he said about it COULD indicate its time.

ings would be at his advent to tell about them. He knew human nature, and he knew that people in all ages would have the same desires, purposes, and motives and would carry them out in the same way. As in the days of Noah, they would be eating, drinking, marrying, and in general be absorbed in natural (not necessarily evil) things to the neglect of spiritual things.

nd advent in the Scriptures and find that these signs are all very indefinite as to time. They are quite obscure as to their details. In my judgment there is nothing connected with that that indicates in a definite way that the advent is imminent. From anything contained in these signs Jesus' coming might as well be a hundred years ahead, or a thousand, or even ten thousand. It is probable that everything in our teaching that has been based on the imminence of Christ's return has an unsound foundation. There is no means by which we can be certain of it. Whether or not we are right, we can only guess. We do not have to guess about the principles of the doctrines we teach which are based on clear statements of Scripture, but we should not base any important teaching on that which is obscure and uncertain.

DO OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES HAVE TWO FULFILLMENTS?

Brother Warner, and most of the rest of us, have based our use of Old Testament scriptures in relation to our movement upon the theory that the Old Testament prophecies had their first application to Israel, and a secondary application to the church. This left us free to apply any Old Testament scripture we chose without regard to its context to present-day occurrences and movements. We have, therefore taken, many Old Testament scriptures out of their setting and without regard for their setting applied them to anything which, to us, they seemed to fit. In The Birth of a Reformation a chapter is devoted to stating and developing this idea, but after a careful and extensive study of the subject I am convinced that this position is not tenable and is not likely to reveal truth.

There was both a temporal and a spiritual fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, for they covered man's material and spiritual life. But these two fulfillments were vitally connected, not separated in kind nor time.

God had always two plans or purposes for Israel--a reward for obedience and a punishment for disobedience. The first of these plans was his ideal desire and purpose for Israel; the other was an undesired necessity. Isaiah illustrates these two plans when he says: "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." (Isaiah 1:19-20). An obedient Israel was to be made a great nation with many temporal and spiritual blessings. They were to have the

protection of God; they were to be the joy of the whole earth. At the appropriate time when the Messiah came, *they were to be merged as a nation into the kingdom*: in other words, they were to become the kingdom. To them, as it is prophesied many times, the Gentiles were to come and in them they should be blessed.

A disobedient Israel was to have God's curses. They were to be captives and dishonored. They would suffer all sorts of things on account of their sins.

The greatest expression of these two plans is found when the nation gathered on the two mountains--the Mount of Blessing and the Mount of Cursing--and there listened to the reading of the blessings, to which the people on the Mount of Blessing said "Amen"; then the curses, to which those on the Mount of Cursing said "Amen." (See Deuteronomy 27:11 through 28:68; Joshua 8:32-35)

Through the history of Israel we find now one now the other of these two plans in effect. Obedient Israel prospered; disobedient Israel was punished. The prophecies relating to obedient Israel were not to have a secondary fulfillment in the church, but *their primary fulfillment was to go right on through Israel into the church*, and to be fulfilled in the larger aspect in the Messiah and his kingdom, from his coming to the end of the world.

As stated, Israel as a nation was to have been the nucleus of the kingdom to which the Gentiles were to gather, but God's purpose was frustrated by Israel's rejection of Christ, so he was compelled to reject the nation. He could only accept the obedient, believing "remnant." Consequently, a very large portion of the Old Testament prophecy which related to obedient Israel *could never be fulfilled and will remain unfulfilled to the end of time*. All of God's promises were conditional, and when the conditions were not fulfilled the promises could not be fulfilled. (Compare Jeremiah 18:7-10, 15-17.) Those promises that could be fulfilled to the remnant of Israel were fulfilled to them and to the church: in fact, all the scriptures that had reference directly to Christ and his kingdom in their spiritual aspect were fulfilled, and are still in process of fulfillment.

Since Israel rejected Christ and was rejected by him as a nation, the Gentiles could not and did not come to them as had been prophesied. Instead, after a short period at Jerusalem we find the early church scattered, going everywhere, carrying the gospel with them. They went to the Gentiles instead of the Gentiles coming to them. As Paul said: "Lo, we turn unto the Gentiles."

Brother Warner's position, based on the idea of a two-fold fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, was the same as the position held with respect to the same thing by the millennialists, the Mormons, the Adventists, the Russellites, and others. The theory is the basis of their errors. They feel free to take Old Testament scriptures out of their setting, disregarding the context, and to apply them to anything, at any time, as they see fit. This is an untenable method, and no sound exegesis of Scripture can be based upon it. The things that are based upon it are unsoundly based.

TYPES

We have felt free to say, and our literature is full of such things, that this, that, and the other thing in the Old Testament was a type of something in the present day. There are certain things about types which need to be considered. There are types in the Old Testament, but there are some very definite principles that apply to them.

1. A type is something especially chosen by the Lord to be typical of, or to represent something. It is not something having a mere accidental similarity to something else.

2. A type must be unchanging in its typical aspect, therefore types cannot refer to historical matters.

3. A type must accurately foreshadow the antitype.

4. A type must be less important than the antitype.

5. A type must precede the antitype in history.

6. All true types are treated as types in the New Testament. In other words, when God gave a thing to be a type he made it clear that it was a type, either specifically in the Old Testament, or it is definitely referred to as typical in the New Testament.

Anything that does not fulfill all these conditions is not a type and should not be called a type. Mere similarity never indicates a thing is typical. It may be illustrative; it may correspond in some features to something else, but it is not a type. We should be very careful, therefore, about the things we treat as types. Our literature abounds in such misuses of the term.

DO OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES RELATE SPECIFICALLY TO OUR MOVEMENT?

Brother Warner, and to a lesser extent we who have followed him, have definitely applied quite a number of Old Testament texts to this "reformation" movement. Is this use sound? Many Old Testament scriptures relating to ancient Babylon have been used as though they specifically applied to the Babylon of Revelation. It is wrong to use them in this way. The most we can say of them is that they illustrate spiritual Babylon. Certainly none of them refers directly to it.

Take also such texts as Ezekiel 34:12-13. This has been one of our key texts: "So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." A study of the context will show clearly that the

cloudy and dark day was not a modern thing, nor was it speaking of the gathering of the scattered church. To see what the prophet is referring to when he uses "they," let us turn to Ezekiel 30. Read verses 2-3, and 18; then read the whole chapter and see what it is to which it refers. Ezekiel wrote during the Babylonian captivity, and the cloudy and dark day was the time of that captivity. The gathering was the gathering of Israel back into Palestine. That gathering was to be followed by the setting up of Christ as a Shepherd (34:23); in other words, the gathering was to precede the first coming of Christ.

Take the text: "At evening time it shall be light" (Zechariah 14:7b). The evening time followed the cloudy and dark day. It is definitely associated in verse 8 with living waters going out of Jerusalem. Those living waters go out from the fountain opened to the House of David (13:1). The cloudy and dark day preceded the coming of Christ. The evening light was ushered in by the rising of the "Sun of righteousness." That light was to shine when "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. It was when the Gentiles should come to the light. See Isaiah 60:1-3. So the text "At evening time it shall be light" has no reference whatever to our day.

I might take up the other texts we have used from the Old Testament as specific references to our movement and show definitely from their context that they have no such application. The fact is that, so far as I am able to determine, there is not one scripture in the Old Testament that has any specific and exclusive reference to this movement. We should stop abusing Old Testament texts in this way, and should seek a sound exegesis of them according to their context and according to the laws of proper interpretation.

DOES GOD STILL WORK IN THE DENOMINATIONS?

Brother Warner constantly asserted, and the rest of us reiterated, that God had forsaken the denominations, that he would no longer save souls in them. Of course, that result would naturally follow if God called his people all out of a denomination locally or generally, and himself totally deserted it. But how has this theory worked out in practice during the years? We all know that God did not cease to save souls in the denominations. We know he is still saving every soul that turns to him, regardless of where that soul is. We know that hundreds of thousands of people are being converted in the denominations every year. This is a certainty. What does it signify? It signifies that the harvest of souls is not past, as we had supposed. It signifies that God has not ceased to work in denominations. It signifies that we were wrong in what we taught on the subject. There is no use glossing it over--we were wrong. I see no reason to believe that fewer people are saved today in the denominations than there were sixty years ago. Can we draw any other conclusion from this but that God has not changed his attitude toward them? Denominations were always wrong; they are still wrong, but most of God's people are in them and he works among his people wherever they are.

"Threshing Babylon" never was God's plan. It did a great deal of harm. It created a great deal of prejudice, most of which was unnecessary. It has greatly hindered our work. What we said about the denominations and their preachers was often slanderous. We might as well face this. I am glad that most of us have stopped that sort of preaching.

WAS 1880 A PROPHETIC YEAR?

Brother Warner held that the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14, at the end of which the sanctuary was to be cleansed, was 2,300 years. He placed the beginning of this time at 420 B.C., at the completion of the restoration of Jerusalem: measuring down from 420 B.C., the end of 2,300 years would be 1880. (See Wickersham's Bible Readings, p.315.) W. G. Schell, in his Biblical Trace of the Church, uses the same starting date and ends at the same date. However, the angel told Daniel specifically that the beginning of the seventy years was not at the completion of the work of rebuilding Jerusalem, but at the going forth of the commandment to rebuild it. Brother Riggle, in The Cleansing of the Sanctuary, rightly puts the date at 457 B.C., as do most commentators. So, according to this prophecy, 1880 was not a prophetic year. The only other scripture used to prove 1880 was a prophetic year is the three and one-half days of Revelation 11:11. This is interpreted to mean three and one-half centuries and to measure from A.D. 1530 to 1880. The interpretation that these three and one-half days signify three and one-half centuries has not one fact to sustain it. Nowhere else in Scripture is a time prophecy where days signify centuries to be found. The only support that can be given to this interpretation is the support of the interpreter's word. It is a pure assumption: it is a mere guess: it is an interpretation that has no standing. Chronologically, therefore, 1880 was not a prophetic year.

Revelation 18:4 has no chronological dating in the Scriptures. For all they set forth, the fulfillment of this Scripture may be a thousand years in the future. Our preaching does not in any way prove that this is the time of its fulfillment. Our movement has no chronological setting in the Scriptures. We might as well face this fact, for it is true. This is admitted by one of the chief exponents of Revelation, who says, "There is no time prophecy here, no chronological dating."

WHAT IS BABYLON?

We have assumed that the term "Babylon" in the Book of Revelation included the Roman Catholic Church and all Protestant churches. We have interpreted the first beast of Revelation 13 as referring to Roman Catholicism, while the second beast and his image represented Protestantism. We have included everyone who belonged to these

denominations as being in Babylon: in fact, we have called every religious organization of every kind Babylon except our own movement. That is an easy way of disposing of all other movements, but is it a correct definition of Babylon? There are some things right in the context, which, to me, limit the term to a much narrower field. In Revelation 13:4, 8, 12, 15, and elsewhere we read of those who were worshipers of the beast. In 15:2 we read of those who refused to worship the beast. They had got the victory over him. Now it is apparent that neither the worshipers of the beast nor those who refused to worship him, worshiped or refused to worship themselves. Those who worshiped the beast worshiped something outside themselves, something distinct and separate from themselves. Those who refused to worship the beast refused to worship something outside, separate, and distinct from themselves. It is evident, therefore, that the people in general are not included in the two beasts and the image, that is, in Babylon.

What, then, is Babylon? "The church of Rome basically considered, is the substitution of the human of the divine first in doctrine; and second, in church organization and government." The Roman hierarchy is defined as a "self-perpetuating priestly corporation." It is not within the scope of this paper to question these definitions if they are accepted. This hierarchal system is a union of Church and State. It includes the Roman ecclesiastical and political law, the decisions of councils and decrees of the popes, the decisions of ecclesiastical courts, the ecclesiastical and political offices, the authority that goes with them, and the general ecclesiastical setup. All of this together constitutes a system that rules with tyrannical power over the people.

When the authority of the hierarchy was thrown off by the States of Northern Europe during the Reformation, the general religious setup which had been held together by the papal authority fell apart along political lines, and in each State the religious organization became independent of the other groups in other States but since the Church had largely been controlled by the State under the papacy, this control was carried on and the same ecclesiastical-political relationship was maintained with this difference: under the papacy the ecclesiastical was in control, while now the State dominated religion. This union of Church and State has been called the image of the beast, for it carried forward the same principle of Church-State organization as still continued in the papacy.

Later, however, there arose an altogether different type of church organization. People grew dissatisfied with the domination of the State over religion. They left the State churches and became nonconformists. In these nonconformist movements there was intense hostility to State domination of religion. Their organizations were of an entirely different type. Our prophetic teachers claim that these nonconformist churches constitute an essential part of Babylon. I have looked through their writings in vain for any substantial proof of this claim. The claim rests wholly on assumption the proof that we have offered to sustain our position in this regard, if tested by the rules of evidence recognized by every court in our land, would result in the immediate rejection of our claim.

It is asserted that these churches are all governed by man rule and have not the divine rule. It is true they have various forms of church government, but the implication

we make that God has nothing to do with their church government is begging the question. It amounts to asserting that their leaders do not seek or receive divine guidance. It definitely implies that the gifts of the Spirit are not possessed or in operation in their organizations. We know that among the officers of these various organizations are many men of great piety and devotion. It is also true as a historical fact that in setting up these organizations divine guidance was earnestly sought. Moreover, whatever form these organizations took, the persons setting them up were thoroughly convinced that they were following out the teachings of the Scriptures.

We must keep in mind that though the Scriptures give us certain principles of church organization and government, they nowhere give us any form of church government. God did not give the early church a form of government. When the Jewish Christians began to have separate meetings from the synagogue meetings they went right on with the form of service they had had in the synagogues. The synagogues had elders, presided over by a "ruler of the synagogue." So we find the Christian church at Jerusalem with elders presided over by James. This simple type of church organization was general in the Jewish churches, but was gradually expanded as time went on.

Those denominations having the congregational, the presbyterial, and the episcopal forms of church government all believe they find their particular form set forth in the New Testament. Who shall say that God may not work through any of these forms? The important thing, of course, is that the government be on a spiritual basis and be divinely guided. This we may expect it to be wherever true Christians have the leadership. To contend that all Christians must have the particular form of church government we have is to contend for something that has no scriptural support. We may, and should, insist upon a spiritual quality of church government, but we have no right to insist that it be clothed in a certain form.

If I admit that the State-dominated churches of Europe may be the image of the beast and then raise my eyes and look across the seas at what is happening in Europe, I am given pause. When I see the amazing courage, the fine loyalty, the unswerving devotion manifested State church Christians and see how they are willing to sacrifice everything, even their own lives, for the name of Christ, and see this to be true not only for the people in general but for the officials also, from the top down, I am made to wonder if we may not have misjudged the facts. Another book of martyrs, just as glorious as any hitherto written, might well be written to tell the story of Christian heroism of these days. The whole Christian world is proud and filled with joy at the heroic conduct of these worthy Christians in their time of crisis.

PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE

Brother Warner, and we in general, have taught that this is the time of the preparation of the bride for the coming of Christ. Do we have anything definite upon which to base this assumption? It seems that it is to occur just prior to the advent, but

since we have no definite proof as to when the advent will be we likewise have no definite proof of the time of preparation.

What will constitute this preparation of the bride? I fail to find any definite statement regarding the matter except that she was to be arrayed in her bridal adornment. It is supposed to mean that all Christians will be brought into one concrete visible body. That may happen, or it may not. There is no definite statement that such a thing will take place. It is said that the church is represented as being one group. It is equally true that the church is always represented as one group; it is never represented as being scattered or divided: Every symbol representing the church everywhere in her history represents her as a unit. The preparation of the bride is left very indefinite so we should not be too definite in our declarations concerning what it will be or when it will be, for we are likely to draw on our imagination and miss reality.

UNITY

A great ground swell of desire for unity is rising throughout Christendom. The crescendo of demand for it increases. The forces that produced the Protestant denominations have largely spent themselves, and unity is on the way. It is imperative at this time that efforts to restore unity be such that they truly aid rather than obstruct its restoration.

Brother Warner had an extreme view of unity. He advocated a type of unity that never existed, and never can exist, in this world. He was sincere and thoroughly believed what he taught, but we have seen the necessity of modifying his teachings to make them conform more nearly to the possibility. I give a few quotations from his writings. Speaking of entire sanctification, he says:

"We now come to the great condition, and all potent means of perfect unity, found in the prayer of Christ" (The Cleansing of the Sanctuary, p. 260, par. 2).

"Here we say is secured to us the essential and all-sufficient means (entire sanctification) of producing perfect unity in all the body of Christ" (par. 3).

"Entire sanctification heals all division" (Ibid.).

"The all-pervading love of God . . . brings all hearts into the same harmony that reigns in heaven, into perfect unity, as the Father and Son are one" (Ibid.).

Of sanctification, he again says: "Perfect oneness is its sure fruit" (Ibid., p.262, par. 1).

W. G. Schell said: "The absence of unity proves the absence of sanctification" (The Biblical Trace of the Church, p. 154).

This teaching was based on Hebrews 2:11 and John 17. The first of these scriptures has no reference whatever to Christian unity. It is a declaration that Jesus took upon himself human nature and became a man, and in his humanity became like us.

John 17 does not assert, as so many have supposed, that sanctification produces unity. Here is what it actually says: "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are . . . pray I for thee . . . that they all may be one . . . The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (vss. 11, 20-22).

Sanctification is not once anywhere in the New Testament linked with unity in relation of cause and effect. Sanctification provides a good background for unity, but it does not produce and maintain unity in and of itself. Unity is dependent also upon many other things.

Brother Warner also taught that entire sanctification will produce unity of doctrine as a natural and inevitable fruit. Of the sanctified, he said: "They are all brought into one faith . . . they are not left in various and conflicting views and interpretations of one faith. Nay, but the unity of the faith implies one faith, a perfect uniformity in the understanding of the same . . . God has made full provision, in every respect, for the perfect harmony in faith, life, and teaching of all who honestly wish to know the truth and obey the same" (The Cleansing of the Sanctuary, p.263)

I add another quotation on the general subject of sanctification and unity: "Where the professed followers of Christ are divided into a plurality of sects, they have not yet become thoroughly sanctified to God" (The Birth of a Reformation, p.219).

The trouble with such views is that they never have worked out in practice; neither we nor any other body of people has ever possessed or maintained such unity. Such views are a hindrance to unity rather than an aid in securing it. In all nature the law is unity in diversity. The church is not an exception. This law prevails in the church also. So there must be account taken of the wide variety in thought, feeling, outlook, and understanding of different people, and whatever unity is attained must be attained through accommodation to these differences.

PATTERN UNITY

Unity, like happiness, is a by-product and cannot be produced by direct methods. We can be happy only when the conditions we create make for happiness. We are united when the conditions we create favor the production of unity as a natural fruit. Preaching unity often hinders rather than helps the cause of unity. That is because the effort is to produce unity directly, a thing that never can be done. Moreover, the unity that is preached is commonly a pattern unity. By pattern unity I mean a pattern of doctrine is preached, a theology that everyone is expected to accept; a pattern of behavior is set up

and all are expected to behave according to this pattern. A pattern of organization and church government is set up which everyone is expected to accept and to which he is expected to conform. A pattern of worship is set up, and this pattern is made a standard; in other words, the unity sought is uniformity. Uniformity is unattainable.

When people go into a community and preach a pattern unity they set forth a blueprint of unity, along the lines mentioned, to which everybody is supposed to conform in order to enter into the unity. The fact is, most people are already patterned. They already have their beliefs, their standard of Christian behavior, their ideas of church organization and government and worship. These ideas may differ very widely from those of the pattern of unity being preached to them. Some people in a community will be able to fit into the pattern of unity that is preached; they will likely accept the preaching. The majority of the people will not be able to fit into the pattern being preached; they have already been molded into a pattern. They cannot change their pattern just because one preaches a different one, therefore they will not accept the pattern that is preached and consequently cannot come into the unity that is set up. Pattern unity, therefore, can never bring about the unity of all Christians. It is the wrong type of unity.

BASIS OF UNITY

Unity does not mean uniformity; it means unanimity. Unanimity depends on an attitude of soul and mind. This can never be attained by accepting a pattern of unity. It must come by experiencing unity within.

There are four things that are the basis of true Christian unity. The first is the recognition and acceptance of all Christians, simply because of their relation with Christ. The second is love of all Christians, just because they are Christians. The third, fellowship with all Christians, based on confidence toward all Christians. Fourth, a co-operative attitude toward all Christians. These four bases of Christian unity must be universal in their nature. They must include all Christians. A unity that is limited to a group is not Christian Unity--it is group unity. The unity of the church must be on a universal basis or it never will be attained, and it must have unanimity as its keynote.

FOUR ROADS TO UNITY

At the present time four roads to unity are being advocated or followed. They are federation or federal union, as set forth by E. Stanley Jones and others, which is the uniting of all Christian groups into a federation, with each group maintaining its identity and its general characteristics.

The second road is amalgamation; that is, the uniting of denominations, making one denomination out of two or more.

The third road is that of undenominational mingling, not on a denominational basis at all, but on a purely Christian basis in interdenominational activities. So far as I know no one is advocating this method as the method of producing unity. It is being carried out with other purposes in view, co-operation being one of these purposes. The results being produced are not the results of preaching unity nor of trying to organize for unity. They are the natural indirect fruits of the conditions being set up. Denominationalism fades into the background. Their differences are temporarily forgotten and through this mingling, becoming acquainted, sensing each other's spirit, developing a common fellowship, real and true unity, which is always informal unity, is being produced very extensively.

The fourth road to unity is calling people out of other groups into one group. This may or may not produce unity. Merely bringing people together in an organic relationship cannot create unity. We know all too well from sad experience that many people have come to us as a group and have professed to be in unity who very soon proved they were not in unity, but were troublemakers or never were able to fit in. So calling people into one group does not guarantee the unity of that group, neither does it create unity with other groups of Christians. On the contrary, it is likely to set up within the group a narrow and exclusive type of unity which is often a hindrance to true universal Christian unity. The latter is the type of unity Jesus prayed for--"That they all may be one."

The third road to unity seems to me to be the most promising of the four, though all have their contribution to make.

RECONSTITUTING THE CHURCH

Brother Warner held, and our prophetic writers who followed him have held, that there was no visible manifestation of the church from the time of the Apostasy down to the beginning of our movement. There was "no visible, corporate, concrete exhibition of God's true church" (Revelation Explained, Rev. ed., p.268). The reformation is to call out Christians from the different sects and re-establish the church as a visible body. "The true church is again concretely, institutionally restored" (Ibid., p. 269). This seems to be a misapprehension of the facts. The body of Christ as a spiritually organized body has always existed from the time he created it. To say that body had no manifestation that could be recognized during the ages seems to be to deny a thousand facts. Were there no local churches of God until we formed some? Did God deal with his people only as scattered individuals? Did he not work through them in any way collectively? If he did work through them collectively, then that collective group was a church of God without regard to anything else.

We are not the only body of people who claim that the church ceased to exist during the Apostasy and had to be reconstituted. Some of the

Baptist bodies teach this same thing; likewise, the Mormons, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Church of Christ, the Russellites, a number of holiness sects and other bodies, all teach that to them was given the task of reconstituting the lost church. They have built up bodies which they claim are *the* church. Nothing outside their bodies is the church. Our claim is on a par with theirs. I think we shall do well to see what effects their making such claims has had upon them in making them feel superior to others, proud of their movement, intolerant. When their attention is called to others who make the same claim that they make, they say, "Oh, but they are wrong; we are right. God has called us to re-establish his church, not them." Let us be warned by their example.

WHY PEOPLE COME TO US

People come from other movements to our movement for at least eight different reasons:

1. They were not getting on well where they were.
2. They had been disciplined or offended by the sect, or had personal troubles with members.
3. We preach something not accepted by their group which they accepted.
4. We were more spiritual than their group.
5. We had simpler, less formal worship.
6. They were not saved, and came to us to find salvation.
7. They were persuaded by friends, or our meetings were more convenient for them to attend.
8. They accepted our prophetic interpretations and "came out" in response to that teaching.

Only this last group can properly be counted as responding to our prophetic call to obey the angel's call, "Come out." Of these there never at any time have been more than a very limited number. I doubt if they often exceed 5 per cent of our churches. This clearly shows that our message on prophecy has found little acceptance and elicited little response. Our churches are built up mostly through our Sunday schools and through converts from the world. Recently I was discussing this point with a man who is a member of one of the largest of our churches. I asked him what proportion of the people of his congregation had accepted the call to "come out" and had come out of denominations to his church. He said, "Very few. I think they could be counted on the fingers of one hand." I think if we make a test we may be surprised at how little response

has been made to our prophetic message. When our specialists on Revelation give their lectures in a community to large crowds, I have watched the reports that later come out. Perhaps one, two, or very rarely more have been added permanently to the local congregation as the result of the prophetic message. People just are not accepting this part of our message. Moreover, they are not backsliding when they do not act upon it. They are going right along as before.

WHAT MAKES US A DISTINCT BODY?

We are not made a distinct body through salvation. Many persons and groups are saved the same as we are, yet are not a part of our group. We are not made a distinct body by any essential Christian thing, for we are not exclusive in our possession of any such thing. Neither are we made a distinct group by a sectarian attitude of God toward us, as a group or personally, for his attitude is the same toward all his people.

Here are the things that make us a distinct body:

1. A common theology and a common standard of ethics and religious life. We have common taboos and common acceptances.
2. Common methods and practices.
3. Common ideals, purposes and interests.
4. Common attitudes and shibboleths.
5. Common fellowship and confidence.
6. Common system of co-operation, with common agencies.
7. Common social activities, such as camp meetings, conventions, assemblies, etc.
8. Common ownership of church property.
9. Common control of property, agencies, etc., by commonly selected boards or other controlling agencies.
10. Common support of our agencies and projects.
11. Common sense of "belonging" to the group.
12. Common organization.

Other groups have the same characteristics as we that group them. Many also have an over-all formal control organization, but this organization depends for its existence, strength, and authority on those characteristics which cause and sustain the grouping. Local churches have the same grouping characteristics that unite them to other churches, and also other things that create special relations in the local group.

Americans are united into a group not merely geographically, but by ideas, ideals, customs, and relationships. Yet with all their differences from other people they cannot claim to be the human race in any specific or special way that others are not also an integral part of the race. Neither can our group properly claim to be the church in a way that shuts out other Christians or groups of Christians.

The universal church may be organized as local congregations in a formal way, but it cannot be organized formally as a general body in any practical way. Any attempt to so organize it results in a denomination, for that which unites some local churches into a visible, distinct organic group at the same time separates them from all other Christian groups. This separation is denominational and strongly tends to and usually does violate Christian unity.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

I am not a pessimist nor a kill-joy, but I know that indulging in rosy daydreams that are impossible of realization is futile. I am a realist and like to look the facts of any situation squarely in the face and adjust myself to those facts rather than ignore them. From this standpoint, then, let us look at the probable progress and development of our movement.

We have a glorious message and have made progress in a gratifying way until we now number, according to our yearbook, about 90,000 members. If we continue to go on as we have done so far, what may we reasonably expect for the future?

I see no reason to suppose that we shall not continue to prosper and increase, to build up many new churches and to increase the size of many of the present ones, and to find better methods and develop more capable workers. If we do all this and succeed even more than what the past and present promise, what even then may we hope for and expect? In the first place, can we expect to become a world-wide movement that will be outstanding and a challenge to all other movements? Have we the dynamic or the leadership to produce such results? So far we have produced no leaders of the caliber of Luther, Wesley, Spurgeon, Moody, or the great leaders of Christian thought in the world of today. We are strongly conservative, and conservatism does not produce a powerful dynamic with the drive necessary to move the world. In view of these facts, we can hardly have reason to expect our movement to become an outstanding world movement.

Brother Warner expected all Christians to be brought into this movement in a single generation--this I know from his own lips. He said so publicly in a meeting I attended, and from others I learn that he repeated the statement at other times and in other places. His expectations are not only far from being realized, but they have not even begun to be realized. No large number of Christians have heard and accepted our "come out" message. Of those who have come to us from other movements, by far the greater number have come not because of hearing that message but because they wanted the salvation we preach or because they sought greater freedom among a more spiritual people.

Our "come out" message has never proved effective except in a most limited way, and I see no reason to expect it to be more effective in the future. If we should count the number of those who were Christians in the denominations and who heard our prophetic message and because of it came to us, we would find the number surprisingly small, the percentage of our whole number very low.

There are more Christians in the denominations every year in spite of our message. There are probably a million persons converted in the world every year. The hope of ever bringing these Christians into our group is futile.

I hold no brief for the denominations; Christendom has inherited them from the past. The question now is how to get rid of them. It is not the simple, easy matter that so many suppose it to be; in fact, it is the most difficult matter with which the church is faced.

One can be a member of a denomination and yet be wholly unsectarian. On the other hand, one can be undenominational or antidenominational and still be thoroughly sectarian. The task of reuniting Christians is a most difficult task, and it will take a long time; but it must be done by whatever means, and by all means, by which it can be accomplished.

I love our movement. I have given my life to it. I love its people. They are my dearest friends. I expect to end my days on earth in this movement and to contribute all I possibly can to its advancement. But I long to see it freed from the things that have impeded its progress and have caused it to be misunderstood. I am sure that better, richer, more glorious days lie ahead of us for we are making genuine progress and getting rid of many of the things that have stood in our way.

If we would stop preaching our theories of prophecy which few will ever believe, and with power preach salvation, righteous living, true unity, a spiritual church--and exemplify these things--we would prosper and be blessed as at no past time and our message would not be misunderstood as it has been so far. The way of victory is the way of simple, plain, gospel truth, loved, preached, and lived in the Bible way. If instead of being doctrine-centered or movement-centered we would become more and more Christ-centered, we would find many of our problems automatically solved and the glow of holy fervor would melt all hearts together.

"No excuse for our existence." For years some people have been saying that if we are not specifically and exclusively God's church, and if our movement is not the definite fulfillment and object of Old and New Testament prophecies, then "we have no excuse for our existence." Perhaps some people will say that if this paper is true it leaves us "no excuse." We do not, however, need any "excuse" for our existence for we have *many good reasons* to justify such existence. Some of these are:

1. We are getting thousands of souls saved.
2. We are building up hundreds of real biblical churches.
3. These churches are wielding a great moral and spiritual influence in their communities.
4. We are publishing literature that is having a wide influence even outside our movement.
5. Our schools are educating many young men and women for gospel service.
6. Our missionaries are doing a great work.
7. Our teaching on a pure and spiritual church with a saved membership is unique and outstanding. No other group emphasizes this truth as we do.
8. We emphasize the need for unity more than other groups do.

To sum up, if we should suddenly be taken out of the world as a movement, and there be no loss to Christianity or to society, then we have neither excuse nor reason to exist; but whatever losses of any and all sorts that would ensue from our going, the sum of those losses, for the present and future, is the sum of our reasons for our existence.