

ROOTS OF OUR BELIEFS, NAMES & TITLES

**SOME AMAZING SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CHURCHES OF
GOD, ADVENTISTS, RUSSELLITES & CHRISTADELPHIANS!
- HOW GOD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS**

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The Scriptures indicate that knowledge shall increase in the end time (Dan. 12:4). This is often accomplished by building on the understanding, knowledge and research of predecessors. Not only is raw knowledge increased, but so is qualitative value-adding to doctrine with deeper and more meaningful insights – this paper explores this enthralling possibility in the history of the Church of God.

Similarity in some doctrines and titles of periodicals may be found between the various Churches of God, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Christadelphians. Why is this so? Is it mere coincidence or has there been some connection between these groups in the past?

This article is an updated version of an appendix to a paper by the author written in June 1983. The article was titled: *Who – what – is the “Angel of the Lord”?*, drawing upon a file of collected material first commenced in the mid-1970s.

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[this paper should be read in conjunction with the paper *The Seven Restorations of the Work of the Church of God*]

Introductory Remarks

Since the early 1970s I found the similarities (even though they may be few) between various religious groups to Church of God groups a fascinating matter. In talking with members and ministers 1973-76 resulted in little information, but my private research revealed much.

This paper seeks to understand why God chose to reveal truth via a sifting method to His Church and how truth was refined and restored in these last days.

Early 1996 I was asked by a group of members from our former association to give an interactive study responding to their leader's talk at their Australian regional offices on 10 August 1995, on the roots of the WCG. In that talk, that leader attempted to take a look at church history and to present it in a fashion which was convincing, if not completely accurate. Having heard the audio tape twice and seen the video, it was immediately recognisable that he had studied the same line of thought as myself: the roots of the doctrines of Herbert W Armstrong and the WCG's history, but came to strikingly opposite conclusions. Prior to the meeting most of the group listened to the tape of that talk to enable them to comprehend the subject matter and to be involved in the interactive discussion.

Of interest to this writer, the aforementioned leader has placed two helpful lists on the internet: one a listing of offshoots from the WCG; another a chronological chart showing the history of the interconnecting groups leading up to the WCG. They are helpful despite some errors such as the indication that the Millerites and hence the later Churches of God supposedly originated with the Sunday Baptists. Nothing can be further from the truth. The Churches of God had a two-part origin: those scattered groups which were awakened by the Millerite Second Advent Movement and who later merged with the groups which left the SDA movement in 1863-66; and those that left the SDA movement in 1863-66. It was the Seventh Day Baptists that brought the Sabbath truth to the Second Adventists and many of these joined the scattered Churches of God or SDAs.

During the course of the 3 hour or longer talk which, by the way, was guided by a facilitator, the arguments of their leader was demolished one-by-one. The audience conceded that with the enormous amount of fact brought to bear, they were in the wrong and the information as presented by their leader was utterly misleading. I still have before me the original notes for that talk and the point-by-point reply to their leader's talk at the regional office which was evidently full of scholarly problems and without credibility. Looking back at what he said about Marcion, Polycarp, King James, the British-Israelites and other matters were so inaccurate as to be an embarrassment to any academic. Constant claims that Mr Armstrong got this belief from here or there without him acknowledging it, was not true. The same could easily be said of Protestant leaders.

I recall in a 1980 Bible study when Mr Armstrong publicly stated that he had read Allen's work on *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*. And having read Allen's work, I cannot fathom where the supposed plagiarism may be found. Rather, it served more of an outline or template for his book *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*. Given that he writing style was radically different to Allen's; many conclusions were different; and that he emphasized the Sabbath, plagiarism cannot be pinned on him at all. (what none have noticed, is that Herbert Armstrong seems to have also read Howard Rand's work *Digest of Divine Law*).

I have seen references in the *Plain Truth* to Scofield's Bible (and Bullinger's *Companion Bible*). Before me is an article he wrote in 1956 which was reprinted in 1970 titled "NO! I Never was a "Jehovah's Witness", or a Seventh-day Adventist!" where he openly admits to having read material from those groups ([copy](#) of this article may be found at the rear).

But the most recognisable and primary source of his foundational beliefs was from the Church of God (Seventh Day) which is what we should be concentrating on – the major root, not minor roots.

The conclusion to my aforementioned talk contained seven points:

1. inferences are made about certain historical persons or events which are incredibly untrue and a little investigation by any person off the street would reveal such;
2. he talks down to the membership of his church as if they are ignoramuses or little children;
3. never does he quote sabbatarian scholars about a sabbatarian issue;
4. he left out some of the more important scholars whose works were read by Mr Armstrong, such as JH Allen, EW Bullinger (he was quoted in some old WCG material), AN Dugger and CT Russell;
5. his claim that our spiritual genetic pool is primarily Miller, the Puritans, Darby and Scofield is true only to a minor extent and not to the extent portrayed. It is the Church of God (Seventh Day), Adventists and Seventh Day Baptists from which we have emerged and which are our 'genetic pool';
6. the Puritan cleansing influence is undeniable, but this is absolutely not a unique perspective of that leader. Others such as Dr Bryan Ball have masterly covered the subject in scholarly works;
7. while talking about the background and culture which influenced Herbert Armstrong, he makes no mention of the culture and influences upon him and his father which framed their thinking which led to the destruction of their own church: Modern theology with its attack upon the Old Testament (non-literal interpretation of Genesis for example) and eschewing of the Laws of God (including laws which forbid homosexuality; and abortion under most circumstances); liberalism and lowering of moral standards; nothing matters except having a relationship with and loving a Jesus; leftist ideas on a range of social issues; and of course the influence of the modern media and radical universities which has left his church without a theology of any substance, detail or future direction, except supposedly having a relationship with a 'Jesus'.

It is indeed true that there were truths found elsewhere which were garnered and sifted by Herbert Armstrong – he said so himself. Understandings and material by the Puritans, Darby, Miller, Hislop, Scofield were not unique to them but found elsewhere. Further, the regathering and restoration of knowledge has increased rapidly, as prophesied (Dan 12:4) and we sabbatarians have always utilised the works of others to fill in the details of our existing framework. Speaking of Darby, Miller and others, a Jehovah's Witness, J Denton, notes that they were a part of "The Retrieval of Knowledge" and refiners of previous literature. With this we heartily concur. Mr Armstrong's foundations and sources may be summarised as follows:

- the Bible
- the doctrines of the Church of God (Seventh Day)
- the writings of Glengarry Rupert, leader of the Church of God (Independent)
- works of others who emanated from the Adventist movement, such as Charles Russell, various works of the SDAs and other pioneers of the Second Advent movement
- Bullinger's works, Hislop's *Two Babylons* and the Scofield Bible
- perhaps the works of Darby and others.

They were all helpful, but he examined what they had to say against the Bible. What was not upheld by scripture, he rejected. Other items he added to the foundation of the doctrines of the Church of God (Seventh Day), in particular the annual Feast days and the truth about Israel's modern identity. Other doctrines followed by further study or were brought to him via early WCG pioneers such as Hermann L Hoeh and others.

Later, his basic doctrines were summarised in the Fundamentals of the Radio Church of God and expanded in scores of articles, booklets and books. His final work, *Mystery of the Ages*, summarised these doctrines.

Herbert Armstrong was in the position to pour through the works of all of those men and others decades after they died, rather than being alive during the confusing midst of the Great Second Advent movement. This was particularly during the formative years, late 1920s-1940s. But after he had settled on the framework and foundational truths, he stuck mostly with the Bible itself. God indeed moves subtly

in mysterious ways, and we must give Him credit for the way He revealed these concepts and doctrines to Mr Armstrong.

As was inferred above, the Churches of God, and in particular the Worldwide Church of God and its offshoots, are daughters of the Church of God (Seventh Day). The latter was in fact named the Church of God (Adventist) until 1922 which gives some clue as to the connections between the Adventists and Churches of God.

This paper addresses some of the connections between the various groups to demonstrate how the various doctrines and titles of publications arose. This would give us greater clarity in defining our roots, respect our spiritual ancestors and both treasure and defend our truths from mainstream Christianity. Given that God has decided to work with us in various ways, our history is somewhat different from the mainstream Protestants and evangelicals whose doctrines are mere watered-down versions of Catholicism.

All of these groups arising out of the Advent and Millerite movements as well as the influence of the Seventh Day Baptists, have a passionate interest in Christology, jubilee cycles, 2520 years, so-called Christianity being actually the Babylonian Mystery Religion, the concept of the latter rain, the Watchman warning message as a witness to the end-time generation, concept of the remnant people (see Hasel's *The Remnant*) and so forth. But it is not the aim of this paper to present (yet another) history of the Millerite movement.

In the final analysis, my attempt at reconstructing this is similar to what historian Philip Schaff stated:

“The purpose of the historian is not to construct a history from preconceived notions and to adjust it to his own liking, but to reproduce it from the best evidence and to let it speak for itself.” (See Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*. Vol. 1 New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891, p. 175).

Similarities in Titles of Periodicals

Five groups emerged directly from this movement: Seventh-day Adventists (1863), Church of God (1866), and three Sunday-observing adventist groups: Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith (1888), Advent Christian Church (1860) and the Life and Advent Union (1862) (the latter two merged in 1964). Except for the Sabbath, the Sunday observing Adventists groups have some major similarities to the sabbatarian Churches of God, including the future Kingdom of God on earth, conditionalism (soul sleep), anti-trinitarianism and water baptism. It is in this context that we may now discuss the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Jehovah's Witnesses came about due to the leadership of Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). Russell was disaffected by the teachings of his protestant denomination and attended an Adventist lecture which moulded his thinking. Later, in 1876, he came into contact with a group of disaffected New York based Adventists led by Nelson H Barbour (publisher of *The Herald of the Morning*) and joined with them. They had two major disagreements with the Adventist movement: Sunday instead of Sabbath and the invisible return of Christ rather than visible.

The early Jehovah's Witnesses or Watchtower formed as a result of their founder, Russell, joining a group of Second Adventists (Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults*, page 224). His paper, commenced in 1874, was titled *Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence*. This is similar in title to the name of the Church of God (Adventist) paper *Sabbath Advocate and Herald of the Advent* (founded 1888) which has since been renamed the *Bible Advocate*. Similarly, *Herald of the Kingdom* was also a Christadelphian periodical and another was *The Apostolic Advocate* – these name similarities are an indication of these groups having knowledge of each other and sharing each other's literature.

It should be noted that the term Watchtower is not unique to the JW's. Other groups believe that they are God's watchman, who derive from the Adventist movement. Herbert W Armstrong taught that the Church of God should be a Watchman to the House of Israel. As we shall see, a man who heavily

influenced Russell, George Storrs had a book published with a similar title: *The Watch Tower: Or, Man in Death; and the Hope for a Future Life* in the 1850s.

In the 1920s (and 1922 specifically), the Jehovah's Witnesses published a newsletter titled *The Bulletin*; an identical title was adopted by that great sifter of information and doctrine, Herbert W Armstrong, for a newsletter in the 1930s and later for a periodical for the Worldwide Church of God pastors, *Pastor-General's Bulletin*. The initial *Bulletin* was a forerunner to the *Good News* magazine.

Russell also wrote a series of articles which were published in 1886 which were given the title of *Millennial Dawn*. This title may have been partially borrowed from the Millerite paper of Edson, *The Day Dawn* (1845).

The Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) were also possibly a source of inspiration for the various sacred name Churches of God and Assemblies that emerged in the 1930s. CO Dodd, who co-authored the *True History of the True Religion* together with Andrew Dugger, adopted this belief. From 1931 onwards the JWs began to emphasise the importance of the name YHWH and this found its way into some of the branches of the Churches of God. In 1972 the JWs published *The Bible in Living English* (a translation by ST Byrington who worked on it for 40 years) which emphasised the divine name.

Charles Taze Russell

The Watchtower has a fascinating history with roots in Millerism/Adventism. When the Great Disappointment hit the Millerites after 22 October 1844, they split into two broad groups: one which believed that Christ came invisibly and will yet return visibly (the Russellites) and those that he will return visibly (the Adventists); the latter group later split into Sabbath and Sunday observers. Charles Taze Russell, while holding to some unfortunate beliefs, certainly had much more truth than the current JW administration. Some of the beliefs were:

- held to the name Church of God (unofficially, but used throughout),
- held Passover on 14 Nisan,
- baptism by immersion,
- Christians are born again in the resurrection,
- anointing for healing,
- mortality of the soul (conditionalism),
- Christendom is the great Whore with many daughters,
- Gospel of the future Kingdom of God,
- second advent and 1,000 year reign of the Messiah
- all those not called by God at this time, will be resurrected during a period in the Millennium to gain their first chance of salvation (100 year period?)

Russell believed that this was indeed "the day of salvation" for Christians (forming the little flock and the Bride of Christ). Yet a further day of salvation awaited all of those that were not cognisant of God's way/ This "day" would be during the Millennium during "the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

According to Russell, all of mankind would be enlightened to God's way during this period and only after that would they be placed on trial and appear before the judgement. Mankind would be raised to life in the general resurrection and given a chance of salvation – after all, they must be judged according to knowledge, not according to ignorance.

Concerning the 100 years referred to in Is. 65:20, Russell's belief was outlined in his work *Divine Plan of the Ages*:

"Dimensions of the Incense Altar = 100

The only piece of furniture not used in that calculation, is the incense altar. Taking the incense altar by itself, we find that the top and the bottom, add up to 4 cubits. Any two verticals add up to 4 cubits. **4 x 25 = 100 cubits or the 100 years of Isaiah 65:20.**

The 4 verticals are 2 cubits apiece.
The top is 4 cubits as is the bottom.
Two verticals of one face = 4 cu.
4 sides of top = 4 cu
4 sides of bottom = 4 cu
4 x 25 = 100 years
This is the 100 years of **Isaiah 65:20**

...

“The Brazen Altar = 1000
If we take the top and the bottom of the brazen altar, the dimensions add up to 40 cubits, **40 x 25 = 1000 yrs.**
Looking at these numbers, we can see that the eventual restitution of all mankind, is being shown in the dimensions of the tabernacle furniture, when its looked at together, Acts 3:19

We find represented in the tabernacle furniture, the 2500 Jubilee cycle, pointing to the restitution of all things, the 1000 year day in which mankind will be restored, and the fact that all will have at least 100 yrs to hear and to accept the kingdom.” [emphasis mine]

This 100 year period, they say that this thought is taken from Isaiah 65:20, which they believe is a “Kingdom Picture”.

The *Amplified Bible* reads this way:

“There shall no more be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who dies prematurely; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies when only a hundred years old shall be thought only a child, cut off because he is accursed.”

To them this shows the possibility that people will be given 100 years to truly change their ways and conform to God’s arrangement, if they do not, they will be cut off – this would occur during the Millennium, rather than after it.

Russellites believe that everyone who ever lived will be resurrected to life and be given the opportunity to learn about God and his plan of salvation. Of further interest is their belief that the resurrection work is a process that may take hundreds of years during the 1,000 years of Christ. A time of opportunity for both the good and evil to be instructed in God’s ways (ie those not called in this life) – a rehabilitative work. This is of course different from the views of Universalism, which claim all will be reconcile to God regardless, including Satan. What they believe is that all will be given the opportunity, but the scriptures are clear, some will fail and fall away.

They further believe that Jesus Christ’s stated words in John 6:44,45 as well as the scriptures in Isaiah 2:3 and 11:9 prove that all of mankind has yet to be offered salvation.

The “exception”, in their belief system, will be those who were begotten by God’s Holy Spirit because Jesus stated that there is no forgiveness for those who sin against the Holy Spirit. That is not to say any sin, because we are all creatures of habit, but most likely refers to those who eventually deny that Jesus is the Christ, the same Spirit that revealed it to them and enlightened them to this regard – this is their strongly held belief and similar to Church of God belief.

Once again, George Storrs had many insights. He wrote:

“It is indeed true that ruling also is included in Christ’s judging the world, yet it will be perfected by reward and punishment.” (*Bible Examiner*, December, 1855)

“The penalty of the divine law is literal *death*, or cessation of conscious being ... if the impenitent and unbelieving are raised to life at all, it must be a *mortal* and not an *immortal* life. ... Numerous divine testimonies ... teach a universal judgment both of a *judicial* and *executive* character: passages which declare facts relative to the judgment of the wicked, which necessarily imply life and its functions, ... many who will be made alive by ‘a resurrection [to] condemnation,’ will be still *mortal* and liable to a *second death*. ... The sacred Scriptures distinctly teach that some will be made alive by a resurrection, in a ‘mortal’ state.” (*Bible Examiner*, February, 1856)

Of further interest, it should be noted that Advent scholars including C. Wellcome and Clarkson Gould were well aware of a plan that God had in mind for the human race. In their 1867 book *The Plan of Redemption* they attempted to expound upon this. Again, it was Storrs that widened this view of salvation being offered to all of mankind (yet without adopting the universalist teaching). To him, God would reasonably provide for mankind’s redemption.

Storrs decided to revive his *The Bible Examiner* periodical in 1871 (which was discontinued in 1863). In it he taught that God’s plan extended to the entire human race and not just those that have been offered salvation in the Christian era. To him, the Abrahamic promise would be offered to all mankind during the Kingdom of God on earth period.

It is not clear as to what Mr Armstrong taught when he was initially observing the Holy Days – it may have been that he taught that the 100 year period was during the Millennium – a period during which all that ever lived would be given their first chance of salvation; or that it was the final 100 years of the Millennium; or that people would live for 100 years. Further investigation is needed to clarify this.

Their belief in a strong centralised governmental system may have influenced the governmental system which arose in the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in the 1950s. It may also be of interest that some in the WCG used the JW book *Equipped for Every Good Work* to establish dates of Bible events.

While they believed they were the Church of God, it was only in 1931 that they adopted the name Jehovah’s Witnesses. The JWs have changed the truths that Russell held to, since his death, which has led to numerous spin-offs, accusing the parent group of being Laodicean. In fact, he was viewed as the “Laodicean Messenger” and the “faithful and wise servant” of Matt 24:45. The headstone at his grave read “the Laodicean Messenger”. Similarly, while the SDA Church views itself as the Laodicean Era, some who have left their ranks considered themselves to be Philadelphians!

There is some talk among these Russellite groups to co-operate and to adopt the name Church of God. Some of them are quite aware of their distant relationship to the Church of God (Seventh-Day) (see for example a letter to the editor in *New World Journal*, July 1994, page 15). Note the following comment from researcher Jerry Bergman:

“When he did die [31 October 1916], the organisation was thrown into a turmoil which resulted in the formation of a number of large splinter groups ... The changes made in policy and doctrine after he died were so drastic that many scholars now consider the Jehovah’s Witnesses to be an offshoot of the original movement which Russell started. Today a number of movements claim to be the “faithful” followers of Russell’s teachings.” (*Jehovah’s Witnesses and Kindred Groups*, page xvii)

Ruth Tucker, author of *Another Gospel*, writes the following:

“... through clever manoeuvring, Rutherford managed to seize control and maintain his position despite the intense opposition from individuals and factions ... Rutherford prevailed and brought a new style to the movement. As a result, many of Russell’s Bible Students deserted the organization ... ‘Thus,’ writes Rogerson, ‘modern-day Jehovah’s Witnesses are not necessarily direct successors of Pastor Russell ... the evil within the organization [is traceable] to Rutherford, not to Russell, who at times is depicted as a virtual saint in comparison to his successor’ ... in 1931 [Rutherford] began referring to the movement as Jehovah’s Witnesses” (pages 125-128).

That sounds awfully reminiscent of what went on in the WCG in the 1990s– strange parallel. Even the events of the 1970s seem to show an interesting parallel between events in the WCG and the JW’s: the growing belief that the JW’s discipline was too severe and out of order in a modern age; the end of the world did not occur in 1975 which resulted in loss of faith of some of their members and even the successor to their church’s leader.

Raymond Franz was frontrunner to be the successor to his ailing uncle, Frederick Franz. But Raymond had doubts about some of the JW teachings which led to conflicts within the leadership. Frederick was 88 at that time (similarly HWA was 86 at the time of the WCG’s crisis). Raymond took a leave of absence for a while and then was disfellowshipped. Similarly, the successor to HWA went through the same procedures. You can read more about Franz’s experiences in *Crisis of Conscience*. In that book he also lists some of the similarities between the Churches of God and the early JW’s (page 343). See also the publication *Our Friends: The Jehovah’s Witnesses* by Price, an SDA.

Note a further strange parallel:

“Canons governing divorce, for example, have been changed twice since 1972. Witnesses who divorced under the old set of rules now find they must return to their former mates or face excommunication” (*Newsweek*, 20 July 1982).

How similar to the WCG having changed its own divorce rules twice in the 1970s, but in the opposite direction to the JW’s.

I was also fascinated to find that the title *The World Tomorrow* was used for a booklet by at least one JW group (Bergman, *Jehovah’s Witnesses and Kindred Groups*, page 257). Those familiar with the WCG would recognise the title *World Tomorrow* as that for its famous TV programme and *The Wonderful World Tomorrow* as the title for its booklet on the coming millennial reign of the Messiah.

The Christadelphians

Notice the following peculiarities and similarities with the Christadelphians: in the late 1840s, during the height of the Great Advent movement, Dr Thomas founded the Christadelphians and published a book *The Hope of Israel*. This title was also used as the title of the paper published by the Church of God in 1863. It is also similar in name to the paper *Banner of Israel* founded in the 1870s by E Hines, who founded the British Israel World Federation. Another similar title was the paper *The Torch of Israel* founded c1910 by Elder Ziegler, an associate of Glengarry Rupert. Rupert’s own paper was *The Remnant of Israel*.

There are other certain similarities between the Christadelphians and Churches of God:

- mortality of the soul; evil to be annihilated
- righteous to reign of earth, not in heaven, for 1,000 years
- water baptism
- the Catholic Church is “Babylon”
- have a particular strength in typology which the Sabbatarian churches also have a great interest in
- belief in the Great Tribulation similar to the Churches of God

- church eras

Some few Christadelphians hold to the belief that Germany is Assyria in prophecy, the new birth occurs at the resurrection and that one should utilise the sacred names (see the book *Yahweh-Elohim. A devotional Study of the Memorial Name* by EJ Lasius, daughter of Dr Thomas).

In similitude to a minority thinking within the Churches of God, they do not believe in the resurrection of the wicked. Their belief is that they will remain dead, never to rise again.

Of particular interest to us would be their move away from a belief that Russia is the end-time evil power to a United Europe under Germany. Some of their more recent literature is quite excellent in this regard. Readers may be interested to know that Herbert W Armstrong did not originally believe that Germany was Assyria in prophecy. Instead, he thought that the Germans descended from Gomer (see “What is going to happen?”, *Plain Truth*, June-July 1934, page 6).

They do not hold to any sabbath day; however they meet on Sunday out of convenience. Further, their view of Christology is ‘extreme Unitarianism’ and is quite different to the various types of Binitarian and Unitarian (Arian) beliefs of the Churches of God. Throughout their history the Sabbath-observing groups have never been trinitarian, but Binitarian or Unitarian. A few sabbatarians, however, have been extreme Unitarians such as John Kiesz, some Sunday Adventists and some few sabbatarians in the WCG. This belief, in short, holds to the view that Christ was not extant prior to his human birth; but that he was in the mind of God Who placed His thoughts and words into the mind of Christ at conception or birth (see discussion of this in Alfs’ *Concepts of Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, pages 58-61). This view extends back several centuries.

Why the similarities? The following may give the answer:

“there seems to be some fraternal relationship between them [the Church of God] and Dr John Thomas, founder of the Christadelphians” (*General Council of the Churches of God (7th Day). A bit of history*, page 6).

And in an article by a Christadelphian group given me in 1976, they trace their spiritual roots through such groups as the Waldenses, Albigenses and Huguenots (as do the JWs). In the same article, they mention that they have a lot in common with a certain large group in the United States called the Church of God. Which Church of God exactly, they do not specify, although one Christadelphian publication on *Dr Thomas: His Life and Work*, stated:

“On his return to America in 1863 Dr. Thomas resumed his usual activities, proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, writing occasional letters and articles that appeared in the pages of *The Ambassador* ... All kinds of “isms” seem to have been added to the teaching concerning the Kingdom and the Name: Sabbatarianism, Millerism, Antisaltism, Teetotalism, Anti-porkism, Anti-tobaccoism ... all these Dr Thomas found were being tacked on to the main principles for which he stood, or to some of them. He was disappointed ...” (page 223) (emphasis mine).

One final similarity: we are all familiar with Herbert W Armstrong founding Ambassador College with its *Ambassador* publication. Dr Thomas’s assistant, Robert Roberts, commenced a periodical in Britain with the title of *The Ambassador*.

Finally, the writer was surprised to stumble across a Christadelphian internet web page on 4 November 1997 which actually stated thus concerning their history:

“The early nineteenth century was a time of great religious ferment in the United States, especially on the expanding frontier. America was being settled by a new kind of men and women, who were independent, and untraditional. The last part of the eighteenth century had seen a revival of interest and enthusiasm in the churches known as the Great Awakening. The Methodist

movement of John Wesley had swept across the country at the turn of the century. Then came the Campbellites, preaching a reform of the paganism of the churches of the day, to be followed soon by the Millerites (also known as the Adventists) preaching the end of the world. Each of these movement questioned some part of the traditional Christianity of the time.

It was a stirred-up time and place and Dr. Thomas moved in it, editing several magazines, preaching and debating to anyone who would listen. After a few years he came to understand some things that caused some disagreements with the Campbellites. After several meetings with Campbell himself, he found his differences with the Campbellites to be unreconcilable and Dr. Thomas had to leave and push on with his search. Some of the Campbellite congregations left with him, and began to look to him as their leader.

At this time the Millerite or Adventist movement was growing and Dr. Thomas began to associate with this movement. He admired their enthusiasm, their desire for the return of Christ, and their questioning spirit. He influenced the movement and was influenced by it. To this day, some Adventist groups have similar doctrines to the Christadelphians, especially the Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith.

The group of congregations and individuals who looked to Dr. Thomas grew in the decades that followed. In 1848 the movement became international when Dr. Thomas went to Britain for a speaking tour. In Britain he was very well received and to this day Great Britain has always had the largest number of Christadelphians. Great Britain became another center for the growing Christadelphian community.” (emphasis mine)

We should respect the intellectual honesty of such aforementioned statements.

The Historical Links Between Adventists and Churches of God

Both Adventists and Churches of God are familiar with their roots and beginnings last century. With the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, some individuals and fellowships either never joined and remained outside of the SDA Church, withdrew in 1863 or withdrew in 1866 (see Linden, *1844 and the Shut Door Problem*, pages 80-81; Bjorling, *The Churches of God, Seventh Day. A Bibliography*, pages 10-14). Of course the Seventh-day Baptists remained a separate entity.

With the incorporation of the scattered non-SDA and non-SDB churches, the new group eventually adopted the name Church of God (Adventist) which indicates strong, intertwined links and relationships between the Church of God and the SDAs. Later, in 1922, the name was amended to Church of God (Seventh Day) and has remained such to this day.

Membership and new elders to the Church of God (Adventist) were added from the Seventh-day Adventist Church from time-to-time. One such elder was Glengarry Rupert, whose writings later proved very impressionable on Herbert W Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God (initially known as the Radio Church of God).

Rupert brought with him the belief that the annual sabbaths, in addition to the weekly sabbath, are important for christians to understand and to observe which impacted upon sections of the Church of God, a few who were already observing these days. During his time with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the late nineteenth century, he performed missionary work in parts of South America. Later, in the 1960s, Worldwide Church of God ministers stumbled across many of these scattered remnants of Rupert’s missionary work. They had never associated with any other sabbatarian group, but continued to faithfully observe the sabbath and in many cases, the annual sabbaths.

So, the Churches of God today have a Seventh-day Adventist elder to thank for bringing the annual sabbaths into their theological framework. To this day, many Adventists privately observe these days. Rupert died in 1922, still a Church of God elder and, leader of the Church of God (Independent), having

been part of the splits from the Church of God (Adventist) in 1905. It was also in 1922 that the name of the Church of God (Adventist) was changed to Church of God (Seventh Day). It split again in 1933 with re-amalgamation in 1950, although some did not rejoin the General Conference. More recently attempts to unify with the latter group failed in a vote, but now appears to be occurring by default with individual congregations joining the larger group.

In 1931 the Church of God in Poland was formed as a result of a split from the SDA Church. Coincidentally the Church of God in Portugal also started that year, as an SDA Church splinter group and the Adventist Church of Promise in 1932 in Brazil which is now a member of the Church of God (Seventh Day) General Conference which has about 120,000 members across the globe. Also in the 1930s an SDA minister in Australia, pastor AH Britten, established the Remnant Church of God (although it was not registered until 1939). A small group continuing that church may still be found extant in Perth, Western Australia, to this day.

There can be no doubt about it: the Adventists and Churches of God are related, have a common history and are more closely related than we might sometimes admit. By the way, not all of the Churches of God in East Europe which were underground during the oppressive years under Communist rule were offshoots of the Adventists. One particular group in the Ukraine came about due to a revelation in 1946 and others trace their history back to the Middle Ages.

The Worldwide Church of God

It was also in 1931 that Herbert W Armstrong was ordained a minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) and in 1933 he formed a congregation known as the Radio Church of God (later changed to Worldwide Church of God in 1968). After seven years his credentials as a minister of the Church of God (Seventh Day) was withdrawn in 1938 although he still co-operated with them until 1945 and Radio Church of God members visited with the mother church until the early 1950s. After that time, unfortunately, virtually all communication between the two groups ceased. Why mother and children churches cannot speak to each other is beyond this writer's comprehension – hopefully communication will recommence some day.

Further clues to our close relationship may be found in commonalities in our literature: The WCG's *The True History of the True Church* was drawn, in part, from Adventist publications such as *The Church in the Wilderness* and *Facts of Faith. Proof of the Bible* was based on the SDA's *Prophecy Speaks: Dissolving Doubts*. Even the booklet *Seven Laws of Healthful Living* seems to have a basis in the SDA's eight health principles.

Beside the Sabbath and it being a sign for Christians, other similarities include the belief in seven church eras, the identification of the Roman Catholic Church with the Mystery Babylonian religion, the historic Beast power has been the Roman Empire and its successor Holy Roman Empire, water baptism, concept of the end-time remnant church, places of protection for God's people during the Great Tribulation and so forth.

This indicates that the Churches of God are not intellectually separate from the SDA Church and owes it a debt for certain concepts.

In 1934 Mr Armstrong commenced publication of the *Plain Truth* magazine and commenced the *World Tomorrow* radio program which became the largest radio program on earth by the late 1960s and when it was cancelled in the early 1990s, it was, by that time, the longest serving program in history. During the 1960s, there was a small flow of Adventists into the Worldwide Church of God's (WCG) ranks.

By the time of his death, the WCG had 150,000 members; the *Plain Truth* magazine had a circulation of over 8 million in 5 languages and in full-colour; a *Good News* magazine in several languages and in full-colour with over 1 million published each issue); a Correspondence Course with hundreds of thousands of students; a theological college; a world famous performing arts centre; scores of quality booklets and

hard cover books; a radio and TV program on hundreds of stations across the globe. All literature was totally free without any cost or obligation.

At the time of writing, the WCG's membership had plummeted to about 35,000; the radio and TV programs had been cancelled; the college closed; all books and booklets withdrawn; the *Good News* magazine and Correspondence Courses cancelled and the *Plain Truth* is being replaced by an ecumenical magazine with different titles in various countries (circulation may only be 250,000).

Today we are aware of about 126 groups which have split from the WCG. More recently the United Church of God and the Global Church of God have split-off to continue the beliefs their members hold precious. Most former WCG members have now forsaken the Sabbath or observe it privately at home. A few have joined the SDA Church.

The number of groups observing the Sabbath may be counted in the hundreds, numbering 9 million Adventists, approximately 2 million True Jesus Church members (mainly Chinese), hundreds of thousands of various Church of God members plus Messianic Jews and other groups.

Case study: the Born Again Doctrine

Let us now examine what some have taught over the past century and a bit. The Church of God published an article on this subject in *The Hope of Israel* (1865, vol 2 no 10, pages 1-2) "Being Born Again" (no author given). The entire article discusses the new birth occurring in the resurrection. This is the earliest sabbatarian source which I have been able to uncover on this particular doctrine. Note the statement of beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventists in 1872:

"The new birth comprises the entire change necessary to fit us for the kingdom of God, and consists of two parts: first, a moral change, wrought by conversion and a Christian life; **second, a physical change at the second coming of Christ**, whereby, if dead, we are raised incorruptible, and if living, are changed to immortality in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye".

In the booklet *Membership of the Seventh-day Church*, 1894, only the first aspect is referred to and the other dealing with the resurrection has no mention at all. This may reflect an oversight or the gradual change in doctrine. However, the original position was re-stated by one of the prominent Seventh-day pioneers, Uriah Smith, in the chapter on "Fundamental Principles of Seventh-day Adventists" in the *1912 Yearbook*. It may also be found in the 1914 Statement. But it is omitted from the 1931 and 1980 Statements.

Of great interest to Church of God historians is that a Church of God, Seventh-day pastor residing in Auckland, New Zealand in the early twentieth century, wrote a 16 page booklet on the subject with the title *Begotten Again, or Born Again, Which?* (1902). The entire booklet powerfully proclaims that the new birth occurs at the resurrection. On the final page he notes:

"It is therefore untrue that the new birth takes place at conversion. If so, it is false, and those who teach it are teaching falsehood, and that must be displeasing to the God of truth. We cannot be born anew unless we are begotten, and we cannot be begotten unless we receive with meekness the implanted word, the ten words of God" (page 16).

Historian Richard Nickels adds further insight to the historical background of this teaching in the Church of God, Seventh-day:

"William C. Long in April 1893, wrote in the Advocate: "We are begotten of God; we are born of the Spirit. These two events do not occur at the same time. We are begotten at conversion; **we are born at the resurrection**" .. this ... was defended by the church for many years. In 1955, the Denver Group Ministerial Council identified the new birth and conversion as synonymous terms. The 1974 doctrinal statement finally adopted the position: "Conversion, also called the

new birth, is the process by which one is changed from his old, sinful life into a new creature in Christ" (R C Nickels, *Bible Doctrine*, page 11.13).

Indeed, the time of the new birth has been a contentious issue for some time and is mentioned as such, along with other doctrines, at the 1929 General Conference of the Church of God at Stanberry. The time of the new birth was an issue at that conference, at which time it seems to have been 'dumped' by the major branch of the Church of God (R C Nickels, *A History of the Seventh Day Church of God*, page 222).

A sabbatarian residing in Melbourne, Australia, has published an interview with an elderly lady who, as a young girl, was once part of a branch of the Church of God in the Brute Shire in Scotland early this century, but now lives in Melbourne. The lady, Margaret McCormack, confirmed several sabbatarian beliefs, including that "it was clearly understood that man's destiny was to **be born into the family of God**" (J Morgan, *Church of God in Scotland*, page 1). Whether there was any connection to the other sabbath-keepers around the country we cannot be sure. But we do know that such groups existed according to an interview with another elderly lady in England:

"Seven churches existed: in London (Holborn, Finchley and Forest Gate), Southend and Moorcombe, England, Wales and Scotland" in the early 1900s. "In England the Church kept the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread and the Sabbath" (J Zhorne, *The Worldwide News*, 4 March 1985, page 7). One wonders if these Churches of God had any connection to that in the Brute Shire in Scotland and perhaps taught the born again in the resurrection doctrine. We cannot know for sure, but if this issue were explored further, the information flowing from the results may be very encouraging.

It should come as no surprise therefore, that the Church of God (Seventh Day) based at Salem, West Virginia, still teaches a future birth at the resurrection. Their general belief is birth in three stages: 1. the natural birth at the time we enter this world; 2. birth at the time of water baptism; 3. **the third birth at the time of the resurrection** (see their booklet *The Three Births*).

Another group worth mentioning is the Church of God (Abrahamic Faith) which is one of the groups directly emanating out of the Millerite Second Advent Movement. Most of their doctrines appear identical to the Church of God (seventh day) except they observe Sunday and their view of Christology is a form of Unitarianism. In their publication *The Restitution Herald* (Aug/Sept 1997) we find an excellent article by a certain Pastor Sydney A. Hatch, reprinted from the 15 April 1965 edition of that magazine. The article is titled "Vocabulary of the Resurrection". The following quote indicates very clearly that an aspect of the born again doctrine was well understood by many of that church:

"To speak of "regeneration" or "new birth" as referring only to the present robs it of its prophetic splendor. In the Old Testament, resurrection was regarded as a new birth or second creation (Isa. 66:7-9; Ezek. 37). Some early Christian fathers made "regeneration" synonymous with "resurrection". Thoughtful students of the Word will realize Jesus had more in mind than the present when He told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" John 3:7)".

It is obvious that this church, which dates back to 1888, received this truth from the Millerite movement. It is a pity that it is dying out in that church and even the various churches of God. However, it may yet see a revival (dare I say "resurrection") over the next few years as news of this much neglected truth is circulated across the globe.

Finally, it may be opportune to mention here that some are reconsidering their position on this doctrine. The Adventist Laymen's Foundation, an SDA spin-off, in a private communication related the following:

"In all honesty, I had not perceived this unique concept previously. I am happy that you have called this to our attention. I shall give it some serious thought, and suggest its incorporation into the Statement of Beliefs on which we are presently working. The more one thinks about it, the more merit it has. It clarifies some questions relative to instantaneous sanctification, and covers very succinctly the whole of the Christian life."

Also, Dr Kai Arasola, Finnish SDA academic, admitted the following in a personal letter:

“Thank you for your letter on the two births. You brought out a concept that I never considered when going through Millerite material ... My first reaction is to consider what effect simple linguistics may have on this issue. Paul uses language which comes close to calling the resurrection a birth. He compares the process to sowing a seed (Gr. *spermaton*) and rising to new life (1Cor 15:20,23).”

Perhaps scholarship will be renewed into this wonderful teaching and that more and more resources will be brought to bear on tracing its origins followed by its resurrection (no pun intended) in various churches.

A SDA offshoot which publishes *The Remnant Herald* newsletter, acknowledges that Christ was 'born' at his resurrection, but do not go the next logical step, to likening the Christian resurrection to a new birth ("Winds of Doctrine", *The Remnant Herald*, April 1997). Their view is similar, if not identical to, Bullinger's *Companion Bible*.

As we shall shortly see, many of these groups continued his teachings on the born again doctrine. Russell certainly held the view that the new birth occurs in the resurrection, not at baptism. Note the following from Russells' work *Studies in the Scriptures. Series 1. The Plan of the Ages*:

“... after being dead three days, he [Christ] was raised to life - to the perfection of spirit being ... born of the Spirit - “the firstborn from the dead.” “That which is *born* of the Spirit is *spirit*.” Jesus, therefore, at and after his resurrection, was a spirit - a spirit being, and no longer a human being in any sense” (pages 230-31).

“The Greek word *gennaō* and its derivatives, sometimes translated *begotten* and sometimes *born*, really contains both ideas, and should be translated by either one of these two English words, according to the sense of the passage in which it occurs. The two ideas, begetting and birth, are always in the word, so that if the one is stated, the other is always implied, as birth is the natural consequence of begetting, and begetting the natural antecedent to birth. When the active agent with which *gennaō* is associated is a male, it should be translated *begotten*; when a female, *born*. Thus in 1John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,18, *gennaō* should be *begotten*, because God (masculine) is the active agent)” (page 278).

“... you will be *begotten* of the Father to anew life and the divine nature, which, if it develop and become quickened, will insure your being *born* a new creature, a spirit being, in the first resurrection; and as such you shall not only see but share the kingdom” (pages 279-80).

The entire book is vitally important in our studying Adventist-Millerite heritage, but I will not belabor the point by quoting any more from it. Another teacher of this doctrine was George W Stetson who was a Second Advent Christian preacher. He died in 1879 and Russell preached at his funeral. In *The Present Truth* (PT!) of Sept-Oct 1991 it is acknowledged that George W Stetson, a minister with the Advent Christian Church, was influential in bringing certain doctrinal understanding to Russell, including the born again in the resurrection doctrine (page 1). Stetson wrote an article in the 13 September 1871 *World's Crisis* on “Infant Salvation” (reprinted in the aforementioned *Present Truth*, pages 72-73).

In this remarkable article he argues for the new birth to occur at the resurrection when we shall be full Sons of God. Russell was very frank and honest by indicating that he was indebted to the Adventists and also George Stetson and George Storrs in formulating doctrine (MJ Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed*, page 15). In fact Storrs was involved with the movement led by William Miller since 1842 (ibid, page 16). Russell was also indebted to Storrs for the observance of Passover on 14 Abib, rather than as a weekly or quarterly Lord's Supper (*Apocalypse Delayed*, page 17). Storrs was also instrumental in bringing the British-Israel truth into the Churches of God as far as we know.

One spin-off from the JW's, protesting at the doctrinal shift away from the teachings of Russell, is the Dawn Bible Students Association. Their booklet, *Born of the Spirit* discusses this subject thoroughly and concurs that "Christians are begotten now by the Spirit and in the resurrection will be born into the heavenly realm to live and reign with Christ" (page 12).

Another spin-off is the Laymen's Home Missionary Movement. Their booklet *Born Again and once in Grace, Always in Grace - Is this Scriptural?*, discusses the born again doctrine within this context. It is clear that they believe that Christians are impregnated with the Holy Spirit at baptism, undergo a gestation Christian life and are finally born into the Kingdom. They maintain that Christ was born from the dead etc. The booklet is remarkably similar to HWA's position.

It is my hope that more information will be forthcoming on the roots of this doctrine. It obviously may be traced back to the sabbatarians and both the early SDAs and Sunday Adventists at the very least. Very likely, as more research is undertaken, we will uncover its true roots. Perhaps we may find evidence for it among certain Seventh-day Baptists and scattered remnants of the Church during the period c1802-1844 and even amongst certain Protestants, for the concept was known amongst them in the 1800s.

Concluding Remarks

When we take a careful look at the development of the Church of God, we must be completely honest with its history: it began to resurface after much slumber due to the Great Adventist movement. The seventh day Sabbath was introduced by a Seventh Day Baptist (SDB) to the Adventists and conditionalism was always lurking under the surface amongst the scattered offshoots from the SDBs after their splits earlier in the century. Passover on 14 Abib, born again in the resurrection and other truths found their way into the Adventist movement. Due to that movement, many adopted the seventh day Sabbath and conditionalism, eschewed the Trinity and came to understand the new birth more fully (it was only in 1931 that the SDA Church officially adopted the Trinity).

Within that historical framework and religious culture, this generation of Churches of God arose. Terminology, titles and names and doctrines found their way like a vine spreading wildly, into the Adventist Millerite groups and those groups influenced by the Adventist Millerites. Of course there are great differences of opinions today between these groups and the author does not advocate unity or ecumenicalism between them. This paper merely documents some of our roots.

It also shows that God's spirit often works in circuitous and mysterious; in a way relative to a given culture or moment in time; or via persons who are not necessarily called in this life. It is His prerogative and His way. It is not always obvious what He is doing until after the event. Sometimes we do not fully see that due to the style of the Bible which we have become accustomed to in study: it is a compression of information which, as a result of so much packed into it, can give the impression of constant miracles and obvious interventions by God. But when we examine these events, we are forced to make two conclusions: (1). In 4,000 years of recorded Biblical history, obvious interventions and miracles are few and far between, but a casual reading of the Bible, due to the compressed record, may give the reader another impression; (2). God works in mysterious ways, not always being noticeable to outsiders or even Church members, as to how He is working or where He is directing matters. God can and does use any means at His disposal to restore truth to and to awaken His Church; to build a new branch of a Church which sparkles gloriously for a few decades as a beautiful Zion; and then He can scatter that branch of the Church for reason of which the Bible gives us some clues. He can be very brazen; but normally His modus operandi is circuitous and subtle.

We know that HWA referred to the Worldwide Church of God as the Philadelphia Era. Not necessarily all Philadelphians listened to what the Spirit says to the churches (although these scriptures refer to historical churches and to Christians as individuals, Christ wants us to ascertain what they mean to the seven churches). This "he who has an ear, let him hear" is an Hebraic expression and means to be very watchful, intentful and to be sensitive to the manoeuvrings and mysterious ways the Spirit moves. It is mostly subtle and not forceful - it needs to be within us urging us onward. So with the church eras - some listen and some

don't. HWA listened and as such doors of opportunity were opened up to him - and the key of knowledge given to him. Others of the Church of God did not listen, did not perceive the signs of the times (in the Church or the world).

Never has anything been seen again since the Second Advent movement: the explosive interest in the Bible, trumpeting the return of Christ and purity of doctrine were the aims of those involved with this movement. The greatest of these was Herbert W Armstrong, a sifter as none since the Apostles. He poured through the works of the Church of God (Seventh Day), Glengarry Rupert, EW Bullinger, JH Allen and the others and brought about a remarkable mosaic and indepth understanding of God's Plan and prophecy which the pioneers last century were grasping for.

May we honour these pioneers in the truths they had by holding fast that which was good amongst them, and constantly remaining vigilant – on guard – ready to defend these truths and fight for every inch of what the Bible really teaches. And instead of dismantling the outline of truths which they brought (dismantling whilst paradoxically 'going deeper into the truth' or 'finding new truth' as some purport), let us build upon their firm foundations, fine-tuning these truths and digging ever deeper into the Word of God.

Finally, this paper is not attempting to have people look to other groups for understanding. Our understanding must primarily be based upon God's Word and the truths revealed in it. We must walk daily with God and His Son - insodoing absorbing His character and truths, generally guided by the expoundings of HWA.

There it is – God indeed works in mysterious ways to bring about His will and for knowledge of His word to increase in these last days. May our understanding of the true doctrines keep on increasing as we grow in grace and knowledge.

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NO!

I Never Was a “Jehovah Witness, or a Seventh Day Adventist!

by Herbert W. Armstrong

LETTERS continue to ask, “Were you ever a ‘Jehovah Witness’? Members of that sect have told me you were.”

Although I have stated positively and definitely on the radio program a number of times that I never belonged to the sect known as “Jehovah Witnesses,” or the Seventh Day Adventist denomination, it seems that many, especially of the “Jehovah Witnesses” sect, continue spreading the false claim that I once belonged to them.

Let me now make the truth **PLAIN**. I have never been a member of these so-called “Jehovah Witnesses,” nor of the Seventh Day Adventists. I have never in any manner, shape, nor form, had any remote connection with them, or associated with either sect or denomination. I have never had any fellowship with them.

I have never attended a regular meeting or church service of either, although I have attended a very few week-night evangelistic campaign services conducted by Seventh Day Adventist evangelists. I have never, however, attended *any* meeting of the “Jehovah Witnesses” sect of any kind. I have never had any kind of fellowship with any of their members.

I have never belonged to, attended any meeting of, or had any remote semblance of fellowship with the “Jehovah Witnesses” predecessor, the “Pastor Russell” people.

I did not learn any of God’s **TRUTH** from the “Jehovah Witnesses” sect. I have, of course, read some of their writings and their books, and I have been glad to find that they have certain truths, as all sects and denominations have (though mixed with dangerous errors), but God had already revealed these truths to me long before I read of them in their literature. **I LEARNED NOTHING THAT I BELIEVE AND TEACH FROM THIS SECT.** If they boast of having taught me anything, they misrepresent.

I learned God’s **TRUTH** direct from **GOD’S WORD**—the Holy Bible. I did not learn it from *any* sect or denomination.

But I say unto you, as the Apostle Paul said:

“I certify you, brethren, that the **GOSPEL** which is preached of me is not after man. For *I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, BUT BY THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST.*”

But when it pleased God, who called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him to” **THE WORLD**; “immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood”—neither went I to any sect or denomination or organized “church,” but I went directly to the **WORD OF GOD**, and on my knees asked God thru His Spirit to open my understanding—to correct me, reprove and rebuke, and instruct in His Truth and His righteousness; . . . then after three years I went to some of the humble of God’s people in the Willamette Valley of Oregon, and preached to them. (Please compare with Galatians 1: 11-18).

My ambition and zeal was *not* persecuting God’s true Church, as was Paul’s, but climbing the ladder of business success and making money. God struck me down three times successively, by taking out from under my feet the businesses I had started, wiping me out, financially. Then God brought me to the study of His Word by causing me to try to refute the truth of God’s Sabbath which He had revealed to my wife, and which I at first bitterly opposed.

During that six-months’ study of more than fourteen hours per day, I read very little literature favorable to the Sabbath, but I read everything I could find which opposed it and upheld Sunday worship—but

mostly I studied— just the **BIBLE!** After six months' intensive study I was forced, in honesty before my God, to swallow the most bitter pill of my life. It literally "killed" me—and *I* died—surrendered wholly to God, gave my life henceforth to Him to use "if He could."

I had been brought up from birth in the Friends Church (Quakers), though I had never been converted or begotten as a child of God, and at age 18 I strayed almost wholly away from all church interest or attendance, and devoted my whole energies to business. I had just passed age 30 when God forced me into this study of His Word, and total surrender to Him and His rule over my life.

From then on, I studied the Bible **ON MY KNEES.** Time after time it corrected me. Repeatedly I had to suffer reproof, and acknowledge I had been wrong in my beliefs and desires. God chastened and corrected me repeatedly, not only thru revealing His Truth in this way, but by continual circumstances. I had been conceited, proud. But now by bitter experience, by suffering, by circumstance, and by God's Word, I was brought low and humbled. But also I began to experience the unmatched joy of learning truth **NEW** to me, as God little by little, yet more and more, revealed **TRUTHS** so wonderful they produced spiritual ecstasy. For the first time in my life I found what **HAPPINESS** really is!

God launched **me in** His work, and after my first evangelistic effort in a church in Harrisburg, Oregon, I experienced the greatest thrill of my life so far, upon realizing a few precious lives had been brought to repentance, to surrender to God, to **FAITH** in Jesus Christ —**CONVERTED—CHANGED!** *Truly it is more blessed to give than to receive!*

That process of being corrected, of **GROWING** in grace and the **KNOWLEDGE** of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, has continued, now, lo these 27 years—more than a quarter century. *And it is still continuing!* God grant it shall forever!

No, **MEN** did not teach me what I preach to you. I was not taught of men, but of **GOD!** I do not speak to you by authority of men, or any politically organized church of men—but in the name, and by the **AUTHORITY** of **JESUS CHRIST**, the living **HEAD** of the true **CHURCH OF GOD!**

These words of Christ, which He received from the Father—the very words and Gospel of **CHRIST** which I speak and write to you—they are **SPIRIT**, and they are **LIFE!**

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