



THE
DEVOLUTION
OF
CIVILIZATION

CIVILIZATION
OF
EVOLUTION
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"I want to show you that, instead of being in a process of evolution,...man is devolving... society is on a downward spiral."

DR. LESTER SUMRALL

The Devolution of Civilization

by
Dr. Lester Sumrall

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The Devolution of Civilization

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PREFACE

“So God will allow them to believe lies with all their hearts, and all of them will be justly judged for believing falsehood, refusing the Truth, and enjoying their sins.”

— 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12
(The Living New Testament)

We live in the most momentous age in the history of the world. We have seen many amazing events in the past few years—important things, prophetic happenings that clearly set the stage for the coming of the Lord and the end of the world. It has been thrilling to me to watch the unfolding of what must surely be the last days.

Not all these events are taking place in the international scene. You don't have to study the developments of world politics to see what I'm talking about. The tremendous things happening in the Holy Land and throughout the Middle East are not the only significant items in prophetic news. Although I study these things very carefully and watch them closely, I also observe our own nation and our own people. And I find Bible prophecy being fulfilled right here at home.

Let me show you what I mean. When I started out as a boy preacher, you could preach the Gospel to a congregation and they would believe what you were

talking about. You could tell them what the Bible said about the things they were doing and the way they were living, and they knew you were telling the truth.

Oh, I don't mean they all repented and got saved. Not at all. As a matter of fact, it just seemed to make some of them worse, and sometimes they'd try to take it out on the preacher. But at least they knew they were sinners. They believed the message I preached. They knew I was telling them the truth.

The great Apostle Paul said the day would come, though, when people would refuse to believe the truth when it was presented to them. He said they would say "no" to the truth, refusing to accept and love it and let it save them. And finally, he said, God would allow them to believe lies with all their hearts. Then they would be judged . . . with eternal damnation.

I'm afraid we're seeing this take place right here in America today. Thousands and thousands of people, young and old, are rejecting the truth of God's Word and choosing to believe lies. Their whole sense of values, of what's real and important, is becoming twisted and distorted.

As a result, we have a whole generation that is rejecting the teachings of the Word of God for what they call the "new morality" and "situation ethics." But it makes no difference what you call it—immorality is immorality, sin is sin, and no amount of fancy words, rationalizations or excuses can change it. So those who deliberately choose to do wicked and ungodly things are believing a lie—deceiving themselves—and they will be judged.

Another lie that has become part of the very fabric

of modern life around the world is the damnable doctrine of evolution. It is taught in almost every school, from the earliest grades right on up. There was a time when Christian people resisted this insidious, unproven theory being taught to their children. But it seems it's not fashionable to stand up against it anymore. So it is now included in all our textbooks—not as a mistaken theory that doesn't agree with the Bible—but as a definite, scientific fact. And it is pounded and emphasized and re-emphasized to our children until they begin to believe it.

It is forbidden to teach the true doctrines of God's Word at school, so they don't get both sides of the story. Unless they are trained at home and at church about what the Bible teaches, they never hear about it at all. The schools just fill their minds with this business about the evolving of man through natural selection. It's the most far-fetched thing you've ever heard in your life.

But it's still being taught in our schools today. And thousands of young people are growing up to believe a lie.

That's the kind of world we're living in today. And that's why I wrote this book, to point out some important truths you and your children need to know. There are some things we all need to be reminded of. They are very plain and easy to understand. They're things you can see with your own eyes. I want to show you that, instead of being in a process of evolution, of getting better and finer and higher—man is devolving, society is on a downward spiral.

This is a tremendous message, a pertinent message. And while it may not be a popular position or stand to

take, it is firmly based on the Word of God. And if God said it, I believe it. To believe anything else would be believing a lie!

Chapter One
EVOLUTION IS A LIE!

For many years, so-called leaders of higher education have asked us to believe that everything in the universe came about through a process of evolution and development. They said even man was a result of this process.

According to their doctrine, many, many eons ago, a bunch of little wiggle tails evolved into some kind of frog-like creatures, and crawled out of the slime. Then, some of these creatures turned into lizards. Some of the lizards developed feathers and wings and became birds. Others decided to grow hair and turn into mammals, and the mammals developed into monkeys or big apes. From here we got the Pithecanthropus or ape man, and then the Neanderthal man, etc., etc. Of course, this happened very slowly, over millions of years.

Finally, because everything was evolving and getting better all the time, modern man crawled down out of the trees and said, “Well, I believe I’ll write some books, build some houses and cars, set up some governments and make me some religions.” And so he did, and here we are!

Now most of this nonsense came from a book written by Charles Darwin called, “Origin of the Species.”

And so-called scientists worked out a whole, detailed theory of evolution based on this unsubstantiated work. They had no proof, no conclusive evidence, no solid support for this theory, yet they insisted on teaching it to innocent, trusting children.

Listen to what some true men of science have said about this damnable doctrine:

The British zoologist, Dr. E.L.G. Watson declared, “The vast body of the tree of evolution is entirely imaginary, and no material creatures have ever been found to correspond to it.”

Professor J. Arthur Thompson of Aberdeen wrote, “Modern research is leading us away from the picture of primitive man as clever, kindly, adventurous and inventive.”

Even Huxley, a staunch advocate of Darwinism, admitted, “There is an enormous gulf, a divergence practically infinite, between the lowest man and the highest beast.”

Pay special attention to this! Darwin himself said, “In spite of all the efforts of trained observers, not one change of species into another is on record.”

Lady Hope, a Christian woman of Northfield, England knew and visited Darwin in the last days of his life. She tells of coming to his house and finding him reading the Bible. Eagerly he talked with her about “the holiness of God” and “the grandeur of the Bible—the Royal Book.”

Then Lady Hope referred to the criticism of the Bible’s creation story, much of it based on Darwin’s book. In her words: “He seemed greatly distressed, his fingers twitched nervously, and a look of agony came over his face as he said, ‘I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering

all the time over everything; and to my astonishment the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them.””

Does this sound like the testimony of a man who has scientifically disproven the Genesis account of creation? Not at all. The truth of the matter is, as Sir William Dawson the Canadian geologist, puts it, “Nothing is known about the origin of man except what is told in scripture.”

And the scriptures tell us, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Isn’t it interesting that while science cannot support or prove the teachings of evolution, there are a number of scientific observations that are in complete harmony with the Genesis account? Let me share a few of these with you:

First, scientists say the universe is expanding, or spreading farther apart. They say this indicates that at one time all matter was concentrated in space, and has since been expanding from that place. Of course, we know that time was “in the beginning”

Second, there is considerable evidence that all the parts of the universe are approximately the same age. Meteorites from outer space and from our solar system are about the same age as the earth and the moon. This means they come into existence at the same time—not through some evolutionary process over millions and millions of years.

Third, astronomers believe the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which says the universe is running down. Stars are losing rather than recovering their energy. So the fact that stars with energy still exist is proof they had a beginning.

All the proofs of science point, not to evolutionary gradualism, but to creative spontaneity. The evolutionists say one life form changed into another, and that into another, and on and on, little by little, degree by degree. Yet, they have never produced a single genuine intermediate form of life, or “missing link” between one species and another. There is a good reason for this. The Bible teaches that each life form produces only after its own kind (Genesis 1:21, 24, 25). And to this day we can observe the same creatures and animals described in the creation story. But we don’t see any “missing links” simply because they never existed.

Evolution is a lie! It is not true by any stretch of the imagination. The test tubes of science cannot find any reality in the evolutionary formula. I don’t believe there is any indication anywhere in the universe that there is any form of evolution in process.

Instead, the exact opposite is true. Scientists are observing the unwinding of a great universe. More stars are not being born—they’re going out in the heavens. The sun is not getting brighter—it is slowly burning and consuming itself. Science has not found a single indication that the world is becoming greater or better in any way. It is a dying world. The whole universe is a gigantic cemetery for the dead and dying planets and moons and stars.

The evolutionists would declare, “Every day in every way the world is getting better and better.” And I say that we can see in the ordinary business of living a retrogression . . . a downward spiral . . . a devolution of our society.

Man never evolved, and is not evolving. He is not evolving biologically, religiously or socially. Instead, he is in a continuous state of devolution.

Chapter Two

GOING BACKWARDS

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

— Isaiah 1:4

When the Word of God says, “Ah sinful nation,” I can’t help feeling it is an accusing finger pointing directly at America. Surely no other nation in history has equaled the wickedness of our country. Dishonesty, immorality and violence have become so common in our nation that they are just expected . . . they are the “norm.” There are actually people who boast they have broken all of the Ten Commandments at least once . . . and lots of others Moses didn’t even think of.

I traveled around the world many times, and have been in most of the so-called “hell holes” of the various nations. I have walked the streets of Singapore, gone through Hong Kong’s old Walled City, preached in the Philippines’ infamous Tondo section. I’ve ridden a mule into remote mountain areas of Tibet where I felt I was surrounded by the actual demons of hell, and had

confrontations with witch doctors, seers and medicine men in a dozen other countries.

But I have seen nothing more saddening, more alarming, or more evil than you can find today in almost any big city in the United States. It seems we are trying to lead the world in sinfulness as well as everything else.

And only recently I heard that it was not considered safe for anyone to be on the streets of our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., after dark, especially a lady. The police can no longer control the criminals who roam the streets and avenues, molesting, assaulting and even killing anyone they can stalk. Someone said you would actually be safer to go unarmed into the jungles of Africa or South America than to walk down a Washington street alone. We are indeed a sinful and wicked nation of people.

God says a sinful nation is a people loaded with iniquity. Notice He did not say people indulge in iniquity and enjoy it. He said that iniquity had become a burden.

Oh, you see, sin can appear so attractive and appealing. It seems so desirable and satisfying. But once you get past the bright lights and loud music and hilarity, iniquity is a heavy, crushing load.

Go to our jails that are crammed and packed full of human debris. You will see that iniquity is a burden.

Visit our penitentiaries . . . our mental institutions, and you'll see what I'm talking about.

Try to counsel with a man and woman who desperately need to change their lives. Hear them curse each other, and blaspheme. Watch them drink until they are nearly senseless, then use language so filthy it almost

makes you sick to your stomach. Listen to them cry and moan—a home so sad, so miserable. And you will know that iniquity is a burden.

Go to our hospitals . . . walk into the divorce courts . . . listen to the cries of little children who have to be placed in foster homes. Oh, how heavy a burden is iniquity.

Anyone who thinks sin is light and easy and joyful has not yet drunk the dregs of iniquity. Ah, but they are bitter. Sin will destroy you. It will wear you down. It will smash your hopes and ruin your dreams. It will drive you insane. The devil is a liar; sin is a deceiver and a destroyer of everything good and fine and noble.

“Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.”

Then God says something really drastic—He talks about the “seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters.” It is very interesting to study the background of certain people and learn some of the reasons they turned out the way they did. For example, a few years ago we brought a converted Brazilian witch doctor to this country. He told us some amazing things. This man’s mother was a spiritist, and baptized him to the devil before he was even born. Can you imagine that? When he grew up, he was completely controlled by the devil. He could eat ground glass, and never get cut. He could put flames into his mouth and swallow them. He was never burned. He was possessed and controlled by evil spirits . . . the child of a woman of witchcraft . . . the seed of evildoers!

We have had young people come to Sunday school who stepped over the sprawled, drunken bodies of their

parents as they went out the door. What kind of chance do these children have? How can we have a better generation of youth until we have better parents?

Those young men with their switch blade knives on the streets of New York, Chicago and Washington are the seed of evildoers. Their parents are not godly people – they lay around drunk, committing adultery, married four or five times. And so we have the seed of evil doers for tomorrow’s leaders.

Now we go from the parents to the children. The next part of our verse talks about “children that are corrupters.” And we see them all around us today. There are children who try to ruin everything they touch. They want to overthrow the “establishment” and get rid of the social system. They want to change everything—the home, the law, the schools. And if they don’t get their way, all they know how to do is tear things up, burn it down, destroy it, corrupt it.

Clearly, they have “forsaken the Lord.” They haven’t even given God a chance in their lives. They have rejected the Bible, spurned the Holy Spirit, turned away from the power of God. Instead, they have mocked and scorned. “They have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger.”

And that brings me to my text phrase for this book – “They are gone away backwards.” Yes, the people of our nation and the world have gone backwards. They have been getting worse instead of better. The spiral of progress is downward instead of upward. We see retrogression . . . devolution.

In the following chapters we will deal with several evidences of this devolution. They are things you can

see with your own eyes. We will not be dealing with mysterious, prophetic matters. As you read, you'll be able to see these things in your own community and neighborhood.

Look with me, then, at the marks of devolution in our society.

Chapter Three
**DEVOLUTION OF ART—
THE EXPRESSION OF THE SOUL**

No one will ever know just how powerful, or how influential, great art has been to the world. Millions of dollars have been spent to buy a few dollars' worth of paint that has clung to canvases for hundreds of years. But, of course, great masters of art put the paint there!

Art is an important part of our lives. I would guess that every person who reads this book can almost look up and look around the room he is in and see a painting, sculpture, or art rendering of some kind. There probably are very few homes and buildings in America that do not have some kind of art included as part of the furnishings.

Wherever you go in the world, you see that art is a basic and important part of life. Even the poorest hut or shack where people live will include a picture or other art form. And strangely enough, the art of any nation is like a photograph of the soul of that nation. For art is truly the expression of the soul . . . a mirror of the innermost being.

If you study the primitive art of the Pygmies of Africa you can discern immediately the ignorance and savagery inside these people. Their superstitions and violence are graphically expressed in their grotesque

carvings and crude drawings.

Go into the mountains of Tibet and look at the art forms displayed at the shrines and temples. It is weird, twisted and eerie. You'd probably say it reminded you of demons and devils—and you'd be right! For much of the art of Tibet expresses the demonic forces controlling the lives of the people through devil worship, magic, and sacrifices.

For several years during the early part of my ministry I traveled with the Rev. Howard Carter of England. We went around the world together, and Brother Carter took me to most of the major art galleries in almost every country. He was an artist, you see, so after we'd been to church, the next most important place he felt we should go was to the local art museum.

I learned so much from him. He taught me perspective, appreciation, values, and interpretation. I learned how to look at a picture or statue and evaluate it. And soon, I began to understand what an artist was trying to express in his work. I could sense it, feel it. In fact, art became a hobby with me, and I have studied it all over the world for the last 40 years.

As a matter of fact, if all the art pieces I have in my house and office were in one place, it would take a pretty big room just to display it all. I've collected it during my travels, because I love it and it reminds me of the people I've lived with and ministered to.

You don't have to be an authority or critic to realize that for hundreds and hundreds of years there was an obvious and easily-discerned progress and improvement in art, as it became more meaningful and beautiful. But

I'd like to ask you what has happened to art in the last 50 years—in America and around the world?

There is only one word I can use to properly describe some of the modern art you see splashed around today, and the word is “confusion.” The other day I clipped a photo of a painting from Time Magazine. It was done by a renowned artist, and acclaimed throughout the world. I'll have to be honest and tell you it looks like the tormented ramblings of a demon-possessed idiot!

And it shows me one thing—that is a picture of the people on the streets of our world today. It is sickening and sad to think that this is the expression of the soul of modern man.

If you want to know what the people of America look like today, take a piece of the art being produced and study it closely. Then I think you'll understand why there are divorces, you'll see why young people are going on rampages through schools and universities, destroying and burning. You'll understand why there are more robberies, hijackings, murders, rape assaults, beatings and other violent crimes. Our country is being rocked by hate and turmoil because the souls of our people are filled with hate and confusion. The art of our nation reveals it.

Modern art is so confusing that even “experts” don't understand it. Sometimes the custodian in a gallery will hang one of these “masterpieces” upside down, and no one knows the difference for weeks and months. The galleries have to publish little programs now that explain what you are seeing, because you sure can't tell just by looking.

And I want to tell you that this kind of thing is a clear evidence of the disintegration of art . . . and our society. Modern humanity is not growing closer to God, but to the devil. And man's art looks more like the devil—it has no symmetry or balance or continuity. It is ugly and grotesque.

We have not gone beyond Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo. No, indeed. We have “gone backward” and the devolution of our civilization is very evident in our modern art.

Chapter Four
DEVOLUTION OF ETIQUETTE

Civilization is defined as “enlightenment, refinement, courtesy, culture and well-behaved conduct,” among other things. And these are big words—important words. They are words that have lost much of their attraction and popularity in recent years.

I believe our cultural standards reveal the devolution of our civilization. Are we a more refined people than we were 30 or 40 years ago? Are we a more polite people than we were 50 years ago? Can we see signs that men are more gentlemanly today than a few years ago? Do we have women who are more ladylike than the women of yesterday?

There have been periods of history when from generation to generation you could actually see the development and growth of families. They became better and finer people, and you could see it in the way they dressed, the way they talked and acted, in their manners and behavior. But I wonder if we can see the same progress being made today?

I think you feel, as I do, that our standards have slipped a long way . . . our etiquette is not higher and finer and purer today. It is definitely in a process of

retrogression. It is so hard to get people to be nice, to be courteous and considerate of others.

For example, think about people and automobiles. You can meet a person who seems so nice and well-behaved in the living room. But let him slip under the steering wheel of a car, and something happens—he loses control. He tenses up, starts muttering and glaring through the windshield, honking the horn and racing the engine. And if you should happen to get in his way—watch out!

I can't help believing God wants us to be a refined people, a courteous nation, people with genteel aspirations, men that are chivalrous and women that are really ladies. Maybe I'm just old fashioned.

A few years ago when we came home from the Philippines, the first thing we noticed when we go off the plane was a group of dirty, scraggly, long-haired, bare-footed freaks milling around. Someone told me they were beatniks. But I'll tell you, they looked like a bunch of mangy dogs to me. It looked like they were in a contest to see who could look the worst.

That was a few years ago. Now we have the hippies. And brother, it that's progress, then God deliver me from it. These kids are everywhere, ragged, unkempt, filthy—doing nothing and going nowhere. If you're ever around a bunch of them, be sure to stay upwind! The boys look like they just crawled out from under a rock. The girls are dressed so slouchy and ugly. And they seem to have no sense of modesty at all.

These are the kids who want to overthrow the “establishment” and find a better way. Well I'm here

to tell you they haven't found it. They sure haven't improved the situation. Instead, they have become part of the devolutionary process in our society.

But I don't think we should give up on our children. We should still try to teach them Bible manners and common sense courtesy. We could use more graciousness today. How delightful it is to visit a home and see children that have been taught good manners. They are polite and thoughtful of others. They know how to say "thank you" and "excuse me" and "I'm sorry." They are appreciative of what is given them or done for them, and they show respect for their elders.

But this is not the trend we see in the world today, unfortunately. And I believe in this area we can see the degeneration of values and deterioration of cultural standards. As God's Word says, we have "gone away backward."

Chapter Five
**DEVOLUTION OF LITERATURE
AND LANGUAGE**

Language forms the soul like a tool forms the hands of a craftsman. A man that holds a tool constantly forms muscles that conform his hand to fit that tool so he can wield it with great skill and power.

Language does the same. It is a refinement. It is very revealing, serving as a mirror for the innermost being of a person. You actually are what you speak.

Now, I am not necessarily talking about how much education you have, or how large your vocabulary is. Some of the most eloquent speakers I've ever heard in my life never went to school a day. And some of the most powerful language that can be spoken is made up of words no longer than two syllables.

Remember, language is just a way to express your thoughts. And it can be no better than what you are thinking. It makes no difference how extensive your vocabulary or how well you understand the rules of grammar. If you never do any thinking, you'll never have anything to say. Oh, that may not keep you from talking, but when you get through you won't have said anything worthwhile unless you've done some thinking,

and your words express those thoughts.

I can remember a few years ago when speaking was a wonderful art. There were men and women who could hold huge audiences spellbound for hours just by the power of their words. They were masters of language. I have heard great ministers preach two hours or longer at one time, and it seemed like only 10 minutes to me. I was completely caught up and captivated by what they had to say.

Why is it that nowadays if a preacher talks longer than 15 or 20 minutes his congregation is either fidgeting or squirming, gone to sleep, or gone home? Part of it may be the quality of his congregation. The rest may be that he doesn't have much to say.

Words are so powerful. They can accomplish so much! But it requires time and effort to learn to use them to their fullest. And many of the problems we have during our life—perhaps most of the disagreements—are a direct result of our inadequate use of language to express completely what we think and feel.

But instead of people studying their language to learn how to use it better, to refine it and polish it and make it a tremendous tool, we see devolution at work again. If you don't believe me, go by the nearest high school in your town, or some place where young people hang out. Sit and listen to them talk. They use so much slang you need an interpreter to even know what they are talking about. Sometimes I wonder if they even know. But one thing is for sure—what they're doing isn't a refinement or improvement of language. It is the tearing down and destroying of the language.

And that's not the worst of it, either. Have you noticed the increase in profanity and dirty language? I'm not talking about just hoodlums, gangsters and the saloon crowd. I mean among the people you meet at the shopping centers and on the street. It is disgusting. Men and women use words in casual conversation today that the roughest sailor would have blushed at a few years ago. I'm not kidding. I'm deadly serious.

My mother used to tell me that filthy, nasty language was the sign of an ignoramus. "When a man starts cussing," she said, "it just means he's run out of decent words. He's used up all the good words he knows and the only thing left for him to do is make a fool of himself by using dirty words." And I think she was right, don't you?

Decide for yourself! Is our language becoming better and more refined? Is it becoming more an instrument to uplift and bring man closer to God, or is it going the other way? Is it deteriorating and dying from dirt and smut and filth? Does our language show that we are evolving into better people and a more wonderful society?

Here's another question for you—have you read any good books lately? Are the works appearing on the best seller lists the kind that bless and challenge and make a better person out of you? What are your chances of buying a popular novel that isn't full of vile language and pornographic accounts of lust and degenerate behavior? And magazines on our newsstands are so bad I honestly don't see how Sodom and Gomorrah could have been worse.

When I was in college at the University of Chicago

we had a reading list of “great books.” They were the works that scholars felt had done the most to shape the development of civilization over the centuries. They were great because they made people think. They made people want to improve, to be and do better, to accomplish more, to learn noble and enriching things. They taught ethics, morality, and integrity.

I wonder if our modern literature has improved on those themes. Have we evolved so far that we have finer and better works today than those given to us by Augustine, Shakespeare, Milton and other great authors? You know the answers as well as I do. The literature of our present society is disgusting, demeaning, degrading and depraved. There is nothing lasting or enduring about it. It is not designed to make people better or finer for having read it.

Let me make myself completely clear—I’m not talking just about the paperback, pulp-paper trash you find on every corner. I’m talking about the volumes published by major book houses and distributed through the finest bookstores—the ones that are reviewed by newspapers and magazines around the world as prime literary efforts. I mean the works that become best sellers, and appear on school and college reading lists for serious study and discussion.

Many—if not more—of these books are completely vulgar and dirty. They use filthy, vile language, commit sacrilege on everything sacred, upright and moral, and glorify everything that is low, base and evil.

Yes, it seems obvious that our language and literature display the unmistakable signs of society’s devolution.

They give us additional evidence that we are going farther and farther away from purity and perfection.

Chapter Six
DEVOLUTION OF MUSIC

Music is another expression of the heart, soul and spirit of mankind. It reveals a great deal about people and nations, in the same way that art and literature do. People who have made a study of these things tell us that by listening to the music developed and performed by a people you can tell much about their make up and character.

For example, the chants and drumming of jungle tribes tell you instantly this is a primitive and superstitious people, who live by weird rituals and ceremonies. The music itself reveals that. The colorful and flamboyant music of a country like Mexico is also very distinctive and descriptive. By the very intensity of mood, the rhythm, the flow, you realize you are dealing with a very passionate and emotional people.

Listen, then, to the strange, minor pitches and unfamiliar tempos and instrumentation of the music of the Orient. There can be no question this music comes from a different people, with different values and traditions.

Because music is a basic part of the cultural heritage of a nation, many musical forms have been preserved for centuries. You can actually go back and trace the musical

development of a particular people over hundreds and hundreds of years. You can watch the improvement and refinement and accomplishment that has been made in a country's music.

Many people feel the greatest music the world has ever known was composed during the 1700's and 1800's, and nothing of equal quality and genius has come since. During this time men like Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Grieg and Handel gave us their masterpieces.

Now, I'm no authority on music. But I do know that the stuff you hear blaring from the transistor radios from one end of this world to the other today is no improvement on what those men gave us. We certainly can't say we've achieved a higher musical level . . . that we are evolving to a more advanced stage. We aren't getting more Messiah's today, but something very much less advanced and worthwhile.

The popular music of America seems to be going the other way—backward, downward, and more primitive. The horrible noises kids are dancing to today were born in the hearts of the heathen and the pagan. It has the rhythm of hell . . . the spirit of the devil. And I believe it influences and leads young people into wickedness and immorality. I've seen young people listen to this music and dance to it, jerking and twisting and shaking until they worked themselves into an absolute frenzy. Look at the faces of these kids when they dance to these hard rock sounds—their faces get hard and set . . . their eyes are almost glazed as if they were in a trance or under a spell.

A few months ago I talked with a 16-year-old girl after one of my meetings in Rockford, Illinois. She was a pretty girl, and she was crying like her heart would break, “What shall I do, Brother Sumrall?” she asked. “I am five months pregnant, and I’m not married. I asked my mother what I should do with this baby. She just cursed and said she didn’t give a ‘blank’ what I did with it. She stays drunk most of the time. Dad is a drunkard, too. All of us used to go to church and try to live right, but something happened to us. Now I’m in real trouble and I don’t know what to do. Can you help me?”

I asked that girl how she got in trouble. Do you know what she told me? She started listening to all kinds of pop music until it really got hold of her. Then she started going to places where they danced and played all this hard rock music. Pretty soon she was going to a different rock show or dance almost every night. And one night after a dance, instead of going home, she went off with one of the men she’d been dancing with. By the time she finally got home, she’d lost her virtue . . . and she was pregnant. “I don’t know what made me do it,” she said. “By the time I realized what I had done, it was too late.”

I found a home for that poor girl to stay in until her child was born, and got someone to help her arrange for the baby to be placed in a good Christian home. But there was no way I could take the shame, heartache and scars from that young lady’s life. She would never be the same again. And at least part of her trouble could be traced directly to the kind of music we have today.

Arlindo Betinho, the converted Brazilian witch doctor we brought to this country a few years ago, told me some startling things. He said that some of the top singers of America go down to Brazil and attend the spiritist meetings there. They learn the strange, weird music and the hypnotic, possessed dances to use in their performances before young people back in the United States. Can you imagine—people traveling throughout the world to pick up every dirty, filthy thing they can, then coming back and vomiting it out before the gullible American public. I tell you, it's a sick world we live in today.

So, once again, in the field of music we can see the devolution of civilization. We are going backward, getting worse and worse.

Chapter Seven
DEVOLUTION OF MORALS

Is our world becoming better morally, or is it getting worse? That seems a foolish question doesn't it? But it's one we need to ask.

A few years ago we were told that immorality was simply the result of ignorance. If we gave everyone a good education we'd create a whole new generation of people with high principles and good morals.

Then, someone declared that the reason we had bad people was because of the slums. "Clear out the slums," they said, "and you'll get rid of crime, violence and immorality."

Isn't it strange that our colleges and institutions of higher learning have become hotbeds of wickedness and immorality? Near nudity and immodest dress seem to be the standard on campus anymore. Girls take the "pill" like it was nickel candy. Dormitories are co-ed now, and boys can have girls in their rooms with the door closed any time they want to, for as long as they want to. Some schools are even openly condoning unmarried boys and girls living together. The campus parties are so wild, I'm told, that the orgies of ancient Rome pale by comparison. This is the way education

has influenced our morality, apparently.

And it seems we've gotten crime and violence out of the slums and right on Main Street now. You don't have to worry about getting on the "wrong" side of the tracks—just remember to stay inside off the streets after dark no matter where you are.

The truth is, we live in a world that hardly knows what a moral is anymore. Even so-called preachers in our land today are telling our young people they should have sexual intercourse before they are married—"try it out to be sure!" Isn't that a terrible thing! I honestly don't know where we are headed with our moral standards. But I do know one thing, we are not in a state of evolution. The people of this hour sure aren't as nice as the people of 50 years ago, I can tell you that.

The only standard of right and wrong many people have today is what they feel like doing. If they want to do a certain thing, that makes it right. And if they don't want to do it, then it is wrong to do it. It really doesn't matter what you do, they say, as long as the people you're doing it with, or to, say it is alright. The only thing bad about lying, cheating or stealing is getting caught. "Do unto others before they do unto you," has become the new rule. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, described these people: "They don't care anymore about right and wrong and have given themselves over to impure ways. They stop at nothing, being driven by their evil minds and reckless lusts" (Ephesians 4:19).

The Bible asks, "When the Son of man Cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). I believe

there is a definite link between faith and morality. People without faith may or may not have a high moral code. But people without moral standards simply cannot have faith! You cannot have faith unless you live right.

I've heard people say, "I know I'm not living the way I should, but I do love God." Do you know what I tell those people? I tell them they are lying! Jesus said, "If you love me you will keep my commandments" (John 14:23). If you love God you will live for Him, you'll obey His Word. There's no way you can love God and live like the devil.

One of the most fascinating stories in history is the growth and development of the Roman Empire. You learn how a horde of barbarians banded together and set out to conquer the world. The people they conquered became their slaves—and often the slaves taught their Roman masters many things. For example, the Greeks taught the Romans about government, language, art, drama, and many other things. And Rome became a mighty power, a great and tremendous nation.

But did they continue to grow and develop into a better people, a finer people? You know the answer to that question, too. Edward Gibbon's monumental work, "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" outlines the destruction that came to the Romans as the process of *devolution* took them *back* to barbarism and insensitivity. Unbridled lust and gross immorality were among the things that led to the disintegration of their society and the fall of their great empire.

And I'm very honest when I tell you we've had the same signs in our own society for a long time,

and they're growing worse every day. We are not going forward . . . progressing, evolving. We are sliding backward, falling down, retrogressing. We believe it is definitely a sign of the last days.

Chapter Eight
DEVOLUTION OF RELIGION

In the world of religion today there is a terrible movement downward. In many of the denominations in the last few years they are closing more churches than they open. And just a couple of years ago a well-known denomination reported that for the first time in its history the Sunday School system had gotten smaller—they lost more than they gained.

Not long ago a member of my staff attended a seminar in Memphis, Tennessee which was attended by representatives from many religious and church organizations. One of these men, representing one of the largest of the formal denominations, told the people at that seminar his denomination now had to operate from savings and money that had come to them in wills and bequests. There was simply not enough support from the membership of that denomination to carry on its normal business. “I don’t know what we’ll do when that money runs out,” he said.

Why are we seeing this downward trend? It is part of the devolutionary process in our society. As we have shown, the movement of society is not towards higher and finer things—but downward, toward base and evil

things. Then, the church itself is at fault. Instead of becoming a stronger and more influential force, the church of today is a far cry from what it should be and was intended to be.

How can you expect the church to meet the needs of the people of our day when its so-called theologians come out and say that God is dead? How can the church be a force for good when its ministers advocate disobeying the laws of the land if you happen to disagree with them, and even join the rebellious mobs marching in the streets? God help us! It has only been a few years since Bishop Pike out in California was publicly gloating that he had scuttled the virgin birth of Christ and disproved the miracles of the Bible. He went to England on some kind of speaking tour, or something, and took his son with him. When they got back, the son checked into a New York hotel and blew his brains out. Then, just a few months later, Bishop Pike himself went to the Holy Land and went out in the desert. From all indications he deliberately set out to commit suicide himself—at least he died out in the desert somewhere. And do you know what his wife did? She set up spiritist séances to try and talk to the spirit of her husband.

If this is the leadership of the church . . . if this is all religion has to offer our society, is it any wonder it is losing the attention of the people and growing weaker and smaller every day.

The voice of the church has lost its authority and power in the last few years. It is not fashionable to talk about sin and repentance anymore. We don't hear the simple, direct story of the Gospel, of Christ's death on

the cross. Instead, we talk about social movements and intellectual understanding of the psychological implications of religious influences, or some such doubletalk that means absolutely nothing and accomplishes even less.

I have a newspaper clipping in my study that nearly made me sick to my stomach when I saw it. The story was released by the Associated Press, and it told about a church that brought a bunch of young people into the sanctuary and had them dance the frug, or some such dance, right down the aisle as a “relevant act of worship.” They were dancing a jungle dance from Africa, shimmying and shaking and stomping while a congregation of people looked on. Will you please tell me how a half-naked girl jerking and twitching in some heathen dance—inside a church—is supposed to be an act of worship? It is desecration and utter sacrilege! And this is what religion has come to.

We can do one of two things about it. We can be complacent about the whole thing and say, “MY, my, isn’t that too bad. I sure hate to hear that.” Or we can get stirred up about it—righteously indignant, I guess you could say. And once we’re stirred up, we can go out and fight the devil. We can declare how we feel—let everyone know which side we’re on. That’s what I’m doing—fighting the devil just as hard as I can.

Yes, we can see the unmistakable signs of devolution at work even in the world of religion. And we must rise up and resist these downward forces.

Chapter Nine
**CASTING OFF THE WORKS
OF DARKNESS**

In the preceding chapters I have shown you some terrible things about our nation and the world. We have talked about the clear and obvious signs of deterioration and devolution in many areas of society.

There is much more we could discuss. There are startling and alarming retrogressions in education, science, politics and other parts of human endeavor. But already our point has been made quite clearly.

I have talked about things that can be understood by everybody. As I promised, I have mentioned things you can see in your own neighborhood and community. With your own eyes you can see the signs of devolution and “going away backward.”

Now I want to make it perfectly clear that what we have discussed is completely prophetic. The signs we have observed are signs of the times . . . and they point to the end of the world and the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Just look at what Paul had to say about the days you and I are living in: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be

lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:1-5).

You and I both know we could find examples of everything on Paul’s list in next Sunday’s newspaper. Unquestionably the devolution of our society is a sign of the Last Days . . . the end of time.

Jesus said the conditions on earth just before His coming would be like those in the time of Noah, and in the days of Lot (Luke 17). First, we see this refers to the gross wickedness and iniquity which will exist. In Noah’s day, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). And we know that Sodom and Gomorrah were so corrupt that not even 10 righteous people could be found inside their walls . . . they had become a stench and an abomination. Sad to say, there is much about these descriptions that reminds us of the world we live in today.

The second lesson we learn from this passage is extremely important to us as Christians. In the time of Noah “they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage . . . and knew not until the flood came” (Matthew 24:38-39). And in Sodom, “they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded” (Luke 17:28).

These are normal, everyday activities—nothing unusual or sinful about them. Why did the Lord make such a point of mentioning them? Simply because these secular and material things made men indifferent and insensitive to the warnings of impending divine judgment. And it is true today. People live as though they are going to live forever. They live for things and today—not for Christ and eternity. They have become completely insensitive to the signs of the times.

These are the people who say, “Yeah, sure—I’ve heard about the coming of the Lord all my life. My mother used to sing ‘He’s coming soon’ all the time, and my grandmother was always talking about the rapture and all that stuff. I’m sure the Lord is going to come . . . sometime, but don’t bother me talking about it right now.” These people have gone to sleep, spiritually.

But what does the Word of God say? “Knowing the time, now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:11-12).

I want to be awake when Jesus comes, don’t you? More than anything I want to be working for Him, wining battles in His name. God help us to “put on the armour of light” and help lead many others in the right way. I believe this is God’s will for us. Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus, said, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

So let's be up and about our Father's business while there is still time to serve Him, always watching, looking for and expecting His soon return. As the old song says, "We'll work 'till Jesus comes, and then be gathered home."

Signs of His coming multiply,
Morning light breaks in eastern sky,
Watch, for the time is drawing nigh,
What if it were today?