

**BACK
TO THE
FOUNTAIN-HEAD**

**STUDIES ON THE RESTORATION
OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY**

JOHN WADDEY

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DEDICATION

To Earl I. West and J. Marvin Powell,
men who sought out and recorded the thrilling history of
our back to the Bible movement, this book is dedicated.

Their work blessed my life
and my work in the kingdom of Christ.

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PREFACE

This book is not the result of a specific literary project completed in a particular period of time. It is the result of a long period of preparation and growth. First there came the years of extensive reading about the history of our Restoration Movement...that continues to this day. Then there were the many visits to the historical sites sacred to our back to the Bible movement. There were occasional sermons on Restoration themes and illustrations used in classes. There were articles written on various aspects of this biblical plea. Then came the presentation of a series of lessons on "What it Means to Restore the Ancient Faith of Christ." There was a start on a book made some 25 years ago that never saw completion. Now all of these ingredients have come together with the accumulated material, the time and the resources to create the book you have in your hands. Rather than a continuous narrative from the beginning of our movement to the present, it is an extended collection of sermons and essays on Restoration themes that have been arranged in a way to tell the larger story of a people striving to be Christians only. They tell of their triumphs and failures, their conflicts and growth, their heroes and their adversaries.

When one writes of things of the past, it is rare that one finds or produces anything totally new. The best he can do is to present the old information in a new and interesting format. He can arrange the information in a way that provides continuity and clarity. Nor can the average author remember every source for every bit of information he relates. He might have read the same story in half a dozen different places or heard it from multiple teachers. So as you read the following lines, you will find some chapters with extensive citations and some with few or none. The author makes no claim of originality for the material, just a desire to tell the story of the determined effort of dedicated Christians to restore the faith and worship of the church to her original purity. That message first swept across the American nation in the 19th and twentieth centuries and then was carried around the world by faithful servants of God. It is an old story but one that is yet thrilling. It is an unending story, as the restoration message continues to take root and flourish in other nations even as it has done here.

The observant reader will find some duplication in the many chapters of this book. To tell the story in so many different settings will inevitably require the repetition of the plea as it echoed from valley to valley and from heart to heart. We have endeavored to limit such repetitions, but ask the forgiveness of the reader where such was necessary.

The author is greatly indebted to M. H. Tucker who led him on numerous tours of historical sites related to our movement, to J. Marvin Powell who generously shared his great store of information with him and to Earl I. West whose historical and biographical works of our movement have enriched his life and his fund of knowledge.

For the artwork of the book's cover he wishes to thank Dave and Jean Baxter for their unselfish contribution. To Wallace and Brent Alexander, of Gospel Light Publishing Company, he owes a special debt of gratitude for their services.

INTRODUCTION

OUR SPIRITUAL IDENTITY

Some of the most basic and important questions of life are, “Who am I?” “Where did I come from?” “What are my roots and origins?” The man who does not know the answers to such fundamental questions is to be pitied. He is not far removed from the abandoned and deprived orphan child.

Members of the Church of Christ wonder, “What are the origins of my faith?” Inquisitive members want to know the answers to this question just as they want to know the origins of their fleshly family. In a healthy congregation, answers to these questions are provided in classes, sermons and literature provided by the elders. Those with an appetite for such information will be guided to appropriate books of history and biography that will quench their thirst for information.

Not long after I obeyed the gospel of Christ an aunt gave me a copy of **The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell**. That huge volume, telling the story not only of the great preacher and reformer, but also of the early years of the American Restoration Movement, kindled a fire in my young mind that burns to this day. She then gave me a copy of J. W. Shepherd’s book, **The Church, Falling Away and Restored**. In the intervening 53 years I have read virtually every history and biography of our people. Some of them, two or three times. The most notable of them were Earl West’s **Search for the Ancient Order**, a history of our Back to the Bible movement. I have been privileged to make several trips to those historic places, homes, churches, and cemeteries where our early history unfolded. This book is written to share with others the information I have gleaned, that has blessed my life.

I have no doubt about who I am spiritually, what I believe and the roots of my faith. Spiritual answers are provided in God’s Word. Historical information I have gleaned from the records of our back to the Bible movement. From those two sources I have the desired answers. I rest confident in that knowledge and look forward with assurance to the day when Christ calls me home. Hopefully those who read these pages will be helped in their quest for spiritual identity. That is my aim and purpose in sending forth this book.

John Waddey

2009

1.

CHURCH HISTORY: A REWARDING STUDY

Congregations and individual saints would be well rewarded by taking time to study the history of Christianity. This study should begin with the apostolic age and include the expansion and triumph of the church. It should include the great apostasy, the reformation and the restoration eras.

Goethe said, “The best thing we derive from history is the enthusiasm that it raises in us. Our past is exciting: it stirs the deepest and best emotions in us as we read of our spiritual antecedents.” Lord Bacon wrote, “Out of the monuments, names, words, proverbs, traditions, private records, and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of books, and the like, we do save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time.” A book of church history is very much like a treasure chest of family mementos, priceless treasures that remind us of loved ones gone before. Of such value are they that we take every precaution to preserve them.

Cicero, the great statesman of Rome, said, “Not to know what has been transacted in former times is to always be a child...If no use is made of the labors of the past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge.” We grow spiritually by studying our religious history. If we learn from our studies, we can avoid a thousand previous mistakes. We can build on the accomplishments of the past rather than having to start over again in each succeeding generation.

Historical studies demonstrate the power of an idea. Someone has written, “More powerful than a mighty army is the idea whose time has come.” When those first restorers enunciated the thought that people could and should abandon all things human in religion and go back to the Bible for their faith and practice, it is doubtful if they could imagine the success that their plea would later enjoy. Thousands of souls have been saved, lives changed, and vast good done as a direct result of that idea planted in human hearts.

History reminds us of the multiplying influence of one man or a small group. Where now hundreds of congregations populate a region, once a lone preacher began to tell his neighbors that they could be Christians without denominational ties. First one or two embraced the plea, and then others until eventually thousands joined the march back to Jerusalem. The prophet Daniel foresaw that the kingdom (illustrated by the little stone cut out of the mountain without human hands) would become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. (Dan. 2:35).

Students of the past are impressed by the effectiveness of gospel preaching. “The gospel seed was sown by thousands of faithful brethren who felt the sacred obligation to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark. 16:15). It was and is God’s good pleasure that through the foolishness of the preaching” men should be saved (I Cor. 1:21). Traveling on foot or on horseback, preaching in groves, schoolhouses, and homes, they endured the elements, angry antagonists and even persecution. They did their job, and we are the beneficiaries. It is now our duty to “preach the Word” to our generation and prepare a band of proclaimers to preach to those who will come after us (II Tim. 4:2, 2:2).

In history, we are reminded of our debt to those men of pioneer spirit who carved a trail through the spiritual wilderness that we now with leisure travel. Most of us can hardly imagine a situation where sectarianism had a total dominance over the people, no gospel preacher proclaiming the undiluted truth, no congregations worshiping after the ancient order, no Christian schools. May we not forget our debt to those pioneers who made our task much easier.

From the past, we can see the frailty and vulnerability of faith that can flourish in one generation of believers and perish in a few years time. Most of the congregations founded in the 1800s were lost to digression ere the century closed. Faith must be constantly nourished and strengthened. Preachers and elders must never cease to put the brethren in mind of the will of God (1 Tim. 4:6). Elders, especially, must be alert and on guard against false teachers who would lead the saints astray (Acts 20:28-30). Only one thing is a successful antidote against error. In the words of Jesus, “The truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). The Psalmist prayed, “Strengthen, thou me according unto thy word” (Ps. 119:28). No congregation or Christian will be spiritually strong in the absence of solid, sound and consistent Bible teaching. Eternal vigilance is the price of spiritual as well as political survival.

History reminds us to be grateful to the scores of sister churches in other places that generously supported missionaries and infant churches in years gone by. Most of our present congregations were helped in their earlier days so they could have full-time preachers and gospel meetings until they became financially strong. It is our duty to extend that same generous support to new churches in other mission fields. It would be the grossest ingratitude for us not to do so.

Looking back, we see the great value of solid, reliable gospel papers to strengthen the brethren and bind them together. For example, Middle Tennessee was fortunate to have David Lipscomb’s **Gospel Advocate**. With the wholesome influence of that journal, congregations by the hundreds sprang

up in that region. East Tennessee had no such paper. In the eastern counties our numbers are still far behind those of the middle region.

Studying history, we are impressed by the power and influence of Christian schools, Nashville Bible School (now David Lipscomb College) and Freed-Hardeman College provided an abundance of trained preachers for Middle and West Tennessee. On the whole, their graduates were solid in their faith and loyal to the Restoration Plea. Young people who went to those schools had their faith strengthened, found Christians mates and returned to bless the local churches. In the eastern part of Tennessee, Johnson Bible College and Milligan College followed the train of digression. The results were just the opposite. Christian schools that are loyal to the Scriptures in every matter are a blessing. However, we can never assume that because they once were loyal, they will always be so.

As to the history of the Lord's church, let us never neglect this vital area of study. May every heart be a repository of the truths of the past. May it ever be the commitment of each Christian to walk in "the old paths" (Jer. 6:16), to love the church purchased by the blood of Christ and ever be loyal to her.

2.

BACK TO THE FOUNTAIN HEAD

Many years ago I visited the little mountain town of Elizay, Georgia. An elderly gentleman gave me a tour of the area. Our drive took us to a spot high on an Appalachian mountain. Parking the car, he led me to a bubbling spring gushing from the rocky ground. Taking a small cup from his pocket, he filled it with the crystal water and said "Have a drink from the Tennessee River." That pure water not only quenched my thirst, it provided me an illustration I have used hundreds of times since. No one in his right mind would drink the water from the great Tennessee River that flows through the valleys on its way to the Mississippi. Sewerage systems, chemical plants, industrial waste, agricultural and road run-off foul its water, making it unsafe to drink without purification. But if one makes his way back to the source, it is pure, clean and wholesome.

This aptly illustrates the situation in modern Christianity. In the beginning, when the Word of the Lord went forth from Jerusalem, it was pure, sweet and

wholesome, bringing only the richest blessings to those who partook of it. As years passed and the gospel spread across the face of the earth, changes began to creep in. There is something about the human mind that leaves us unsatisfied with what has come from the past. We are always trying to improve on such things. Men thought they could improve on the religion of Christ. For some that meant creating a governing body to control the life of the church and her members. Others sought to improve the worship, by incorporating practices and customs popular with the newly converted masses. Still others felt the need to enhance the church's power by moving her into the political realm. Some found the original doctrinal basis of the church too simplistic. They sought to make it more philosophical. In time there came the splintering of the church into hundreds of competing bodies, some large, some small. The current situation in the world of Christendom is like that polluted river.

When one reads his New Testament, he sees Christianity as it was in the beginning; pure, undiluted. One marvels at the simplicity and beauty of the message: a message of personal salvation; of encouragement to live the Christ-like life and avoid those things that will alienate one from God. There he finds a church without all the modern accouterments: no political power, no wealth, no real estate, no social standing, no entertainment,. There we see the church in her true glory as the family of God, the bride of Christ, the kingdom of God, the body of Christ. In the Book of Christ we discover the real power of the Christian message to change the world for good. It is addressed to the individual. Like leaven, the heavenly message goes from life to life changing people's hearts into the likeness of Christ. No physical force is ever used, no political or legal coercion is found. The servants of the Lord go forth with a message seeking to win the hearts and minds of humanity (Matt. 28:19-20).

Today with our Bibles in hand, we can make our way back to the fountain head of Christianity. Leaving behind the foreign items accumulated over the ages, we can learn for ourselves and practice the pure, undiluted religion of the Son of God. Clear and clean, wholesome and pure, it will truly be a blessing to our souls.

3.

RESTORING A THING OF VALUE

Lovely works of art are often marred by accumulations of dirt and grime. Specialists are employed to restore them to their original beauty. They carefully remove the foreign matter that obscures their true nature. Fine furniture can become worn and damaged. Its beauty is hidden by tattered upholstery or layers of paint. To see it as it came from the hands of the artisan, it needs to be restored by a skilled workman. The paint and ragged upholstery need to be stripped away.

Christianity is two thousand years old. Its modern appearance is greatly marred and distorted by the accumulation of human doctrines and practices imposed upon it by uninspired men. A careful reading of the New Testament provides one with an accurate picture of Christianity as it came from the hands of Jesus. A comparison of that with modern denominational versions of Christianity reveals a stark difference. Hardly a single teaching or practice of the original faith has been untouched. Human hands have defiled and marred its beauty with their changes. But as with the work of art or the fine furniture, we can restore the church to her original simplicity and beauty. First we look to the New Testament of Christ to determine just how he intended the church to be; what she was to believe; how she was to worship. We then resolve that we will follow those guidelines faithfully. Each item of faith and practice must be examined carefully in light of Christ's word. Anything not as old as the New Testament must be discarded. Anything that has been left out or neglected must be put back in its proper place. We must be willing to endure the complaints, criticisms and ridicule of those who love their human traditions more than they do the original faith of Christ. We must be prepared to be a minority because Jesus said "Many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). We must resolve to hold fast to that which we find to be true lest we let it slip from us (Heb. 2:1). The labor will be intense, the cost will be high, but when you have done the necessary work of restoring you will possess the pure and holy Church of Christ which he purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28). You will have found the way that is right, which cannot be wrong. The restoration of New Testament Christianity is the goal and commitment of faithful Christians around the world.

4.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RESTORATION OF CHRISTIANITY?

Churches of Christ throughout the world are pleading for the restoration of the original Christianity described in the New Testament. Perhaps you wonder, “Just what do you mean by this?” The question deserves a clear answer.

Restore is defined “to bring back to or put back into a former or original state” (**Webster**). Applied to Christianity, it suggests that we are seeking to put back into its original state, the Church of Christ. But that suggests that the church has suffered deterioration over the years. Any person who carefully reads his New Testament and then examines the Protestant and Catholic versions of Christianity will be struck by the differences in the original and the modern varieties. Every aspect of primitive Christianity has suffered from attempts of men to change it to their liking.

NOT A NEW DENOMINATION

To restore does not imply that we create a new denomination that is better than existing ones. Christ built his church (Matt. 16:18) and declared it to be “one body” (Eph. 1:22; 4:4). Denominational division is condemned in Scripture (I Cor. 1:10; Rom. 16:17). Even a better denomination would still be unacceptable, for it is the work of men competing with the true church of God. It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps or to build his own church (Jer. 10:23).

NOT A REFORMATION

We do not propose to reform an existing denomination. Martin Luther and John Calvin set out to reform the corrupt, medieval Roman Catholic Church. They learned, as did others, that such institutions are impervious to reform. A reformation is an “amendment of what is defective, vicious corrupt, or depraved” (**Webster**). Had the reformers succeeded in correcting some, or all the abuses of Catholicism, the finished product would still have been the Roman Catholic Church, not the church the Lord established in Jerusalem (Matt. 16:18).

Our goal is to go beyond all the sects and denominations which have evolved from the original Christianity preached and practiced by the Apostles of Christ. The church which Jesus established was exactly what God wanted it to be. Its faith, worship and practice perfectly met humanity’s needs. Every

attempt by uninspired men to improve upon, or modernize Christianity has only succeeded in corrupting it. The collector of fine art objects does not settle for an imitation, no matter how fine. He diligently searches until he finds the original. So do we. Like the jewelry merchant, having found the pearl of great price, we are willing to invest all to possess it (Matt. 13:45-46). We would be simply Christians, nothing more. Since the words of Christ will judge us in the last day (John 12:48), those words must be heeded in this life.

STRIVE FOR THE IDEAL

In restoring the church of the New Testament, we do not seek to be like the particular congregations of the church at Corinth, Jerusalem or Laodicea. Every congregation then as now was made up of human materials. While the design and blueprint of Christianity was conceived in heaven, the disciples that constitute a congregation are always human, and prone to sin (Rom. 3:23). As a consequence, every congregation reflects that human weakness. Some of those early congregations were good but others were average or poor. But the ideal is set forth in the divine plan and every Christian in every age should strive to measure up to it. In Scripture we have God's pattern of sound words (II Tim. 1:13). If we dedicate ourselves to following the Biblical pattern in all matters of faith and practice, then we will be the same kind of Christians as were the Apostles.

5.

TO RESTORE ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY

When caught in a flood, we look for a high place of safety. In times of confusion, we search for surety and confidence. In today's religious climate, the sensitive believer is determined to find a way of fellowship with God that is safe, solid and secure.

The old established denominations and Catholicism are groaning with the pangs of decay. Many strange voices are being heard on the religious horizon. But these only lead further away from the truth of the gospel. Christ did build his church! (Matt. 16:18). It flourished in simple purity in the first and second centuries (Acts 8:1; Gal. 1:22). That was the age of pure Christianity, unadulterated by man's hand. Have you ever pondered the possibility of drinking from the clear springs of original Christianity today?

THE NEED FOR RESTORATION

Someone may ask, is it necessary to restore the church? The careful student of scripture and church history knows that many serious changes have been forced upon the Christian religion since its beginning.

- The form of church government has been drastically changed (Eph. 1:22; Phil. 1:1).
- Names by which the church is known have been changed (Rom. 16:16; I Col. 1:2).
- The recipient of baptism has been changed by many groups (Mark 16:15-16)
- The form of baptism has also been changed (Rom. 6:3-5).
- The creed of the church has been displaced. Human creeds have overshadowed the will of Christ (John 12:48).
- The form of worship has been altered with various additions or subtractions (Acts 2:24; Eph. 5:19).
- The plan of salvation has been obscured (Acts 2:37-40).
- The unity of the church has suffered because of denominationalism.(John 17:20-23).¹

These many changes have robbed believers of a clear vision of what their religion was really like in the beginning. The problem is magnified when we remember that an infallible, all-wise God founded the church and that sinful, fallible men have presumed to change it. Can man ever hope to improve on God's work?

IS IT POSSIBLE?

Is it possible to restore first century Christianity today? Jesus founded an everlasting kingdom (Dan. 2:44; Matt. 16:18). Surely, God who gave us the church is able to preserve it through the ages. To realize the goal of restoration, we must recognize the following points:

- Christ is the supreme authority in all matters of religion (Matt. 17:1-5). His New Testament is the only authoritative rule of faith and practice for Christians (II John 9:11).
- We must make a proper distinction between the Old and New Testaments (Col. 2:14-17).
- We must be content to worship and serve God exactly as the first Christians did, as set forth in the New Testament (I Cor. 4:6 ASV).

¹ Thomas, L G., *Restoration Handbook*, p. 63-64

- The autonomy of each local congregation must be respected (I Pet. 5:1-4).
- Every effort must be made to achieve and maintain the unity of all Christians upon the basis of obedience to Christ and His Word (Eph. 4:1-5).

If we have no book but the Bible; no creed but Christ; and no name but the divine name, surely we can achieve this goal. When reached, we can maintain it if, in matters of faith, we will stand united; in matters of opinion and methods we will grant liberty and toleration and in all things practice love for our brethren.²

A UNIVERSAL APPEAL

The idea of restoring New Testament Christianity has a universal appeal to men of all nations.

- It looks to that one **universal church** that Jesus founded and of which he is savior (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23).
- A **universal book** (the Bible) is set forth as the only rule of faith and practice, the only authoritative and complete repository of all that is necessary to serving God and preparing for eternity (II Tim. 3:16-17).
- Its **confession of faith is universal**; that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16).
- Universally accepted **scriptural names** are used: i.e., Christian, disciples, brethren, saints, church of Christ., etc. (Acts. 11:26; Matt. 23:8).
- Its **teaching on baptism and the Lord's Supper are universally appealing** for they would be observed precisely as when instituted by Christ (Mark 16:15-16; Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:26-29).
- It advocates a **universal life of Christian purity and service** as exemplified by the Lord. One that goes beyond racial and national boundaries (Phil. 4:8-9).
- It has a **universal aim** which is to exalt and spread the kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 28:18-20).³

Could any honest soul object to such spiritual principles as:

- Wearing the name of Christ to the exclusion of all human names;

² *Ibid.*, p. 71-72

³ Crawford, C. C., *The Restoration Plea*, p. 33

- Faith in the living, reigning, interceding, Christ being the only creed of the church;
- The New Testament of Christ being the only book of discipline accepted by the church;
- The complete authority of Christ over his church being recognized and restored;
- Christ's one church being exalted above all man-made institutions and organizations;
- All the commands of Christ being obeyed by his people;
- The ideals of Christ being exemplified in the lives of all who wear his name;
- Unity in Christ by faith, repentance and baptism into his spiritual body (the church) (I Cor. 12:13). This would supercede all denominationalism to the end that there should be but one body of which Christ is both Head and Foundation?⁴

THIS PLEA IS NOT NEW

The concept of "Restoration" is not new. It is an ancient and constant need in religion. Twenty-six hundred years ago God said to the men of Judah, "Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls..." (Jer. 6:16). The student of church history finds many voices who made this same plea. It is not a local movement. All across the earth, independent movements have sprung up with the announced goal of going back to the Bible and restoring primitive Christianity. This common faith and goal, if sincerely followed, cannot but bring these movements together in Christ.

Restoration is not an institutional or governmental movement. Rather, **God-fearing individuals** are making their way out of the foggy mist of religious confusion into the pure light of God's word. Like the merchant seeking goodly pearls, when they find it, they gladly give up whatever is necessary to lay hold on it (Matt. 13:45-46). Hopefully you are interested in this plea.

⁴ Ibid., p.35

6.

THE CHURCH: HER APOSTASY, REFORMATION AND RESTORATION

Jesus established his church on earth as he had promised (Matt. 16:18). It came into existence in Jerusalem on the Pentecost following his resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:1-47). Planned in heaven (Eph. 3:9-11) and established by Spirit-guided men (John 14:26), the church was exactly as God wanted it to be and glorious in every detail (Eph. 5:25-27).

APOSTASY FORETOLD

The Lord warned of “false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15). While the Apostles were yet among the churches, they warned of a coming apostasy. Paul wrote, “But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies...” (I Tim. 4:1-2). He explained to the Thessalonians that before Christ’s return a “falling away” would occur (II Thess. 2:1-3). He warned the elders of Ephesus that “after his departure” grievous wolves (would) enter in among “them, not sparing the flock; and from among (themselves) shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

APOSTASY REALIZED

Departures in Church Organization. Early in the second century, “We begin to find congregations headed by a single officer for whom the name ‘bishop’ is exclusively reserved. The bishop becomes the most important man in the church” (C. M. Jacobs, **The Story of the Church**, pp. 19, 20). City bishops soon extended their power over rural congregations and mission churches they had assisted in planting (John L. Mosheim, **Ecclesiastical History**, Vol. 1, p. 30).

Bishops were said to be successors of the Apostles and the representatives of Christ over his church. Cyprian (248-258) championed this theory. Eventually the bishops of the major centers of Christian influence were elevated above other bishops and given the title of “Metropolitan.” Bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, Jerusalem and Constantinople came to hold leadership positions for the whole church (**Ibid.**). After a long and bitter struggle, the bishop of Rome claimed and was recognized as the

universal father or pope of all the church. Boniface III was thus honored in 606 A.D.

Departures in the Roles of Preachers and Elders. Christ rebuked those who sought exalted places in his kingdom (Matt. 20:25-28). Clerical titles and exalted stations are forbidden since “all ye are brethren” and the Father in heaven is our only Master (Matt. 23:6-10). All Christians are God’s priests (I Pet. 2:9). With the rise of the episcopal bishops came a distinction between clergy and laity.

Departures Through Church Councils. By the middle of the second century bishops began holding conferences to set policy and resolve problems in their dominions. In 325 A.D. the first general council was held at Nicea in Bithynia. It was convened and presided over by Emperor Constantine. Heretics (labeled Arians) were condemned and banished and a binding creedal statement was adopted (The Nicene Creed). This was the first of a continuing series of councils. These decisions were often contradictory and they generally eventuated in persecution of dissenters.

Departures Concerning Baptism. Early in the third century a few voices were advocating infant baptism, among them was Origen of Alexandria. This was based on the faulty ideas that children inherited Adam’s sin (championed by Augustine) and that the act of baptism had miraculous, saving power apart from understanding, faith, repentance, and free will. Upon the heels of infant baptism came the substituting of sprinkling and pouring for immersion. The first recorded case was that of Novation in 251 A.D. Being near death, he received “clinic baptism,” i.e., water was poured upon him in his bed. Later he became a prominent leader and the practice grew in popularity. It was declared equal to immersion by the Council of Ravenna in 1311 A.D.

There were Departures in Practice. Penance replaced the Biblical practice of repentance which was a change of heart resulting in a change of life. “The Sacrament of Penance and priestly absolution included...contrition of the heart, confession by the mouth, satisfaction by good works. On these conditions the priests grant absolution...” (Philip Schaff, **History of the Christian Church**, Vol IV, p. 382).

Auricular confession replaced the simple confession of sins of the Bible (Jas. 5:16). “Confession is the avowal of one’s own sins made to a duly authorized priest for the purpose of obtaining their forgiveness through the power of the keys...” (**Catholic Encyclopedia** Vol. XI, p. 625).

Departures occurred in the Realm of Worship. “Bishops augmented the number of religious rites by way of accommodation to the ...Jews and heathen, in order to facilitate their conversion to Christianity” (**Ecclesiastical History**, (Vol. I, pp. 56-57).

The Lord's Supper was changed from a simple memorial to a sacrificial offering of the body of Christ. It was claimed that the priest changed the bread and fruit of the vine into the literal body and blood of Jesus in the mass. The Council of Trent declared transubstantiation to be a matter of faith. In 1415 A. D., the cup was denied to the laity. They were to receive only the bread; the wine being reserved for the priests. The original practice of vocal singing of hymns by the congregation (Eph. 5:19), was changed with the introduction of special singers, choirs and instrumental music. Pope Vitalian (657-672) introduced instrumental music into the Roman Church (**Schaff**, Vol. IV, 439).

Veneration of departed saints, relics and the use of sacred images were brought into the worship. This first began in the middle of the second century (Williston Walker, **A History of the Christian Church**, p. 155). This grew out of the contemporary pagan belief in guardian spirits. By 787 such was a requirement in the corrupt church.

Holy days were added to the Lord's Day as occasions of worship. The most notable of these were Christmas, the Lenten Season and Easter. There were dozens more. Most of them were adopted to replace pagan holidays. "December 25 was a great pagan festival, that of Sol Invictus, which celebrated the victory of light over darkness..." (Walker, p. 155).

Other additions included the sign of the cross, holy water, incense and prayer beads.

Departures Were Made Concerning Marriage. The clergy were forbidden to marry even though God had declared marriage to be honorable in all (Heb. 13:4) and foretold that enforced celibacy would be a mark of apostasy (I Tim. 4:1-3).

These are but a few of the departures. It is correct to say that every doctrine and practice of the church was changed, perverted or obscured during the long years of Rome's dominance.

THE REFORMATION

Such abuses cried out for reform. Righteous souls longed to be rid of the corruptions that prevailed. God raised up a number of fearless men to break the chains of the Roman hierarchy.

John Wickliffe of Oxford, England (1328-1384) taught that "The Scriptures are the only law of the church." He translated the Latin Bible into English so that even the plow-boy could read and know God's will (Walker, p. 269).

John Huss (1373-1415) carried Wickliffe's message into his native Bohemia. He challenged the authority of the pope and opposed the sale of indulgences. He was burned to death as a heretic.

Jerome Savonarola (1452-1498) led a great reform movement in Florence, Italy. He challenged the power and condemned the corruptions of the popes and Catholic clergy. He was hanged and burned for so doing.

Martin Luther (1483-1546). As a monk, Luther was angered at the crass selling of indulgences by John Tetzel, representative of Pope Leo X. Step by step he attacked virtually every aspect of the Romish system. Only by the providence of God did he escape death at the hands of the Catholic authorities. He translated the Bible into German and launched the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century. He founded the Lutheran Church. His great themes were salvation solely by faith and the supreme authority of the Bible.

Ulrich Zwingli (1482-1531) led a reformation in the German-speaking sections of Switzerland. He was more thorough-going in his reform than Luther. He was killed in battle when the Catholic leaders sent troops to put down the reformers.

John Calvin (1509-1564) fled Paris, France and launched a reform movement in Geneva, Switzerland. His theology, as reflected in his **Institutes of the Christian Religion**, has dominated much of the Protestant world for nearly 500 years. It does so even to this day. His churches were known as Reformed Churches.

Henry VIII (1491-1544) was the catalyst for reformation in England. He was no religious reformer, but he separated the Church of England from the power of Rome so he could divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Other religious leaders led the reformation of the doctrine and practice of the church.

John Knox (1509-1572) was a Scotsman, who after imprisonment, studied under John Calvin in Geneva. He returned to his homeland, defied Queen Mary and established the Church of Scotland, commonly known as the Presbyterian Church. He was a remarkably brave and heroic man.

John Wesley (1703-1791) sought to reform and revise the decadent Church of England. He, along with his brother Charles, founded the Methodist Episcopal Church. His Arminian theology challenged Calvin's views of free will and predestination.

The Protestant reformers generally held the following major points in common:

1. The Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice (*Sola Scriptura*).
2. Justification by faith alone (*Sola Fide*).
3. The priesthood of all believers.

4. Direct access of the believer to Christ. All human mediators and intercessors were denied.
5. That we are free to do whatever the Scriptures do not condemn. Luther said, “What is not contrary to Scripture is for Scripture and Scripture for it” (Schaff, Vol. VI, pp. 16ff.).
6. The right of men to study the Scriptures, learn God’s will and follow it independently.

These great men set out to reform the corrupt church of their day but found it impossible to do so. Their efforts resulted in the establishing of numerous warring sects which proliferated with each generation. Upon their deaths, their followers crystallized around their names and their beliefs. This effectively stopped their progress back to the Bible. This situation degenerated until scores of denominations spent most of their time and energy biting and devouring one another (Gal. 5:15). This unfortunate situation was a major contributing factor to the American Restoration Movement of the Nineteenth Century.

THE RESTORATION

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, a mighty religious revival swept over America. The first wave arose out of the Methodist Church. **James O’Kelly** (1757-1826) rebelled against the tyranny of Bishop Francis Asbury. In 1794, his followers took the name Christian, and the Bible as their only guide. They acknowledged Christ as the only head of the church. They evangelized throughout Virginia and the Carolinas. The O’Kelly Christians held to affusion for baptism.

Elias Smith and Abner Jones launched a restoration movement among the Baptists in New England. In 1803 they took the name Christian, and the Bible as their only guide. They rejected Calvinism and planted independent churches. They were immersionists. Their influence spread into the mid-Atlantic States where they established fellowship with the followers of O’Kelly.

Barton W. Stone (1772-1844) led a back-to-the-bible movement in Central Kentucky that grew out of the great Cane Ridge Revival of 1801. His followers took the name Christian and acknowledged the Bible as their only guide. They broke with Presbyterianism and launched a hugely successful movement that soon spread over all the adjoining states. They published **The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery**. Stone edited a journal called the **Christian Messenger**.

Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) was an immigrant minister from northern Ireland. He left the Presbyterian Church, to begin a restoration movement in western Pennsylvania. He wrote a **Declaration and Address** which set forth the basic premises for such a movement.

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) came to America to join his father. He soon emerged as the leader of the new movement. He lived at Bethany, Virginia (now West Virginia) and there established Bethany College from which went forth hundreds of ministers. Campbell edited two influential journals. **The Christian Baptist** and **The Millennial Harbinger**.

The Restorers saw the futility of previous attempts to reform degenerate churches. They sought to go beyond Luther, Calvin and the popes, back to the Apostles and restore the church on the New Testament foundation. They built upon the following premises:

- There is but one true church of Christ (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 4:4).
- Denominationalism is sinful and wrong (I Cor. 1:10-11; 3:1-4).
- The New Testament is the constitution of the church for her faith, worship, work, government, and discipline (John 12:48).
- Nothing should be made an article of faith or communion unless it is clearly taught in the New Testament.
- Where the Scriptures speak we speak, where the Scriptures are silent we are silent. This means that the silence of the Scriptures authorizes nothing (I Cor. 4:6 ASV).
- Baptism by immersion is a necessary condition for salvation (Acts 2:38).

These men recognized the futility of attempting to reform the corrupt churches that had fallen under the control of powerful men. They set out to restore the original Christianity revealed in the Bible. Eventually, portions of these different streams of restoration efforts coalesced and thus became mighty wave that, following the frontier, swept across the North American continent.

The result of the work of the Restorers was the restoration of the church of the Bible. By the help and grace of God, their efforts resulted in a truly a non-denominational, non-sectarian body in which all the saved can worship and serve God in unity, as the Scripture directs.

To every God-fearing soul who is weary of denominational confusion, we extend a welcome invitation to join us as together we go back to the Bible to serve Jehovah as simple Bible Christians.

** The author is indebted to Don Shackelford's **A Survey of Church History** for most of the information in this lesson.*

7.

THE THRILLING STORY OF OUR ORIGINS IN AMERICA

Some 200 years ago, when the true faith of Jesus had long been eclipsed by the darkness and confusion of dismal error, the sun broke through in the new nation on the North American continent.

Down in the Carolinas in the winter of 1793, there arose a rebellion against the autocratic rule of Francis Asbury, bishop of the Methodist Church. Courageous James O'Kelly and a little band of men, loyal to king Jesus, walked away from the confines of Methodism, claiming their freedom in Christ. It was noble Rice Haggard who recommended that they henceforth march under a banner inscribed with the ancient biblical name of "Christians." O'Kelly's followers traversed the seaboard states, reaping a large harvest of souls and planting hundreds of churches.

Some ten years later, up in the chilly climes of New England, God stirred up the souls of two medical doctors, of Baptist persuasion, to lead their friends and neighbors back to the simple faith and worship of the Bible. Dr. Elias Smith and Dr. Abner Jones were the instruments he used to crisscross the Northeastern states preaching the gospel and calling men back to New Testament Christianity. Smith's influence was spread far and wide through his religious paper, **The Herald of Gospel Liberty**. Through much hardship and tribulation they sowed the gospel seed, preparing the way for better prepared men who would come after them.

About the same time, into the frontier country of Kentucky there came a young Presbyterian minister by the name of Barton Warren Stone. His heart was filled with zeal and devotion to the Savior. When he observed the great camp meetings conducted in southern Kentucky, he returned to Bourbon County resolved to have a similar revival for his Cane Ridge congregation. He invited his religious neighbors to join hands with him in the undertaking and on August 6, 1801 folks began pouring into the campgrounds. More than 10,000 hungry souls, traveling by horse, foot and in wagons gathered to sing, pray and hear the word of the Lord. What a sight it was. Following that marvelous event, Stone and four other preachers resolved to break their ties with Presbyterianism and be Christians without other affiliation. Rice Haggard, just happened to be in their community and encouraged them also to take that blessed name of Christian as their standard. Four of the five men soon surrendered to pressure and turned away, but not Barton Stone. With

strength and courage he stood alone for a while, but soon God rewarded his efforts and great multitudes fell in step with him. Ere long his converts had planted churches all over the Mid-Western and Southern states. He spread his gospel message through a small journal called **The Christian Messenger**. Never a more kind, gentle and dedicated Christian served the Master.

In 1807, from Northern Ireland, came a fine man by the name of Thomas Campbell. Crossing the great Atlantic, he settled near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A devout Presbyterian, he dreamed of overcoming the sectarian divisions that dominated the religious scene. His Presbyterian brothers thought him to be a traitor when he offered communion to those not of his sect. Smarting from their rebuke, he and a few neighbors formed the **Christian Association of Washington** (Pennsylvania) and began to meet for study and worship. Thomas, was a well educated man, and he soon put pen to paper and brought forth a **Declaration and Address**, a beautifully crafted call for unity based up the restoration of the ancient faith and worship of Christ's church. In 1809, after a long and harrowing voyage, Thomas was joined by his wife and children. His eldest son, Alexander, of keen mind and well educated, immediately embraced his father's dream. Together, they set out to call men back to the Bible. Rejected by the Presbyterians, they found a welcome among the Baptists. There they found a warm reception and great multitudes joined their ranks. This stirred antagonism among the Baptist loyalists and after some 15 years they parted ways. Since hundreds of disciples, and scores of preachers, congregations and even a few associations followed Campbell's lead, the remaining Baptists resolved to make war on them. Some of them are not over their wounds to this day, 180 years later.

With fervent zeal in their hearts and a message from God on their lips, evangelists from these various movements visited every town, village and crossroads. As they did so, they discovered that they were preaching a common theme. As it dawned on them that they shared a common message and goal, efforts were made to unite their efforts. Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone exchanged letters, comparing their ideas. Finally, in late 1831, in Georgetown, Kentucky, representatives of the Stone's Christians and Campbell's Reformers met and pledged themselves to unite their efforts. Legendary Raccoon John Smith arose and said, "God has but one people on the earth. He has given to them but one Book, and therein exhorts and commands them to be one family...Let us, then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us all come to the Bible and the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need." He then clasped the hand of Barton Stone and unity was forged.

8.

JOHN WESLEY'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RESTORATION

The earliest organized effort in America toward a restoration of primitive Christianity was among the Methodists of North Carolina and Virginia. Led by James O'Kelly, thousands abandoned the Methodist Church, which was lorded over by Bishop Francis Asbury, to take their stand on the Bible alone.

On August 4, 1794 at Old Lebanon Church in Surry County, Virginia, O'Kelly and his followers committed themselves to the following **“Five Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church:**

1. The Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.
5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.”⁵

Many of O'Kelly's preaching brethren and their congregations flowed into the greater Restoration Movement led by Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell. Thousands of additional honest souls, first influenced by O'Kelly's back to the Bible plea, were later won to the Restoration Cause by other gospel preachers.

Nothing happens without a cause. Among the causes that led James O'Kelly to follow the restoration path were teachings of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. On September 10, 1784, Wesley wrote a letter addressed “To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and Our Brethren in North America.” In that letter, these significant points were made that pointed his co-workers back to the Bible.

(1) Wesley observed: “Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain.

5 W. E. McClenney, **The Life of Rev. James O'Kelly** (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950), p. 121.

This challenged the widely held view that bishops were a superior order of clergy to presbyters and pastors. This view most Methodists, Episcopalians, and Catholics held. Churches of Christ stand virtually alone in teaching that the words elders, bishops, and pastors all are descriptive terms of the one office of overseers in congregations of Christians (See Acts 20:17; 28-29).

(2) He then wrote, “I also advise the elders to administer the Supper of the Lord on every Lord’s day.” This was a revolutionary thought that challenged the accepted practice of all Protestant bodies. The average American Protestant knew of communion observed monthly, quarterly or semi-annually, but to break the bread weekly was to them a strange and new thing. From Acts 20:7, early Restoration preachers concluded that the fundamental purpose for the Lord’s Day assembly was “to break the bread.” Wesley’s advice made it easier for many Methodists to accept this biblical truth.

(3) He closed by noting, “As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state, and from the English hierarchy. . . They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely made them free.”⁶

Two grand concepts essential to restoration are herein presented. The first is that of religious liberty and freedom in matters of religion. To people who for generations had known the domination of established churches and tyrannical clergy, these words were heady and exhilarating. Thus when Francis Asbury appointed himself bishop with complete superintending authority over the Methodist Churches and their ministers, O’Kelly and his band walked out in the name of freedom and liberty.

Second, Wesley planted the thought that they should “follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church.” How novel that sounded at first. But the more they pondered the concept, the more sense it made. When those good Methodists, familiar with Wesley’s exhortation, heard Stone, Campbell and others calling men back to the Bible, the words had a reasonable sound and a respectability about them that caused many to abandon Methodism for New Testament Christianity.

Although he was thoroughly imbued with the Armenian theology of his day, Wesley discovered other significant truths that contributed to the success of the Restoration plea among the Methodists.

In an article entitled, “The Character of a Methodist” Wesley wrote: “... I would to God both those and all men knew, that, I and all who follow my judgement, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any

⁶ John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, vol.13 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, n.d.), pp. 241-252.

but the common principles of Christianity—the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction ... But from real Christians, ... we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all.”⁷ This thought later blossomed in the commitment of Rice Haggard and James O’Kelly to take the name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.

On the question of baptism, Wesley sought a position that would accommodate all: thus he offered immersion, pouring, or sprinkling to those requesting baptism. But in his **Notes on the New Testament**, on Romans 6:4, he wrote, “**we are buried with him**, alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion.”⁸

As to the purpose of baptism he comments thusly on Acts 22:16: “**Be baptized and wash away thy sins**, Baptism administered to real penitents is both a means and a seal of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive church bestow this on any, unless though this means.”⁹

On the question of using instruments of music in Christian worship, Adam Clarke, noted Methodist Bible commentator relates that Wesley had said, “I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD or SEEN.”¹⁰ Our objection to instrumental music is based on that fact that the Word of God nowhere authorizes such and we must not go beyond what is written (I Cor. 4:6 ASV). Wesley’s statement reinforces that Biblical principle.

Both of the above points which distinguish Churches of Christ from their denominational neighbors were often singled out as points for special scorning and ridicule. Yet when Methodists were shown that the great Wesley held such views, their opposition was broken and many honest souls accepted these truths of the New Testament.

John Wesley lived and died a member of the Anglican Church and was buried in his clerical robes. In his work, he founded and nurtured to maturity a new denomination, the Methodist Church. Yet in his teaching and writing, he sowed the seed in the hearts of at least some of his adherents that later produced a crop of New Testament Christians. From his teaching we reap benefits even to this day.

Alexander Campbell wrote: “I am greatly indebted to all the Reformers, from Martin Luther down to John Wesley. . . I am indebted to some person or

7 John Wesley, **The Works of John Wesley**, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 346.

8 As quoted in J. W. Shepherd, **A Handbook on Baptism**, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1950), p. 166.

9 *Ibid*, p. 366.

10 Adam Clarke, **Clark’s Commentary** Vol. IV, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, n.d.), p. 684.

other for every idea I have on the subject. When I begin to think of my debt of thought, I see an immense crowd of claimants.”¹¹ So are we all. Such a recognition is not an endorsement of all those men taught any more than is our debt to Campbell himself. For every man who contributed a concept or thought that helped men get back to the Bible, let us give thanks and may our commitment ever be to restore, in all points, the original faith and practice of the primitive church as the Lord gave it.

9.

THE RESTORATION PLEA

Every institution must have a purpose and goal. If not, it will soon wither away and cease to exist. If it seeks to attract followers, it must have a message or a plea to present. We who are committed to restoring the original Church of Christ offer the following plea to all men.

A PLEA FOR UNITY

We plead for the unity of all who love Jesus. This is the Master’s will. His dying prayer was that we be one as he and the Father are one (John 17:20-21). By this all men will know that we are his disciples (John 13:35) and they will be led to believe that Christ was heaven sent (John 17:27). Thus our objective is Christian unity. The basis for this unity is the New Testament of Christ. Only on that divinely given document can all believers agree. The method for achieving our goal is the restoration of the faith and practice of the early church. We must always stand ready to extend a welcoming hand to any man or group of people who are ready to take their stand on the Bible alone.

We plead for all God-fearing souls to join us in going back to the Bible so that in every essential point we will reproduce the original church of the apostolic age.

That we proclaim the same plan of salvation the Apostles preached. They taught that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). Man cannot improve on the Master’s plan.

That we wear the same name as did the early disciples. God called them Christians (Acts 11:26) and we are to glorify God in that name (I Pet. 4:16). Our

¹¹ B. B. Tyler, *A History of the Disciples of Christ*, (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1894), p. 43. Reprint.

congregations we call “churches of Christ” as did Paul (Rom. 16:16), or other approved Biblical names. With such divinely approved names we stand on incontestable ground. Any name that God used is an acceptable name for his people.

That we be governed by the same book of discipline as were the early saints. We observe all things that Christ commanded in his New Covenant (Matt. 28:20). This is most sensible since his words will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

That we worship in the same fashion as did the primitive church. We sing (Eph. 5:19); commune each Lord’s Day (Matt. 26:26-29); give our gifts to God (I Cor. 16:1-2); pray to our Father (I Thess. 5:17); and study the divine Word of the Master (Acts 20:7-11). To be acceptable, worship must be in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

That our congregations be scripturally organized with saints, bishops (i.e. elders), deacons and preachers (Phil. 1:1).

That we fulfill the same mission as did the early church. Jesus charged his people to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation” so that men could be saved (Mark 16:15-16). For that reason Christ came down from heaven (Luke 19:10). For that reason we exist.

That we pursue the same good works that Christ ordained. “Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction...” (Jas. 1:27). When we thus care for the poor and afflicted we minister to our Lord (Matt. 25:40).

That we confess the same creed as did the first Christians. The good confession they made was that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (I Tim. 6:12; Matt. 16:16). While we reject all human creeds and statements of party loyalty, we freely confess Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10). No other confession dare we demand of a brother or one who desires to follow Christ.

THUS, OURS IS A PLEA FOR CHRIST

We offer nothing new to the world. Ours is a plea as old as Christianity itself. We plead not for a religious party, human leaders or a philosophy of men. We hold Christ and his way before an inquiring world.

We plead that the name of Christ be worn to the exclusion of all human names. God ordained that we glorify him by wearing the sacred name, Christian (I Pet. 4:16).

We plead that the living, reigning, interceding Christ be recognized as the only head and ruler of his church. God gave him “to be head over all things to the church...” (Eph. 1:22).

We urge that the confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God be our only creed. The Latin word *credo* means, “I believe.” Scripture is written that we “might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing (we) might have life in his name” (John 20:30-31). No greater truth, no grander creed, has ever been proposed than this divine oracle.

We propose that the Word of Christ, the New Testament, be the only standard or authority accepted by his church. Those abiding within “the teaching of Christ” have the approbation of both the Father and the Son. We need nothing else. It is all sufficient for our every spiritual need (II Tim. 3:16-17). Human creeds are fallible, divisive and oppressive. Christ’s word is like honey from the honey comb.

We plead that the sovereign authority of Christ over his church be recognized and restored in every place. God gave him this station (Matt. 28:18). To confess Christ as Lord (Rom. 10:9), is to acknowledge his authority. It is presumptuous for any man or group of men to usurp his authority over his people.

We urge that the church which Christ purchased with his blood (Acts 20:28), be exalted above all other institutions and that denominational organizations that compete with and oppose Christ’s church be forsaken and left to disappear. Christ loved his church and died for her. He will save his church (Eph. 5:23). He will one day deliver her back to the father (I Cor. 15:24). To seek to serve God in man made churches is futile for it is to attempt to serve him outside of his kingdom.

We teach that the ideals of Christ should be exemplified in the lives of all who wear his name. True disciples must have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). By thus letting our lights shine, men will be led to glorify our Father (Matt. 5:14-16).

We actively work for unity in Christ of all who truly love God. This is accomplished when each soul obeys the gospel and by the Lord is added to his one church (Acts 2:47). Those properly taught by God’s Holy Spirit are baptized “into one body” (I Cor. 12:13), thus they are united with all other true Christians of whatever nation or race.

CONCLUSION

To all believing men and women who long to simply be Christians and to escape the confusion of the modern religious scene, we plead that you join hands with us and go back to Jesus, back to the Bible, back to Jerusalem. That is the way that is right and cannot be wrong.

** The author is indebted to J. M. Powell for the heart of this lesson.*

10.

ANOTHER LOOK AT OUR PLEA

As we go forth seeking to build up the kingdom of Christ, we are asked by inquiring souls, what is your plea? Ours is a plea for Christ. We do not plead for a **new way**, nor for **our way**. We do not propose **another denomination** or a way that is **just a little better** than others. Christ was the heart, the central theme of the Apostles' preaching (I Cor. 2:1-2); so must he be in ours.

We are pleading for the book of Christ; the New Testament. We proclaim its **inspiration** (II Tim. 3:16-17) and its authority (II John 9:10). We honor his book as **all sufficient** and **alone sufficient**, making us complete and furnishing us completely unto every good work. This being the case, no other creed book or standard is needed or allowed. Pleading for Christ's book means also that we are set for its defense (Phil. 1:16).

Ours is a plea for the Church of Christ. We do not plead for some human organization that wears that name. It takes much more than a name to make a body truly Christ's church. We plead for that church which Christ himself promised to build (Matt. 16:18); of which he is the foundation (I Cor. 3:10) and the head (Eph. 1:22).

We plead for the name of Christ i.e., Christian. Peter teaches us to "glorify God in this name" (I Pet. 4:16). It is a God-given name (Acts 11:26). It is a universal name, acceptable to all who would be Christ's people. The humanly devised names, so prevalent in religion, are divisive. By nature and intent they divide and dominate people into different camps. They glorify men (Lutheran, Mennonites); they exalt a preferred system of government (Episcopal, Presbyterian); or a favorite doctrine (Baptist, Pentecostal). The sacred name Christian glorifies the Son of God. No God-fearing soul would take offense if called by this honorable name.

We are pleading for the authority of Christ over his church. He is said to be "head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Eph. 1:22). He claims all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Differences in religion arise from a lack of respect for his authority and from people seeking to serve God with different standards of authority. Men have usurped his authority with their popes, patriarchs, conventions, synods and assemblies. We show our respect for Christ's authority by obeying his written word (John 12:47-48).

Ours is a plea for the creed of Christ. We do have a creed. In our rejection of human creeds some erroneously conclude that we have no creed at all. The Latin word *credo* means, "I believe." With Peter we confess that

Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God (Matt. 16:16). John's gospel was written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing we might have life in his name (John 20:30-31). If we confess with our mouths Christ as Lord, and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead we shall be saved (Rom. 10:9-10). Truly the living creed of the Lord's Church is the glorious Son of the living God. This heaven-born creed is acceptable to all who love Jehovah. It never stands in need of revision as do the creeds of uninspired men.. The most humble peasant can understand it, the most sophisticated technocrat is awed by it!

We plead for the ordinances of Christ. The church has no ordinances of her own, but Christ has given us three special ordinances. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ are three great facts that are magnified in these ordinances (I Cor. 15:1-4). Baptism proclaims the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Each time a penitent believer is immersed in the watery grave (Rom. 6:3-5), we are reminded of these events of His life. In the Lord's supper, we proclaim his death until he comes again (I Cor. 11:26). Like the early Christians, we observe it weekly (Acts 20:7). The Lord's Day commemorates his resurrection on the first day of the week (John 20:1).

Our plea is for **Christ's terms of admission** into his church. Here, as in all other areas, men have tampered with his divine will. They have injected infant baptism, voting, on candidates, sprinkling and pouring for baptism, with some churches waiving baptism altogether. Christ entrusted Peter with "the keys to the kingdom" (Matt. 16:18). The Apostle told those Jews seeking admittance, to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38). Gentiles likewise were commanded to be baptized in the name of Jesus (Acts 10:47-48). We exhort all penitent believers to follow these divinely given examples.

We are pleading for the **worship which Christ ordained.** The New Testament of Christ provides us a pattern of sound words to be followed (II Tim. 1:13). Like Moses, we are taught to do all things according to the revealed pattern (Heb. 8:5). Thus we pray in his name and according to his will (John 14:14; I John 5:14). We bring our free-will offerings to God on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2). We praise God in song, without mechanical accompaniment, as did the first Christians (Eph. 5:19). Communion is observed weekly as a memorial to Christ's death for us (Acts 20:7; Matt. 26:26-29). Both bread and fruit of the vine are shared by all. Instruction is given from God's Word through preaching and the reading thereof (Acts 20:7).

We are pleading for the **life Christ wants us to live;** one that is sober, righteous and godly (Tit. 2:12). All that we do, in word or deed is to be done to the glory of God (I Cor 10:31). We urge all to live so that Christ will be "magnified" in their lives (Phil. 1:20).

This then is the sum and substance of our “Restoration Plea.” We must give Christ to the world. We must glorify him in all we do. We cannot do more, we dare do no less” (William Temple).

** The author is indebted to C. C. Crawford for the heart of this lesson.*

11.

PURPOSES OF OUR RESTORATION EFFORTS

Churches of Christ in America are heirs of a distinct movement that sprang up on this continent at the opening of the nineteenth century. Noble men and women dedicated their lives to the goal of restoring in their day the original Christianity of the first century. They sensed the futility of attempting to reform the existing denominations. They concluded that the only practical way to have pure Christianity was to bypass all the existing bodies, return to the apostolic age and make a fresh start with the New Testament as their sole guide and blueprint.

REASONS AND MOTIVES

No doubt each man who contributed to this movement had many reasons for his efforts. It is most likely that none of the leaders ever wrote down for posterity all of their motives, yet we can glean some important goals that were shared by the great pioneers of restoration. For the sake of our readers who do not yet share our faith, we would hasten to add that the Restoration Movement of the nineteenth century was not an organized movement with a governing body over it. No single individual can be looked upon as the leader or spokesman. The very first generation saw a number of talented men, in widely scattered parts of the land, from distinctly different religious backgrounds, launch their own attempt to restore original Christianity. This was done without an organized, coordinated effort. It is a fascinating study to trace the growth of this restoration movement and to read of the struggles to arrive at that pure religion of the first century.

1. The restorers wanted to overcome the problem of religious division that plagued believers in Christ. They felt unity could only be realized in Christ and upon the basis of his New Covenant. All saints should speak the same thing, and be of the same mind and judgment (I Cor. 1:10).

2. They wanted to restore the original simplicity and purity of worship of the Lord's church. The centuries had produced numbers of additions and subtractions to the true worship of God outlined in the New Testament. The Lord's Supper needed to be restored to its proper place as the center of Lord's Day worship. Every saint deserved the privilege to eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The accumulation of such unscriptural items as incense, candles, holy water, images, crucifixes and prayer beads needed to be swept away.
3. They sought to discover and proclaim again the gospel plan of salvation first spoken by the Lord and then by his holy Apostles (Heb. 2:3). Knowing that sinners could not be saved by faith only (Jas. 2:24), or by works done in human righteousness (Tit. 3:5), they sought and found that way revealed by Christ. The New Testament posited salvation upon faith in Christ, repentance of sin, confession of faith and immersion in water (Mark 16:16; Rom. 10:9,10; Acts 2:38).
4. They desired to restore the local congregation of Christians to its rightful place. Each community of saints should be self-governing under Christ and his inspired Word. Christ knew nothing of popes or patriarchs dominating his people. Elders, not preachers, were to rule the congregations (Acts 20:17; 28-31). Associations, conventions, synods, conferences, and councils to govern the churches were all creations of men and needed to be eliminated.
5. They longed to exalt the Bible to its proper place as the final and complete authority in Christianity. They had seen the damage done by the creeds of the churches. They rejected the traditions of men (Matt. 15:6-9). Their plea was "back to the Bible." It was "to the law and to the testimony" for them (Is. 8:20). They wanted to find and abide in the doctrine of Christ (II John 9).
6. They yearned to rid the world of sectarian names in religion and to restore the name of Christ to its honored place. They were not ashamed to be merely "Christians" (I Pet. 4:16). Since the church was Christ's by right of purchase, why not call it "the Church of Christ" even as did Paul (Rom. 16:16)? Of course they objected not to any other Biblical name for saints or congregations.
7. They felt an obligation to rid Christianity of all those corruptions and errors that had crept in over the centuries, whether in faith or in practice, whether large or small. They were convinced that this could only be accomplished by a rejection of all the denominations of men and a complete return to the divine blueprint laid out in God's Word (II Tim. 1:13; Heb. 8:5b).

That first generation of men succeeded admirably in their efforts. Across the land a mighty wave of God-fearing people joined hands in the effort. We would not be so bold as to claim that we have perfectly reproduced the total program of Christ today. But we hasten to affirm that those of your neighbors known as the Church of Christ are diligently striving after that goal. Every saint in every generation must in his own life dedicate himself to that noble effort, i.e., to be nothing more nor less than the kind of Christian as were Peter, James John, Paul and a myriad of others we read of in the New Testament. Will you not join with us in the honorable pursuit?

12.

THE GOAL OF OUR RESTORATION MOVEMENT

The spring, high on the mountain side, sends forth its waters, crystal clear. As they cascade down the mountain, filth and pollution gradually find their way into the stream. By the time its reaches the plain in the lower valley, it is thoroughly polluted and unsafe to drink, unless treated. So it is with Christianity. When the Lord established his church in Jerusalem it was exactly what he wanted it to be. But over the centuries, men have laid unholy hands upon Christ's precious church. Virtually every aspect of Christianity has suffered unauthorized change.

Time and again God has raised up holy men to call people back to the Bible, the original source of pure Christianity. Churches of Christ had their beginning in America in the early 19th century when James O'Kelly, Abner Jones, Elias Smith, Barton Stone, and Thomas and Alexander Campbell broke out of their respective denominations and resolved to restore the original faith and practice of the New Testament.

As the heirs of those noble men, we are committed to continuing that goal:

1. We honor Christ as the only founder and head of the church (Matt. 16:16-18).
2. We call ourselves only by Bible names. Collectively, we are churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16); individually, we are Christians, nothing more or less (I Pet. 4:16).

3. We teach people to be saved just as did Christ and his Apostles, i.e., by faith, repentance, confession and immersion (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
4. We worship in the simple fashion of the first Christians, with weekly communion (Acts 20:7); prayers, vocal music (Eph. 5:19) sacrificial giving (I Cor. 16:1-2) and faithful teaching of the gospel (II Tim. 4:2).
5. We organize our churches with elders and deacons as prescribed by the Apostles (I Tim. 3:1-13).
6. We pledge ourselves to do the work of Christ by doing those things he authorized us to do: evangelize the world, edify the church and care for the needy.
7. We strive to be holy in life by following Jesus in thought, word and deed (I Pet. 2:21).

Let us never forget our goal to be Christians, in the same manner as were the Apostles and that courageous band of believers who risked their all to be the first disciples of Jesus.

13.

PREMISES FOR RESTORATION

To be a New Testament Christian, there are certain basic premises which must be recognized, understood and respected. Failure to build upon these foundational truths will destine a body of people to be only a human organization, a denomination, and not the church of which Christ is Lord and Savior. F. D. Power in his book, **Sketches of our Pioneers**, notes a number of these fundamental premises.

I. Recognition of the sufficiency of the sacred Scriptures as the rule of faith is essential. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide the Apostles “into all the truth” (John 16:13). Paul wrote that the God-given Scriptures make us “complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17). Peter says that we have “all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3). This being true, with Scripture in hand, we need no creed book or statement of faith. We need no personal divine illumination from the Holy Spirit. We need no council, synod, or convention to decide the substance of

our faith. No uninspired man (pope or president) is needed to rule over the church or to tell us what to believe.

II. The New Testament sets forth our duty in this Christian Age. Christ has superseded Moses and the prophets. When Peter would equally honor Christ, Moses and Elijah, God spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5). God, in times past, spoke through the prophets, but now He speaks to us through His Son (Heb. 1:1). After his resurrection, Christ could claim "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28:18). It is His words that will judge us in the last day (John 12:48), hence, we are not under the Old Testament as a law of our faith, worship and service. Christ abolished "the law of commandments" in His death (Eph. 2:15). He took the old system "out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (Col.2:14). In the words of Paul, the law written and engraved on stones has passed away (11 Cor. 3:6-11). Thus, we are a New Testament Church. We practice New Testament worship. We are New Testament Christians, having been saved by believing and obeying the teaching of Christ revealed in his New Testament. This great truth sets Churches of Christ apart from most modern day religious groups.

III. The object of our faith must be Jesus, not the traditions, opinions and speculations of men. Jesus declared "except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Paul was "determined not to know anything among (his hearers) save Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). When the jailor at Philippi asked what he must do to be saved? The answer was simple and clear, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts. 16:31). Men have no right to demand faith in any human organization, plan, system or doctrine of those seeking salvation. No one can be denied Christian standing who confesses Christ as Lord and obeys him (Rom. 10:9-10). Thus was the case of the man from Ethiopia (Acts. 8:35-38). This position challenges the very heart of denominationalism.

IV. There must be a thus-saith-the-Lord, either in explicit statement or approved precedent, for every article of faith and item of practice. Herein lies the basic failure of the religious world. We are to teach men to observe all the things which Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20). We must not "go beyond the things that are written" (1Cor. 4:6 ASV). If we go beyond the teachings of Christ, we have not God (II John 9). Martin Luther and Ulric Zwingli were contemporary reformers. Both rebelled against the corruptions of Catholicism, but they could not agree as to how to proceed. Luther argued that he could do anything the Bible did not expressly prohibit. Zwingli held that he could do only what Scripture authorized. Zwingli was right in his understanding. This grand principle distinguishes the Church of Christ from all other religious bodies in our age. This is the meaning of Thomas Campbell's declaration,

“Where the Scriptures speak, we speak: where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” Following this principle, our worship and practice are simple and plain, but they are, “as it is written.”

V. There should be a complete restoration of the forms and ordinances of the gospel as they were in the days of the Apostles. This premise is based on the assumption that the church, as constituted by Christ, was perfect and that the New Testament provides a pattern for all Christians to follow in all succeeding ages. Timothy was charged to “hold the pattern of sound words” which he had heard from Paul (II Tim 1:13). As was Moses, we are excepted, to do all things according to the pattern showed unto us (Heb 8:5). In another imagery, the Scriptures are the divine measuring rod by which the church, her worship and her priesthood are to be measured (Rev. 11:1). If a doctrine or practice is not as old as the New Testament, it should be rejected. Like a fine old painting, we dare not add one stroke of the brush to the work of the Master. We only would clean away the accumulations of soot and dirt that soil its perfection and beauty. The world may scoff at our determination to restore the primitive state of the church, but we must never be deterred from our goal.

VI. Sinners must now be told to do just what they were told by the Apostles to obtain forgiveness of sins. Can any mortal man improve on the words of Christ, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16)? Do uninspired men know more than did the Apostle who said, “Repent ye, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38)? Peter commanded Cornelius and his family to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:47-48). It is amazing that virtually all religious bodies in our age have rejected this simple plan of salvation for one of their own making. Do they really think God is obligated to honor their inventions? When pioneers of the Restoration Movement began to preach this apostolic plan, thousands of hungry souls rushed eagerly to embrace it. Three years in succession Walter Scott baptized a thousand or more souls as he preached on the Western Reserve of Ohio. Without this premise, none will be Christians at all!

VII. We must deplore division in the body of Christ and plead earnestly for Christian unity. It is Jesus’ prayer that all of his followers be one as are He and His Father (John 17:20-21). Christians are charged to “give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph 4:3). “The Church of Christ,” said Thomas Campbell, “is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one.” He went on to say that “division among Christians is anti-Christian, anti-scriptural, unnatural, and to be abhorred” (**Declaration and Address**). Religious division violates Paul’s command that we all “speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us” (1 Cor. 3:1-4) Alexander Campbell

said, “I have no idea of adding to the catalogue of new sects...I labor to see sectarianism abolished, and all Christians of every name united upon the one foundation on which the apostolic church was founded” (**Christian Baptist**, 1826, Vol 3, p. 217). True Christians can never come to terms with and live at peace with denominationalism.

If the church of which we are a part is but another sect, we have no right to exist and should close our doors and go out of business this very day!

VIII. We must grant to fellow Christians the largest liberty in all matters of opinion. We see this vividly demonstrated in Paul’s answers to questions on marriage. He recommended that the disciples stay unmarried in the face of persecution (1 Cor. 7:1, 26), but he hastened to add, “But this I say by way of concession, and not of commandment” (vs. 6). Nothing must be bound, or made a test of fellowship, that is not as old as the New Testament. Opinions must be held as private property and not promoted to the disruption of the church. In every congregation, hundreds of questions arise about procedures, methods and choices that are matters of opinion. Multitudes of difficult verses of Scripture or unknown matters may be discussed, but we must refrain from forcing out conclusions on others. James O’Kelly’s Christians preached “The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and the duty of all” (W. E. McClenny, **Life of Rev. James O’Kelly** p. 111). Thomas Campbell declared “that differences of opinion with regard to such inferences shall not be made tests of fellowship ...” “That any addition to the New Testament program which circumstances may seem to require, shall be regarded as human expedients and shall not be given a place of higher authority in the church than is permitted by the fallible character of their origin” (**Declaration and Address**). It is here that we have encountered our greatest difficulty. A regular reading of Romans 14 and 15 would do much to solving this problem. “Who art thou that judges the servant of another? To his own Lord he standeth or falleth” (14:4).

Conclusion: May we who are God’s children renew our commitment to the proposition, that so long as we live on the earth, we will devote ourselves to searching out and doing God’s will and urging others to do the same—so that God’s will may be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

14.

NECESSARY STEPS TO RESTORING ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY

In every place and every age where people have sought to restore New Testament Christianity there have been six basic steps followed. If we today are successful in our commitment to restore the pure faith and practice ordained by Christ, these steps we too, must follow.

SEARCHING

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is seeking goodly pearls” (Matt. 13:45). To find the true way to serve God we must be seekers. The Bereans were truth-seekers. When they heard preaching that sounded good, they searched the Scriptures to see if it was so (Acts 17:11). If all men did this today, a host of denominational preachers would either hurriedly change their message or go out of business for lack of a following. We must study to show ourselves approved unto God (II Tim. 2:15).

In the history of the American Restoration Movement are many notable examples of men searching for truth. Young Walter Scott was teaching school in Pittsburgh when he was given a tract that taught baptism for remission of sins. When the school term ended, he walked three hundred miles to New York City to find the author and learn more. Dr. Chester Bullard confessed his faith in a Methodist environment. Studying his Bible, he learned that baptism was immersion, not sprinkling or pouring; and that it was an essential duty. When he by chance met Landon Duncan who taught that truth, he was immediately baptized in the icy waters of a nearby stream. He searched till he found the true way of salvation. Later when he heard that Alexander Campbell was to speak at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, he rode 100 miles on horseback to study with him. If we would be New Testament Christians, then like those noble men, we must be lifelong searchers for truth.

DISCOVERING

Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you...” (Matt. 7:7). Again, he promised, “If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God...” (John 7:17). Dr. Benjamin Franklin Hall was preaching among the followers of Barton W. Stone. In the early years, they did not understand the place of baptism in salvation. They called penitent sinners to the mourner’s

bench and urged them to pray for a sign of God’s forgiveness and acceptance. They relied on emotionalism to move the people. While on an evangelistic journey, he spent the night with a Bro. Gess who lived near the Tennessee Kentucky line. There he discovered a book that contained a debate on baptism between Alexander Campbell and W. L. McCalla. As his eyes poured over the pages he read Campbell’s argument based on Peter’s charge in Acts 2:38 that related immersion to salvation. In his excitement, Hall shouted aloud, “Eureka, I have found it!” He sought, and he discovered truth. Some folks spend their whole lives searching, but never discover saving truth. Paul wrote of men who are ever learning, and never coming to a knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 3:7). Some seem not to know where to find vital truth. Others spend all their energies on trivial matters that, while true, are not fundamental to salvation. Some seem unable to recognize truth when it stands before their eyes. The man from Ethiopia did not hesitate to say that he needed help in his search for truth. With Philip’s help he discovered it (Acts 8:30-39).

ACCEPTING

To please God we must “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save (our) souls” (Jas. 1:21). John Smith and Jeremiah Vardeman were two successful Kentucky Baptist preachers. Both heard Alexander Campbell and his ringing challenge to lay aside everything human in religion and stand upon the Bible alone. Both were convicted that the plea was right and that they should act thereon. Vardeman’s problem was that the congregations of the reformers were so poor and small in number they would not be able to afford him the monetary support he was use to receiving. Although his mind and heart inclined to the restoration plea, his purse kept him among the Baptists. Vardeman warned Smith, who was ready to make the change, that his income would be so reduced that he might lose his farm. To this Smith replied, “my conscience is one item I have not brought to the marketplace, but if I did, all the land in Stockton Valley could not buy it.” He knew the meaning of “Buy the truth and sell it not” (Prov. 23:23). Truth is no trivial matter. Where we will spend eternity hangs in the balance.

PRACTICING

James says, “be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves” (Jas. 1:22). “Faith apart from works is dead” (Jas. 2:26). Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him (Heb. 5:9). “Not everyone that saith...Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven,” said Christ (Matt. 7:21). When Thomas Campbell drafted and presented his **Declaration and Address**, he did not understand that his premise, “We will speak where the

Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent,” would eliminate infant baptism. When, however, he was confronted with that fact he said, if it is not authorized by the Bible we must give it up. Shortly thereafter he was immersed in accordance with the New Testament plan. The person who rebels against doing what the Bible instructs or resists giving up that which is without Scriptural authority cannot be a true disciple of Christ.

SHARING

Salvation is not to be selfishly kept to oneself. It is heaven’s plan that when we become disciples, we then go make disciples by teaching our neighbors (Matt. 28:19-20). The things we have heard from godly teachers must now be committed to faithful men who can then do the same (II Tim. 2:2). Like Legion, the Master wants us to go to our communities and tell family and friends what great things he has done for us (Mark 5:19-20). This is God’s plan for saving the multitudes. The writer recalls a young man in Nigeria who had been a Christian but three months. Since he lived far back in the countryside he had little opportunity for study and training. He had only been able to spend four days with the missionary before going home, yet in three months, through his tireless efforts, fifty souls had been saved and three new congregations planted. To restore the gospel means to share the gospel.

PERSEVERING

To be successful in our quest for New Testament Christianity, we must be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Across the ages many have gone “back and walked no more with him” (John 6:68). It is not enough to start back to the Bible, we must “hold the pattern of sound words” once we have discovered them (II Tim. 1:13). Barton Stone, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar, John Thompson and Robert Marshall broke with the Presbyterians and announced their intent to follow the Bible alone and be only Christians. Within a few months Dunlavy and McNemar were swept away by the hysteria of the Shaker cult. Thompson and Marshall returned to the Presbyterian fold. Only Stone stood by his commitment. Today his name is legendary among us. His spiritual posterity are spread around the earth. The others are forgotten names on the pages of dusty history books. Only those who endure to the end shall saved (Mark 13:13).

CONCLUSION: Searching, Discovering, Accepting, Practicing, Sharing, Persevering: these are essential steps as we restore the original faith of Jesus Christ.

** The author is indebted to J. M. Powell for the main points of this lesson.*

15.

FOUNDATION PILLARS OF THE RESTORATION PLEA

The great movement to restore the faith and practice of the first century Church of Christ in our present age is built upon seven great pillars of truth. No building can stand unless the builder digs deep and lays a solid foundation upon the rock. Otherwise, when the flood comes, the structure will fall (Luke 6:47-48). The foundation of Christianity is Christ (I Cor. 3:11). On that foundation these seven pillars rest. To keep the church loyal and true to her commitment, we need to keep our foundational pillars ever fresh in our minds. In his book, **Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union**, C. A. Young sets forth those great truths necessary to achieve the restoration goal.

I. The Scriptures of the New Testament are the supreme and ultimate source of authority for Christian faith and practice. Of the 2400 religious bodies in America, so far as the author knows, only the Church of Christ makes a proper distinction between the Old and New Testaments. Most seem unaware that the Old Testament was given to the Hebrew nation to govern their moral and religious conduct. Moses makes that abundantly clear in Deuteronomy 5:1-6, “Hear O Israel...Jehovah made a covenant with us in Horeb.” Though that law served Israel well, Christ took it “out of the way, nailing it to the cross” (Col. 2:14-17).

Christ now has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). His words will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). To go beyond his words separates man from God (II John 9). That we are not under Moses’ Law is no loss for we have “a better covenant enacted upon better promises” (Heb. 8:6). We must never forget that we are a New Testament church! Our faith and worship is derived from the New Covenant of Christ!

II. The New Testament contains a perfect and complete model of the Christian institution as to her faith, life, worship, ordinances and government. The teaching of the Apostles is the “pattern of sound words” to which we must cling (II Tim. 1:13). “**Pattern**” is from the Greek word *hupotuposis* which means, “the pattern placed before one to be held fast and copied, model” (**Thayer’s Lexicon**, p. 245). God has provided us a divine measuring rod by which we test the church, her worship and her worshipers (Rev. 11:1). That divine standard is the Word of Christ. It will be our measure of judgment in the last day (John 12:48). Like Moses, we are exhorted to “make all things according to the pattern shown” us (Heb. 8:5). It is this fundamental

concept, that our New Testament constitutes an authoritative pattern for us, that distinguishes us from the many human churches around us.

III. The Scriptures are intelligible as far as essential matters of faith and salvation are concerned. In the early nineteenth century, most sectarian preachers taught that the Bible was a dead letter, a sealed book. At best, the reader had to have special illumination from the Holy Spirit to understand it. At worst, the common man could not expect to understand it. Only “divinely called” preachers were able to correctly interpret the Word. This made the Bible the property of the clergy and kept the masses in chains of ignorance. Our fathers taught their hearers that they could “know the truth” that would make them free (John 8:32); that if they would search the Scriptures they would know if the teaching they had heard was truthful (Acts 17:11). Ephesians 3:4 was cited, teaching that when Paul’s words were read, men could “perceive (his) understanding in the mystery of Christ.”

IV. The church needs reforming by being restored to the New Testament pattern. Paul warned that “some shall fall away from the faith” (I Tim. 4:1). Within fifty years, the church at Ephesus had left her “first love.” To please God, they had to “repent and do (their) first works” (Rev. 2:4-5). That is what restoration is all about. Faithful preachers will “put the brethren in mind of these things (I Tim. 4:6). Restoration is a task that is never completed. Man is prone to drift away from God. He must be called back to “the old paths” (Jer. 6:16). Restoration is both desirable and possible.

V. The church of apostolic days was by design, one organic body. There is “one body” even as there is one God (Eph. 4:4-5). That one body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). It is the church which Christ built (Matt. 16:18). The word pictures used to describe the church declare her oneness: Christ has but one body, one bride, one kingdom.

Denominations exist without God’s approval. They are contrary to his will and in competition with Christ’s own kingdom. It is God’s will that we “all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among” us. Christ is not divided and no man was crucified for us (I Cor. 1:10-11). It is our sacred duty to diligently work to maintain “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). Not only is denominationalism wrong, so are the “in-house divisions that mar our fellowship!

VI. Matters of faith and opinion are distinguishable and recognition of what is essential and nonessential will result in unity of faith and practice. Paul made such a distinction in his Corinthian correspondence. When asked about the advisability of marriage, he responded, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” He then qualified his answer by saying, “But this I say by way of concession, not of commandment” (I Cor. 7:1,6). In matters of

judgment and opinion, “we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak...” (Rom. 15:1). Thomas Campbell argued that we could achieve unity if in matters of faith (i.e., essentials) we have unity; in matters of opinion we have liberty and if in all things we have love. There is no room for varying opinion in clearly stated instructions of Christ; only obedience. But there is ample room for freedom of opinion in all unspecified matters.

VII. The Apostles stood on the same plane of infallibility and authority in their teaching as did Christ. Not understanding the significance of the “red letters” in their testament, some have thought and taught that Christ’s words were the only ones that really counted; or at least that they took precedence over other scripture. Jesus told the Apostles, “He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me” (John 13:20). Paul, the Apostle, claimed that the things which he wrote were “the commandment of the Lord” (I Cor. 14:37). Thus every verse of our New Testament is the will of Christ and of equal value and importance in the faith and practice of Christianity.

Conclusion: May all of God’s children renew their commitment to the proposition, that so long as they live on the earth they will devote themselves to searching out and doing God’s will and urging others to do the same; that in their lives God’s will may be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

16

GREAT SLOGANS OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Across the ages those successful in communicating their ideas to others have been able to couch their doctrines in simple, easily remembered slogans. Solomon put it beautifully when he said, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a network of silver” (Prov. 25:11). In this lesson we will notice some of the great slogans of the Restoration pioneers of the nineteenth century.

I “**No creed but Christ, no book but the Bible.**” In a world of warring sects, each with its own human creed and tests of loyalty, our brethren confessed no human creed; only Jesus as the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:18). They acknowledged no document as authoritative in matters religious but God’s book. That confession, all sincere souls of every stripe can confess without reservation, shame or embarrassment. With the inspired Bible

as their guide, they can “be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (II Tim. 3:16-17). To confess Christ and follow the Bible is a way that is right and cannot be wrong.

II. “Do Bible things in Bible ways; call Bible things by Bible names.” This simple statement struck at the corruptions of the Christian faith as practiced by the spokesmen of denominationalism. Across the ages, Catholicism had corrupted every item of the faith. Protestant sects still held to many Romish practices and spoke her corrupt language. Like the Hebrews in Nehemiah’s day, “the children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’s language...” (Neh. 13:24). To bring all believers to unity in Christ, the restorers saw the need to “turn the people (to) a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of Jehovah with one consent” (Zeph. 3:9). Rather than human names of identification they took the God-given name, Christian (Acts 11:26). Laying aside the terms “mass” and “eucharist” they spoke of “the Lord Supper” (I Cor. 11:20). Rather than affusion, sprinkling or pouring they spoke of baptism as a “burial” (Rom. 6:3-4). No longer were preachers called pastors, reverends, or fathers; rather, they were called ministers, evangelist, brethren (Matt. 23:8-9; I Tim. 4:6; II Tim. 4:5). Baptism by immersion was administered to penitent believers, not to guileless infants (Acts 2:38; 8:38-39). The whole vocabulary of the faith had to be restored. In so doing they cleared away most of the dreary mist that had confused the people.

III. “Where the Scripture speak we speak; where the Scripture are silent, we are silent.” This truth sets forth the fundamental difference between the Lord’s church and the whole of denominationalism. The pioneers correctly learned that we can only do what Christ has authorized in his New Testament. We are specifically told to teach men to observe Christ’s commandments (Matt. 28:20). Again we are warned, “not to go beyond the things which are written” (I Cor. 4:6 ASV). They recognized that to please God we must respect “the silence of the Scriptures.” This principle is illustrated in the case of Nadab and Abihu. They were consumed by fire for offering “strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them” (Lev. 10:1-2). Christian preachers who taught Gentile brethren that they must be circumcised were rebuked by the Apostles because they had not been given commandment to do so (Act. 15:1; 23-24). We do not ask where does the Bible forbid infant baptism or instrumental music? We ask where is such authorized? Those who ignore the silence of the Scriptures opened a flood gate through which a thousand corruptions pour in unchecked.

IV. “In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion liberty; in all things, charity.” These words, first spoken by Rupertus Meldenius, were drafted by Thomas Campbell and placed in his **Declaration and Address**. They form a workable plan of unity in a world of divided believers. All devout

souls accept the Bible as God's Word. All agree on the fundamentals. It urges men to humbly accept what is plainly taught in Scripture. Love for Jesus means keeping his commandments (John 14:15). Christ saves those that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9). In unclear areas and in matters of judgment all are urged to grant the fullest liberty to others (Rom. 14:4-5). It is this area of Christian faith and practice where we have stumbled most. Campbell's slogan urges brotherly love as the essential nutrient for unity (John 13:34-35). We can be most patient, forgiving and tolerant of those we love dearly.

V. **"Truth first, union afterward; and union only in truth."** This saying of David Lipscomb was voiced when a large segment of our brethren departed from Scriptural ground to embrace missionary societies, instrumental music, the denominational pastor system, women preachers and a host of other departures. While so doing, they expected our brethren to tolerate their innovations and fellowship them under the guise of maintaining unity. Our fathers responded with John's warning that "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." To receive the false teacher and give him greeting made one a partaker in his evil works (II John 9-11). They noted Paul's charge to "mark them that are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17). True unity can never ignore error. It can only be attained when men meet on God's divine truth.

VI. **"Be true to the truth, oppose the error, but bear with humanity."** This wise saying of David Lipscomb spoke to those who were impatient in dealing with fellow Christians. Without discounting the value of truth or the duty to oppose error, it urged patience in dealing with those in error. Not all Christians are at the same level of maturity. Not everyone will see the danger that you may see. All will not have the strength of conviction that you have at this moment. Everyone has not had, or taken, the time to study a given point which is at issue. "We who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak..." (Rom. 15:1). We "must not strive but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil..." (II Tim. 2:24-26). We must recognize the difference between those who are coming out of error into truth and those who are leaving truth for error. There is a difference in those who are confused or misled on a matter and those who are deliberate, destructive false teachers. Our goal should be to salvage as many people as possible rather than cut them off.

VII. **"Back to Jesus, back to the Bible, back to Jerusalem."** These words declare the direction we are traveling. We are not progressives who are

departing from Christ (II John 9). We are looking for “the old paths” that we may walk therein (Jer. 6:16). The faith was once for all times delivered to the saints (Jude 3). Jesus is our savior, founder and head; we look to no other man. The Bible is our standard; we need no other book of doctrine. The church which began in Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago is our pattern.

VIII. “The only way to make progress in religion is by going back to the Bible.” This reminds us that we must not seek to modify the church to please modern man. We strive to please only Jesus (Gal. 1:10). We please God and reach our optimum effectiveness by seeking out “the old paths” and walking therein (Jer. 6:16). This would not be true of any other institution, law, book or system. What comes from man’s hand is dated and is soon obsolete. But what the omniscient God creates is perfect, eternal and ever contemporary. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). So is the Bible, and so must be the church.

These slogans are not inspired, they are not to be thought of as Scripture. They are truths that help us remember our commitment to be Christians only as were those saints in the first Christian century.

17.

THE GREATNESS OF THE MOVEMENT TO RESTORE ORIGINAL CHRISTIANITY

Churches of Christ are part of a great religious movement launched on the North American continent, in the early 1800s, to restore the pure Christianity of the first century. The pioneers of this movement made it their aim to go back to the Bible for their faith, worship and practice. To maintain the Restoration commitment in our day, we must remind ourselves of what it was. To properly appreciate it, we must know wherein it was great.

In America, the first clearly discernable call to go back to Bible was heard among the Methodists. Jams O’Kelly led a revolt against bishop Francis Asbury’s autocratic rule. At a meeting at the old Lebanon Church in Surry County, VA, on August 4, 1794, Rice Haggard, with Bible in hand, challenged his brethren thusly:

“Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. By it we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply.”

A Brother Hafferty then moved that they take the Bible as their only creed. From that meeting came, **“Five Cardinal Principles of the Christian Church:”**

1. The Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible...our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character...the only test of church fellowship and membership.
5. The right of private judgment and liberty of conscience the privilege and duty of all. (W. E. McClenny, **Life of Rev. James O’Kelly**, p. 111).

Shortly thereafter, in 1803, a similar back to the Bible movement emerged among the Baptists of New England. The principal leaders were Drs. Abner Jones and Elias Smith. Smith wrote:

*“When our number was some short of twenty, we agreed to consider ourselves a Church of Christ, owning him as our only Master, Lord and Lawgiver, and we agreed to consider ourselves Christians, without the addition of any unscriptural name” (Elias Smith, **Life and Conversion of Elias Smith**, pp. 313-314).*

About the same time, in Central Kentucky, a group of dissident preachers broke with the Presbyterian Church. They first organized themselves as the Springfield Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church. After further study of the Scriptures they met and resolved to dissolve their presbytery. They framed a document entitled, **“Last Will and Testament”** of the Springfield Presbytery. Among its remarkable items are the following:

- “We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body...”
- “We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church and executing them by delegated authority forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible...”
- “We will, that the Church of Christ resume her native right of internal government...”

- “ We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven...”

On June 28, 1804, the Will was signed by Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar, John Thompson, David Purviance, and B. W. Stone.

In 1809 Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian immigrant preacher from Northern Ireland, broke with his church and issued a **Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania**. Among Campbell’s declarations were the following:

- “That the Church of Christ is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one.”
- “That the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice for Christians.”
- “That the Old and New Testaments alone contain the authoritative constitution of the Church of Christ.”
- “That no human authority has power to amend or change the original constitution and laws of the church.”
- “That faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a sufficient profession to entitle a man or woman to become a member of the Church of Christ.”
- “That division among Christians is anti-Christian, anti-scriptural, unnatural, and to be abhorred.”
- “That neglect of the revealed will of God and the introduction of human innovations are and have been the causes of all the corruptions and divisions that have ever taken place in the church...”
- “That all that is necessary to secure the highest state of purity and perfection in the church is to restore the original ordinances and constitution as exhibited in the New Testament.”

These men sought not to found a new denomination, rather they worked to restore to its pristine purity, the original church of the Bible.

The goal of Restoration is great because it is a commitment to reproduce the original Christianity of the first century. God designed and Jesus built the church exactly as they wanted it (Matt. 16:18). When changes were imposed on the church they were always destructive, never beneficial. Like a masterpiece of art, we would restore the Lord’s church to her original state of existence. In the words of the prophet, “thou shalt be called The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in” (Is. 58:12).

The Restoration Movement is great because it is a non-denominational effort, dedicated to serving God in a non-sectarian way. Jesus built but one church (Matt. 16:18; I Cor. 12:13). It was his dying prayer that his followers be one as were he and his father (John 17:20-21). Denominational division is soundly condemned in Scripture. Paul besought the Corinthians “that there be no divisions among them” (I Cor. 1:10). He labeled as immature and carnal those who denominated themselves as followers of Peter, Apollos and Paul (I Cor. 3:1-4). Even those most deeply involved in denominationalism concede the undesirable nature of that system.

Our movement is great because it is a “back to the Bible “ movement. Catholicism has elevated tradition, the decisions of councils and declarations of popes above the Bible. Liberal Protestantism has attacked the Bible as unreliable and irrelevant. Evangelical churches give lip service to believing the Scripture, while in practice, they place their creeds and subjective experiences above it. We exalt God’s Word above all creeds and philosophies of men. We speak as the oracles of God (I Pet. 4:11). The God-breathed Word is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete...” (II Tim. 3:16-17). Furthermore, we properly distinguish between the two great covenants. While the entire Bible is from God, the words which Christ spoke will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). Because of this truth we do not look to Moses or David’s writings for instructions on salvation, worship or practice of our faith.

The Restoration is great because it is a doctrinal movement. Our message is not one of human theology, philosophy, speculation, or experience. We seek always to abide in “the doctrine of Christ” (II John 9). We advocate strong, clear Bible preaching. Preachers are urged to cite chapters and verses so their hearers can verify for themselves the lesson taught. We expect our spokesmen to “preach the Word” (II Tim. 4:2). We demand “sound doctrine” from our pulpits (Tit. 2:1). Our preachers can generally be distinguished from their denominational counterparts by the “Biblical ring” of their lessons. A modern generation must be reminded that all the social activities, marriage enrichment seminars and self-improvement courses will not save a single soul. Only by preaching the gospel will sinners be brought to the Savior (Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:16).

Because it offers a reasonable, common sense approach to religion, the Restoration Movement is great. God expects a person to use his head, to think rationally if he would be a Christian. Faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Christianity is not a fuzzy, emotional response to some vague religious impulse; rather it is reasonable, logical and sensible. The emotionalism of the old mourner’s bench system, the irrational behavior

of the charismatics and the mysticism of the ritualistic churches all give way before the simple truth of our plea (John 8:32). Faith is not foolishness.

The Restoration plea is great because it is universal both in nature and appeal. It alone can bring religious unity to a world torn by sectarian confusion and division. Can any man who sincerely loves Christ object to being called a Christian? Visit any minister in your community and inquire of him, "Are you Christian?" I can safely predict a favorable reply. But ask the Methodist parson if he is a Baptist and he will quickly deny it. Call him a Baptist and you will insult him. Ours is a universally accepted name. Who will oppose calling Bible things by Bible names? This in itself would eliminate most of the confusion in the religious word. Who would criticize doing Bible things in Bible ways? Who would condemn preaching the Bible, only the Bible and all of the Bible? Can anyone conceive a better way to serve God than his own divinely appointed way?

The plea to restore the ancient faith and practice of the first Christians is great because it is thoroughly Biblical. Jeremiah exhorts the people of his day to ask for the "the old paths" and walk therein (Jer. 6:16). King Josiah labored to restore the true worship of Jehovah in Israel (II Kings 22:8; 23:5). Paul exhorts us to hold the pattern of sound words (II Tim. 1:13). The author of Hebrews reminds us to build according to the revealed pattern (Heb. 8:5). The New Testament is our pattern, and we must conform to its divine standard.

May we never neglect, forsake or betray this noble movement of which we are part. Let us devote ourselves to restoring the ancient church, her doctrine, worship and practice. May we pass it on safely to those who come after us.

** The author is indebted to J M. Powell for many of the points of this lesson.*

18.

THE SUCCESS OF THE RESTORATION PLEA

To understand the present status and situation of the Church of Christ, it is necessary to understand our past. The first generation of preachers who called for a restoration of original Christianity experienced phenomenal success. Their contemporaries were eager to receive their message. M. M. Davis, in his book, **The Restoration Movement of the Nineteenth Century**, cites the following reasons for their great success.

I. The preachers of the restoration theme had arrived at a clear understanding of their goal. They were committed to reproducing the Christianity of the first century in their own generation. They were calling people back to the old paths (Jer. 6:16). They clearly articulated their message for a people who wanted to be told plainly what the Lord's will was (John 10:24). Like Ezra of old, they set their hearts to first seek the law of Jehovah, then do it and only then to teach others (Ezra 7:10). They boldly challenged the entrenched errors of religion and dared denominational defenders to examine and test their systems by God's Word. Like Apollos, they powerfully confuted the champions of error and that publicly, showing by the Scripture the error of their ways (Acts 18:28).

II. The masses wanted a change in the religious scene. Many sectarian preachers were uneducated men, ignorant of the Bible. They relied on bombast and emotion in their preaching. The rest were mystical, theoretical and speculative in their teaching. This left their hearers hungry for the bread of life. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a famine in the land; "Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah" (Amos 8:11). Men and women were hungrily searching for the word of the Lord. In the teaching of our pioneer brethren, they found it.

Devout souls had grown weary of sectarianism with its arrogance and pride, its quarreling and division, its rending of families, friendships and communities. Satan had had his day; men's hearts were inclined toward God.

III. Restoration preachers provided the menu people were searching for. They gave folks a new view of God's book. Many denominational preachers said it was a sealed book that could not be understood. Our men cited Ephesians 3:4 where Paul said, "When ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ." The sectarians said it took special divine illumination by the Holy Spirit to understand Scripture. Our brethren pointed out that when you read what the Bible says, you are hearing "what the Spirit saith to the churches" (Rev. 2:7). Some taught that the Bible was the property of the

clergy; that they alone could understand and expound it. Our men pointed out that all Christians are God's clergy (Eph. 1:11; I Pet. 2:5,9).

In those days, most folks thought the Bible was a disorganized basket of truth. Our brethren demonstrated that it was a systematic and orderly in its teaching. They noted the distinction between old and new covenants, between law and gospel, obligation and expediency, command and promise. Our teachers made a proper distinction between the Old and New Testaments. They taught men to rightly divide the Word (II Tim. 2:15). They showed that Christ took the old law out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Col. 2:14), and that we are subject only to the law of Christ, by which we will be judged (John 12:48).

The Restorers exalted the Book of God above all man made creeds. Every denomination had its human creed by which a man's faith was judged. Our brethren taught that Scripture would make a man complete and furnish him completely unto every good work (II Tim. 3:16-17). They honored the Bible as all sufficient; therefore, no human creed was needed.

They pled for the unity of all God-fearing souls in Christ and on the Bible. Such was clearly the Savior's prayer (John 17:20-21). Their denominational counterparts promoted divisions and thanked God for it. The people could see the difference.

The pioneers emphasized the difference in faith and opinion and showed how men of diverse opinions still could be united in Christ. It was the Lord's will that we "all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among (us)..." (I Cor. 1:10). In matters of opinion we must, like Paul, be willing to make "concession" to our brother (I Cor. 7:6-7). Thomas Campbell captured the idea when he said, "In matters of faith let there be unity; in matters of opinion, liberty and in all things let there be charity."

They met the objections of Calvinism by showing that "election" had reference to a type of character, not to individuals (Eph. 1:11-13). They taught that God wanted all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4); and that he called them to himself through the gospel (II Thess. 2:14). They stressed man's role in his salvation. While salvation is extended to all (Matt. 11:28-30), only those who in faith obey Christ will be saved (Heb. 5:8-9).

They taught that the Holy Spirit, in conversion, did not operate directly on the sinner's heart; rather it worked through the gospel. The word of God is the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17). By emphasizing the Bible examples of conversion in the Book of Acts, they exposed the folly of requiring a conversion experience of those seeking salvation.

They showed from the Scripture that God did not have to be implored at a mourner's bench to save penitent sinners. He wants all men to be saved (I Tim.

2:4) and every provision has been made to effect their salvation. Believing sinners need only arise and be baptized to wash away their sins (Acts 22:16).

Those early preachers were striving to reproduce the original church of the Bible in name, teaching, creed, ordinances and work. They called on religious folks to honor the Bible as the only standard. Their plea made sense. It was evident to most folks that one cannot improve on God's perfect plan.

Those brethren exalted Christ as the central point of Christianity. He was the founder, head and savior of the church. He had purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28). Rather than a system of doctrine or a denominational organization, they preached a personal Savior for an individual sinner. It was Christ who saved, not creeds or sects (Acts 16:30).

IV. The pioneer preachers were men worthy of their message. A weapon is no more useful in combat than the man who wields it. The success of the gospel message depends to a large degree on those who teach it. Those brethren were men of intelligence and conviction, courage and common sense. While most of them were not college educated, they were "full of the Book." They loved and studied it, respected and lived it. They preached and practiced it. They were not hirelings (John 10:12). They preached not because they were paid to do so. Most were not. They loved their Lord and could do no less (I Cor. 9:16). They sacrificed their all and God blessed their labors. We are their blessed heirs.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, a little stone, cut out of the mountain without human hands, smote the man-like image of metal and ground it to pieces. The little stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:31-35). That is an apt description of the growth and success of the great Restoration Movement. May we today do our part to further the success of this great movement so that all citizens of earth will hear the glad message of Christ. May we be committed to its perpetuation so it will continue to bless those who come after us.

19.

REFORMATION BY RESTORATION

Sometimes we are discouraged when we observe the flaws, failures and shortcomings among contemporary members of the church. That we are imperfect disciples cannot be denied. Like all others, we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). To deny that fact is to deceive ourselves and be void of truth (I John 1:8). We are a fallible people, limited in both knowledge and understanding of God's will. In every congregation, disciples are at various levels of spiritual growth and maturity. This means their conduct will likewise span the spectrum from that of babes to mature senior saints. It would be presumptuous for a disciple to claim he has perfect knowledge, perfect faith, or that he is perfect in obedience to or the practice of the principles of Christ. Even those who seem to enjoy pointing out the failures of others must face the harsh reality of their own shortcomings; especially their ingratitude, elitism and presumption.

Our human frailty explains why great preachers of the past use to preach and write often about the continuing need for restoration. We are not the first body of people to set about restoring the church to her primitive state, nor will we be the last. Some restorations floundered and sank back into the mire of apostasy. This happened to most of the congregations associated with the efforts of Dr. Abner Jones and Elias Smith in New England in the early years of the 19th century. It happened to some eighty-five percent of the churches of the Campbell-Stone movement who are now known as Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches. It is happening today among those who have openly renounced the idea of restoring the ancient order.

What shall we who hold the restoration concept to be biblical, valid and workable do when we see our shortcomings? We must reform ourselves by refocusing on the divine pattern set forth in the New Testament of Christ (II Tim. 1:13), and dedicating ourselves to matching that in our faith and practice. The only other alternatives would be for us to follow our own paths (Jer. 10:23) or depend on our own human wisdom (I Cor. 1:20-21). Or like our religious neighbors, we could lean on the broken staff of public popularity, or the uncertain emotions of subjectivism. We who love the Lord and his holy church, who still bow in submission before the authority of the New Covenant of Christ, will continue to plead with all men to turn from their misguided ways and join us in the never-ending task of reforming our selves by restoring the ancient faith and practice. Those who stubbornly refuse to do so will answer to the Judge of all when he comes in glory with his mighty angels (II Thess. 1:7-9).

20.

RESTORING BAPTISM TO ITS PROPER BIBLE PLACE

When the call to go back to the Bible was first sounded, none of the spokesmen appreciated the proper role of baptism in God's scheme of redemption. So inured were their minds that they read right over the verses on baptism without perceiving their meaning.

James O'Kelly and his "Christians" continued to hold to the old Methodist practice of offering sprinkling, pouring or immersion to those who thought they were already saved. When young Joseph Thomas, later known as the White Pilgrim, came to O'Kelly requesting immersion, the older preacher finally persuaded him to accept pouring. Thomas did so with reservation and requested that an entire tub of water be poured upon him (Joseph Thomas, **The White Pilgrim**, 1861, p.25; Chester Bullard "The White Pilgrim," **Christian Standard**, nd. np.). Later, Thomas found men willing to immerse him and immediately he requested and received proper baptism (J. W. West, **Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers**, pp. 88-89).

Barton Stone's restoration movement began among the Presbyterians. It was several years before they came to realize the importance of immersion. David Purviance and Reuben Dooley were among the first preachers to request immersion. Stone at first hesitated but in 1804 he was baptized in Stoner's Creek near Paris, Kentucky. Even then, he was reticent to preach the necessity of Christian baptism, believing that it had a discouraging effect on his hearers. Later he fully embraced the Bible way (Earl West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 1, pp. 29-31).

Thomas Campbell was at the home of Abraham Altars when he presented his back to the Bible program for the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania. All of those present were of Presbyterian background. They had been sprinkled in infancy. When he proposed that the Bible be the only rule of faith and practice and that they reject all humanisms in religion, a brother Andrew Munro pointed out that such commitment would force them to discontinue infant baptism. An emotional exchange took place and Campbell, after reflection, calmly said, if it is not authorized in Scripture, he was prepared to give it up (Robert Richardson, **Memoirs of Alexander Campbell**, Vol. I, pp. 235-238).

When Alexander and Margaret Campbell's first child was born (March 13, 1812), the mother asked Alexander if they should arrange for the babe's

baptism. Campbell resolved to make a thorough study of the subject before proceeding. After several weeks of intensive study, he concluded that his infant daughter should not be sprinkled, but that he himself needed immersion. When he shared his conclusions with his father, Thomas announced that he had reached the same conclusion. Alexander then sought out a Baptist minister by the name of Mathias Luce, requesting that he immerse them according to New Testament teaching. Luce hesitated, protesting that such was contrary to Baptist usage. Finally he was persuaded that he could not do wrong by helping honest souls obey God as it is written in Scripture. Upon the appointed day, a large audience assembled on the banks of Buffalo Creek near present day Bethany, West Virginia. After some seven hours of preaching in which both Campbells and Luce discussed their reasons for being there, seven adults were immersed into Christ in obedience to the Master's will (Richardson, Vol. I, pp. 391-398).

Later, in 1823, during his debate with W. L. McCalla at Washington, Kentucky, Alexander Campbell first set forth his conviction that baptism was vitally connected with "the remission of sins," citing Acts 2:38 (Bill Humble, **Campbell and Controversy**, p. 180).

It was Campbell's protege, Walter Scott, who with great success, took this grand truth and set it forth in popular form. Young Scott had been employed by the Baptist Churches of the Mahoning Association to be their itinerant evangelist on the Western Reserve of Ohio. Scott had studied the conversions recorded in the Acts of Apostles and recognized the relation of baptism to remission of sins. Being naturally timid, he was reticent to openly preach his views among those Baptist Churches whose members believed in mourner's bench salvation. On November, 18, 1827, Scott was preaching at the Baptist Church at New Lisbon, Ohio, when he dared to set forth the biblical truth he had learned. Completing his discourse on Matthew 16:16, he called on those sinners who desired salvation to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). He did so with great fear and trembling. The audience was shocked. But a Mr. William Amend immediately made his way through the audience, requesting immersion. Amend, a Presbyterian, had said to his wife a short time before that if he ever heard anyone preach baptism as did Peter on Pentecost he would at once obey. He was forthwith baptized according to the divine instruction (Dwight E. Stevenson, **Walter Scott, Voice of the Golden Oracle**, pp. 66-67). In the three years following, Scott baptized some 3,000 souls according to the ancient gospel.

Until recently, members of the Church of Christ have rarely attended a service when they did not hear the simple New Testament plan of salvation set forth at the close of services. Unfortunately a new generation of men now

feel such an explanation is unnecessary. In its place, they substitute a vague call to respond to Jesus much as our denominational neighbors do. Lest we forget, or lest the familiar become contemptible, we need to often declare the Bible's message on baptism.

- **Baptism is a command** of the Lord (Mark 16:16; Acts 1:48).
- **Baptism is the duty of everyone** not yet in Christ (Acts 2:38).
- **Baptism cannot be administered until certain conditions are met:** Faith (Mark. 16:16); Repentance (Acts 2:38); Confession (Acts 8:36-38). Hence babies are not proper candidates for baptism.
- **Baptism is an immersion in water** (John 3:23; Acts 8: 38-39; Rom. 6:3-4).
- **There is only one baptism** (Eph. 4:4). Therefore sprinkling, pouring, and so-called Holy Ghost baptism are excluded.
- **Baptism puts one into Christ** (Gal. 3:26-27).
- **Baptism also puts one into Christ's body which is his church** (I Cor. 12:13; John 3:5).
- **Baptism is for remission of past sins** (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

The Bible does not teach baptismal regeneration. There is no miraculous power in water. The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sins (I John 1:7). God has ordained that Christ's blood saves us when we arise and are baptized to wash away our sins (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a test of our faith in the Word of God and our willingness to obey Him.

Those who have been improperly baptized should follow the example of the twelve men of Ephesus who were rebaptized according to Paul's instructions (Acts 19:1-6).

Noble souls in past generations struggled to clear away the ignorance and false teaching that obscured God's precious plan of salvation. They succeeded in restoring baptism to its proper place in the salvation of sinners. Let us not neglect this beautiful teaching but proclaim it to every creature that they might believe, be baptized and thus be saved (Mark 16:15-16).

21.

THE REBAPTISM OF SAMUEL ROGERS

Elder Samuel Rogers (1789-1877) was one of the great leaders of the first generation of Restoration preachers. He was widely known and deeply respected for his sacrificial service and faithfulness to God's Word and work. In his autobiography, Elder Rogers wrote:

"Most of my old brethren, in coming into the Reformation, differed from me in one particular. They were quite satisfied with their baptism; I was not satisfied. (He speaks of those who had received immersion usually in the Baptist churches). I heard with disquieted conscience the command; "Be baptized for the remission of sins." It was urged by my brethren that the highest and purest motive had actuated me in my baptism; that is, a desire out of a pure heart to obey God; that it would be unreasonable to believe that, because his loving children did not understand all that was in store for them in their obedience, therefore, he would withhold any good thing from them. They argued that no earthly parent would be so hard with his child..."¹²

Rogers was not impressed with their arguments. He reasoned that it was fallacious to assume that God would necessarily do what a human parent would do. He insisted that he had not obeyed the command to be baptized for remission of sins, since he had sought remission at the mourner's bench and later requested baptism. He saw his obedience as defective, because his understanding and faith as to the purpose of baptism had been faulty.¹³ A few days later he settled the question by being baptized for the remission of sins and from that point on his conscience was at rest. He was convinced that he had done the right thing.

Year later, Rogers wrote,

"To my mind, an unintelligent baptism is little better than no baptism at all...Christian baptism is not simply an act, else an immersed infidel could claim the blessing of remission. Faith must precede it, all admit, but are the antecedents more important to make it baptism than its consequents? Certainly not....I claim that the antecedents are defective, necessarily if they do not embrace the consequents, there can be no intelligent faith

¹² John I. Rogers, editor, *Autobiography of Elders Samuel Rogers* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1909), p. 127

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 127-128.

that does not embrace the promises connected with any act of obedience we are required to perform."¹⁴

Bro. Roger's experience is timely for us today as the subject of "what constitutes scriptural baptism?" is once more a point of discussion. From this we learn:

- That the question of rebaptism for those coming from denominationalism is not a new issue. It is rather a recurring question.
- It is a mistake to assume that all the pioneers in the East were willing to accept, without question, those immersed in sectarian bodies.
- It is likewise a mistake to assume that only radical men made an issue of rebaptism in the past. Samuel Rogers was not radical! He was one of the most highly respected men of that first generation of restorers.

For some 40 years (1880-1920) a heated discussion on this subject transpired between the editor and writers of the **Firm Foundation** and their counterparts at the **Gospel Advocate**. "The avowed purpose of the establishment of the **Firm Foundation** was occasioned by (Austin) McGary's growing alarm at the practice of some preachers of 'shaking in the Baptists.'"¹⁵

*"David Lipscomb believed that if an individual was baptized from the motive of wanting to obey God, that motive was acceptable whether the individual understood that baptism was in order to the remission of sins or not. Austin McGary, on the other hand, denied this, insisting that obeying God 'from the heart' required an accurate understanding of the purpose of baptism."*¹⁶

The battle was hard fought for some 40 years. A clear victory was never won by either side. Over the years, however, brotherhood thinking evolved to the point that most preachers and congregations would decline to accept a Baptist or any other denominationists unless they could demonstrate that they had been baptized in order to receive remission of sins. This is clearly Biblical ground. The Apostles told candidates why they should be baptized: "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). "Be baptized and wash away thy sins..." (Acts 22:16).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹⁵ Earl I. West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 2, (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950), pp. 405-406.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

Those baptized without proper faith and understanding, Paul rebaptized (Acts 19:1-7). Better to say, he baptized them properly for the first time, thus they received the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5.

Many have had the experience of meeting that occasional prospect who insisted that he did understand correctly the divine purpose for baptism; that he obeyed with that clearly in mind. If such a man is willing to repent of any error in his life and worship, we gladly extend to them the hand of fellowship. We leave the disposition of the matter to him and God, since it is God, not us, who adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47).

Let us preach boldly those truths plainly revealed in God's book. Let us teach men not only to be baptized, but also why they should do so. By so doing we can't be wrong. On judgment day no man will regret having been baptized upon a proper understanding of God's purpose for that ordinance.

22

RESTORING THE ANCIENT LANDMARKS

In ancient times property boundaries were marked with piles of stones at the corners of one's land. Unscrupulous men were tempted to move these landmarks in order to gain control of their neighbor's land or water. Since God had given Israel their land, to tamper with the boundaries was a sin against Him. Thus, Moses wrote, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbor's landmark, which they of old time have set....in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee to possess it" (Deut. 19:14). A curse was pronounced on the man who dared to do this dastardly thing (Deut. 27:17).

Like those material landmarks of old, there are spiritual landmarks that must be respected. To be sure of one's property rights he must be able to survey his landmarks—likewise, to be sure of our spiritual footing, we must consult, God's Word to establish our borders

I. We must not tamper with God's landmarks. God warned his people, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I commanded you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of Jehovah....." (Deut. 4:2). Agur the oracle said, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6). In the words of Peter, "If any man speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 3:15, KJV). Jesus closed His New

Covenant with these solemn words, “If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which were written in this book, and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life...” (Rev. 22:18-19).

II. There are landmarks concerning God which must be respected. The first of these is His existence. Though all the learned men should scoff and doubt, we “must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him” (Heb. 11:6). Other landmarks include His oneness (Deut. 6:4), and that God is revealed in three personalities; i.e. Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). Polytheism moves the landmark, but so does Unitarianism. God is exclusive; we must have no other gods before (beside) Him (Deut. 5:7). His divine nature must be respected. God is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, omni-benevolent, perfectly holy, righteous and just. To deny even one of these attributes is to tamper with the landmarks. God’s will for man must be obeyed. We must “fear God and keep his commandments” (Eccle. 12:13). Only those who do His will shall inherit the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21). Those who teach universal salvation, or salvation by faith alone, tamper with this landmark.

III. There are landmarks concerning Christ. He is the Son of God (Matt.16:16). He is divine; God in the flesh (John 1:1-3, 14). He is also human as are we (1 John 4:2-3). Those who deny His deity are removing the landmark as are those who deny His humanity. Jesus was raised from the dead (I Cor. 15:1-4). He established his kingdom (Col. 1:13). He now reigns at God’s right hand on David’s throne (Acts. 2:29-33). Those who advocate the premillennial doctrine remove the ancient landmarks. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Those who set popes, patriarchs, and presidents over churches have moved the Divine landmarks.

IV. There are landmarks concerning the church. Christ founded only one church (Matt. 16:18; 1Cor. 12:12-13). Jesus is the only head of the church (Eph.1:20-22). Those who promote denominationalism move these landmarks. Membership in Christ’s church is essential to salvation since it is the family of the saved. (Eph. 5:23). Those who say the church is unimportant move this landmark. The church is to be directed by the teaching of Christ (John 12:48; 11 John 9). Every human creed and confession of faith disturbs this landmark. Each congregation of God’s people is self-governing with its own elders (Acts 14:23; I Pet.5:2). Ecclesiastical bodies that seek to govern men and congregations violate the divine landmark. They are an intrusion upon the rights of God and his saints.

V. There are landmarks concerning worship. God ordained that His people worship on the first day of the week, the day of Christ’s resurrection (Acts

20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2). Those who teach men to observe the seventh day Sabbath remove this landmark.

Lord's Day worship centers on the sacred meal memorializing Christ's crucified body (Acts 20:7). Jesus ordained bread and fruit of the vine by which to remember his death (Matt. 26:26-28). The landmarks are disturbed when men claim to transform the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ, or when they claim it is a sacrifice of the Savior. So also was the landmark moved when the worshipers were denied the cup or when they are given water instead of fruit of the vine.

The Master's landmark calls for freewill offerings given to God on the first day of the week (I Cor. 16:1-2). To substitute taxes, tithes, and fundraising gimmicks is to remove the ancient landmark.

Heaven ordered that we offer up the fruit of our lips as a sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13:15). Singing and making melody with the heart is the authorized form of worship. Mechanical instruments of music and choirs in worship move the landmark.

VI. There are landmarks regarding salvation. God declares that He is willing to save all (I Tim. 2:4). But he only saves those who come to him on His terms (Heb. 5: 8-9). To teach salvation without compliance with God's will is to remove the landmark. Calvin's doctrine of limited atonement, i.e. that God has willed that some be damned, violates the sacred landmark. Scripture affirms that salvation is by faith (John. 3:16), but the doctrine of salvation by faith alone moves the landmark (Jas. 2:24). Repentance is made requisite by God (Luke.13:3). For folks to seek to be Christians without a genuine change in heart and life ignores this landmark. Infant baptism fails here for the child cannot repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). Confession of faith is divinely ordained (Rom. 10:9-10). We are to confess Christ as did Peter (Matt. 16:16). To confess that God has saved oneself before baptism is contrary to the teaching of Christ. It is to tamper with the landmark.

We stand before the world with the announced goal of going back to the Bible and restoring original Christianity.

A common commitment to do all things according to the Scripture, and only those things therein prescribed, can bring together all those disciples who love Christ. Such a movement is an act of faith, not a governmental or institutional movement. Around the world, God-fearing individuals are making their way out of the darkness of religious confusion into the pure light of God's eternal truth. It is our prayer that you too will commit yourself to being an undenominational, New Testament Christian and a member of the church one reads of in the Scripture. Together we will worship and serve the Lord and together we will share the bliss of eternity.

23.

RESTORATION OF THE SACRED NAME CHRISTIAN

When the commitment was made to restore the religion of Christ to its original purity, men had to determine the name by which God's people should be called. At that time every religious groups identified itself by a name of its own choosing, such as Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist, etc. While all thought of themselves as Christians, all preferred their human names to that of Christ.

RICE HAGGARD: CHAMPION FOR THE NAME CHRISTIAN

In 1793 James O'Kelly and a band of dissident ministers broke away from the Methodist Church and the despotic leadership of bishop Francis Asbury. At first O'Kelly's group called themselves Republican Methodists. On Aug. 4, 1794, O'Kelly's men met at the Old Lebanon Church in Surrey County, Virginia to discuss the direction they would go. Rice Haggard arose and stated:

"Brethren, this (Bible) is a sufficient rule of faith and practice. By it we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move(d) that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply."

The brethren proceeded to adopt "the name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names" (W. E. McClenny, **Life of Rev. James O'Kelly**, p. 111).

In the opening years of the 19th century, Drs. Abner Jones and Elias Smith broke with the Baptists in New England and launched an independent movement to restore the original faith of the church. Smith, in his autobiography notes:

*"When our number was some short of twenty, we agreed to consider ourselves a church of Christ, owning him as our only Master, Lord and Lawgiver, and we agreed to consider ourselves Christians, without the addition of any unscriptural name" (Elias Smith, **The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels and Sufferings of Elias Smith**, pp. 313-314).*

About this same time (1804), a small handful of men broke with the Presbyterians in north-central Kentucky. At first they organized themselves as the Springfield Presbytery. In 1804, about a year after their beginning, the group met and dissolved their organization and pledged themselves to seek

solid Biblical ground. They issued a document entitled, “**The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery.**” Among their declarations was the following:

“We will that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God’s heritage, and his name one.”

Later, Barton Stone, leader of these brethren, tells us that it was Rice Haggard who taught them to take the Christian name to the exclusion of all others (John Rogers, **Works of Barton W. Stone**, p. 50). They proceeded to publish a pamphlet written by Haggard entitled, **An Address to the Different Religious Societies on the Sacred Import of the Christian Name.** Elias Smith, in 1809, published Haggard’s document in his **Herald of Gospel Liberty** which he issued from New England.

Modern historians have discovered that Haggard’s thoughts on the importance of the name Christian were not original to himself. He had evidently read and embraced the thoughts of a sermon published by Samuel Davies, a New Light Presbyterian, in his three volumes of **Sermons on Important Subjects** (see Colby D. Hall, **Rice Haggard, the American Frontier Evangelist Who Revived the Name Christian**, p. 51). Similar thoughts had previously been set forth in 1728 by Bishop Grosvenor of Great Britain (Lester McAlister and William Tucker, **Journey in Faith**, p. 56).

Rice Haggard offered six reasons why all disciples should wear the name, Christian:

1. “Because it is significant...the word Christ means *anointed*.”
2. “Because the Scriptures favor that as the name most proper for the church. It was given by divine authority...”
3. “The Church of Christ is one body and one name is enough for the same body.”
4. “Because unscriptural names are spurious things, are divergent, having a tendency to disunite the body of Christ.”
5. “Because Christ and his church are...designated under the endearing relation of husband and wife. And there is a real propriety in a woman being called by the name of her husband...”
6. “The Church of Christ is...a spiritual house. Knowing that a house divided against itself cannot stand....” (Rice Haggard, **An Address to the Different Religious Societies on the Sacred Import of the Christian Name**, pp. 15-17).

It was Haggard's view that denominational names arose only after men "had lost the spirit of the Christian religion and departed from the simplicity of the gospel..." Barton Stone in **An Address to the Churches** wrote:

"We have taken the Bible only as our standard. We have taken no party names by which to distinguish ourselves from others, but the general name Christian ...

We have taken the name Christian, not because we considered ourselves more pure than others, but because we know it was the name first given to the disciples of Jesus by Divine Authority" (James Mathes, **Works of Elder B. W. Stone**, vol. 1, pp. 158-159).

When Alexander Campbell launched his **Christian Baptist** journal, he declared:

"The Christian Baptist shall espouse the cause of no religious sect, excepting the ancient sect, 'called Christians first at Antioch'" (Robert Richardson, **Memoirs of Alexander Campbell**, Vol II, p. 50).

When on Jan. 1, 1832 the forces of Campbell and Stone came together in the Hill Street Church in Lexington, Kentucky, Raccoon John Smith made the following exhortation:

"God has but one people on the earth. He has given to them but one Book, and therein exhorts and commands them to be one family... Let us, then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stonites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need" (John August Williams, **Life of Elder John Smith**, pp. 452-454).

Enemies of the back to the Bible movement delighted in insulting the restoring brethren by calling them Campbellites. Alexander Campbell, responding to the question: "What is Campbellism?" replied.

"It is a nickname of reproach invented and adopted by those whose views, feelings and desires are all sectarian—who cannot conceive of Christianity in any other light than an ism ... if they slander us with the name and epithets which we disavow they must answer to him who judges righteously" (**Christian Baptist**, Vol. 5, p. 270).

The pioneers frequently preached on "The Christian Name." Elijah Goodwin made the following points in his lesson on the name:

1. "The word 'Christian' is derived from the term "Christ" which means "anointed." Since every Christian is a royal priest (I Pet. 2:5), and has

an unction, i.e., anointing (I John 2:20), it is proper that we wear the name Christian.”

2. “Christian is a name of distinction, intended to distinguish those who wear it from all other people” (II Cor. 7:1).
3. “The term ‘Christian’ is intended to point out those who bear it as the property of Christ” (I Cor. 6:19-20).
4. “The name ‘Christian’ is a catholic (i.e., universal) name which is acceptable to all and should replace all human names. Ask any disciple of any of the sects of Christendom if he is a Christian, and he will proudly claim the title. If he is a Methodist, ask him if he is a Baptist, and he would promptly deny it.”
5. “Christian is a patronymic name...it is intended to refer to the founder of the church and the author of our holy religion” (Matt. 16:18). “We glorify God in this name (Christian)” (I Pet. 4:16).
6. “The name Christian seems to have been given by divine authority.” Adam Clarke says, “The word *chrematizo*...which we translate ‘were called’ signifies...to appoint, warn, or nominate by divine direction.” Philip Doddridge translates the passage, “and the disciples were by divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch” (**The Family Expositor**, p. 418).
7. “We glorify God in the name Christian (I Pet. 4:16). Each time the Hebrews called themselves Israelites, they produced the name of God (El) so each time we call ourselves Christian, we set forth the name of Christ.”
8. “The prophet predicted a day in Messiah’s age when Jehovah would “call his servants by another name” (Is. 65:15). When the disciples were called Christian at Antioch, this was fulfilled (Acts 11:26).”

We are not alone in pleading for the general use of this glorious name:

Martin Luther said, “I pray you to leave my name alone, and call not yourselves Lutherans, but Christians....cease my dear friends to cling these party names and distinctions. Away with all; and let us call ourselves only Christians after him from whom our doctrine comes” (Stork, **The Life of Luther**, p. 289, as quoted by Leroy Brownlow in **Why I am A Member of the Church of Christ**, p. 33).

Charles Spurgeon, the greatest of all Baptists ministers, said: “I say of the Baptist name, let it perish, but let Christ’s name last forever” (**Spurgeon’s Memorial Library**, Vol. 1, ; 168).

John Wesley reported a dream he had in which he found himself at the gates of hell. Knocking at the gate he inquired if any of the various denominations were there citing by their sectarian names. “Yes” was the answer, a great many. He then visited paradise and asked if any of those groups were there: Wesleyans? No. Roman Catholics? No. “Whom have you here then?” He asked in astonishment. We know nothing here of any of these names you have mentioned. “The only name of which we know anything here is ‘Christian’ was the reply” (J. P. Bennett, **Centennial of Religious Journalism**, p. 20).

Adam Clarke, noted Methodist commentator, wrote, “When all return to the spirit of the gospel, they will probably resume the appellative Christian” (**Clarke’s Commentary**, Vol. 5, Matthew-Acts, p. 773).

May God hasten the day when all of those who love Jesus will duly honor him by laying aside every human name and wearing with holy pride the sacred name “Christian.”

24.

RESTORING THE UNITY FOR WHICH CHRIST PRAYED

The movement to restore New Testament Christianity was first of all an effort to restore the unity of the Lord’s people.

In the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, Barton Stone and his coworkers stated, “We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.” Thomas Campbell, in his **Declaration and Address**, declared “that division among Christians is anti-Christian, anti-scriptural, unnatural and to be abhorred.” He believed “that the church of Christ is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one.” Truly, nothing is more beautiful and edifying than unity and harmony among brethren (Ps. 133:1). On the other hand, nothing is more destructive than strife and division among God’s people.

I. Some may ask, **Is it really reasonable to labor for religious unity** in a world that seems to prefer sectarianism? The answer is obvious to those who study the Scriptures. It is God’s express will and intent that his people be

united. We are to give “diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3). As he faced the cross, Jesus prayed that his disciples would be one (John 17:20-21). Paul pled with the church in Corinth that there “be no divisions among” them (I Cor. 1:10).

The divided state of Christendom is scandalous. A lost world stands **bewildered** and **confused** at the sight of divided, competing churches. Many are **alienated** because of the situation and reject Christianity altogether. There is unholy competition between rival groups. Waste of precious resources is seen as services and facilities are duplicated by rival denominations. This scandalous situation has given Satan a great advantage which he has well exploited (Matt. 12:25). As a result of this crippling division of believers the world is yet unevangelized and multitudes of souls are lost. Because of the disruptions of division, we have failed to reform and ameliorate our society and the whole world is yet in the power of the evil one (I John 5:19). Surely every sensitive believer sees the pressing need for the unity of all who love Jesus.

II. What is the nature of the unity which Christ desires? The Lord prayed that we “all be one” even as he and his Father are one (John 17:21). Paul’s expectation was that (we) be “perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgement” (I Cor. 1:10). The same apostle urged the Ephesians to work to maintain unity since we have a **common foundation**, i.e., “one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of (our) calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. . .” (Eph. 4:4-6). This unity is illustrated in the fact that Christ has but one bride (Eph. 5:22-23), 32) and that he is king over only one kingdom (John 18:36). Our unity is based on mutual love among Christians, even as Christ loved us (John 13:34).

III. How are we to attain this oneness? Across the ages three approaches to Christian unity have been pursued. Some have sought to **coerce** men to conform with the ruling power by force of law, by persecution and the sword, Catholicism and the Protestant state churches of Europe and England sought to maintain the unity of believers. The use of physical force to attain unity is unknown to Scripture. Rather, the Lord wants cheerful compliance with his will in all matters (II Cor. 9:7).

In modern times, men have sought for unity through **compromise**. This is the method of the ecumenical movement. Each group maintains its peculiar traditions and doctrines. The various bodies close their eyes to their many differences in faith and practice and agree to disagree. They speak of this approach as “unity in diversity,” or “fellowship without endorsement.” They seek a union without concern for God’s revealed will.

Some are so brazen as to openly reject Scripture as an unacceptable basis for unity. Catholicism would elevate tradition to a par with Scripture. Others would urge their neighbors to unite upon their creed and traditions. Obviously these are not acceptable bases for Christian unity.

Christ, in his New Covenant, has set forth a divinely appointed plan for unity. First of all, we must accept the absolute **oneness of Christ's church**. As the head, Christ has but one body and every saved soul has to be baptized into that one body (I Cor. 12:13, 20, 25). That spiritual body is his church (Col. 1:18). Secondly, we must all agree that Christ is the **one and only head** of the church. To this office God has appointed him (Eph. 12:22). Thirdly, there must be a **common standard** or rule of faith and conduct for the church. Christ's will, the New Testament, is that standard. By it, we will be judged (John 12:48). To abide within it is to be blest, to depart from it leaves us without God's benediction (II John 9). Fourthly, we must see the **New Testament as a common, divine blueprint**, a pattern for all things relating to the faith, worship, practice and government of the church (II Tim. 1:13). That pattern must be followed in all things (Heb. 8:5b). Fifthly, we all must share a common salvation. Faith in Christ is the essential foundation (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6). Repentance from sin is commanded of all (Acts 17:30). Immersion for remission of sins is a divine requirement (Acts 10:47; 2:38). The necessity of baptism is seen in Jesus words to Nicodemus, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Sixthly, there must be a **common worship** based not upon tradition, preference or popularity, but upon the divine Word. We are to observe all things that Christ commanded (Matt. 28:20). We may neither add to nor take from those instructions (Rev. 22:18-19).

IV. To attain unity, there must be a **common goal**. All must desire to be united as are the Father and the Son (John 17:20-23). We must be determined to speak the same so there will be no division among us (I Cor. 1:10). We must be committed to honoring God by honoring his inspired Word as the absolute and final standard (Acts 17:11). We must be resolved to accept nothing but that revealed in the Scripture, and to never add to nor take away therefrom (Rev. 22:18-19). We must never doubt nor question the plainly revealed will of God on any subject - nor compromise thereon. We must never quarrel about unknown, obscure or unimportant questions and issues. From such questions and "disputes of words. . . cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmising (and) wrangling of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth. . ." (I Tim. 6:4-5). We must never force our "opinions" on any subject on our fellow Christians. Opinions must be held privately and quietly (Rom. 14:1, 5, 13). Of course those plainly revealed matters of faith are not in this category. We must never make a single rule or regulation to bind on our brothers. Rule making is God's

exclusive right (Jas. 4:11-12). No barriers must be built between ourselves and any other true Christian, rather we must labor to remove all barriers (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-18). Party-spirit and party-loyalty must be removed from every heart. Such is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). These must be replaced with loyalty to Christ. We must do everything in our power, that is right before God, to achieve and maintain that unity of the Spirit which Paul commands (Eph. 4:1-4). We must deny ourselves and count others better than ourselves if we are to be one (Matt. 16:24; Phil. 2:1-3). We must devote ourselves to the service of God and man and let Christ have all of the credit and honor (Matt. 20:25-28). Ambition and jealousy are the roots of most division.

25.

CAN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TRACE ITS LINAGE TO THE APOSTLES?

The existence of the Lord's true church does not depend on our ability to trace a continual line of churches from the apostolic age to ours. The Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, the Methodists, the Baptists and others seek to justify their existence by labored efforts to trace their lineage back to the Apostles. One need only compare their faith and practice with Scripture to know that even if they should be able to show such a lineage, they have so changed their faith and practice that the historical connection is meaningless.

These denominations and others are driven to establish a lineal descent to the Apostles because of a misunderstanding of Jesus' words in Matthew 16:18. "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." Most tend to prefer the King James rendering, "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." This seems to make their point that the church would never fail because, Satan, the master of Hell, would not be able to overcome it. A closer study however yields a different meaning.

Jesus promised to build his church. Yet, in verse 21 of the same chapter, he told his disciples that "he must go unto Jerusalem...and be killed." Like any other mortals, they would have wondered, how can you build your church if you are going to be killed? His answer was, "the gates of Hades....not Hell" shall not prevail against my building my church. The word used by Christ

was *Hades* “the region of departed spirits” not *gehenna* (hell) Satan’s realm of eternal punishment. He clarified this by clearly stating that even though he would be killed, on “the third day (he would) be raised up” (Matt. 16:21).

In essence, the Lord was saying, I am going to build my church, but first I must die. But do not let this discourage you for the gates of Hades (where the souls of the dead go) will not be able to contain me. I will be resurrected and then I will fulfill my promise to build my church. This he did on the Pentecost following his resurrection (See Acts 2).

The existence of Christ’s true church does not depend on our ability to trace it in history. The Lord taught that the seed of the kingdom “is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). He did promise that his words would never pass away (Matt. 24:35). If one lived in an area where the true church had never existed, or where it had once existed and either by apostasy or persecution had ceased to exist, he would still be able to raise up a true Church of Christ by planting the seed of the gospel in the hearts and minds of people. When they gladly receive the word they will obey Christ’s instructions and upon their baptism be added to his spiritual body, the church (I Cor. 12:13). When there are two or more of them who resolve to worship and serve the Lord, they will constitute his church in that community (Matt. 18:20). In the very same way, we today plant the Church of Christ in a new part of the world by preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15). During those past years of apostasy and corruption, the true church was propagated through the faithful preaching of the word of God. This we call “restoration.”

26.

DID CHURCHES OF CHRIST EXIST DURING THE DARK AGES?

The above question is often asked by critics of the Church of Christ. If you are looking for a national or international organization wearing the name Church of Christ and meeting publicly in “church buildings” such as we know, the answer is no. But if you are looking for people who lived and worshiped according to the teachings of Christ the answer is yes. The Apostles predicted that apostasy was coming (Acts 20:29-30; I Tim. 4:1-3). By the fourth century apostasy was wide-spread. The corrupt church did not hesitate to persecute

those who dared to dissent from her teaching and practice. When the apostasy was full grown, it was what we now know as the Roman Catholic Church. So great was its power and so oppressive its tyranny that any who dared to hold to the ancient faith of the Apostles had to go “underground” with their faith or perish at the hands of the dominant church. In the Book of Revelation, John pictures this as the persecuted church fleeing into the wilderness where she would be nourished and protected by God for 1260 years (Rev. 12:13-14).

The dissenting groups, being small and persecuted, did not gain a notable place in the history of the church. Their writings were often destroyed. The corrupt church, being dominant, preserved her diatribes against the dissenters. As is common, they were maligned and misrepresented on every occasion. From the writings of their enemies it is virtually impossible to know for sure what they believed, taught and practiced.

In recent years researchers have been able to unearth some valuable bits of information that throw more light on these independent churches. Some among the Puritans and Separatists in England seem to have held views similar to modern day Churches of Christ. In Europe there was a numerous back to the Bible movement, called by their enemies, “Anabaptists,” which meant re-baptizers. The earliest traces of this movement are found in the 14th century. They were thoroughly committed to the idea of restoring the original faith, worship and practice of the apostolic church. The Anabaptists were hated and persecuted by Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists. Thousands of them died for their faith.

Those believers who sought to be faithful to the teaching of Christ and his Apostles labored under the most difficult circumstances. Most were poor. They were persecuted unto death. Their opportunities for advanced education were very limited. Many were illiterate. They frequently had to flee for their lives. Their leaders were hunted down and killed. Bibles were extremely rare and their cost was beyond the reach of most ordinary folks. They lived in a day of prevailing ignorance and superstition. This they had to overcome as they sought to know and do God’s will. Books of sound teaching were virtually non-existent. Tools for research and study, which we take for granted, were unavailable to them. These conditions left them grouping for direction like a man in a darkened cave. Doubtless they often stumbled and reached wrong conclusions in their search for truth. We would not have done any better in the same circumstances. Their hearts were set on the New Jerusalem, they followed to the best of their ability such light as they had. We are happy to leave their fate to the Judge who knows the hearts and minds of men (Heb. 4:12-13) and who is great in mercy to them that fear him.

Be reminded that our standing before God does not depend on our ability to trace a line of Churches of Christ back through history to the Apostles. The gospel is the seed of Christ's kingdom-church (Luke 8:11). In any place on earth, when an honest soul hears the gospel message, believes and is baptized, he is saved (Mark 16:15-16) and added to the Lord's true church (Acts 2:41,47). When two or more converts resolve to meet together and worship Him, they constitute the Church of Christ in that community (Matt. 18:20).

27.

ANOTHER RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Jesus taught that the seed of his kingdom "is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). This being the case, whenever the gospel seed is sown, one can reasonably expect to see the kingdom, the Church of Christ, springing up and flourishing.

The Bible printed on Gutenberg's printing press ignited more than the great reform movements of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. It also struck fire in the souls of thousands of brave men and women who were not content to merely reform the old, apostate Church of Rome. They were determined to go all the way back to the Bible and restore the church found therein. The story of these godly people, known in history as Anabaptists, is truly a trail of suffering and martyrdom.

WHO WERE THEY?

Of the Anabaptists, J. L. Mosheim wrote, "They were persuaded, that it was possible, by human wisdom, industry, and vigilance, to purify the church from the contagion of the wicked, and to restore it to the simplicity of its original constitution..."

Franklin Littell writes, "They urged the putting away of all modes of worship which were unknown to the church of the Apostles, and the restoration of the observance, according to their institutions, of the ceremonies ordained by Christ," i.e., baptism and the Lord's Supper. He continues, "...the Anabaptists proper were those in the radical Reformation who gathered and disciplined a 'true church' upon the apostolic pattern as they understood it" (Franklin Littell, **The Anabaptist View of the Church**).

These disciples did not call themselves Anabaptists. It was a nickname which they rejected. To call them Anabaptists, i.e., rebaptizers, was to malign them, because they denied that baptism was repeated, inasmuch as infant baptism was no baptism at all. Their enemies, “were insistent on use of the terms ‘Wiedertauffer or Anabatistici’ because the radical groups thereby became subject to the death penalty” of the old Justinian Code (Littell). They “wanted to be known only as ‘Bruder’ (brothers) or some other nonsectarian name” (*ibid.*).

“Their movement arose in Zwingli’s own circle as the result of an effort to carry through more consistently the program of the restoration of primitive Christianity” (Roland Bainton). The historian Keller argued that “Anabaptism is, the real reformation movement, from which both Luther and Zwingli turned aside for political reasons.”

WERE THEY RADICAL?

In the early years of their movement, many radicals and fanatical men sprang up among the Anabaptists. Some claimed to be specially illuminated by the Holy Spirit; others sought a social revolution to establish a Davidic kingdom at Munster in Westphalia. They seized the town and set in force a rigid, theocratic form of government, based on a communism of goods. Even polygamy was allowed. This revolt was brutally crushed in 1535 and the leaders executed. When this handful of fanatics grabbed the stage, the entire movement was besmirched. Philip Schaff rightly observes that, “it is unjust to charge the extravagant dreams and practices of individuals upon the whole body.”

ANABAPTISTS AND THE REFORMERS

The Anabaptists said of Luther, “he tore down the old house, but built no new one in its place.” And of Zwingli, “he threw down all infirmities as with thunder strokes, but erected nothing better in place.” While the Reformers waited on the decisions of the magistrates, certain small groups embraced the New Testament pattern with eagerness and pressed forward to restore the undefiled spirit and customs of the church of the first century. Men like Balthasar Hubmaier “could not long remain satisfied with the halfway reforms of Luther and Zwingli; he had in reality done what they only professed to do... take the New Testament as his sole rule of faith and practice” (H. C. Vedder).

THEIR COMMITMENT TO RESTORATION

On January 21, 1525 a small group met at the home of Felix Mann near Zurich. “The newly baptized then pledged themselves as true disciples of Christ to live lives separated from the world and to teach the gospel and hold

the faith...” Here for the first time in the course of the Reformation, a group of Christians dared to form a church after what was conceived to be the New Testament pattern” (William Estep, **The Anabaptist Story**).

The Anabaptists “agreed with Luther that what was needed was a restoration of the beliefs and practices of the early church...” One of their favorite words was “**restitution**” by which they meant literally turning the clock back to the first century and restoring the spirit and institutions of the apostolic age” (E. H. Harbison, **The Age of Reformation**).

Roland Bainton wrote, “Much more drastically than any of their contemporaries they searched the Scriptures in order to recover the pattern of the early church.” Balthasar Hubmaier was determined “in every way possible...to reproduce the pattern of what he considered to be New Testament faith and practice” (Estep). Thus across central Europe groups “embraced the New Testament pattern with eagerness and pressed forward to restore the undefiled spirit and customs of the churches of the first century (Littell).

The Anabaptists were hated and persecuted by both Catholic and Protestant leaders. They were driven from their homes and sought refuge in remote and distant places. They were martyred by the thousands. Their heirs are found in several modern bodies such as the Mennonite, the Amish and Brethren churches.

In our lifetime, missionaries have discovered small bands of disciples in far fields who had begun on their own to imitate the original Church of Christ in their faith, worship and practice. It should come as no surprise that godly souls made the same commitment in ages past.

A SIXTEENTH CENTURY RESTORATION

Few stories are more thrilling than that of the efforts of godly men to restore New Testament Christianity. For those who are members of the Church of Christ, this is especially interesting.

Generally, when tracing the historical backgrounds of the Restoration Movement, we follow the evidence back to such men as Greville Ewing and James and Robert Haldane of Scotland who greatly influenced Alexander Campbell. They did their work in the late 1700 and early 1800s.

In his excellent book, the **The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism** (Macmillian Co. 1964), church historian, Franklin H. Littell throws light on an earlier European restoration movement in the 16th century. On the front cover of the book is written this statement of the author's purpose: "A historian's defense of the Protestants who in the 16th century broke with all Christendom and attempted, under heavy persecution, to restore the radical communities of the primitive church." A few quotations from this book will show the marked similarity of thought between leaders of the Restoration Movement in America and the "Ana-Baptists" of the 16th century Europe.

WHO WERE THESE PEOPLE?

"...the Ana-Baptists proper were those in the radical Reformation who gathered and disciplined a 'true church' upon the apostolic pattern as they understood it" (p. xvii).

"The real issue between the Anabaptists and other reformers was the question of the type of church which should take the place of the old church (Rome jhw)...the reformers aimed to reform the old Church by the Bible; the radicals attempted to build a new church from the Bible" (p. xviii).

The term "Anabaptist" simply means "rebaptizer." "...the enemies of the movement were insistent on use of the term "Wiedertaufer" or 'Anabaptistici' because the radical groups thereby became subject to the death penalty" (p. xv).

"The radicals wanted to be known only as 'Bruder' (Brethren) or some other non-sectarian name." "They repudiated the name (Anabaptist), insisting that infant baptism did not constitute true baptism and that they were not in reality rebaptizers" (p. xv).

Among the best known leaders of the Anabaptists were: Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Wilhelm Reublin, and George Blaurock in Zurich, Switzerland;

Balthasar Hubmaier of Waldshut; Hans Denck of Augsburg, Germany; Hans Hut and Pilgrim Marpek of South Germany. Menno Simons, leader of the Dutch Anabaptists, had perhaps the most lasting influence.

BIRTH OF THEIR MOVEMENT

Although some Anabaptist believers can be identified in the late 13th century, the movement came to the forefront as a corollary of the Reformation of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin.

Groups sprang up at Wittenburg, Germany in late 1521 and in Zurich in 1522 and 1523. These believers soon spread over most of Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands. Congregations were found in most other European nations as their missionaries went everywhere preaching the word.

“The great Reformers were cautious and responsible men. They hesitated to abandon the parish pattern of the medieval church. At this point the radicals passed beyond, demanding a purging of errors accumulated during the period of ‘wandering in the wilderness.’ While the Reformers waited on the decision of the magistrates, certain small groups embraced the New Testament pattern with eagerness and pressed forward to restore the undefiled spirit and customs of the church of the first century.”

Anabaptists “said of Luther, ‘that he tore down the old house, but built no new one in its place,’ and of Zwingli, that he ‘threw down all infirmities as with thunder strokes, but erected nothing better in place’.”

They found themselves hated, opposed and persecuted not only by Catholics, but by the Reformers and their followers as well. All the forces of the continent raged against them. Confiscation of goods, imprisonment, torture and death by fire and drowning were everywhere used against them. They were drowned as a reproach for having been rebaptized, some of them by immersion!

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

In the early years of their movement, some radical men and elements sprang up among the Anabaptists. Some claimed to be specially illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Others actually sought a social revolution in order to establish a Davidic realm at Munster in Westphalia. They seized the town and set in force a rigid theocratic type of government, based on a communism of goods. Even polygamy was allowed. This was crushed in 1535 and the revolutionary leaders were executed.

Out of the whirlwind of radical extremism, spiritualism, illiteracy in the masses and bitter persecution, came a mature, Bible centered concept of restoring first century Christianity. With so many of their trained leaders killed

by persecution, it is amazing that they matured as well as they did. Menno Simmons (1496-1561) provided leadership that is considered the high point in their doctrinal growth. Consider these concepts:

THE CHURCH: “Small groups embraced the New Testament pattern with eagerness and pressed forward to restore the undefiled spirit and customs of the church of the first century” (p.2). They “did not, however, consider themselves an ‘order’ or marginal movement within the church; rather their congregations were the True Church” (p.68). Against Rome they charged, “Instead of the Church of Christ that is the community and congregation of believers they have built and created stone Temples, called them churches to deceive men thereby” (p. 69).

THE MINISTRY: “The priesthood of all believers was taken to mean the application of the *consilia perfectionis* apply to all Christians instead of only a special class” (p. 68). No special class of professionals was to be allowed to diminish the sovereignty of the community of believers in matters of faith and order” (p. 93). Every faithful member was a priest of God.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT: “...they established Biblical rule, notably government by elders...”(p. 118). “These leaders were laymen, chosen by the congregation on the authority of the New Testament examples of Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5; I Tim. 3; 5:17...” (p. 92).

CHURCH DISCIPLINE: They stressed “an active practice of church discipline” (p.36). Their discipline, also called “the ban,” was based on Matthew 18:15-18 (p. 118).

EVANGELISM: “the Taufer Missioners declared that the New Testament method of preaching and letter writing was the only proper way to spread the faith” (p. 33). This was their reply to those who resorted to the sword for expansion. “They looked out upon the known world as a great missionary territory, and they sought to evangelize on the comprehensive scale of the great heroes of the past” (p. 119). “...the Anabaptists were among the first to make the (Great) Commission binding upon all church members” (p. 112).

BAPTISM: They “condemned infant baptism as non-apostolic: the rite would not be used, therefore, in a congregation seriously trying to revive the life of the Early Church” (p. 83). Many of them preached immersion (*Americana*, Vol. I, p. 508). They preached, “Firstly, Christ said go forth into the whole world, preach the Gospel to every creature. Secondly, he said, whoever believes, thirdly—and is baptized, the same shall be saved. This order must be maintained if a true Christianity is to be prepared and though the whole world rage against it” (p. 111).

LORD’S SUPPER: They “denied the ‘real presence’ which Luther and Calvin retained. For them the Supper was a memorial and symbol of their corporate union with each other and the Risen Lord” (p.68).

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY: Anabaptists were among the first champions of liberty for individual conscience. Hans Denck wrote in 1524, “No one shall discriminate against another because of faith” (p.66).

WAR AND VIOLENCE: A tiny faction took arms to protect themselves and accomplish their ends. Most refused stating, “we don’t carry sword, nor lance, nor guns, nor any kind of arms or weapons” (p.103). “The objection of the Anabaptists was not Humanistic, cultural or national. They were concerned first of all with separating the True Church from power and political interest. Their attitude was not ‘pacifism’, but rather ‘defenselessness, or ‘non-resistance’ or ‘passive obedience’” (p.103).

EXCLUSIVENESS: Heinrich Bullinger charged that “the Anabaptists hold to this their church alone, and have no community at all with any churches and also not with the Evangelicals” (p. 90). “In all congregations counsel was given against marrying out into the ‘world’” (p. 91).

WHY HAVE WE NOT RECOGNIZED THEIR RESTORATION EFFORTS BEFORE?

“...the writings and records of the movement were successfully suppressed, whereas the polemics of their enemies circulated widely and were early translated in the writings of Lutheran and Reformed enemies of the Anabaptists. This has produced an extremely biased picture. “...the most significant materials upon which informed judgements might be based, lay relatively untouched for four hundred years in the archives in Swiss, Austrian, and Czechoslovakian, German and Dutch Cities” (p.142).

THEIR DESCENDANTS

Present day descendants of the Anabaptists include Mennonites, Amish, Brethren and Baptists. Yet a simple comparison reveals that all of them have long since discarded the principle for which their forefathers died, i.e., the restoration of New Testament Christianity as revealed in the Scripture. Within 250 years, the glorious call to restore the Old Paths was largely forgotten in the world. It had to be begun all over again in the new world by the Campbells, Stone and others.

In the 200 years of our present Restoration we have seen a major portion of the body turn aside to the inviting sirens of compromise. Those of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches stand in a similar relation to the Restoration fathers we know, as do the descendants of the Anabaptists to

their progenitors. The most disturbing question is, Will it happen to us yet again? Will our children give up the cause for which the fathers sacrificed so dearly?

We conclude with this assessment by church historian, Vedder, “They were the only party among those protesting against the errors of Rome who were logical and thorough going. They alone accepted in absolute faith and followed to its necessary consequences the principle avowed by the leading reformers, that the Scriptures were the sole source of religious authority...The Anabaptists alone had penetrated beneath the surface of traditional Christianity and comprehended the real Gospel of Jesus” (p.140).

29.

DID ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FOUND THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Jesus promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18). In his death on the cross, he purchased the church with his blood (Acts 20:28). He fulfilled that promise, for we read in the Book of Acts of the Apostles that the church existed in Jerusalem (Acts 8:4). The author of the Book of Acts relates how sinners were saved and added to Christ’s church (Acts 2:14-42). It also reports the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome in the lifetime of the Apostles. The Epistles of Paul, Peter, James, John and Jude provide instructions on the faith of the church and how they worshiped and served God. The New Testament was given by Christ to be a pattern by which his church would be ordered in every age and nation (II Tim. 1:13).

Historically, we know that the church prospered and flourished for the first three centuries, even though she faced severe persecution at the hands of the Jews, pagans and the Roman government. With the ascension of Emperor Constantine as head of the Roman Empire (313 A.D.), the church finally was freed from official persecution. Given power and privilege by the emperor, many unconverted people rushed to join the church. Soon signs of corruption were seen. Depending on the support of the government rather than on God, the church began a long journey away from the teaching of Christ. In time, the Church of Christ was supplanted by the Church of Rome with her pope and his supporting hierarchy of lesser officers. The Roman priesthood not only

dominated the church, but also the souls of the people. They persecuted all who did not submit to Rome's dictates. While most conformed, individuals and small groups scattered throughout the empire refuse to do so. They sought to be true Christians, nothing more. They suffered for their faith, but steadfastly refused to compromise themselves.

This sad situation continued for some thousand years until the birth of the Protestant Reformation in the early 1500s. Martin Luther, John Calvin and Huldreich Zwingli were the most notable leaders of that protest against Rome's corruption and domination. Their noble efforts were soon thwarted by internal strife and controversy that resulted in the creation of the many Protestant denominations. Although Protestantism greatly reduced the power of the Roman Church, its adherents did not enjoy the pure and simple Christianity of apostolic times. Doctrines and commandments of men still ruled the day. After some 300 years of conflict, competition and confusion, many people began to question the concept of denominationalism. With easy access to the Bible, they began to study it with a desire to go back to the fountain head. These men were found in virtually all denominations in Europe, Great Britain and America.

As early as the 1600s scattered disciples in England were protesting against the sad state of the various denominations and calling for a pure church. Among the early voices pleading for a return to New Testament Christianity were James and Robert Haldane of England (ca.1765-1850). It was from Greville Ewing, one of their disciples, that young Alexander Campbell learned about restoration of the ancient faith. Small groups known as Glassites, Sandemanians and Scotch Baptists were scattered throughout Great Britain. From Northern Ireland, Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian preacher, and his family immigrated to America (1807-1809). His son Alexander eventually became a famous preacher and a leading voice for restoration of the ancient faith.

Here in America, others were pleading for a return to Biblical Christianity before Campbell arrived. In North Carolina, James O'Kelly launched a restoration movement among the Methodists as early as 1793. He had great success and his followers were found from Georgia, north to New Jersey and inland. In New England, Dr. Elias Smith and Dr. Abner Jones left the Baptists and began a back to the Bible Movement in the opening years of the 19th century. In Kentucky, in 1804, Barton Stone launched a similar movement among the Presbyterians. Several other smaller movements were also pleading for a return to the original faith and worship of the church. The Campbells left the Presbyterians and for a while worked among the Baptists. Young Alexander emerged as a brilliant and capable student of God's Word, preacher, writer and leader. The Campbells eventually left the Baptists and proclaimed themselves to be Christians only. Enemies of the church accused Campbell of founding a

new denomination. This he vehemently repudiated and denied. Some of those who make this charge do so out of ignorance, others out of malice.

While we are deeply indebted to Alexander Campbell for his tireless and sacrificial labors, and while we greatly admire his knowledge of Scripture and skill as a preacher, writer and debater, we do not consider him or any other human being to be our founder. Jesus founded his church. Our stated goal is to be that church, nothing more nor less.

30.

WHAT IF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL OR BARTON W. STONE HAD NEVER LIVED?

Among the fiery darts launched at the Church of Christ by scornful denominational enemies is the charge that she is nothing more than a worthless denomination founded in the early 1800s by Alexander Campbell. In recent years, disaffected preachers of the Lord's church are heard making similar accusations. From Leroy Garrett they have learned to speak of the Stone- Campbell Movement rather than the Church of Christ. The literature of their "change movement" is filled with such insulting terms as "Campbellite, Campbellian, Campbellism and the Campbell tradition." All of these derogatory terms are used to imply that our faith, our worship and our very existence stem from the mind and work of Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), thus they have no special merit or value in the world of denominational Christianity.

To show the fallacy of this assumption, let us pretend that Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone had never lived:

- Still there would have been God's Word, translated into common vernacular of the various European and English speaking nations. God's Word is the seed of his kingdom (Luke 8:11). Where it is read, believed and obeyed by honest souls, it will produce a true crop of Christians.
- There still would have been those early movements in the British Isles calling for a restoration of the ancient faith and practice of the church. There were James and Robert Haldane and their co-workers, John Glass and his followers advocating primitive Christianity. There were the Scottish-Baptists who were searching for the old paths of Christianity.

Here in America there was Elias Smith and Abner Jones of New England who launched their back to the Bible movement among the Baptists before Alexander Campbell set foot on American soil. In the seaboard states James O'Kelly and his co-workers broke with Methodism and launched their effort to be only Christians. In Georgia, Herman Dasher (1786?-1866) had resolved to be a non-denominational Christian before he heard of Campbell. In Virginia Dr. Chester Bullard (1809-1893) had done the same.

- While we appreciate the labors of Alexander Campbell and give him due credit for his knowledge and leadership, we are confident that the spiritual ferment that was at work would have eventually produced other leaders equally capable of leading a broad-based, national movement to restore the church to her original purity.
- Since Campbell's death in 1866, other restoration movements have occurred. At the turn of the 20th century there blossomed such a movement among the Russian people and their neighbors. In the late 1940s C. E. O. Essien led a back to the Bible movement in Nigeria. His restoration efforts were well under way before any of our brethren came in contact with him. Today, some 400,000 disciples are found in his homeland.
- In the 1960s, Juan Monroy of Spain abandoned skepticism to become a Christian. His conversion was based on the study of God's Word and was without denominational ties. His efforts were flourishing in Spain long before he learned of our existence.
- Today, of the million and a half members of the Church of Christ in America, only a small handful even recognize the name of Alexander Campbell. Fewer still have heard of Barton Stone. While most of our preachers recognize the names of these great men, very few of them have ever read their writings or biographies. Beyond America's shores the awareness of these two pioneer preachers is virtually unknown.
- It would be a fair estimate to say that 99.9% of current members of the Church of Christ were converted by a teacher who used the Bible to show them their need for forgiveness of sins and how Christ can save them by faith and obedience to his will. Campbell's name was not mentioned in the process. They were baptized by immersion, for the remission of their sins because they read it in their Bible (Rom. 6:3-4; Acts 2:38), not because of Campbell's teaching.
- What then should we make of those who delight in calling us Campbellites? Some few might do it of ignorance, but for the greater part of them it is an act of malice and hatefulness.

“CAMPBELLITES:” TWO USES OF THE WORD

For 150 years denominational antagonists of the Church of Christ have called us “Campbellites.” The word was always used as an insult and a slur. By it, they implied that Churches of Christ originated with Alexander Campbell (1788 -1866) rather than with Jesus, as we claimed (Matt. 16:18). Our preachers often pointed out that churches founded by men had no claim on God’s favor and had no more value than the men who founded them. Denominational preachers could not deny that their churches were founded by a particular man or group of men at an identifiable place and time. Their response was to charge us with being disciples of Campbell whom they claimed founded the Church of Christ. Baptist preachers were especially known for reproaching us with this unwelcome insult. There was a reason for their bitterness. After leaving the Presbyterian Church, Campbell spent a few years working among the Redstone Association of Baptists. So great was his influence, that thousands abandoned that faith and joined hands with Campbell in restoring the church and her faith to their original purity. In some quarters that bitterness still exists.

When a reader asked Campbell, “What is Campbellism?” he replied “It is a nickname of reproach invented and adopted by those whose views, feelings and desires are all sectarian—who cannot conceive of Christianity in any other light than an ism...I have always disclaimed every thing sectarian; and if the people of the different sects slander me or any of those who prefer the scriptures to any human creed, and the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah to any sect; I say, if they slander us with the names and epithets which we disavow, they must answer to him who judges righteously. But for ourselves, we protest against the name...” (Campbellism, **Christian Baptist** Vol 5. 1828, p. 270). When Campbell spoke in New Orleans, the editor of the local newspaper wrote a glowing report of his labors, describing Campbell as the founder of a flourishing and respectable denomination commonly known as Campbellites. When the piece was brought to his attention, Campbell diplomatically responded, kindly explaining that such was not the case and that the name was not used by his brethren. “You have done me, gentlemen, too much honor in saying I am the ‘founder’ of the denomination...known...as ‘Campbellites.’ I have always repudiated all human heads and human names for the people of the Lord and shall feel very thankful if you will correct the erroneous impression which your article may have made in thus representing me...” (**Memoirs of A. Campbell**, Vol. 2, p. 441).

Men who view Christianity through the lens of denominationalism cannot imagine or appreciate a body of people who strive to be Christians, nothing more nor less. Nor can they visualize a church that was founded by Christ; that worships, serves and is organized just as He directed. This defect in their spiritual vision leads them to rail at us and cast hateful slurs in our direction.

Now, a new breed of men are freely using this term to describe the Lord's people and church. These are men in our own ranks who have lost any love and respect they may once have held for the Church of Christ. They have borrowed the practice from their liberal cousins of the Disciples of Christ whose defection occurred a century or more ago. The writings of our change agents are sprinkled with "Campbellite, Campbellism and Campbellian" but not for the purpose of insulting us. They use them because in their delusion, they have come to believe that Alexander Campbell founded the church of which they are members; that he originated the beliefs and practices unique to us. They evidently think that claiming him as their founder somehow gives them legitimacy with their denominational neighbors. They believe we have been deluding ourselves all these years in denying Campbell as the father of our faith.

Two kinds of people call members of the Church of Christ "Campbellites." The one does it out of meanness, thinking to insult us. The other does it out of ignorance, deceived and deceiving (II Tim. 3:13). We can bear the insults of our enemies but we shall not stand idle when men who should know better shame the church by their careless use of these misleading terms.

32.

IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST A DENOMINATION?

Those who first led our efforts to restore the ancient faith and worship of the church were determined to leave denominationalism behind and be bible Christians, nothing more nor less. They aspired to be in faith and practice, the church which Jesus had promised to build (Matt. 16:18). From the beginning, their enemies charged that they were just another denomination of later vintage. This our fathers in the faith stoutly denied.

Now some among us, whose theology is tainted with liberalism, are saying that the Church of Christ is a denomination founded by Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. Since several of our professors in some of our universities believe and teach this, a steady stream of young preachers and other graduates are flowing into our churches, holding this view.

To escape the embarrassment of standing alone in a world of 1500 or more denominations, these men are saying, “we are really like you.” “We are not really all that different.” “ Please don’t scorn us or shun us...we are willing to come to terms with you.”

I say to all who have reached this conclusion, **If, in fact, your congregation is a denomination**, you should be greatly concerned for the following reasons:

- Your church exists without God’s approval. He has neither authorized nor approved of denominations.
- Your church has no promise of His blessing.
- If your church is a denomination, Christ is not the head of it, for he is head over his own church (Eph. 1:22), not one men have created.
- If your church is a denomination, you are not a part of the body of Christ. He has only one body (Eph. 4:4) and that body is his church (Col. 1:18). By your admission, you are part of another body, a denomination.
- Your church, if it is a denomination, stands in competition with the true Church of Christ. No competitor of Christ can hope to stand or prevail (Rev. 19:11-16).
- Your denominational church is of human origin. It is human in nature and value. All such human creations are doomed to perish when the earth and all things therein are burned up (II Pet. 3:10).
- Your church is of absolutely no spiritual value. It is of the same value as the Civitan, Rotary or Optimist Club, the Odd Fellows or the Masonic Lodge. It may provide you a nice social outlet and do many good things for humanity, but in the Judgment, Christ will be looking for those who are members of his church, not of a man-made denomination (Eph. 5:23).
- If your church is a denomination, you will be greatly disappointed in the Day of Judgment for you will not hear “Come ye blessed of the Father” but “I never knew you, depart from me” (Matt. 7:23).
- If your church is a denomination then you are sailing under false colors when you call it a “Church of Christ.” Only a church founded by Christ and headed by Christ, only a church that is submissive to

Christ's will in all things can honestly and truly be a Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16).

- If your church is a denomination, you cannot expect its members to be delivered up to the Father when Christ returns. He will deliver **his kingdom church** (I Cor. 15:24) but not churches that men have created. Can you imagine Christ delivering Joseph Smith's Mormon Church to God?

Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone were godly men who preached Christ and called men to abandon denominationalism and go back to the ancient truths of the Bible. Both eschewed the idea of starting a new sect or denomination. When small-minded men of their day accused them of doing that, they vigorously denied the accusation as slanderous. Now small-minded men within the very church Campbell and Stone helped to restore are making the same ugly charge. It is no less slanderous today than it was then! Those outside our ranks might make such a charge out of ignorance, but those within do not have such an excuse.

If your church is a denomination, I truly feel sorry for you. The church of which I am part is not of human origin. It was founded by Christ in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost following his resurrection. It is constructed according to the divine pattern set forth in God's Word (II Tim. 1:13). Its faith and worship are revealed in the New Testament of Christ. Entrance is according to the instruction of Jesus. Only those born of water and Spirit can enter it (John 3:5). If you are currently worshiping with a group that acknowledge themselves to be a denomination, I strongly encourage you to flee as soon as possible and make your spiritual home in a church that is truly a Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16).

THE PIONEERS WHO WENT BEFORE US

We often refer to the early preachers who labored to restore the ancient faith of Christ as our “pioneer preachers.” In days past, their names were kept alive primarily by brethren who believed in the ideals of the Restoration Movement. At first the liberal element had little interest in what they said or did. They found their progenitors among denominational scholars and reformers. In time liberals decided to claim the early leaders of our movement for their own. First, the Disciples of Christ laid claim to the heritage. They set about to reinterpret the story of our past and the message first preached, to make them compatible with their own diluted version of the faith. Now, change agents in our midst have followed that example and are producing a endless flow of books and articles dedicated to revising our understanding of the early years of our movement. It is important that those who love the church and hope to see her survive without loss of her identity, have a correct view of those pioneers in the faith.

- **They were men with hearts of gold and feet of clay.** They were devout, godfearing men who manfully struggled to free themselves from the shackles of denominationalism. Their hearts were full of the love of God. They had the highest respect for the Word of God and loved the church beyond measure. They labored to remove the tangled cords of error that hindered the correct understanding of the Bible and enmeshed and crippled churches.
- **Being human like us, they were imperfect in their knowledge and in some aspects of their practice.** They did the best of which they were capable in their day and age and with the tools of knowledge at their disposal. Thus it is possible for a researcher to find among their writings a wide array of mistaken notions and ideas about the faith. By ignoring the great fundamental truths which they generally held in common, one can paint distorted picture of them and the church of their generation. Like us, they strove to be like Jesus wanted them to be but never reached perfection. Only by God’s grace can they or we hope to stand before him justified.
- **They are our examples, but not our authority.** Like them, the church of the 21st century must always look to Christ to find her authority for faith and practice (Matt. 28:20). The truth is determined by what saith the Scriptures rather than by what saith the pioneers such as Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone.

- **We should admire the pioneers but not idolize them.** Having read most of the biographies and histories of our people, I can say that their stories are inspirational, encouraging and faith-building. They were noble champions. They were sacrificial heroes. They were giants among their fellows, but they were men of clay, just as we are. Some of them crashed along the way. Some recovered, others did not.
- **They were men of mixed abilities.** A few were greatly gifted by God, natural leaders who would have excelled in any field of endeavor. Others were ordinary men who labored in the shadows of their great leaders.
- **A few of that early generation of preachers were highly educated, but the majority were men of limited education.** They educated themselves while struggling to preach the Word and provide for their families.
- **They had few tools with which to work.** Our young men can attend Christian Schools, be taught by fellow-Christians, have access to marvelous libraries, computers and the Internet. Most of our pioneers never had such advantages. Thousands of books devoted to Bible exposition and research are available to us, but our fathers had only a handful in comparison. We can afford them but most of them could not.
- **They were our trailblazers, preparing the way for us, making our paths easier.** In their path stood armies of sectarians determined to block them. They fought against entrenched error and won. They did not always have the time or opportunity to build up their converts and the congregations they planted, they were always moving onward.
 - We build on the foundation they laid for us (I Cor. 3:10). We enjoy the fruits of their labors.
 - If we can see a bit further than they did, it is because we stand on their shoulders.
 - We have far superior educational opportunities. Thus a young man can enter his field of labor with a much greater fund of knowledge than he would have in 1820.
 - We have more and finer tools with which to work. My library consists of over 22,000 volumes. I recall that Raccoon John Smith had only 3 or 4 books to his name.
 - We can profit from their mistakes. We need not repeat them. Two centuries removed from them, we can see pitfalls and errors that might have seemed harmless at the time. We can see how some of their choices and decisions played out. If we are wise we will avoid their destructive choices.

- We are beneficiaries of their victories. The strangle hold of Bible ignorance, denominational error and superstition that encompassed the race in their day, was broken. Our task is thus much easier. Entrenched enemies were beaten and churches were planted. We can move into such a community and begin our work with a thousand advantages.
- We should thank God for those noble pioneers.
- We should imitate their faith (Heb. 13:7).
- We should accept the responsibility to carry the cause they launched on to completion.
- We must never fritter away or surrender the victories they won at so great cost.
- At whatever cost, we must pass the faith of Christ bequeathed to us on to the generation that follows. Like a chain, one broken link means a failure of the whole.

When the history of our generation is written, may our names be worthy of mention with those of our pioneers.

34.

CHURCH PLANTING IN PIONEER DAYS

Members of the Church of Christ played a significant role in the settling of the vast western frontier of America. The lure of cheap or even free land and the devastation of the Civil War prompted thousands to seek new land and homes in the western lands. The story of how these brethren carried their faith with them on their arduous and dangerous migrations is thrilling.

In the middle of 1835, virtually an entire congregation located on the Tennessee, Alabama line decided to go as a group to Texas. They were led by their two preachers, Dr. Mansil W. Matthews and Lynn D'Spain. They hired famous Davy Crockett to be their guide. Their journey carried them through Alabama and Mississippi. They crossed the mighty Mississippi River at Memphis. There, Crockett bid farewell to the pilgrims and with sixty volunteers road away to help the Texans fight for their liberty from Mexico.

The last words the brethren heard from Crockett, were, "Hurrah for Texas." Not long afterward he perished with the others at the battle of the Alamo.

The wagons rolled westward Monday through Saturday and then camped on Sunday. They worshiped and observed the Lord's Supper each Lord's Day. As their draft animals rested, they sang, prayed and listened to preaching. Their caravan was called "the church on horseback and wheels." They finally arrived at Fort Clark on the Red River. Finding the hostility with Mexico at fever pitch, they decided to wait there until things settled down. There on Jan. 17, 1846 they formally launched their congregation in their new home. Matthews and most of the men of the party hurried away to join Sam Houston's beleaguered army. During the winter and on rainy Sundays they met for worship inside the fort. But with the coming of spring they constructed a brush arbor outside for their services.

In 1846, a wagon train containing 1,000 settlers left Missouri for Oregon. Many of those in the group were our brethren. The first congregation in Oregon was planted on the banks of the Yamhill River by Amos Harvey at what is now Amity. A disgruntled non-member complained that, "The Campbellites and the fern were taking the Willamette Valley." (Campbellite was a term of derision often cast against our people by denominational preachers who had lost members to the Churches of Christ.

(From Christians Only, J. D. Murch, p. 131, Texas Disciples by Colby Hall and History of the Churches of Christ in Texas by Stephen Eckstein).

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE SPRING CREEK CHURCH OF CHRIST OF RICEVILLE, MCMINN COUNTY, TENNESSEE

One of the oldest congregations in East Tennessee is the Spring Creek Church near Riceville. The exact date of its founding is unknown but by 1830, the congregation was well established with a meeting house on the farm of Mr. John Roberts. On June 9, 1830, Roberts deeded the land on which the building stood to the congregation. The trustees who held the property for the church were Wesley Spearman and Robert Mansell.

Among the earliest members, in addition in the trustees, were John Edmond and Thomas M. Roberts who had come from South Carolina, William McNabb, and James Billingsly. Thomas, John and Wesley Spearman were also immigrants from South Carolina. Robert Randolph and Isaac Rice had moved down from the Post Oak Springs church near present-day Rockwood. Riceville received its name from Isaac Rice. There were the Mee, the White, the Erickson, and Stone families in the early group. Thomas Miller moved to the community in 1825 from Monroe County, Kentucky. He had worshiped with John Mulkey in the Mill Creek Christian Church near Tompkinsville.

William McNabb, Robert Mansell and James Billingsly were early elders of the church. In those days, most elders also did a lot of preaching. Robert Randolph was one of the first preachers at Spring Creek. He had been ordained to preach in 1822 while living in Virginia.

William and Rees Jones moved to the community around 1826 and were won to the faith. Isaac Newton Jones, who in 1897 wrote an unpublished **History of the Reformation in Tennessee**, tells us, "In about 1826 my father and Uncle William Jones moved to McMinn County and located a wool-carding machine on Spring Creek. Here they heard of a man named Daniel Travis, perhaps from Kentucky, preaching strange doctrine in a county east of McMinn. My father, being the principal carder, requested Uncle William to go and learn what the new doctrine was. On his return, he showed how the man had used Acts 2:38 to prove that **baptism is for the remission of past sins**. The reasoning was so clear that they at once began teaching it to their neighbors (**A Sketch of the Reformation in Tennessee** by J. W. Grant, p. 33). On August 16, 1833 both were ordained to preach by Robert Randolph and Isaac Mulkey. The older preachers laid hands on them in the special service.

Preachers in those days were not afforded the respect and consideration of later generation. I. N. Jones tells of a note hung on a tree at the forks of a road near Spring Creek. It read: "Twenty dollars reward to any man or set of men that will whip Old John Mulkey and Rees Jones." Jones recalled seeing his mother wiping tears from her eyes and asking worriedly, "Will your Pa ever get home alive?" His father was Rees Jones, one of the preaching brethren.

By 1833 the congregation had grown to some 60 members. In addition to conducting the Lord's business at home, the elders and preacher of the church carried on an active evangelistic outreach, preaching in adjoining communities.

Among the men preaching in the area of Spring Creek in those early years were Isaac Mulkey, William Slaughter, Jacob Johnson, William Brown, and Dub Ruble (Grant, p. 35). Isaac Mulkey was one of the most capable preachers in the ranks of the East Tennessee Churches. He was a powerful proclaimer of the Word. When he joined the Masonic Lodge, it created an uproar among the brethren and the Spring Creek Church charged him with misconduct. A disciplinary trial was conducted by the church and he was forced to leave the area. He went on to become a famous preacher in Kentucky and Illinois (Grant, p. 36, 53).

In those early days, the brethren in McMinn County used the mourner's bench at their services. Sinners were urged to mourn and pray for a sign of God's forgiveness. I. N. Jones recalled seeing it argued out by his father and other brethren (Grant, p. 37-39).

He also remembered a controversy that arose when traveling preachers came down from Kentucky. The custom at Spring Creek was for the brother in charge of the Lord's Supper to kneel while blessing the emblems. The congregation either sat or knelt. The Kentucky preacher said they should stand. The congregation adopted the new (standing) practice, but it grated on some of the members to do so (Grant, p. 40).

Barton Stone, one of the early leaders of the Restoration Movement, conducted a meeting for the congregation prior to his death in 1844.

Sensing a need to expand their evangelistic efforts, seven of the congregations in lower East Tennessee met to form a cooperative program to achieve that goal. At first the cooperatives were simply gatherings of Christians to discuss their needs and to pool their efforts in evangelizing their part of the world. Participating congregations would send representatives and then contribute toward the support of the workers sent out.

On December 10, 1831, James E. Matthews of Barton's, Alabama described an early cooperation meeting that included preachers from south-

eastern Tennessee and northern Alabama. John and Isaac Mulkey were present. Matthews explains what transpired:

“In conference, we dispensed with the etiquette usually observed. No bishop was called to the chair, nor was any clergyman or lay-member chosen President. We entered no resolves upon our minute book. Nor did we take the name of an ‘**Advisory Council,**’ but ‘with one accord, in one place’ we mutually engaged in arranging the appointments for our next annual meeting, so as to best promote the cause of the Redeemer; and agreed to request you to publish said appointments in the **Christian Messenger**” (**Christian Messenger**, Vol. VI, 01 Jan. 1832, p. 26-37).

On November 29, 1849, the first meeting of the lower East Tennessee Cooperation was held at the Spring Creek Church. Twelve churches from seven counties sent representatives. Robert Randolph, Gilmore Randolph and Ephraim A. Smith were sent forth as evangelists. Their circuit covered an area 150 by 65 miles through East Tennessee and northern Georgia. The missionaries were expected to visit the existing congregations and help to build them up by preaching and to plant new congregations where possible. Three months were required to complete their circuit. The twelve participating congregations had a total of 357 members. They pledged \$390.20 for the support of their evangelists.

The year following (1852), Spring Creek again hosted the Cooperation meeting. Robert Randolph, James D. Billingsly and John R. Frame were chosen as the group’s traveling preachers. At the meeting, the evangelists reported 100 additions and one church planted with twelve members, and prospects in several places very flattering.

Churches that participated in the 1851 Cooperation meeting were Athens, Smyrna, Spring Creek, Philadelphia, Trenton, Rocky Springs, Daddy’ Creek, Coosawatter, Chatatee, Hare’s Creek and Post Oak Spring. The total membership had increased to 550. They pledged \$338.25 for evangelism the following year and selected Bro. Thomas A. Witherspoon to be their traveling evangelist.

Again in 1852, Spring Creek hosted the annual meeting. They had grounds suitable for camp meetings. Entire families came to the meeting, bringing their bedding and supplies in their wagons. They camped out together. The programs ran from Thursday or Friday through the Lord’s Day. There, was preaching, singing, fellowship meals, and business sessions for the men-folks. Children played, young adults courted, and the women visited. All were blessed by the opportunity to be with fellow-Christians. At a later Cooperation meeting (1873) the subjects addressed by the speakers were Anti-Christ, Prayer, How

to Use the Lord's Day, Love, Purity of the Church and Spiritual Influence. Though times have changed, these topics are yet timely.

The decade of the 1850's saw many of the Spring Creek brethren migrate westward. There was an extended drought that brought great hardship on the farmers. The cheap land on the western plains attracted many.

At least six, possibly seven, buildings have stood on the property since the church's beginning. A graveyard holds the dust of multitudes of disciples who served God in the days of their earthly sojourn. Slaves rest there along with their masters.

ENDNOTES

1. Ethelyn Barnes Mitchell, Spring Creek Church – An Early Example of Missionary Cooperation, *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 129, No. 9, May 7, 1987, pp. 268-268.
2. Current information supplied by Franklin Hyberger.
3. Isaac Newton Jones in *A Sketch of the Reformation in Tennessee* by J. W. Grant, Nashville, unpublished manuscript, 1897.

36.

THE FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

From the New Testament we learn not only that early Christians worshiped God, but we are told what they did in their worship. On the Lord's Day they assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine were taken in memory of the body and blood of Jesus and his death on Calvary (Matt. 26:26-29). Through Christ, they offered up the fruit of their lips as a sacrifice of praise to God (Heb. 13:15). This, of course, was in their prayers and hymns. They sang and made melody in their hearts unto God (Eph. 5:19). They presented their freewill offerings to the Lord (I Cor. 16:1-2). The teaching of God's Word was an important aspect of their worship (Acts 20:7).

Justin Martyr was born in Samaria about 100 AD. In 132 he became a follower of Christ. In c.a.152 he wrote, describing the worship of the church of his day. "...on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings

of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president (the one presiding, jhw) verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought (the strong wine was diluted according to Jewish custom, jhw), and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do and willing give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succors the orphans and widows, and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want...But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead” (**First Apology** chapter 67). In his **Questions and Answers to the Orthodox**, Justin writes, “Simply singing is not agreeable to children, but singing with lifeless instruments and with dancing and clapping; on which account the use of this kind of instruments and of others agreeable to children is removed from the songs in the churches, and there is left simply singing,” (**Question 107**).

Then came the apostasy predicted by Paul (I Tim. 4:1-3; II Thess. 2:1-9). Every aspect of the prescribed faith and worship was corrupted during the thousand years of Catholicism’s dominance. Courageous Protestants challenged Rome’s authority in the 16th century and attempted to reform the faith and worship of the church of their day.

Moving ahead two centuries, here in America, Alexander Campbell and other godly souls launched a “Back to the Bible” movement to restore the original aspects of Christianity. Sometime prior to 1835 young Campbell visited a small congregation of Christians in rural Virginia. In his memorandum book he noted the following things about their worship. After greeting each other in a familiar and cordial manner, they began with the hymn, **Christ the Lord is Risen Today**. Then a brother read the history of the crucifixion of Messiah. A brother was then called upon to pray. The congregation pronounced the final Amen. A brother then arose and read a passage from the Epistles. They then sang a hymn in preparation for the Lord’s Supper. The brother presiding reminded the assembly of why they observed this memorial supper and then offered thanks and distributed the elements to each member. After another brief hymn, a brother offered a prayer before and for a contribution was collected for the poor and the preaching of the gospel. After a few more readings and hymns they concluded the meeting with a benediction. (Alexander Campbell. **The Christian System** (pp. 290-292), Standard Pub. Co. Cincinnati, no date).

In 1956 the author confessed Christ and was united with him in baptism at the Woodbine Church of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. On Sunday mornings we assembled for Bible study and worship. We usually sang two songs, had a prayer and then engaged in some 45 minutes of Bible Study. After a brief intermission, we took our places for worship. Bro. Aubrey Yearwood led us in hymns. There was a scripture reading and prayer. Bro. Parker French delivered a lesson from the Bible, followed by an invitation for any who needed prayer or who wished to confess their faith and be baptized. It was not uncommon for there to be responses to the invitation hymn. Christians confessing sins were prayed for and penitent sinners, who confessed Christ, were baptized. We then sang a hymn in preparation for the Lord's Supper. The brethren expressed prayers for the bread and the fruit of the vine and served us. Our gifts were given. With a closing prayer we were dismissed

For some 2000 years Churches of Christ have worship this way. There are no valid reasons for changes in the content of our worship. It is thoroughly biblical, practical and easily implemented in any age or society. Those who love the Lord are happy and content to worship him now as did their predecessors in the faith 50, 170, or 2000 years ago.

37.

RESTORATION PREACHING: THEN AND NOW

There is a shortage of gospel preachers to meet the needs of our day. There are not enough "live bodies" to serve our existing congregations and evangelize the mission fields. Beyond that, not enough **men of the right quality** are available to serve our congregations. Not only do we need more preachers, we need better preachers. "Better" does not necessarily equate with the accumulation of advanced educational degrees in secular fields or the sterile lands of modern theology. We need men with unreserved devotion to God and his church. Men are needed who have deep reverence toward the Word of God, whose hearts and minds are filled with its teaching. We need men with the courage to preach that Word without compromise.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Lord's church enjoyed tremendous growth, spreading from a scattered handful of disciples to more than a quarter million adherents. Much of the growth can be attributed to the work and message of the gospel preachers of that generation. In this lesson we

will examine their preaching with the hope that it will help our contemporary preachers do a more effective job of building up God's cause. It is true that we must not idolize the pioneer preachers. They were flesh and blood like us and often erred in thought and in deed. Some of them held some erroneous views which we rightly reject, but their failures were no more than ours.

SOME BACKGROUND OBSERVATIONS

Many of our pioneer preachers served a frontier generation of rough-hewn, uncultured people. We should not seek to imitate the crudeness of that distant day. The general level of education was much lower than today, both for preachers and their hearers.

The first half of the nineteenth century was the time of the second great revival, a wonderful spiritual awakening which made multitudes of that generation receptive to the gospel message.

Our early preachers were itinerant evangelists rather than located ministers. On foot, on horseback, or in buggies, they roamed the hills and valleys of a rural land preaching the Word. This laid great hardships on both them and their families. While multitudes were converted, local churches did not grow to maturity as soon then as now.

Not all of our early preachers were equal in their education and training. Walter Scott, Thomas and Alexander Campbell had advanced training superior to most denominational preachers in the nation. Raccoon John Smith had only a few months of formal schooling. He was not, however, an uneducated man, for by his own study he became a master teacher and a polished speaker. He baptized far more souls than did Thomas or Alexander Campbell. Multitudes of our early preachers were self-made men like Smith, yet they did their work effectively and cleared the path which we now travel.

THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS GOD'S WORD

Our pioneer preachers had a vision of a great work for God. They were dedicated to restoring "The Ancient Order of Things" (Jer. 6:16). Their goal was the unity of all believers on Christ and his Word (John 17:20-21). They truly believed that they could change the complexion of the religious world by a bold proclamation of the Word of God (Rom. 1:16). They were willing to pay the price, bear the burdens and endure the elements to win the victory. Their biographies abound with stories of long journeys, nights spent sleeping in vermin-infested beds, barns, or on the ground; of swimming across swollen or even icy rivers; of riding horseback in the freezing rain until frozen to their saddles; of unpaid pledges of support; of threats of violence; of their being locked out of public houses; of bitter and slanderous attacks made against

their good names. Paul's suffering did not far exceed theirs (II Cor. 11:23-29).

Those brethren most often preached without pay. B. F. Hall received 75 cents his first year of work. S. H. Millard received one dollar and a pair of jeans for his first year of labor. They spent weeks and even months away from home and family. Samuel Rogers walked from Kentucky to Missouri, preaching the Word. They preached two and three times per day in homes, barns, public buildings or groves. There was no cooling for the heat of the summer and often no heat for winter's cold blast. Most of them had to provide for their families by farming or teaching, in addition to their preaching. This they gladly did, willing to spend and be spent for the gospel's sake (II Cor. 12:15).

The pioneer brethren fought the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12) and endured the hardships of opposition and persecution as good soldiers of Jesus (II Tim. 2:3). All the sects united in opposing those rugged warriors. They were challenged by bold champions of error to defend their faith in the public arena. This they did with courage and skill that won their Lord a thousand victories and drove the enemy from the field. Although they are the best known, Alexander Campbell's five published debates are but a sample of thousands of similar polemic duels engaged in by our brethren. When all else failed, their enemies threatened them with violence. Space does not allow the list of men threatened if they baptized some man's wife or child. But they were not intimidated. A sign was posted on a roadside tree in McMinn County, Tennessee that read "\$20 to any man or group of men who will whip Reese Jones and old John Mulkey." Such tactics did not deter them.

Those great men of God believed in the power of preaching to rout error, teach the lost, win converts and edify the church. They preached the Word, night and day to few or many. We read of them arriving to find only one or two souls present. They taught and won them. They converted thousands to their Bible-centered plea. In the Western Reserve, Walter Scott baptized a thousand souls three years in succession. Entire congregations of denominational people renounced their error and embraced the Savior's way. The Mahoning Baptist Association was won over by Walter Scott's preaching.

They saw a world of souls lost in sin, ignorance and error and truly believed the gospel they possessed could save them (Rom. 1:16). They had no message to deliver but the gospel.

Those brethren loved their fellow workers in the kingdom and rejoiced in their success (John 14:34-35). Their love for Christ and his church generally raised and kept them above petty envy and jealousy. A kind and Christian spirit was exhibited even towards their enemies.

Generally, in preaching, these brethren concentrated on the great universal themes of the faith and avoided speculation and side issues that tend toward division. They stressed the need for unity among brethren and worked tirelessly to that end (Eph. 4:3).

THE GOSPEL THEY PREACHED

The pioneers believed the Bible to be the Word of God; that it was inspired and inerrant. When a later generation of preachers dared to question the authenticity and reliability of the Biblical text they were bombarded by great men like J. W. McGarvey who loved the precious word. Such men as L. L. Pinkerton, H. L. Willet and R. C. Cave were liberals who learned their lessons from a different school than did those early pioneers.

Those early preachers saw the Bible to be all sufficient for faith and practice. It to them was the final and complete authority for Christians.

Contrary to their denomination counterparts, the Bible was the basis for all the sermons of our brethren. They preached Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Matt. 16:18). To Walter Scott this was “The Golden Oracle.” They taught that Christ died for all and wants all men to be saved (I Tim. 2:4). They believed that all sinners are able to believe and obey God and thus were responsible to do so (Acts 16:30-31; Heb. 5:8-9). They affirmed that faith comes from hearing God’s word (Rom. 10:17) and not by a direct operation of the Holy Spirit at the mourners’ bench. In this they challenged the system of Calvinism that dominated the religious scene. They argued that worship, doctrine and polity should conform to God’s word in all matters (Col. 3:17) This struck at the heart of all denominational systems but appealed to every good and honest heart that loved the Bible. They preached faith, repentance and baptism as the divine plan for saving lost souls (Acts. 2:36-38). This made sense to their hearers who eagerly responded to their message.

RESTORATION PREACHING TODAY

If we are to maintain the restoration movement in this and future generations, we must plant the same love for and commitment to the Restoration Plea in our preacher students as dwelt in the hearts of the pioneers. A course of study in Restoration History should be an integral part of every student’s preparation. They should be encouraged to read the biographies of those great soldiers of the faith. In homiletics, students should be required to study and outline selected sermons of great Restoration preachers of the past. Every school that trains preachers should build a major collection of Restoration materials in their library. Teachers should encourage their students to make use of these valuable tools. Students should be encouraged to purchase for their own collections a wide selection of Restoration volumes. Where possible,

teachers should utilize textbooks written by our brethren. At the very least, a brotherhood volume should be used as supplemental reading for courses offered. This will give students a proper doctrinal emphasis in their training. Sound doctrine must be consciously and deliberately passed on to the next generation if the church is to survive.

Schools should have an annual, one-day workshop on Restoration history with a visiting authority speaking on the subject. It would be most helpful to take all preaching students on a field trip to the historic sites of our past. They will be inspired by visiting Cane Ridge Meeting House, Old Mulkey Meeting House, and Alexander Campbell's home in Bethany, West Virginia.

We need teachers who see the need of helping their students learn their links to the past, i.e., their spiritual roots. They must be taught to be grateful for those who blazed the trail before them and established the churches in which they will serve. We must encourage them to be loyal to the commitment to go back to the Bible and restore the original Christianity of the first century. We must help them to see and know, as they actually were, those wonderful brethren, who laid the foundation on which we now stand. They were very human and very fallible. They were struggling to learn God's will and live up to it. They sometimes failed, but they were always committed to pleasing Christ in all things.

It is our responsibility to commit to faithful men the truths that were passed to us (II Tim. 2:2). Only then will the Lord's church be vouched safe to the next generation. "A people not conscious of its own past is adrift without purpose." May God help us to maintain the Restoration Plea.

WALTER SCOTT'S FIVE-FINGER EXERCISE

You may never have heard of the “Five-Finger Exercise,” but that is only because you have not heard or read the message of the change agents at work among us. It is one of their favorite points of ridicule when they are trying to discredit those Churches of Christ that are not willing to march in their parade.

They are referring to an illustration or way of teaching first used by Walter Scott and by many other preachers since his day. It was in 1827 that young Walter Scott was sent forth by the churches of the Mahoning Association to evangelize in the Western Reserve. Without funds for paid advertising of his meetings, Scott would visit school houses and ask permission to speak to the children. To get his message safely home to their parents, he would have them hold up their hands and repeat after him. He promised he would teach folks about faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Each finger would represent one of these five steps of salvation. So effective was Scott’s preaching and his simple method that thousands of other men have use some variation of it every since. It is impossible to calculate the thousands who have been saved after seeing this illustration in their time of instruction.

Now, a new generation of preachers has arisen who have scanty bible knowledge and are abysmally ignorant and unappreciative of our past history. Desirous of being looked upon and accepted as respectable denominationalists, they ridicule Scott’s simple illustration and make light of those who believe and teach that Christ has set forth five conditions of salvation.

Because the Bible declares it, we believe and teach that (1). Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing unto God (Heb. 11:6); (2). That faith comes from hearing the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17); (3). That God commands all men every where to repent (Acts 17:30); (4). That to be saved we must confess Christ (Matt. 10:32); (5). That baptism is prerequisite to receiving remission of sins (Acts 2:38). After attending denominational seminaries or filling their minds with denominational literature, change agents have been persuaded that such simple biblical teachings are old fashioned and unsuited for theologians such as themselves and sophisticated postmoderns. They prefer the doctrines of Luther and Calvin that offer salvation by grace through faith, before baptism. Some wonder if baptism is really a necessary factor in man’s salvation? How can they introduce their new gospel and new ideas about salvation to an audience that long ago learned and still believes that

Christ ordained those five basic steps to salvation? They try to shake their belief by poking fun at and ridiculing the illustration. They scorn those they sneeringly call “Five Steppers.” They imply that all who hold this view of salvation or use this method of teaching are really ignorant and outdated for our postmodern world.

The fact is, those change agents who ridicule Scott’s illustration will not win in their life time the number of souls the famous evangelist won in a year. Using his homely illustration, he was winning and baptizing up to 1,000 souls per year. He planted scores of new congregations made up of those he won to Christ. For the simple message of salvation revealed in the New Testament change agents would substitute a human doctrine which proposes but a part of what Christ’s Apostles taught about the matter. “By grace have ye been saved through faith” is certainly a true statement (Eph. 2:8-9), but it is not the sum of what the Holy Spirit has said on the subject of salvation!

We do not say that Bro. Scott’s five finger illustration is inspired, but the truth it conveyed is. You can still use it in explaining to your neighbor what God expects him to do to be saved. You can use the faulty message of the change agents and leave your neighbor unprepared to meet God.

39.

HINDRANCES TO THE RESTORATION OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

In every undertaking of value, there are attitudes and actions that promote and those that hinder the effort. In the grand endeavor to restore the faith and practice of the first Christians, there are things that can only hinder our efforts. Among them are:

- **A pride filled spirit.** The Scripture condemns this spirit of false-pride (I John 2:15). It is a spirit of pride that makes some who are highly educated look down with scorn on those with less formal training. Conversely, it makes some with lesser academic credentials resentful of those with more. In either case faction and schism result. The cause is hindered.
- **An arrogant spirit towards those outside the faith.** This spirit treats with disdain those who have not yet arrived at their level of understanding

of Scripture. It assumes there is no honesty or sincerity to be found outside of their circle. Such a spirit is disgusting and revolting to those at whom it is directed and to those who observe it. It shuts the door against folks who might otherwise be receptive to the gospel plea.

- **A sectarian or divisive spirit.** This spirit has little appreciation for the unity of God's people. Working diligently to maintain the unity of the Spirit (Eph. 4:3), is neglected because folks with this spirit are too busy drawing lines, breaking fellowship and branding fellow-Christians. Their divisive work is pursued without shame or guilt. This discredits our plea for the unity of all who believe in the Lord Jesus (John 17:20-21).
- **A spirit of foolishness.** I have in mind those preachers who come before audiences as a representative of Christ but behave as court jesters. Rather than devote their precious time to preaching Christ and his sacred principles, they try to be cute; to be comedians or entertainers. Such foolishness does not promote or enhance our back to the Bible plea. God would have those who lead his people to be "grave" and sober-minded (I Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:8).
- **A spirit of laziness.** Some men wish to have the position of preacher and draw the salary but are unwilling to spend the time and make the effort to learn God's Word. They haven't time to examine the issues that come before us and prepare themselves to address them. Intelligent people who come to hear their lessons go away bored and seek for truth elsewhere. Churches wither and die from lack of meaningful Bible teaching (Hos. 4:6). We must be diligent servants of the Master (I Tim. 4:15).
- **A spirit of pretended scholarship.** Genuine scholarship is admirable. It reflects years of discipline and hard work. One may be a scholar in one field while a novice in another. Advanced educational credentials in secular fields mean nothing, if a man is not well-read in God's Word. I have known men who had neither the training nor the experience to be considered a scholar in the field of biblical studies, yet they pretended they were. They knew a few Greek or Hebrew terms to toss about, but the living Word they did not know. Such pretenders will soon be spotted by those who do know. Trying to attract attention to themselves, they do a disservice to the Cause.
- **A spirit that cares not for our past history.** Many contemporary preachers exhibit disdain for those who went before them, building the highway on which they now travel with ease. They serve churches established and built up by great men of God whom they do not recognize nor appreciate. They know nothing of the past struggles to arrive at a Biblical faith. Because they care nothing for our history, they are likely

to repeat the mistakes of the past and be vulnerable to the siren voices of error.

- **A spirit of satisfaction with the status quo.** So long as the earth doth stand there will be lost souls to whom Christ expects us to take his gospel (Mark 16:15). As long as there is a village without a Church of Christ, we must be busy planting churches. So long as there is good waiting to be done, we have an obligation to be busy doing so to the glory of Christ (I Cor. 15:58). Sadly, too many men take positions in churches and are content just to maintain the status quo at home. Distant fields and Macedonian calls do not stir them. The needs of the fatherless and widows fall on deaf ears. The cause suffers where this spirit prevails.
- **A compromising spirit.** Christianity is likened to an army sent forth on world conquest (I Tim. 6:12). Our mission is to rescue souls from Satan's kingdom of darkness (Col. 1:13). Our enemy never rests. He constantly roams the earth seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8). Sadly, we see in Christ's army soldiers who do not want to fight. They prefer to rest peacefully in the safety of the fort. Without a spirit of militancy, we will never win the world to Christ nor restore the faith and practice of the first disciples.

May all who have the privilege of representing Christ before his church shun these attitudes that hinder the success of the gospel and devote themselves to humble service in the Master's kingdom.

40.

JOSIAH'S RESTORATION AND OURS

Jeremiah cried out to ancient Israel, "Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein..." (6:16). These words were spoken during and concerning a notable restoration of the religion of Jehovah in the days of Josiah, King of Judah. The records of Josiah's restoration are found in II Kings 22-23 and II Chron. 34-35.

THAT RESTORATION

Josiah ascended the throne when only a child of eight years. The records tells us that the young king's heart inclined towards God. "He did that which

was right in the eyes of Jehovah” (II Kings 22:1-2). In his eighteenth year, Josiah commissioned repairs for the house of Jehovah which had fallen into decay. In the rubble of the temple, Hilkiah, the high priest, found “the book of the law” (22:8). Shaphan, the scribe, brought the precious book to the king and read it in his presence. “When the king heard the words of the book of the law....he rent his clothes...” (22:11). From the Scripture, Josiah learned how far his nation had drifted from God and what God expected of them.

Moved with godly fear, the king called the people together and “read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant...” (22:2). He understood that restoration can never be accomplished alone; many must be involved. He further saw that God’s message is the only adequate basis for reform.

“The king (then) stood by the pillar, and made a covenant before Jehovah, to walk after Jehovah, and to keep his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant...and all the people stood to the covenant” (22:3). A theory, however noble, is of little value without a commitment to action. Josiah’s commitment inspired his people, and they joined him in the resolution to restore God’s worship.

The accumulated corruptions had to be removed from the temple and purged from the spiritual life of the people (23:4-24). The paraphernalia of paganism was removed from the temple and burned. The ashes were used to defile the corrupt worship center at Bethel (23:8). Idolatrous priests were put down (23:5). The Asherah dedicated to Astarte was burned (23:6). Tents of the Baal sodomites were removed from Jehovah’s temple (23:7). Priests were recruited to defile the idolatrous high places (23:8). Topeth, in the valley of Hennom, where human sacrifices were offered to Molech, was defiled (23:10). Chariots dedicated to the sun-god were burned (23:11). Heathen altars erected in the temple courts by Ahaz and Manasseh were destroyed (23:12). Heathen shrines which the great Solomon had erected for his wives were destroyed (23:13). Jeroboam’s rival altar at Bethel was destroyed and desecrated (23:15). Priests who persisted in calf-worship were executed (23:20). All the mediums and wizards were driven out of the land (23:24).

Having completed his purge of idolatry, the true worship of God was re-instituted. They kept “the Passover unto Jehovah...as it is written in this book of the covenant” (23:21). Without this, his reform would have been a total failure.

OUR RESTORATION

In Nineteenth Century America, men had drifted far from the original ground of God’s true religion. Good men’s hearts inclined toward God. They were weary of sectarianism and the doctrines and commandments of men.

They wanted a closer walk with God. As they studied the Scriptures, they clearly saw their undone status and what God expected of them. They began to share with family, friends and neighbors the grand truths they had discovered in God's Word. Our forefathers made a commitment to go back to the Bible in all things and to be Christians only.

John Mulkey served the Mill Creek Baptist Church near Tompkinsville, Kentucky. When he heard the call for restoration preached by Barton Stone, Mulkey's great soul could no longer preach the message of his Calvinistic creed. On a frosty November day he announced to his congregation his decision to sever his Baptist ties and establish a church after the New Testament pattern. Unsure of the support he would have, he invited those who wished to join him in so doing to follow him out the door. The first to arise was Hannah, the sister of Daniel Boone. Others filed out behind her until only fifty-two of the two hundred were left to carry on the Baptist service. They graciously surrendered the building to the majority.

The Elkhorn Baptist Church appointed a committee to examine their **Philadelphia Confession of Faith**. After deliberation, they reported:

Whereas this church in its original constitution agreed to receive and adopt the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as her constitution, This church having taken the subject into consideration and after deliberation thereon have resolved to dispense with the Philadelphia Confession of Faith as her constitution and from this time forth to take the Word of God as contained in the Old and New Testaments in their own statements and connexions as her constitution to be guided and directed thereby in all things, believing them an all-sufficient rule of faith and practice for the government of the church—endeavoring to walk together in love, bearing and forbearing with each other according to the law of Jesus Christ whom we esteem alone as King in Zion.

And further we retain the name of Baptist Church of Christ at South Elkhorn, its members being composed of immersed believers. (July 1828).

To restore the church to her primitive state all the accumulated corruptions and errors of seventeen centuries had to be rooted out and cast away. When Thomas Campbell presented his **Declaration and Address** to his congregation at Washington, Pennsylvania, Andrew Munro raised a question about infant baptism. He protested that if they did only that which the New Testament authorized, they would have to abandon that ancient and treasured practice. Campbell responded that if the practice were unauthorized they would in fact have to do so. Hearing this, a Mr. Thoms Acheson rushed from the room in tears. The subject was laid aside for the moment but when Alexander Campbell's first child was born, the issue had to be resolved. After some weeks

of study, the young father was forced to conclude that not only should his baby not be sprinkled, he himself was in need of immersion. When he shared his findings with his wife and parents, they and three others were immersed in Buffalo Creek by Elder Mathias Luce of the Baptist Church. Later Alexander described their attempts at restoration as men who set out to sea on a finely trimmed schooner. Once embarked they vowed to cast overboard everything that was not absolutely essential. Ere long they were reduced to the few boards of a raft—but they had found the essential simplicity of the gospel of Christ.

Along with infant baptism and sprinkling, the fathers cast off human creeds, doctrines, traditions, councils and conventions. The role of the preacher had to be rediscovered. He was not a clergyman, pastor or reverend. He should wear no clergy garb nor titles and received no supernatural call. He was a Christian brother who, under the great commission of Christ, was to teach and baptize his neighbors (Mark 16:15-16).

The true worship and service of God had to be restored. Rice Haggard called them back to the holy name Christian (I Pet. 4:16). Thomas Campbell taught them to break the bread of communion on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7). Alexander Campbell led the way in restoring baptism to its proper form of immersion (Rom. 6:3-8). Walter Scott searched and found the gospel plan of salvation (Acts 2:38). The government of the church was restored to its ancient congregational form and the Bible was exalted to its proper place of authority in the life of the church. One by one, the doctrines and practices of the day were examined. Only those that met the divine standard were allowed to stand (Rev. 11:1).

Conclusion

Today we enjoy the fruit of their labor. We cannot, however, afford to rest on their attainments. Restoration is a task that is never done. The truth of this is seen in Josiah's experience. His restoration was short-lived. Upon the untimely death of the young king, the populace quickly reverted to their old ways. God said, "Judah hath not returned to me with her whole heart" (Jer. 3:10). Jeremiah said, that God was "near in their mouth and far from their heart" (12:2). May we never fail in our commitment, but be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58). Let us commit unto faithful men the great truths we have learned that they may be able to teach others also (II Tim. 2:2).

41.

HEZEKIAH, WHO SOUGHT TO RESTORE THE TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD

When young king Hezekiah took the throne of Judah, the nation was sunk in a spiritual depression. His father, Ahaz, was a committed idolater who defied Jehovah, choosing to worship the Baalim, the gods of Damascus and even to sacrifice his own children in fire (II Chron. 28:1-4). Nothing in the pagan religions of his neighbors was too extreme for him. He looted the temple of God, taking the gold to adorn his idolatrous altars (28:24).

In stark contrast, Hezekiah was a committed servant of Jehovah. He made a covenant with God to restore his true worship and to lead his people back to the path of faithfulness (II Chron. 29:10). He wasted no time theorizing or debating about the merits of Baal and his corrupt worship. He had no interest in compromising with the prevailing religion of the masses. He did not pause to determine what public opinion might think of his efforts at reform. Immediately, he ordered the house of Jehovah repaired and reopened (II Chron. 29:3).

The newly crowned king ordered the priests and Levites to purify themselves and get ready for the resumption of Jehovah's temple worship (II Chron. 29:15). They were instructed to purge the temple of all the filthiness, which included accumulated rubble and rubbish but also anything relating to the idolatry of his father (29:5). They did the necessary repairs, then purified and sanctified the sacred house (29:3,15, 17).

At the king's direction, the priests re-instituted the prescribed services of worship (29:31-35). Sacrifices were offered and the song of Jehovah began "and all the assembly worshiped, and the singers sang..." (29:27-28). The people brought their gifts and sacrifices and offered them up to the Lord (29:31). As they participated in restoring the true worship of Jehovah, "Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people..." (29:36). Man's greatest joy comes from faithfully serving Jehovah.

WHAT THIS ANCIENT LESSON MEANS TO US

Jesus promised to build his church (Matt. 16:18). It was established and the doors of entrance opened in Jerusalem on the Pentecost following his resurrection (Acts 2:1-47). From the beginning, Satan was determined to defeat and destroy the Savior and his church. With vivid symbolism, John describes his evil effort. In a vision, John saw a woman arrayed with the sun,

a crown of twelve stars upon her head. She was expecting a child and about to deliver. He saw Satan in the form of a great red dragon ready to devour the holy child. Herod the Great was the wicked agent who sought to kill the infant Jesus (Matt. 3:13-16). The “child was caught up unto God and unto his throne” (i.e., Christ’s ascension). Defeated in his efforts to destroy the Christ, Satan made war against the woman (now the church) and “there were given to the woman the two wings of the great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness...where she is nourished for time, and time, and half a time from the face of the serpent...And the dragon ...went away to make war with the rest of her seed that keep the commandments of God...” (Rev. 12:1-17).

The church was established but Satan did not accept defeat. Using persecution from without and by corrupting some within the church, he worked to destroy her. Paul warned the elders of the Ephesian church “that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them...” (Acts 20:29-30). Later he wrote to Timothy, “the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith ...through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies...forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats...” (I Tim. 4:1-3). Early signs of this apostasy were seen in Corinth as disciples began to form cliques and call themselves after notable or favorite teachers (I Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-5).

Following the death of the Apostles, apostasy came and the greater part of the churches were thoroughly corrupted. The driving force of this was centered in Rome, the capital of the ruling Roman Empire. Numerous changes were introduced in the second and third centuries, but in the opening years of the fourth century profound and destructive changes occurred. They came with the accession of Constantine to the throne of the empire. A great civil war was raging as three generals, backed by their armies, vied for the throne. At the Battle Milvian Bridge, in 312, Constantine observed the appearance of a cross on the moon and concluded that the God of the Christians had sent him a sign. He had all of his troops mark their shields with a cross and they did in fact win the battle. Taking the throne, the new emperor remembered the sign. He signed an Edict of Toleration (313 A. D.) for the Christians. For the first time they now had legal standing and protection under Roman law. Doubtless, the saints thanked God for the new ruler and the kindness he had bestowed on them. Little did they know that this apparent blessing was a watershed event that would be their undoing. Constantine decreed that to serve in his army or to fill governmental positions one had to be a Christian. He provided gifts to those who chose to affiliate with the church. This was a disaster because thousands of unconverted people rushed to join the church for political and social advantage. They quickly corrupted the congregations where they had

influence. The emperor taxed the temples of the idols for his building projects. When the impoverished temples were abandoned, he gave them to the churches for their meeting places. He endowed churches with great treasures to be administered by prominent church leaders. By his actions, idolatry fell out of favor in his kingdom.

Perhaps the most harmful consequence of Constantine's misdirected efforts to help the Christians was his decision to convene a conference of all the church leaders to resolve a conflict that had arisen over the nature of Christ and his relationship to the Father. The emperor had the prominent leaders of the churches assemble in Nicea in 325 A.D. He presided over the discussions. Strangely, Constantine himself had not yet been baptized, so it was a bizarre case of an unsaved sinner presiding over a compliant group of Christian leaders. This was the turning point of the uniting of church and state. At first the state dominated and controlled the churches, using them to its advantage. However, when the Western Roman Empire collapsed in 476 A. D., the bishop of Rome emerged dominant over the broken and enfeebled government. Constantine sowed the seed that eventuated in the rise of Roman Catholicism with its pope claiming power over all the churches and rulers under his influence. This dominance continued until the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. This was the era of the Dark Ages. Rather than a blessing, the domination of Europe and England by the corrupt church was cruel and oppressive and is the low point in Western Civilization. Every aspect of the faith, worship and practice of the church established by Christ was corrupted and distorted by the leaders of the ruling power of Catholicism.

The thousand years of dominion by the see of Rome was finally broken by a group of brave men who dared to lead a revolt against that oppressive regime. In c.a. 1360, John Wycliff began to challenge the authority of Rome and her corrupt practices. His followers were called Lollards. Wycliff's greatest gift was the translation of the New Testament into English. In c.a. 1400, John Huss of Bohemia led a protest against the corruptions of the Catholic church. He was burned to death for daring to do so. In c.a. 1475, Girolamo Savonarola of Florence launched a similar revolt and he too paid with his life. In 1520, a young priest by the name of Martin Luther of Wittenburg, Germany found a copy of the Bible and upon reading it was stirred to protest the departures from the divine standard that had become common. From his strong declaration, "I protest," came our word "Protestant", i.e. protesters. Luther was condemned and would have been executed had not a friendly prince protected him. He gave the German people the Bible in their native tongue. His followers became known as Lutherans. Ulrich Zwingli of Zurich, Switzerland launched his call for reform in 1519. In 1534, John Calvin, first in France and later in Geneva, Switzerland, generated a mighty reform movement. Zwingli and Calvin gave us the Reformed Churches. John

Knox of Scotland spent time with Calvin and returned to Scotland to preach reform. His disciples became known as Presbyterians. Later John Wesley of England (1737) protested the deadness and worldliness of the Anglican Church. He and his brother Charles gave us the Methodist Church. While these courageous men broke the iron grip of the popes, they only succeeded in giving the world Protestant denominationalism which by now numbers over 2000 kinds of churches. This stands in glaring contrast with the one church which Christ purchased on the Cross (Acts 20:28) and built (Matt. 16:18). It is an affront to the unity he expects of his disciples (John 17:20-21).

As the 19th century opened, here in America, from the swirling milieu of denominationalism, were heard calls to go back to the Bible and restore the original faith, worship and practice of the church. James O’Kelly in North Carolina led a back to the Bible movement among the Methodists. In New England, Drs. Abner Jones and Elias Smith did the same among the Baptists. In Kentucky, Barton Stone preached restoration among the Presbyterians. In Pennsylvania and western Virginia, Thomas and Alexander Campbell were powerful voices calling for restoration among Presbyterians and Baptists. They cited verses like Jeremiah 6:16, “Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way; and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls...” They pointed to Hebrews 8:5 which reminds us to do “all things according to the pattern” God has given us. In our young nation, with its gift of personal freedom of religion and the tremendous influx of immigrants, their message was gladly received. Hundreds of thousands of people cast aside denominationalism and resolved to follow the Bible alone and be simply Christians as were those early disciples in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Today we continue that call to restore the ancient faith.

42.

UNDERSTANDING FIRST CENTURY CHRISTIANITY

The best source material for first century Christianity is the New Testament of Christ. Therein is revealed the divine pattern God has given for us to follow (II Tim. 1:13; Heb. 8:5). When we speak of restoring the first century church we speak of restoring the faith, worship and practice of the church as given by Christ and his chosen Apostles. Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking that to be true first century Christians we must revert to the manners and customs of that ancient time. To be true to our commitment:

- We need not dress and groom ourselves as they did. Fashions and styles of clothing vary from society to society and from time to time. We should dress modestly by the custom of our day (I Tim. 2:9-10). Robes, long hair, veils and beards are not essential to the faith and worship of the church.
- We need not conduct our services in Aramaic or Greek as they did. They took the gospel to every nation but did not tell them to worship in either of those ancient tongues.
- We need not meet in upper rooms, private homes, caves or in the courts of the temple at Jerusalem. Jesus made this point to the woman of Samaria. We can worship God anywhere so long as we do so in spirit and in truth (John 4:20-24).
- We need not stand, sit on the floor or on stone benches when we assemble, even though they did. How we position ourselves when we worship has nothing to do with its acceptance before God.
- We need not commune from one cup, chant our hymns, sing only from the Psalms or read Scripture from a scroll, even though they did these things. These incidentals are not the essence of their worship or ours. When we sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, pray, commune and read God's Word we have obeyed His will.
- We need not illuminate our gatherings with oil lamps such as they had. Our electric lights serve us much better.
- We need not observe the Jewish way of counting time (from sundown to sundown). Wherever Christians may be found on the planet on the first day of the week they should observe the first day of the week as a day dedicated to worshiping Christ. Folks in the extreme northern climes could not measure their day by sunup and sundown.

- We need not read our Scripture from Hebrew or Greek as they did. God wants us to understand what is offered in our worship (I Cor. 14:19).
- We need not observe Jewish manners and social customs even though the Lord, his Apostles and the first generation of Christians were Jews and lived that way. Paul tells us when among Jews he became a Jew but when among Gentiles he became a Gentile (I Cor. 9:20).
- We need not baptize only in streams or other natural pools of water as they did. Where one is baptized is of no significance. It is in being immersed as the Lord ordained, in the likeness of his death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-4), that counts.
- We cannot perform miracles as they did in those early days. Those supernatural gifts served a vital role in the founding and launching of the cause of Christ. They confirmed the words of the inspired teachers (Mark 16:18-20; Heb. 2:3-4). Since we do not receive a baptism of the Holy Spirit to empower us as did the Apostles (Acts 2:1-4), and since there are no Apostles to lay their hands on us and give us those gifts (I Tim. 1:6), we must accept the fact that miracles, having served their intended purpose, have ceased (I Cor. 13:8-10). Thus we labor with our God-given natural gifts as have the overwhelming majority of disciples from Christ's day to this.

While working in Africa, I worshiped with a congregation that was much like that first generation of churches. The church met under a tree. There were only a few chairs; most sat on the ground. We communed from a single glass and from a dinner plate with homemade bread. Only the song leader had a hymnal. He would first read us the verse then we would sing. The congregation had elders and deacons, a preacher and missionaries whom they sent out each week. After we worshiped for several hours, there was a feast for all who had assembled. Women were dressed much like those of ancient times. Yet the essence of what we did was exactly what we do each Lord's Day here in America.

While it is of great historical interest to we who are their heirs, it is of little consequence what Alexander Campbell or David Lipscomb said or did in worship. That which really matters is what did the Holy Spirit guide the inspired servants of Christ to say and do. That we find recorded in our New Testament.

43.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF OUR RESTORATION MOVEMENT

When our brethren launched our back to the Bible Movement in the early 1800s, they made major contributions to the world of Christian thought. Among those contributions are the following:

- In a world of denominational confusion and competition, they lodged a strong Biblical protest against religious division. That protest has been heard and accepted, if not acted upon (I Cor. 1:13). Today, few try to defend their divisions.
- Their biblical plea for unity of all believers in Christ was a significant contribution (John 17:20-21).
- Their repudiation of human creeds as a basis for fellowship was a revolutionary thought. The words of Christ the king are complete and adequate (Matt. 28:20). They will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).
- Their exaltation of the Bible as the only authority in Christianity; that it is an all sufficient guide for faith and practice of Christians, was new to the ears of most people in their day (II Tim. 3:16-17).
- They restored the ancient confession of faith that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God (Matt. 16:16-17). In a world of denominational of confessions of faith this was remarkable.
- * Their rejection of human religious traditions as binding on the conscience of men was a remarkable contribution (Matt. 15:6, 9). Most churches were shackled by these. Many still are.
- They redirected religious people to the apostolic method of evangelizing and bringing men to salvation (See Acts 2:14, 22, 31-33, 38, 40). Rather than exhorting them to seek an supernatural experience or to come to the mourner's bench, they taught them the gospel and urged to do what God said to do.
- They removed a vast amount of superstition regarding the conversion of sinners to God. In a day when most thought that salvation depended upon God's Holy Spirit coming down and overpowering the sinner, or dreams or visions, they pointed men to the Word of God wherein was the gospel, God's power unto salvation (Rom. 1:16). They showed the folly of calling penitent sinners to the mourner's bench where they begged God

for salvation. They explained that He was already eager to save believers who were willing to obey Him (I Tim. 2:3-4; Heb. 5:9).

- They clarified the scriptural view of saving faith. From the Bible, they showed it was more than mental assent or a warm, tingly feeling. They showed that faith comes from hearing the word of Christ (Rom.10:17); that saving faith was of necessity, obedient faith that gladly complied with the instructions given by God regarding salvation (Heb. 5:9).
- They restored biblical terminology to clarify in people's minds the true meaning of God's word. They emphasized "calling Bible things by Bible names." They purged their lessons of the theological terms common to denominational preachers of their day. They emphasized "pure language" (Zeph. 3:9) and speaking as the oracles of God (I Pet. 4:11).
- They blessed the world by promoting the serious study of God's Word. They showed the average man that he could study and understand the Bible without having to depend on a clergyman to interpret it for him. They freed him from slavery to the clergy caste. They taught people to rightly divide the Scripture (II Tim. 2:15). They showed them that while the Old Testament is surely God's inspired Word, it was fulfilled in Christ and has been superceded by the New Testament which gives us the will of Jesus (Col. 2:14-15; Matt. 28:20). They taught them to read the Bible as they would any other serious book of non-fiction, expecting to understand its essential message. Prior to that time the Bible had been viewed as a book of inexplicable mysteries; something the average man could never understand.
- In restoring the simple worship of the New Testament they blessed the world. They taught people that the worship God wanted was revealed in the New Testament not in the Old. It was not a matter of exaggerated emotionalism and excitement, not a matter of ignorant shouting and ranting, but the offering of intelligent, Bible-based worship, by intelligent people to the God of heaven (John 4:24). They restored the Lord's Supper to its proper place as the central focus of Lord's Day worship (Acts 20:7). They restored the congregational, acappella singing of the early church in place of the sounds of musical instruments and choirs (Eph. 5:19).
- They restored the priesthood of all believers (I Pet. 2:5, 9). Martin Luther and other reformers had talked about the priesthood of all believers but in most churches the clergy had claimed that role and the layman meekly took his place at their feet. Our fathers broke that human mold and gave his God-given privileges back to the man in the pew.
- In restoring the ancient mode and purpose of Christian baptism they made a wonderful contribution to mankind. To the many sects that practiced

affusion for baptism they showed that immersion was the only baptism of the New Testament (Rom. 6:3-4). To those who misunderstood the purpose of baptism, thinking it was only for church membership, they showed that Christ tied baptism to forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). To those who desired baptism they showed that any Christian brother could immerse them into Christ.

These valuable contributions have helped to change the thinking of the Christian world. In this, we should have a godly pride. We should cherish the heritage that is ours as we serve the Savior and pass it on intact to those who come after us.

** The author is indebted to J. H. Garrison for the heart of this lesson.*

44.

OUR PAST IS THE KEY TO OUR PRESENT PROBLEMS

Across the nation, Churches of Christ are faced with a host of preachers and teachers who have undertaken a campaign to mold and changed them according to a new pattern. These “agents of change” think they have found something new and better for the Lord’s church, but in reality what they are promoting is almost identical to the changes proposed by the progressives among our churches in the 60 years from the end of the Civil War to World War I. The changes they insisted upon ravaged our brotherhood with strife and division. When the dust was settled there were two separate bodies; Churches of Christ and Disciples of Christ/Christian Churches. Those who departed from us had begun a journey which continues to this day, farther and farther from the Biblical ground their fathers occupied.

- Those brethren were unhappy with our acappella singing. They desired choirs, soloists, pianos and organs.
- They felt that a brotherhood of independent congregations could never do the Lord’s work in an adequate way. They proposed all sorts of brotherhood organizations to manage that work. They created missionary,

Bible, tract, publishing, benevolent and other societies, believing they could do it better.

- **They were convinced that our preachers were not reaching their full potential as simple ministers or evangelists, and so they reshaped theirs to be pastors and reverends.**
- **They felt lonely and alienated from their ministerial peers in other religious bodies, so they joined their ministerial alliances and eventually the Federal Council of Churches (now The National Council of Churches).**
- **They were embarrassed at their fathers' resolve to be Christians only and the church which Christ built and blessed. Such an approach seemed narrow and ungenerous to others, so they began to seek acceptance as fellow denominationalists.**
- **They felt shackled and restricted when obliged to abide by the authority of the New Testament in their faith and practice. They needed the Old Covenant to broaden their range of options for worship. Eventually, even that did not provide adequate latitude for their innovations.**
- **They concluded that we were mistaken in not placing women in our pulpits and leadership offices. So they remedied that by doing so.**
- **Eventually they concluded that the whole idea of restoring the original faith and practice of the church was an obsolete and unworkable idea and they abandoned it.**

Within 40 years (by 1906), the differences between the progressives and our fathers was so great that it was clear they were two different bodies of people. Today you can examine the mature fruit of their progressive ideas by visiting a Disciples of Christ church. They still talk about our common past, but in faith and practice there is little that we hold in common.

Today, the seeds, if not the plant, of all of these departures from the faith are found among us. Many of the great grandchildren of those courageous men, who stood in the forefront of the battle and salvaged a small remnant of faithful disciples, are prepared to embrace the apostasy that was rejected by their forefathers. Like Hymenaeus and Alexander, they are making shipwreck concerning the faith (I Tim. 2:19-20). Let all who love the Lord reject their overtures.

45.

GOOD REASONS FOR STUDYING RESTORATION HISTORY

As he was about to leave them, Moses said to the Hebrews, “Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations: Ask thy father and he will show see; thine elders and they will tell thee” (Deut. 32:8). Wise men have always recognized the value of studying history. J. Anderson wrote, “There is nothing that solidifies and strengthens a nation like reading the nation’s history, whether that history is recorded in books, or embodied in customs, institutions, and monuments.” Cicero, the great Roman orator, said, “not to know what has been transacted in former times is to be always a child...If no use is made of the labors of past ages, the world must remain always in the infancy of knowledge.” As in the realm of citizenship and culture, so in religion, we need to study our past. Among the many reasons for studying the history of the Lord’s Church are the following:

- We are a part of a continuum. To know who we are and how we got where we are, we need to study our history.
- To know and thus appreciate the men who went before us, paving the way for us, making it possible for us to enjoy and benefit from papers, books, congregations and schools, we should study our past.
- It will help us to understand the personalities, institutions, issues and conflicts that shaped us into what we are and how they left their distinctive imprint upon us.
- Such a study will help us to better understand the significance and meaning of our commitment to go back to the Bible and restore original Christianity (Jer. 6:16).
- To thoroughly learn and assimilate those biblical principles that teach us the importance of restoration, we should study our history.
- From such a study we will gain inspiration and encouragement as we become acquainted with the great soldiers of the cross who sacrificially served God in their day (I Cor. 11:1).
- We will learn valuable and useful lessons from the men and events of the past that we may use to illustrate biblical truth today. Lamertine said, “History is neither more nor less than biography on a large scale.”

- As we study the message and methods of evangelism that were so fruitful and productive in the early years of our movement, we are better equipped to build up the church in our day.
- A study of the mistakes made by brethren in days gone by will help us not to repeat them because of our ignorance. A sage once observed that “he who does not learn from the mistakes of history is doomed to repeat them.”
- We need a knowledge of our past so we can respond intelligently when asked about our history and heritage (Jonah 1:8).
- A study of our history will help us understand those factors and issues that have wracked and divided the body of Christ so that we may be prepared to deal with those alienated brethren when we come in contact with them. With a clear understanding of the causal factors of our problems, we will be better able to win them back to Bible ground.
- A broad, general acquaintance with the thought and teaching of those early days of the church will help us to correctly analyze and respond to those who would rewrite our history or reinterpret the faith and message of the pioneer preachers. This the change agents are busily trying to do.
- A better understanding of our past will enable us to properly see our place in the larger scheme of things. When we are unaware of our heritage, we tend to have a dwarfed and inferior view of the church and its impact on the world.
- The knowledge gained from such a study will humble us by keeping us from thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought (Rom. 12:3). It will edify us by helping us to see the value of our small contribution to the whole.
- A careful study of our history will help us to know the facts of what actually happened, what was actually said and believed in those bygone days. It will help us not to accept or repeat those myths, legends and distortions that have grown up over the years concerning our heroes.
- The study of history will make us appreciate the power for either good or evil of one man, one idea, one book, one paper, or one congregation. This cannot always be seen at the present but can clearly be discerned in retrospect.
- A knowledge of our past enables us to check our bearings as one does a map when on a journey, to make sure we have not strayed from our announced course of going back to the Bible.
- Goethe said, “The best thing which we derive from history is the enthusiasm that it raises in us.”

Such a study is no substitute for studying the Scriptures. We are not restoring the Restoration. Alexander Campbell was not our founder (I Cor. 3:5). Studying our past does have merit and value however, as a secondary support system to our faith and work. A wise man once said, "It would surely be wrong to idolize these great men of the past, but it would be equally wrong to forget them." A congregation will be blessed that receives some well prepared lessons on the history of the Restoration of New Testament Christianity. A series of classes taught on this theme would be profitable. May we never forget our religious heritage and may we pass it on, intact, to our children and those who come after us.

46.

CHURCHES OF CHRIST: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

When our back to the Bible movement began there were four separate points of origin. James O'Kelly and a group of Methodists launch their movement in the 1790s. They were located mainly in Virginia and the Carolinas. They called themselves Christians. Drs. Elias Smith and Abner Jones, early in the 1800s, launched their movement among the Baptists of New England. They too resolved to go back to the Bible and be known as Christians. About the same time Barton Stone and a small handful of Presbyterian preachers launched their restoration efforts in Bourbon County, Kentucky. They used the names Christian and Church of Christ to identify their congregations. In the second decade of the 1800s, Thomas and Alexander Campbell immigrated to America. Their background was Presbyterian, but their initial work was done among the Baptists of Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky and the Western Reserve (modern Ohio). Alexander Campbell preferred the designation Disciples of Christ. Since some of the New England Christians had drifted toward Unitarianism he did not wish to be confused with them. It is interesting that the congregation in Bethany, Virginia, where Thomas and Alexander preached and served as elders, was called a "Church of Christ." The building still stands with the name etched in stone. As the followers of Stone and Campbell merged their efforts, neither side insisted that their favorite designation be adopted by all. The result was that our brethren had no one specific name used by all.

Some congregations were identified as Churches of Christ, some as Disciples of Christ and some as Christian Churches.

Prior to 1859 virtually none of the congregations used instrumental music in worship. They believed that the restoration of New Testament worship meant to sing a cappella. In 1859, Dr. L. L. Pinkerton introduced an instrument in the church at Midway, Kentucky. It caused serious problems in that church.

A decade earlier, in 1849 a group of progressive preachers created the American Christian Missionary Society to do the evangelistic and missionary work of the church. That too created serious controversy. The disruptions caused by the outbreak of the Civil War keep things on hold from 1861-1865, but following the war, many of the large, prosperous, city churches in the North began introducing a number of “new” things into their congregations. Instrumental music, choirs and performance singing became popular. The role of preachers evolved toward that of being a pastor- clergymen with some adopting the title of reverend. In every state efforts were made to launch local missionary societies and win support for the national Missionary Society. The progressive churches were often large and socially prominent. They desired to be accepted by other religious bodies and thus their preachers began to participate in ecumenical activities. As this progressive movement rolled forward, those who were content with being simple Bible Christians and to worship as the Scriptures direct withstood their efforts. The main resistance was in the South and Southwest. By 1900 the differences were many and the ties of fellowship had gradually been eroded. When the US Census Department recognized the obvious difference in the two elements, they began listing them as separate bodies.

At the turn of the century congregations began to identify themselves with one or the other of the two groups without thought of adjusting their name. As a practical matter of identification, over a period of time, the more conservative congregations eventually accepted or adopted the designation, Church of Christ. The progressives were generally known as Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches. However many of their congregations in the mid-West identified themselves as “Churches of Christ/Christian Churches.” This usage has resurged after the division between the ultra-liberal Disciples of Christ and the “conservative” Christian Churches in the late 1950s .

It should be not be thought that the restoring preachers first founded the group now known as “Christian Churches” with their instruments and societies, and then in 1906 Churches of Christ began as a split from the Christian Churches. All originally worshiped as we do. When the majority chose to change, the minority that stayed with the original pattern were not the

splinter. They were the remnant of the original movement that was left after the departure (Rom. 9:27).

It is essential that we keep in mind the fundamental differences in Christ's one true church and churches founded by uninspired men. Christ's church does not exist as an institutional body. It has no earthly territory, no earthly headquarters, no earthly head or administrative organization, no humanly devised standard. But virtually all humanly created churches do. The best example is that of the Roman Catholic Church or the Methodist Church.

Christ's church does not depend on having legal recognition, public property and public visibility or power. His church is spread not by an institutional body, but by Christians who share their faith with their neighbors. It spreads like leaven in meal (Matt. 13:33). The message of Christ is like seed (Luke 8:11). Wherever the sacred seed is sown it springs up in good and honest hearts and produces Christians. Where there are two or three of them they constitute the church (Matt. 18:20). So while the church was largely corrupted and engulfed in what grew to be Roman Catholicism, individual Christians and small groups continued faithful in their worship and service. When persecuted by the corrupt church, they were driven underground. Since the historical record was written by those of the strong and powerful state churches, the faithful few were either left out of the picture or painted in pejorative terms as heretics. Other restoration movements have occurred in other places and at other times. The Anabaptists, who refused to follow either the popes, Luther or Calvin, were preaching restoration. There was a movement in Russia at the turn of the 20th century and another in Nigeria in the 1950s which was merged with our brethren. If every true Christian was martyred by wicked men, the church would not be dead so long as the seed of the kingdom could be accessed by honest souls.

SHAKERISM AND THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Peter reminds us that “the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8). This ancient enemy of mankind never misses an opportunity to bring down those who are aspiring to please the Lord Jesus. From the earliest days of the Restoration Movement, Satan has used false teachers to plague the body of believers. The earliest of these threats was that of the Shakers.

This strange sect has its beginning in England in 1747. Ann Lee was the foundress. She claimed to be the second incarnation of Christ. Members of her group had prior connections with the Quakers. Their enemies called them shaking Quakers because of their emotional services where they trembled and shook as they worshiped. Ann Lee said their shaking result from sin being purged from their bodies by the power of the Holy Spirit. The 18th century was an age filled with a wide variety of prophets and prophetesses who claimed to received divine instruction through dreams, visions, trances and the Holy Spirit. They claimed to speak for God. It was also a time when many communal, utopian societies were formed, most of which soon failed.

Ann Lee and nine of her followers left England for America, arriving in New York on Aug. 6, 1774. They settled in Niskayuna, NY where they built their first commune on American soil. Lee died September 8, 1784.

In early 1805 three Shaker missionaries appeared in the region of Kentucky and Ohio where Barton Stone and his brethren were working. The Shaker teachers were named Bates, Mitchum and Young. In his **Autobiography**, Stone describes them as “eminently qualified for their mission”... Their dress was plain and neat, they were grave and unassuming, very intelligent and ready in the Scriptures, and of great boldness in their faith” (p.61-62). “They said they could perform miracles, and related many as done among them. But we never could persuade them to try to work miracles among us” (p. 62).

To the shock and chagrin of Stone and the struggling young brotherhood, three of their fellow preachers were won to this strange cultic group. Matthew Houston, Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy defected. The latter two were signers with Stone of the **Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery**. They were brothers-in-law. The high emotionalism of their recent Cane Ridge Revival, wherein many of the people exhibited exuberant actions such as dancing, shouting and swooning, left them vulnerable to the

similar teaching and practice of the Shaker missionaries. Also they had only recently resolved to cast aside their previous Presbyterian beliefs and follow the Bible alone. Thus their biblical knowledge and understanding of original Christianity was limited. They evidently lacked spiritual maturity. With fair words and smooth speech the false teachers seduced and won these men.

Standing almost alone, Barton Stone worked feverishly, day and night to check the influence of these deceivers with their strange innovations. He fought valiantly to protect the few churches they had planted and salvage the members that had been seduced by them.. His health gave way under the strain, but with God's help he prevailed against the adversary.

The Doctrines and Practices of Shakerism

1. "They denied the literal resurrection of the body from the grave."
2. Their elders claimed "constant communication with angels and all the departed saints."
3. They claimed to be able to perform miracles by the Holy Spirit.
4. "They looked for no other or better heaven than that on earth.
5. They demanded and enforced total celibacy, insisting even that marriages be abandoned as sinful.
6. In addition to singing and prayer, their worship "...consisted in voluntary dancing together."
7. They lived in communes "and had all things common, entirely under the direction and control of the elders."
8. They taught that Christ first appeared as a male but could not accomplish his plan of salvation until his second appearance as a woman.
9. They believed that Ann Lee, the founder and head of their church, was the Christ and that she had power to save.
10. They claimed to receive new revelations of divine truth which were superior to the Bible (p. 63-64).

Both Dunlavy and McNemar reached high levels of leadership among the Shakers and wrote a great deal of their literature. Dunlavy authored **The Manifesto, or a Declaration of the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Christ** which was the first systematic theology of the Shakers. Stone records that John Dunlavy died, "raving in desperation for his folly in forsaking the truth for an old woman's fables." McNemar was later excluded by the Shakers and left "in a miserable, penniless condition..." (p. 63)

You may ask how could this be? How could people committed to following the Bible be so misled by such a glaring false system? We must never underestimate the power of Satan. His ministers fashion themselves “as ministers of righteousness ...even as Apostles of Christ” (II Cor. 11:13-15). He has numerous devices with which to deceive us (II Cor. 2:11). His teachers use slight and craftiness to promote their wiles of error (Eph. 4:14-15). Jesus warned of false Christs and false prophets who would show great signs and wonders, trying to lead astray “even the elect” (Matt. 24:24).

There is an important lesson in this for us today. We must never assume that our brethren are immune to such erroneous systems. Let us warn our congregations to “believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Teach them to examine every teacher and his message in light of the Word of God, searching the Scriptures daily to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). This is our only safeguard against damnable doctrines and deceitful teachers.

END NOTES

- 1. The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone**, included in the Cane Ridge Reader, Hoke Dickinson, editor, no date, no place.
- Wikipedia, On-line Encyclopedia, article, Shakers
- Douglas Foster and others, editors, art. John Dunlavy, **The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement**. Eerdmans Pub. Co. Grand Rapids. 2004, p. 287.

LESSONS FROM A LOST CAUSE

A Restoration Movement began in New England at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Led by Dr. Elias Smith and Dr. Abner Jones, a host of pious souls broke with denominationalism and determined to go back to the Bible. Smith wrote “that we might be prepared to form ourselves into a church according to the New Testament, and to be called Christians without any sectarian names added” (**The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels and Suffering of Elias Smith**, 1816, p. 98). Their movement came to be known as the Christian Connection. Crowds of up to 3,000 flocked to hear the old gospel proclaimed. Daniel Hix reported 662 additions to the cause in 1808. Flourishing congregations sprung up all over New England. Their success, however, was short lived. In his book, **The Christians of New England**, James Gardner identifies a number of serious mistakes in judgment, faith and practice that brought an early and shameful demise to their great movement. We list these without comment, asking the reader to look around him in our brotherhood. Think about the preachers, programs and papers; the sermons, attitudes and practices in vogue today and see if any of those deadly symptoms are evident among us.

- “The most serious problem facing the Christians by the 1830’s was not a particular false doctrine, but rather the absence of doctrine at all” (p. 82).
- “The Christians grew increasingly reluctant to hold themselves or each other to the Biblical standard” (82).
- Their preaching soon, “gave way to vague appeals to every man to do that which was right in his own eyes” (p. 82).
- “Jones’ preaching gradually lost its challenge to the world. He gave up the demanding intensity of a prophet for the emotionalism of a revivalist” (p. 56).
- They came “to accept a large number of converts as proof that God approves of a particular church...” (p. 56). They “regard(ed) bigger as necessarily better” (p. 82).
- “One of the worst effects of the mania for numerical growth was the prestige it gave some of the most unstable and unprincipled ministers among the Christians” (p. 83).
- “As their first generation of great leaders grew old and died, the Christians began to listen to a class of preachers who were more showmen than saints, more publicity agents than Biblical scholars” (p.83).

- “Closely associated with their passion for outward success was the fundamental problem of emotionalism” (p. 83). “Preachers found it easier to frighten or excite people into the church than to convince them” (p. 84).
- “The Christians...generally followed the denominational practice of preaching on short passages of Scripture, usually no more than a verse or two, without any detailed study of the Bible” (p. 102).
- “Where Jones and Smith had pled for no creed but the Bible, many among the second generation of Christian wanted no creed at all, not even the word of God” (p. 101).
- “The Christians gradually changed their teaching concerning the organization of the local church” (p. 78).
- Beginning about 1825 the Christians began to refer unashamedly to themselves as a denomination among denominations, still pleading for unity among all the followers of Christ...” (p. 78).

In December of 1831, Mark Farnold, a leading Christian preacher, wrote, “that while we had enlarged our borders, we had lost sight of some of the landmarks” (p. 85).

In 1831 William Miller, father of the modern Adventist movement, began his work in New England. “He found a particularly receptive audience in the Christian Connection Churches ...” (p. 114). “Perhaps as many as half of all the New England Christians came to believe in...Miller’s prophecy of doom...” (p. 115). In 1844, “The Christian Connection lost approximately half its total membership in a single year” (p. 122). Although Miller’s predictions of Christ’s return failed, his adherents could not go back. They flowed into the newly formed Advent Christian Church. “Many small congregations were wiped out, and larger ones were severely crippled” (p. 122). “Finally in 1929 the remnant that was left joined with the Congregational Church, now known as the United Church of Christ, thus officially ending the history of the Christian Connection” (p. 122).

A wise man has said, “He that does not remember the lessons of history is doomed to repeat the mistakes of history.” The mistakes that destroyed the New England Restoration will destroy us today. It is alarming that all of those fallacies are presently found in our midst. If they are allowed to flourish, they will produce a bitter harvest. May all of God’s people renew their commitment to restoring the church of the Bible by conforming in every detail to the New Testament of Jesus her Lord.

49.

THE BROKEN FELLOWSHIP

A careful observer will note that Churches of Christ and the Independent Christian Churches have many similarities. Once we were a united people, worshipping and serving the Lord with a common faith. In this lesson we will notice that past connection and the causes of our separation.

The Period of Unity (1804-1849)

Our roots had their primary beginning with the restoration efforts of Barton W. Stone in Kentucky and Thomas and Alexander Campbell in Western Virginia in the first quarter of the 1800's. The seed of the gospel produced a common crop of Christians wherever it was preached (Luke 8:11). Thousands of godly souls eagerly embraced the invitation to go back to the Bible and be Christians only. Scores of Baptist churches abandoned their denominational connection and became New Testament Christians. The Mahoning Baptist association was dissolved and its member churches joined the Restoration in 1830.

In 1831 – 1832 in Georgetown and Lexington, Kentucky the followers of Stone and Campbell agreed to unite and merge their efforts for the Lord. A tremendous surge of growth followed this move and the number of disciples soon came to number upwards of 250,000. So great was the reception to the gospel that many thought the restored church would soon sweep the field.

The Period of Turmoil (1849 – 1906)

Satan never rests when God's cause is flourishing. In October of 1849, a group of prominent brethren met in Cincinnati, Ohio to organize the American Christian Missionary Society in order to coordinate the mission work of the entire brotherhood. The chief leaders of this movement were D. S. Burnet, the organizer, and W. K. Pendleton, its chief defender. Alexander Campbell had laid the foundation for the missionary society in a series of articles published in the **Millennial Harbinger** in 1841 – 1848. He was elected the first president of the organization. Once opened, there was no closing the floodgates and a number of unscriptural and disruptive practices soon appeared.

In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton introduced an instrument of music into the worship of the church in Midway, Kentucky. His reasoning was that their singing was so poor that even the rats had left the church. Though slow in being accepted, by 1906 the majority of our churches had adopted instrumental music. In virtually every place where it appeared, friction and division followed in its wake.

The issues of slavery and abolition plagued the churches from 1840-1860. A few disciples owned slaves, but most were too poor to afford such a luxury. A. Campbell wrote and preached a message of moderation. He viewed slavery as a social evil, but noted that the Scriptures did not specifically condemn it. Rather, it was regulated. While he expected the institution of slavery to fall before the advance of the gospel, he warned against agitation that would disrupt society and lead to bloodshed. John Boggs founded **The Northwestern Christian** in Indiana, a magazine to promote the abolitionist cause within the church. He felt it his duty to drive out of the church all who owned slaves or sympathized with the practice. He went further and attacked those like Campbell who would not espouse his abolition viewpoint. James Shannon of Missouri was just as outspoken in affirming the merits of slavery. He alleged that it was God's will for the African people. Along with the entire nation, the bonds of Christian unity were greatly strained by these agitations.

When the cannons fired on Fort Sumter in 1861 not only the Union but the Church as well was grievously torn. At first, strong leaders such as David Lipscomb (Tennessee), Ben Franklin (Ohio and Indiana) and J. W. McGarvey (Missouri and Kentucky) urged brethren to maintain a neutral, pacifist position. Others were caught up in the fever of war and joined the fray on their chosen side. James A. Garfield recruited Christian brethren and formed the 42nd Ohio Volunteers. He led his troops in the bloody battles of Shiloh and Chickamauga. He was eventually commissioned a general. R. M. Gano of Texas put together a cavalry troop made up largely of Christians. By one day they missed fighting Garfield's Christian troops at Shiloh. During the war years, the Missionary Society issued several inflammatory resolutions favoring the Union cause and condemning the South. This not only convinced the southern brethren of the evil nature of the society, it embittered them against those associated with it. Following the war, a sectional bitterness was clearly evident between those north of the Mason-Dixon line and those south. The division that finally came reflected that sectionalism.

A spirit of compromise had been developing in those churches that wanted missionary societies and instrumental music. This was reflected in Walter Scott's paper, **The Protestant Unionist** which reduced the terms of fellowship to a belief in the deity of Jesus. "Progressive Brethren" as they preferred to call themselves, were frequently involved in union meetings with denominational ministers. They came to view and refer to the church as a "denomination." The cliché was coined that "we are Christians only, but not the only Christians."

The role of the progressive minister gradually evolved from that of a preacher and evangelist to that of "pastor," like their denominational

counterparts. With this development, it wasn't long until men like Isaac Errett began to add the title "Reverend" for their name.

Within that same stream of progressive preachers there soon were manifestations of rank theological liberalism. Led by men like J. H. Garrison, editor of **The Christian Evangelist**, R. C. Cave of St. Louis and Edward Ames of the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago, these men began an assault on the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures that equaled the most rabid of the liberal Protestants.

Separation Realized (1906)

In 1906, those responsible for the U.S. Religious Census noted the polarization that existed among the Restoration churches. They commissioned J. W. Shepherd to gather the statistics of those churches whose fellowship excluded instrumental music and missionary societies. The resulting figures were shocking. The progressives claimed 985,701 members. Our brethren could count only 149,658. We had 2,649 congregations, they had 8,203. The liberals had gained control of most of the foreign mission work, the schools and benevolent works. We were a small, badly beaten remnant scattered primarily in the South. The little strength we had was found mainly within the circle of influence of David Lipscomb's **Gospel Advocate** and Austin McGary's **Firm Foundation**. Our brethren were poor, with little strength or resources. They were scorned and ridiculed by the progressives as well as the sectarian world.

Brethren of great courage and conviction refused to accept defeat. They argued that "they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us; they would have continued with us..." (I John 2:19).

Growth and Recovery (1906-1976)

The surviving handful of faithful men of God, threw themselves into the Lord's work with incredible sacrifice and zeal. Foot by foot they recovered the ground lost and reestablished New Testament congregations throughout the land. By 1976 we had grown to some 1,200,000 members, outstripping those who had digressed. From a lower socio-economic strata, we move into the middle class of society. Following World War II, we expanded our mission outreach into every state of the nation and some 140 foreign nations. There has likewise been growth in recognition and respect in the eyes of the world.

Awareness of hard battles fought and the losses sustained should make us very cautious when we hear voices calling for unity based on compromise with those whose doctrines and practices devastated us in the past. Remember the lessons of history, or you will repeat the mistakes of history!

THE ORIGIN OF THE MODERN DAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

Some who have departed from the faith have sought to revise the history of our back to the Bible movement. In their revision, they say that Churches of Christ are a splinter group that in 1906 split away from the original Christian Church. Hence in their view, we should desire to be reunited with the original Christian Church, and not allow such things as instruments of music, women leadership, theological liberalism, etc. keep us apart.

In the early days of our back to the Bible movement our brethren did not insist on nor have one particular name to identify their congregations. Some used Church of Christ, others Christian Church and still others Disciples of Christ.

Congregations descending from Barton Stone's movement tended to use Church of Christ. Those descending from James O'Kelly's and Elias Smith's movements tended to use Christian Church. Alexander Campbell argued for Disciples of Christ because he did not want to be confused with those of Smith's movement. This was the case because some of them were mistaken in their understanding of the nature of Christ and thus were accused of unitarianism. Strangely, the congregation in Bethany W. Virginia, where Campbell lived, preached and served as an elder, was called The Church of Christ. You can still visit the old meeting house and see the stone lintel over the door which has engraved on it, "The Church of Christ."

When the division between the conservatives and the progressives occurred, there was much confusion as to what a congregation's thinking and position was on the matters of dispute. The strongest element of the progressives were those known as Disciples of Christ. They led the way into denominationalism. Most congregations agreeing with them took that name or the name, "Christian Church." Our brethren clung to the old "Church of Christ" terminology that they had known and used for many years. It was a name they could read in their bible (Rom. 16:16). The church belonged to Christ since he purchased it with his blood (Acts 20:28) established it (Matt. 16:18). It is his body of which he is the head (Eph. 1:22). It also helped to identify them as not being a part of the digressive movement which preferred to identify itself as Disciples of Christ/Christian Church. Keep in mind that we do not say that "Church of Christ" is the exclusive name that God gave his church. Nor do we say it must be used to be pleasing to God. But it is surely

one of the terms used by the Holy Spirit and the Apostle Paul to identify the early congregations. It is acceptable to God. It correctly represents who we are.

As to the time of our origin, imagine a family of people who set out to go to Washington D.C. Along the way the majority of them get side-tracked and lose their way. The rest of the group continues on their journey to Washington. Although those who reached the destination was the smaller of the two, they did what they intentionally planned to do. The others, though more numerous, ended up in other places and did not reached the original destination. So it was when brethren set out to restore the church to her original state. The majority were distracted and turned aside (the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches). The remnant struggled on to get back to the Bible in all important matters. We are not the splinter. We are what is left of the original movement.

51.

RESPECTING THE SILENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES IS ESSENTIAL TO RESTORATION

In his excellent history of the American Restoration Movement, James DeForest Murch made the following insightful statement concerning us of the Churches of Christ:

“Within the last generation the Church of Christ has made a phenomenal growth. This is due to two things: (1) Its people have stood like a Rock of Gibraltar for ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,’ amid the doubt and confusion superinduced by liberalism. They have challenged the spirit of compromise and worldliness and dared to be a ‘peculiar people’ teaching and practicing what they believe is the Bible way of life. (2) They have come to realize that the silence of the Scriptures must be respected as well as the commandments of Scripture, but that obedience to its silence permits freedom of judgment and action” (**Christians Only**, p. 313).

There are two remarkable things about this quote. First, Murch was a national leader in the Independent Christian Churches whose predecessors 125 years ago rejected the law of silence. Almost to a man, they still refuse to recognize this aspect of Christ’s authority over his church. Second, is that we now have a sizeable number of professors, preachers and elders among us who are preaching and behaving as though there is no such a thing as “the law of silence.”

This principle of divine authority is revealed in a half dozen examples of Biblical history. When Jewish brethren journeyed to Antioch and told the Gentile converts, “except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved (Acts 15:1), Paul and Barnabas took the matter to the Apostles at Jerusalem. After an inquiry, the Apostles and elders wrote “For as much as...certain (men) who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; *to whom we gave no commandment*” (Act 15:24). Thus a teaching, not commanded by apostolic authority, is not to be allowed or accepted. Although there was no command forbidding circumcision, in the absence of some positive instruction, the practice could not be introduced into the life of the church.

The writer of Hebrews observes that Christ could not serve as a high priest on earth since he was of the tribe of Judah, “as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests” (Heb. 7:14). No specific statement forbade a man from Judah serving in that exalted station, but it did not have to since God had said that the sons of Aaron the Levite would bear that office (Ex. 28:1).

Two other familiar events of Old Testament history vividly illustrate this point. The tragic case of the priests, Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, who perished while using strange fire in offering incense in Jehovah’s sanctuary (Lev. 10:1-3). The fire they used was strange in that it was not taken from the sacred fire on the great brazen altar, as God had instructed them to do (Lev. 16:12; 6:12)

When David ordered the ark of God to be carried up to Jerusalem another tragedy occurred. It was placed on an ox cart and care was taken to insure that proper respect was shown. En route the oxen stumbled and the ark was about to fall. Uzzah reached out to steady it and God instantly struck him dead (I Chron. 13:6-10). Shocked and saddened, David ordered the procession halted until they could research the matter and determine why God had so dealt with them. Consulting the Scriptures, they discovered that God had ordered the ark to be carried on the shoulders of Levites. Although he had not specifically said, “Don’t carry it on an ox cart,” such was excluded by the positive directive given (I Chron. 15:2,13).

Today, to our shame and sorrow, many of our young preachers have never heard this lesson explained or else have been convinced it is of no significance for modern disciples. The most notable example of this failure is in the current discussion about our worship. These poor scholars who wish to introduced changes are asking, “Where does the Bible forbid us to do so?” Shame, shame, shame. The above lesson, which you should have learned in Freshman Bible, answers you with a thunderous voice.

52.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY WHAT IT WAS; WHY IT WAS WRONG

The American Christian Missionary Society was established in Cincinnati in October 1849. This, along with the introduction of instrumental music in worship, created a furor that ultimately divided our brotherhood. Those who accepted these innovations came to be known as the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ. Observation tells us that most of our brethren, including our preachers, have no idea what the Missionary Society was and why our brethren rejected it.

WHAT IT WAS

A look at the founding documents gives us an idea of the nature and purpose of the Society. Those assembled at Cincinnati adopted the following resolution: “Resolved, that the ‘Missionary Society,’ as a means to concentrate and disperse the wealth and benevolence of the brethren of this Reformation in an effort to convert the world, is both scriptural and expedient.”

The constitution adopted, began with the following articles:

1. This society shall be called the American Christian Missionary Society.
2. The object of this Society shall be to promote the spread of the gospel in destitute places of our own and foreign lands.
3. The Society shall be composed of annual delegates, Life Members and Life Directors. Any church may appoint a delegate for an annual contribution of ten dollars. Twenty dollars paid at one time shall be requisite to constitute a member for life, and one hundred dollars paid at one time...shall be required to constitute a director for life.
4. The officers of the Society shall consist of a President, 20 Vice presidents, a Treasurer, a corresponding Secretary, and a Recording Secretary...
5. The society shall also annually elect 25 managers, who together with the officers and life directors of this Society, shall constitute an executive board, to conduct the business of the Society.

The delegates selected Alexander Campbell to be the first President and D. S. Burnett the First Vice-President of the Society.

WHEREIN IT WAS WRONG

From the beginning, serious objections were raised against the missionary society. Among the criticisms were the following:

1. Since delegates, membership and officers were all limited to those who paid the set fees, therefore the Society was built on a money basis and that was wrong.
2. It was argued that God's Word "knows nothing of a confederation of churches in an ecclesiastical system, culminating in an earthly head, for government or for any other purpose..."
3. It was a dangerous precedent, a departure from the principles for which we have always contended..."
4. Many feared "that the Society would grow into an oppressive ecclesiasticism..."

Among those who led the opposition to the Society were Jacob Creath, Jr., Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb and Benjamin Franklin.

The church in Connelsville, Pennsylvania issued a public statement in opposition to the Society which encouraged other congregations to join them in rejecting it. Among their objections were these:

- "We consider the Church of Jesus Christ, in virtue of the commission given her by our blessed Lord, the only scriptural organization on earth for the conversion of sinners and sanctification of believers."
- "...Conscientiously, we can neither aid nor sanction any society, for this or other purpose apart from the church, much less one which would exclude from its membership many of our brethren, and all of the Apostles...because silver and gold they had not."
- "We consider the introduction of all such societies as a dangerous precedent—a departure from the principles for which we have always contended..."
- "We also consider them necessarily heretical and schismatical, as much so as human creeds and confessions of faith, when made the bonds of union and communion."¹⁷

Through the **Gospel Advocate**, David Lipscomb and others brought additional charges against the Society. They said:

¹⁷ Homer Hailey. **Attitudes and Consequences of the Restoration Movement**, Second Edition (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1952) pp. 148-178.

1. That it was a substitute for the church, that it was a human invention and without divine authority. When the society did its evangelistic work it was usurping the rights of the church.
2. That societies were built on the assumption that the Lords's church cannot or will not do the work assigned to it. The founders must therefore assume that their plan can do the job better than God's.
3. That the Church of Christ is the Lord's Missionary Society. He is its Head, and every member a life member and director.
4. That the Society had its origin in a desire to be like the denominations around us.
5. That to do its announced job the Missionary Society would have to assume power or control over the churches who were the source of its income and the fruit of its efforts.
6. That the Society was the cause of division and conflict in the brotherhood.
7. That the Society was a poor investment of God's money since the operating overhead consumed most of the money.
8. That there was no Scriptural authority for the creation and existence of the Missionary Society, therefore it was unscriptural, unauthorized and condemned.¹⁸

History tells us that the majority ignored the warnings and accepted the Missionary Society to be their organization for evangelism. After a shaky start, it grew in power and pursued a steady course away from God's Word. The Disciples of Christ denomination is the modern heir of that decision. All of the warnings about what would be the end result have come true.

A wise man observed that, he who does not remember the lessons of the past is doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. The prevailing ignorance about the Missionary Society leaves us vulnerable to those who would propose human systems to do the work of the church today.

Be thankful to God for those faithful soldiers who stood and fought to save the church from the corruptions of these human schemes. May we, their heirs, never forget the battle fought and the price paid for our freedom in Christ.

¹⁸ Earl West. *Search For the Ancient Order*, Vol. 2 (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950) pp. 51-71.

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

From 1849 to 1900 our brethren debated the merits of the Missionary Society. The American Christian Missionary Society was created by prominent men among us who believed that such a society was essential if we were ever going to have a major impact on the world. D. S. Burnett was the founding father of the Society and Alexander Campbell was its first president. Isaac Errett and W. K. Pendleton were its most ardent defenders. Among those who offered strong biblical opposition to the Missionary Society were Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, Jacob Creath, Jr., David Oliphant and David Lipscomb.

Unfortunately, today, most brethren, including most preachers, know next to nothing of the missionary society and why our brethren opposed it.

- **The heart of the debate was not about mission work.** All agreed it was the duty of the church to preach the gospel to the lost of every nation.
- **It was not about cooperation in preaching the gospel.** All believed two or more churches could cooperate in doing a work beyond the capacity of a single church.
- **It was about people who were convinced that congregations of the Lord's church were incapable of doing the work of evangelizing the world.**
- **It was about people who believed they could create a better organization for doing His business than Christ had done.**
- **It was an attempt to imitate the missionary organizations of the various denominational churches.**
- **It was the creation of men who believed the many congregations needed a national organization to handle not just missions, but every phase of church life.** Soon after launching their Missionary Society, they created local and state societies. There was a benevolent society, a tract society, an organization for fund-raising and another for screening ministers and recommending them. There was a society to care for the retirement of aged preachers and one for helping churches build buildings. There was a Ladies' Aid Society.
- **Soon, those who questioned the inspiration and authority of God's Word rose to positions of influence and power in the societies.** Most of those who championed the societies wanted instrumental music in their worship.

Many of them allowed women to fill positions of public leadership in their churches.

- The compounding of error was more than faithful brethren could tolerate. Division was the result. By 1906 it was evident to all. Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches were devoted to their societies. Churches of Christ rejected them and all of their appendages.
- But the zeal of the society movement was not satisfied. It caused yet another division in the ranks of its supporters. The Independent Christian Churches refused to submit to the control of the national Society, preferring their own organizations to do their work. The Disciples of Christ were left with the United Christian Missionary Society and it eventually swallowed them up. It morphed into the International Convention of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) which in 1968 restructured them into a full-fledged denominational organization. In the **Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement**, Richard Hamm writes “Rather than being something entirely new in the history of the Stone-Campbell Movement, Restructure represented a maturing of the organizational developments that had been under way in the Disciples’ stream of the movement for many years” (p. 645). (Since 1849, jhw).
- Thus we can see that the reason the progressives wanted the Society (i.e. to organize the brotherhood and bring it under the supervision of national leaders) was precisely the reason our brethren rejected it, and they were right in so doing.
- We must not be so ignorant and foolish as to repeat that terrible mistake now, 160 years later.

54.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC DID IT REALLY MATTER?

For some sixty years churches of the American Restoration Movement worshiped in harmony, without the use of instrumental music. In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton brought a melodeon into the church at Midway, Kentucky to improve their worship in song. His excuse was that their singing was so poor that the rats had been frightened away. One of the elders, a Bro. Adam Hibler and his slave, Rueben, secretly removed the instrument by night and hid it in the attic of Hibler's house. This did not discourage Dr. Pinkerton for he soon replaced the lost instrument.

Although instrumental music was slow in gaining acceptance, by 1900 most city congregations had accepted the innovation and numerous rural churches had done the same. When the division that resulted from this and other innovations was noted in the 1906 religious census, those who chose the instrument claimed 8,293 congregations and 982,701 members, They were identified as Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches, Those brethren who refused the instrument could claim only 2,649 churches and 159,658 members. A fierce battle had been fought and a fearful price paid. From a ragged handful of survivors we have rebounded to our present strength in America of some 13,500 congregations and 1,350,000 members.

Now some brethren are proposing resumption of fellowship with the Christian Churches, even though they continue to use instrumental music in worship. Some are questioning whether our fathers should have stood their ground in opposition to it? It is helpful to go back and review the reasons why we reject instrumental music in Christian worship.

WHY WE DON'T USE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

We are Christ's church, therefore under his authority. The church was purchased with his blood (Acts. 20:28). He is **head** over all things to his church (Eph. 1:22) We must be subject to Christ in all things (Eph. 5:24). Since he has all authority, we are obliged to teach men to observe all, and only, those things he has commanded (Matt. 28:18, 20).

Christ specifically instructs us how to worship God. We are told to sing and make melody in our heart (Eph. 5:19). No mention is made in his will of playing instruments of music in worship. Scripture warns us not to go beyond the things that are written (I Cor. 4:6 ASV). To go beyond the doctrine of

Christ leaves a man or a church without God (II John 9). We are straightly warned not to add to nor take away from God's Word (Rev. 22:18-19).

WE ARE NOT UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT

Perhaps the most frequent objection raised to our practice is that instrumental music was used by saints under the Old Testament. The argument is faulty at heart. God authorized the Hebrews to use instruments of music in his worship (II Chron. 29:25) That he has not done for the Church of Christ. Furthermore, the old law has been removed, nailed to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14). To argue for Old Testament authority would prove too much. The Old Testament not only authorized instrumental music but incense, animal sacrifices and polygamy. Few people would want to accept all of these items in the church. A New Testament church does not worship according to the Old Testament.

HISTORY TELLS US THE ORIGIN OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

The first use of it in a church is attributed to Pope Vitalian of the Roman Catholic Church in the year c.a. 660 A.D. His doing so created such a furor that the practice was rejected and was not commonly accepted until after the time of Thomas Aquinas, c.a. 1250 A.D. (Joseph Bingham, **The Antiquities of the Christian Church**, London, Henry Bohn, 1850, Vol. 1, p. 315).

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF WE USE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

There are some who are not impressed with the need to be submissive to Christ's authority. The New Testament pattern of worship means little to such people. They commonly raise the question, is it really any great thing if a church chooses to use mechanical instruments? To advance such an argument reveals a serious deficiency in their Bible knowledge and understanding.

Numerous Old Testament examples teach us that God expects us to do what he says, the way he says, for the reason he says if we expect his blessings on our worship and service. The rejection of Cain's sacrifice demonstrates this (Gen. 4:3-4). "By faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice" (Heb. 11:4). Paul tells us that "faith cometh of hearing and hearing of the Word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The Genesis record tells us that Abel offered a blood offering by faith, i.e., as God directed. It was received by God and Abel was blessed. Cain offered the fruit of the ground, which God had not authorized. It was rejected because it was not of faith, i.e., not according to the divine directive. He substituted that which he thought should be acceptable. It was not! This lesson teaches that it is not enough just to worship, no matter how sincerely.

Acceptable worship must be according to the Lord's instruction else it will be rejected. Christ's Will instructs us to sing in worship (Eph. 5:19). To add an instrument is to make the same mistake as did Cain. May we learn from his sad experience.

Remember the case of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron. These young priests offered strange fire upon the altar of incense "which God had not commanded." Fire from the Lord smote them and they perished on their first day of active service at God's house (Lev. 10:1-3). The key is found in the words "which God had not commanded." The divine instruction was that they use only fire from the perpetual fire on the great brazen altar before the tabernacle. They substituted "strange" or different fire and discovered the hard way that God meant what he said about his worship. What a fearful price they paid, but it is recorded for our learning (Rom. 15:4). Here we see what has come to be known as God's law of exclusion. When a thing is specifically commanded, that eliminates all other possibilities that men might propose. They might have reasoned that "fire is fire;" that "one fire is as good as another" or that God did not say don't use fire from your campfire. They were dead wrong. Those who use the above logic regarding instrumental music make the mistake of Nadab and Abihu. Should we expect God to judge them differently?

There is the case of Uzza. When David wished to move the ark of God from Kiriathjearim to Jerusalem, he commissioned two good men, Uzza and Ahio, to transport it on an ox cart. A great parade of celebrants accompanied the procession, worshiping God. All went well until the oxen stumbled and Uzza reached forth his hand to save the sacred ark from crashing to the ground. To the shock and dismay of all, Jehovah smote him and he fell to the ground dead (I Chron. 13:7-10). Consternation swept over all. What had gone wrong in this noble and holy event? The answer is found in chapter 15. After three months of study and reflection David said, "None ought to carry the ark of but the Levites; for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him..." "For because ye bare it not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not according to the ordinance...the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon as Moses commanded according to the word of Jehovah" (I Chron. 15:2, 13-15).

Now the problem is evident. Their intention was good. They were sincere. But they failed to honor God by following his instructions. Their mistake has been repeated ten thousand times by those who would worship him. The tragic case of Uzza and Ahio is written for our learning. Approach God in his appointed way! For our worship, he has told us to sing (Col. 3:16). Do it and be blessed. Change the divine order at your own peril!

Think of righteous Noah. He built an ark to the saving of his house (I Pet. 3:20). When God commissioned him to construct the life boat, he gave specific details. The size was to be 300 cubits x 50 x 30. It was to be constructed of gopher wood and sealed with pitch. There were to be three decks and one door. Moses tells us, “Thus did Noah; according to **all** that God commanded him ...” (Gen. 6:13-22). Judge ye, what would have been the results if Noah had presumed to make the ark larger or smaller? What if he had selected a different wood or design? Would God have blessed and saved him? Believe it who will?

God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7). If we make the same mistake as did Cain, Aaron’s sons, or David’s men, we should expect a similar judgment from a just God. If, like Noah, we worship according to that which God commands, we will be rewarded for our faithfulness.

We sing praises to God without instruments for such is God’s expressed will. It is not a matter of tradition or opinion. It is a matter of faith!

This question wracked the brotherhood a hundred and fifty years ago and it has now raised its ugly head again. Please, brethren, learn the lesson of the past. Don’t be led into this transgression against our holy Lord. Reject the unauthorized practice and rebuke those who promote it (Rom. 16:17). We must take our stand against this and every sinful innovation upon God’s sacred worship. We can do no other. God help us!

55.

WISE MEN LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF HISTORY

David McCullough observed that, “History is a guide to navigation in perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are.” Members of the Church of Christ need to consider these wise words. There is confusion in our ranks today because many have no acquaintance with our brotherhood’s history. Moses expressed a similar thought when he taught Israel to “Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations: Ask thy father, and he will show thee; Thine elders, and they will tell thee” (Deut. 32: 7-8).

We marvel to hear some of our brethren expressing themselves on the subject of instrumental music in worship in such unscriptural or uncertain terms. They seem totally unaware of the great battle our fathers fought on this and related subjects. The solid scriptural arguments for our practice they do not understand or accept. From their lips fall the prattle of false teachers. In their ignorance, they are traveling a path that can only lead to heart break and sorrow for them and the Cause of our Lord. Consider the following:

Bro. Glenn McCoy has recently given us an excellent book on Restoration history. In the 15th chapter of his book, **Return to the Old Paths**, he discusses the rise of the instrumental music controversy among our brethren from c.a. 1860 to 1900. I share with you some quotes that will help you understand what our leading preachers thought about the subject 125 years ago.

Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), wrote: “I wonder not then that an organ, a fiddle, or a Jews-harp, should be requisite to stir up their carnal hearts, and work into ecstasy their animal souls, else hosannas languish on their tongues and their devotions die. And that all persons who have no spiritual discernment, taste or relish for their spiritual meditations, consolations and sympathies of renewed hearts should call for such aid, is but natural...So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in the church and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think with Mr. G. that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert” (McCoy, p. 227).

Benjamin Franklin (1812-1878), the gospel preacher, was asked if there might be occasions when instrumental music would be acceptable. Franklin, with dripping sarcasm, responded:

- “Where a church never had, or has lost the Spirit of Christ.
- “If a church has a preacher who never had or has lost the Spirit of Christ, who has become a dry, prosing and lifeless speaker, so as to be entirely incapable of commanding and interesting an audience, it is thought that instrumental music would draw out and interest the people.
- “If a church only intends being a fashionable society, a mere place of amusement and secular entertainment, and abandoning all idea of religion and worship, instrumental music would be a very pleasant and agreeable part of such entertainment” (McCoy, p. 228).
- In another place he wrote, “If you press the instrument into the worship, we care not whether you call it an element in the worship or an aid, and drive them away because they cannot conscientiously worship

with the instrument, you cause division—you are the aggressors—the innovator...” (**American Christian Review**, June 14, 1870, p. 188).

John W. McGarvey (1829-1911), wrote: “In the earlier years of the Reformation, there was entire unanimity in the rejection of instrumental music from our public worship. It was declared unscriptural, inharmonious with the Christian institution, and a source of corruption. In the course of time individuals here and there called in question the correctness of this decision and attempt was occasionally made to introduce instruments in some churches...” “...I again repeat, that every man who bows to the authority of God’s word, must oppose the use of instrumental music in the church...” (**Millennial Harbinger**, 1864, p. 510).

Moses Lard(1818-1880), responding to the question, “What should be done with the churches using instrumental music,” said, “What shall be done with such churches? Of course, nothing. If they see fit to mortify the feelings of their brethren, to forsake the example of the primitive churches, to condemn the authority of Christ by resorting to will worship, to excite dissension and give rise to general scandal, they must do it. As a body we can do nothing. Still, we have three partial remedies left us to which we should at once resort... Let those brethren who oppose the introduction of an organ first remonstrate in gentle, kind and decided terms. If their remonstrance is unheeded, and the organ is brought in, then let them at once, and without even the formality of asking for a letter, abandon the church so acting; and let all such members unite elsewhere. Thus these organ grinding churches will in the lapse of time be broken down, or wholly apostatize, and the sooner they are in fragments the better for the cause of Christ” (McCoy, p. 232-233).

Robert Richardson (1806-1876), wrote, “The introduction of a musical instrument into a church is a triumph of the sensual over the spiritual” (Ibid, p. 237).

Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874), wrote, “...we regard the organ and violin (in) worship, and even the fashionable choir singing of our country as a mockery of all that is sacred” (**Gospel Advocate** # 9, July 1856, p. 199).

These quotes could be augmented with dozens more. Suffice it to say that such was the common thinking of our brethren for the first half century of our back to the Bible movement. It was only after the Civil War that the use of instruments of music began to be widely practiced. That and other innovations caused a painful and destructive division in our ranks and swept the greater number of our brethren into the ranks of denominationalism. These great men of God and those who shared their convictions were shouted down by their peers. Most of our churches preferred their organs to the fellowship

of those who would not accept that unscriptural innovation. The result was the separation of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches from us.

After a full century of recovery and rebuilding we have the bizarre spectacle of a few preachers among us, introducing instrumental music into their worship. Satan never rests. Fools never learn. Let us be wise men who learn from the mistakes of the past lest we repeat them again. Our acappella praise is by the definition of the word, "as in the chapel." That was the way the early Christians praised God. If it was right for them, it cannot be wrong for us.

56.

A PAINFUL LESSON FROM THE PAST

The following narrative was written by the late brother R. N. Gardner, gospel preacher, who for many years taught at Harding Christian College. This material was shared with me by his son, brother Arthur K. Gardner. Wise men learn from the events of the past. Fools ignore history, vainly assuming they are immune from the destructive dangers of bygone generations. In a day when men are urging us to a reunite with the Christian Churches, its message is timely. (John Waddey).

"In 1884 the county seat of Greene County was moved from Gainesville to Paragould, Arkansas. My father was County Court Clerk and moved there at the same time.

At that time there was no church of Christ in Paragould. However, a few Christians began to meet in private homes. At the first meeting in my father's home there were six members present: Brother Riley Smith and wife, Brother Tyner and his wife, Sister Shannon and my father.

In the summer of 1885 they began a meeting in the Methodist church house with Brother A. Alsup of Tennessee doing the preaching. During the first week of the meeting brother Alsup taught that sprinkling was not baptism. For this the Methodists refused to allow any further use of their house.

At once, the brethren made plans to build a church house. After some delay and much sacrifice the house was finished. Brother Smith, Brother Tyner and my father were selected and appointed elders. The members met for worship every Lord's Day. They used no man-made instruments of music for they believed singing was the only music ordained of God to be used in worship.

Preachers and money were scarce. For several years they had preaching only once a month and a gospel meeting once a year. Some of the preachers who held meetings for the Paragould congregation during the early years were: James A. Harding, James E. Scoby, M. C. Kurfees, S.M. Jones and F.W. Smith.

Several years after the church was established a Bro. Yantis, his wife and two daughters, also a son-in-law and his wife, moved to Paragould. Bro. Yantis was a druggist, and his son-in-law was depot agent for the Cotton Belt Railroad. They were likeable people and all were talented musicians. They believed in having instrumental music in the worship. They were eager in attendance and Bro. Yantis led the singing. At first they did not agitate the instrumental music issue for they knew the elders and the members were opposed to it. As time passed they gained friends and had influence with some members of the church and with the townspeople. Several members of the church accepted their views on the music question. With this additional force and influence, they insisted that they were entitled to be heard in deciding matters concerning activities of the church.

They had sympathy from some of the members because they were active in the work of the church, contributed of their means and helped otherwise. They wanted to use a piano in connection with the singing. This was not permitted.

They clamored for the privilege of selecting a preacher for a gospel meeting. Finally, for the sake of peace, the elders granted their request. They chose a preacher from Missouri whose name was Davidson. He was a sensational evangelist, a pleasant man, a smooth speaker. He had large audiences. There were about forty additions to the church. Some of these were from the denominations. With their numbers increased those who favored the use of instrumental music seemed more determined to have their way even at the risk of division.

Early in the Spring of 1901 the church engaged Bro. M. H. Northcross of Franklin Tennessee, to preach during a meeting to be held the following summer. This meeting was announced and advertised for several months before it was to begin. Bro. Northcross was a preacher of long experience, a devoted Christian, loyal to the truth, kind in his preaching, and a forceful speaker. He arrived in Paragould and began at the appointed time on Sunday morning. He preached a week without any special public interference by those favoring instrumental music.

On the second Sunday night of the meeting Bro. Northcross, Bro. Smith, my father and I went to church together. Though we were early, as we approached the meeting house, from within came strains of music, the tones of a piano and the voices of singers! When we entered the building we

were completely surprised and astonished for the sight was so unexpected and disappointing. That afternoon the “digressives” had brought a piano into the church house without the knowledge of the elders or the congregation! In the pulpit, there was a “digressive” preacher. There was a choir. At the piano was a daughter of Bro. Yantis.

Though they were engaged in religious service, all of them were committing a two-fold sin; disobeying the voice of God, and unlawfully taking possessions, by force, of a church building put there and paid for by Christians conscientiously opposed to what these “robbers” were doing. In firm fact they were acting like bandits holding up (not a man for his money), but a group of Christians. As effectively as with bullets they were taking from the Christians who owned the property, the building so precious and useful to them. Then, though a party to these malicious, treacherous proceedings and guilty before God of the sin, the imported preacher got up to warn others of the danger of sin which, damns the soul. When his sermon was ended the congregation was seated, what followed then was enough to make the angels weep and the devil rejoice. The preacher asked if anyone had anything to say.

Bro. “Dump” Thompson, who the digressive claimed as one of their elders, stood up and said, “We have this building and we are going to keep it. We will put new locks on the doors in the morning and we will prosecute anyone who molests or tampers with them.” Then he pulled up his sleeves raised his arms, clinched his fist and added a threat: “If any one of you does not like this, just come on.

There was a short pause. Then my father arose and with humbling voice said quietly, “Brethren, I would rather you would come over and take my dwelling away from me.” He sat down. The congregation was dismissed. We went home. For fifty years many of us never entered that building again.

The brethren left their meeting house in Paragould that night with the blessing of God upon them for humbly suffering such injustice without retaliating. Of this I am firmly convinced. They did not believe in have lawsuits among brethren.

When division over the use of instrumental music first occurred, the digressive element usually took the church buildings. In many instances, as in Paragould, Arkansas, they simply stole the property. From what I observed and learned then. I know they did this by force rather than on the principle or basis of justice and righteousness.”

Sad to say, there have already been a few similar cases among our brethren in the last few years. How quickly the lessons of the past are forgotten. We include this lesson with the prayer that it will serve as an inoculation against digression for those who read it (JHW).

57.

HOW THE LIBERALS CAPTURED THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

In his book **Christians Only, A History of the Restoration Movement**, J. D Murch explains how the liberal preachers and scholars gained control of the Disciples of Christ. A review of this bit of history is very useful for the Lord's church today. The first indicators of religious skepticism began to reveal themselves following the Civil War. By the turn of the century, liberals were well established among the ranks of the progressive brethren. At that point (1906), fellowship between them and our Churches of Christ was broken. The apostasy and arrogance of the liberals then provoked a division between them and the more conservative Independent Christian Churches. The first indicators of this second schism were seen in 1927 when the conservatives conducted their own North American Christian Convention. After festering for more than 40 years, the break was finalized in 1968 when the Disciples restructured themselves into a full-fledged denominational body. By that time Disciples of Christ were totally in the camp of religious liberalism. Murch notes the steps leading away from our original "back to the Bible" commitment and the tools the liberals utilized to capture control of the Disciples churches.

Tools of Destruction

"Liberalism was introduced to the mainstream of the Restoration movement by the Disciples' Divinity House, **The Christian Century** journal, the Campbell Institute and the Congresses promoted by a small coterie of "forward looking brethren" (pp. 237-238).

The Role of Religious Journals

"The Liberals needed an organ through which they could propagandize the brother-hood. **The Christian Standard** was opposed to their views. **The Christian Evangelist** was lukewarm. A small journal known as **The Christian Century**... (had) alienated their subscribers."

Destroy the Opposition

"Finally in 1908 C. C. Morrison brought **The Century** and a new policy of frank and open commitment to liberalism was inaugurated. His guns were trained on **The Christian Standard**, which he rightly figured was the one great barrier to the liberal program. He accused its publisher and its editor of

“vicious propaganda,” “falsehood and bigotry” and of causing the “dissension” which “racked the brotherhood” (p. 238).

Hiding Behind the Mask of Scholarship

“The medium for the development of a liberal strategy for the capture of the schools and agencies of the Disciples was the Campbell Institute. This fellowship of college and university trained ministers and workers was organized in 1892. Its original purposes was to promote “a scholarly spirit... quiet, self-cultured and the development of a higher spirituality,” and to make “contributions of permanent value to the literature and thought of the Disciples.” Since all its members had been duly exposed to the liberal philosophy and theology, it was a natural breeding ground for liberal ecclesiastical action” (p. 239).

False Security of Naive Brethren

“Conservatives were slow to see what was happening in their Zion. Some were naïve enough to be taken in by the liberal propaganda. Most of them trusted in a false security” (p. 240).

Take Over a School

“... At the death of McGarvey (1911) and others of the “old school” at Lexington, the liberals moved in for “the kill”... Hall C. Calhoun, a PhD from Harvard, had been tagged by McGarvey to succeed him as president of the College of the Bible ... certain liberals on the board had other ideas. Almost immediately, R. H Crossfield, a liberal, was chosen president ... Calhoun was made dean of the seminary in 1912 and proceeded to do the best he could to maintain orthodox biblical standards. But the inexorable liberal purge was on ...” (p. 241).

Christian Colleges Became Unchristian

“The liberal strategy at Lexington was exactly the same as that used by educators in all Protestant denominations. They insisted that the educational standing of the college needed to be improved ... Professors were needed who could lecture and conduct “cooperative” inquiry between student and teacher, with much reading and broad research on all sides of a question. There ought to be such freedom of discussion and stimulation of students to come to ‘their own conclusions’” (p. 242).

Accrediting Agencies and Colleges

“Motive and viewpoint in studying the Bible had changed, and the “new approach “ was essential if the school was not to be “typed “ and ostracized by

the accrediting agencies.” “At first in the name of academic freedom, the liberals appealed only for a place or two on the faculty in fairness to a new theological viewpoint that had ... attained wide acceptance. Later they maintained that there was no other viewpoint than theirs which had any scholarly standing. The liberal position was buttressed by action of the educational accrediting agencies, now in almost complete control of the liberals...They created standards which eliminated much biblical and doctrinal instruction from the curriculum and disqualified the older scholars and professors from holding a place on the faculty. In fact, the real basic issues of the educational controversy were not allowed to appear” (p. 242)

Blame the Conservatives for Causing Trouble

“And when evangelicals raised them (the basic issues) they were branded as trouble-makers bent on destroying the peace of the Brotherhood...” (p.242).

Liberals Seldom Admitted Their True Colors

“Liberal educational strategists used many clever feints to keep the facts from the people who supported the schools, most of whom were evangelicals, in dense ignorance of the battle going on behind the scenes. Some of the less honorable liberals...deliberately misled inquiring brethren as to their stand on the issues” (p. 243).

The Wounded Soul Tactic

“The favorite tactic, however, was to assume an aggrieved demeanor because inquiry was made and faith questioned, thus relieving the one questioned of the necessity of making a frank and honest answer” (p. 243).

Intellectual Freedom

“Always this was accomplished under the guise of intellectual and religious liberty and of advancing the best interests of the brotherhood. There were always protests of innocence to charges of disloyalty to the word of God and to the historic principles of the Restoration Movement” (p. 244).

Avoid the Real Issue

“Simultaneously the foreign missionary work, as well as education, of the Disciples was infiltrated by liberals. Here again, the strategy was to keep the issues from the masses. Unfortunately, those who opposed this penetration did not hold the ensuing controversies to the basic issues but allowed secondary considerations to obscure the real ones. The only histories of the tragic encounter have emphasized the fringe debate...” (p. 245).

Conclusion

This writer sees an alarming parallel between what happened to our former brethren 100 years ago and things happening among us today. May we who still hold to the old paths awaken to the very real threat that is upon us and arm ourselves for the battle. Conservatives among the Disciples lost the battle because of their failure to recognize and challenge the enemy on the basic issues of error. Let us not repeat their error.

58.

NINETEENTH CENTURY PARALLELS TO OUR PRESENT PROBLEMS

Our back to the Bible movement was less than 50 years old when a progressive element began to agitate for changes that, when fully implemented, would drive a divisive wedge into the heart of the brotherhood. The first of these issues was the creation of a Missionary Society that would coordinate the missionary efforts of all the churches. Although he at first vehemently opposed such organizations and wrote against them, Alexander Campbell eventually came to endorse the idea. The primary credit for the creation and birthing of the American Christian Missionary Society must be given to David S. Burnet (1808-1867). Recruiting other sympathizers, he called for a general meeting of church leaders in Cincinnati in 1849. After a rocky start and a lengthy struggle for survival, the Society emerged as the banner around which the progressive brethren rallied. They were determined to have it in every congregation in every town, no matter what their conservative brethren thought of it. If division occurred, it was blamed on those who objected to their societies.

To David S. Burnet also goes the credit for being the first preacher whose congregation used an instrument of music in its worship. The Sixth Street Church in Cincinnati was using instruments in worship as early as 1855. The man best known for the introduction of instruments of music in worship is Dr. L. L. Pinkerton (1812-1875). While serving the church in Midway, Kentucky, he led the way in that departure from the ancient faith. His justification was the poor singing of the congregation. The overwhelming majority of our brethren objected to the instrument when the issue was first raised. In time however,

evolving social and cultural changes, both within and without the church and weakening of conviction in the hearts of many regarding the necessity of biblical authority, led them first to tolerate then to embrace the instrument.

While at first the progressives sought to justify their changes with appeals to distorted scripture, men like J. S. Lamar reasoned that the use of organs was “an inevitable consequence of growth and culture.” Everett Ferguson correctly observed that, “Larger and wealthier churches required the things associated with their position in society” (**Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement**, p. 414). In the North, men like Moses Lard, John W. McGarvey and Benjamin Franklin vigorously opposed the use of instruments, but their protests were largely unheard. In the South, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding and E. G. Sewell of the **Gospel Advocate** rallied the brethren against the instrument. In Texas, Austin McGary and his associates of the **Firm Foundation** were able to save a viable remnant of our churches. Isaac Errett of **The Christian Standard**, the dominant paper of the North, carried the day by arguing that while he personally preferred a cappella praise, yet no one should cause division if others wanted their instruments. That position of compromise opened the flood gates and most of the Northern congregations were lost. This deceptive approach has allowed all sorts of evil to prevail in our world.

As the progressive spirit prevailed, its exponents began to add to their innovations. There was a shift in the role of the preacher in the local church. From a preaching servant, he evolved into a reverend pastor. Some among them began to advance their women to roles of leadership in their churches, with some of them serving as preachers and elders. Their view of the church changed. No longer did they think of the restored church as uniquely the Lord’s church, rather they came to view themselves as a Protestant denomination. The desire for acceptance by their religious neighbors led most of them to seek membership in ministerial alliances. Prominent leaders such as J. H. Garrison sought and found a place in national ecumenical movements. Many of the progressive preachers felt the need to enroll in the great secular universities to attain credentials recognized and respected by the world. There they absorbed the skepticism that breeds and flourishes in such environments. They brought their liberal skepticism back to their schools and churches where it soon became dominant. Out of all of the above, a new understanding of what our movement was all about emerged. The progressives repudiated the concept of restoring the faith and worship of the ancient church. In its place they saw the movement as an American reform movement much like scores of others. They assumed they could make a better church by molding its faith and practice to the wishes and needs of modern man. Within the liberal branch, the Social Gospel became dominant.

By 1925 the more conservative of the progressives rebelled against the theological liberalism and unbelief in their ranks and a further division occurred. The conservatives rallied around the North American Christian Convention. They refused to participate in the United Christian Missionary Society, yet they created smaller, less offensive organizations through which to do their work. They continued to cling to their organs and pianos.

After several years of struggle, it became evident to even outsiders that division had occurred within the ranks of the restoration brotherhood. In 1906, S. N. D. North, of the U. S. Census Bureau, inquired of David Lipscomb if his perception was correct. With a heavy heart, Bro. Lipscomb confirmed that such was true. Two quite different kinds of churches now existed, both with roots in the work of Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell who had called for a restoration of New Testament Christianity. Bro. J. W. Shepherd was appointed to contact the churches and determine which were committed to staying with the old paths of Bible Christianity. The results he found were sad indeed. The churches who had abandoned the restoration plea for a denominational approach to Christianity numbered 8,203 with 982,701 members. Those who were content to stay with the Bible numbered 649 with 149,658 members. The digressives became known as Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches.

Bro. David Lipscomb, James A Harding and a handful of faithful men stood firm against the digressives. They challenged the remnant to take courage and rebuild the damaged kingdom. Within 50 years the conservatives had recovered and outnumbered those who had left.

Many years ago Dr. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. published a small booklet entitled, “**Emergence of the ‘Church of Christ Denomination.’**” Harrell is a recognized historian. His perspective is that of the “non-cooperative” churches. His analyses of our brotherhood, although done 30 years ago, is most enlightening in our day of *emerging “change churches.”* As you read the following quotes from Harrell, you will see the similarity of what happened a century ago and what is transpiring now.

1. “...what is true and what is easily demonstrated by historical scholarship, is that the rich and the sophisticated tend to want a different kind of religion from the poor and humble” (p. 8). Discussing the apostasy of the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ a century ago, Harrell writes, “The simple fact of the matter was that the people within the church no longer wanted the same kind of Christianity. This was the basic issue—what doctrinal problems arose to divide over were inconsequential” (p. 14). “Instrumental music and organized societies were in essence the accidental basis of the doctrinal division in the movement. They certainly were not the cause of the schism. The cause was that the church had grown to include incompatible kinds of people” (p. 14).

2. “Most of the debates centered for several decades, around the attempts of each side to scripturally document its position. Each side was also profoundly interested in rallying the testimony of the early leaders of the movement to the support of its position.” “The best a liberal literalist could do was obfuscate, muddle, or evacuate” (p. 15). “The listeners generally believe what they want to believe and in the nineteenth century controversy most members of the Disciples wanted to be denominationalists” (p. 15). “It was not until the twentieth century that a sizeable number of liberal leaders recognized the fact that they had abandoned their allegiance to scriptural literalism and restoration “ (p. 16).

3. “It was easy for a man who wanted a more progressive and denominational religion, and yet at the same time wanted to believe that he still held to his old time convictions to satisfy himself with fuzzy rationalizations” (p. 16). “A man in the midst of the change often fails to recognize it. If he is perceptive enough to recognize it, he must have the additional ingredient of courage and moral honesty to admit it” (p. 16).

4. “It takes at least one generation to make the change and at least one more generation to understand and admit the change” (p. 16). “A successful liberal leader must move with calculated caution” (p. 16). “Many church members in the fifty years from 1860 to 1910 traveled the slow road to denominationalism who would have been repelled by a rapid transition” (p. 16-17). “Many a liberal Disciples leader during these crucial years underplayed the magnitude of the transition in his own personal conviction for the benefit of the less perceptive general body of members” (p. 17).

5. “...Most of the people who are deeply and intensely concerned about their religion are conservatives. On the other hand, the liberal point of view attracts the contented and the complacent. If the conservative plea attracts those whose zeal might lead them to extremes, the liberal plea finds its most devoted supporters among those who want the easiest and least bothersome religion they can find” (p. 20).

6. “The old values of the early leaders of the movement are no longer an acceptable expression of Christianity to this sophisticated element” (p. 20). “The cultured element in the movement has simply begun the search for a more sophisticated type of religion” (p. 23). “The church is dividing because there are two basic kinds of people within the movement who are demanding two very different kinds of religion” (p. 23). “Many, I suppose most, of the people involved in the present schism are unaware of this basic conflict” (p. 23). “In the first place, many of the liberal leaders of the church do not understand that they have made a basic transition. ... preachers who are well on their way to the acceptance of a denominational point of view do not realize that they are no longer committed to the old conservative approach” (p.24).

7. "There are many preachers in the church of Christ today who are consciously liberal enough, that twenty years ago they would have left the church. But the young liberal does not leave the church now as he used to do. He does not because he understands the fundamental tendency of the church" (p. 25). "In the battle for the local churches denominational leaders must be careful not to move so rapidly that they offend the moderate members. Many 'Church of Christ' preachers find it necessary to be as deceptive about their true convictions as does a liberal Methodist pastor in a rural church" (p. 26).

8. "There has been a kind of intellectual snobbery throughout the present controversy in the church. By the very nature of the sociological character of the schism, most of the 'doctors,' most of the education centers, and most of the sophisticated people have been concentrated in the liberal camp. An underlying assumption among the liberals through the whole controversy has been that these 'intellectuals' must have a better grasp of the issues than their less impressive antagonists. (p. 26).

9. "The truth is that these pseudo-intellectuals are virtually alone in their contention that they have made no basic shift in religious emphasis. I do not believe that there is a reputable scholar in the country who would not consider their protestations the ridiculous aberrations of blinded religionists. Everyone knows the situation in the church of Christ today except the liberal 'intellectuals.'" (p. 27).

To understand our present change movement, we must see it as a replay of the apostasy of a century ago. Also we must recognize that within our brotherhood there are now two elements of people, one content with the bible based church of their fathers and the other desiring to be accepted and respected as an Evangelical denomination. Like fire and water, these two approaches cannot coexist in the same congregation. We now can identify two distinct kinds of churches, both still identifying themselves as Churches of Christ. Consider the distinctions:

*** There are two views of the Church of Christ.** One says the Church of Christ was established by Jesus. The other says it was founded by B. W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. The one says that the church is non-denominational. The other says we are in fact a denomination. The one says the church, is God's family of saved people, thus all who are saved will be within her fellowship. The other says, that folks are saved in all sorts of denominational churches. The one sees the church as sacred and holy and they dare not tamper with her faith or worship. The other sees no harm in changing any or all of her divine ordinances.

*** Two views of the Bible.** The one says that the Bible is inspired of God and without mistake or error in its original manuscripts. Among the others we see some who claim to find flaws, mistakes and contradictions in the Bible. The one rightly divides the word by marking a distinction between the Old Testament which was the guidebook of Judaism and the New Testament which is Christ's will for his church. The one takes the Bible as the final and complete authority in all matters of faith and practice. The other feels that changing world views, mores and standards must be accommodated and that the Bible should not be viewed as a set of rules to be followed. The one accepts the Bible as the divine, God-given pattern for the church (Heb. 8:5), the other flatly rejects the idea of it being a pattern. The one fears to teach or practice anything not authorized by the Bible. The other argues they can do anything the Bible does not specifically forbid. The one honors the New Testament as the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; John 12:48), the other denies it is a law.

*** Two views of communion.** The one takes Christ and Paul's words quite literally that they should take the bread and fruit of the vine "in memory" of his body and blood shed on the cross. They dare not mix it with common meals which are no part of that event (I Cor. 11:20-22). Among the others, some see it as a festive celebration which can be mixed with a common meal. The one follows the example of the early church and communes on the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection (Acts 20:7). The other wants to commune at other times that suit them.

*** Two views of music in the worship of God.** The one follows the ancient practice of praising God with their voices alone. They make melody in their hearts. They base their practice on scripture such as Ephesians 5:19. The other wants musical instruments for their worship. Performance is mixed with their praise. The one group speaks one to another in their psalms, hymns and spiritual songs as they lift up their voices in congregational singing. The other prefers praise teams, solos, duets and choirs.

*** Two views of the atmosphere of worship.** The one prefers to worship in a more solemn way with their emphasis on offering up worship "well-pleasing to God" (Heb. 12:28). They come to fill their minds and hearts with saving truth. They worship as God has directed them to do. The other prefers a more emotional and exciting type of worship. They crave performance and entertainment. They find the practices of the charismatic churches appealing. Such things as lifting their hands to heaven, swaying with the music and applauding the performers pleases them.

*** Two views of the mission of the church.** The one sees the church as God's unique and only kingdom on earth with a simple divine mission. She is to glorify God and his Son (Eph. 3:21). She is to preach the gospel to every

creature (Mark 16:15). She is to minister to the poor and unfortunate. She is to educate and edify her members and strive to keep all safe unto the day of redemption. The other sees the church more as a social service club. She has a social gospel to preach. Entertainment is one of her duties. She is to provide for the felt needs of her community and those who worship with her. To them such things need no authorization from Scripture. Their major emphasis is providing for the physical needs of humanity with little attention to evangelization.

*** Two views of the work of the church.** The one sees the church with her elders as fully equipped to do the work of evangelism, edification and benevolence that God has assigned her. The other seems to prefer independent organizations, not under elders, in and through which to do their work. Rather than elders, they prefer a board of directors, with a president, etc. They solicit our churches for money, but they do not want elders of the church to supervise their activities and dispersals. They sometimes even mask the fact that their good works are done by Churches of Christ.

*** Two views of about the church's relation to the larger religious world.** The one sees the church as God's Cause and the various denominations in competition and conflict with it. The other sees the church as a sister to other denominations, all equally pleasing to God. The one sees the denominations as good people seeking God in a mistaken way. Hence it is their duty to teach them the way of the Lord more perfectly (Acts 18: 26) and bring them into Christ's church and fellowship. The other sees no serious problem with the unscriptural beliefs and practices of denominations and is willing to accept them as they are. The one feels they cannot be part of denominational spiritual and evangelistic projects where error is propagated. The other is eager to participate with their religious neighbors, regardless of what is taught.

*** Two views of the role of women in the church.** The one is content to respect and abide by the restrictions placed on women by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 14:33-34; I Tim. 2:11-12). The other follows the demands of the Feminist Movement. They ignore the divine restrictions and allow women to fill forbidden leadership roles in the church, including, in some cases, preaching.

*** Two views of what it means to restore the ancient faith.** The one believes that this commitment means to go back to the Bible and identify the faith, worship and practice of the earliest Christians and then reproduce those very things in our worship and service today. The other says, such is not necessary. To them it is even foolish. They feel the church is free to adapt herself to the demands of modern society. The one is willing to be as old-fashioned and different from the world today as the church was in first century Roman society. The other wants the church to conform to the world's standards. The one believes that restoration is a worthy goal that every

generation must pursue. The other thinks that such efforts are misguided and mistaken. The one takes the commitment to restoration to mean being governed by the Bible in all matters. The other talks about their roots and heritage in the Stone-Campbell Movement but does not see that as binding them to a specific Biblical pattern. The one clings to the Scripture and their commitment to restore the ancient faith, even if all others abandon it. The other is casting it aside as embarrassing baggage from the past.

With Commissioner North, those with eyes to see can discern that indeed two different kinds of churches are now functioning side by side. Sooner or later the differences will be so pronounced that every member will have to decide, "Of which do I wish to be a member? Of which would God have me be a part?"

59.

VALUABLE LESSONS FROM THE PAST

A century and a quarter ago our brotherhood was being decimated by a powerful change movement that eventuated in the separation of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches from our fellowship. The parallels between that apostasy and our current change movement are remarkable.

David Lipscomb, a country preacher from Middle Tennessee, emerged as the most effective leader of the opposition. Although he was neither a profound Bible scholar nor a polished orator, Bro. Lipscomb was a man of much wisdom, determination and great patience.

While doggedly opposing the digressives who were determined to change the worship of the brethren by introducing instrumental music, and the polity of the church by organizing missionary societies, Bro. Lipscomb patiently sought to lead good men out of their error and into useful positions of service in the church.

When Theophilus B. Larimore was trying to maintain fellowship with the digressives and the conservatives was well, Bro. Lipscomb and others worked patiently to convince him that he must break his ties with error and take his stand with those who were loyal to the Bible way. They eventually succeeded and Bro. Larimore went on to be one of the most effective and successful preachers among us. When Lipscomb was criticized for befriending Bro. Larimore, he wrote, "...I have no sympathy with the idea that we must jump

on and denounce every brother that does not do things our way. This is selfish bigotry” (Robert Hooper, **Crying in the Wilderness**, p. 219).

Hall. L. Calhoun was educated and served under the inimitable John W. McGarvey at the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky. He was then encouraged to enroll at Yale University’s Divinity School where he earned his Bachelor of Divinity degree. His doctorate was earned at Harvard. He returned to teach at the school in Lexington. He was McGarvey’s choice to succeed him as head of that school (A. Doran & J. E. Choate, **The Christian Scholar**, p. 93). When the theological liberals were able to grab control of the College of the Bible, N. B. Hardeman, F. W. Smith and H. Leo Boles were able to persuade Bro. Calhoun to leave the camp of the digressives and cast his lot with our brethren. The rest of his days were spent effectively preaching the word among our people.

The lessons for us are these:

- Lipscomb’s doctrinal soundness and loyalty were tempered by his love for his brethren and his desire to salvage every good man he possibly could.
- Men who are champions in opposing error can still afford to extend a helping hand to a brother who needs some help and encouragement.
- Men like Bros. Larimore and Calhoun remind us that not everyone in the camp of the change agents is a hopeless case. Some of them can be salvaged, and we must make every effort to do so.
- One man salvaged from error is worth all the labor and patience it took to win him.
- We must do more than oppose error. We must labor to build up the kingdom in positive ways as well.
- The most effective leaders in the kingdom are not always the great scholars or preachers. Few have equaled Lipscomb’s greatness, influence or success yet he was no great orator or scholar.

A SCENE THAT MADE GROWN MEN CRY

In the darkness of night, as I slumbered on my bed, my mind was filled with scenes of people and events long passed. Friends and ancient foes of the kingdom came into view. On the faces of some were smiles of great happiness on the others were sadness and tears.

There, peering out of the misty past, I saw the gaunt figure of Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, a brilliant preacher and writer among us in the mid 19th century. He made his mark in several ways. He was a founding member of the American Missionary Society. To him credit is given for introducing musical instruments into our brotherhood churches. He justified his deed because in his opinion the congregation in Midway, Kentucky sang so poorly. He was not concerned that his deed created conflict and disunity in his congregation and eventually spread like a cancer to most of the northern churches. He also embraced the liberal theological views of his day with all the heretical appendages it involved. Those views made shipwreck of the faith of him and many of his generation.

I saw the erudite Isaac Errett, editor of the Christian Standard paper, who while insisting that he preferred to worship without instruments, devoted his life and energy to defending those who wanted to have them. To him goes credit for leading the progressive brethren of his day away from the commitment to do Bible things in Bible ways.

There was the talented J. B. Briney. At first he opposed the use of instruments in worship, but as the tide of public opinion shifted, he changed his views. He debated the matter with Bro. W. W. Otey, J. W. McGarvey and others who were determined to follow the old biblical pattern of acappella praise. While stoutly defending the use of instruments, he always insisted that he never advocated their use in worship.

In the background I spied the distinguished Ira Boswell. He taught at the Cincinnati Bible Institute. In 1923 he traveled to Nashville to meet N. B. Hardeman, noted preacher and professor from Henderson, Tennessee, in a public discussion on the question of instrumental music in worship. He fared poorly and returned home well-chastened.

Among the throng I recognized J. Carroll Stark journeyed from Texas to Henderson, TN to discuss the matter of instruments with Bro. Joe S. Warlock. Like 300 other opponents, he could not prevail against that mighty man of God.

As I observed them, broad smiles of happiness were on the faces of these ghostly personages. Their hearts throbbed with excitement as they reached out to embrace and welcome home the descendants of those brethren who had once refused their innovations and bested them in polemical forums.

They were overjoyed to see Max Lucado, Rick Atchley and Mark Henderson and all of their fellow agents of change. There was a large contingent from Abilene Christian, Pepperdine and David Lipscomb Universities and a sprinkling from several other church related schools with them. At last after a long and embarrassing century, the ghostly figures were seeing success from their battles. They were thrilled to welcome into their circle these men of emaciated faith and lukewarm convictions.

But standing to the side I saw a band of men, with bibles in their hands, whose names I knew and revered. There was rugged Ben Franklin, staunch David Lipscomb, spirited James A. Harding, Jessie Sewell, dependable Leo Boles, eloquent N. B. Hardeman and battling Joe S. Warlick. They were flanked by hundreds of others whose faces were marked with deep sadness, their cheeks streaked with tears, as they observed some of their heirs now embracing the golden calf of instrumental music against which they had valiantly and successfully fought.

Waking from my dream, my heart was heavy. Given our past history and the strong biblical case for our acappella worship, who would ever have thought that gospel preachers of the Church of Christ would one day turn their backs from worship that was tried and proven scriptural, to pursue practices so obviously false?

61.

A BIBLE BASIS FOR FELLOWSHIP

(Some 38 years ago the author was invited to speak on a forum which included preachers from Christian Churches, Disciples of Christ, and Churches of Christ. The topic is of continuing interest. This was his message then. It is his message today).

In the shadow of the cross Jesus prayed, “neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their words; that they may all be one; ... that the world may believe that thou didst send me” (John 17:20-21).

WE CAN HAVE FELLOWSHIP TODAY IF

We build together upon Christ and his word. “Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus” (I Cor. 3:11). Current trends in Protestantism call for fellowship on a common faith in Christ. This is deceptive. These voices ignore the teachings of Christ and make every man a law unto himself. This approach might bring “instant fellowship,” but it is not what Christ prayed for, nor is it what early Christians had. “They continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, fellowship...” (Acts 2:42). They taught that if a man did not abide “in the teaching of Christ, he hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (II John 9). For many, the passion for unity outweighs their passion for Biblical truth!

FIRST WE MUST AGREE ON AUTHORITY

To have fellowship, we must come to a common conclusion on the question of authority. The Father gave his Son all authority (Matt. 28:18). The words of Jesus will judge us (John 12:48). Jesus told his Apostles, “He that receiveth you receiveth me” (Matt. 10:40). Thus the Apostles’ doctrine is Christ’s will for us. His word has been preserved for us in the New Covenant. No faithful disciple questions these principles.

It was respect for Christ and his New Testament that made the plea of the Restoration pioneers so attractive to the people. J. W. McGarvey wrote:

“It was this supreme devotion to the word of God that developed a movement having at first only a union of believers in view, into one having in view the complete restoration of primitive Christianity. For it was soon seen that the union for which Christ prayed and upon which the Apostles insisted, could be brought about only in this way” (J. D. Murch, **Christians Only**, Standard Pub. Co. Cincinnati, 1962, p. 211).

WHO CAN I FELLOWSHIP?

Only God’s Word can answer this question. Christ made both Jew and Gentile one in himself. “For we are all one man in Christ...” (Gal. 3:26-28). Being one in Christ simply means that we have fellowship with everyone who is in Christ. But how can we determine who is in Christ? Again, God’s Word explains that we are baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27). This limits our fellowship to those baptized into Christ. Can we fellowship the unimmersed? The baptism of Christ is a burial with him in water (Rom. 6:4; Acts 10:48). There being but one baptism (Eph. 4:5), and it immersion for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), we can have fellowship only with those thus baptized.

BOUNDARIES OF FELLOWSHIP SET BY GOD

Even of those properly immersed, the word of God limits our fellowship to those who conform to His rules of faith and conduct.

- “Now we command you brethren to withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the traditions which they received of us” “...that ye have no company with him” (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15).
- “If any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no not to eat ... put away the wicked man from among yourselves” (I Cor. 5:11-13).
- “A factious man after the first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth being self-condemned” (Tit. 3:10-11).
- “...mark them that are causing divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned and turn away from them” (Rom. 16:17-18).
- “Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not his teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting; for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works” (II John 9-11).

The foregoing words compel me to withhold my fellowship from those who are immoral or disorderly in conduct; those of a factious nature; those who cause divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the Scripture and who abide not in the doctrine of Christ.

Those who expect perfect harmony between all who call on the name of Jesus are dreamers. Even from the beginning there were those who despised the fellowship of the saints. Some Jewish Christians shunned Gentile brethren. False brethren led away disciples after them and others who made shipwreck of their faith. There will always be many who say, Lord , Lord but who do not the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21). Jesus does not recognize them, nor can we.

LOVE AND OBEDIENCE ARE COROLLARIES OF FELLOWSHIP

Those who love God with all their heart, who seek first his kingdom, will love the brotherhood (I Pet. 2:17). This love for brethren is the identifying badge of discipleship. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (I John 4:11). Yet this very love for God insists that we keep His commandments (I John 5:3). We cannot escape the imperative of obedience to the will of Jesus, if there is ever to be meaningful fellowship. Some advocate fellowship without regard to doctrinal differences. They maintain that love and faith in Jesus are sufficient. Their approach is fallacious and anti-scriptural.

A MISCONCEPTION

It is a false delusion to think that the compromising approaches of those preachers and leaders of Churches of Christ who have appointed themselves to speak at the “Restoration Unity Forums” are expressing the thinking of the great body of the Churches of Christ who use no man-made instruments in worship. “...mere union in a federation of churches is not true Christian unity. Such a union would be merely something which the church would have in common with human societies...a mere federation in itself has nothing at all to do with real church union.” “Unity movements will be futile if they eventuate in nothing more than “mutual tolerance, respect and co-operation” (Murch, p. 365).

HERE I STAND

We occupy safe ground. History vindicates the action of those who respected the silence of the Scripture on instrumental music and rejected the extra congregational organizations like missionary societies. Murch’s history is an eloquent witness to this fact.

“... the Church of Christ has made a phenomenal growth. This is due to two things: (1) Its people have stood like a Rock of Gibraltar for ‘the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,’ amid the doubt and confusion superinduced by liberalism. They have challenged the spirit of compromise and worldliness and dared to be a ‘peculiar’ people teaching and practicing what they believe is the Bible way of life. (2) They have come to realize that the silences of the Scriptures must be respected as well as the commandments of Scripture, but that obedience to its silences permits freedom of judgment and action” (Christian Only, p. 313).

Those brethren who first introduced the instruments and societies never dreamed of the final destination to which they would lead. The Disciples of Christ have made a complete circle back into denominationalism, a situation which their forefathers struggled valiantly to escape. There is a great difference between those leaving Babylon in search of truth and the Lord’s true church and those leaving New Testament Christianity for the Babylon of denominationalism.

The battle fought and the victory won were too costly for us to surrender now in compromise for a shallow token of unity. The author could never enter into fellowship where instruments of music or any other addition to the divine plan are used. Our problem today is essentially the same as it was a hundred years ago. The question of the hour is, “How will history record our attitude and action respecting the authority of God’s Word?” Only in humble submission to that heavenly authority will true biblical unity be found!

AVOIDING THE DITCHES

The highway of holiness has dangerous ditches on both right and left hand sides. Whether we wreck on one side or the other is of little consequence. The results are fatal in either case. Moses warned Israel, “Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, Ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left” (Deut. 5:32). From the earliest ages, God’s people have been plagued with the extremes of liberalism and legalism. Our brotherhood has suffered many wounds from those who mistook one extreme or the other to be the highway of holiness. The great challenge of every Christian and congregation is to maintain a balanced position between these two perversions of God’s way.

What is Legalism? Legalism is an unwholesome attitude toward religion. It is a blind zeal for law with no thought for the spirit or intent of it. Paul was a minister of the “new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (II Cor. 3:6). Legalists have a greater concern for rules than for people. When Jesus healed the poor invalid at Bethesda, the legalistic Jews showed no sympathy for the man. Rather, they persecuted Jesus because he broke their uninspired rules about Sabbath keeping in so doing (John 5:1-18). He reminded them that, “the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath...” (Mark 2:27). Legalists worship the law more than the Law-giver. In the legalistic mind, traditions are gradually elevated to equality with God’s law. A legalist is obsessed with details and numerous insignificant matters, while casually overlooking serious matters of major importance. Pharisees, who were legalists, were scrupulous to tithe even their garden herbs; mint, anise, and cummin. Yet they had little interest in weightier matters of the law such as justice, mercy and faith (Matt. 23:23). They majored in minors while minoring in major things. With the legalist, there is always the disposition to make additional rules to reinforce what they perceive to be God’s law. The legalistic Pharisees of Jesus’ day bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves would “not move them with their finger” (Mat. 23:4). James tells us that “One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and destroy” (4:12). When man sets himself up to criticize and judge his brother, he has ceased to be a doer of the law and is condemned.

What is Liberalism? It too is a mistaken attitude toward Christianity. The liberal has a low view of Scripture. More extreme liberals deny the miraculous element of the Bible. They question the full, complete inspiration

of God's Word. Especially do thy reject the Bible as the final authority in religious matters. In liberalism there is always a willingness to place human wisdom above the revealed wisdom of God. Liberals feel that they can select the portions of the Bible which they are willing to accept and follow. We are describing a frame of mind that does not feel obligated to do all that God says to do. We definitely have an element of liberalism in the Lord's church today. It is a movement away from doctrinal preaching. It substitutes subjectivism for objective Biblical authority. It shows a willingness to fellowship denominations. It compromises truth with error. It is unhappy with simple New Testament worship. This spirit has often found fertile ground in Christian Universities. The Sadducees of Christ's day were liberals.

The departure of our "non-institutional" brethren in the 50s did not end our problem with legalism. From then till now we have had a small but noisy band of "ultraconservative" brethren who have carried on a belligerent agitation against all who would not heel to their demands. Lacking a significant organ of communication and champions who commanded wide respect, they have not succeeded in forging their own independent fellowship, though for years many have tried to do so. Like a thorn in the foot, this legalistic element have imposed a decided limp on our brotherhood.

Today, while we endure the legalism on the right, we are faced with a much greater threat from a wave of liberalism on the left. This assault is driven primarily by those associated with our prominent Christian Universities and their proteges. Most of them are men with high educational credentials and a following among the young adults of our churches and schools. They are having marked success in many of our large city churches that have younger memberships. While few of these "liberal teachers" would openly question the miraculous events of the Bible, or the inspiration of the Word, by their words and deeds they demonstrate that they do not respect the authority of the Bible for regulating the faith and worship of the church. They are working to broaden our fellowship to include that of denominational bodies. They especially chaff at having to sing without instruments, choirs and soloists. They wish to move women into roles of public leadership. They think they have found a new way of interpreting the Bible that will allow them to do all of this and still claim to be New Testament Christians. If they cannot capture and lead our brotherhood into their liberal camp their future will be with the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ who have long trodden the same path. Either of the ditches described herein will wreck and destroy a congregation. God's way is the Biblical way that stands between these two extremes. May God grant us wisdom to clearly see his way and the courage to walk therein. Only by so doing can Churches of Christ survive the current crisis.

AS LONG AS WE HAVE THE PATTERN

When God wanted the Hebrews to build him a house of worship, he provided them specific instructions on how it should be built. He specified even the kinds of materials to be used. The exact dimensions were given for the tent, and the furnishings thereof. Nothing was left to the creative minds of the craftsmen. The wood was to be acacia, the cloth was to be linen. The metals used were gold, silver and brass, each used in the object specified. The details were written down for the workers and are preserved to this day in the Book of Exodus chapters 35-38. God straitly instructed Moses, and he those who did the work, that they make the tent and its fixtures “after their pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount” (Ex. 25:40). They wrought according to the pattern and God blessed and accepted their efforts. He placed his glorious *shekinah* in the most holy place of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34).

Ponder the question, what if the tabernacle had been destroyed, by fire, storm or war? What would the Hebrews have done? The answer is simple, so long as they had the Book of Exodus in their possession they had the pattern and could have rebuilt it just as it was in the beginning.

Christ built his church and recorded his will for us in his New Testament (Matt. 28:20). He specifically tells us it is to be regarded as his pattern for his disciples and his church (II Tim. 1:13). Borrowing the very words God spoke to Moses, the Holy Spirit led the writer of Hebrews to say, “See that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee...” (Heb. 8:5). By the third century, men were openly ignoring the divine pattern for the church. One by one, over a period of time, virtually every doctrine and practice ordained by the Master was changed. Eventually the Bible itself was effectively removed from the reach of the common man. It was locked in a dead language (Latin) which none but clerics spoke. It was declared to be the exclusive property of the priesthood of the corrupted Church of Rome. Penalties were attached for possessing a Bible. Men were forbidden to translate it into the vernacular of the people.

The great gift of the Protestant Reformation was that the power of the popes to keep the Bible from the masses of humanity was broken. In virtually every country of Europe brave men set about to put the sacred book into the language of the people. Gutenberg’s printing press made it possible to produce Bibles in large numbers and at prices many people could afford. Although the church that Christ built had long been corrupted and obscured, the people now had the divine pattern in hand. By carefully studying it, they were able to

rebuild that which had been lost. Using a slightly different figure, the author of The Revelation was given “a reed like unto a rod: and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar and them that worship therein...” (Rev. 11:1). The divine measuring rod was the Scripture. To be acceptable to God, the church must meet the divine standard given in God’s Word.

Two centuries ago, with the heavenly pattern in hand, our fathers set about to restore the church, her faith and worship, as they were in the beginning. Today we still possess the pattern. Those who want God’s acceptance and blessing will be diligent to see that all things are done according to the pattern. One last question: How do you think God would have dealt with Bezalel and Oholiab, if those master craftsmen had taken it upon themselves to change various aspects of the tabernacle to make them more pleasing to themselves and the people?

64.

A MOVEMENT BASED ON A DREAM

Our nation was created and developed by men who had a dream. The American dream said, Give people personal and economic freedom and they will make the effort and sacrifice necessary to succeed and achieve prosperity and happiness.

The pioneers who launched our back to the Bible movement were all motivated by a dream. They desired to be disciples of Christ working for and worshiping the Master just as did that first generation of saints in Jerusalem. They called their dream a movement to restore New Testament Christianity.

As long as we can keep the dream alive, passing it from generation to generation, our movement will flourish. But should the day come that a generation allows the dream to die, to be distorted or replaced by a different kind of dream, our movement will wither and die.

To keep our dream alive, we need to talk about it and share it with those around us. It needs to be the frequent topic of sermons and class discussions. We need wise men, who understand the dream and believe in it, to write books and articles that set forth the dream and advocate its principles.

We when evangelize our neighbors, after they have come to faith in Christ (Heb. 11:6), show them that to enter his kingdom they need to do just what

the first converts did (John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38). As Christians they will want to believe, worship and serve just as the earliest saints did.

Congregational leaders need to schedule special workshops or lectures on the Dream. The names of our pioneers should remain fresh in the hearts of our people and the thrilling story of their victories should be recounted over again lest they be forgotten. We owe a great deal to those who blazed the trail for us. We should never forget the names of Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Raccoon John Smith, Jacob Creath, Jr. Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, Benjamin Franklin, H. Leo Boles and scores of other faithful soldiers of Christ whose sacrificial labors benefit us today.

A great boost to maintaining the dream is a visit to the historic sites associated with the early years of our movement. Tours can include the home of Alexander Campbell, the Campbell Cemetery and Bethany, Barton Stone's Cane Ridge Meeting House, the Old Mulkey Meeting Place, David Lipscomb's home, the old City Cemetery at Lexington, KY and Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Nashville. At these cemeteries one can find the monuments of a multitude of noble men. The Disciples of Christ Historical Society in Nashville houses a treasure trove of portraits and possessions of those early leaders.

A vast collection of biographies and histories of our brethren has been written over the years. Some of these are yet in print. Others are available in the libraries of Christian Schools. Fortunately, many of these studies are now available on the Internet.

Never be ashamed of our Dream. Do not let any false teacher persuade you that the dream is dead, or that it is flawed.

We worship and serve the Lord Jesus. We honor and respect those brethren who went before us. To have a true Church of Christ we look to the Bible for directions. Our method is to conform ourselves and our congregations to what we find there (II Tim. 1:13). It is our duty to keep the dream alive and pass it to our children and grandchildren. Will the dream survive you?

65.

THE NEED FOR A CONTINUING EMPHASIS ON RESTORATION

Two hundred years ago our forefathers in the faith broke the bonds of denominationalism and planted on this continent a church fashioned according to the divine pattern found in the New Testament (II Tim. 1:13).

Our own history sadly demonstrates the truth that the second, third and following generations can quickly forget the commitment of their fathers and eventually abandon the concept of restoration altogether. The Disciples of Christ have done just that.

Each generation of Christians must be taught anew the need for restoration; the concept of restoration; the value of restoration; how to achieve restoration and how to maintain the restoration impetus.

REASONS WHY MEN NEED TO BE REMINDED ABOUT THE COMMITMENT TO RESTORE THE ANCIENT FAITH

1. It is man's nature to forget great truths and events of the past. Following the deaths of Joshua and the generation "who had seen all the great work of Jehovah that he had wrought for Israel...there arose another generation after them, that knew not Jehovah, nor yet the work which he had wrought for Israel...and they forsook Jehovah...and followed other gods..." (Judg. 2:1-12). Peter wrote of a man who has "forgotten the cleansing from his old sins" (II Pet. 1:9).

2. There is in man a natural tendency to compromise, to mix truth with popular and attractive error. Like the Samaritans, they fear Jehovah and serve their own gods (II Kings 17:33). John warns us not to give aid and encouragement to those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ lest we become partakers in their evil works (II John 9-11).

3. It is common for men to drift away from principles that are exclusive and unpopular. Apostasy never occurs in a night or even a year. Like a glacier, it takes years of slow steady movement before the danger or damage is realized. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them" (Heb. 2:1). "So then brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught...." (II Thess. 2:15).

4. The reality of Satan makes it essential that we emphasize our plea. He is the great deceiver (Rev. 20:2-3) and the father of lies (John 8:44). He fathers such lies as:

- “Restoration won’t work.”
- “Restoration of a 2,000 year old church is foolish.”
- “The Restoration idea is divisive.”
- “The church will never grow if we are so strict and exclusive!”
- “The Church of Christ is really just another denomination.”
- “Modern people will not accept such an old fashioned approach to religion.”

Paul warns, “Let no man deceive you with empty words” (Eph. 5:6).

5. Because of the average man’s desire to be pleasing to the world, it is vital that we hold tightly to our plea. Moses warned Israel, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil...” (Ex. 23:2). The world tends to hate Christians because they “are not of the world” and because they testify that the world’s works are evil (John 17:14). Weaker souls are tempted to love the sinful world and seek peace with it (I John 2:15). When they do so, faith is compromised.

6. There is a tendency for people, like moving water, to seek the course of least resistance. Elders and preachers sometimes have not the courage and conviction to say no to a crowd that clamors for unscriptural freedom and change. Rather than stand firm and pay the price of loyalty, they let the worldly current flow through their congregations undermining truth and the divinely ordered way. J. W. McGarvey stoutly opposed instrumental music when the subject was first raised. Later he was silent on the subject. When asked why? He replied that no one would listen. They were determined to have it. So he directed his interest to other matters. Satan won the victory.

7. We must reemphasize these truths because of the pressures of the world to conform and get in line. The world resents a church that is different; that dares to stand alone; that speaks out against the world’s pleasures and practices (John 7:7). They object to our unique worship, our insistence on immersion and that only those properly baptized are saved. They dislike our non-denominational stance. By ridicule, insult and exclusion they seek to force us into the common denominational mold. Tragically, hundreds of preachers and churches have sought the approval of the world by assimilating the ways of the world. God yet thunders from on high, “Be not conformed to the world (Rom. 12:2).

8. Because the philosophy of the world presses against the church we must indoctrinate our people. Daily, Christians are bombarded with such destructive ideas as: “Truth is relative;” “Nothing is absolute;” “You can’t be sure you are right and others are wrong;” “Anything old is obsolete;” “The Bible is not that reliable;” “The majority must be right;” “Religion is always evolving.” Such concepts weaken and eventually destroy one’s commitment

to New Testament Christianity. No wonder Paul warns, “Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men...and not after Christ” (Col. 2:8).

9. The prevailing ignorance of the Word of God demands strong teaching on divine principles. Truth makes man free from religious error (John 8:32). Ignorance leaves him enslaved. Even free men in Christ can be “destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hos 4:6). It is hard to know and do the right religiously if you have never been taught the right.

10. We must reemphasize the old truths since there is a tendency for the familiar to become commonplace and even contemptible. The value of the old truths must be constantly set forth. Jeremiah said the old paths were the good ways (Jer. 6:16). Our great challenge is to teach the old truths presenting them in a fresh and exciting format. We must teach each new convert, and each child growing up, to love and respect the sacred concept of restoring the ancient order of things.

11. There is a tendency for a church to change with the changing of preachers and elders. Leaders play a vital role in shaping the life of a congregation. A church with strong, sound preaching, and elders will stay true to the Book. An injudicious choice of a new preacher or the gradual replacement of those elders with men of different convictions will soon redirect a congregation away from the path of righteousness. In a generation, the church at Ephesus had left her first love (Rev. 2:4-5). In a matter of a few years, the Galatians had been led away from the gospel Paul had preached to a false Judaistic system (Gal. 3:1-2). Brethren must be taught to stick to God’s Book, never allowing any man to teach them “another gospel” (Gal. 1:8).

12. Christian faith and conviction is not inherited from ones family. Faith comes only by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). Each individual has to personally be born again in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3-5). Each youngster as he grows to accountability must receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save his soul (Jas. 1:21). Thus we must teach our children why we serve God as we do so their faith can be their own.

THE GREAT CHALLENGE BEFORE US

For some sixty years we as a people have neglected to instill those rudimentary principles of restoration in the hearts of those coming into the church. Now a crisis of identity is upon us. Many do not know the plea. Others have grown ashamed of it. Some disciples have departed into denominationalism. Some congregations are tottering on the brink of apostasy.

We must remember our heritage and pass it on to our children. Thus Moses instructed Israel “These words, which I command thee...shall be upon

thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children....then beware lest thou forget Jehovah who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt...” (Deut. 6:6-12).

Brethren, “guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babbling and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so-called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (I Tim. 6:20-21).

Elders and preachers: let there be a continuing emphasis on our restoration commitment in your pulpit and classrooms. Failure to do so could be disastrous.

66.

RESTORATION — THAT IS OUR BUSINESS

Many folks love to restore old furniture or homes. Others love to restore old cars. Some make a living restoring works of art or fine jewelry. In each case we see something of value that has suffered over the years. Neglect, damage or abuse has occurred. Unskilled hands might have sought to change or modify the object. In its damaged condition, its beauty and value are marred, but restored to its original condition it becomes a treasure.

Restoration is what we are about. The church established by Christ is some 2000 years old. Across the centuries neglect and damage have occurred. Unholy hands have imposed changes on her faith, her worship, her practices. These accretions have scarred and defaced her walls and obscured her glory. In many cases, one could not even recognize a religious group as the church Christ built.

Two centuries ago our forefathers in the faith realized this sad condition and set about to restore the Church of Christ to her original purity and beauty. They resolved to remove and cast aside every addition imposed by men; to restore each and every matter that had been lost or damaged through the centuries. They were not content just to patch and paint over some of the problem areas, theirs was a complete renovation project. Those early restorers came together from many religious backgrounds. There was Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott from the Presbyterians. There was Abner Jones, Elias Smith, John Smith and Jacob Creath Sr. and Jr. from the Baptists. There was James O’Kelly and Rice Haggard from the Methodists. Others came from other bodies but all had a common goal, to restore the Church of Christ to her original purity.

Beginning at the turn of the 19th century, their movement was successful beyond their wildest dreams. Some described it as spreading like fire in dry

brush. Within 60 years upwards of a half million souls had embraced the call for restoration. However, following the Civil War, an element of our brethren, situated primarily in the Northern states, grew weary of the simplicity and austerity of the restoration plea. They craved acceptance by their religious neighbors. They wanted grandeur and finery in their buildings and worship. They added instrumental music to their worship. Their preachers became pastors adorned in robes. They moved their women into roles of leadership over men. They united in fellowship with denominational bodies. They ceased to preach the distinctive message of the Bible and adopted a watered down message common to other Protestant bodies. Their apostasy caused conflict and eventual division in the body of Christ. By the turn of the 20th century the damage was such that the progressives went their separate way, leaving behind the remnant of our brethren who were determined to continue the plea to restore the ancient faith and practice of the church.

Our fathers were resolved to work longer and harder at their task of winning the lost to the restored church of the Lord Jesus. The Master blest their efforts with great success and soon their numbers outstripped those of the departed progressives. Within 60 years, Churches of Christ were recognized as the fastest growing religious body in America. We sent missionaries around the world proclaiming the gospel and the proposal to restore the ancient faith of Jesus. In many nations it received a cordial and enthusiastic reception.

But Satan never rests, nor does he give up. For the past 40 years a small element in our midst has challenged and questioned our back to the Bible plea. They too yearned for acceptance by their religious neighbors. Like a deadly virus they incubated in our midst, primarily in some of the schools operated by our people. Now the infection has broken out throughout the length and breath of our brotherhood and we are faced with a sizable element that, like the Disciples of Christ a century ago, are determined to change the faith, worship and practice of our churches. They are laboring to mold them into the image of the mega churches of the Baptist and Methodist denominations. Tragically, they are having much success in their unholy endeavor. Now it falls the lot of every man and woman who loves Christ and his church to stand up and fight for the Cause of Jesus (Eph. 6:10-18). We cannot be party to their apostasy (I Tim. 5:22). We cannot sit in silence and watch their destructive work proceed unchallenged (Is. 58:1). We must arise to protect the church, her worship, her doctrine, her borders from those who would desecrate and destroy them (Phil. 1:16). We must with loud voices call our brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as our neighbors who are lost, back to the Bible, back to the old paths of the first century, back to obedience to Jesus, Founder, Head and Savior of the Church of Christ (Jer. 6:16). That is our mission, our duty, our sacred obligation.

DUTIES OF THOSE WHO WOULD WRITE OUR HISTORY

Every religious body has a history that tells the story of its origin and development, its heroes and villains, its victories and defeats. All history is the distillation of the thoughts and deeds of men, both good and bad. Every organization that has noble purposes and goals wants its history preserved in a fair and accurate way. This should certainly be the goal of every faithful member of the Church of Christ. There have been relatively few men among us who were capable of writing our history. Some had more talent, time and resources than others and thus produced a superior product. Some had agendas to promote and thus their histories or biographies were slanted, telling us what the author believed should have happened rather than what in fact did occur.

One of the premier historians of the Christian religion was Philip Schaff. Schaff was born in Switzerland in 1819. After receiving his education in Germany, he was invited to come to America where he spent the remainder of his productive life as a teacher and writer. His accomplishments were monumental. He gave us the **Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, he edited the English translation of **Lange's Commentary on the Bible**, and published his own **International Illustrated Commentary on the Bible and The Creeds of Christendom**. His crowning work was his wonderful seven volume **History of the Christian Church**. His encyclopedia and church history are still in print and widely used, a century following his death in 1893.

In the preface of his **History of the Christian Church**, Dr. Schaff set forth his understanding of the duties of a historian.

“The first duty of the historian, which comprehends all others, is fidelity and justice. He must reproduce the history itself, making it live again in his representation. His highest and only aim should be, like a witness, to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and like a judge, to do full justice to every person and event which comes under his review...The historian, moreover, must make his work readable and interesting, without violating truth. Some parts of history are dull and wearisome; but upon the whole, the truth of history is ‘stranger than fiction’...It is God’s own epos. It needs no embellishment...The historian must first lay aside all prejudice and party zeal, and proceed in the pure love of truth...But the historian of the church of Christ must in every thing be as true as possible to the objective fact...do justice

to every person and event...Then he must be in thorough sympathy with his subject, and enthusiastically devoted thereto" (Vol. I, p.22-27).

Although written long ago, theses guiding principles are yet most timely. In our 21st century, a new way of thinking has evolved. History is seen in a different light and historians work by different rules. Rather than relate the story in a factual way, weaving the many and varied threads into one coherent account, they much prefer to deconstruct the historical record and retell the story from their own subjective point of view. Thus black can become white and white black under the author's hand. Heroes can be made villains and villains heroes. Truth can be turned into error and error depicted as good. The author constructs his own story, convinced he is rightly interpreting the past as he passes it through the prism of his new postmodern paradigm. An unscrupulous man views history as a piece of clay which he can shape as pleases him. A true historian sees the past as events that actually happened, words that had specific, understandable meanings. He wants to present them to his contemporaries as they truly were.

I commend Dr. Schaff's standards to those men among our Churches of Christ who wish to publish books and papers on our brotherhood's history. To seek to recast the life and work of great men of God so as to make them appear to support a new and different spiritual agenda is not only poor history, it is downright dishonest. It may fool those who have no knowledge or understanding of our past, but there are those who by their own research and investigation know the truth of our past. They will be the witnesses who expose the weakness and duplicity of such efforts. With Paul, we must be determined to speak the truth and lie not (I Tim.2:7).

68.

WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN A PIONEER IN OUR BACK TO THE BIBLE MOVEMENT?

Christianity had its beginning in Jerusalem in the year our Lord was crucified. Our back to the Bible movement had its origin here in America in the early years of the 19th century. Today, some three million people serve God as members of the Church of Christ on all the inhabited continents of the earth.

Sadly the average member knows little or nothing of the sacrifices and struggles of those predecessors who paved the way for us. We sometimes refer to them as pioneers because they blazed a trail through the prevailing wilderness of error of their day. Many of our preachers now occupying positions in large, prosperous congregations have little appreciation for their spiritual ancestors. In fact some of them are heard disparaging them. To every man among us who considers himself a preacher, I ask, ***Would you have been a pioneer for Christ in those early days?***

- They were willing to leave a church connection they found to be contrary to God's Word to stand with a despised and unpopular people and cause.
- They were willing to part with friends and family for the sake of Christ and the gospel.
- They sought to be undenominational Christians, nothing more nor less.
- They willingly gave up their employment and financial security as denominational leaders, to serve Christ and his church, usually with no assurance of financial reward.
- As Christians only, most of them preached the gospel with scant remuneration. They did so because they were bound by conscience to do so. They labored with their own hands to supply their temporal needs and preached at night and on the Lord's day.
- They sought to persuade men of other faiths to join them in going back to the biblical foundation and were highly successful in their efforts.
- They were willing to cast aside any belief or practice for which they could not find Bible authority, no matter how ancient and revered it was.
- The tools we consider necessities for our work, they never enjoyed. They knew nothing of the many wonderful things powered by electricity. They studied by oil lamps. They had access to very few books for their study. College and university training was beyond the reach of most of them. Communication was by handwritten letter or telegraph. Most of them never saw a paved road.
- They endured incredible hardships to plant churches throughout the land. If they were fortunate, they traveled on horseback. If they were poor, they walked. While traveling, they slept wherever lodging was offered. If no offer was made, they slept under the stars. They endured the scorching sun and the icy snows of winter as they made their evangelistic journeys. They spent lengthy periods of time away from their wives and children.
- They preached in groves, in school houses, homes or barns. They were often denied the use of community buildings because the denominational preachers insisted that they be banned.

- They baptized their converts in farm ponds, streams and rivers. In the cold of winter, a hole would be chopped in the ice so they could bury the candidate in baptism.
- They gladly endured the scorn and ridicule of hostile sectarians.
- They had to deal with drunken rowdies who delighted in hassling preachers and disrupting preaching services.
- They challenged the champions of religious error to defend their faith before the public. They themselves were often challenged. They acquitted themselves well and in most cases they drove their opponents from the field of conflict. Eventually there were few if any denominational men willing to meet them.
- The hardships they faced took their toll on their bodies. Many were broken down and worn out before their time.
- Most of them grew old without wealth or retirement pensions. Many of them were forced to live with relatives when they were no longer able to work.

Now if you had lived in that day, would you have been willing to cast your lot with that noble band of heroes? Would you have been willing to endure such hardships for Christ? (II Tim. 2:3). Let every man who claims to be a gospel preacher ponder these points. Although they were not perfect, they were men of whom the world was not worthy” (Heb. 11:38). They bequeathed to us a noble legacy. Let us prove ourselves worthy of the privilege of continuing the work they began.

69.

WHEN WAS THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH COMPLETED?

At what date and place did the Restoration Movement begin? At what point had the sacred pattern been rediscovered? We call it the Restoration *Movement* because it was not an event that occurred on one particular day in one particular place. Think of it as a seed planted. The idea of going back to the Bible and being Christians only germinated in the hearts of many men for more than 200 years. We find statements in this direction by men like

John Wycliff, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. Also a host of lesser known men such as John Glas, Robert Sandeman and James and Robert Haldane, were advocating such a move. Reading their thoughts, it seems as though they were like scientists or discoverers who dreamed the idea and were wrestling with how to implement it.

Here in America the earliest voices were heard in 1793 in the Carolinas. James O'Kelly and Rice Haggard led a back to the Bible movement among the Methodists. They understood autonomy of congregations, the name Christian, and undenominational Christianity. Yet most of them did not understand the need for immersion as the only Scriptural baptism.

Drs. Elias Smith and Abner Jones in New England (c.a. 1800) were next. They broke with the Baptists and properly conceived of immersion and autonomy and the name Christian for disciples and Church of Christ for their congregations. Yet they were unsettled and unsure about the nature of Christ and his relation to the Father. They vacillated back and forth on the issue of unitarianism which was sweeping through New England in their day. They also were much confused about millennialism and thus lost many of their members to William Miller's Advent movement.

Barton Stone broke with the Presbyterians primarily over their exclusivism and Calvinism's teaching on predestination and election. Also he refused to accept their belief that revivals were unnecessary or even unscriptural. He had contact with the New England Christians and for years clung to their anti-trinitarian views. Also, he at first utilized the mourner's bench in calling sinners to salvation. He was immersed but for many years did not think it was essential to salvation.

Thomas and Alexander Campbell seemed to be the first to grasp the larger picture of how the dream of restoration could be implemented. Thomas' **Declaration and Address** (1809) presented a workable method for restoration and unity in Christ. Alexander's **Sermon on the Law** (delivered September, 1816), explained that we were not under the Mosaic law, only that of Christ. He was first to see the necessity of immersion for baptism (ca. 1812-13). Walter Scott was the first man known to have called sinners to Christ, pointing out the necessity to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of their sins and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This was in Lisbon, Ohio, on November 18, 1827. Alexander's book, **Christianity Restored** (1835), later called the **Christian System**, was an early statement of the faith and practice of the New Testament church. Much of its content had previously been published in Campbell's **Christian Baptist** paper.

These men were pioneers. They likened themselves to men clearing a path through the wilderness of religious error. Every doctrine and practice had

to be searched out and discovered. Hundreds of prevailing errors had to be investigated and proven wrong.. Little by little they were being transformed into the likeness of the church as she was at the beginning. As new members were brought in, they too had to be taught God’s truth on hundreds of questions. They had to cast aside mistaken ideas and practices. All the while, Satan was working to raise up men and issues to trouble the struggling saints. There was John Thomas of Virginia, Sidney Rigdon of Ohio, Jesse Ferguson of Nashville who sowed discord and strife and led away disciples after them. Later, came those who wanted to organize all the churches and succeeded in creating the American Christian Missionary Society and later introduced instrumental music. They nearly destroyed us. Then came Daniel Sommer whose legalist approach further divided our forces and troubles us to this day. Today, the promoters of change are joining that long line of men who troubled, weakened and divided the church.

Restoration is a never-ending process. We are still engaged in that process. In every mission field where the gospel is taken, those brethren have to go through the process, although it is easier for them as we can share with them our knowledge and experience. As we read the history and biography of those early years we can see numerous instances where they were not altogether correct in their thinking or practices. But we have 200 years of experience they did not have. We have a vast reservoir of tools and resources unavailable to them. Doubtless the Lord can see many shortcomings in us today. Being pleasing to God depends in good measure on the direction you are traveling. If you are determined to go back to the Bible and be just what God wants you to be you are traveling in the right direction. If you are unhappy with being a Bible Christian and are going away from that biblical base, then you are unfaithful, even though you might still be associated in name with the Lord’s church.

70.

MAINTAINING OUR RESTORATION MOVEMENT

The restoration of New Testament Christianity is a continuing quest and goal for all who love God. We have the tendency to forget mistakes of the past and to lose our way. History demonstrates that departures have occurred and new departures will continue to plague us.

Within 40 years of the time that Alexander Campbell began his work, he and his co-workers had forgotten their objections to human organizations and ecclesiastical structures over the church. Thus they organized the American Christian Missionary Society. In another forty years, some of the heirs of those men (the Disciples of Christ/Christian Churches) had gone full circle back into denominationalism.

TO MAINTAIN OUR RESTORATION

God wants us to maintain good works (Tit. 3:14). Surely we should strive to maintain the noble cause of restoring the primitive Church of Christ. Such will not happen by accident. It demands much thought and determined effort on our part.

We must know, understand and appreciate the history of our movement. We need to be acquainted with the great men who blazed the trail before us. Not only do we need to know of their sacrifices and labors, but also the problems and controversies they faced. It is beneficial to see the mistakes they made, lest we repeat them. A historian once noted that he who does not learn the lessons of history is doomed to repeat the mistakes of history.

To gain the above information, we must read the history and biography of the Restoration Movement. Every saint should read Earl West's **Search for the Ancient Order**, Homer Hailey's **Attitudes and Consequences of the Restoration Movement and Christians Only** by J. D. Murch. All would be blessed and strengthened by reading the **Memoirs of Alexander Campbell** by Robert Richardson; the **Life of Elder John Smith** by J. A. Williams; **The Life and Times of David Lipscomb** by Earl West; **The Life of Elder Barton Stone** by John Rogers; **Ben Franklin, the Eye of the Storm** by Earl West; **J. D. Tant, Texas Preacher** by F. Y. Tant; and **W. W. Otey, Contender for the Faith** by Cecil Willis. Of course there are numerous other excellent biographies. They should be placed in church libraries, called to the attention of the congregation and highly recommended.

Preachers need to present sermons on the concept of and our commitment to restoring original Christianity. Without this, our people will soon be destroyed by their lack of knowledge in this area (Hos. 4:6). Lessons are needed that tell brethren about the heroes of the faith and the price paid to bring us where we presently stand. Thus did Paul in Hebrews 11. We must help today's disciples to know the sacrifices made and the debt we owe to those who fought and won the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12). Buy, read, and use the classic books of Restoration sermons by men like Ben Franklin, T. W. Brents, N. B. Hardeman and others.

Congregations should plan series of lessons on the Restoration Movement using knowledgeable men to lead the discussions.

Bill Humble's video series, **Back to the Bible: How We Got There: How We'll Stay There**, should be purchased and frequently used in classes and with new converts to help them see where we came from, how we got where we are and the necessity of sticking to God's word if we expect to get to our heavenly destination.

We need special, in-depth lectureships and workshops on Restoration history such as that conducted annually by the elders of the North Lexington Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Ideally, there should be programs conducted throughout the land. Each could lay emphasis on the origins of the church in their own region.

We need writers to carefully research and write the biographies of great Christians of the past, lest their stories be lost. Likewise we need to publish books that recount the history of the rise and progress of the Restoration Movement in the various states and in the nations of the world. The Disciples of Christ have done this for many states, but their presentations give a very slanted view of Restoration history.

Our schools that train preachers should include a course in Restoration History as a requirement for graduation for all such students. Just as teachers need to know the history of education, so our young men need to know their roots.

SELF EXAMINATION

Every Christian needs to examine himself to determine if he is yet in the faith (II Cor. 13:5). Erosion of faith is a slow but steady experience and at first, imperceptible. By the time it is seen, it is hard to stop the destructive process. Elders need to refresh their minds as to just what it means to restore the first century church, then ask the hard question, "Is our congregational program loyal to that idea?" If not, "What steps must we take to remedy the situation?" Preachers need to carefully review their sermons and Bible classes asking, have I given adequate attention to "the old paths?" Have I taught and led the people to walk therein? (Jer. 6:16). Moses charged Israel to:

*"Remember the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations:
Ask thy father, and he will show thee
Thine elders, and they will tell thee?" (Deut. 32:7).*

We who are heirs of those who made their exodus from the bondage of sectarianism would be blessed beyond measure if we would likewise ponder our past.

Let us hold fast to the ancient gospel. Let us preach it boldly. May we never be ashamed of our heritage. What a tragedy it would be if we forget and lose all that has been won by the blood, sweat and tears of a past generations. Rather, let us “be... imitators of them who through faith and patience inherited the promises” (Heb. 6:12). Let us maintain the restoration!

71.

WHO WILL LEAD THE REMNANT?

Like a toxic cloud, apostasy is settling over significant numbers of our congregations and schools. One need not be a prophet to predict that where this occurs, a separation is inevitable. Faithful Christians, who love the church and respect the authority of the Scriptures, will not be able to stay and be part of a congregation that has cast aside the Will of Christ and determined to chart a new course. God always has, and always will, have a faithful remnant who will be true to His will and way (Rom. 9:27). Because they remain faithful, they shall be saved. The question is, who will provide the leadership to rally those brethren who refuse to be led into denominationalism?

Four options come to mind.

- Without strong leadership, they will be left as sheep without a shepherd to wander aimlessly until they are finally scattered and lose their identity.
- Some will be left to seek fellowship in non-institutional churches (They used to be called anti orphan home and anti-cooperation churches). They are far more conservative than many of our congregations. Some of them have moderated their approach on their issues over the last few years. Visitors will find their preaching and worship very much like ours before agents of change appeared on the scene.
- Some will be tempted to follow those ultra-conservatives brethren who for years have been railing against anything and anyone in which they did not personally have a controlling hand. There is a sprinkling of these preachers and congregations across the country. Yes, they are conservative, and they reject the new currents of change, but they have one wheel in the ditch and history demonstrates that they will never provide leadership that will give the church growth and victory.

- Hopefully wise and good men, sound in faith, conservative in commitment, level-headed and able to discern and avoid either extreme of liberalism or legalism will rise up. Only such men can provide the Biblical leadership to help us restore the church of the 21st century to a solid Biblical base.

A little historical background will make this point clearer. In the years following the Civil War our brotherhood experienced an upheaval and apostasy almost identical to that we are experiencing today. Those determined to change the church styled themselves “progressives” while those who sought to maintain the Biblical faith called them “digressives.” So effective were the digressives in promoting their views and so naive and complacent were many good men that before the dust had settled they had swept away some 85% of our churches and most of our schools. The issues then were: how can we determine what God allows?, man-made organizations to do the mission work of the church, instrumental music in worship, placing women in roles of leadership, turning their preachers into pastors, fellowship with denominations, classifying the Lord’s church as a denomination, choirs, soloists and other similar things. There was a significant circle of well-educated preachers who espoused the theological liberalism popular in that day. Among other things, they questioned the inspiration and authority of the Bible.

The digressives had two primary camps. J. H. Garrison led the theological liberals. They had a large influence in the Christian schools that were captured. Isaac Errett, through the **Christian Standard**, led the moderates. They promoted all the agenda except the flagrant liberalism of Garrison’s followers. Among those who opposed the digressives, David Lipscomb was the most prominent leader. He led moderates who wished to maintain the Restoration Movement on its original Biblical course. Through the pages of the **Gospel Advocate** paper and the Nashville Bible School (Now David Lipscomb University), he was able to keep his followers on a steady course that avoided extremes. Daniel Sommer of Indianapolis pursued a radical approach that not only opposed the digressives but Lipscomb and the moderates as well. Sommer’s legacy has been a seed bed for an unending cycle of “ultra-conservative” splinter groups.

Those preachers, congregations and schools that followed the leadership of Bro. Lipscomb prospered and multiplied in a phenomenal way. By the 1960s our churches had spread to every state in the Union and in more than a hundred foreign nations. Brethren conducted numerous schools, providing educations for our children. Scores of good works were undertaken, providing care for widows, orphans, unwed mothers, the aged. We had numerous gospel papers of the centrist view and several publishing houses that provided good, dependable literature for our people.

Today we have already lost much of what we had gained. Some of our Universities and Colleges are under the influence of the new digressives. Many of our gospel papers have either been discontinued or have suffered serious decline in circulation. The international radio and television outreach that we once were proud of is no longer a distinctive voice for the New Testament church. Many campus and youth programs have weakened rather than strengthened the faith of their young charges, leaving them vulnerable to the sirens of change. From every quarter we hear of churches pursuing a new course, and the conflicts that pursuit causes.

Our liberal digressives have their leaders. The question is who will lead the surviving remnant? Will faithful leaders arise soon enough to save the greater number of our churches? Or will we tarry and hope until major losses are inflicted? Our current agitation is not going to be a year or a five year tussle. Such changes within religious groups take years to run their course. The conflict that was mentioned earlier spanned well over 50 years and resulted in a divided brotherhood. The digressives emerged as the Disciples of Christ/Christian Churches, those clinging to the old paths, as Churches of Christ.

Granted, no man, editor or school can appoint themselves to be leaders of our people, nor can any group elect them to that position. Granted every congregation is autonomous and independent. But now, as in the past, men will arise to provide leadership, be it good or bad, and others will voluntarily follow. Our liberals are providing their leadership in a most successful way. We have a radical reactionary group eager to lead those who reject liberalism. What we desperately need is for wise men, rooted and grounded in God's Word, faithful and loyal to the New Testament Church, to step forward and issue the call to arms. Only that kind of leadership will save the day. We need not one, or a dozen but thousands, of loyal soldiers of Christ to lead us in this hour of crisis.

II.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF GREAT MEN WHO CARRIED THE RESTORATION BANNER

BARTON W. STONE, A GREAT SERVANT OF GOD

It was on Christmas Eve 1772 that Barton Stone was born to John and Mary Stone of Port Tobacco, Maryland. Three years later his father died and his mother took the children to a new home in Pittsylvania County, Virginia.. When he was approximately 16 years of age, Barton enrolled in David Caldwell's academy in North Carolina. There he was exposed to the Presbyterian religion of his teacher with all of its cumbersome Calvinistic doctrines. Under the preaching of William Hodge, a powerful Presbyterian evangelist, young Stone yielded his life to Christ. The commitment eventually led him to desire to serve God as a preacher of the gospel.

Graduating from Caldwell's school at age 20, he became a candidate for the Presbyterian ministry. He found himself unable to understand and subscribe to the Presbyterian doctrines of election and foreordination. The traditional doctrine of the trinity also left him bewildered. Discouraged, he took employment as a teacher while he pondered these things.

Three years were spent teaching in an academy near Washington, Georgia. There he was associated with Hope Hull, a Methodist preacher, who had been sympathetic with the restoration plea of James O'Kelly among the Methodists. It is likely that Stone was influenced by Hull's views.

In 1796, Barton Stone finally received his license to preach from the Orange Presbytery in North Carolina. While wrestling with the profound theological mysteries regarding the Trinity, he became depressed and discouraged. When his friend R. Foster decided to abandon his work as a preacher, Stone was tempted to do the same. Fortunately a pious old sister detected his discouragement and told him plainly that she feared he was acting the part of Jonah, the prophet who ran from his preaching assignment to go to the Ninevites. She encouraged him to go west over the mountains, which advice he took.

His journey west led Stone through Southwestern Virginia. He made a stop at Wythe County, Virginia, and ended up staying from May until July preaching among the people. His itinerary took Stone through Cumberland Gap and Knoxville. In 1796, Knoxville was "a town of less than one hundred dwellings and five hundred residents." It was the capital of the new state of Tennessee.

The land between Knoxville and Nashville was wilderness country, yet occupied by Indians. Travelers went to the “house of rendezvous” to find companions for the hazardous trip west. Two travelers were waiting to embark, so Stone joined them for the trip. One man was “a backwoodsman, and Indian fighter of great courage,” the other a total coward. They left Knoxville August 14, 1796.

The journey was uneventful until they crossed the Clinch River near present day Kingston. About sundown they discovered fifteen to twenty Indians, some three hundred feet away near a canebreak. The pilgrims sped away on their horses with the Indians in hot pursuit. Unable to cross the mountains in the dark, they hid in the thicket through the night. Wolves could be heard in the darkness. A rain fell on them, but the Indians did not overtake them.

Stone’s horse threw a shoe the next day and was unable to carry him. Neither of his fellow-travelers would let him ride on their horses. One of them had a pack horse, but he would not even allow Stone to ride it. They rode off leaving the poor stranger alone in the wilderness. He walked the one hundred and fifty miles to Nashville without incident, driving his horse before him. To Stone, Nashville, “was a poor little village, hardly worth noticing.”

In 1798 he presented himself for ordination before the Transylvania Presbytery at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. When asked if he would be willing to adopt the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, young Stone replied that he would as far as it was consistent with the Word of God (J. D. Murch, **Christians Only**, p. 85). Throughout his long career, Stone measured everything by that divine standard.

His first preaching assignment was with the Cane Ridge and Concord churches in Bourbon County, Kentucky. Shortly after beginning his work he was attracted to the successful camp meeting revivals being conducted in the southern part of his state. Seeing their exciting results, he proposed to other preachers near his home that they too should have a great camp meeting. His plan was realized in August, 1801. Thousands gathered for a weekend of preaching, singing and fellowship. Estimates of the crowd ranged from ten to twenty thousand. Hundreds of sinners were persuaded to commit their lives to Christ in the now famous Cane Ridge Revival.

Rather than rejoice at the great success of the Cane Ridge Meeting, the Presbyterian rulers accused Stone and his Presbyterian helpers of heresy. In 1803, Stone, Richard McNemar, Robert Marshall, John Thompson and John Dunlavy withdrew themselves from the Synod. They organized the Springfield Presbytery which would allow them liberty to follow the Scripture in all things.

By June of 1804, they resolved to abandon the Presbyterian faith all together. To explain and justify their decision they drafted and published a document entitled, **The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery**. In that remarkable document they affirmed the following great truths:

- They saw that the Body of Christ (the Lord’s Church) was bigger, more extensive and more important than any human organization such as their Presbytery. “We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one Body...”
- They abandoned their “reverend title” to simply be a servants of Christ. “We will, that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten...”
- They grasped the truth that no man nor body of men had the right or power to make laws for the kingdom of Christ; that disciples should be pointed to the Bible to determine God’s will on any matter. “We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority forever cease: that the people may have free course to the Bible...”
- They believed that Christian men who understood God’s word had the right to preach that message without the approval and ordination of any official body of clerics. “We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple gospel...”
- They believed in congregational autonomy. “We will that the Church of Christ resume her native right of internal government—try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith... We will, that each particular church, as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free will offering... and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.”
- They believed the Bible to be the only sure guide to heaven and sufficient for understanding God’s Will. “We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire...”
- With the encouragement of Rice Haggard, they also resolved to wear no other name than “Christian.” From that day onward, Stone loved and proudly wore the holy name “Christian” without hyphenation. His enemies called his converts New Lights and Stoneites, but he was

only a Christian. He wrote, “We cannot conscientiously give up the name Christian, acknowledged by our brethren as most appropriate, for any other...” (**Christian Messenger**, Vol. V, p. 182, 1831).

In 1807 Stone and others of his coworkers embraced immersion as the proper mode of baptism. They later realized its necessity for remission of sins. He taught and practiced open communion when such was not an accepted or popular view.

Satan, sensing the great potential for good in this little band of preachers, went to work to destroy their efforts. In 1805, Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy defected to the strange Shaker cult. Later Robert Marshall and John Thompson returned to the Presbyterians, leaving Stone to carry on alone. Stone believed in the power of preaching. He traveled thousands of miles across Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, Alabama and Missouri preaching and planting churches. He wore himself out with long years of tireless, selfless work, seeking to advance the kingdom of Christ.

There is much to be admired in the life of Barton Stone.

- There was his courage in breaking with the popular, influential and ruling body of the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky. With a family depending upon him for their provision, he was willing to launch out into deep, unchartered waters, totally trusting God for his sustenance.
- There was his total honesty with those with whom he worked. When he could no longer believe the Presbyterian system, he called the Cane Ridge and Concord congregations together and informed them that he “could no longer conscientiously preach to support the Presbyterian church...and that his labors should henceforth be directed to advance the Redeemer’s kingdom...that I absolved them from all obligations in a pecuniary point of view” (**Murch**, p. 87).
- There was his willingness to bear the odium of being called a “heretic” by those whom he left behind and those who would not receive his back to the Bible message.
- There was his courage and unwillingness to yield in the face of physical persecution. He wrote, “The floods of earth and hell are let loose against us, but me in particular. I am seriously threatened with imprisonment, and stripes. I expect to receive for the testimony of Jesus...the scribes, the disputers of this world are gnashing upon us” (**Charles C. Ware, Barton Warren Stone**, p. 208).
- There was his saintliness and lovely humility of spirit. He built no personal empire, only the kingdom of Christ. He took insult, injury and neglect, even by his brethren, without bitterness or reprisal.

Across the South and Midwest are large numbers of churches, dating from the early 1800s, who owe their origin to Stone and his disciples. On the deeds and over the doors of many of them are the words “Church of Christ.” Such a name was worn by the Cane Ridge church. “The Church of Christ at Cane Ridge and other generous friends ... have caused this monument to be erected ... to Barton W. Stone” (Alonzo Fortune **The Disciples in Kentucky**, p. 32).

Stone was not a profound theologian, but he was a diligent student of God’s Word. He believed and loved every word found therein. We still approach the Scripture as he did. His great strength was evangelism. Stone believed in the power of the printed word. On November 25, 1826 he launched his **Christian Messenger** magazine which carried the Restoration message across the young nation and helped to define and shape the movement. For 14 years he instructed the brethren with words of truth by this medium. Our brethren have and continue to follow his example.

In December of 1831 a meeting occurred between the followers of Stone and Campbell to discuss the possibility of union of the groups. The climax came when Racoon John Smith addressed the assembly thusly:

“God has but one people on the earth. He has given to them but one Book, and therein exhorts and commands them to be one family. A union, such as we plead for—a union of God’s people on that one book—must then be practicable ...

For several years past, I have stood pledged to meet the religious world, or any part of it, on the ancient Gospel and order of things, as presented in the words of the Book. This is the foundation on which Christians once stood, and on it they can, and ought to stand again. From this I cannot depart to meet any man, or sect of men, in the wide world ...

*Let us, then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights or Old Lights, or any other kind of **lights**, but let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the light we need.”*

Barton Stone, after a few preliminary comments, responded:

“I have not one objection to the ground laid down by him as the true scriptural basis of union among the people of God; and I am willing, to give him now and here, my hand.”

From that day the Christians and the Disciples went forth as one body of people. Not since the days of the Apostles has the gospel so been readily received and the Lord’s church prospered so well.

The followers of Stone and those of Alexander Campbell united their efforts in a meeting held in Georgetown, Kentucky in 1832. By that time, Stone had no less than 16,000 people in his ranks.

In 1801 Stone married Elizabeth Campbell whom death claimed in 1810. He later took Celia Bowen of Tennessee in marriage. Ten children were fathered by Barton Stone. After long years of grueling work and financial hardship, Barton Stone died in Hannibal, Missouri, Nov. 9, 1844. Today, his remains rest beneath a memorial stone before the old Cane Ridge Church of Christ which has been well-preserved.

E. E. Snoddy wrote, "To Stone belongs priority in time, priority in (the) American experience, priority in the ideal of unity, priority in evangelism, priority in the independency of his movement, priority in the complete repudiation of the Calvinistic system of theology, and, finally, priority in sacrificial devotion to his cause" (William Garrett West, **Barton Warren Stone**, p. 221). Upon Stone's death, Tolbert Fanning observed, "He will be regarded as the first great American reformer...the first man, who to much purpose, pleaded the ground that the Bible, without note, commentary, or creed must destroy antichristian powers, and eventually conquer the world... Although I have heard Father Stone slandered, and his views grossly perverted, yet never did I hear mortal man utter a syllable derogatory to his moral worth. A man more devoted to Christianity has not lived nor died..." (**Christian Review**, Vol. 1 #12, p. 288).

73.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, A MAN ADMIRER BY ALL

One of the greatest leaders in the movement to restore original Christianity was Alexander Campbell of Bethany, Virginia (now West Virginia). While most members of the Church of Christ have heard his name, few have seen his picture or know much about the man.

Campbell was born in Northern Ireland in 1788. His father was of Scottish and his mother of French descent. His family immigrated to America in 1809. Thomas Campbell was a Presbyterian minister and school teacher. Young Campbell was thus thoroughly trained and educated. He spent one year at the University of Glasgow in Scotland.

When, the Campbells broke with Presbyterianism. Alexander soon became the acknowledged leader. He was a multi-talented man, a Renaissance man. He was a successful farmer, businessman, educator (he founded Bethany College), journalist (he edited the **Christian Baptist** and the **Millennial Harbinger**), author (some 70 volumes), preacher and debater.

In this lesson we will glean from his contemporaries a word portrait of Mr. Campbell.

“In personal appearance Campbell was tall, vigorous and athletic. His hair was light and his complexion moderately fair. His face had no straight lines and his aquiline nose was arched as John Smith said, a “little to the north.”¹⁹

As a boy he loved the outdoors and was fond of hunting, fishing, and the usual sports of his peers.²⁰

In 1829 Campbell met Robert Owen, a noted infidel, in a public debate in Cincinnati. Timothy Flint, a minister and journalist wrote his impressions of Campbell:

“The chivalrous champion of the covenant is a citizen of Bethany, near Wheeling, in Virginia; a gentleman, we should think between thirty and forty, with a long face, a rather small head, of a sparkling, bright and cheerful countenance, and finely arched forehead; in the earnest vigor of youth, and with the very first sprinkling of white on his crown. He wore an aspect, as of one who had words, both ready and inexhaustible, and as possessed of the excellent grace of perseverance.

Mr. Campbell possesses a fine voice, a little inclining to the nasal; and first rate attributes and endowments for a lawyer in the interior; perfect self-possession, quickness of apprehension, and readiness of retort, all disciplined to effect by long controversial training...Very often, during the debate, he manifested those resources which belong only to an endowed and disciplined mind.”²¹

The Cincinnati Chronicle wrote of Campbell:

“He is undoubtedly a man of fine talents, and equally fine attainments. With an acute, vigorous mind, quick perceptions, and rapid powers of combination, he has sorely puzzled his antagonist, and at the same time both delighted and instructed his audience by his masterly defense of the truth...”²²

Ms. Frances Trollope of England attended the debate. She recalled:

19 Earl West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, Nashville, Gospel Advocate, 1949, Vol. II, p. 36.

20 Robert Richardson, **Memoirs of Alexander Campbell**, Nashville, Gospel Advocate, 1956 (re-print). Vol. I, pp 31-32.

21 Bill Humble, **Campbell and Controversy**. n.p. Old Paths Bookclub, 1952, pp. 94-95, 112-113.

22 Ibid., p. 113.

“Mr. Campbell then arose; his person, voice, and manner all greatly in his favor ... He quizzed Mr. Owen most unmercifully; pinched him here for his parallelograms; hit him there for his human perfectibility, and kept the whole audience in a roar of laughter. Mr. Owen joined in it most heartily himself, and listened to him throughout with the air of a man who is delighted at the good things he is hearing, and exactly in the cue to enjoy all the other good things that he is sure will follow. Mr. Campbell’s watch was the only one which reminded us that we had listened to him for half an hour.”²³

The Baptist historian, A. H. Newman, described Campbell as a debater in the following words:

“Alexander Campbell was a man of fair education and of unbound confidence in his resources and tenets. He was possessed of a powerful personality and was one of the ablest debaters of his age. In the use of caricature and sarcasm he has rarely been surpassed. Throughout the regions that he chose for the propagation of his views, the number of Baptist ministers who could in any way approach him in argumentative power or in ability to sway the masses of the people, was very small.”²⁴

Mr. Campbell traveled to the Western Reserve in 1831. At Aurora he addressed a large audience in a grove of trees. The Honorable A. G. Riddle placed in writing his recollection of the event.

“The woods were full of horses and carriages, and the hundreds already there were rapidly swelled to many thousands ... At the hour of eleven, Mr. Campbell and his party took their places on the stand ... He was then about forty years old, above the average height, of singular dignity of form, and simple grace of manner. His was a splendid head, borne well back, with a bold, strong forehead, from which his fine hair was turned back; a strong, full, expressive eye, aquiline nose, fine mouth, and prominent chin. He was a perfect master of himself, a perfect master of his theme, and, from the moment he stood in its presence, a perfect master of his immense audience.

(He was) calm, clear, strong, logical, yet perfectly simple. Men felt themselves lifted and carried, and wondered at the ease and apparent want of effort with which it was done.

... With great intellectual resources, and great acquisitions, athlete and gladiator as he was, he was a logician by instinct and habit of mind, and took a pleasure in magnifying, to their utmost, the difficulties of his positions, so that when the latter were finally maintained, the mind was satisfied with the result. His language was copious, his style nervous, and the characteristic of

23 Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manner of the Americans*, New York, publisher unknown, 1927, pp. 121ff (as quoted in *Campbell and Controversy*, p. 117).

24 Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, p. 257.

his mind was direct, manly, sustained vigor; and under its play he evolved a warmth which kindled to the fervor of sustained eloquence, and which, in the judgment of many, is the only true eloquence.

... There was no appeal to passion, no effort at pathos, no figures or rhetoric, but a warm kindling, heated, glowing, manly argument, silencing the will, captivating the judgment, and satisfying the reason... When he closed, low murmurs broke and ran through the awed crowd; man and women from all parts of the vast assemblage, with streaming eyes, came forward; young men who had climbed into the small trees from curiosity, came down from conviction, and went forward to baptism; and the brothers and sisters set up a glad hymn, sang with tremulous voices, clasping hands amid happy tears.”²⁵

Benjamin Franklin Hall was an early associate of Barton Stone. In 1833 he made a trip to Bethany to visit Campbell. In his autobiography he recalls his first impression of the man.

“I ... caught sight of a rather tall and stout-looking figure, approaching the house. His step was somewhat quick, elastic, and regular and firm. His dress attracted my attention. He had on a mixed Janes surtout coat (overcoat JW). White, slouched hat, rather broad brim, and not a very high crown; the brim was broken loose from the crown on one side, and flopped down over his ear. He had in his hand a large palmetto walking cane, with ivory head. He was, as I supposed, some six feet high, and a little stooped. By the time I had taken this eye-sketch of him, he was at the door, and met by his sister with an affectionate greeting... I need not say I was seized suddenly with a palpitation at the heart, and that I felt a kind of choking sensation about my throat; that my hand grew suddenly cold, and my lips dry, and that I had rather strange sensations as he entered the parlor door and flashed upon me his keen dark-blue eye, and in an instant scanned me from head to feet, as I stepped to meet him, introduced by his sister. Evidently perceiving my embarrassment, he kindly asked me to be seated. His features were animated, and his countenance indicated feelings of gentleness, humility and kindness. He beamed upon me a gracious smile, and in tones of affection, and in voice of tenderness, asked after my health. Common-place topics occupied us until he was called to breakfast.

...Without intending me to perceive it, he introduced such topics of conversation as would lead me to express my views on a variety of subjects. The arts, the sciences generally, Medicine, Chemistry, Botany, Physiology—

25 A. S. Haden, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve*, Cincinnati, Ohio, Chase & Hall Publishers, 1875, pp. 377-379.

all were introduced, and briefly discussed; as well as Astronomy, Geology, History, sacred and profane, all had a share in our conversation.”²⁶

Moses E. Lard was a student of Campbell at Bethany College. Himself a grand preacher and writer, Lard has left us his impression of Campbell in the prime of his life (i.e., 1840-1850).

“Physically, not one man in a thousand was so well endowed. Nature was in a fertile mood when she molded his large and sinewy body. Material was abundant and bestowed with no grudging hand. There was not a pound of flesh too much, nor a pound too little. As to resources of the mind, no word but opulent will describe him. Here he was preeminently great, in the true sense of the word. His head was faultless, the finest I ever saw.”²⁷

“Mr. Campbell’s chief greatness lay in his intellect. In resources of mind no word but **opulent** will describe him. Here he was great, preeminently great in the true sense of that fine simple word. No one could gaze on that grand head, or look on that bold, unique face, without feeling impressed with this fact. His head was large, very large; his forehead high, with all the breadth necessary to amplitude; while the distance from the point of the ear to the center of the frontal bone revealed the capacious home which God had built for his thought. His head I think the finest I ever saw. It was simply faultless. After the first look, you never criticized it; you only admired it...

We yet do not hesitate to affirm that since the last inspired man bowed his head in death a greater than our brother has not risen.

At nightfall he collected his family in his homely parlor, and arranged them in order around the room. Each then read a verse, he reading with the rest... The chapter for the evening being read, a song was usually sung, when all bowed in the presence of God. His prayers were usually long, inimitably reverential, and chaste.

... Yet his manner was as easy and natural as that of a child. Of his greatness he seemed never for a moment conscious; of his religion, never for a moment unconscious. Not an object in nature did he see, from the orb which illumines day to the insect which lay beneath his glass, that did not suggest to him something of the wisdom, power, or goodness of God...

...His body was a noble one... Toughness and, power, were palpably the two finest traits in it...

Nor was a body ever more largely endowed with the true activities of life than his. Even when he slept I should think his muscles often twitched with life. With this, his whole frame seemed ever replete. Every motion and emotion

26 B. F. Hall, *Autobiography*, unpublished, typescript. pp. 99, 100.

27 Archibald McLean, *Alexander Campbell as a Preacher*, Athens, Ala., CEI Store, 1955, p. 40.

of the man evinced its abounding presence. His walk, his talk, his look, and laugh were fervent with it. This, through life, kept him from acquiring the courtly studied manner too often and always unwisely assumed by the great. A slow measured bow was something he could not make. Life rushed on too fast. It left him not the time. He shook your hand in passing you; looked back and made his hasty remark, and then darted on as if some grand inexorable current bore him away...When he walked he was apt to walk too fast, as if the leading idea were on the wing and he was pressed in the pursuit. When he rode he rocked on his horse, as if to aid his speed; and even in his talk he often articulated one word too hurriedly in hastening to the next. To the eye this gave to him a rather rugged, irregular appearance..."²⁸

Robert Richardson, longtime friend and associate of Campbell, wrote his memoirs. Among his descriptive phrases of the man are the following:

"He was not a person of transient impulse or of subservient purpose. He was no dreamer, no mystic, no visionary theorist, but a man of earnest character devoted to a great and worthy object; a man of high and firm resolve, of deep convictions, of practical sagacity, dealing with the highest interests of mankind, self-consecrated to the most sacred duties, untiring, unfaltering, declining rest and worldly honor and promotion, and esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than any earthly treasure."²⁹

As to convictions:

"Never in sacred things would he tolerate the slightest approach to levity, and failed not on all occasions to reprove profanity in the severest terms. In church and college discipline, also, though inclined to pity offenders, he was ever most just and strict in enforcing law as the means designed for correction and reformation. He would never for a moment compromise any principle of right, but with decisive and unyielding firmness, yet with the utmost kindness, would always insist upon the rigid observance of every regulation..."³⁰

Richardson describes his preaching thusly:

"Lifting himself above all human theories and speculations, Mr. Campbell strictly applied the inductive method to the Bible, and made its facts and revelations the great basis of religious thought and the sure foundation of all religious trust. His method of discoursing was hence totally unlike that of other preachers. In discussing the great themes of salvation, he manifested a breadth of view, a depth of biblical knowledge, a freshness of thought and a grandeur in his combinations of facts and arguments which imparted instruction and

28 Benjamin Lyon Smith, *Alexander Campbell*, St. Louis, Bethany Press, 1930, pp. 268-272.

29 Richardson, Vol., 2, p. 669.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 665.

delight. At his bidding, the facts of Scripture seemed to acquire new force and meaning; a connected rain of scriptural truths and illustrations opened up unexpected and lofty views of the Divine plan of redemption...”³¹

“Nothing indeed was more striking than his singular ability to interest his hearers in the **subject** of which he treated. With this his own mind was occupied, and, being free from all thoughts of self, there was in his addresses an entire absence of egotism, and nothing in his delivery to divert the attention from the theme on which he discoursed. For the first few moments, indeed, the hearer might contemplate his commanding form, his perfect self-possession and quiet dignity of manner, or admire the clear and silvery tones of his voice, but those emphatic tones soon filled the mind with other thoughts.”³²

“His power was thus derived, not from graceful gesture, nor from flowery language, nor from elaborate or glowing description, nor merely from logical argumentation, but from his singular faculty of stating and connecting facts—of producing novel and striking combinations of related truths, and of evolving the grand fundamental principles of things...

Mr. Campbell’s discourses were, however, by no means destitute of ornament. He had a correct fancy, which was rather fastidious than lively. Hence he never employed figures of a homely character or such as were calculated to lower his subject. On the contrary, his comparisons, which were not very frequent, were always such as tended to elevate it, or were at least in perfect harmony with it. These he usually drew from the Scriptures, and his familiarity with the language of the Bible enabled him to employ its glowing expressions and beautiful similes with great effect.”³³

Isaac Errett describes Campbell’s preaching:

“...His discourses were extemporaneous, often exceeding two hours in length, but were so clear in statement, cogent in argument, rich in diction, and forcible in illustration, as to hold his auditors in apt attention to the close. His was not the highest style of oratory. Indeed he rather despised oratory as an art, relying on the inherent attractiveness of the truths he uttered. We have known him, in his prime, to “stand for two hours, leaning on a cane, and talk in true conversational style, with scarce a gesture in the entire discourse. But to a fine personal appearance and dignity of manner, he added a clearness of statement, a force of reasoning, a purity and sometimes a pomp of diction, a wealth of learning, a splendor of imagination, and an earnestness often rising

31 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 583.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 585.

into impassioned utterance, which clothed his pulpit efforts with a high degree of oratorical excellence.³⁴

Errett also tells us of Campbell's social skills:

"In conversation, he expended, perhaps more time and strength than in pulpit discourse. Possessed of a strong social nature, and gifted with rare conversation powers, his delighted visitors hung on for hours on the wisdom and eloquence of his lips. Mr. Campbell conversed on different themes, and to a widely different circle of hearers. But we doubt if any of his age excelled him in capacity to charm and instruct in the social circle. Perhaps more prejudice was dissipated and more adherents were gained in these daily conversations, than in his best pulpit efforts."³⁵

In the year 1849 Mr. Herman Humphrey, D. D., past president of Amherst College, heard Campbell speak. He published the following description in the *New York Observer*.

At length Dr. Campbell made his way up through the crowd and took his seat in the pulpit. He is somewhat above middle stature, with broad shoulders, a little stooping, and though stoutly built, a little spare and pale. He has a high, intellectual forehead, a keen, dark eye, somewhat shaded, and a well-covered head of gray hair, fast changing into the full bloom of the almond tree. I think he must be rather over than under sixty-five years of age. He looks like a hard-working man, as he has been from his youth up. Very few could have endured so much mental and physical labor as has raised him to the commanding situation which he now occupies, and so long sustained him in it. His voice is not strong, evidently owing, in part, to the indifferent state of his health, but it is clear and firmly modulated. His enunciation is distinct, and, as he uses no notes, his language is remarkably pure and select. In his delivery he has not much action, and but little of that fervid outpouring which characterizes Western and Southern eloquence. There is nothing vociferous or impassioned in his manner. I think he is the most perfectly self-possessed, the most perfectly at ease in the pulpit, of any preacher I ever listened to, except, perhaps, the celebrated Dr. John Mason of New York...

In laying out his work, his statements are simple, clear and concise, his topics are well and logically arranged, his manner is calm and deliberate, but full of assurance. His appeals are not very earnest nor indicative of deep feeling; but nevertheless winning and impressive in a high degree. There were many fine and truly eloquent passages in the two discourses I heard, but they seemed to cost him no effort, and to betray no consciousness on his part that

³⁴ Hayden, p. 48.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

they were fine. In listening to him you feel that you are in the presence of a great man. He speaks like a “master of assemblies” ...”³⁶

Tolbert fanning of Tennessee wrote his impressions of Campbell at the time of his famous debate with N. L. Rice at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1843:

“Alexander Campbell is about sixty years old; has been blessed by nature with a fine constitution; has led a most active life, and consequently enjoys remarkable good health for one of his age, and his intellect is as vigorous as it was at twenty-five. In personal appearance, there is no man like him. His scholarship is admired by both friends and foes; and in logical powers, the world, in my humble opinion, has not his equal. As a declaimer, he is not generally admired by the multitude; but men of the best order of mind are always delighted with his address. He is most chaste, pointed, and dignified, in all his public exhibitions; knows not how to take advantage of an opponent, and will not condescend to little tricks for the sake of applause. His arguments are always well arranged, and are generally full and satisfactory on every point he touches. It is scarcely probable any man has ever become truly distinguished, who has not attained his preeminence for some one particular trait, and evidently Alexander Campbell owes his greatness to his powers of concentration, and his habit of presenting the greatest subjects in a few pointed and palpable propositions. His doctrine is that the universe is ruled by a few general laws, and to illustrate the most important truths, a few leading points only need be discussed. For logic, scriptural knowledge, genuine criticisms, dignity of manner, fairness and Christian courtesy, it is barely probable Alexander Campbell has an equal living...”³⁷

George Prentice, editor of the **Louisville Journal**, wrote his impressions after hearing Alexander Campbell.

“Alexander Campbell is unquestionably one of the most extraordinary men of our time....he claims, by virtue of his intrinsic qualities, as manifested in his achievements, a place among the foremost spirits of our age. His energy, self-reliance and self-fidelity, if we may use the expression, are of the stamp that belongs only to the world’s first leaders in thought and action. His personal excellence is certainly without a stain or shadow. His intellect, it is scarcely too much to say, is among the clearest, richest, profoundest ever vouchsafed to man.

He grasps and handles the highest, subtlest, most comprehensive principles as if they were the liveliest impressions of the senses. No poet’s soul is more crowded with imagery than his is with the ripest forms of thought. Surely

³⁶ Richardson, Vol. 2, pp. 581-2.

³⁷ Tolbert Fanning, “Campbell Rice’s Debate, **Christian Review**, Vol. 1, No. 5, (May 1844, pp. 115,116) as quoted in West, Vol. I, p. 37.

the life of a man thus excellent and, gifted, is a part of the common treasure of society. In his essential character he belongs to no sect or party, but to the world.”³⁸

Attorney General Jeremiah Sullivan Black was baptized by Campbell. He said:

“As a great preacher, he will be remembered with unqualified admiration by all who had the good fortune to hear him in the prime of his life. The interest which he excited in a large congregation can hardly be explained. The first sentence of his discourse ‘drew (the) audience still as death,’ and every word was heard with rapt attention to the close. It did not appear to be eloquence; it was not the enticing words of man’s wisdom; the arts of the orator seemed to be inconsistent with the simplicity of his character. It was logic, explanation and argument so clear that everybody followed without an effort...”³⁹

President James Madison said:

“It was my pleasure to hear him very often as a preacher of the Gospel, and I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of the Scriptures I have ever heard.”⁴⁰

Archibald McLean, a friend and coworker of Campbell, sought to analyze the source of his power in preaching. He remembered:

“There was nothing in the least dramatic in Mr. Campbell’s manner. He rarely made a gesture of any sort. There was no attitudinizing; no nervous flourishing, no pointing upward to the stars; no stretching forth of outspread arms as if to embrace mountains. He was seldom tender or pathetic. His style reminded some of the apostle as he reasoned with the people from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that the Jesus whom he preached was the Christ. It reminded others of the Master as He sat on the mountain or in the boat, and spoke as man never spake to those who sat around Him on the mountain or on the shore. When Mr. Campbell spoke, there was no gesticulation and no sign of perspiration and no beating of the pulpit. He did not alarm any by the way he pronounced certain words. His reliance for effects was upon the inherent power of the truth he was illustrating and enforcing, and upon the Spirit of God.

Without any gestures, either emphatic or descriptive, the speaker stood in the most natural and easy attitude, resting upon his innate powers of intellect and his complete mastery of the subject, impressing all with the sense of a

38 Archibald McLean.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

40 *Ibid.*

superior presence and a mighty mind. His enunciation was distinct, his diction chaste and simple, his sentences clear and forcible. The intonations of his clear and ringing voice were admirably adapted to the sentimental while by his strong and bold emphasis upon important words he imparted to what he said a peculiar force and authority.... His power was thus derived, not from graceful action, gesture, nor from flowery language, nor elaborate or glowing description, nor merely from logical argumentation, but from his singular faculty of stating and connecting facts—of producing more novel and striking combinations of related truths, and of evolving the grand fundamental principles of things.

While Mr. Campbell's style was conversational for the most part, there were times when he spoke with the utmost fervor."⁴¹

Remembering Campbell, General Robert E. Lee said:

"He was a man in whom were illustriously combined all the qualities that could adorn or elevate the nature to which he belonged; knowledge the most various and extended, virtue that never loitered in her career nor deviated from her course. A man who, if he, had been delegated as a representative of his species to one of the many superior worlds, would have suggested a grand idea of the human race."⁴²

Regarding Campbell's character and personal conduct, McLean wrote:

"No one ever called his character in question. His critics assailed his views; no man ever had enemies more in number or more venomous. He was accused of all kinds of heresies. He was charged with holding views that were mutually exclusive. His reputation was without spot. His bitterest enemies failed to find a flaw in his character, for truth, integrity and goodness. His life was above suspicion and above reproach in that fierce light that beats upon a leader of men and blackens every blot. No father could wish for an only son a career more splendid or more stainless."⁴³

Alexander Campbell ceased the walks of men on Sunday, March 4, 1866. The world was a better place because he had lived. The face of American religion was forever altered because of his teaching. Through his influence and that of other good men, a mighty movement was launched, calling men back to the Bible. We are his heirs, we are his debtors. May we appreciate the mighty work he did. JHW

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 26-27.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

43 *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S LUNENBURG LETTERS

In every generation those who have grown weary of walking the old paths of New Testament Christianity have sought to justify their departure therefrom by citing correspondence of Alexander Campbell called the **Lunenburg Letters**. On July 8, 1837 A Christian lady from Lunenburg, Virginia wrote Alexander Campbell the following lines:

“Dear Bro. Campbell: I was much surprised today, while reading the Harbinger, to see that you recognize the Protestant parties as Christians. You say, you “find in all Protestant parties Christians.” ... Will you be so good as to let me know how any one becomes a Christian? What act of yours gave you the name of Christian? At what time had Paul the name of Christ called on him? At what time did Cornelius have Christ named on him? Is it not through this name we obtain eternal life? Does the name of Christ or Christian belong to any but those who believe the gospel, repent, and are buried by baptism into the death of Christ?”

(This letter and the following correspondence is found in Campbell's **Millennial Harbinger** for 1837. Page numeration is from the most recent reprint by College Press (pp. 411-414).

Campbell vigorously defended his statement. He argued that there must be Christians among the Protestant sects or else there would have been no Christians in the world for generations prior to beginning of their restoration movement. But the Protestant sects he referred to all began in the 16th century or later. What was the situation in that long dreary period when corrupt Catholicism prevailed? He confused Christian individuals with organized, visible congregations and significant movements. Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21). Even when the agents of the popes crushed every public effort to worship and serve God, independent of Rome's yoke, devout souls who obeyed God were citizens of his invisible kingdom. A righteous remnant; a handful here and there, faithfully served the Master. So long as the sacred seed, Word of God, survived, the kingdom would not fail (Luke 8:11).

He argued that Jesus promised that the gates of Hell would not prevail against the church (Matt. 16:18) and if there were no Christians in the sects, then Satan would have prevailed for centuries. Such, he reasoned, could not be. He misunderstood Christ's meaning in the passage cited. Jesus did not

speaking of the gates of "Hell" which our King James translators gave us. He said "the gates of Hades" would not keep him from building his church. (Campbell so rendered the word in his **Living Oracles** translation). That meant that even though he must die and go to Hades (the place of the dead) his plan would not be defeated. By this, he spoke of his forthcoming resurrection, after which he would build his church.

He argued that his plea to sectarians to come out of Babylon and be united with his brethren proved there were Christians in the denominations. He later explained that the term "Christian" had more than one level of meaning. It not only describes the true, obedient follower of Christ, but also describes people, projects and institutions that are dedicated to Christ and his Cause, even though they might not be fully or wholly pleasing to him. Thus we speak of Christian books, a Christian nation or the Christian World in contrast with the Hindu or Muslim world. In his last letter Campbell insisted "They (his critics) only misunderstood me as using the term in its strictest biblical import, while in the case before us I used it in its best modern acceptance" (p. 567).

We would not question that there are many devout, god-fearing souls scattered in the denominations. Most who have spent their lives in evangelism have encountered such devout people. When an honest and humble believer, who desires, above all, else to serve God, sees the error of his association and finds the true Church of Christ he will gladly abandon the inferior for the true and genuine.

Campbell wrote, "I think there are many, in most Protestant parties, whose errors and mistakes I hope the Lord will forgive." This benevolent prayer is commendable for all who hope for heaven, including those of us who have committed ourselves to following His divine instructions without pause or let. Should God in his mercy grant such a blessing at the judgment, no saint will protest or complain. Yet it would be presumptuous for us to promise any person salvation without compliance with the will of Christ. We can only show a person the revealed will of the Savior and encourage him to submit to it. Those who in faith obey Him can rest on His blessed promises that their sins are forgiven; that they are saved and that heaven is theirs. Those who do not can have no such assurance.

Campbell also reasoned that some make the mistake of thinking that immersion is the defining mark of the saved, whether the baptized person lives a devout life or not. He reasoned that a godly profession was just as important as one's proper baptism. Hence if he encountered a member of a church that practiced sprinkling, yet lived a godly life of service and a brother properly immersed for the remission of sins who failed to live such a godly life, he would prefer the pious unimmersed disciple. Note that he makes his

preference the determining factor. But he will not be the one to judge us (Rom. 14:10). Campbell would not make immersion the single standard of Christian standing. Nor should we. Both proper obedience and proper living are essential! Being right in the form of baptism will not cover a refusal to imitate the Savior (I Cor. 11:1) and obey his will (Matt. 7:21). On the other hand, the emphasis placed on baptism by the Master himself makes it impossible to grant brotherly recognition to those who have not submitted to it. Jesus said, "Except one be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). If words mean anything, these tell us that baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit stand between every sinner and the kingdom or Church of Christ. The question is, do we believe them? Saul of Tarsus was told to "be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). One cannot be saved until his sins are washed away. But that is accomplished when one is immersed as Christ ordained. Hence one cannot be saved until he has been properly baptized. We recognize that the water has no cleansing power. Only the blood of Jesus can save us (I John 1:7). The Savior has appointed baptism as time and place when that is done.

Campbell summarized by saying, "There is no occasion, then, for making immersion, on a profession the faith, absolutely essential to a Christian..." (p. 414). This statement is just as faulty as, "Baptism is not necessary for salvation;" or "Regular observance of the Lord's Supper is not imperative;" or "Being a member of the Christ's spiritual body, the church is not essential;" or "Worshiping God with his people is not important." It is a door that admits every kind of error.

He concluded by saying, "So I reason and I think in so reasoning I am sustained by all the Prophets and Apostles of both Testaments" (p. 414). This is an interesting self-justification for an article that offers only four vague Scripture references in four pages filled with speculation and rationalizations.

When a storm of letters came, protesting his article, Bro. Campbell responded by saying "We gave it as our *opinion* that there were Christians among the Protestant sects..." (p. 506). Should he not also have granted the same generous presumption of salvation to the devout unimmersed within the Roman Catholic faith? If not why? Those who insisted that only those properly immersed are truly redeemed, Campbell labeled as Ultraists, i.e., extremists on the issue. He conceded, "We cheerfully agree with them (his critics), as well as with our sister ...that the term Christian was given first to immersed believers and to none else; but we do not think that it was given to them because they were immersed, but because they had put on Christ" (p. 507). Note that he never answered the lady's question about how one puts on Christ! It is when we are baptized into Christ that we put on Christ (Gal. 3:27). He labored to defuse the situation by saying, "Still my opinion is no

rule of action to my brethren, nor would I offer it unsolicited to any man...” (p. 508). Change agents have presented Campbell’s *opinion* as a *doctrinal standard* and promoted it whether solicited or not. He continued, “Therefore our opinion militates not against the value of baptism in any sense” (p. 564). But it does! For instead of the clear message of Christ which teaches that remission of sins is conditioned on proper baptism (Acts 2:38), his view says baptism is fine but if you don’t do it, it is OK so long as you live a good and devout life.

Of the sister’s questions posed in her letter, Campbell wrote, “She proposed a list of questions, involving, as she supposed, either insuperable difficulties or strong objections to that saying...I answered them not: but attended to the difficulty which I imagined she felt in the aforesaid saying” (p. 564). It seems more likely he could not easily answer her questions and maintain his position so he “observed the Passover.”

Campbell rationalized, “Some of our brethren were too much addicted to denouncing the sects and representing them *en masse* as wholly aliens from the possibility of salvation...” (p. 564). While this case was true then and is yet true in some quarters, it does not justify taking a position that stands at odds with the revealed will of Christ. That some are uncharitable in the way they deal with members of other confessions, does not justify us in relaxing the standards of Christ. Better to try to teach the offending brethren to display a more charitable spirit in their preaching!

The editor conceded that to disarm sectarian critics who accused him of heading and building up his own party, “I consented the more readily to defend Protestantism; and I have...endeavored to show the Protestant public that it is with the greatest reluctance we are compelled to stand aloof from them...” (p. 565). Of those of other religious parties, he affirms, “they must certainly come over to us whenever they come to the Bible alone” (p. 566). He concludes the correspondence by saying, “A Christian is one that habitually believes all that Christ says, and habitually does all that he bids him” (p. 566). To this all can say a hearty amen!

The immediate response to Campbell’s **Lunenburg Letters** was overwhelmingly negative. Campbell acknowledged receiving “numerous letters” from brethren who took exception to his expressed views (p. 561). He also acknowledged hearing from sectarians who taunted him saying, “Then we are as safe as you.” And “You are coming over to us, having now conceded the greatest of all points;—viz. that immersion is not essential to a Christian” (p. 561) He promised that he would be publishing some of the objections received but a search of the following issues of the **Millennial Harbinger** did not reveal a single one of them. A year later he began publishing a series by an unknown

brother under the pseudonym **Christianos** that endorsed his position. Responses challenging the view were offered by T. M Henley and M. Winans. When the discussion had run its course, Campbell wrote two concluding lessons that are crucial to properly understanding the Lunenburg controversy.

He wrote, “The word Christian has three distinct acceptations in modern times. It has a national, a sectarian and a scriptural meaning. Nationally it means one that is not a Jew, a Mohammedan...but a professor of the Christian faith. In the style of the sects it means something more and better than a Romanist, a churchman, a Presbyterian.... It means one who is supposed to be a follower of Christ in the moral virtues of his religion without regard to his tenets, in comparison with other sectaries. And scripturally it means one who has first believed in Jesus as Messiah, repented of his sins, and been immersed in water into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and who follows Christ in all his appointments. Such were they who were first called Christians. Now in this latter sense it can never be applied to any but to those who resemble the disciples described in the Acts of the Apostles; while in the first and second senses of the term there are many Christians among the sects...” (M. H. 1840, p. 164).

He continued, “But in this day of increasing light, I confess that in my *opinion*, the cases of involuntary ignorance are becoming fewer and more few; and that the hope of remission for many who do not, who will not examine and obey from the heart the Savior’s precepts, becomes more and more feeble; and therefore there is no very bright side of the picture for those who are at ease in Zion—whose fear of God is taught by the precepts of men rather than by the oracles of Apostles and Prophets” (M. H. 1840, p. 165).

He further states, “Everything depends on the definition of this word Christian, before we decide where he may be found. The disciples of Christ were those who first received that name. Now what is a disciple of Christ? Are there any disciples of Christ among the religious sects? That there are no one of much intelligence can doubt. The phrase disciples of Christ did not uniformly represent those who believed and practiced all the same things... Now if we use the word *Christian* as used in Antioch, none can wear it unless he resembles the Antiochans in knowledge and practice: but if we use the phrase ‘disciples of Christ’ as commonly used in the New Testament, we may, perhaps, find many of them among the sects” (M.H. 1840, p. 128) “Now amongst the sects there are many disciples of Christ; but, perhaps very few to whom the name Christian would rightfully apply in the exact latitude of its meaning at the time of its first application” (M. H., 1840, p. 276).

Thus after some two years of contemplation and having taken heavy buffeting from his friends and enemies, the illustrious editor decided that he

would like to rephrase his ill-stated words and offer his *opinion* that in rare cases some, who in fact never had opportunity to know all the truth about the means of salvation, might possibly find acceptance with God. This conviction is also expressed in Campbell's book **The Christian System**, in a footnote on p. 174-175.

Over a century ago the liberal element of the Restoration brotherhood rediscovered Campbell's Lunenburg Letters. With them in hand they justified abandoning the premise of restoring the one true Church of Christ and chose to seek acceptance as a denomination among the family of denominations. Today, they are found in the Disciples of Christ/Christian Churches. Some forty years ago, Carl Ketcherside and the first generation of our modern change agents found them again and put them to similar use. Rubel Shelly's book, **I Just Want to Be a Christian**, was built on the premise of these letters. Today, in the absence of Scripture, they are cited by our change agents as their authority to embrace as their brethren, denominationalists and those not born of water and the Spirit.

While Campbell conceded that there were some few "Christians among the sects," our change agents leap from his particular concession to the general conclusion that all sects are equally acceptable to God as is the Church of Christ and that all who believe in Jesus are therefore saved by the grace of God. If the premises of our change agents are true, the noble thing for them to do would be to immediately present themselves to their denominational neighbors and ask for their forgiveness for standing apart all these years. They should disband and cease to exist as a separate body of people and ask for admission to their nearest denominational church.

The fact is, denominationalism is wrong in principle and practice (John 17:20-21; I Cor. 1:10; 3:5). Change agents and their churches freely acknowledge themselves to be denominationalists. Therefore they are wrong and stand condemned by God and self.

What shall we say of our departed brother, Alexander Campbell? He was a brilliant man, an extraordinary scholar of Scripture, a capable preacher and leader, but he was fallible as are we all. Bro. Campbell did not found the Church of Christ. That was the province of the Son of God (Matt. 16:18). The Sage of Bethany was not the author of our faith and practice. That is clearly set forth in the New Testament of Jesus (Heb. 12:2). His writings, brilliant and informative though they are, and of great historical interest, were not normative or binding for the church of his day, nor for us today. The careful student of Campbell's life and writings will find other inconsistencies and errors in his thinking. This in no way should detract from our appreciation of his life and work. The same would be true of any one of us. The greater question is, shall

we cling to Campbell's mistaken views? Change agents doggedly cling to these letters because they seem to justify their prior decision to abandon the old faith and seek a new home in the ecumenical world of Protestantism. They provide balm for their consciences and give them a cloak of respectability as they bid the Bible way goodbye.

75.

WALTER SCOTT ORATOR OF THE EARLY YEARS OF OUR MOVEMENT

It was on Oct. 31, 1796 that John and Mary Scott of Moffatt, Scotland welcomed their new son, Walter, to their home. They were of the same clan as the famous author, Sir. Walter Scott. Being good Presbyterians, they raised their son in that faith, hoping that he would one day become a minister. At age 16, he enrolled in the University of Edinburgh from whence he graduated in six years. Two years later he arrived at New York where he found employment as a classical teacher. There he met George Forrester who changed the direction of his life. Forrester had been influenced by the back to the Bible teachings of the Haldane brothers of Scotland. He taught young Scott the Bible and his need for baptism by immersion. Upon the untimely death of Forrester, Walter was asked to serve as the minister for Forrester's church.

Scott was later invited to move to Pittsburgh to serve as the tutor of the children of a Dr. Richardson and his neighbors. He made the trip by foot. He chanced to find a tract by Henry Errett advocating baptism for remission of sins. That tract made a profound impression on his mind and his teaching. Scott walked back to New York in hope of meeting Mr. Errett. While in Pittsburgh, Scott came in contact with Alexander Campbell. They became fast friends and when Campbell launched his **Christian Baptist** journal, Scott was a regular contributor to it. They worked hand in hand until his demise in 1861.

In 1826, Campbell recommended that the Mahoning Baptist Association employ Scott as a traveling evangelist. His field was in the district called, the Western Reserve which was later part of the state of Ohio. With the energy and zeal of youth and outstanding speaking ability, Walter began his mission. On

November 18, 1827, in a meeting held at the Baptist Church in New Lisbon, Ohio, Scott, for the first time, told his hearers that sinners needed to believe in Christ, repent and be baptized and they would receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. A Mr. William Amend, a Presbyterian elder, responded, saying he had for years searched for someone who would preach the same message that the Apostles had preached. Inspired by that response, Scott preached that message at every opportunity and the results were overwhelming. Within the next three years, more than 3,000 souls responded to his preaching, requesting Christian baptism. Scott liked to illustrate the steps to salvation on the fingers of his hand. Faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Some of our apostates now ridicule that as the “five finger exercise.” They seem unaware that thousands will be in heaven because of that excellent illustration of Bro. Scott. Scott liked to think that he restored the ancient gospel plan of salvation. Later, he help persuade the Baptist churches of the Mahoning Association to abandon their Baptist connections and be non-denominational Bible Christians.

No man of the early years of our Restoration Movement was the equal of Scott in bringing souls to Christ through gospel preaching. He was described as a sensitive, emotional person with the personality of a poet. His voice was almost musical in quality. He was often referred to as the Voice of the Golden Oracle. His hearers hung spellbound on his words as he proclaimed the great message of Christ with flights of wisdom, eloquence and emotion. On one occasion, Alexander Campbell was in Scott’s audience. He sat as charmed as the young man proclaimed the unsearchable riches of Christ. Forgetting where he was, Campbell turned to a neighbor and said, “Ain’t he a sugar stick!” Robert Richardson described Scott as “naturally timid, diffident, and yielding. William Baxter noted that Scott’s power, ...was over the hearts of men, of the masses; his dark eyes, seemed to penetrate the secrets of the souls and his voice was soothing or terrible as he gave utterance to the promises or threatenings of the word of God.”

Walter Scott was also a fine writer. He published a monthly journal called **The Evangelist**. Later he edited **The Protestant Unionist**. He bequeathed to us three wonderful books, **The Gospel Restored**, **The Messiahship** and **The Death of Christ**.

He served a brief tenure as president of Bacon College in Georgetown, Kentucky (1836-37). In 1852 he opened a school for females in Covington, Kentucky.

When the mother of his six children died, Scott married a wealthy widow who was not in sympathy with nor supportive of her husband. His last years were not very happy. Scott had unbounded love for America, his adopted

homeland. He believed that God had blessed her and granted her special privileges above all other nations. When the Civil War erupted, his heart was broken and he was overcome with grief. Suffering from pneumonia, he died on April 23, 1861, ten days after the fall of Fort Sumter. His burial monument can be seen in the cemetery of the Mays Lick community.

Of Scott, Alexander Campbell wrote, "Next to my father, he was my most cordial and indefatigable fellow-laborer in the origin and progress of the present reformation...He was in his palmist days, a powerful and successful advocate of the claims of the Lord Messiah...By the eye of faith and the eye of hope, methinks I see him in Abraham's bosom."

76.

AYLTTE RAINES

A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The name of Aylette Raines is prominent in Restoration history, but not because of his scholarship, pulpit power or influence. Rather, his acceptance within the fellowship of the movement was a test-case whereby one of the fundamental propositions of the faith was tested.⁴⁴

Raines was born in Spottsylvania County, Virginia on January 22, 1797. His parents were poor and he grew up without the advantage of a good education. Being Episcopalian, his parents had young Aylette sprinkled by Parson Biggs at the age of four.

In 1811, Raines' father migrated to Jefferson County, Kentucky, and in 1814 the family moved to Campbellsburg in Henry County, Kentucky. There in 1816 Aylette began teaching school.⁴⁵

Hearing the clashing doctrines of denominationalism, and presuming that the Bible was to blame for such confusion, Aylette grew skeptical of all religion. Reading Thomas Paine's poisonous "**Age of Reason**" confirmed him in his unbelief and filled him with conceit. However, the teaching about

44 A. S. Hayden, **A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve**, Cincinnati, Chase and Hall Publishers, 1875 (reprint Religious Book Service). p.150.

45 H. Leo Boles, **Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers**, Nashville, Gospel Advocate, 1932. p. 48

God, Christ, and the Bible which his mother had instilled in him in his youth eventually prevailed and his faith revived.

Later, Raines moved to Crawford County, Indiana, to conduct a school. There he came in contact with a religious doctrine known as “Restorationism.” This system had no connection with the plea of Campbell and Stone to restore New Testament Christianity by going back to the Bible. It was the belief that all men would eventually be restored to the favor of God, and thus saved in eternity. It was a brand of universalism. Working alongside folks who were “Restorationists,” the young teacher often found himself engaged in discussions of their doctrine. He read Winchester’s “**Dialogues on Universal Restoration**” and became a thorough convert. Raines “got religion” as it was styled in those days and reformed his life. He began an earnest study of the Scriptures and in two years commenced preaching his “Restoration” theme.⁴⁶

The “Restoration” sect taught that all men, even the worst of sinners, would at some distant time find eternal happiness.⁴⁷ While Raines taught universal salvation he repudiated the skeptical doctrines of the Universallist Church which denied the deity of Christ and other fundamental truths.⁴⁸

For five years Raines taught his doctrine throughout the Western Reserve (now eastern Ohio.) Eventually “the lax morals of some of those who embraced “Restorationism” and their “latitudinarianism” soon led him to doubt the doctrine he was preaching.⁴⁹

Raines heard of Walter Scott, who was rapidly gaining fame for his successful preaching of the back-to-the-Bible message. Hearing that Scott would be preaching at the town of Windham, Raines attended in order to challenge the newcomer for a debate. Many of Raines’ Restorationist brethren accompanied him. At the close of his lesson, Scott asked if anyone had an objection to raise. Raines sat speechless. He later wrote, “I felt certain that if I opposed Bro. Scott, I would expose myself.” When pressed by his friends he confessed, “I can do nothing against the gospel as preached by Bro. Scott; unless I should live to disgrace it; which may our gracious Lord forbid!” Like a bee attracted to honey, Raines could not stay away. He heard Scott preach repeatedly and each time the light of the gospel drove more of the darkness of error away. He learned the difference between the old and new covenants—a fact which had previously alluded him. Ultimately, Scott convinced him to lay his philosophy aside and preach the gospel as the Apostles did, “making their discourses a model to be accurately copied...”

46 A. S. Hayden, p. 150-151.

47 Boles, p. 48.

48 Hayden, p. 170.

49 Boles, p. 48.

Leaving Walter Scott, Raines commenced a preaching tour, committed to preach as did Scott and the Apostles. He even closed his lessons with a request for objections to his message.

Before submitting to immersion, Raines visited a preaching brother of the Restorationist cause named Ebenezer Williams. Raines explained that he had been hearing Walter Scott and that “he had gotten into trouble and wanted (Williams) to help him out.” The visit and study of the Scriptures extended over several days. On the following Lord’s Day both men preached for the Restorationist church at Brimfield. On their way home Raines asked Williams if he had any more questions about the matters they had discussed. Williams replied he wanted to be immersed. The day following, each baptized the other after the apostolic pattern in Sandy Lake near Rootstown. Bro. Raines immediately retraced his steps and was able to immerse fifty souls including two additional Restorationist preachers.

When the news of Raines and Williams’ action spread abroad it caused great joy among the Christians and consternation among their former Restorationist brethren. When some of the Christians heard that Raines was yet clinging to some of his old views the fear arose that he was not truly converted.

The disciples of the Western Reserve assembled at Warren for their annual meeting in 1828. Bro. Raines went, expecting trouble, for the word was out that some of the brethren were going to raise a question about accepting him into their fellowship.

Fortunately, Alexander Campbell was scheduled to speak and the great leader of the troops chose for his text Romans 14:1, “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but without regard to difference of opinion” (Living Oracles). He showed the difference between faith and opinion and humanisms and the faith once delivered. However, not everyone was satisfied.

The next day Raines’ case was brought before the assembly for discussion. Bro. Thomas Campbell was first to respond. He said, “The devil has brought this question into this association to sow discord among brethren. Bro. Raines and I have been together much for the last several months and we have mutually unbosomed ourselves to each other. I am a Calvinist, and he a Restorationist, and although I am a Calvinist, I would put my right arm into the fire and have it burn off before I would raise my hand against him. And if I were Paul, I would have Bro. Raines in preference to any other young man of my acquaintance to be my Timothy.”

Alexander Campbell then rose to endorse his father’s statement as did Walter Scott. Aylette Raines was then asked to speak. He pledged that he would not preach nor contend for his opinion on the restoration of the lost, but that he would preach the whole counsel of God according to the best of his

ability. Alexander Campbell then asked those assembled whether there was any law of Christ by which Raines could be condemned. The majority voted to receive Bro. Raines into their fellowship.

The next morning, at their prayer meeting, a zealous brother spoke out saying, "Brethren, I understand that there are certain persons in the fellowship of this association who deny the sinners are saved by grace, and say that those who die in their sins will be purified by hell fire. I move, said he, that such persons be disfellowshipped."

Raines leapt to his feet and said, "I second that motion; for by grace are ye saved through faith..." The brother who had offered the motion made a hasty retreat and thus ended the controversy.

Raines threw himself into the preaching of the Word and within ten months had given up his peculiar views. He later recalled, "had they attempted to brow-beat me, I might have been ruined forever."⁵⁰

This episode in the life of Aylette Raines became a landmark case, setting precedent for dealing with brethren who held opinions that did not subvert the obvious facts of the gospel. Later Alexander Campbell said, "...if you want opinions to cease or subside, you must not debate everything that men think and say. You may debate anything into consequence, or you may by a dignified silence, waste it into oblivion."⁵¹

After a few years, Bro. Raines moved south into Kentucky where he labored until his death. On December 14, 1831, he reported from Minerva, Mason County, that he had baptized 130 souls since the latter days of July.⁵² In 1834, Raines moved to Paris, Kentucky, where he resided until 1862. He preached for several congregations on a once-a-month basis. He worked with the Paris church for five years, Millersburg ten years. Clintonville, twelve years. Providence for twenty-two years, Winchester, twenty-seven years and north Middletown, twenty-eight years.⁵³ The north Middletown church had a membership of 320 in 1839. It was the largest congregation in Burbon County.⁵⁴

When Alexander Campbell engaged in his great debate with Nathan L. Rice, champion of the Presbyterians, Bro. Raines assisted Campbell along with James Shannon, John Smith, and Dr. Fishback. The famous statesman,

⁵⁰ Hayden, pp. 167-169.

⁵¹ M. M. Davis, *The Restoration Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, Cincinnati, The Standard Publishing Co., 1913, p. 181.

⁵² Alonzo W. Fortune, *The Disciples in Kentucky*, Kentucky, The Convention of the Christian Churches in Kentucky, 1932, p. 161.

⁵³ Boles, p. 51.

⁵⁴ Fortune, p. 165.

Henry Clay, served as presiding officer of the debate. The discussion was conducted in Lexington, Kentucky, beginning on November 15, 1834.⁵⁵

For several years, Raines published a small paper at Paris entitled the **Christian Teacher**. In 1846, he wrote articles vigorously opposing the state meetings and organization which were developing. “He objected on the ground that “they are opposed to apostolic example!” He pointed out that “the Apostles, instead of appointing a co-operation meeting, or an advisory council, composed of delegates from churches, when they wished to raise funds for a benevolent purpose, sent a messenger or messengers to those congregations with which they wished to co-operate.” Raines was convinced that the tendencies he saw developing, would eventually lead to state organizations and a nationwide organization of congregations which would be a dangerous accumulation of power. He was in favor of congregational co-operation but opposed to extra or supra-congregational organization.⁵⁶

In 1859 Dr. L. L. Pinkerton introduced the first instrument of music into the worship of the church in Midway, Kentucky. On April 27, 1851, Bro. Raines noted in his diary, “Brother Saunders wishes to introduce the melodeon in the church” at Millersburg. Raines opposed such innovations and the melodeon was kept out at the time.⁵⁷

For several years prior to his death, Bro. Raines was displeased with the drift of things with the brotherhood. Under the theme of Warnings, he wrote a number of articles for the **American Christian Review** addressing the issue.

Aylette Raines lived a long life and enjoyed a fruitful ministry in the Lord’s vineyard. He died on September 7, 1881, in his ninety-fourth year.⁵⁸ He led multitudes to the Savior. He stood like a granite boulder against digression, when most of his peers were being swept onward before the current. Truly he was preacher of righteousness, a man to whom we owe much.

55 **Ibid**, p. 143.

56 Fortune, p. 208-209.

57 **Ibid**, p. 373.

58 Boles, p. 51.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN HALL

Benjamin Franklin Hall was born in Christian County, Kentucky, on the 15th day of June, 1803. His father was a veteran of the Revolutionary War and the later Indian Wars. He had migrated to Kentucky from Virginia. The elder Hall was a moral man but not inclined to religion. The mother of B. F. was a devout Baptist. Hall wrote, "She could see God in everything ... she was a great and a noble woman. Her influence had more to do in molding my character than all others together."⁵⁹

Young Hall grew up in a community of Presbyterians. He attended that denomination and learned their "shorter Catechism." He also memorized many of the Psalms and numerous chapters of the New Testament.⁶⁰

As a child, he was privileged to attend school for a few years where he learned the rudiments of education. He was diligent student but was often spanked for his mischievousness.

At age seventeen, Benjamin was convicted of his sins. He had provided the whiskey on which some of his neighbors had gotten drunk. Smitten in conscience, he resolved to change his life and seek the Lord.⁶¹ His prayers and those of his mother were unavailing. He dreamed of judgment day and knew that he was unprepared to meet his Maker. Shortly thereafter he became acquainted with some believers who called themselves Christians. Among the first of the preachers he heard was Elder John Rogers.

In those early days, the Christians still held to the mourner's bench practice and penitent believers were urged to mourn and pray until they received evidence of their pardon and acceptance by the Lord. Young Hall went forward at every meeting seeking the Lord's sign, but without relief. Finally, a preacher, in discussing the matter with him, said, "God does not now speak to us audibly, by a voice from heaven ... the written word is to us the same as the spoken word to the people then." The idea was new to the young man, but it found lodging in his sincere heart. A few days later he heard John Rogers preach and when the invitation was extended, he stepped forth. According to the custom of the day, he related his experience and a date was

⁵⁹ B. F. Hall *Autobiography*. Unpublished Manuscript, typescript and indexed by R. L. Roberts, Abilene, TX, p. 3.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 4-5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

set for his baptism. He was immersed by William Morrow in a nearby stream.⁶² Benjamin was seventeen. All of his relatives, save his mother, opposed his decision to associate with the Christians. They could tolerate the Baptists but not the “New-lights,” as Stone’s followers were called.

As a new Christian, Benjamin had some changing to do. He tells us he “was naturally volatile, fond of mirth and amusements, and had a passion for dancing.” He was also “in the habit of using profane language.” A decided effort was made to overcome these vices.⁶³

HIS DECISION TO PREACH

Within a year of his conversion, Benjamin began to feel that he was called to preach. He loved sinners and ardently desired their salvation. Several obstacles stood before him. He had a speech impediment and stammered badly. His physical constitution was frail and he had problems with his lungs. His voice was weak and soft. He had only a beginner’s education, and his father was unalterably opposed to his becoming a preacher. None of these things deterred him. He found help and encouragement from relatives and enrolled in a school taught at Flemingsborough by Mr. Peter Acres. To get his father’s consent the young man had to forfeit any claim to help or assistance from him in any manner whatever.⁶⁴ This the young Christian did.

His brother who was financing his education decided that it would be more to Benjamin’s advantage if he would join the Presbyterian Church. He even offered to send him to Princeton College if he would do so. But the young man held fast to his faith. His conviction was that he “would rather be right than to be the pope of Rome...rather be the humblest member of the Church of Christ than to occupy the loftiest position on earth in any other society.”⁶⁵

A traveling evangelist by the name of Harrison Osburn invited the aspiring young preacher to go on circuit with him. Hall was a good singer and was helpful in leading the hymns. On one occasion, without warning or time for preparation, the senior member of the team asked Benjamin to speak to their audience. Unable to excuse himself, Hall started. He exhausted his store of knowledge in five minutes and stammered to an ungainly halt. He sat down confused and mortified but not discouraged. However, his mentor said that he was convinced that Hall had mistaken his calling. He recommended that he

62 *Ibid.*, p. 20.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

64 *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

65 *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

return home. Even Hall's mother doubted that he would succeed. The young man was undaunted and continued his pursuit.⁶⁶

Among his discouragements at this point in his career was the fact that no one had ever spoken a word of encouragement to him. He was penniless and ragged. One brother, however, did encourage him. He said that someone must be the poorest preacher and that Hall might as well be the one.⁶⁷ On one occasion, a brother called him aside and when no one was looking slipped him a quarter. Many folks in those days took literally the Savior's words, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth."

Another time Hall recalled seeing dozens of barefoot tracks some distance down the path from the meeting house, but every one present had shoes. Later he learned that the ladies would walk barefooted until they drew close to the building and then slip on their shoes.⁶⁸

Once, when Benjamin had to take the ferry across the river from Highland to Minerva, Kentucky, having no money, he gave the ferryman his hymn book for the fare. In his autobiography, Hall relates how he walked to Indianapolis. His return trip was in the winter. His boots were worn and ragged. He chanced to call at a house to see if he could spend the night. The residents were Christians and, upon learning that he was a preacher, they asked him to conduct services. For so doing they had his boots repaired.

Hall attended a conference of the Christian preachers and a Bro. Mavity invited him to go home with him and preach in Montgomery County. For the first time his tongue was loosed and the words flowed out in a reasonable way. A large number responded to his call for mourners. Upon this, Mavity assured him he was called to preach. Later he explained that at the conference the brethren had discussed recalling Hall's license since he showed so little promise.⁶⁹

Later, Barton Stone contacted Benjamin, asking him to ride the circuit with Bro. Isaac Mayfield in upper Green River County. Stone sent letters of recommendation along with Hall. It took a full month to cover their appointed circuit. They had only one day of rest per month. They encountered "extreme poverty, ignorance, filth, ticks, bed-bugs, and other vermin. (They) lodged on boards, (corn) shucks, straw, and ... best of all on the floor. (Their) diet was at

66 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

68 *Ibid.*, p. 37.

69 *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

some places the poorest, the most meager, and the worst prepared ... at others it was good.”⁷⁰ They were able to change clothes only once a week.

At the annual conference of the churches meeting at the old Union Church in Lafayette County, Kentucky (c.a. 1825), Hall and T. M. Allen were officially “ordained to preach” by B. W. Stone and others.⁷¹ Hall was then invited to travel and preach in middle Tennessee. Accepting the invitation he rode with William D. Jordan. As they rode to their appointments and as they rested by night they studied, memorized and discussed the Bible. In his autobiography Hall recalls that the folks on the circuit referred to him as “the proud Preacher” and Brother Jordan as “the fighting preacher.”⁷²

Looking back Hall reminisced, “We were very zealous and frequently spoke at the top of our voice, and sometimes screaming at such a rate almost to split our throat. We substituted sound for sense, figuratively speaking, we supposed that the power was in the thunder instead of the lightening, and we thundered more than we...enlightened, for, in truth, we had not much light to emit.”⁷³ Their method was well received by their hearers. He writes, “The religion of those days consisted principally of feeling; and those who shouted the loudest and made the greatest ado, were looked upon as the best Christians. Hence our preaching, our prayers, and songs we adapted to excite the emotions. We would clap and rub our hands, stamp with our feet, slam down and tear up the Bible, speak as loud as possible.... I often blistered my hands by clapping... and my feet were made sore by repeated stamping.... I was considered good at exhortation. Death, the Judgment, Heaven and Hell, were my favorite themes.”⁷⁴

He went on to discuss the doctrine they preached. “We differed very little in those days from the sects in our views of spiritual influence, getting religion, the evidence of remission and kindred subjects. Hence we practiced the mourner’s bench.... Our view on these and other subjects were dark and confused ...” When he and his fellow workers finally resolved to take the word of God alone as their rule of faith and practice, it meant that to be divinely authorized, a matter had to have “a plain ‘Thus saith the Lord’ or (an) inspired example... Whatever might be taught or practiced by others not included in the above rule...they...rejected...”⁷⁵

70 *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

73 *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 53.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

One of the first great truths he discovered, through his own study, was that we today “are not under Moses, but Christ.” When he began to publicly preach that, he was accosted by his preaching brethren for teaching error. Later they all came to see this grand truth.⁷⁶

Hall’s faith in the mourner’s bench practice was shaken in 1824 when a brother approached him and asked for Biblical authority for calling sinners to the bench. Hall responded, “The Bible is my authority.” The brother pressed him, “What part of the Bible?” Hall retorted, “The whole of it.” Undaunted, the brother demanded, “I would like to see the place.” Hall shot back, “Read the Bible and you will find it.” He responded that he had done so and it just was not to be found.” But, said he, I find authority for baptizing penitents for remission of sins ...”⁷⁷ While Hall was not convinced at that time, later events did change his thinking.

Returning to Kentucky in the spring of 1826, B. F. stopped at the home of a Bro. Gess who lived on Line Creek on the state line between Kentucky and Tennessee. As he rested, he noticed a copy of the **Campbell-McCalla debate** on the bookshelf. Picking it up, he began reading. As he examined Alexander Campbell’s speech on “the design of baptism,” the light began to dawn, nay it flashed in his mind; and ere he completed the argument Hall was fully convinced that baptism was for remission of sins. He sprang to his feet and cried out, “Eureka! Eureka! I have found it!”⁷⁸

That was the long lost link in the chain of gospel obedience which he had been seeking. So excited was he that he wanted to share the lesson with everyone he met. As would be expected, not all of his preaching brethren appreciated his newfound truth. The first soul he baptized for remission of sins was his brother Levi Hall’s wife. She was a devout penitent soul, but she was unable to find relief at the mourner’s bench.⁷⁹

In the summer of 1826, Hall made a trip to Georgetown to discuss with his mentor, Barton Stone, the subject of baptism for remission of sins. Stone’s response was negative. He recalled that he had introduced the practice in the early years of his preaching and that “it was like throwing water on the people; that it froze all their warmth out, and came well nigh driving vital religion out of the country.” He had given it up. After much discussion, Stone reproved Hall for his hardheadedness and requested that he not preach that doctrine

76 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

77 *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

78 *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

79 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

at Georgetown.⁸⁰ We rejoice that Stone later accepted, and faithfully taught, the place of baptism in God's scheme of redemption. B. F. Hall made it his business to introduce the subject at every congregation he visited. Ere long, all the brethren embraced the truth.

When winter drew near, Hall would temporarily retire from his preaching labors and devote his time to the study of medicine, He explains that in those early days the brethren had but few meeting houses. In the warm months services were conducted in groves and open sheds. These were insufficient for winter's weather.

When the cause was young, they had to meet bitter, wicked and malignant opposition at every turn. Their teaching was new, and the prejudice against it was tremendous. The truth had but few adherents, and they were generally of the poorer class, and without great personal influence. The preachers were poor, and received but little pecuniary aid.⁸¹

As he later looked at some of the worldly minded professional preachers who filled the pulpits of large churches, Hall wrote that those early preachers; "Were a different class of men from the kid-glove gentry, who frequent the well-furnished houses of rich brethren, philicing (i.e., loving) gold watch-keys, flourishing gold-headed rattans (canes), puffing Havana's (fine cigars), dressed in fine broad cloth, reclining on velvet, cushioned sofas, reading light literature, spouting Greek, waiting for a loud call to some rich city church."⁸²

A favorite story that Bro. Hall loved to tell happened among the Cherokee Indians of North Alabama. A Methodist circuit rider visited the Indian community in the Spring of 1825 to distribute Testaments among them. A young Indian received a Bible and proceeded to read it with diligence. In the fall, the Methodists held a camp meeting in nearby Jacksonville, Alabama. The Indian went, requesting baptism. When he spied the preacher who had given the Bible he informed him that he wished to go to the river for baptism. The preacher insisted that he could baptize him without going to the river. He proceeded to take a glass of water and offered to pour it on the young man's head. The Indian looked at the preacher and seriously asked, "Is that baptism?" The reverend responded affirmatively. At that, the Indian said, "Colonel, if that is baptism, you gave me the wrong book"⁸³

In September of 1826 Hall preached on Cypress Creek in Lauderdale County, Alabama. At the conclusion of his lesson, a tall, gangly young man by

80 *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

81 *Ibid.*, p. 68.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

83 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

the name of Tolbert Fanning presented himself for baptism. Fanning went on to become the foremost preacher in Tennessee in the years prior to the Civil War.

In the winter of 1827, Bro. Hall conducted his first public debate with a Mr. M. L. Andrews of the Methodist Church. The topics discussed were the subjects and action of baptism. The debate was held in Williamson County, Tennessee.⁸⁴

In January of 1828, Benjamin married Miss _____ G. Chisholm of Lauderdale County, Alabama. When spring came, he took his bride and visited Kentucky. That fall they settled in Mercer County, Kentucky. He began preaching there and at Hillsborough in adjoining Washington County.⁸⁵

While preaching at Hillsborough two men responded to the invitation that had long been at enmity with one another. Each was carrying a side arm. Neither knew the other was at the meeting or going to respond. When their eyes met, they shook hands and embraced. In Christ they became good friends.⁸⁶

The next spring Hall moved to Stanford, Kentucky, to enter a medical partnership with Drs. Huff and Coffey. The Baptist ministers in the community were admirers of Alexander Campbell and readers of the **Christian Baptist** magazine. A committee of them asked Dr. Hall to work with the Rush Branch Baptist Church which was located nearby. He agreed to do so if they would accept the name Church of Christ and “take the Scriptures as their only rule of faith and practice.” This they unanimously agreed to do, and he commenced work among them. When he went to the Baptist Association meeting, there was a great deal of controversy over his presence, but the tide was with the reformers and they asked Hall to speak.⁸⁷

When a church in Columbia, Kentucky, offered Hall a job as their preacher and promised to use his medical services he proceeded to move there. However, the pay was so small and the people so healthy that he soon decided to move to Madisonville in Hopkins County. While in Madisonville, Hall began the study of law with Mr. Henry S. Bennett.⁸⁸

A little later a Dr. John Harris proposed to teach him the art and skills of dentistry and Hall accepted his offer.⁸⁹ In our day of specialization it is

84 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

85 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

86 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

87 *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

89 *Ibid.*, p. 79.

hard for us to imagine a man skilled in such a variety of fields as preaching, medicine, law and dentistry. Of course, standards were not nearly so exacting then as now.

While studying dentistry under Dr. John Harris, Hall was actively preaching the gospel. He won a number of souls from the community, including several students from nearby Cumberland College at Princeton, Kentucky. A Mr. Lowry of the College delivered a lecture against Hall and his teaching to which B. F. replied. The professor would not debate the issue but when Hall announced that he was leaving town, Lowry announced he would review his lessons a month from that day. When he had been urged to do so at an earlier date so Hall could respond, Lowry refused, citing his wife's sickness. Hall canceled his trip and sent out an announcement that he would reply to Mr. Lowry's morning speech at 3:00 in the afternoon. On the morrow, the whole town was astir with excitement. People crowded into the meeting house to hear the discussion. "Lowry entered...pale and agitated, followed by two full wheelbarrow loads of books." The audience groaned at the sight of his load. Commencing his speech at 10:00, he labored on until 1:00. At that time he announced that we would speak yet again at 3:00 p.m. and following supper. A ripple of disapproval was heard from the audience. A Baptist gentleman cried out, "We over here want to hear Dr. Hall." Lowry protested. People began to shout. "Take the vote, take the vote." Others began chanting, Dr. Hall, Dr. Hall. Hall then stood and proposed that all who wished to hear him stay seated, and he would speak until 3:00. When a show of hands was called for, only seven objected. Lowry started to leave, but the president of the school, Dr. Coil, requested that he stay.

For an hour, Bro. Hall "flayed" his opponent, giving no quarter. When finished, Hall thought Lowry looked "lightening struck and thunder riven." At his conclusion, the audience rushed for the doors with Mr. Lowry vainly calling for them to stay and hear his response. "Bro. Hall had defeated the sectarian scholar with his two wheelbarrows of books with a Bible and a hymn book..."⁹⁰

Following the debate, the Halls made a trip to Florence, Alabama, there his wife fell ill and died within six weeks, leaving him with twin daughters just two years old.

Having buried his beloved mate, Hall set out on an extended preaching mission that carried him to points in West Tennessee and Memphis. He would practice dentistry by day and preach by night and on weekends. He then crossed the Mississippi and journeyed to Little Rock. There he persuaded an entire Baptist congregation to leave denominationalism and take their stand

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 79-81.

upon the Bible alone. Before he left, most of the local population had been won over.⁹¹ While at Little Rock, Dr. Hall devoted a great deal of his time to teaching to the Negroes of the community who gladly received the Word of God.

Overworking himself in the hot humid Arkansas weather, Hall contracted a fever, the severity of which made him fear for his life. He concluded to take an ocean voyage in hope of recovering his health. He departed Little Rock on the third Sunday in December, 1832. Traveling by boat he went first to New Orleans and from there to Havana, Cuba. His strength was soon recovered and the following spring the doctor returned to the mainland, landing at Wilmington, North Carolina. At Wilmington he won a small Baptist Church to the old paths, Numerous stops were made in North Carolina. From there he turned north to Norfolk, Virginia. In all of these places he found a ready reception among the Baptist Churches and usually persuaded them to take the stand on the New Testament. He visited Washington, D. C., and Baltimore and then took the stage for Bethany, Virginia, where lived the noted Alexander Campbell.⁹² In his autobiography Hall painted a vivid word portrait of Campbell. He was, "A rather tall and stout-looking figure... His step was somewhat quick, elastic and regular and firm.... He had a mixed Janes surtout (over) coat, white, slouched hat, rather broad brim...the brim was broken loose from the crown on one side, and flopped down over his ear. He had in his hand a large palmetto walking cane, with ivory head. He was...some six feet high, and a little stooped.... (he had) keen dark-blue eyes... His features were animated, and his countenance indicated feelings of gentleness, humility and kindness. (He had) a gracious smile, and (a) voice of tenderness..." His whole manner was "natural and unostentatious."⁹³

Bro. Campbell insisted that Hall accompany him on an extended preaching trip in Eastern Virginia, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. This was a thrilling opportunity which he eagerly accepted. Campbell gladly shared the preaching appointments with his companion.

Upon their return to Bethany, B. F. immediately set out for Kentucky. After visiting his kinfolks, he moved to Paris, where he took up his dental practice and began preaching. While there, he preached at Cane Ridge, North Middletown, Millersburg, Carlisle, Coopersrun, Mt. Carmel, and Paris.

Later he moved to Georgetown to practice his profession. While there, he traveled with the noble John T. Johnson, visiting the churches at Dry Run, Great Crossing, Cloverun and other nearby places. The two enjoyed great

91 Ibid., pp. 85-89.

92 Ibid., pp. 90-99.

93 Ibid., pp. 99-100.

results from their evangelistic efforts. In January 1834 Hall and Johnson published the first issue of a new gospel paper which they called **The Gospel Advocate**.⁹⁴

In the autumn of 1834, Hall conducted meetings at New Castle in Henry County and in eight days, seventy-five were won for Christ. Meetings were also held at Shelbyville and Bloomfield.⁹⁵

In 1836 Bro. Hall moved to Lexington. The churches appointed him to do mission work in the counties of Fayette, Woodford, Scott, and Jessamine. Jacob Creath, Jr., and Jerry P. Lancaster were his coworkers. Later that year, he moved to Woodford County and worked out of Versailles. Bro. Johnson turned the **Gospel Advocate** over to Hall and he chose Bro. William Hunter as his associate. They then changed the name of the paper to **The Christian Panoplist**. After a short time, Hall resigned, leaving the paper in the hands of Bro. Hunter.⁹⁶

In the summer of 1836, Dr. Hall was urged by J. T. Johnson to join him in Madison County where a rich harvest of souls was being garnered. Through their labors that summer, several hundred were added to the Lord.⁹⁷

In August of 1836, B. F. married Susan Ball of Woodford County. She was the widow of John Ball. Rather than happiness this union brought him years of grief and sorrow and greatly impaired his ability to preach the gospel. According to his diary, she was a scheming, manipulative woman who used him much as she would have used one of her salves. She used deceit in money matters and involved him in a heavy indebtedness.⁹⁸

In the fall of 1837 the church in Lexington invited Bro. Hall to labor with them at a salary of \$400 per year. After one year his salary was increased to \$600. The church grew and prospered. From Louisville he assisted the churches at Versailles, New Union, Winchester, Paris, and others. At Flemingsburg he and J. T. Johnson baptized some forty souls.⁹⁹

At David's Fork, he preached in the home of a Baptist family. The head of the house conducted a school for young ladies. At the conclusion of the service, thirteen of the girls confessed their faith. The following morning they broke the ice on the pond and Hall immersed them. One of the youngest

94 *Ibid.*, pp. 107-109.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 109.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

97 *Ibid.*

98 *Ibid.*, pp. 111-116.

99 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

ladies, by the name of Louisa, made an appointment for the preacher to visit her neighborhood and some fifty souls were added to the Lord's cause.¹⁰⁰

While at Lexington, Hall persuaded the elders to provide funds for any young man interested in preaching the gospel. Two young men, Robert Rice and T. N. Gaines, were thus trained and sent forth.¹⁰¹

During his tenure at Lexington, Dr. Hall wrote and preached fifty sermons. The lessons filled 600 pages of manuscript and Hall valued them as the best production of his life. Unfortunately, before they reached the printer, they perished in a house fire when he later lived in Texas. They were never rewritten.

A controversy arose in the Lexington church of the question of ordination by the laying on of hands. Hall argued for the practice. The breach was mended without division, but it became the occasion of his resignation. In his three years at Lexington over one hundred souls were added to the church.¹⁰²

In the spring of 1840 Hall moved to Louisville to work with the congregation which met on 5th Street (later at the corner of 4th and Walnut). It was his practice to visit every family of the congregation once every three months. He kept a grueling schedule which bore rich fruit for the congregation.

1. Family worship and breakfast.
2. From breakfast till one, he worked in his study.
3. After lunch he visited members and prospects.
4. Monday nights he conducted Bible classes at the meeting house.
5. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings were devoted to "social meetings" in different parts of the city. At these meetings they read Scripture, prayed, and exhorted.
6. Friday evening was devoted to singing classes at the church house.
7. On Lord's Day he preached morning and evening lessons.

In two and a half years, some 160 were added to the church. A congregation was established at Bear Grass, some six miles from town, with about sixty members. Gospel meetings were held at Brewnerstown and across the river in Jeffersonville and New Albany, Indiana.

Because of increasing domestic problems with his wife, in the fall of 1843 Hall resigned his work with the Louisville church.¹⁰³ When his wife announced her desire to live separate and alone, it forced Dr. Hall to give up his local

100 Ibid., p. 118.

101 Ibid., pp. 120-122.

102 Ibid., pp. 122-125.

103 Ibid., pp. 125-127.

work with the church and resume an itinerant life style. This took him to Nashville, Tennessee, Mississippi, New Orleans, and ultimately to Texas. He became a land agent for a business firm in New Orleans and traveled widely in Texas where land could be bought for **six to eight cents** per acre. He traveled alone dressed in buckskin and armed with a five-shooter pistol. He endured the heat, rain, and cold of winter and faced hostile Indians.¹⁰⁴

Occasionally, trips were made back to Kentucky. He made repeated overtures for reconciliation to his estranged wife, but to no avail. On one trip back to Kentucky in 1853, he accepted an appointment with the state Missionary Board to organize district cooperation meetings in and around Louisville. He held meetings at Eminence and Lagrange and at the mouth of Salt River with numerous additions. At the State meeting of the Missionary board he was assigned a similar role for the entire state. Also, he solicited funds for the Orphan School at Midway. This lasted less than a year. He then moved to Memphis and finally to Texas. His wife refused to join him and after a number of years he divorced her and took another wife.¹⁰⁵

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Hall, although 58 years of age, volunteered as a Chaplin in Col. B. W. Stone's 6th Texas Calvary. Stone was the son of Barton Warren Stone of Kentucky. Hall was involved in two battles but stated, "I neither brandished sword nor fired a gun at an enemy. So I am sure I neither killed nor wounded anyone."¹⁰⁶

Following the war, Bro Hall returned to Texas and married Mrs. Elizabeth Collins. He spent the remainder of his days preaching as opportunity allowed. His acceptance was limited as many rejected him because of his divorce and remarriage. He had presented his case to leading brethren including Alexander Campbell, and he reported that they agreed with his decision. Not all, however, accepted his reasoning. He continued his work of farming, dentistry and preaching until death overtook him on May 1, 1873. He was 69 years old at the time of his death. His burial was in Grayson County, Texas.

Thus ends the life of one of the most active and widely traveled men of our nineteenth century brotherhood. He was tireless in his labors, successful in winning men to Christ and powerful in the proclamation of the word. We regret that his illustrious career was hindered by his domestic problems.

** Most of the above material was gleaned from B. F. Hall's personal autobiography.*

104 Ibid., pp. 134-135.

105 Ibid., pp. 141-147.

106 Ibid., pp. 151-152.

JOHN T. JOHNSON AND THE CHURCH AT ATHENS TENNESSEE

The first week of June in 1844, Bro. John T. Johnson and Bro. J. N. Payne completed a meeting at Barbourville, Kentucky and prepared for a journey to the village of Athens in McMinn County, East Tennessee. Finding his horse too lame for the lengthy journey, Bro. Johnson borrowed a fine mount from a Bro. Ballinger, and the co-workers commenced their four-day ride through the mountains and valleys to their destination.

Their hosts were a Bro. and Sis. Samuel who operated an academy one mile from the village. A few scattered Christians were located, as well as a few relatives in the flesh. With this nucleus, announcements were sent throughout the community that preaching would commence on the morrow which was the Lord's Day. For eight days the two evangelists proclaimed the simple gospel to those assembled; one preaching the lesson and the other exhorting to obedience, as was the method in those days.

Johnson wrote, "mountains of prejudices were removed; the public mind was disabused and greatly conciliated, "thirteen were won to the Restoration plea, one of them being a prominent Baptist preacher.

A congregation of twenty-two was organized by the end of their visit, including two elders, an evangelist, and a deacon. These were ordained by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands. A large audience gathered to witness the birth of this church based on the New Testament pattern.

Early on Monday morning, the little band assembled for a final exhortation. Three were baptized. After prayers of thanksgiving for their coming and petitions for God's care in their travels, the two men of God began their long journey home.

They stopped at the church in the Republican community, some five miles south of Lexington, Kentucky, to report on their missionary journey. This congregation had financed their trip, supplying \$60.50 for their needs.

Johnson observed that, "the beautiful villages of East Tennessee present the finest field for the labors of an able evangelist."

John T. Johnson was the tireless missionary of the Restoration Movement. No man exceeded him in travels or in souls won to the Master. Prior to becoming a preacher, he had served two terms in the United States House of Representatives. His brother, Richard, went on to be elected Vice-President

of the nation under President Martin Van Buren. John gave up his career in politics to preach the gospel. Much of the time he did so at his own expense. He supported his family through his farming enterprise. He suffered hardship as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. He won many to righteousness. We are his debtors.¹⁰⁷

No further information is available regarding this congregation and its progress in the gospel after the departure of the two evangelists. We marvel at the zeal and courage of these early preachers in enduring incredible hardships to spread the cause they loved. May we recapture their spirit.

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JOHN MULKEY

EARLY PIONEER PREACHER IN McMINN COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Among the early preachers of the restored faith in Tennessee was John Mulkey who lived for a while in McMinn County and preached throughout the region.

John Mulkey was born January 14, 1773 in Fair Forest, South Carolina. His parents were Jonathan (1752-1826) and Nancy Mulkey. His father was a notable Baptist preacher from an illustrious family of Baptist ministers. John had two brothers, Phillip and Isaac. All of them grew up to follow the profession of their father as Baptist preachers.

When the boys were yet small, the family moved into Carter's Valley in Upper East Tennessee. The date of their move was between 1775-1780. Jonathan helped to organize the Baptist Church on Boone's Creek in Washington County, which was later known as Buffalo Ridge. Mulkey was one of the first Baptist preachers to reside in Tennessee. Here, the Mulkey boys grew to manhood and began their careers as preachers.

John Mulkey began preaching in 1793 at twenty years of age. It is probable that he was licensed by the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church which his father

107 John Rogers, **The Biography of Elder J. T. Johnson**. Nashville, Gospel Advocate (reprint), 1956 pp. 219-221

pastored for forty-two years and in which young John would have grown up. He soon grew to be recognized as one of the finest pulpit orators in the area.

Near the turn of the century, John took for his wife Elizabeth Hayes. Also, he and his brother Phillip migrated westward into Kentucky. They settled on Mill Creek in Green County (now Monroe County) near present day Tompkinsville. It is thought that John organized the Mill Creek Baptist Church during the year 1798. While living at Mill Creek, John and Elizabeth raised a family of ten children. All of their sons save one, became gospel preachers. Two of them, Isaac and John Newton, went on to be outstanding proclaimers of the gospel.¹⁰⁸

With the coming of the great revival, new winds of doctrine began to blow within the churches. As people began to study the Bible with renewed zeal and enthusiasm, they discovered discrepancies between their denominational doctrines and the Sacred Word. John Mulkey's thinking was affected as he measured the fundamentals of Calvinism as set forth in the **Philadelphia Confession of Faith** and held and taught by the Baptists of his day.

In July of 1805, a Baptist sister by the name of Gunn was accused of joining the Arians, the favorite word of derision for Barton Stone and his people. Mulkey sought to win her back but to no avail. In 1806, the circular letter of Mulkey's Stockton Valley Baptist Association contained a tirade written by an Elder Louis Ellis against the Stoneites.

Later, the Baptist church on Little Barron River (later called Gamaliel) invited Mulkey to come and help them with a problem. A Bro. Louis Byrum had traveled to Cane Ridge in Bourbon County and invited Barton Stone to come to the community to preach. Several people had been won over to Stone's views, including Byrum.

Abner Hill, a fellow member of the Stockton Association, wrote that Mulkey went to talk with Byrum in hopes of reclaiming him. Bro. Byrum suggested that first they ask God's blessings on their discussion. So fervent was his prayer for open hearts and open minds, that they would honor Bible truth above human creeds, that Mulkey's prejudice was melted.

Though he did not change immediately, John's righteous soul was stirred. Day and night his mind wrestled with the great truths he had encountered and his obligation to them. Finally, one night he was so troubled he could not sleep. Rising while it was yet dark, he saddled his horse and rode eight miles to the home of Byrum, arriving at breakfast time. Byrum invited him to eat with them, but Mulkey insisted they first must talk. He apologized for opposing the truth his friend had taught and then pledged himself to join him

108 Vernon Roddy, **Mulkey Meeting House A Tennucky Experience**, Hartsville, Tennessee, privately published. 1979, pp. 20-53.

in preaching the ancient gospel.¹⁰⁹ For a while he continued his work with the Mill Creek Baptist Church.

Isaac T. Reneau, a fellow worker of Mulkey, wrote a vivid account of Mulkey's break with the Baptists. In 1809, Mulkey was delivering a sermon on John 10 at the home of William Sims. While making a diligent effort "to establish Calvinism, his own argument convinced him(self) that the doctrine was false." Being an honest and plain-spoken man, he expressed a change of conviction on unconditional election and other doctrinal matters. A storm of controversy erupted in the Mill Creek Church and in the Stockton Valley Baptist Association. He was charged with heresy and notified to stand trial at the August meeting of the Association. At that session, his opponents could not secure a guilty verdict. They called on five sister churches to assist them and scheduled another inquisition for October. After the charges were reiterated, they called for a show of hands, and the majority still favored Mulkey. At the November session, the same accusations were revived. Mulkey proposed that they "drop all disputes and bear with one another, but they replied 'Never, till you come back to the very ground from which you started.'" Mulkey then proposed to dissolve the Mill Creek Church which was unanimously accepted.¹¹⁰

On Saturday, November 18, 1809, the Mill Creek Baptist congregation assembled and their embattled preacher entered the pulpit. There was nothing left to discuss. The die had been cast. John Mulkey announced "all of you who believe as I do, follow me out the west door." Like an axe splitting fire wood, his words splintered the congregation. Among the first to follow Mulkey out of the Baptist faith and back to the Bible was Hannah Boone Pennington, sister of the great frontiersman Daniel Boone. Others included Joseph Gist, Nathan Breed, Obadiah Howard, and William Logan. Before the exodus ended, one hundred fifty of the two hundred members had taken their stand with Mulkey. The remnant of loyal Baptists made no claim on the meeting house. They left to form a new congregation according to their denominational tradition.¹¹¹

Following the separation, Mulkey and those that followed him met on the third Saturday in November and organized a congregation on the Bible alone— without a human creed, confession of faith, or book of discipline.

109 R. L. Roberts, **The Mulkey Movement**, cassette recording, delivered at the Cane Ridge Restoration Workshop, Lexington, Kentucky, no date.

110 Isaac T. Reneau, as quoted in W. C. Roger, **Recollections of Men of Faith**. Rosemead, Ca. Old Paths Book Club (reprint 1960) p. 224-225.

111 E. Clayton Gooden, "John Mulkey: The Man With a Majority," **Discipliana**, Vol. 24, No. 6, Jan. 1965. P 74-75.

The Baptist historian J. H. Spencer wrote: "In 1812 John Mulkey was excluded from the Baptists for having joined the New Lights...."¹¹² Barton Stone and his followers were called New Lights. Alexander Campbell was unknown in Kentucky at this time. Spencer also spoke of the Unitarian views and other fanatical sentiments of Barton W. Stone.¹¹³ He labeled Mulkey as "unstable and carried about by every wind of doctrine - first falling into Arianism, and then into Campbellism." He does concede, however, that "he maintained, as far as known, an unblemished moral character."¹¹⁴ The minutes of the Mill Creek Church state that Mulkey:

*"... denied the Essential doctrine (sic) of the Gospel such as denying in our Esteem that Jesus Christ satisfied the demands of Law and Justice for his people or died as our Surety or that any man is saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to them. Also finely (sic) for treating the church with contempt and going away and leaving us in an unpleasant situation."*¹¹⁵

John Mulkey was a tireless preacher. He traveled throughout his region of southern Kentucky and the nearby counties of Tennessee. His enthusiasm for his new found faith bore abundant fruit as hundreds of converts were brought to the Lord and the New Testament way.

Between the years 1825-1829. John Mulkey moved his large family to McMinn County, Tennessee. There he farmed to provide for his family while he preached the restoration gospel throughout the region. He was associated with Rees and William Jones and Elihu and Robert Randolph. He traveled throughout the territory of the Lower East Tennessee Cooperation and did some work in Northern Alabama. His son, Isaac and John Newton, were actively engaged in evangelizing while in Tennessee. In 1834, John Mulkey wrote to Barton Stone's **Christian Messenger** from Meesville in McMinn County, Tennessee. He reported some 30-40 converts recently baptized (Vol. 8, No. 10, p. 318).

It is interesting to read in the McMinn County tax lists for 1829, 30 and 31 that Jonathan Mulkey, John N. Mulkey, and John Mulkey, Sr. were recorded as "Capt. Mulkey's Company." The county was divided into military districts at that time, and the records indicated the adult males available for militia service should the need arise.¹¹⁶

112 J. H. Spencer, **A History of Kentucky Baptists From 1769 to 1885**. Cincinnati. 1886, Vol. 2 p. 223.

113 Spencer, Vol. 2, p.214.

114 Spencer, Vol. 1, p. 378.

115 Roddy, p. 41.

116 Roddy, p.45.

Isaac Newton Jones was well acquainted with John Mulkey when he was a boy in McMinn County. He wrote a candid description of our subject in 1879. "Old John Mulkey, as he was then called, was of medium height and slightly corpulent, weighing, I suppose, one hundred and eighty to two hundred pounds. He was a graceful horseback rider. Though he was not a rigid logician, his musical voice, aided by ideality, sublimity, and an easy-flow of language, readily fixed the attention of an audience and when desirable, he could carry away his hearers by a whirlwind of natural eloquence."¹¹⁷

John Mulkey's success in refuting the doctrines of the various denominations, putting their preaching champions to flight and winning their members over to the truth infuriated his sectarian neighbors. On one occasion, some of the more belligerent of them posted a sign on a tree in the forks of a road in McMinn County that offered "twenty dollars reward for any man or set of men that will whip old John Mulkey and Rees Jones."¹¹⁸ Such threats did not intimidate or deter him from his mission. He was thoroughly prepared to endure hardness as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

John Mulkey was a long-time friend and associate of Barton Stone. When Alexander Campbell entered the field, Mulkey had the highest regard for him, sending occasional correspondence to Campbell's **Millennial Harbinger**. While he admired these men of God, he did not look to them for the substance of his faith. He followed Jesus. He studied, obeyed, and proclaimed the New Testament of Christ.

Mulkey returned to Monroe County, Kentucky some time between 1834 and 1840. He continued his preaching until 1842 when bad health forced him to curtail his labors. His last year was spent confined to his home. When death drew near, he confided to one of the elders, "You cannot think how willing I am to die." He requested that when it appeared that he was departing that those present sing his favorite hymns. "He calmly fell asleep in Jesus, December 13, 1844. He had preached for fifty-one years and delivered upward of ten thousand sermons."¹¹⁹

His body was laid to rest near Vernon, Monroe County, Kentucky. His epitaph reads: "John Mulkey, a faithful preacher of the Gospel of Christ. (11)

Present day Churches of Christ in Tennessee and Southern Kentucky owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Old John Mulkey, the man who took his stand for Christ.

117 Isaac Newton Jones in J. G. Grant's **A Sketch of the Reformation in Tennessee**, Nashville, unpublished manuscript, 1878, p. 52.

118 Jones, p. 37.

119 Isaac T. Reneau, **Obituary, Millennial Harbinger**, Series III, 1845, Vol. 2, p. 380.

DR. CHESTER BULLARD

PIONEER PREACHER OF SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

Too often our study of Restoration History is limited to the lives and works of great leaders such as Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton Stone, and David Lipscomb. These men did not win the battle alone. Around them were a host of lieutenants who made major contributions to the success of the cause. Often those lesser known men are lost in the shadows of their great contemporaries. We owe it to them to search out and preserve their story for generations yet unborn.

Chester Bullard was born on March 12, 1809, in Framingham, Massachusetts. As a child he had great faith and confidence in all things related to God and the church. There was a horse in the village which was known as the “church horse” because of its connection with a church squabble. Once when the owner was visiting Chester’s father, the church horse was left tied at the gate. They found young Chester swinging from the horse’s tail. As the senior Bullard rushed to rescue his son, the lad explained, “a Christian horse would not hurt anybody.”¹²⁰

In 1818 Chester’s older sister, Mary, and her husband, Asial Snow, migrated to Staunton, Virginia. Young Chester accompanied them, being only nine years old. There he grew up under the supervision of his sister and was fortunate to receive a good elementary education. He was a sensitive boy who prayed regularly and sought to please God.

When he was seventeen, the family moved to the village of Christiansburg in Montgomery County. At this point, Chester was actively searching for peace and acceptance with God. Knowing nothing of the Bible’s teaching on salvation, he sought to “pray through” as the sects taught. After weeks of soul travail, he collapsed in exhaustion. His sister exclaimed, “There is a change in Chester.” He revived, thinking he was now saved by the Holy Spirit. He soon joined a Methodist Church.¹²¹

Reading his Bible with great zeal and asking numerous questions, the young man soon found himself at odds with his fellow Methodists. Finally,

¹²⁰ F. D. Power, editor, “Autobiography of Chester Bullard” *Christian Standard*, Vol. 29, No. 11, March 1893, p. 210.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 210 ff.

the minister told him that “he was not a Methodist” and urged him to procure and study the **Methodist Discipline**. This fully convinced Chester that Methodism was not God’s way. He resolved to leave that group. Most all of his neighbors were Methodists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans. They all practiced sprinkling and infant baptism. His study had convinced him that baptism was an immersion and a condition of salvation.¹²² For months, he searched for someone who had a similar understanding to his.

In 1830 Bullard moved to Giles County, Virginia to study medicine under Dr. D. J. Chapman. While there, he met Landon Duncan, a former Baptist minister, who had been influenced by Pilgrim Thomas to embrace the Restoration Plea. On December 11, 1830, his long search was ended as Duncan immersed him in the icy waters of Sinking Creek. Later, Duncan ordained Bullard to preach.¹²³ Bullard’s first convert was his wife, Elsey, who was won two years after he began preaching.

Chester’s older brother, Dexter, had chanced upon a copy of Alexander Campbell’s Christian Baptist while traveling in Western Pennsylvania. He recommended that his sister, Mary Snow, subscribe, which she did. Mary died shortly thereafter and the journals were left to gather dust. Later they were given to Chester. One of the first articles that caught his eye was “An Extra on Remission of Sins published in the new Millennial Harbinger. Chester later recalled, “up to this time I had not noticed (Acts 2:38), and the charge to the disciples to begin at Jerusalem....I was not long in getting to Jerusalem...”¹²⁴ In his old age he recalled “no one at this day can understand how he that believes and is baptized shall be saved or pardoned, sounded fifty or sixty years ago” (c.a. 1832). His teaching that “the faith that saved a soul came through the Word received through the ears on the outside of the head was almost a sin against the Holy Ghost.” When he taught that men could be Christians and follow the Bible without a human creed, denominational preachers responded that “a Christian body without a creed was a tub without a bottom.”¹²⁵

In 1833, Bullard organized his first congregation with 24 members near the headwaters of Catawba Creek in Montgomery County. The congregation took the name of the Craig Church. By 1836 six congregations were identified with him.¹²⁶

122 Ibid.

123 H. Jackson Darst, **Ante-Bellum Virginia Disciples** (Richmond, VA. Virginia Christian Missionary Society, 1959), p. 24.

124 Bullard, **Autobiography**, p. 210ff.

125 Ibid.

126 Darst, **Ante-Bellum Disciples** p. 76.

Preaching wasn't easy in those days. James Calfee, a later co-worker, wrote that they were forced to stand against "floods of denunciation."

In 1840, a general meeting of preachers associated with Alexander Campbell was held at Charlottesville. Hearing that the illustrious Campbell was to speak, Bullard determined to be there. Traveling by horseback, he made his journey. From reading Campbell's writings, he felt sure their thinking was alike. He wanted to talk with him face to face before deciding to join forces with him. From that date onward the two were fast friends and co-workers in the Lord's kingdom.

Bullard had studied medicine and continued to practice all of his active years. We should not think of country doctors in those days having skills such as our modern physicians do. His apprenticeship under Dr. D. J. Chapman was the extent of his medical training. There was no American Medical Association and a license was not needed.

Bullard the Preacher

Chester Bullard was married four times, losing three young wives to early deaths. All of his children, save one son, died young. His surviving son, Willie, went on to be a very successful preacher among the Disciples of Christ.

Dr. Bullard stood 5 feet 8 inches and weighted about 150 pounds. His physical strength and endurance were of eminent proportions. He was blessed with a powerful stentorian speaking voice.

J. T. Taylor recalled that when he was small his parents left him at the house across the hollow from the Cypress Grove meeting house where Bullard was preaching. Bullard's "great voice rolled in thunder tones from hill to hill, sweeping up and down the river, and dying away in the distance like retreating waves of the sea ..." ¹²⁷ W. H. Book told of Bullard assembling a large audience on the grassy bank of New River at Eggleston Springs near Pembroke. He then climbed to the top of a high rock on the opposite side and preached to them and all could hear. ¹²⁸ F. D. Power remembered that Bullard "had a patriarchal appearance, wearing a long gray beard, and beneath shaggy eyebrows, sparkled small gray eyes that had a wonderful glow... He had a magnificent voice ... In exhortation he was specially gifted, and would plead with the people with great tenderness and untiring perseverance..." ¹²⁹

¹²⁷ J. T. Taylor, "Recollections of Dr. Chester Bullard #1, The Missionary Weekly, May 12, 1893, p. 10, Richmond, B. A. Abbott, editor

¹²⁸ William H. Book, *The New Castle Record*, Feb, 13, 1934

¹²⁹ F. D. Power, *Christian Standard*, Vol. XXIX, No. 16, April; 22, 1893, p. 307 "Dr. Chester Bullard, Num. III".

Hardships of Those Days

Bullard recalled one Saturday when the weather was the coldest any could recall. “On that day the stage stopped at the post house, but the driver, stiff and stark, would not deliver the mail bags. The road wagon stopped at the wagon stand, but the driver had fallen from the wheel-horse, miles in the rear, and was now covered by the drifting snow—while the hunter laid side by side with his gun and slaughtered deer.” Bullard had a preaching appointment that evening. “The wind freighted with ice needles, blew in a direct line,” but he determined to go, lest he disappoint his hearers. Even after preaching he was shivering cold. Four precious souls confessed Christ and were baptized in an icy stream the Monday following. One later became an elder, another a state legislator. It was such courage and conviction that caused the infant restoration movement to grow as it did.¹³⁰

He told of a mountain wedding where he preached following the ceremony and baptized both.¹³¹

Once when Bullard was baptizing in a mountain stream, a group of rowdy boys were perched on a limb that overhung the water. They were annoying him by shouting “Hurrah for the Bullardites” each time he raised a candidate from the water. Just as the last convert was brought forth the limb snapped dumping the rowdies into the stream. Bullard shouted, “Hurrah for the Devilites.”¹³²

On one occasion an angry husband threatened to do him bodily harm if Bullard baptized his wife. The man was known for his violence. When the good lady presented herself, the courageous preacher immersed her without hesitation. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Bullard was traveling on a narrow mountain trail and came upon the angry husband. So narrow was the trail their stirrups touched—but the man did him no harm.¹³³

Bullard the Debater

As did most preachers in those days, Dr. Bullard engaged in numerous religious debates. We have record of six of his controversies.

The Bullard-Painter debate occurred in Draper’s Valley, Pulaski County, Virginia. The Christians and the Presbyterians shared a community meeting house. When Painter announced he would preach on baptism, Bullard was invited to respond for the brethren. So effective was his response that the Presbyterian preacher “lost his temper and bolted for the door” leaving his hat

130 Chester Bullard, *Christian Standard*, Feb. 19, 1881, p. 58.

131 *Ibid.*, Dec. 11, 1881, p. 394.

132 Louise B. Allison, *Early History of Snowville, VA*, Pulaski County Library.

133 Chester Bullard, *Personal Remembrances*, p. 9, 1875.

behind. The Presbyterian group left the union building and constructed their own meeting house.¹³⁴

In 1840, Bullard organized a congregation of twelve members at the Bethel meeting house in Montgomery County. Mr. John Rigden, the Methodist minister, challenged the doctor to a discussion of their differences. The discussion centered on the action and purpose of baptism. Following the debate, several Methodists requested baptism and eventually most of the Bethel Methodist Church embraced the New Testament way. That was the beginning of the Laurel Hill church which is still flourishing.¹³⁵

The Bullard-Stone Debate never occurred. In 1858 Bullard converted a number of Methodists in Grayson County. T. J. Stone, a relative, was a Methodist minister and felt compelled to try to rescue his kindred from Bullard's influence. He issued a challenge to Bullard to debate their differences. A short time later Bullard preached at the Pleasant Hill Church and Stone was in the audience. He invited Bullard to his house to plan their forthcoming debate. The doctor sensed that the young man was having second thoughts about the discussion and suggested that they could settle it by immersing Stone. Conversation revealed that he had been studying the Campbell-Rice Debate in preparation for their discussion. After six hours of study he yielded to the gospel and Bullard immersed him. The next morning Mrs. Stone obeyed the Lord. Stone wrote of Bullard,

“He was a grand man. He was intellectually and morally great. His Christian love embraced the whole brotherhood of man. Though persecuted and misrepresented, his kind, loving heart yearned for the salvation of his enemies ... with the heroism of Caesar, he stormed the citadel of sin, but with the love and tenderness of a woman he besought the sinner to be reconciled to God.”¹³⁶

Bullard-Ellison Debate was a written debate that was published in a book. The proposition discussed was: “The body, now called Baptist, has departed from the faith and practice of the New Testament, so far as to forfeit her title to be considered a truly Christian Church.”¹³⁷

134 *Ibid.*, p. 12-13.

135 Chester Bullard, letter to R. L. Coleman and J. W. Goss, editors of *The Christian Publisher*, August 17, 1841 and James Calfee, letter to R. L. Coleman and J. W. Goss, editors of *The Christian Publisher*, July 30, 1841.

136 T. J. Stone, “**Recollections of Dr. Chester Bullard**” *The Missionary Weekly*, B. A. Abbott, editor, Richmond, July 30, 1893, p. 115.

137 Dr. C. Bullard and Elder M. Ellison, *A Discussion*, Richmond, W. H. Clemmitt, printer, 1857, p. 2.

The Bullard-Shelburne Debate was on War and Secession. During the early months of the Civil War, Bullard and Bro. Cephas Shelburne had a heated controversy which culminated in a debate at the Cypress Grove Church. Chester opposed national division and bloodshed. At the appointed time a large crowd assembled. Many who opposed his preaching hoped to see his overthrow. Several Confederate soldiers were present. Given the war-fever, the doctor was in imminent danger of being lynched or sent to prison for his perceived unpatriotic sentiments. Being from Massachusetts made him all the more suspect.

Shelburne spoke first and for an hour heaped charges upon Bullard. Arising, he strode with a firm step to the podium. Looking over the crowd he fastened his steel gray eyes on first one and then another. J. T. Taylor wrote of Bullard, "Like a majestic mountain swept by a storm, he stood master of the situation. His speech was not unkind...but in a very dignified manner he reached out and gathered up the points which put one in mind of a coming cyclone—a calm and then an awful rush of elements of fearful destruction. His great logical reservoir broke loose, carrying everything before it. Like a giant, he gathered up all his strength, and with one mighty effort hurled his antagonist to the dust."¹³⁸ The doctor walked away unmolested. He harbored no ill-will for his opponent and always spoke highly of him.

When the great apostasy grew up among our brethren, Bro. Bullard cast his lot with the "progressives" who favored instrumental music and missionary societies. Cypress Grove, his home church, was polarized on this issue and eventually split. Br. Josiah T. Showalter led the "loyal opposition." In 1880 Showalter challenged Bullard to debate the following propositions:

1. "Without faith, repentance and immersion, no one can be a Christian."
2. "Nothing should be done by the church without positive precept or approved precedent."

Showalter offered to affirm each proposition, but Bullard declined on the advice of friends.¹³⁹

As he neared the end of his life, Dr. Bullard could count more than 5,000 souls won for Christ and some seventy-five churches planted. You may yet see his home place, which he named "Humility," and the Cypress Grove Christian Church in which he served. They are at Snowville, Virginia.

On February 27, 1893 death came to Bullard. He was 84 years old. The funeral was conducted at the Cypress Grove Church near his home in

138 J. T. Taylor, *Recollections* # 1, p. 10.

139 Josiah T. Showalter, *American Christian Review*, Daniel Sommers, editor, clipping.

Snowville. The eulogy was presented by Benjamin King, a former slave. Friends, family and fellow Christians laid him to rest on a hill overlooking Snowville.

J. T. Taylor wrote: "God chose him to be the spiritual father of a mighty progeny. His name is a household word all over this land. No one is honored more highly, because he first broke the stillness through all these mountains. Through insult and much misgiving, he went forth, telling our fathers and mothers "that old, old, story of Jesus...His influence among the people was great and the many thousands whom he baptized have in many ways carried his influence far and wide. Hundreds of preachers have sprung from him as their spiritual father. Directly and indirectly, he has more spiritual sons and daughters than any man in Virginia."¹⁴⁰

The following words adorn his grave marker:

*A soldier of the cross:
He wore the Breastplate of Righteousness;
He bore the Shield of Faith;
He wielded the Sword of the Spirit;
He endured hardness as a Good Soldier;
He turned many to righteousness
And so shall shine as the stars
forever and ever.*

81.

OUR BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, A MAN WHO OVERCAME AND PREVAILED

Among the second generation of our Restoration pioneers, none exceeded in talent nor labor Bro. Benjamin Franklin of Indiana. Benjamin was born in Belmont Country, Ohio, February 1, 1812. He was named him after his illustrious great uncle of Philadelphia. The Franklins were poor and Benjamin received only the rudiments of education. His family were Methodists.

140 J. T. Taylor, *Recollections* # 1, May 12, 1893, p. 10.

Benjamin was grown and married when he first heard the gospel in its purity. Samuel Rogers came to Middletown, Indiana in December of 1834, calling citizens back to the Bible. Benjamin confessed his faith and was baptized. Immediately, he began a serious study of the Bible and soon was found preaching when any opportunity presented itself. His preaching was plain and unsophisticated and the common people heard him gladly. Before long, he was in great demand for revivals. He served as minister of numerous congregations in Eastern Indiana and Ohio. It is said that he led some 10,000 souls to the Savior.

James Johnson, who often heard Bro. Franklin preach, described him. "Franklin was six feet tall...with grey eyes that were 'bright and sparkling.' ...when Franklin spoke, he became 'animated' and his face 'lights up and becomes wonderfully expressive. His delivery was "...earnest, his tone of voice was very little louder than the ordinary conversational tone, and seems rather to talk to and reason with his hearers than to preach at them...His presentation of the truth is the clearest I ever listened to. With every detail of the gospel, he is thoroughly familiar, not one jot or tittle has escaped him. In this and his wonderful power of illustration consists the charm which he wields over a popular audience: and although his sermons are well over an hour in length, yet one apt illustration succeeds another with such rapidity that the listeners cannot grow weary..." (James B. Johnson, as quoted in **Elder Ben Franklin: Eye of the Storm** by E. I. West, pp. 48-49). Earl West notes that "Franklin brought nothing of showmanship to the pulpit..."

Being well able to express his thoughts, Franklin began to write pieces for gospel papers. In 1845 he launched **The Reformer**. Later he was co-editor of **The Christian Age**. His lasting monument was the **American Christian Review** which was launched in 1856. He edited it until his death. His readers fondly called it "The Old Faithful." Some of the finest writers of that age provided articles for his paper.

When the Civil War broke out, Franklin refused to turn his back on his Southern brethren. Because he would not endorse the Union military effort and because of his friendship with the brethren in the Confederate states he was accused of being a secessionist and of treason. He bore his burden and continued his work for Christ.

Franklin was not only a gifted preacher, he was a capable debater. He engaged in some twenty-five public debates on religious questions. Truth never suffered in his hands. His evangelistic efforts carried him throughout the north-central states and even into Canada. It was generally conceded that following the death of Alexander Campbell in 1866, Franklin was the most influential preacher and writer among our brethren.

Following the Civil War, when the controversy erupted over instrumental music in worship and missionary societies, Franklin and his **American Christian Review** were the principal voices of opposition in the North as were David Lipscomb and the **Gospel Advocate** in the South. For his vigorous opposition to their favorite projects, the progressives came to despise Bro. Franklin, but their disapproval and disparaging remarks did not deter him.

Two volumes of Franklin's gospel sermons were published under the title, **The Gospel Preacher** and are still widely circulated. Following his death, his son published a **Book of Gems** which were short articles and sayings of his famous father. One of his most popular publications was a tract entitled, **Sincerity Seeking the Way to Heaven** which was often reprinted and circulated hundreds of thousands of copies.

Benjamin Franklin passed away on October 22, 1878. He was laid to rest at Anderson, Indiana. Jacob Creath wrote, "His death is universally regarded...as a great loss to our restoration. He has left no one who can fill his place and we should not see his like soon again." To this day no man of our brotherhood has exceeded Benjamin Franklin in love and loyalty for Christ, His Church and the Bible. The good he did still bears fruit for the Master. We need desperately men of his stature in this 21st century.

82.

DAVID LIPSCOMB

A SIMPLE MAN WHO ACCOMPLISHED GREAT THINGS

In the dreary days following the Civil War, when apostasy swept through most of our congregations, God raised up a leader for his people by the name of David Lipscomb. He was the son of Granville and Ann Lipscomb, born in Franklin County, Tennessee in 1831. His parents learned about New Testament Christianity about the time of David's birth. While still a small child, David's mother and three siblings died of malarial fever. David and two other children were deathly ill but survived. Franklin County at that time was a primitive backwoods. At age 13 the father sent David and his brother William to spend a year with their grandfather in Virginia. During that time David memorized

the four Gospels and the book of Acts. At age 14, David heard Tolbert Fanning preach. The young lad confessed his faith and was immersed to fulfill his duty to God. In 1846 he was enrolled in Fanning's school, known as Franklin College. Young Lipscomb received a fine education from Fanning and he became his co-worker in the kingdom of Christ. He was greatly impressed by Fanning's courage, independence, and unswerving faith in the Bible.

Although he is looked upon as one of our most influential 19th century preachers, Lipscomb never considered himself as a preacher. He made his living by farming and thought of that as his occupation. He wrote, "I did not care to be considered a preacher. I began preaching because I thought I could do some work in that line that would be helpful. His first effort at preaching was a failure. He read his text but could not think of anything to say so he sat down. That so rattled Bro. George Stroud, his mentor that he too was speechless. Fortunately David did not allow that to defeat him.

When the Civil War broke out, Lipscomb refused to be involved. Being a staunch pacifist, he encouraged all other Christians to join him in non-participation. For that he was viewed with suspicion by the Confederates and as a spy by the occupying Federal troops. Throughout the ordeal he continued to meet his appointments, often driving his buggy through battle lines. In his later years he often preached, seated in a chair. He would read a passage from the Bible and then expound upon it and show its application in life.

Following the war, Lipscomb revived Tolbert Fanning's paper, the **Gospel Advocate**, and used it to solicit help for his starving neighbors. Through his efforts, thousands were assisted. When a cholera epidemic struck Nashville in 1873, all who were able fled the city. Lipscomb and a few young Christian men stayed behind to help care for those unable to flee. To the poor he was an angel of mercy.

When a liberal, progressive element within the church began their campaign to force the American Christian Missionary Society upon the churches, Lipscomb dug in his heels and opposed them. Through his paper and by his own teaching and influence he led the opposition. Later, when instrumental music was added to the progressive agenda, he opposed it as well. The losses to the liberals were overwhelming. Some 85 percent of the congregations and members abandoned the back to the Bible position for a denominational version of Christianity. Lipscomb did not accept defeat. He challenged the brethren to rebuild. He encouraged every congregation to be evangelistic and plant new congregations. With his own funds he kept the struggling **Gospel Advocate** afloat. He gave the land for the Nashville Bible School which he and James A Harding founded. The school eventually evolved into David Lipscomb College and now University. Sadly it has now

fallen into the hands of change agents who teach the very things Lipscomb opposed.

Beyond his editorial work with the Advocate, Lipscomb authored a **Commentary on Acts**, and co-authored **six volumes of commentaries** still available in the Gospel Advocate New Testament Commentary series. Two books of **Questions and Answers** were published under his name, plus **Civil Government and Salvation From Sin**. He continued his work for the Lord until God called him home in 1917. He was age 86 when death overtook him.

Benjamin Franklin wrote of Lipscomb, “Bro. Lipscomb is a plain and unassuming man with the simplicity of a child. He has a good native sense, much power and influence, and is greatly devoted to the cause. There is not the least danger of his ever turning clergyman. He has not an inkling in that way. He lives in utter disregard of the notions of the world, puts on no air, wears just such a coat, hat and pants as suit him....” (As cited in **Eye of the Storm**, by E. I. West, p. 322).

V. M. Metcalfe wrote, “While everybody concedes that (Lipscomb) is a man of ability, yet few know his real worth...I have never known a more godly or self-sacrificing man...He is tenderhearted and loving as a child...He is loyal to the teaching of the Bible...God has given him wisdom and power for good...” (**Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 2, p. 22). Lipscomb, more than any other man, helped the Church of Christ survive the disaster of the great apostasy of the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches and rebuild. We are ever indebted to this godly man.

83.

DAVID LIPSCOMB STOOD IN THE GAP AND MADE A DIFFERENCE

As the people of Judah languished in Babylonian captivity, God spoke to them through his faithful prophet, Ezekiel. The reason for their ruined state is expressed in chapter 22:30 where God says, “I sought for a man among them, that should build up the wall, and stand in the gap before me or the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.”

A hundred and twenty-five years ago the situation within the brotherhood of restoration churches was much like ours today. The progressives had all the momentum went them. Their movement away from the authority of the Scripture was moving like an avalanche. The issues then were the same as now: 1. Extra-congregational organizations to do the Lord's work, 2. The use of instrumental music, choirs and soloists in worship; 3. Women in leadership roles in the church; 4. Fellowship with denominational bodies; 5. Lack of respect for the authority of God's Word.

Had it not been for David Lipscomb and the small band of men he gathered around him, it is likely that the liberals would have taken everything. By 1906 it was clear that two separate bodies of people existed where once there was one. The larger group, came to be identified as Disciples of Christ/ Christian Churches. They had captured some 85 percent of the movement, including virtually all of the schools, benevolent works and mission outposts. The smaller group was know as Churches of Christ consisting of a remnant of loyal disciples who were determined to be faithful to the old paths of God's Word.

We can learn great lessons from the work of David Lipscomb.

- In terms of his pulpit ability, he was a very ordinary preacher. But he was a dedicated and determined disciple of the Master who stood in the gap and fought courageously.
- He was willing to lay his all on the line for the Cause. He invested his time and energy, his money and his property in his effort to save and rebuild the church he loved.
- He knew it was not enough just to oppose error, he encouraged his brethren to rise up and rebuild the damaged Cause. He worked tirelessly to that end until his aged and worn out body was laid to rest.
- He saw the value of the printed page. He and Tolbert Fanning relaunched the **Gospel Advocate** following the Civil War. He printed useful religious books that would shape the hearts and minds of the brethren for good.
- He understood the importance of training children in the way of righteousness. He and his team produced Bible School literature that was true to the Scriptures.
- He knew the effectiveness of engaging the enemy head on. Thus he published articles that addressed the problems of the day and offered Biblical answers to the errors being promoted.
- He saw the need for a school to train the young and especially future leaders for the church. With James A. Harding, he founded and

financed Nashville Bible School. He gave his own farm to house the school.

- He actively recruited men to join the ranks on the side of truth. He built a strong network of faithful Christians to fight side by side. He frequently met with men who were uncertain and unsure and used his influence to persuade them to take a stand for the truth.
- He encouraged every good work done by those who were true friends of the gospel. These things we must do today.

84.

THE GREATNESS OF DAVID LIPSCOMB

In times of crisis the church desperately needs good and wise men who are courageous and faithful to the Scripture, to lead her safely through. Many who lack the necessary qualities will aspire to lead God's people in the right paths, but their weaknesses often cause them to do more harm than good.

When apostasy swept over our brotherhood in the last half of the 19th century, God raised up an unlikely man to lead His remnant. His name was David Lipscomb of Nashville, Tennessee. Compared to most worldly leaders, Bro. Lipscomb was remarkably different.

- He was a man slow of speech and in no sense eloquent as a speaker. He was a common man from the rural world. He preached plain and simple lessons to common folks who were willing to listen and follow.
- He was no polemic champion. In a day when religious leaders often displayed their prowess in public debates with opponents, Lipscomb only engaged in two debates.
- He made no attempt to make a name for himself. As far as he was concerned, his name could have been buried with him and forgotten.
- He was no great scholar. His writings reflect none of the attributes of scholarly types. He had a reasonable education for his day. He knew the fundamentals of Christianity and believed them with child-like faith. He devoted himself to reading the Bible and teaching it to all who would listen. It never occurred to him to speculate about murky prophecies or to pursue profound issues of theology. The simple truth which he held and taught, stood on its own merit.

- He was plain and unassuming in his dress and appearance. His wife trimmed his hair and made his clothes. He drove his own buggy, and in later years he walked with a hickory cane. When his health flagged, he sat in a chair to preach. That which drew people to him was the purity, sincerity and dedication of the man.
- He was a servant to others. Following the Civil War his compassion was stirred for the hungry survivors. He helped raise the funds to feed multitudes. When cholera swept the city of Nashville, most people with means fled the city. Lipscomb stayed and risked his life ministering to the sick and dying. He had a great interest in helping widows and orphans.
- He was willing to spend and be spent for the cause of Christ. When the South was impoverished in post-war days, Lipscomb used his personal resources to maintain the **Gospel Advocate** paper so he could rally the scattered disciples. He used his wealth to launch and support the Nashville Bible School. For his work for the school and the paper he drew no salary.
- He led by his godly example, not by coercion. “He never expected other men to think as he did on all points...there was no vindictiveness in him... he did not expect everybody to see things his way...He knew that all men had personal weaknesses and toward them he attempted to show the strongest spirit of forbearance” (Earl West. **Life and Times of David Lipscomb**, p. 14).
- He was a leader whose faith and practice were solidly grounded on Scripture. “He wrote, “The cardinal thought of my religion has ever been to follow the will of God, as expressed in precept or by approved example; to stand on safe ground; to be sure of the approval and blessing of God” (**Ibid.** p. 15).
- He avoided extremism in his religion. Lipscomb wrote, “We have noticed those most extreme on one side are liable to run to the other extreme. Let your moderation be known to all men. Be firm for the truth, steadfast in the maintaining of the right, yet forbearing to the weaknesses of our fellow men, knowing we also are liable to be drawn aside...we have often borne with men that were wrong, tried to get them right, often failed, but have never regretted the forbearance. Be true to the truth, oppose the error, but forbear with humanity” (**Gospel Advocate**, Vol. 38, 1896, p. 20).
- Interestingly, near the end of last century David Lipscomb, the humble farmer-preacher, was named one of the most influential men in the history of Tennessee

Today we face the determined efforts of some to change the Lord’s church into a denomination, to corrupt her faith and her worship. We desperately need leaders of with the qualities of godly David Lipscomb.

J. W. McGARVEY

SCHOLAR EXTRA-ORDINAIRE

Of the millions who have lived upon the earth, only a few have so impressed their fellow citizens that they still command a hearing ninety years after their death. John William McGarvey is one of that mighty minority whose teaching and influence have survived his passing. Today, most of his many books are yet in circulation and eagerly sought for. His original **Commentary on Acts** has proven the most enduring volume produced by members of the Restoration Movement. His book on **The Eldership** has had a lasting effect on the brotherhood's concept of church government. His writings defending the Christian faith against the assaults of skeptical liberals have inoculated most of our preachers against this destructive error for upwards of 100 years. His work in this field is preserved in four excellent volumes: **Biblical Criticism, Evidences of Christianity, The Authorship of Deuteronomy and Jesus and Jonah**. His book of **Sermons** has occupied a prominent place in the library of most of our gospel preachers.

Through his work of training preachers in the College of the Bible at Lexington, Kentucky, Bro. McGarvey established a pattern for ministerial training and a standard of excellence that still is felt in most of our Christian Colleges and all our Schools of Preaching.

Great as he was, J. W. McGarvey was not perfect in every decision and action in his long career. When the brotherhood was wracked and torn over the innovations of instrumental music in worship and missionary societies to do the Lord's work, he stood between the opposing sides. He strongly opposed instrumental music in worship but worked with enthusiasm for the various Missionary Societies of his day. This position, held by several of his co-laborers at the College of the Bible and in central Kentucky, placed them in an awkward position. They were too conservative for the liberal element in the church led by Isaac Errett, editor of the **Christian Standard** and J. H. Garrison editor of the **Christian Evangelist**, and too liberal for the conservative brethren associated with David Lipscomb and the **Gospel Advocate**.

For some 30 years McGarvey was associated with the Broadway Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Eleven years he served as her minister, the rest as one of her elders. Yet, when the other elders and Mark Collis, the minister, announced their intent to poll the congregation regarding the introduction of

an organ, he immediately resigned. He and his wife placed their membership with the Chestnut Street congregation where they could worship in good conscience

After many years of outspoken opposition on the music question, his pen grew silent on the matter. When asked why, he confessed that he had decided it to be a losing battle and had elected to pursue other matters. His last years of literary work were spent with the **Christian Standard** with the very men he had earlier opposed.

We can only cast a mantle of charity over this one blot on his record, knowing that each of us will doubtless make similar mistakes in the years of our lives. In spite of this flaw, we can profit greatly from the masterful work he did in other areas. The church today needs men of his scholarship, dignity, and conviction. (Needless to say, we do not approve of Bro. McGarvey's involvement in the various missionary societies mentioned). All that this great preacher attempted, he did well. Today's disciples will benefit by reading his thoughts. Preacher's especially will be strengthened by so doing. Through the knowledge gained from such study the Cause of Christ will be benefitted.

86.

A TALE OF TWO PREACHERS

By the middle of the 19th century two young men had grown to maturity. Both heard the simple gospel of Christ and obeyed it, becoming nondenominational Christians. Both were privileged to study in a Christian School and receive a good education, thoroughly integrated with bible training. Both men lived through the Civil War in which each refused to participate as combatants. Both faced hardship as a consequence of their decision.

Following the war, both men grew to be prominent leaders in our back to the Bible movement. David Lipscomb, emerged as a principal leader in the crushed and impoverished South. J. W. McGarvey filled a similar role in the border state of Kentucky.

Both men were capable writers. Both were influential preachers. Both established and taught in schools designed to train young people in the way of truth.

Lipscomb was a humble but successful farmer. He was never employed as the regular preacher for a congregation. He spent his years working among small struggling congregations. He dedicated himself to the task of rebuilding the Cause of Christ. The Southern churches had to recover from the losses suffered from the effects of the war. Later they had to recover from the damage caused by the apostasy of a progressive element in the church. McGarvey was more refined. He lived in and preached for large churches in Lexington, Kentucky.

In the post war years there blossomed a demand for changes in the faith, worship and polity of the church. Some were determined to have a national organization to gather the funds and manage the mission work of all the churches. They created the American Christian Missionary Society. The same brethren wanted to have instruments of music to assist them as they worshiped. They were open to allowing women to fill leadership roles in the public activities of the church. Their understanding of the nature of the church evolved. From seeing the Church of Christ as God's family on earth, unique and undivided, they came to view her as one of the many denominations founded by men. Their understanding of the role of preachers changed. Rather than being a teaching servant of the church, a minister or evangelist, they wanted him to be their pastor. Some of the highly educated preachers who taught in our schools, wanted degrees from and recognition by the famous universities of the nation and abroad. In pursuing that recognition many of them lost their faith in the inspiration and authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, miracles, etc.

Both Lipscomb and McGarvey were great students of the Bible. Both loved and respected it as the word of Jehovah. Both men were conservative in their convictions. Both were thoroughly dedicated to the restoration of the ancient order of things. Both boldly preached that message and manfully defended the truth against those who challenged it. Both men were highly respected and look upon as pillars in the church. Their wisdom was sought by many as the church struggled with her mounting problems.

When the controversy over instrumental music in worship and the missionary society erupted, the two men took different courses. Bro. McGarvey embraced the concept of missionary organizations to do the evangelist work of the church. He served as an officer for the Kentucky Missionary Society. Lipscomb saw the society as of the same nature as instrumental music. Both were innovations to God's plan and without divine authority. McGarvey encouraged the society effort and Lipscomb opposed it with all his might. Both men opposed the use of instruments in worship. Lipscomb did so until the day he died. For some 15 years McGarvey stood manfully against them but eventually ceased his opposition saying it was of no use since the brethren

were determined to have them. Even though he disapproved of their use he continued to fellowship those individuals and churches that used them. He explained his decision thusly: “...but when all the papers through whose columns I could hope to reach those who were engaged in it were closed against the further discussion of the subject, and when the minds of those whom I might have hoped to convince were equally closed, I desisted because I did not wish to spend my time whistling against the wind...”¹⁴¹

Lipscomb was a practical man but neither a fine orator nor a great scholar. His work was in gathering up the weak and scattered disciples and encouraging them and planting churches. McGarvey made a name for himself as an erudite scholar, recognized as such here and abroad. When theological liberalism invaded the churches of the progressives He stood virtually alone and hewed the steel with the best of them. He continued the fight until the day of his death. His fine books on Jonah, Deuteronomy and Biblical Criticism are still circulated among us.

When Lipscomb died he left behind him the Gospel Advocate, the most influential gospel paper among our brethren. He left David Lipscomb College which he and James A Harding had founded. Harding soon moved on and Lipscomb nurtured it to maturity. He left behind him commentaries, bible school literature and scores of helpful books that would fortify the faith of his brethren. The churches of the South had weathered the storm both of the War and the great Digression. With his uncompromising leadership they had recovered and were flourishing on every hand. Nashville, Tennessee, Lipscomb’s home town, had become the buckle of the Bible belt.

When McGarvey died, his school soon fell into the hands of his liberal enemies. The churches he had worked among continued to drift farther and farther from their Biblical moorings. Even the Broadway Church in Lexington took up instrumental music and the organ pealed out the hymns at his funeral.

In his later years Bro. McGarvey was holding a meeting Texas. Before the service he confided to young Jessie P. Sewell, that he had tried to work with those who used the instrument even though he viewed the practice as contrary to God’s will. He had done so, hoping to hold the brethren together and avoid a division. But now as he looked back, he had made a terrible mistake. Most of his students had embraced the entire package of the progressives. If McGarvey had it to do over again he would have taken the more conservative route. But the damage was done.

141 McGarvey’s message is found in James Bales’ **Instrumental Music & New Testament Worship**, pp. 372-373.

McGarvey believed “that there will yet come a reaction against it and knowing that, when primitive Christianity shall be fully and triumphantly restored among men, this practice will have passed away with all the other human devices that have encumbered the church.”¹⁴² That happy day for which he hoped came when our fathers refused to follow the pied pipers of digression. They took their stand on the Word of God and continued to worship Him, lifting up their voices in joyful praise, as other faithful saints had for generations past. Soon they grew and multiplied, outstripping those who preferred their instrumentals more than unity with their brethren. May we not cast away the heritage that is ours.

87.

THEOPHILUS B. LARIMORE

THE MAN WHO WOULD NOT FIGHT

T. B. Larimore was one of the great evangelists of the church from 1870-1925. He was loved and respected by all who knew him for his pleasant temperament and peaceable spirit. All change agents cite the example of Bro. Larimore as they seek to persuade conservative brethren to sit silently while they work to change the church and capture congregations, church buildings and schools. When a similar change movement swept through our brotherhood, following the Civil War, Bro. Larimore chose to devote himself to evangelism rather than taking a strong stand against those who were abandoning the Restoration Plea and corrupting the faith. He steadfastly refused to condemn their innovations or to break fellowship with those who were introducing instrumental music and missionary societies into the churches. Modern promoters of change usually fail to mention that he did have sufficient conviction to pitch his tent with the conservative brethren of the Churches of Christ rather than with the progressives of the Disciples of Christ.

Bro. Larimore faced questions such as, “How should we worship in order to please God? Or, are we allowed to tamper with the structure of Christ’s sacred church?” Douglas Foster comments, “To Larimore those issues were

142 Ibid.

not worth dividing the body of Christ” (**Will the Cycle Be Unbroken?** p. 157). This of course is what Bro. Foster wants his readers to conclude about the innovations of the change movement. He does not consider the possibility that Bro. Larimore was naive about what was actually happening to the church of his day...just as many are naive today. Perhaps Larimore’s personality was such that he could not bring himself to confront those who were walking away from the ancient gospel standard. It is reasonable to ask if Bro. Larimore’s actions reflected a proper spirit for a Christian soldier in the face of hostile enemies (I Tim.6:12)? God does command us to “Contend earnestly for the faith” (Jude 3). Like Paul we are to be set for the defense of gospel (Phil.1:16).

We must ask, if every member of the conservative churches had responded as did Larimore, what would have been the result? Would we even exist today? Would all have been swept into apostasy? Do our modern change agents think such would have been the preferable course? Is that what they want for today? Bro. Foster naively asserts, “if everyone had had T. B. Larimore’s attitude, the problems would never have been blown up into divisive issues in the first place” (**Ibid.** p. 158). Either he doesn’t know or chooses not to mention that the progressive brethren did not have that sweet, passive spirit. They were determined to have instruments in our churches and involve all in their Missionary Societies. They pushed their agenda and even resorted to stealth to gain control of congregations. If all of our brethren had stood by passively as did Bro. Larimore, all would have been swept away. The same is true today.

During the controversy, Bro. Larimore held a lengthy gospel meeting for the church in Sherman, Texas. Dr. Foster mentions that the progressives of the church in Sherman were meeting at separate times from the conservatives so they could worship with their instruments (**Ibid.** p.152). This is similar to the “alternative services” modern change agents use to get a foot hold in a conservative church. A year later he notes that the “pro-instrument faction withdrew to form what they called the First Christian Church” (**Ibid.**). If our change folks cannot take the property, we can expect them to eventually leave to be free to do as they wish.

The change agents conveniently fail to mention a letter Larimore wrote to the Disciples when they pressed him to cast his lot with them. With conviction he wrote, “I will live to see the grass growing green upon your graves and when I do, I will stand by them and say, ‘Here lie some brethren who once were my friends and who never had cause to be otherwise, but who, for reasons which they perhaps understood, came to be my enemies. This may seem to be a strange prediction to you, but it will be just that way, for He whose I am and whom I serve tells me so (**Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 4, p. 145) (**Among the Scholars**, p. 107).

In time of war, every patriotic citizen does his part to help his nation through the conflict. Some produce food, others produce war materials. Some are warriors, some are medics. Some drive supply trucks, others fly bombers that rain death on the enemy. Some plan strategies, others process the paperwork. But all who do their part faithfully are good citizens who together serve their nation. So it is in the church. We do not fault Bro. Larimore's passive stand, but neither should we fault Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, Jacob Creath, Jr., Benjamin Franklin and the other noble men who fought valiantly to save a remnant from the apostasy that confronted them. We are much indebted to them for the survival of the church and our existence today.

88.

ASHLEY SIDNEY JOHNSON and JOHNSON BIBLE COLLEGE

One of the most influential men to preach in East Tennessee was Ashley Johnson, founder and president of Johnson Bible College of Knoxville.

Ashley Sidney Johnson was the son of Jeremiah Crockett and Barbara Johnson. He was born in a log cabin in Knox County Tennessee, June 22, 1857. He grew up in that area, attending the common schools that were available. At the age of seventeen, he applied for and received a teacher's certificate. He thus began a career of teaching that continued till his death.

In the fall of 1857, Ashley enrolled in the University of Tennessee. After a short while, he took up the study of law with General J. C. J. Williams of Knoxville. As was the custom in those days, a young man aspiring to be an attorney became an apprentice and understudy of an older lawyer until he was prepared to take the law examination for admittance to the bar. Johnson's desire to be a lawyer gave way to the more urgent commitment to preach the gospel.

The father and mother of Ashley Johnson were nominal Baptists. His father had fallen into skepticism and his mother had become indifferent. As a result of the parent's backsliding, the children were never taken to Sunday School and only rarely to worship services. At the early age of twelve, young

Ashley desired to follow Jesus but received no encouragement or guidance. Consequently most of his teen years were spent in sin. Fortunately, Johnson was privileged to hear the primitive gospel proclaimed by Dr. L. H. Lawson, John Adcock, Gilmore Randolph and W. B. Smith. Eventually his parents obeyed the gospel, but he continued in sin, being influenced by worldly friends.

In October of 1877 he attended a Baptist revival in which many folks were greatly moved by the excitement of the occasion. He later wrote: "In the midst of the great excitement which prevailed, the thought came to me like a bolt from a clear sky at noonday. Here I am, trifling my time away, knowing the truth, and these people are drifting to judgment in ignorance. I will turn over a new leaf and be a preacher."

After a brief period of study he was immersed into Christ by Bro. John Adcock, October 14, 1877. The following Saturday the young convert attended a worship service at the Thorn Grove Church near Knoxville. Dr. Lawson, the minister, asked Ashley to give a lesson. He had never even led a public prayer up to that point. Accepting the challenge he spoke and thus launched his long and illustrious career.¹⁴³

The succeeding months were devoted to a thorough study of God's Word and the writings of Alexander Campbell. By early spring he was ready to begin preaching in a serious way. He set out on an extended evangelistic trip through East Tennessee and Western North Carolina. He was successful from the start. A. H. Brown wrote of him: "His messages rang true to the Book, and were couched in simple, direct language that a child could understand. He was deadly in earnest He often quoted, 'woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel' . . . He baptized people by the scores and soon was encouraging other young men to devote their lives to the proclamation of the Word."¹⁴⁴

Two years following his conversion, Johnson engaged a Mr. John Cain Miller in a public debate at Greenville, Tennessee. Miller was a Lutheran minister. The proposition was; "Resolved, that the First Covenant (the Law of Moses) is abolished." When Miller made a poor showing, the Lutherans insisted that the discussion be terminated at the close of the first day. It had been scheduled for two days.

A second debate was conducted at the Thorn Grove Church in Knox County in September 1891. His opponent was a Mr. H. C. Hemstead of the Missionary Baptist Church. Each man affirmed the proposition: "The Church with which I stand identified is Apostolic in doctrine and practice." Hemstead was

143 Alva Ross Brown, **Faith, Prayer, Work — Being The Story of Johnson Bible College** (n.p., n.d.), p. 3-5. (n.p., n.d.), pp. 3-5.

144 *Ibid.*, p. 6.

routed when it was shown that his Baptist Church wore a non-apostolic, non-scriptural name; that it had a non-apostolic, human creed (**The Philadelphia Confession of Faith**); that it employed unscriptural language; that its plan of salvation and church membership were unscriptural along with a host of other non-apostolic tenets and practices. Brother Johnson wished to publish the full record of the discussion, but Hemstead and his colleagues would not consent. Johnson proceeded to print 25,000 copies of his arguments.

In 1881, just four years after his conversion, the young preacher published his first full-length book entitled **The Great Controversy** which depicted representatives of the “Christian” denominations engaged in a search for a basis for unity, with a New Testament Christian showing them the more perfect way. This remarkable volume has enjoyed a circulation of over 100,000 copies.

Johnson’s journalistic career began with the publication of **The Christian Watchman** in 1879-1880. He served a while as a special correspondent to the **Christian Standard** magazine of Cincinnati. **Johnson’s Quarterly** was published from 1888-1892. A total of fourteen titles came forth from his prolific pen which enjoyed a combined circulation of 250,000 volumes. Among his published works were: **The Great Controversy, The Holy Spirit and The Human Mind, The Two Covenants, The Tennessee Evangelist, The Self Interpreting New Testament, Johnson’s Encyclopedia, The Life of Trust and Sermon Outlines and Bible Readings.**

As an author, A. R. Brown wrote of Johnson: “He was one of the most zealous and most discerning advocates of his generation for the restoration of the New Testament Church in name, ordinances, doctrines, practices, and fruits.”¹⁴⁵

In the year 1885 Ashley Johnson was employed as the state evangelist for the churches in South Carolina. While extremely successful in his evangelistic endeavors, he was struck by the great need for more preachers. At that time he was the only man devoting full-time to preaching among our churches in South Carolina. While there, he conceived the idea of a Correspondence Bible College to help train ministers. Soon he had some 200 men enrolled. After a brief stay in Augusta, Georgia, he returned to Knoxville from which he operated the rest of his days.

Upon his return to Knoxville, Johnson preached for six months for the church which met on Park Street. In addition he did a great deal of evangelistic work as well as conducting his Correspondence School.

In 1890 he was able to purchase the old Johnson homestead at Kimberlin Heights some twelve miles from Knoxville. At the same time he began to

145 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-9

dream of founding a school for the training of preachers. In November of 1892 while preaching at the Bearden Church, he ventured to tell the brethren of his dream. A Bro. William F. Crippen urged him to go ahead and he would give him \$100. That was a sufficient boost for the establishment of **The School of Evangelists**. The cornerstone for the first building was laid May 13, 1893. Some forty students enrolled for the first session. The school was financed largely from the sale of Johnson's books. Ashley Johnson was a man of great faith and prayer. He modeled his devotional life after the great British preacher and humanitarian, George Muller. He estimated that he averaged praying two hours per day. Archibald McLean wrote "not one man in a million can pray like brother Johnson." A. R. Brown recalled that "he prayed with the confidence of a child speaking to his father." He wrote, "Herein is the secret of my success: Profound convictions; absolute self-abandonment for Christ." Because of his unbounded faith in God's providence, he said concerning his work "no man can discourage me." On his stationery was this motto:

"We pray as if everything depends upon prayer.

We work as if everything depends upon work.

We trust as if everything depends upon trust.

We wait as if everything depends upon waiting."

A great tragedy struck Bro. Johnson in 1904. While on an evangelistic trip to Columbus, Indiana, word was received that the main building of his school had burned and all the equipment had been lost. There was no insurance. Since the boys were lodged in that building, most of them lost their possessions as well. So well had he trained those young men that when he arrived they lined the walk to the charred ruins and sang, "**My Faith Looks Up To Thee**." Undaunted, Johnson launched a drive for funds and soon replaced the lost building with a splendid edifice of brick.¹⁴⁶

The sole purpose of The College of Evangelists was to train men to preach the gospel to a sinful, sorrowing world. Above the entrance to the main building was engraved the words, "Open Day and Night to the Poor Young Man Who Desires Above Every Other Desire to Preach the Gospel." The slogan of the school was, "A Preacher-Training Institute in a Preacher-Growing Atmosphere." It was his goal to enroll only such "men whose lives were morally consistent with the Christian ministry."¹⁴⁷

In the school catalogue for 1896-97 Johnson wrote:

146 Harry C. Wagner **History of the Disciples of Christ in East Tennessee** (Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943), p. 171

147 Brown, *op cit.*, p. 9-29.

1. “If you use tobacco in any form, do not write to us about coming here, for it will be a waste of time. It is not a question of coming here to quit—if you use it you cannot get in.
2. If you are a wild, unsettled boy, this is no place for you. We are not in the work of reforming bad boys, but in the work of developing pious young men into preachers of the gospel.
3. If you are too lazy or too “nice” or too sick to work, this is no place for you”¹⁴⁸

Of his students Johnson said, “Our young preachers speak for themselves; a cleaner lot of young men cannot be found. If there is one young man on the Hill who uses tobacco or who would stoop to tell a filthy yarn, I do not know it. These young men are poor, but they are good material, the best material out of which to make preachers.”¹⁴⁹

Ritchie Ware said at Johnson’s funeral “There is no other school among the disciples of Christ where every man who comes must declare first his desire to preach the Gospel.”¹⁵⁰

The kind of training students received at the College of Evangelists is reflected in a **Statement of Belief** drawn up by Bro. Johnson to which all trustees, teachers, and other servants of the school had to subscribe. “That the Bible is the inspired word of God from cover to cover; that the prophets of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; that Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary, without the interposition of an earthly father; that He is the Son of God in the all inclusive and all exclusive sense and that therefore He can do everything; that He died on the Cross for the remission of our sins; that He arose from the dead on the third day, in the body in which He was buried, for our justification; that that He sits at the Father’s right hand in glory, making intercession for the saints according to the will of God; that He is the supreme dictator of life and death; that His terms of salvation inspired by the Holy Spirit were proclaimed by the Apostles and put on record in the book of Acts; that the Church of the living God was built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; that outside of His Church there is no promise of present or eternal salvation—the terms of salvation and Church membership being one and the same; that God through Jesus Christ still answers prayer; that Jesus Christ will come again in glory at the end of the world, at which time there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust; and that God will judge every man from

¹⁴⁸ Wagner, *op cit*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁹ Brown , *op cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁵⁰ Wagner, *op cit.*, p. 172.

Adam down to the last man who draws mortal breath according to his works, and according to the laws laid down in the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New, and reward every one eternally according to his work.”¹⁵¹

The spiritual life of president Johnson permeated every aspect of the school. There was a prayer meeting on campus every evening at 7:30. Each student was expected to attend. He had an “upper room” on the fourth floor of the main building which served as a private chapel for prayer. Each student was urged to visit there daily.¹⁵²

Concerning the name of the school, Johnson wrote, “we call it the School of Evangelists because it was modeled, in a sense, after the old time School of the Prophets, institutions in which the prophets lived with their students and lifted them to higher things.”¹⁵³ In 1909 the name of the school was changed to Johnson Bible College.

The accomplishments of Ashley Johnson were astounding. In 1913 he wrote: “Here is what, with God and our brethren, we have done: Raised from our books, the farm, contributions and other sources, \$250,000; taught, counting annual enrollments, 250 ... the largest enrollment of preacher students in the church...”¹⁵⁴

By 1916 he estimated that he had a part in training 1,000 men who were then preaching the gospel.¹⁵⁵ Through never large, the school with an average enrollment of 110 in its first twenty-seven years had a tremendous impact on the brotherhood and especially on the congregations of East Tennessee.¹⁵⁶

Throughout his career Ashley Johnson enjoyed the highest respect from his fellow preachers. The editor of **The Christian Standard** voiced the opinion that Johnson had done more for the cause represented by the Christian Churches than any man of his generation.¹⁵⁷ Bro. J. W. McGarvey of Lexington, Kentucky, wrote: “You certainly are doing and have done a remarkable work.”¹⁵⁸

Ashley Johnson’s preaching career spanned the years of controversy and division in our great brotherhood. There is no indication that he was troubled by the evolving organizational structures such as the missionary society or

151 Brown, *op cit* , p. 22.

152 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

153 Wagner, *op cit.*, p.172.

154 *Ibid.*, p. 179.

155 *Ibid.*

156 *Ibid.*, p. 180.

157 **Christian Standard**, Vol. 50, Aug. 14, 1915. p. 1507.

158 Brown, *op cit.* p. 35.

the use of instrumental music in worship. No record of his protesting either practice has been found. An aged Christian Church minister, who was a student at the Bible School prior to 1920, related to the author that he recalled seeing Bro. Johnson seated on the platform singing with the piano. History makes it plain that the school, its staff and students, readily took its place in the stream of the brotherhood that departed from the original ground of the Restoration and came to be known as the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches. It should be mentioned that the school has always been identified with the conservative wing of the Christian Churches.

By 1924 Johnson's health had failed. He preached his last sermon on January 3, 1925, an exposition of John the fifteenth chapter. He traveled to Baltimore for treatment but suffered a fatal cerebral hemorrhage that finished its work on January 14, 1925.¹⁵⁹

His worn body was returned to Knoxville where he was laid to rest on the campus of the school overlooking the peaceful French Broad River.

We cannot help but ponder what would have been the present status of the Lord's Church in East Tennessee if those who directed and taught in Johnson Bible College and Milligan College had remained loyal to the commitment to teach and do only those things in religion which are authorized by the New Testament of Christ.

89.

H. LEO BOLES

WHO TOWERED ABOVE HIS PEERS

Great men make a lasting imprint on human society. While statesmen and warriors make marks (often scars) on the face of history, it is the teacher and literary man who makes the lasting imprint. He affects the minds—the thoughts of men. Shaping their thoughts, he changes their lives. Long after his demise, the words he wrote continue to influence the world for good or evil. Such a man of letters was H. Leo Boles, the subject of this biographical sketch.

¹⁵⁹ J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers* (Lynchburg, VA; published by the author, 1939), p. 68.

His Early Life

Henry Leo Boles was born to Henry Jefferson Boles and Sarah Smith on February 22, 1874, near Gainsboro, Tennessee. He was one of eighteen children born into H. J. Boles' home. His mother was a granddaughter of the illustrious Raccoon John Smith of Kentucky. Smith had carved for himself a notable place in the early history of the American Restoration movement.

Young Boles was fortunate to be born into a Christian home. Thus from his earliest days he grew up in an environment of righteousness. For 53 years, his father faithfully preached the gospel of Christ in the Cumberland Mountains of Tennessee. He it was that first encouraged young Leo to become a preacher.

W. T. Kidwell, while conducting a gospel meeting at the Olive Church of Christ in DeKalb County, Tennessee, baptized our subject. It was on September 27, 1895.

As a boy, Leo was educated in the local elementary schools. In those days a youngster only attended school some 3-4 months out of the year. He then enrolled in Dibrell College and later Burritt College at Spencer, Tennessee. From the latter school he graduated in 1900. After a short stint as a school teacher, in 1903 he entered Nashville Bible School. There he met and studied at the feet of the venerable David Lipscomb. By 1906 he was able to graduate from the Bible School, whereupon the administration offered him a teaching post. This he gladly accepted. While teaching his courses in mathematics, he took every course that Bro. Lipscomb taught. He thus spent a total of seven years in the classes of that great man of God. In 1920 he completed his formal education, receiving the Master's Degree from Nashville's Vanderbilt University.

Bro. Boles had originally planned to pursue a career in law but at age 29 he finally decided to devote his life to proclaiming Christ. For that decision we should be eternally grateful.

Our subject was twice married. First he married Miss Cynthia Cantrell of DeKalb County, Tennessee (1894). A year later she died, following the birth of their first child. He then married Ida Mae Meiser (September 23, 1906). Bro. Boles fathered two sons, Cleo, by his first wife, and Leo, by his second mate. While his profession placed him in the eye of the public, he was very determined to keep his personal life private.

In 1913 H. Leo Boles was chosen president of David Lipscomb College, being nominated by Bro. Lipscomb himself. Under his administration, the faculty of the school for the first time received a guaranteed salary. His tenure continued until 1920. Then after a three-year absence he returned for a second period of service. The school was greatly blessed by his sixteen years of enlightened leadership. His students recalled that he loved to play tennis.

The Preacher

Bro. Boles preached his first sermon at Sunny Point, Tennessee on July 7, 1903. His first gospel meeting was conducted in Nashville in the year 1904. Seventeen souls were saved. For his efforts he was paid \$30. By the time he completed his life's work, through his labors an estimated 8,000 souls had been won to Christ. In physical endowments, Boles was richly blessed. He was a little taller than average and all of his adult life he weighed about 165 pounds. He preferred to preach without consulting his notes and without a lectern. In the pulpit he was dignified. His delivery was calm with no shouting. He was always immaculately dressed.

The great ability of Bro. Boles and his influence on his contemporaries is reflected in their written estimates at the time of his death.

L. L. Brigance wrote, "Bro. Boles had grown in the confidence of the brethren until he was probably regarded as the best 'authority' in the church on what the Bible teaches on any and all subjects."¹⁶⁰

N. B. Hardeman called him "one of the best bible teachers of all that have gone before." He said "there was a magnetism about him that attracted men to him."¹⁶¹

A. E. Emmons recalled that "one of the most outstanding characteristics in Bro. Boles' teaching and preaching was his directness. He spoke deliberately and carefully. He manifested great depth of soul and an abounding compassion for the lost, yet you were never in doubt as to which side of a question he stood on."¹⁶²

Of Bro. Boles' preaching, R. C. Walker observed, "He is a man of knowledge, and he also has the ability to convey that knowledge in terms that are easily understood." He went on to add, "he was one of the few men whose preaching was so clear and concise the outline automatically set itself in the minds of the hearers...when he finished, men might not agree with him, but they knew what he had said, and exactly where he stood."¹⁶³

J. E. Chessor described Bro. Boles' preaching thusly: "He carved each thought and when he reached the climax, the work stood forth admirable as a medallion carved by a skilled hand, clear, forceful, convincing, strong and beautiful, and unassailable...yet few could detect that he had ever taught

160 L. L. Brigance, "Great Leader Fallen," Gospel Advocate, # 28 (March 1946); p. 290.

161 N. B. Hardeman, "H. Leo Boles," op. cit., p. 290.

162 A. E. Emmons, "Reflections on the Passing of H. Leo Boles," op. cit., p. 300.

163 R. C. Walker, "A Suggestion Concerning That Man of God, H. Leo Boles," op. cit., p. 301.

“logic,” or “rhetoric,” or “ethics,” so simple he was, so thoughtful, so humble and reserved. He made no display of his learning.”¹⁶⁴

Tillit S. Teddlie reminisced, “If Bro. Boles had any faults, they were totally obscured by the greatness of his character. As a preacher, he was sound to the core. As a soldier of Christ, he was loyal and courageous. As a Christian, he was humble and faithful.”¹⁶⁵

Batsell Baxter noted that Boles “studied diligently to the last, and this showed in the freshness and interesting quality of his sermons.”¹⁶⁶

His power is further explained by the fact that “throughout his preaching career, he read the Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus each week to keep fresh in his heart the responsibilities of a preacher.”¹⁶⁷

John T. Lewis attributed his success to “his indomitable will power and determination....” These, said Lewis, “made him one of the outstanding gospel preachers and educators in his day.”¹⁶⁸

His preaching was powerful and his influence great because “He held no radical opinions, no speculative theories, no strange positions. He rode no hobbies. He was safe, sound, conservative.”¹⁶⁹ From his early years he had a habit of a private period of prayer in the afternoon of each day.

People love Boles’ preaching because it “was true to the book, rich, dynamic and soul-stirring.”¹⁷⁰ Another factor was his “simplicity and humility and lack of egotistical desire to be a great preacher...”¹⁷¹ These traits gave him unsought greatness above many of his peers.

The Teacher

H. Leo Boles was, above all else, a gifted teacher. Some 1500 young preachers were trained in his Bible classes at David Lipscomb College. “He taught his students the Bible, not merely some course related to the book, but the book itself. His students were taught to oppose all modernism, speculation, and denominationalism. They were encouraged to preach for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. He condemned professionalism among preachers

164 James E. Chessor, “**Good and Faithful Servant**,” op. cit., p. 295-296.

165 Tillet S. Teddlie, “**A Great and a Good Man**,” op. cit., p. 302

166 Batsell Baxter, “**Teacher and Friend**,” op. cit., p. 293.

167 B. C. Goodpasture, “**A Biographical Sketch**,” op. cit., p. 293.

168 John T. Lewis, “**H. Leo Boles As I Knew Him**,” op. cit., p. 295.

169 Brigance. op. cit. p. 290.

170 Jacob L. Hines. “**True to the Book**,” op. cit., p. 301.

171 R. O. Kelly, “**Believed in Power of Truth**,” op. cit., p. 301.

without reservation. His students were taught to suffer hardship as good soldiers of the cross.”¹⁷²

Roy Vaughan recalled that Boles “did not himself, nor did he allow any student in his class to waste time speculating upon an obscure passage of Scripture or to discuss some untaught question. He wanted his students to have a knowledge of the Scriptures, to be filled with the spirit of Christ, without being influenced by the teaching of any man. “He taught young men to get up and preach the truth unmixed with their opinions or the opinions of other men.”¹⁷³

Boles’ was brilliant in the classroom. “His keen and accurate memory of the Scripture was such that he was often able to teach an entire chapter, verse by verse, without referring to the Bible a single time.”¹⁷⁴ To such a gifted teacher students eagerly flocked.

The lessons he instilled in his students were first of all biblical, and thus valuable and timeless. John D. Cox remembers Bro. Boles’ teaching his boys the following principles:

- “Doom is written on every departure from God’s will.”
- “Truth will rise in the midst of its enemies; error will die in the midst of its friends.”
- “Truth mixed with error ceases to be truth and becomes error.”
- “It takes more study and preparation to be able to say something worthwhile in a thirty-minute sermon than to talk for two hours.”
- “Once one takes the road to destruction, every step he makes is a miserable failure.”
- “One never sees a thing right until he sees that thing just as God sees it.”¹⁷⁵

Another collection of his recommendations to young preachers is given in his biography. Would that every preacher, whether young or old, would memorize and heed the following suggestions;

1. Preach the gospel and live in harmony with its teaching, and you need not defend your character.

172 B. G. Goodpasture, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

173 J. Roy Vaughan, “H. Leo Boles,” *op. cit.*, p. 298.

174 Leo Boles and J. E. Choate, *I’ll Stand On the Rock, A Biography of H. Leo Boles* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Col., 1965), p. 209

175 John D. Cox, “As One of ‘His Boys’ Remembers Him,” *Gospel Advocate* 28 (March 1946), p. 297-298.

2. Heat up the people, but keep your hammer wet and cool. It takes a cold hammer to bend hot iron.
3. A preacher should not scream and bawl out his sentences. "Powder is not shot, and thunder is harmless. It is lightning that kills. If you have lightning, you can afford (not) to thunder."
4. Put thought in your sermon. "It is true that a pound of feathers is as heavy as a pound of lead, but it will not sink as quickly."
5. A preacher should make few promises and live up to the ones he makes.
6. Keep out of debt, and do not lend more than you are able to lose.
7. Be patient with all men; and make friends with children as well as parents.
8. Remember that each sermon may be the last one you will preach, or the last one that some of your hearers will ever hear.
9. Preach in view of the judgment and seek to please God.
10. Let others praise you and refrain from boasting.¹⁷⁶

The Debater

Bro. Boles lived in a day when the man who took the public platform had to be prepared to defend his message in the presence of his audience or be driven from the field.

His first debate was with a Methodist minister. It occurred when he was teaching school in Texas. At that time Boles was young, inexperienced, and not even a preacher. The proposition was, "Resolved, that denominationalism is contrary to Christianity." At that time he was the only member of the Lord's church in the community, thus his support was nil. Yet he courageously met and handily spanked his opponent.¹⁷⁷

"In 1906 he debated a Seventh Day Adventist by the name of O. W. Burnell in Warren County, Tennessee. Two years later he debated W. J. Watson, a Baptist minister at Walter Hill in Rutherford County, Tennessee. His final debate was in 1944 in Nashville with J. M. Hoffman, a Seventh Day Adventist."¹⁷⁸

Bro. Boles' most notable debates were written discussions that were first published in the **Gospel Advocate** and then in book form. In 1926, he debated

¹⁷⁶ Boles and Choate, *I'll Stand On the Rock*, p. 222-223.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 89-90.

¹⁷⁸ Dabney Phillips, *Restoration Principles and Personalities* (University, Al.: Youth in Action, Inc., 1975), p. 278.

M. D. Clubb of the Christian Church on the subject of instrumental music. In 1927, a similar discussion was conducted with R. H. Boll on the subject of premillennialism. Each of these debates enjoyed a wide circulation and was viewed by Boles' brethren as a definitive presentation of truth and refutation of error.

H. Leo Boles "was ready to meet any man on earth who would dare to lift his voice against the truth. He was aware of the fact that the truth of God has no voice of its own with which to defend itself when blasphemed, defamed, and cast down as damnable heresy...He was set for the defense of the gospel."¹⁷⁹

F. O. Howell wrote, "Bro. Boles approached every question with an open mind; but when he finally took a position, he was definitely a positive character. He was always calm and deliberate, but firm, steadfast, and fearless in his defense of the truth as he understood it..." Even in the heat of controversy, Howell remembered that Boles was "kind and gentle toward the erring and patient in his efforts to help them find the right way"¹⁸⁰

When facing a matter of controversy, Bro. Boles always thoughtfully, carefully, and prayerfully investigated an issue in the light of divine revelation to determine the right and wrong side of a subject. He did not wait for the world or the brotherhood to take a stand, but always aligned himself on the side he believed to be the Lord's side. Then he stood (even if alone) and contended for and defended the truth in the spirit of Christ. One never did have to wonder which side of a question Bro. Boles was on. It was not his habit to evade an issue. Any opponent would squirm under his profound logic and scriptural conclusions."¹⁸¹

In debate, Boles "did not stoop to the ugly and ungentlemanly plane nor did he rely upon sarcasm and sophistry to defeat his opponent. His logic was keen and clear, and no man entered the arena with him without keenly feeling the force of his arguments"¹⁸²

Gus Nichols, himself an accomplished debater, wrote of Boles, "with his powerful mind he could see through a problem or a proposition, clearly define the issue, and make the truth to shine as bright as day, while others were wasting time with technicalities..... All could easily understand any argument that he made on any subject. He could state the truth on any question in few words, and when he stated any proposition, he clearly defined the terms used and presented the truth from so many angles that the force of his arguments

179 Gus Nichols, "H. Leo Boles," *Gospel Advocate* 25 (March 1946): p. 306-309.

180 F. O. Howell, "A Great Man Passes," *op. cit.*, p. 304.

181 A. R. Hill, "A Great Man," *op. cit.*, p. 304.

182 J. Roy Vaughan, "H. Lee Boles," *op. cit.*, p. 307.

was irresistible. He was just and fair in dealing with men and issues. He never intentionally misrepresented anyone to obtain the advantage in argument... He had deep and abiding convictions, knew what he believed, and why he believed as he did ... He was bold as a lion in defense of the truth. He knew the word and will of God and feared no man who would dare raise his voice against the truth.”¹⁸³

W. C. Anderson recalled that during a “unity meeting” with a group of Christian Church preachers, a digressive brother proposed that since his brethren had respected the scruples of our brethren and forgone the use of instrumental music for that session, that they should be given to privilege to use it at the next meeting along with their choir. He then asked those present “Do you agree?” One voice answered firmly and courageously, “No.” It was Bro. Boles.¹⁸⁴

As A Writer

Perhaps Leo. Boles’ most lasting contribution was his literary work. As in his preaching, he was highly trained and gifted in the art of writing. He was a disciplined man, commonly arising for work at 4:30-5:00 a.m. He prayed and studied until 7:00 when he had breakfast with his family. He then did his day’s work.¹⁸⁵ For many years he was blessed to have as his secretary, Miss Violet DeVaney, who greatly assisted him. For some forty years he was associated with the **Gospel Advocate**, the leading paper among the Churches of Christ. A portion of that time he served as editor of the journal.¹⁸⁶

He authored several volumes of **Elam’s Notes** and beginning in 1929, the **Annual Lesson Commentary** for Bible School teachers. He served as editor-in-chief of the **Gospel Advocate Series of Bible School Literature**.

The **Boles-Clubb Debate** was issued in 1927. The **Boles-Boll Debate on Unfulfilled Prophecy** was sent forth in 1928. In 1932 he published a book entitled **Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers**.

Nineteen-thirty six saw the issuance of the first of his great commentaries. It was on the **Gospel of Matthew**. His **Commentary on Luke** was published in 1940. His **Commentary on Acts of the Apostles** came forth in 1941. All of Boles’ Commentaries have enjoyed a wide and continuing circulation to this day as part of the Gospel Advocate series of commentaries on the New Testament.

183 Gus Nichols, “H. Leo Boles,” op. cit., p. 306.

184 W. C. Anderson, “He Was Courageous,” op. cit., p. 303.

185 Boles and Choate, **I’ll Stand on the Rock**, p. 241.

186 *Ibid.*, p. 162.

In 1942 his monumental work on **The Holy Spirit** was printed. This was the result of a series of scholarly lectures he had presented on the subject to the students at Freed-Hardeman College.

Other publications included the following tracts and pamphlets:

- **The New Testament Teaching on War,**
- **The Eldership of the Churches of Christ,**
- **Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage**
- **Boles' Sermon Outlines,** edited by B. C. Goodpasture
- **Boles' Bible Questions**
- **The Way of Unity Between "Christian Churches" and Churches of Christ.**

Hundreds of Boles' articles filled the pages of the **Gospel Advocate** from 1915 till his death in 1946. Many of his articles have been reprinted in the **Gospel Advocate** and other journals since his departure. His last article was written the day before his death. His topic was "Paul's Four Faithful Sayings." It is through his literary work that "being dead, he yet speaketh" to our generation.

His Mentors

H. Leo Boles felt especially blessed by his association with three great men of the faith. He wrote; "From **David Lipscomb** the writer (Boles) learned the rugged truths of the Bible and received encouragement which strengthened his faith in the word of God; through the association with **E. A. Elam** he learned to appreciate more the value of loyalty to the Word of God and service in the name of Christ, and through the association with **Bro. (A. G.) Freed** he learned some of those finer graces of soul culture which adorn the Christian life."¹⁸⁷

S. P. Pittman observed that "the stamp of Bro. (D.) Lipscomb was upon all those who had studied with him, but it seemed that H. Leo Boles had received a double portion of his spirit."¹⁸⁸ According to Pittman, Boles came closer to epitomizing the ideals of David Lipscomb than any person connected with David Lipscomb College."¹⁸⁹

Sister A. R. Hill considered Bro. Boles the most unforgettable character she had ever known. Eleven things about him greatly impressed her:

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

1. Spirituality, nearness to God.
2. Bible knowledge, depth of understanding, logical thought, and simplicity of speech in preaching.
3. Temperance. He abstained from everything evil or harmful and used the good things of life according to God's will.
4. Service. His desire and willingness to serve humanity. He was never too busy to talk with the humblest persons who were sincerely seeking for guidance.
5. Positive nature. He could be very firm, yet kind. Never was he easily swerved from what he considered his duty. He was a man of strong will power.
6. His capacity for work was marvelous. He had the ability to accomplish his purposes. Perhaps this was because he always had a goal before him. Also his systematic and orderly work habits added to his efficiency.
7. Punctuality. He was never known to be late for an appointment.
8. His good appearance. He was always well dressed and well groomed.
9. His dignity in the pulpit.
10. Cheerfulness. He always radiated a spirit of optimism and was never one to spread gloom. He might reprove and rebuke, but never did he discourage one.
11. He was a student of human nature. He knew people.¹⁹⁰

Upon his demise, Allen Phy wrote of Bro. Boles; "In character he was pure, firm and steadfast. There was no compromise with error in his nature. In this respect he regarded not the person of man. He was no flatterer, but as a friend he was constant and true. He always encouraged young preachers when he thought they had the ability and character for their work."¹⁹¹

Death came to Bro. Boles on the morning of February 7, 1946, following a bout with phlebitis and pneumonia. He lacked but two weeks reaching his seventy-second birthday. Funeral services were conducted at the Grace Avenue Church of Christ in Nashville. Services were conducted by N. B. Hardeman, S. H. Hall, and B. C. Goodpasture. Congregational singing was led by Mack Wayne Craig. Burial was in Woodlawn Memorial Park in Nashville.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ Mrs. A. R. Hill, "An Unforgettable Character," *Gospel Advocate* 28 (March 1946): p. 307.

¹⁹¹ Allen Phy, "A Tribute to H. Leo Boles," *op. cit.*, p. 298.

¹⁹² Boles and Choate, *I'll Stand On the Rock*, p. 257.

We have but briefly sketched the life of one of the greatest leaders of the American Restoration Movement. In the first half of the twentieth century, none among our brethren was his superior and but few his equal. In terms of his abilities, his accomplishments and his lasting influence, he surely stands in company with Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, Benjamin Franklin and David Lipscomb. His continuing worth to the cause of Christ is inestimable. We can only give thanks to God that he lived among us in a most critical period of time. Much of the strength we enjoy today is due to his years of tireless work.

90.

GUS NICHOLS,

A PREACHER PAR EXCELLENCE

(Author's note: Although Gus Nichols did his work in the 20th century, he reflected the spirit and zeal of the early pioneers. He was a great inspiration to the author and others of his generation).

Once in a great while God blesses the earth with a person who is a rare jewel of humanity. Such people seem to combine all of those traits and characteristics that people universally admire. Although God has given the church of our day many notable and capable preachers, few have been endowed with the graces of Christ, the powers of intellect and skills of oratory and the practical success as was Gus Nichols of Jasper, Alabama.

Nichols was born in a log cabin in Walker County Alabama, Jan. 12, 1892, the first of ten siblings. He was baptized at age 17 by C. A. Wheeler. For a short while he attended Alabama Christian College at Berry, Alabama but most of his education came from years of disciplined study and experience. Gus preached his first sermon in July of 1917. His ministry continued until he was struck down by a stroke in 1975. He was married to Matilda Frances Brown. Of their children, two sons, Hardeman and Flavil, became capable preachers. In his long years of service, Bro. Nichols served the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ in Jasper as their regular minister. But his work extended throughout the South. He was a featured speaker each year at the Freed-Hardeman College Lectures. He met some 100 men in public debates on various religious themes. **The Nichols-Holder, Nichols Weaver, and Nichols-**

King Debates were published and widely circulated. Four books of sermons were published as were his lectures on the Holy Spirit. It is said that over 5,000 people were brought to Christ through his teaching. Besides his local work and evangelistic meetings, Nichols conducted a daily radio broadcast and edited a monthly religious paper, **Words of Truth**.

The author knew of Bro. Nichols since his college days, but only in the last seven years of Nichols life was he privileged to know him personally. Yet in that time, he learned to love and appreciate the man and to count him as his “ideal” as a gospel preacher, this side of Christ and the Apostles. Herewith are some of the characteristics that so impressed me.

- He was great and highly successful, yet always humble and unassuming.
- He was notable, yet still a servant to God and man.
- He was among the best preachers, yet he was still approachable.
- He was friendly, and open, willing to share his thoughts with others and listen to them.
- He was a scholar of distinction, yet he was always a student, studying and learning to the end.
- He was a highly educated man without the benefit of a lot of formal training in religious schools. He taught himself:
- He was renowned preacher, yet he was very sympathetic toward younger preachers. He always had time and was willing to help.
- He was a busy man, yet he took time to put his wisdom down in print for future generations.
- He was in great demand as an evangelist, yet he was a dedicated and successful local preacher and congregation builder.
- He was an able pulpiteer, yet still a soul-winner, interested in the individual.
- He reached the pinnacle of success, yet never retired. He was a tireless worker who fell at his post of duty.
- He was a successful builder of a local congregation, yet he found time to become a noted scholar.
- He was a dedicated worker at home, yet he was interested in the welfare of and took time for the church abroad.
- He was a great evangelist, yet also a capable debater and defender of the faith.
- He could boldly defend the truth and attack error without being ugly or hateful to those with whom he disagreed.

- He was a leader of adults, yet he had time for youngsters.
- He excelled as a preacher, yet he was a dedicated family man, a beloved husband and father.
- He practiced in life what he preached from the pulpit. He was godly, holy and pure in thought, words and deeds.
- He did his work in the 20th century, but he was cut from pioneer cloth. He would have been just as successful in 1850 as he was in 1950.

Upon notice of Bro. Nichols passing, the sentiment of the brotherhood was, let it be told across the land that “a prince and a great man is fallen in Israel this day” (II Sam. 3:38). As was said of righteous Abel, though Bro. Nichols be dead, he yet speaketh through his written words, through the thousands he won to Christ, through the hundreds of men he has influenced to preach (Heb. 11:4). It will be difficult to replace such a warrior of the cross. Only a handful of his kind grace a generation of humanity.

John heard a voice from heaven saying, “...Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord...that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them” (Rev. 14:13). I am richer because Gus Nichols lived, I am a better preacher because of his influence. I look forward to seeing Bro. Nichols in heaven.

III

LITTLE KNOWN MEN WHO SERVED WELL

WILSON G. BARKER **and BUFFALO INSTITUTE**

The earliest pioneer of education among the East Tennessee Christians was Bro. Wilson Gilvan Barker. He was born in Washington County, Virginia, December 25, 1830, the first child of Col. Joel and Jemima Kendrick Barker.

Wilson received a good education and chose teaching as his profession. For a mate he selected Miss Sarah Lyon. On September 1, 1852, they were married. In 1858 they moved to Bristol, Virginia. Having prior connections with the Restoration Movement, they immediately cast their lot with the Goodson Christian Church in Bristol on June 20 of that year.

Six children were born to the Barkers; Nanie S., Mary J., Martha W., Jacob, Albert S. and William S. Between June of 1861 to September of 1862 the Barkers lost three of their young children. The record does not tell what caused their deaths. We can imagine the heartbreak and sorrow they felt as their tears fell upon those new graves. Wilson's beloved wife, Sarah, joined her children in the year 1870.¹⁹³

On Feb. 4, 1866, Bro. S. H. Millard and Bro. William J. Pendleton ordained Wilson Barker to the ministry of Christ at the Bristol Church. His early preaching was done in upper East Tennessee. He served such congregations as Weaver's, Poplar Ridge, Boon's Creek, Hale's Chapel, Greasy Cove, Hampton, Elizabethton and Turkey Town. He took a special interest in building up the church in Jonesboro, the oldest town in the state and the first capital. To secure adequate funds for a building, he had to make an extended tour into other states soliciting support. He carried with him a picture of the uncompleted building to illustrate the need.¹⁹⁴

In early 1846, Barker moved to Buffalo Creek in Carter County, Tennessee and opened a school in the Buffalo Creek Church building.¹⁹⁵ The church building was quite old by this time, the congregation having begun in 1828.¹⁹⁶ The meeting house was constructed of logs, the length of two or more logs,

193 Mary Hardin McCown and Josephine Owen, **History of the First Christian Church, Johnson City, Tennessee.** n.p., n.d., p. 40.

194 J. W. West, **Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers,** pp. 244-246.

195 H. C. Wagner, **History of the Disciples of Christ in East Tennessee** Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, (1943). p. 153

196 Wagner, **op cit.,** pp. 58-63

with two doors; one in the front, the other on the side with the pulpit opposite the door. Barker renovated the building, ceiling it within and covering the exterior with white weatherboard and placing shutters on the windows. In those days that made it an imposing structure. The building served a dual purpose for church meetings and school classes.¹⁹⁷

The earliest record of Mr. Barker's labors at Buffalo Creek are dated May 28, 1866. When he gave a receipt to George D. and S. W. Williams for \$5.87 paid in 9 bushels of oats at .50 and \$1.37 in cash, on a bill of \$18.50 tuition fees ... The tuition fees were for George Taylor Williams- \$7.50, Rhoda J. Williams-\$7.50, and for Ida Anderson – \$3.50.¹⁹⁸

The school was chartered as Buffalo Male and Female Institute by the State of Tennessee, December 10, 1866.

So successful was Barker's project that it was necessary to enlarge the facilities the next year. On June 7, 1867, a drive was launched to raise funds for the new building. The proposal read;

Trustees of Buffalo Male and Female Institute propose to build on the site near the church donated by Joshua Williams, a brick house sixty by twenty-five feet, one story high. All friendly to the enterprise are solicited to subscribe."

Seventy-seven people subscribed with pledges ranging from one to one hundred dollars. A total of \$1533 was promised and the unit built with two stories rather than one. Soon other houses were built for student dormitories.¹⁹⁹ Buffalo Institute was situated in a scenic location on a hill overlooking Buffalo Valley with its sparkling stream and the Buffalo Mountains in the distance. For upwards of ten years Barker conducted classes at his Institute.

Bro. Barker was a preacher at heart. It was probably to devote more time to his preaching that he left the school in or near 1872 and moved to Johnson City where he taught at Science Hill School. Later he taught at a Martin's Academy at Jonesboro.²⁰⁰ Upon his departure, a Mr. Pendleton of Virginia took the school and further developed the property. Pendleton left the school and in 1875 Josephus Hopwood came from Sneedville to continue the work. Under his leadership it grew into the present day Milligan College.²⁰¹

Bro. Barker wished to devote his full-time to preaching, so in c.a. 1882 he moved to Missouri serving two years at Mexico, Missouri, and ten years at Brunswick, Missouri. As he grew older he returned to East Tennessee to

197 West, *op cit.*, p. 295.

198 *Ibid.*, p. 296.

199 Wagner, *op cit.*, p. 154.

200 West, *op cit.* 246.

201 *Ibid.*, p. 297.

the scenes of his earlier associations. For a short time he served the church at Bristol where his preaching career had begun.

Following the death of his second wife, Anna Bohannon, he made his home with his daughter, Mrs. G. T. Williams, at Milligan College. There he passed away October 5, 1905.

His niece, Mary Lyon Peebles, wrote of him:

“Brother Barker ... was a lovable, consecrated Christian character, gentle and refined, faithful and just in all his dealings, and instructive and forceful preacher of the gospel, which he lived and illustrated in his daily life...”

He had a happy and jovial disposition and always enjoyed a good anecdote, trying always to make people happier and hopeful.”²⁰²

His final words were. “I’m nearing the river, I will soon be across.” He was interred in the East Hill Cemetery in Bristol, Tennessee.²⁰³

92.

JAMES C. BASS

James C. Bass was born in Chattam County, North Carolina, January 24, 1831. In his early years Bro. Bass served as a minister among the Methodists. David Buck convinced him to take his stand on the Bible alone. That occurred in 1846, while Bass was on a preaching mission to Russell County, Virginia.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Bro. Bass enlisted in the Confederate army in South Carolina. He served as a private, fighting in twenty-seven battles. He received several flesh wounds and a severe wound to his right leg which left him crippled for life.

James and Martha Bass had four sons and several daughters. His son, Thomas T. Bass, followed his father’s calling as a gospel preacher.

Bro. Bass was active in the East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia Cooperation. He preached for the Turkey Town church on a monthly basis for many years. His final work was with the church at Cleveland, Tennessee.

202 *Ibid.*, pp. 246-247.

203 McCown and Owens, p 41

Death came to James Bass on June 4, 1924, at the home of his daughter, Carmon White, in Johnson City. J. J. Musick preached his funeral at the Unaka Ave. Christian Church. His earthly remains rest in the Frank White lot at Monta Vista Cemetery.²⁰⁴

93.

JAMES M. BECKETT

James M. Beckett was the son of William and Lucy LeSouer Beckett. He was born in Floyd County, Virginia in 1830. In 1861, he moved to Elizabethton in Carter County, Tennessee, then to Sinking Creek and finally to Dry Creek in Washington County.

Beckett and his wife were early members of the Union Christian Church in Washington County. Beckett was a many talented man. He preached, taught school and taught music. In addition, he was a mill operator, a cabinet and furniture maker. All of his sons were wood-workers. All followed their father's footsteps as ministers. Among his children were Rowena and Charles William.

The Becketts worshiped with the church in Johnson City from its beginning in 1871. He shared the leadership duties there in the early days. He helped to establish the Bethel Church of Christ in Cherokee and preached at the Lone Oak, Buffalo Creek, and Union Christian Churches.

Bro. Beckett completed his earthly journey in 1911. He was part of a mighty band of little-known men who cleared the path before us.²⁰⁵

204 Mary Hardin McCown and Josephine Owen, *History of the First Christian Church., Johnson City Tennessee.* n.d., n.p.

205 Mary Hardin McCown, Josephine Owen, *History of the First Christian Church, Johnston City, Tennessee,* n.p., n.d.

E. H. BOYD

One of the pioneer preachers who proclaimed the back to the Bible message through the hills of East Tennessee was E.H. Boyd. He was the eldest child of Jasper and Marjorie Boyd and was born at Pikeville, Tennessee, on March 2, 1846. Bro. Boyd was fortunate to be educated at Sequatchie College. When the Civil War broke out, he left school and enlisted in the Sixth Tennessee Infantry, Company G, of the Union Army. He served throughout the war.

Following his military years, he completed his education and soon became a leader in his community. He served as Deputy Sheriff and as tax assessor of his county.

In May of 1872, at age 26, Boyd heard the gospel proclaimed by Bro. James Billingsly. He yielded his life to Jesus and was immersed according to the Word of God.

At age 31, Bro. Boyd married Mary Foust of Dayton, Tennessee. She was a worthy help mate to him and to her he owed much of his later success as a gospel preacher. He purchased land in the Sequatchie Valley and began farming, which was the common livelihood of folks in those days. Seeing the need for a church in his community, he gave the land for a meeting house and organized a strong congregation known as Old Bethel. He began preaching the gospel at his home church in 1884.

Bro. Boyd saw the great need for men of God to carry the gospel to the folks of his region, so he commenced a diligent study of the Word of God. He was eager to teach all with whom he came in contact the good news of the Scriptures. Ere long, his fame began to spread and calls came for him to preach in all the adjoining counties of East Tennessee and as far north as Kentucky. He helped to establish congregations of the church at Bethel, Pikeville, Jasper and Dayton, Tennessee. He baptized hundreds of souls into Christ. Wherever he lived, he established a flourishing congregation of God's people. He had those qualities of heart and life that endeared men to him. He was a faithful man of God, loyal to the truth and firm in his stand thereon. His preaching was simple and persuasive.

When the great apostasy swept through East Tennessee, Boyd was a major opponent of it. He strongly opposed the use of instrumental music in worship and the creation of missionary societies to do the work Christ had given his church. He appealed to the Scriptures to show that these things had no divine authority and therefore were to be rejected. By his own example he

demonstrated that no missionary society was needed to effectively evangelize the world. The local church could adequately do the work entrusted to her by her Master.

In 1905 Boyd moved to Dayton, Tennessee where he resided until his death. He departed this life in Sept. 3, 1920. Services were conducted at the Dayton meeting house by J. W. Arrowood.

E.H. Boyd had faithfully preached Christ for forty years. Through his labors, the cause of Christ was planted and protected in the lower region of East Tennessee. To him and his co-laborers of those early days, we are ever indebted. Surely their works do follow after them.

** The above information was gleaned from H. Leo Boles, Biographical Sketches Gospel Preachers, Nashville, Gospel Advocate, 1932, pp. 335-358.*

95.

DAVID BUCK

Scores of noble men of God, whose names and records are all but lost, traversed the mountain trails of East Tennessee in the nineteenth century preaching Christ. It is the author's intent to rescue at last some of them from obscurity. Our present generation needs to know their fathers in the faith, the hardships and sufferings they endured and how the victories were won that give us today a place to stand.

One of God's great proclaimers in those olden days was David M. Buck. He was the son of Ephraim and Agnes Taylor Buck, natives of Carter (now Unicoi) County. Ephraim Buck fought in the War of 1812 attaining the rank of captain. The Buck home place was at Okalona Station on Buffalo Creek. They were devout members of the Buffalo Creek church. David was born on Buffalo Creek near present day Milligan in Carter County, Tennessee on May 22, 1820.

Buck married Mary Elizabeth Mengle on July 6, 1847. To their union were born Abraham M., Ephraim C., David T., Cephas B., James M., and Mary Rebecca. Three of his sons followed his steps as a gospel preacher.²⁰⁶

206 Mary Hardin McCown, and Josephine Owen, *History of the First Christian Church, Johnson City, Tennessee*, n.p., n.d.

John Wright preached for the Buffalo church on occasion. A news item in the **Millennial Harbinger** for December 1841 reports:

*“On Friday following we commenced at Buffalo, Carter County, and in two visits to that place we have gained for the King fifty-three; a part of these from the world, the rest from the Methodists, Baptist, Lutherans, and one from the Universalists. This church numbers one hundred and fifty members...”*²⁰⁷

Records of the early life of Bro. Buck are lost. By 1845 we find that he was a gospel preacher with such reputation and experience that the brethren at the Annual Meeting held at Weaver’s Church in Sullivan County commissioned him to be their itinerant evangelist for the next year. With young Samuel H. Millard, whom he had recommended for ordination,... he visited Grainger, Anderson, and Roane Counties, “preaching at various points and visiting the scattered membership.” Additional missionary journeys carried them into the Virginia counties of Lee, Scott, Russell and Washington. They also visited Johnson, Carter, Sullivan, Washington and Greene Counties in Tennessee. These lengthy preaching excursions were made on horseback.²⁰⁸ Alexander Hall’s Register of 1846 lists Buck as serving the Old Concord Church in Sullivan County, Tennessee.

At the Annual Meeting for 1846, which took place on August 24, at the Buffalo Creek Church, David Buck gave the following report of his labors:

*“...he had delivered 164 regular discourses, had witnessed 122 confessions, and enlisted in a late tour to Russell County, VA., two “Preachers” ... James Bass, an ordained minister from the Methodist E. Church, the other, Abraham Campbell, a licensed minister from the Baptists...”*²⁰⁹

Once more, the brethren engaged Bro. Buck and Sam Millard for a year of work. The congregation of the Annual Meeting obligated themselves to raise funds for their traveling evangelists. Unfortunately not everyone was able to fulfill his pledge. Twelve congregations were represented in the 1846 session.²¹⁰

207 Alexander Campbell, **Millennial Harbinger** news item, New Series, v. 5 (Dec. 1841), pp. 590.

208 H. W. Wagner, **History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee**. (Master’s Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943), p. 138.

209 Ibid., p. 139.

210 H. Jackson Darst, **Ant-Bellum Virginia Disciples** (Richmond, Virginia Christian Missionary Society, 1959). P1 95.

Brother Buck continued his role as traveling evangelist for the cooperation until 1858.²¹¹ In that year he planted a new congregation at the Field School House in Russell County, Virginia with seventy-five disciples.²¹²

David Buck suffered an untimely death. During the Civil War he contracted a fever from a sick soldier while nursing him in his home. His widow was left with four small sons and an infant daughter, born three months after his passing.

What more noble life could one have lived than to serve the Master as a preacher of the gospel and to give up his life while serving his fellow man. He fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith. A crown of life awaits such faithful servants.

96.

W. D. CARNES:

PIONEER PREACHER AND EDUCATOR IN EAST TENNESSEE

One of the first men to preach the Restoration message in Knoxville, Tennessee, was W. D. Carnes. Carnes excelled as a gospel minister and educator, but for our study, his association with the University in Knoxville is of great interest.

William Davis Carnes was born in 1805 in Lancaster district, South Carolina. His parents were Alexander and Mary Davis Carnes. When he was four, his family moved to McMinnville, Tennessee, where his father operated a general merchandise store. The elder Carnes was robbed and murdered while on a business trip to South Carolina.²¹³

Most of the family's estate was mishandled and lost by the guardian. William's mother bought a farm in Rutherford County, Tennessee, whereon he and a younger brother were raised.²¹⁴

211 *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96

212 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

213 M. N. Young, *A History of Colleges Established and Controlled by Members of the Churches of Christ* (Kansas City, MO: The Old Paths Book Club, 1949), pp. 53-54.

214 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Young Carnes learned to read before he went to school. He was fortunate that there was a good school near his home and he eagerly absorbed all the knowledge within his reach. He was the champion speller of his school he allotted regular hours for reading and consumed all the books available in his neighborhood. At night, "He often studied by the light of cedar torches."²¹⁵

William was raised in the Presbyterian faith of his mother but at age eighteen, while teaching at Woodbury, Tennessee, he heard the gospel of the New Testament preached by a Bro. Abner Hill. He accepted it immediately and began preaching within the year. He was trained under Dr. William Jordan and Abner Hill. As was typical in these days, he traveled with them as an apprentice.²¹⁶ His mother and brother followed his godly example and were soon baptized.

At his second speaking appointment, a large crowd of people were present who opposed the gospel he preached. He was intimidated, lost his confidence, and failed miserably. Later he remarked that he had needed such an experience to save him from vanity.

Carnes made a preaching tour into the mountains of East Tennessee and the Sequatchie Valley. The denominational churches refused him use of their meeting houses, so he preached in private homes with much success.²¹⁷

In 1826, Carnes married Elizabeth Billingsly whom he had earlier converted. He bought a farm and a mill near Pikeville, Tennessee, and proceeded to raise a family.²¹⁸ Soon he enjoyed a good measure of prosperity. Later, he was elected to one term as a Justice of the Peace.²¹⁹

Brother Carnes was one of the first promoters of the African Colonization Society which founded the Nation of Liberia and sought to abolish slavery by sending the Negroes back to Africa. He actively supported this project with his influence, his money and his words.²²⁰

Professor James Garvin of the East Tennessee University at Knoxville urged Carnes to improve himself by attending the University. When his plans were made known, his brother-in-law told him he was a fool to give up his

215 Miss Ivey Carnes, **Biographical Sketch of President W. D. Carnes in James E. Scobey, Franklin College and Its Influence** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, Co., 1954), p. 204.

216 H. Leo Boles, **Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers** (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1932), p. 121.

217 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

218 Ivey Carnes, *op cit*, p. 205.

219 Young, *op cit*, p. 54.

220 Jim Carnes, **Memoir of W. D. Carnes**, Beaumont, TX., Pub. By G. G. Carnes, 1926.

lucrative business to go to school.²²¹ But He was not deterred. William rode his horse 95 miles to Knoxville to survey the situation before moving his family. While in the city, he was wandering through the streets and got lost. He stopped at a tailor's shop to ask directions. Because he was dressed in his work jeans, the tailer snubbed him. Later, as he was traveling home on his fine white horse, he overtook the same tailor walking on the muddy road. He paused to chat, but the man did not recognize him. The tailor asked about job opportunities to the west. Carnes reminded him of the snubbing he had received, but gave the fellow a ride on his horse. When they parted paths, the tailor asked permission to take his measurements. To his surprise, when Carnes arrived in Knoxville, a fine suit of clothes was waiting for him at the post office.²²²

Carnes matriculated at age thirty-five. He completed his B.A. program in three years and his M.A. two years later. Upon receipt of his undergraduate degree he was elected principal of the preparatory department of the school and following the reception of his Master's degree he was appointed Professor of English. While at the university, Carnes was nicknamed "Old Pap" because his son and two daughters were enrolled in school with him.²²³

While a student at the University, Carnes took a survey and found two other New Testament Christians. They began to meet together for devotions and Bible study. Other students learned of their meetings and ridiculed them. Some of the students called for an investigation and demanded that the meetings he stopped. At their third session "a mob of hooting, swearing students came storming into the entrance hall, a fiddle twanged, and a dance, punctuated by the stomping of heavy heels, made the building resound." The uproar lasted over an hour. The three Christians waited silently. When the agitators gave out, they closed their devotional meeting with a prayer. The harassment continued for several days before the perpetrators grew weary. Soon, other students joined in the spiritual exercises and eventually the majority of the campus was in attendance. One day as they were worshiping, the leader of the agitators asked to speak. With sobbing voice, he apologized and asked for their prayers. This sparked a great revival among the students.²²⁴

The area across the river from the University was so wild and primitive that it was called "South America." Carnes and his band of students undertook to evangelize the rough citizens of that community. They started a Sunday School in a tumbled down log school house and enjoyed great success in their work.²²⁵

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.

223 Young, pp. 54-55.

224 Ibid., p. 55.

225 Carnes, op cit

In 1850 Bro. Carnes was elected President of Burrirt College in Spencer, Tenn. For eight years he filled that post with honor and success. Burrirt College was owned by the local citizens. Under the leadership of Carnes, the school came to have a distinct religious emphasis. The Scripture was read with prayer at the opening and closing of each school day. Each Lord's Day a congregation assembled at the school for worship and Carnes taught a Bible Class which his students were expected to attend. He also conducted a midweek prayer meeting.²²⁶ When a small group of students and two trustees petitioned Bro. Carnes to abandon his religious program for the school, he immediately wrote out his resignation rather than concede. The board refused his resignation and he continued his practice.²²⁷

As President of Burrirt, Carnes implemented two educational concepts that were new for schools in the South; co-educational classes and physical education, he modeled the curriculum after that of the University at Knoxville.²²⁸

Faced with the problem of students using alcoholic beverages, Carnes expelled all who were found so doing. He also successfully lobbied the state legislature to pass a state-wide prohibition ordinance which forbade selling whiskey within four miles of a chartered school except in incorporated cities.

Carnes' success against the liquor interests stirred a great deal of local hostility and in October of 1857 his house was burned. It was generally thought to be an act of retaliation.²²⁹

Upon the loss of his home, Carnes resigned and accepted the Presidency of East Tennessee University in Knoxville. The trustees of the school had voted unanimously to invite him. Before accepting their invitation, he exacted two pledges from them: that they would build a gymnasium and that no liquor would be allowed on the campus. His administration began in the fall of 1858 and lasted only one year. Two things contributed to his move. In 1859 his wife of thirty-three years died. This, along with the serious illness of two of his children, left him broken in spirit. That same year a group of leading members of the church met at Franklin, Tennessee, and elected him president of a proposed university to be established by Christians.²³⁰ In the end the group purchased Tolbert Fanning's Franklin college in Davidson County and Carnes took the reins. The school showed great prospects for success under

226 Young, p. 55.

227 Carnes, Ivey, pp. 207-208.

228 Young, p. 56.

229 Carnes, **Memoirs of W. D. Carnes.**

230 Young, p. 58.

his capable leadership, but all was shattered by the Civil War. The school closed for lack of students and Carnes moved back to Pikeville.²³¹

He continued his educational work until his death, serving as president of Manchester College, with a second term at Burritt and a final stint at Waters and Walling College at McMinnville, Tennessee. Death came to this grand Christian leader November 26, 1879. He was buried at Spencer, beside his mother.²³²

W. D. Carnes loved the Bible, and he loved to study and teach it. "He believed that, a knowledge, of the Bible was necessary to an all-round practical education, and he believed that the principles of the Bible were essential in developing character and making manly men."²³³

97.

WILL J. CULLUM

One of the gospel preachers who helped to rebuild the cause of Christ in East Tennessee was Will J. Cullum who helped establish the church in Rockwood, Tennessee and served as her minister from 1920-26. The following information about Bro. Cullum is gleaned from a biographical sketch written by his daughter.

When Will Cullum first began preaching, his wife was not a member of the Lord's church. She was a daughter of a Methodist preacher. Most of the preachers of that time wore a slit-tail preacher's coat, often called a Prince Albert coat. One day while Will was at work his wife and her cousin sewed red ruffles on the sleeves, the front and bottom of his preaching coat. It was carefully put away without word. When Sunday came he found his newly decorated coat. Not to be undone he ripped the ruffles loose but left them attached to his coat and trailing behind—to the chagrin of the ladies.

Payment for Bro. Cullum's preaching services was often made in vegetables and meat with whatever the small collection for the day might be.

231 Ivey Carnes, *op cit*, pp. 207-208.

232 *Ibid*, pp. 212-213.

233 Boles, *op cit*, pp. 123-124.

Mention has been made that Cullum's father-in-law was a Methodist preacher. On one occasion they found themselves on opposite sides of the street each one preaching the message he held to be true.

Will was invited to conduct a gospel meeting where he had been several times before. One of the elders met him at the train station as usual. As they were traveling toward the man's home he said, "Brother Cullum, you aren't going to find things like they were when you were here before. The people of the church have withdrawn from me." Astonished, Cullum asked, "Why?" The elder said, "Well, I don't rightly know. You know how I helped build this church, I gave the most money, led the singing, hired the preachers, fired the preacher, and done near all the praying. I just don't know why they withdrew from me."

He preached in Ostella community in Marshall County, Tennessee and baptized almost half of the members of the Spring Place Presbyterian Church. One of the Presbyterian holdouts threatened to horsewhip Cullum and run him out of the country. Eventually the man became one of the preacher's best friends, but he was never converted.

In the same community, the Methodist Church was having a meeting and Cullum attended. As was customary, the Methodist minister invited him to say a few words. Bro. Cullum preached the gospel to them. The following Sunday many of the Methodist folks were at the Ostella Church of Christ and eventually obeyed the gospel.

Once, after his sermon, a lady accosted him saying, "What you preached isn't in the Bible." "Yes it is," he responded and showed her where it was in his Bible. She retorted, "Well it is not in my Bible!" He replied, "Oh yes, your Bible is just like my Bible." Her final remarks was, "Well, if it is I don't want it in there and I'm going to go home and tear it out!"

In those early days in the backwoods communities, preachers did not automatically enjoy respect and courtesy. When he scheduled a meeting in Livingston, Tennessee, folks warned him that the local rowdies had run out of town every preacher who had gone there. Rather than back down, Cullum took that as a challenge. One night during the services he looked up and there was a Klansman at every window and door. The hooded men walked down the aisle carrying a cross, a Bible, and a flag. He stopped his lesson and they handed him a letter demanding that he read it to the assembly. He did so. It contained a warning to certain man and woman in the audience who were cohabiting without marriage to straighten up their lives. As the night-riders were leaving they left a \$25 contribution for the preacher. Later in the meeting they returned with \$50 more for the preacher but specified that it was not for the song leader!

Will Cullum knew and counted as his friends, David Lipscomb and J. D. Tant. Lipscomb visited in his home and Cullum moderated for some of Tant's many debates.

Bro. Cullum's preaching often took him into poor communities as well as those that were prosperous. On one occasion the preacher introduced Cullum, saying, "Bro. Cullum is going to preach today on knowledge and faith. You take Sis. Brown over there, she knows that baby is hers, now that is knowledge. You take Bro. Brown, he thinks that baby is his and that is faith."

Like most of our early preachers, Bro. Cullum worked at a secular job to support his family. At one time he worked at a department store operated by a member of the Catholic Church. The proprietor was very considerate and always let Cullum off for his meetings and debates and even continued his pay. When Bro. Cullum tried to talk to the man about the Scriptures, the gentlemen smiled and said, "I don't need to read the Bible, that's what I pay the priest for."

Then, as now, when one held a meeting, the members would invite him into their home for meals. While preaching in the East Tennessee mountains, an old sister invited him for Sunday dinner. She had him sit in the front yard while she put the meal together. When she called him to the table, there sat the meal---turnip greens, cornbread and buttermilk. The lady said, "Brother Cullum, will you return thanks? If you are thankful, I am."

Once when preaching near Cookeville, there was a young lady who attended the meeting and wished to be baptized. Her father was enraged. He locked her in her room and threatened to shoot the preacher if he came around. Before the meeting was over, the girl managed to slip away and Cullum baptized her. She was afraid to go home, so the family with whom he was staying took her in. Sure enough the angry father appeared with gun in hand. Bro. Cullum wanted to talk with him but his host insisted he not. The host went out, locking the door behind him and finally calmed the raging man. The father did however sue Cullum for baptizing his daughter who was under age. When the case comes to court in Cookeville, the charges were dismissed. A humorous thing happened in connection with the trial. When neighbors asked if Bro. Cullum was away preaching, his twin daughters who were very young replied, "Oh no, he's in jail in Cookeville for staying locked up in a room all night with a girl." We can imagine Sister Cullums' embarrassment trying to explain the real facts to the neighbors.

Will Cullum loved children. He always urged mothers to come and bring their children. He assured them that if the babies cried it wouldn't bother him. He would say, "If they can cry louder than I can preach, then I'll stop." It was a custom in those days when the meeting house was crowded to place the

children on the pulpit with the preacher. His daughter recalled seeing so many children on the stand that he could not walk about.

Crying babies were one thing, but misbehavior during worship services Cullum would not tolerate. If people talked while he was preaching, he would stop and say, “my mother always taught me that it was rude to talk while others were talking, so I’ll wait until you are finished.” Such always got their attention.

When Bro. Cullum performed a wedding and the groom asked, “What do I owe you?” his stock reply was, “Whatever you think she is worth.”

He was invited to hold a meeting for a church in Arkansas. When he got there both elders had decided to go on vacation during the meeting. Needless to say, the meeting never got off the ground. When he returned home to Nashville, he wrote a note to the **Gospel Advocate** saying he had gone to Arkansas and preached the funeral of a dead church.

Will Cullum always tried to see the best in everyone. He seldom spoke critical word about a person. Nor would he encourage those who had gossip to spread.

Death came to W. J. Cullum in his seventy-first year, after a brief illness. His daughter remembers that he had no fear of death. He went peacefully. He just stopped breathing.

** Information taken from a biographical sketch written by his daughter. No name, no date, privately published.*

98.

JERIEL DODGE: BELL MAKER AND GOSPEL PREACHER

One of the earliest proponents of New Testament Christianity in East Tennessee was Jeriel Dodge (1788-1843). Dodge was born November 18, 1788. It is most likely that his father was Josiah Dodge who was preacher for the Severn’s Valley Baptist Church in Harding County (now Larue County), near present day Elizabethton, Kentucky. Josiah served that church from 1791-1800 at a salary of “thirty pounds a year.” The elder Dodge had at least two sons, both of whom became preachers.

At age 16, Jeriel was minister of the tiny South Fork of the No-Linn Baptist Church. In 1804, he attended the Russell's Creek Association meeting as a delegate from his church. He reported that they had ten members. By 1815 they had grown to a membership of forty-five. Both Severn's Valley and the No-Linn Church were associated with the Separate Baptists.

While living in the Blue Grass area, Dodge evidently came in touch with Barton Stone's ideas and embraced the "back to the Bible plea."²³⁴

Jeriel chose for his wife Miss Eliza Washington Spottswood. She was descended from two aristocratic Virginia families. Alexander Spottswood, her great-great grandfather, had served as governor of Virginia 1710-1722. Her mother was Elizabeth Washington, niece of George Washington, the nation's first president. Her father was Augustine Washington. Another of her Spottswood relatives was the wife of Patrick Henry. It seems that the family objected to her marrying "a poor Baptist preacher."²³⁵

The young couple moved to Washington County in Southwestern Virginia. Marriage records from that county, dated July 4, 1816 and October 24, 1819, carry the signature of Jeriel Dodge. From there, in 1820, he moved to Blountville in Sullivan County, Tennessee where he bought property.²³⁶

Dodge brought his faith with him and began teaching his new neighbors. In the early 1820's he helped to organize a congregation at Concord (later Weaver's) Church in Sullivan County. Most likely, it was the first congregation, advocating restoration of original Christianity, that was established in the upper part of the state.²³⁷

The records of the Sinking Creek Baptist Church of Washington County tell of a problem involving Dodge. On November 14, 1824, there was a controversy over the baptism of one Fanny Rentfro. She had been immersed by Dodge, who the record says "is not of our union." This led to an extended controversy which resulted in eight people being excluded from the Sinking Creek Church for justifying the woman's baptism. A year later, James Miller, another of Stone's followers, obtained a letter of dismissal from Sinking Creek Church because of their action regarding Sister Rentfro.

234 Boones Creek Church, *The Earliest Years*, n.d., n.p., p. 1.

235 Mary Hardin McCown, "The Early History of the Christian Churches in East Tennessee," *The East Tennessee Christian*, April 1967.

236 H. Jackson Darst, *Ant-Bellum Virginia Disciples*, (Richmond, Virginia Christian Missionary Society, 1959). pp. 30-31.

237 H. O. Wagner, *History of the Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee*, (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943) p. 71.

In 1826, the Holston Baptist Association appointed a committee to investigate the problems at Sinking Creek. The following year, they reported that they found Sinking Creek.

“A divided people in principle and practice and recommend to the party who hold to the principles and practices that they were constituted upon (i.e., Baptist principles, JW) to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and will not accede to advice given by the association on the point (i.e., regarding Dodge and his followers)”²³⁸ —JW

In 1831, “the church covenant (of Sinking Creek) was produced and read and it was motioned and recorded that reference in it to the Philadelphia Confession of Faith be expunged (*sic*) from the church covenant.” Thereafter, all minutes of the church are headed “Church of Christ on Sinking Creek.”²³⁹ By this, they did not give up their Baptist connections, but they did thus move in the direction of the Scriptural pattern.

In December of 1826 Dodge bought 78½ acres of land in Washington County, on Little Sinking Creek, “West of the Old Stage Road.” Later, in 1841, he purchased 420 acres lying in both Washington and Sullivan counties, paying \$2,671.36 for it. During this period of time, he supported himself by farming and his special trade of bell making, while preaching at every opportunity.²⁴⁰

Some unknown contemporary bard penned the following lines about preacher Dodge, the bell maker:

*“Against old Dodge
We’re bound to lodge
A heavy accusation:
He clinks the bell
That tolls to hell
Sad victims of damnation”*

It was reported that Dodge could imitate the tone of any bell with his voice.²⁴¹ The Jonesboro Whig of November 17, 1841, advertised a stock of bells at Jeriel Dodge’s Shop, 8 miles N. E. of Jonesborough, near the Stage Road leading to Blountville.²⁴² The molds for his bells were dug into the ground near a stream on his farm. When his estate was settled after his death,

238 *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

239 *Ibid.*, p. 62.

240 McCown, *Early History of the Christian Church*, May 1967.

241 Isaac Newton Jones, in J. W. Grant’s *A Sketch of the Reformation in Tennessee*, Nashville, unpublished manuscript, 1897, p. 37.

242 McCown, May 1967.

the inventory listed 900 unfinished bells. From this we conclude that he must have had a flourishing business.²⁴³

In addition to his farm and bell shop, Dodge operated a ferry on the Holston River. His home occupied a historic site in the state for near his house was the famous beech tree on which Daniel Boone carved his immortal line: "D. Boon cilled a Bar on tree in the year 1760."²⁴⁴

Dodge built a swing on one of the tree's great branches, and all the neighborhood children enjoyed playing there. He was a witty fun-loving man. Isaac Newton Jones relates a humorous conversation he had heard about the bell maker and a stranger he chanced to meet:

"The stranger asked him, 'What do you believe in?' Dodge replied, 'I believe in my bellows.' The stranger pressed him, 'What do you hold to?' Dodge retorted, 'I hold to my hammer handle!' The stranger then said, 'What do you call yourself?' Dodge replied with a twinkle in his eye, 'Dodge the devil.'²⁴⁵

Brother Dodge actively participated in the Cooperation Meetings of the East Tennessee Christians. In 1829, the following report was submitted to **The Christian Messenger** by William Slaughter, Jr.:

"Notice – The Christian Church met in conference, at Boon's (sic) Creek meeting house, E. Tenn. August 17, 1829. The elders present were Jas. Miller, Jeriel Dodge, Robt. M. Shankland, John Wallace, and Wm. Slaughter, Jun (sic). The number of members, composing the Christian Churches in this section of the country, were ascertained to be 472. After conferring comfortably together, we agreed to meet again at the North Fork Church, Washington County, Virginia, on Saturday before the 3rd Lord's Day in August 1830."²⁴⁶

Grievous problems arose for Bro. Dodge in 1834. It seems that he got involved in some controversy with two fellow Christians and allowed himself to engage in some harsh and ugly criticism of them. In the records of the Boone's Creek Church is found the following letter, evidently sent to them by the Buffalo Creek Church:

"Dodge Excommunication

May the 26, 1834

Jeriel Dodge said at Elizabeth Ellise's that Andrew Taylor was too respectable a liar and of too long standing to be heard by him Dodge, but

243 Ibid.

244 Ibid.

245 Jones, p. 58.

246 Barton Stone, **Christian Messenger**, Vol. 4, Georgetown, Kentucky, August 1830, p. 213.

when he got through with Taylor there was some more respectable liars he would handle. He made use of this language or words to the same import or meaning. Sister Humphries said the testimony she gave to the church concerning Dodge was part of the language used in her house on the 26th of April 1834 this language was used at night by J. Dodge ...

... (the) same presented by the elders for consideration that Jeriel Dodge indulges in speaking reproachful of James Miller and his band and he also said that when he got through with Taylor he would show what Miller and his band had been about. And also saying in presence of Sister Humphries that if he had a dog named James he would kill it and that if Miller came here the church would be broke up. And after considering the wickedness of evil speaking or reviling against brethren in good standing when he should not speak evil of no man, the church then unanimously agreed they would not respect him as a brother nor eat with him from being specially instructed by Paul, (1st Corinthians 5 letter 11 verse), and they hope the Boone's Creek Church agree with them in the same."

On June 21st, 1834 the Boone's Creek brethren concurred in the judgment and also withdrew their fellowship from Bro. Dodge. These were the two largest congregations in the region. It is speculated that this controversy spilled over into the other churches as well. The Boone's Creek Church wrote a strong letter to the East Tennessee-Southwest Virginia Cooperative reminding them that they had no authority or jurisdiction in the matter.

For eight long years, the struggle went on – becoming a test of wills. Doubtless, great harm was done to the struggling young congregations and disciples of the region. We can rejoice, however, that eventually reconciliation was realized. On the 23rd day of August 1842, the following letter was sent forth:

"Brother Dodge's Restoration

Brother Jeriel Dodge upon satisfactory confession being restored to the fellowship and privilege of the Boone's Creek Church and at the same time desiring a letter of dismissal is dismissed in mutual fellowship and recommended as a servant and minister and teacher of the Christian religion this 23rd day of August 1842. Done by order of the church. John V. Hoss Clk."

Boones Creek Church recorded the following note:

"Whereas Brother Jeriel Dodge upon satisfactory confession being restored to the fellowship and privilege of the Boone's Creek Church and at the same time desiring a letter of dismissal and whereas all matters of difficulty heretofore existing between the parties vis, the said church

and Bro. Dodge were finally settled never again to be agitated by either party. It is the sincere desire and earnest request that the Buffalo Creek Church being also concerned in this matter agrees with the Boone's Creek Church in the above named restoration and fellowship and that all difficulty heretofore existing between the parties are affectionately made by the Boone's Creek Church also Brother Dodge. Done by order of the church, the 23rd Day of August 1842.

John V. Hoss Clk.

*Jeriel Dodge*²⁴⁷

Soon after the resolution of his problems with the church. Bro. Dodge made a trip to Missouri, leaving his family behind. On that trip, he fell ill and died of an eruptive disease (probably small pox). He died on October 18, 1843 and was buried in an unmarked grave unknown to his family.²⁴⁸

He left behind a grieving widow and eight children. Four of them are known by name, Mary, Josiah, Jeriel and Spottswood. Spottswood Dodge followed his father as a gospel preacher.

We long to know more of those hardy pioneers who cleared a trail for us to follow. We owe them much.

99.

LANDON DUNCAN

PIONEER PREACHER OF VIRGINIA

Among the hardy souls who pioneered the gospel in the early days of the Restoration Movement was Landon Duncan of Giles County, Virginia. We are fortunate that history has preserved for us some fascinating bits of information about this faithful servant of Christ.

247 Boones Creek Church, *The Earliest Years*, pp. 12-16.

248 McCown, May 1967.

In 1813, Duncan was ordained a Baptist minister.²⁴⁹ He was a member of the New River Baptist Association.²⁵⁰ He also served as tax assessor of Giles County, Virginia.²⁵¹ On December 20, 1818, Joseph Thomas known as the White Pilgrim, preached at the Giles County Court House. His subject was “Faith, Hope and Charity.”²⁵² Thomas set forth the plea to restore the Lord’s church to her original purity. He had been taught by James O’Kelley, baptized at the instruction and urging of the New England Christians (followers of Elias Smith and Abner Jones) and influenced in his thinking by Barton Stone of Kentucky.

Landon Duncan, hearing Thomas preach and having read his tract entitled **Emblems of Christian Union**, was convinced of the rightness of Pilgrim’s plea and aligned himself with him. Soon he won a neighboring Baptist preacher by the name of Thomas Kirk who was likewise a member of the New River Association.

Duncan and Kirk “mutually agreed to advocate a reformation from party names and rules, which have a tendency to divide and keep asunder the flock and Church of Christ: which according to the New Testament should be one in name, principle, and practice.”²⁵³

They began to disseminate their new convictions in their teaching at the Walker’s Creek Baptist Church. Duncan drafted a question for consideration of his fellow Baptist ministers at the next meeting of the New River Association. Unable to attend in person, he sent the question by a brother John Howard. It asked:

“What is the most appropriate name given among men whereby the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be called?”

In addition, he prepared a letter to be read should no satisfactory answer be forthcoming from the group. In it he wrote concerning the need for reformation in the Baptist Church. Being alarmed at Duncan’s query and letter, the group appointed a committee to investigate the Walker Creek Church to see if they had departed from the Baptist way.

249 Barton W. Stone, **The Christian Messenger**, 14 vols. (Ft. Worth, TX: Star Bible Publ., 1978) Vol. 4, 1828, p. 44.

250 H. Jackson Darst, **Ante-Bellum Virginia Disciples** (Richmond, VA: Christian Missionary Society, 1959), p. 24.

251 Frederick Arthur Hodge, **The Plea and the Pioneers in Virginia** (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddey Co., 1905), p. 202.

252 J. W. West, **Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers** (Lynchburg, VA: J. W. West, 1939), p. 274.

253 Landon Duncan, Landon Duncan Document, as quoted in J. W. West, **Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers** (Lynchburg, VA: J. W. West, 1939), p. 274-275.

On August 17 of 1819, a committee of Baptists met with the Walker's Creek congregation to interview the members regarding Duncan's teaching. They demanded of Duncan his reasons for raising such questions, to which he responded:

1st. The name Baptist is not after Christ but a party name.

2nd. As a party they had made such rules as prohibited Liberty of conscience to members of their society.

(a) By debarring them from holding persons of another denomination in fellowship or communing with them when they spread the Lord's table.

(b) By prohibiting an invitation being given to God's people of another denomination when they spread the Lord's table themselves.

3rd. I find no plain law of Christ to justify the assembling a delegated body and investing them with powers to enforce any rule they may adopt or to perpetrate traditional doctrines by such delegated power.

4th. I cannot find anything under the Gospel for making and supporting covenants, creeds, articles, disciplines, etc. made by fallible man.

5th I believe there is but ONE true church which is the body of Christ, and believe it wrong to support any party name or rule in the administration.

6th. I believe Christ intended in raising a church to make it universal and to be so it should bear his name (Christian) and it should be governed by his laws exclusively.

7th. I believe an improvement from the present confused, divided, and disordered state of the church can be made and is necessary and in tender conscience have dissented, and now hold all the faithful in every sect brethren in Christ.

The committee found that four of the ten members at Walker's Creek agreed with Duncan. They were Thomas Kirk, Benjamin Hall, Margaret Hall and Judith Diamond.²⁵⁴

Such a statement is a beautiful presentation of the need and basis for restoration and worthy to be placed beside Barton Stone's **Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery** and Thomas Campbell's **Declaration and Address**.

Landon Duncan's declaration of independence from sectarianism is equally impressive. It was written and entered on the Walker Creek Church record, July 10, 1819.

254 *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277.

“I do hereby certify to all men this day that I renounce every sectarian name and every party rule with every known traditional construction of the scriptures and as an humble follower of Christ will know no other name among men but CHRISTIAN in honor of Christ the head of the church. I also make choice of this name to the exclusion of every other under which the religion of Jesus Christ may be held forth and choose this name as a part of that cross which the righteous are called to bear, and through the grace of God given me by the revelation of Jesus Christ, I do believe the Scriptures sufficient for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works and needeth no legislation or additional helps of men for the organization or government of the church of God.”²⁵⁵

Duncan and his churches practiced foot-washing, a carryover from their Baptist affiliation.²⁵⁶ His co-worker, Parker Lucas, believed and insisted that a “unanimity of religious sentiment” was necessary if there was to be Christian unity. They were accused by their religious neighbors of being Unitarian and even their friends agreed that they speculated too much about on the subject of the Godhead. They were at odds among themselves on the subject.

In 1830 Chester Bullard moved to Giles County, Virginia to study medicine under Dr. D. J. Chapman. While there, he met Landon Duncan. On December 11, 1830, after a period of discussion, Bullard was immersed by Duncan in the icy waters of Sinking Creek. Later, Duncan ordained Bullard to preach. From this one convert came 5,000 additions to the Cause of Christ.

In 1850 Alexander Campbell received a letter from Bro. Duncan wherein he tells of the difficulties facing the Cause in Giles County. In closing he mentions that he had been impaired for the last five years by reason of paralysis. Thus we leave one of those hardy pioneers of the faith who took his brave stand for the old paths of the Lord’s gospel and so faithfully laid the foundation on which we today stand.

255 Darst, p. 29.

256 Chester Bullard **Autobiography**, typescript copy.

100.

ANTHONY McKNIGHT FERGUSON

Anthony M. Ferguson was born in October 1835 in Russell County, Virginia. Almost nothing is known of his early years. He received no formal education until after he was married. He then entered a "free school" to improve himself. His religious education came from a systematic study of the Bible along with whatever religious books and commentaries he could find. He carefully studied the published debates of Alexander Campbell with Presbyterians, Catholics and Infidels. He developed remarkable skills with words and a deep and wide knowledge of the Scripture.

Bro. Ferguson married Mary Ann Ferguson To them were born three sons: Aaron A., Charles, and Arthur. The last two died in childhood. For more than forty years Bro. Ferguson evangelized in Eastern Tennessee and Southwestern Virginia. Most of his travel was by horse. In 1887-1888 he worked with the congregation in Johnson City. Also he served the congregations at Hale's Chapel and Goodson at Bristol, Tennessee.

He was blessed with strength to preach to the end of his days, dying on November 21, 1915, in Elizabethton Tennessee. He rests in the Oak Hill Cemetery in Johnson City.²⁵⁷

101.

ISAAC HARTSELL

Isaac W. Hartsell was the son of Jacob and Nancy William Hartsell. He was born on Cherokee Creek in Washington County, Tennessee, July 4, 1821. His father was a veteran of the War of 1812. No information survives on his early life.

Hartsell was an early member of the Christian Union congregation of Washington County, Tennessee, which was organized in 1853. Most of the members of the Union Church had been won from the Baptists. He preached for the Union congregation for many years and was active in the East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia Co-operation.

²⁵⁷ Mary Hardin McCown and Josephine Owen, *History of the First Christian Church in Johnson City, Tennessee*. p. 63.

Isaac and his wife Nancy brought twelve children into the world, all of whom grew up to be active Christians, a rare accomplishment. According to the tax records, he supported his family as a “manufacturer.”

His earthy sojourn ended on February 10, 1876. He rests in the cemetery of the Union Church beside his faithful wife.

102.

JOSEPHUS HOPWOOD

EDUCATIONAL PIONEER IN EAST

TENNESSEE

Josephus Hopwood was the son of William C. and Permilia Fox Hopwood. He was born April 18, 1843, near Winchester, Kentucky. His father was a school teacher who died in 1849 while nursing his neighbors through a terrible cholera epidemic. Widow Hopwood took her children to Illinois. There they grew up with the hard work and discipline of farm life. Young Josephus was fortunate to receive a good education for those days, a benefit that many poor young men never realized. At age twelve, he solemnly promised the Lord that he would become a Christian within six years--- a pledge fulfilled and lived by until his death.

When the Civil War erupted, Josephus volunteered for service with L Company of the Seventh Illinois Calvary under a Captain Scott. He saw action at Corinth, Mississippi, and was captured when thrown from his horse. Fortunately, he was soon released in a prisoner exchange. During his military years he vowed never to use strong drink, a vow he kept throughout life. He served in the siege of Baton Rouge in May of 1863. Twice he had close brushes with death. Once, in a fire fight, a Confederate ball cut through the brim of his hat. On another occasion when the troop was dismounted and firing from a kneeling position, he laid flat on the ground and a bullet whizzed over his body. In October of 1863 his regiment was routed by the Confederates under General Nathan Bedford Forrest. As they retreated, Hopwood gave his horse to a sick man and fled on foot. He was captured and following a series to intermediate stops he was incarcerated on Bell Island, Virginia. With others, he tried to escape but was caught. During the winter, food was in short supply

and he sometimes received only one meal per day. His weight fell to 115 pounds. Finally in March 1864 he was released in a prisoner exchange.

Following the war, in 1867, Josephus enrolled in Abingdon College in Illinois. Later studies took him to Kentucky University where he studied Greek under Professor Neville. There he also met the great gospel preachers and Bible scholars, Robert Milligan and J. W. McGarvey of the College of the Bible. These men had a profound effect on Hopwood's life and thinking.

Upon his graduation from Abingdon College in 1873, Josephus was offered a teaching position with that school. To their offer he responded, No, you have plenty of good teachers here and do not need me. I am going south to start a school. Their country has been torn up by the War and they need us to help build again.

Somehow Hopwood learned of an empty school building in Sneedville, in Hancock County, Tennessee. Correspondence was initiated with a Captain Jarves, and the young teacher agreed to take charge of Sneedville's Academy.

On Christmas day, 1873, Hopwood left Louisville, Kentucky, traveling by public conveyance as far as London, Kentucky. From there he set forth on foot with bag in hand through Pineville to Cumberland Gap. A kindly neighbor, by the name of Dr. Wallace, walked him a few miles to show him a shortcut to Sneedville.

Monday was court day and the little town was full of drunks and disorderly people. The Mellungeons, that strange tribe of people of the Hancock County mountains, made and sold moonshine whiskey to their neighbors. Two saloons in the town provided watering holes at which many of the citizens drank. On the first day, Hopwood saw a poor fellow shot dead and left lying in the street for over two hours. When asked if he did not fear to work in such a place the spunky young man replied, No, here is when I am needed to help you good citizens.

The school was launched and was well received and patronized by the local residents. A crisis arose when the schoolmaster discovered that some of his male students were carrying pistols while at school. After a chapel talk on Truthfulness, fifteen boys admitted they were armed. With wisdom and diplomacy, the young teacher persuaded them to leave their weapons at home.

A religious revival broke out among the Baptists in the area. Many citizens were perplexed and came to Hopwood for a biblical explanation regarding matters under discussion. When it was evident that his answers differed substantially from those of the Baptists, he was challenged to a debate by a Baptist champion named Kimbrough. Not being a preacher at that point of his life, Bro. Hopwood wisely agreed to meet in a formal discussion only after he had opportunity to prepare himself adequately.

At the close of his school term, Josephus immersed himself in his preparation for the upcoming discussion. He made a trip to Lexington, Kentucky, to visit

with Bro. J. W. McGarvey regarding his project. Little Mac, as his students fondly called him, was of great help explaining the arguments, answering the quibbles and furnishing helpful books for Hopwood's study. When he returned to Sneedville, Josephus was elated to find Bro. Samuel Shelburne, a strong and experienced gospel preacher, on hand for the debate. We can imagine the relief he felt and the support he gained from Shelburne's presence. The audience insisted that Shelburne serve as the chairman of the discussion.

The debate began on August 8. The little town was full of people and the audiences were large and attentive. Each morning's speech was one hour in length. In the afternoon there were thirty-minute presentations. The subjects covered the major points of Calvinism as espoused by the Baptists of that day. The debate lasted four days. Much good was accomplished as the local residents had opportunity to see the simple gospel of Christ in contrast with the heavy, cumbersome systems of human religion.²⁵⁸

Josephus continued his work in Sneedville for two sessions. In 1874 he married Sarah Eleanor LaRue of Oldham County, Kentucky.

When Samuel Shelbourne told Hopwood about the availability of Buffalo Institute near Johnson City, Tennessee, he immediately made a trip to investigate the prospects of founding a college there. Finding the situation favorable, he and his wife took charge of the school. It was 1875 when he began his tenure there. Under his able leadership the school flourished. In 1881, when the cornerstone for a new building was laid, he changed the name to Milligan College in honor of the late gospel preacher, Robert Milligan of Kentucky University.

When he wrote his autobiography, Bro. Hopwood devoted several pages to his horse Morgan, who helped to found Milligan College. When Morgan was a three year old colt, Hopwood promised Isaac Campbell, "I will give your boy his tuition and pay his board wherever I may teach this year" as pay for the colt. For five years, he rode Morgan throughout the hills and valleys of East Tennessee recruiting students for the school and seeking helpers for his work. When a note came due at the school and no money was available, Hopwood, with a grieving heart, sold his horse to clear the debt. With tears in his eyes he walked home. He later wrote that he would not have exchanged that horse for the office of state governor. He prayed, "O Lord, if there be any animals in heaven. I want three—Joler, my dog and playmate of my boyhood; Jocko, my pet eagle and Morgan, my horse.

Josephus Hopwood was a strict disciplinarian in administering his school. He did not hesitate to dismiss unruly students and those who challenged the

258 Josephus Hopwood, *A Journey Through the Years, An Autobiography* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1932), pp. 38-44.

administration's policies, even when large numbers threatened to leave with them. Usually the students came to appreciate his point of view and conformed.

The motto chosen for the school was "Christian Education, the Hope of the World." He carried that motto with him wherever he went.

Being a strong Christian and a preacher of great ability, Hopwood placed a spiritual stamp upon all that he did. There were Wednesday night prayer meetings and Sunday evening worship services on the campus. Many students were moved to confess their faith and be baptized while at Milligan College.

Convinced that strong drink was a curse upon society, Hopwood warmly embraced the Prohibition Movement. In 1896 he was candidate for Governor of Tennessee on the Prohibition ticket. He took his campaign throughout the state. A quartet of young men from Milligan accompanied him singing stirring temperance songs. In a campaign speech Professor Hopwood said:

"Changes for the better cannot be made in a day, nor can they ever be made unless, by readjustment of existing forces and the bringing in of new ones, the causes producing evil conditions are removed....."

The blessings of a republic depend upon the intelligence of (the) political conscience of her voters. Whatever hinders intellectual and moral progress in this nation becomes its deadliest foe ...

Then it is the individual duty of every honest man, every patriot and Christian to elevate the nation's moral standard by upholding truth, justice, and conscience in politics as in home, business, or church."

On election day he garnered some 3,000 votes.²⁵⁹

After twenty-eight years with Milligan College, Hopwood resigned in 1903 to become the founding president of Virginia Christian College at Lynchburg. That school still exists under the name Lynchburg College. Milligan College continues as well.

In 1911, the Hopwoods moved to Georgia and established Lamar College, located between Atlanta and Stone Mountain. In 1915, they moved to Grundy, Virginia, where they helped to plant the Mountain Mission School.

Finally in 1927, when Bro. Hopwood had reached age 80, they retired, moving back to Milligan where a home had been built for them. On January 20, 1935, Josephus Hopwood died, being in his ninety-first year. Sis. Hopwood died in April that same year.²⁶⁰

Along with most of the preachers in East Tennessee, Bro. Hopwood's sympathies were with that element of Restoration brotherhood that chose

259 *Ibid*, pp. 1-97. (This chapter consists largely of information extracted from this source.)

260 J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers* (Lynchburg, VA: published by the author, 1939). Pp. 136-146.

to use instrumental music in worship and to create extra-biblical church organizations. Most of his students followed that path and led the majority of the area congregations in the same. Today, the schools he founded all serve the Independent Christian Churches.

How much different the story might have been had he taken a strong stand for the apostolic pattern of work, worship, and church polity.

103

DANIEL McINTURFF

Of this servant of God, we have but scant knowledge. His name is found scattered in the surviving records of some of the East Tennessee Churches.

Col. E. C. Reeves wrote of Daniel McInturff:

*“He was a rough scholar. I did not know him intimately, although I heard him preach frequently in the old Brick Church. I did admire his strength of intellect and his earnestness. He could grip an audience and hold it with a tenacity surpassed by few in his day. My, how I enjoyed the two days debate between him and Brother Newell of the Baptist Church in the grove by the old Baptist Church in Sinking Creek. It was a battle royal. Each contended for the mastery over the question whether baptism was essential to salvation ...”*²⁶¹

Brother McInturff served the East Tennessee Cooperation of churches as a field evangelist prior to August 1845. At that time he was relieved by D. M. Buck.²⁶²

When Samuel Millard was set apart to preach the gospel on Aug. 11, 1845, Bro. McInturff presented the “ordination address and gave the ministerial charge from II Timothy 3:14-17; 4:1-6.”²⁶³

Beyond this scanty bit of information we have no knowledge. We do know, however, that we of today are greatly indebted to Daniel McInturff and those other trailblazers who for us cleared a path through the wilderness of religious confusion. We trust that he was faithful unto death and will receive the reward of the righteous.

261 J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers*, Lynchburg. Published by the author, 1939, p. 293.

262 *Ibid*, p. 188.

263 *Ibid*.

WILLIAM CONRAD MAUPIN

William Conrad Maupin was born near Charlottesville, Virginia, June 7, 1840. His parents, Willis and Rebecca Hilbert Maupin, migrated to East Tennessee and became members of the Boone's Creek Church in Washington County. At age 19, William obeyed the gospel and became a member of the Boone's Creek Church.

William enrolled in Boone's Creek Institute but was unable to graduate because of the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. When the war began, young Maupin was determined not to take sides in the bloodshed. He was conscripted into the Confederate Army, against his will, but refused to fight. When issued a gun he responded that they could not make him use it. Once when his troop was ordered into combat he set his gun on the ground, took out his bible and began to read. Bullets were whizzing about him. For refusing to obey orders he was court-martialed and sentenced to be shot. Fortunately, General J. C. Breckinridge issued him a pardon.

Following the war, he was set apart for the ministry of the Word by the Boone's Creek Church (August 11, 1867). He set out on a life-long missionary journey for Christ. For the rest of his days he "was inseparably identified with the Cause of New Testament Christianity," His work carried him over much of East Tennessee, Southwestern Virginia, Western North Carolina, Kentucky, and even Missouri.

An old schoolmate, Col. E. C. Reeves, recalled that Maupin was "upright and pleasant. When the fur was rubbed the right way, he attended strictly to his own business and he fully expected others to do the same in matters affecting him. When challenged to controversy, public or private, he could never find the word 'decline' in his lexicon."²⁶⁴

William Maupin preached in a day when every foot of ground won for the Master was hotly contested by the entrenched sectarian churches and their preachers. He was a ready debater and gladly met the opposition with the two edged "Sword of the Spirit." He was always seeking men who would defend their doctrine on the public platform. He rarely came out second best. When the struggling bands of disciples found themselves under attack, they instinctively called for Bro. Bill Maupin. Brethren affectionately called him "the old war horse."

²⁶⁴ J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers*, p. 53.

In August of 1911, Bro. Maupin met Dr. W. B. Godby of the Methodist Church in a debate at Mount Olivet near Greeneville, Tennessee. Before the scheduled time was up, Godby fled the field in disarray. The debate was published. Dr. B. A. Abbott wrote of Maupin, "His was the brightest mind I ever knew."

Brother Maupin was impressive as a preacher. He was tall and slender. He had sharp bluish-gray eyes and wore a full brown beard. Usually he wore a Prince Albert coat and a beaver top hat. He was especially fond of his beaver hat since it had been given to him by his friend and neighbor, Governor Bob Taylor.

Frequently, the sectarians "would conspire to lock him out of the school houses and other public buildings. On one occasion when such was done, the crowd was going to break open the door and go inside. He convinced them to go to a nearby grove where, under the stars, he preached from Matthew 8:20, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath no where to lay his head." Josephus Hopwood recalled that in preaching, Bro. Maupin's "thought was logical and forceful, His manner was sincere... never did anyone doubt the sincerity of his motives..."

Brother Maupin was blessed with a wonderful sense of humor and a quick wit that usually enabled him to have the best of an exchange. Once he illustrated his sermon by telling of farmers who let their fence corners grow up with briars. Afterwards a brother reproved him for singling him out, "Everybody knew you were hitting at me," he said. To which Maupin replied, "No, no, my brother, I did not even remotely refer to you. I was telling how men permit their fence rows and hedges to grow up in weeds, and made no reference to the man who permits his whole farm to grow up with briars."

On another occasion, he was not so successful. At Hale's Chapel there was a brother Elkanah Martin who loved to argue. Folks called him "Kane." Once when Bro. Martin had engaged Maupin in an endless argument, Maupin said, "Kaney, you are the father of all fools." Quick as a flash Martin responded, "Well then why don't you call me daddy?"

Maupin helped to plant the church in Johnson City, Tennessee. He was the first full-time preacher there, serving for five years. Being a skilled cabinet maker, he made the pulpit for the congregation.

Death came to Bro. Maupin on June 30, 1916. His body rests in the cemetery of the Boone's Creek Church.²⁶⁵ Josephus Hopwood said of him, "He loved the truth and had the courage to speak his convictions. He was a warrior for the right, yet had a good word for all."²⁶⁶

265 *Ibid.*, p. 53-57.

266 Josephus Hopwood, *A Journey Through the Years, An Autobiography* (St. Louis: Bethany Press. 1932) p.121.

SAMUEL H. MILLARD

Samuel Harrison Millard was the seventh child of Samuel and Alice Morrel Millard. He was born November 1, 1820, in Sullivan County, Tennessee. His place of birth was near Weaver's Church and he never lived more than twenty miles from that spot.

As a boy, Samuel attended the community school which met in the church building. His first teacher was an Irishman named John Russell.

When he was still a child, he first heard the gospel preached by Elder James Miller, a pioneer evangelist. In August of 1842, Bro. David T. Wright conducted a gospel meeting in the neighborhood and young Millard, then 22, made the good confession. He was baptized on August 8th in the Holston River by Elder John Wright. Samuel was the first Millard to espouse the Restoration plea. All of his family were Lutherans. He always remembered the words of the invitation hymn to which he responded, *"If the fathers want to go, Why don't thee come along?"*

Samuel was no nominal convert. He soon was active in every phase of the Lord's work and an avid student of the Bible. A New Testament was carried in his pocket, and when he rested at the end of the furrow he was plowing, he would read a few pages.

The first sermon preached by Millard was in a school house in Johnson County, July 20, 1845. Soon he was invited to preach at Weaver's Church and Boone's Creek. His sermon at the latter was "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

When the East Tennessee and Southwestern Virginia Co-Operative of Christian Churches met at Weaver's Church on August 8, 1845, Bro. David Buck persuaded those present to ordain Millard to the gospel ministry. The decision to do so was unanimous. The ceremony was set for Monday, August 11, 1845, and was observed with fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands. Bro. Daniel McInturff delivered the ordination charge from II Timothy 3:14-17 and 4:1-6, where Paul charged young Timothy to preach the Word and do the work of an evangelist. Millard later recalled: "I accepted this with the Bible in my hands, it being sufficient to direct me in the work for which I was being set apart and I leave it to my hearers to decide how faithfully I have followed this divine rule and charge during these fifty years."

After his ordination, Bro. Millard set out on an evangelistic trip with David M. Buck. It was the custom for young, aspiring preachers to travel

with older men, as an apprentice. Traveling on horseback, they visited the Tennessee Counties of Grainger, Anderson, and Roan, their most western point being Post Oak Springs near Rockwood. The following spring (1846), they made an extended tour into Southwestern Virginia and Johnson, Carter, Unicoi, Sullivan, Washington, and Greene Counties in Tennessee. Later he recalled traveling as far south as Chattanooga and west to Livingston. In those days, preachers traveled on horseback. In a meeting conducted at the Buffalo Creek Church (the site of present day Milligan College), more than thirty souls responded to the invitation. In his first year of preaching, he received for his labors one dollar and a pair of Kentucky jeans pants.²⁶⁷ It is evident that these pioneer brethren did not preach for the money they would receive. A good example of their hardship and lack of monetary support is seen in the following report from Bro. J. P. Miller:

“I entered the field October 4, 1884. Visited during the year twenty-one places. Preached 220 discourses; added to the church by confession and baptism, restoration, from the Baptists, etc., 156; received from my brethren, sisters, and friends \$120.50, including \$5.00 I pledged myself and \$45 my wife paid out of her own means. Thirty-one dollars of individual pledges remain unpaid.”²⁶⁸

How many of our present day ministers would still be preaching if such were their lot? The church of today owes an unpayable debt to those hearty souls who blazed the trail before us at so great a personal sacrifice.²⁶⁹

The annual meeting of the churches of upper East Tennessee was held at Buffalo Creek in Carter County in August of 1846. Eighteen congregations were represented with a combined membership of 954 in Tennessee, 429 in Virginia, and 20 in North Carolina.

Those present selected D. M. Buck of Elizabethton and J. H. Millard of Papersville, as evangelists to ride “under the patronage of the Churches in Carter, Washington and Sullivan Counties, as well as other congregations represented, for the next year.”²⁷⁰ Later, Millard recalled that he served as an evangelist under the oversight of the Annual Meeting for parts of thirty-five years, both in a full-time and part-time capacity.

Besides his itinerant work, Bro. Millard served the following churches on a monthly basis during his long career; Weaver’s Church, 33 years; Popular

267 J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers* (Lynchburg, Va.: published by the author, 1939), pp. 186-189.

268 H C. Wagner, *History of the Disciples of Christ in East Tennessee* (unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943), p. 142.

269 West, *Op cit.*, pp. 186-189.

270 Wagner, *History Disciples*, pp. 138-139.

Ridge, 20 years; Bristol, 19 years; Limestone, 12 years; Boone's Creek, 10 years; Johnson City, Turkeytown and Beaver Creek, 4 years each; Roan Mountain and Buffalo, 2 years each; Walnut springs, 9 years; Corner House Church, 6 years; and Liberty in Johnson City, 1 year. To accomplish this feat of service, he frequently preached for two churches on a given day. Much of his preaching was done in school houses, mills, barns, and in homes. It is estimated that he preached in some 65 to 80 separate locations in Sullivan County alone. He organized the first congregation at Goodson (Bristol, Virginia) on June 19, 1856. Preaching was no easy occupation in those early days. Brother John Wright wrote to Bro. Millard recalling, "when our labors were in the midst of vituperation and opposition."²⁷¹

During the tense and painful years of the Civil War, Samuel Millard tended and kept alive the congregations at Bristol, Corner House, Weavers and Popular Ridge. In those days East Tennessee was torn between North and South and partisanship caused neighbors to turn on each other with hostility and violence. A brother said of Millard, he never heard a sentence uttered by him during the war by which he could tell what his politics or sympathies were. His only difficulty came from not siding with either Abraham Lincoln or Jefferson Davis.

On August 7, 1851, Samuel Millard was married to Maria Blevins with Elder Daniel McInturff officiating. Seven children were born to that union. When widowed, he married Mary Jane Taylor Kitzmiller in 1873. A son, Samuel T., was born to his second wife.

Brother Millard celebrated fifty years of preaching in 1895. He continued to preach as long as he was able, leaving this life May 14, 1905. He was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Johnson City.

John T. Brown wrote, "S. H. Millard did more than any one in his section to open the understanding of the people to the truth as it is in Christ."²⁷²

271 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

272 West, *Op cit.*, pp. 189-192.

JAMES MILLER AND BOONE'S CREEK CHURCH

One of the earliest gospel preachers in upper East Tennessee was James Miller who was born in Maine in 1798. He migrated to Tennessee by way of Ohio and Kentucky. There it seems he came in contact with Barton Stone and his Back to the Bible plea. On October 16, 1824, Miller was received into the Sinking Creek Baptist Church in Carter County, Tennessee after relating an acceptable religious experience. Six months later on April 16, 1825, he asked for and received a letter of dismissal from that church.²⁷³ It does not appear that brother Miller ever preached for the Baptists. By 1826, Miller was performing marriage ceremonies as a "minister of the Gospel." A later record states that he was ordained by Barton W. Stone and "commenced to preach in upper East Tennessee ... and contending that party names tended only to divide the people of God."²⁷⁴ Soon after separating from the Baptists, James Miller conducted a great revival meeting in Boone's Creek Valley, Washington County which resulted in many additions. This would have been the summer of 1825. Miller's preaching divided the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church. An investigative committee from the Holston Baptist Association found Buffalo Ridge a "divided people in principle and practice."²⁷⁵ In the records of the Sinking Creek Baptist Church, October 18, 1826, is the following note: "We also declare against Molly Humphries for joining Miller's church ... We unanimously agree not to invite any of the people called [sic.] Arians, Socianian, Unitarians or Sysmatics or that will not wright (sic.) there (sic) Creed to preach in our meeting house."²⁷⁶

It was common for their denominational neighbors to associate Stone and his followers with these heretical groups. One reason being, the Christians would not subscribe to their creedal statements about the trinity. Also it was

273 Harry C. Wagner, *History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee* (Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943). p. 45-46.

274 Samuel H. Millard and T. J. Wright, *Biographical Sketch of John Wright*, as quoted in Harry C. Wagner, *History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee* (Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943). p. 45-56.

275 *Minutes of the Holston Baptist Association*, as quoted in Harry C. Wagner, *History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee* (Master Thesis University of Tennessee 1943). p. 49.

276 *Sinking Creek Baptist Church Records*, p. 94, as quoted in Harry C. Wagner, *History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee* (Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943). p. 49.

a “name-calling” tactic to besmirch their Christian faith and prejudice folks against them.

Baptist historian, J. J. Barnett, records that Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church was reduced from 350 members to fourteen by the “Arian heresy as taught by Barton Stone and Alexander Campbell...”²⁷⁷

In his new home, Miller found a wife, Elizabeth Devault. James Miller supported his family by farming and teaching. His preaching was done at nights, on week-ends and when the crops were laid by. He taught at the Boone’s Creek Seminary.

Colonel E. E. Reeves wrote the following glowing description of Bro. Miller:

“Once there lived a man in this country, whom I knew three-quarters of a century ago ... He hailed from Maine ... He was a minister of the gospel in the Christian Church. Of heroic size, with a benevolent face and a dignity in his bearing, he was a commanding figure in any assemblage of people. The Rev. James Miller was a ripe scholar, a fluent speaker and withal a real logician. At first he was a school-teacher during the week and a pulpiteer on the Lord’s day. However, soon he devoted his entire time to his holy calling, leaving the management of his extensive farm to his practical wife. Ere long he conducted a remarkable religious revival on Boone’s Creek in this county, which in its scope and sweep, was a wonder in that day, for in that community nearly every soul was gathered into the Christian Church; and through the generations following to the present, the Christian church dominates all other churches in that community. The Boone’s Creek Brick Church was the outgrowth of that eventful religious awakening, and was longer and more widely known, than probably any other in a large section of our country. From it have gone out men and influences which have proved the primal human cause of the development of the Christian Church into the commanding position it occupies in our section of the country.”²⁷⁸

Most of those won from the Baptists became members of Boone’s Creek Christian Church. When they formerly organized their congregation, the Boone’s Creek brethren drafted and signed the following statement:

“We the members of the Church of Christ at Boone’s Creek have met together on the twentieth day of September in the year of our Lord one Thousand eight hundred and thirty-four and according to the Acts of the Apostles The church have chosen from among us seven men of honest report

277 J. J. Burnett, *Sketches of Tennessee’s Pioneer Baptist Preachers*, p. 537, as quoted in Harry C. Wagner, *History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee* (Master’s Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943) p. 50.

278 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

and ordained them elders of the church. And Daniel Fox, a member of the church, was appointed clerk of the church on the same day and year above mentioned.

ELDERS AND DEACONS

James Miller, William White
Jacob Miller, Daniel Isenburger
Jacob Range, John V. Hoss
Daniel Snider, John Elsy
Jeremiah Bacon, Jesse Hunt
George Grisham²⁷⁹

The membership list showed forty-four brothers including several negroes, each identified as “man of color (sic).” The names of ninety sisters are given. It is thought that Boone’s Creek Church first began meeting as early as 1829 though it was not fully organized with elders and deacons until 1854.

In September of 1841, John Wright, James Miller, James I. Tipton, and David T. Wright participated in a great gospel meeting at Boone’s Creek which won fifty-six souls for Christ.²⁸⁰ The rapid growth of the church is seen in her membership figures. In September 1841 she had 156; in February of 1842, 238; in July 1842, 259; in August 1843, 299. When the Civil War began there were 318 members. After the disruptions of the war only seventy-three members were accounted for.²⁸¹ This sad experience was repeated throughout the South.

Numerous preachers were sent forth by the Boone’s Creek Church. Among them were Spotswood Dodge (1850), Hezekiah Hinkel, a black brother (1866), W. C. Maupin (1867) and John Ellis.

Bro. James Miller died February 19, 1874. In his will he left a lot in Johnson city to the church for a building site. On it a comfortable meeting house was erected by the brethren.

279 **Beaver Creek Church of Christ church records**, as quoted in Harry C. Wagner, **History of Disciples of Christ in Upper East Tennessee** (Master’s Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943) p. 51.

280 Alexander Campbell, editor, **Millennial Harbinger**, New Series, Vol. 5, December 1841, p. 590.

281 Wagner, **History East Tennessee**, p. 53.

JOHN TAYLOR, AN ANCESTOR IN THE FAITH

Of John Taylor, F. B. Srygley wrote, “Bro. Taylor had no education from any school or college, but ... I cannot say he was without education. He knew humanity. He learned from nature, but best of all he knew the Bible ... His illustrations were simple, and yet they were applicable and fitly illustrated the point at issue ... He was a good debater, and he never failed to come to the defense of the truth when called upon ... He truly labored with, and for the poor ...” (*Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 3, 1936 p. 150).

John Taylor was born in South Carolina on February 20, 1807 and finished his course on Feb. 19, 1885. As a child, he was raised and trained in the Baptist faith. When as a young man John began to seek for salvation he devoted himself to studying God’s Word. When he heard a Baptist preacher discoursing on Acts 2 his eyes were opened. The preacher related the question the Jews ask Peter, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” John instantly remembered Peter’s answer “to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins” (Acts 2:38). His heart was filled with joy and he began to rejoice and clap his hands. The Baptist preacher thought the Spirit of God had come upon John and announced that he has gotten religion. John corrected him, saying, No, Sir, “I haven’t gotten religion, but I see how I can get it.” John then requested to be baptized just as Peter had instructed, but the Baptist minister balked. Such was contrary to the Baptist way. He urged John to relate his experience, but John no experience to tell. The preacher refused to baptize him. Soon however John found another Baptist preacher who was reluctantly persuaded to baptize him as the Bible directs so long as John would not tell others what he the preacher had done. He insisted that the baptism take place at midnight so no would witness it and report him to his peers. John and his wife arrived at the appointed place, but the preacher did not show. When John confronted him, he confessed it did not look right to perform the sacred rite in that secretive way. The minister proceeded to seek permission from his Baptist congregation to baptized John as the Scripture directed, but they refused to allow it. Later however the preacher ignored his brethren and assisted John Taylor in his obedience to Christ.²⁸²

282 Kimbrough, Earl: *The Warrior From Rock Creek: Life, Times and Thought of F. B. Srygley*, (Religious Supply Center, Louisville, KY , 2008).

For a short while, Bro. Taylor preached among the Baptists. Because he preached what he found in his Bible and not the Baptist creed, he was reprov'd. He insisted he could give book, chapter and verse for everything he preached, but to no avail. He had violated the prescribed usage of the Baptist Confession. He was declared a heretic and expelled from the Baptist Church. Rather than discourage John, it freed him to preach the Bible and evangelize without the restrictions they had sought to impose on him. This he was doing long before he ever heard of our brethren and our back to the Bible movement.

John Taylor preached the gospel under the hardships of severe poverty and in the face of bitter enemies and persecutions. His life was spent evangelizing and planting churches in northern Alabama and Mississippi. He was a country preacher who preached to country people. His transportation was by horseback, buggy or by foot. He never set foot on a train. His most notable contribution was to help launch the preaching career of the great T. B. Larimore who became famous throughout the entire brotherhood as he preached from coast to coast. Country preacher though he was, Bro. Taylor personally baptized some 4,500 souls into Christ.²⁸³

With no reserves for his old-age, John Taylor spent his last days living in a log cabin with his daughter. When God called him home he was buried near the church in Rock Creek, north Alabama. His brethren in Christ provided a modest stone to mark his grave.

Every man who aspires to preach God's word in this 21st century should read and ponder the record of those godly pioneers, like Taylor, to whom we owe so much. Their story will make us ashamed of our plush and easy surroundings. It will inspire us to endure any hardship we may encounter in our labors. It will motivate us to strive day and night to keep alive the fire of faith and to leave to the next generation a spiritual inheritance such as John Taylor and his peers left behind them.

283 Boles, H. Leo: **Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers**. Gospel Advocate Co. Nashville, 1932.

JOSIAH T. SHOWALTER

Josiah Thomas Showalter was born near Snowville, Virginia July, 1838. He was the son of David and Jennie T. Showalter. He attended school for only five months but by diligent work and study he became a well-educated man. He was successful as a preacher, school teacher, journalist and farmer.

At the tender age of eight, Josiah was baptized at the Cypress Grove Church. There under the influence of Dr. Chester Bullard he contemplated the idea of preaching. The outbreak of the Civil War forced new circumstances upon him. At first, he was opposed to the war, but eventually, he volunteered along with most of his peers. He served in Company A of the 54th Virginia Infantry, under General Joseph E. Johnston. It was his duty to supply ammunition to the men fighting on the front lines.

In the bloody battle of Missionary Ridge, near Chattanooga, J. T. participated in a frontal assault on the Yankee bulwarks. When the battle was over, one-third of Company A were missing. So numerous were the dead bodies, that "one could walk a mile and never touch the ground."²⁸⁴ His company fought in northern Georgia and vainly tried to block Sherman's scorched-earth march to the sea.²⁸⁵

During the war, Showalter conducted worship services in the army camps. At that point he was seriously debating if he should give his life to preaching Christ. He wrote a letter to Dr. Bullard and the Cypress Grove Church, seeking their advice.²⁸⁶ When the war ended, no doubt was left in young Showalter's heart. The rest of his life was to be spent in God's service.

Josiah married and fathered twelve children, seven sons and five daughters. Two of his sons followed his steps and became gospel preachers. George H. P. Showalter was, for some 40 years, editor and publisher of **The Firm Foundation**, a religious journal then published in Austin, Texas. Edward T. Showalter farmed, taught school and preached in the vicinity of Snowville his entire adult life.

Josiah wrote often for **The American Christian Review**, a paper founded by the illustrious preacher, Benjamin Franklin. It was edited by at that time by

284 J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers*, p. 212-213.

285 Cecil Willis, *W. W. Otey, Contender for the Faith*, pub. By the author, Akron, OH 1965, p. 9-10.

286 *Ibid.*, p. 8

Daniel Sommer. In 1887, he became a corresponding editor for that paper.²⁸⁷ His column was entitled “Jottings From Virginia.”

In 1870, Showalter was appointed an elder of the Cypress Grove Church. He was only 31 years old at the time of his appointment. He served with notable men such as George Abell, famous Virginia evangelist, Arial Snow, W. A. Ammen and Chester Bullard.²⁸⁸

In 1871 he and his fellow elders issued an anti-war resolution that read:

“We the undersigned Elders and Deacons of Cypress Grove Church, being convinced that wars of this world are opposed to both the letter and the spirit of the Christian religion, hardily recommend to the members of the above church, that they declare their determination, that under no circumstance will they bear arms or engage in these wars.”²⁸⁹

Doubtless this strong statement reflected the painful memories of his war experience. His conviction about Christians and war eventually led him to break with Daniel Sommer, then editor of the **Octographic Review**.²⁹⁰

Coursing through the midst of Snowville is the beautiful Little River. A wooden bridge was early constructed across the stream for the benefit of travelers. Over the years, time and weather had taken its toll on the bridge. One day Josiah drove his two-horse wagon upon the bridge, when, without warning, a panel of the floor gave way, dropping the horses, wagon and driver some ten feet into the stream. Unflapped, Showalter drove his startled animals safely to the opposite bank with no apparent damage to them, the wagon or himself. When asked if he had prayed as he was falling into the water, the preacher promptly replied, “It was no time to pray, it was time to act.”²⁹¹

Home duties limited Bro. Showalter’s field of travel, but he met the needs of scores of congregations in Southwest Virginia. In a career of fifty years, he never missed a Sunday wherein he preached at least once.

As the brotherhood polarized over the issues of missionary societies and instrumental music, Showalter emerged as a leader of the conservative brethren. In the Snowville church, Dr. Bullard stood with the “progressives,” as the advocates of these things were known. The congregation could not escape the tensions and stress as these two elements exerted themselves.

287 *Ibid.*, p.40

288 *Ibid.*, p. 71

289 *Records of Cyprus Grove Church*, Snowville, VA. as cited in Willis, p. 71.

290 West, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

291 W. R. Hundley, *Historical Sketch of Snowville, Virginia*, East Radford, VA. Privately published, 1931, p. 27.

Showalter challenged Dr. Bullard to debate the following propositions at the Snowville church:

1. "Without faith, repentance and immersion, no one can be a Christian."
2. "Nothing should be done by the church without positive precept or approved precedent."

Bullard at first agreed but later declined to participate in the discussion.²⁹² Later, there was a three-way debate on the organ and other questions between J. R. Miller, J. T. Showalter, and W. S. Bullard (son of Dr. Chester Bullard). By that time the tension in the congregation had reach a breaking point.²⁹³ In 1893, Daniel Sommer, editor of the Octographic Review was on a preaching tour through the state of Virginia. Showalter, being an elder of the congregation, took it upon himself to invite Sommer to present a series of lesson for the church. The opposition issued an open "letter of warning" to the Disciples of Christ in Southwest, Virginia. It was signed by W. S. Bullard and W. H. Smith, elders. They objected to Sommer preaching at Cypress Grove church.

Their objections were three: First, that Sommer had authored and advocated the "Declaration" of the Sand Creek Church of Illinois, declaring non-fellowship with those who advocate societies for missionary work and the organ in the church. They affirmed that a large portion of their congregation supported both practices. Secondly they noted that he had openly stated that he would not extend the hospitality of his house to those who preferred societies and instrumental music. Third, they charged "this man is a schismatic, a factionist, a divider of the body of Christ."²⁹⁴

So intense was the disagreement about their faith and practice that in November of 1895, Showalter and his family left the Snowville Church and began worshiping with the New Salem congregation whose position on these issues was the same as Showalter's. A note in the Snowville Church records says, "J. T. S. and family withdrew from the congregation November 1895. They being anti-mission, anti-organ, etc."²⁹⁵

Among the issues that Josiah Showalter saw as threatening the integrity of the Lord's church and against which he stood and fought were:

292 J. T. Showalter, *American Christian Review*, Indianapolis, Jottings from Virginia. Clipping, no date.

293 Hundley, *op. cit.* P. 93.

294 W. S. Bullard, W. H. Smith, *An Open Letter*, Snowville, June 4, 1893.

295 *Cyprus Gove Church Minutes* as cited in Willis, in W. W. Otey, p. 74.

1. Instrumental music in church worship.²⁹⁶
2. Missionary societies to organize and direct the mission work of the churches.²⁹⁷
3. Conducting the affairs of the church by majority rule.²⁹⁸
4. The name “Christian Church” to identify the Lord’s people.²⁹⁹
5. Bible Colleges for the training of preachers.³⁰⁰

So thorough was the success of the progressives in Virginia that according to W. W. Otey, “only six small country congregations in the entire state...had not gone over to the society movement.³⁰¹ For a while, Showalter “was the only preacher left in Virginia who had not left the word of the Lord...” Among the progressives he was “the most hated man in the state.”³⁰² Later, younger men whom he trained and sent into the battle also experienced their wrath.

In the early 1900s, Showalter broke with Daniel Sommer, editor of **The Octographic Review**, over the Christian’s relationship to Civil Government and war. From that time until his death, he wrote for **The Firm Foundation**, edited by his son, George.³⁰³

Showalter and Bullard provide us a study in contrasts. The one was conservative and determined to hold the Bible way at all cost, even if it meant standing alone; the other was progressive and drifting far afield from his original ground. The one was the progenitor of the conservative wing of the Restoration churches in Virginia, now known as Churches of Christ. The other was the father of the liberal Disciples of Christ.

Both had obeyed the same gospel, worshiped at a common altar, communed together for years and preached the same message but different currents carried each in opposite directions. The experience of these two men was reenacted throughout the entire brotherhood. The bitter result was a broken fellowship and divided brotherhood. By 1900, the progressives had swept 85 percent of the congregations and members, along with virtually all the schools. It took the conservatives a half century to fully recover their losses. We today are greatly indebted to such brave and stalwart men as Josiah T. Showalter.

296 Showalter, J. T., **American Christian Review**, Jottings from Virginia. Indianapolis, clipping, no date, c.a. 1887.

297 *Ibid.*

298 Willis, *op.cit.*, p. 97.

299 Willis *Ibid.*

300 *Ibid.*, p. 113

301 *Ibid.*

302 *Ibid.*, p.102

303 *Ibid.*

JOSEPH THOMAS, THE WHITE PILGRIM

Of the many pioneer preachers who blazed the trail through the denominational wilderness, back to the Bible, Joseph Thomas, the White Pilgrim, deserves special notice. With none of the opportunities and advantages of education or books, with none to assist him financially, he trudged the mountain trails of the eastern states preaching the gospel of Jesus.

Thomas was born in Orange County, North Carolina, March 7, 1791. So poor was his family that at age seven he was placed in the care of a neighboring family to work for his room and board. The people were cruel and harsh to their young charge, often leaving him cold and hungry. Fortunately his parents had taught him to read and he spent every spare moment in reading his Bible and a few other books. After two years, an older brother rescued the lad and took him to his home in Grayson County, Virginia. His brother saw that young Joseph got more schooling. In December of 1801, at age ten, he contacted what he called "the white swelling" in his knee which was so painful that he and all his neighbors thought he would surely die. Fortunately, God spared his life.

At age 13, Joseph he took a job teaching school and assisting a family. He received for his work, ninety dollars for the year.

In 1806, young Thomas journeyed to North Carolina to visit his aged mother. While there he attended one of the great camp meetings which were popular in those days. Even at age 15, he was vitally interested in his salvation. He tells us:

"It was no strange thing to hear many, old and young, profess religion, and to see them in the unaccountable exercises of shouting, dancing, hallowing (sic), jumping, laughing, etc."³⁰⁴

Not knowing God's plan for saving man, Joseph earnestly sought salvation in the emotionalism of the crowd but to no avail. One night during the meeting he had a vivid dream in which he imagined that Isaiah the prophet had spoken to him giving him a sign. Still his conscience agonized with guilt. Finally, in May of 1807, he "prayed through" as it was called in those days. With the peace he found, he resolved to be baptized by immersion, but had great difficulty in finding a willing administrator. The Baptists insisted that he must join their sect, the others all used sprinkling as their mode.

³⁰⁴ Joseph Thomas, *The Life, Travels and Gospel Labors of Elder Joseph Thomas*, (New York: M. Cummings, 1861), pp. 1-16.

Finally, Joseph heard of the group called Christians, led by James O’Kelley. On October 19, 1807, the lad set out on foot for Raleigh, North Carolina to see if they would immerse him. When he met O’Kelley and made his request, the older preacher persuaded him that sprinkling was the Bible way of baptism. With mixed emotions he submitted, but insisted that a tub full of water be used.³⁰⁵ Immediately, he began his life of preaching, traveling as an apprentice with an older preaching brother.

He soon made the acquaintance of Rice Haggard, another of O’Kelley’s co-workers and a fast friendship was formed. Haggard won his place in the history of the Restoration Movement by his determined efforts to get his peers to reject all human names and only call themselves Christians.³⁰⁶

The young preacher found himself shamed and ridiculed by many as he sought to tell the gospel story, but he was not discouraged by their rude reception. Most of his career was spent traversing the hills and valleys of the land preaching the gospel message. In June of 1810 he set out on a missionary tour that carried him south to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, across Tennessee and Kentucky, into Ohio and eventually to Philadelphia. On this trip he met Barton W. Stone.

While in Philadelphia, Thomas contacted preachers who were part of Elias Smith and Abner Jones’ Christian Connection of New England. Thomas rejoiced when they agreed to immerse him in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It was in the first week of July when he was baptized in the Schuylkill River. A numerous concourse of people were present. He tells us:

“On that day I was ordained according to the rules of the New Testament by the laying on of hands of two regular ordained elders.”³⁰⁷

On April 4 of 1812 Thomas married Christiana, daughter of Michael Rittenours, near Winchester, Virginia. For their honeymoon they travelled 7,000 miles in a horse-drawn gig, with Joseph preaching 460 times and winning 92 converts.³⁰⁸

In June of 1814, Thomas began to make a serious introspection of his life and work. From this he resolved to abandon the traditional dress of men and especially of the preachers of his day. He felt constrained to don a long white linen duster or coat. He sold his horse and set forth on foot, calling on sinners to submit to the Savior. As could be expected, he was thus ridiculed

305 Chester Bullard, “The White Pilgrim,” *The Christian Standard*, (n.p., n.d.).

306 W. E. MacClenny, *The Life of Rev. James O’Kelly*, (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, Reprint, 1950), p. 116.

307 J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers*, (Lynchburg, VA: J. W. West, 1939). pp. 88-89.

308 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

as “Crazy Thomas.”³⁰⁹ Similarly, the people thought John the Baptist was “crazy” because of his strange dress and habits (Matt.11:18)). Hearing his powerful, intelligent lessons they began to call him the “Pilgrim Preacher” hence his lifelong sobriquet of “Pilgrim Thomas.”³¹⁰

Two vivid descriptions of the White Pilgrim have been preserved. Chester Bullard remembered him thusly:

“He was about six feet in stature, perfectly erect and gracefully muscled, a pale Grecian face, illumined with magnetic gray eyes that invited the gaze of his audience. His finely chiseled features were draped with glossy dark hair, falling down to his shoulders.”³¹¹

F. A. Hodge described him as follows:

“In person, he was tall, straight as an Indian with fair skin, gray eyes, beautiful nose and mouth, a lofty forehead, long chestnut locks, parted over the middle of his head and falling over his shoulders. Few who ever saw him forgot the wild beauty and sublimity of his eloquence.”³¹²

Of his labors, Bullard tells us:

“Scarce a town of any importance in (North Carolina), or in Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, or valley, or plain, in those states, and even the mountain gorges but heard of his voice, while Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Maryland were widely traversed.”³¹³

In 1835, while on a preaching journey in New York state, Bro. Thomas and O. E. Morrill engaged in a debate with the followers of Alexander Campbell at Weedsport, New York.³¹⁴

While in New York, Elder Thomas contracted smallpox. He expired on the 9th of April, 1835 at the home of Elder J. S. Thompson of Johnsonsburg, New Jersey. There he was buried.

Few men in 44 short years have invested so much of themselves, labored and toiled so diligently and endured such hardships as did Pilgrim Joseph Thomas. Many of his converts were later gathered into churches of the Restoration Movement. With Paul, we say, “how beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things” (Romans 10:16).

309 Thomas, p. 87-90.

310 Bullard, n.p.

311 Chester Bullard, “Autobiography of Chester Bullard,” The Christian Standard, March, 18, 1893.

312 West, p. 85.

313 Power, p.

314 Wm. Garrett West, Barton Warren Stone, (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), p. 183.

JAMES IRELAND TIPTON

On October 14, 1792, James Ireland Tipton was born to Samuel and Susannah Tipton at the site of present day Elizabethton, Tennessee. His father was a Baptist minister. The son was named after an old Baptist minister, James Ireland, of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

John Ireland grew up, married, lived and died in this scenic section of East Tennessee. He was twice married. In 1812 he wed Nancy Patterson who bore him five children. Upon Nancy's death in 1823 he married Joanna Gourley. They had six children.

Tipton farmed and operated a rolling mill where he manufactured nails and other iron products.³¹⁵

It appears that Tipton came under the influence of Bro. James Miller of the Boone's Creek Church for he is listed in that congregation's records as a contributor in 1835. He preached for the Buffalo congregation and others including the Union church in Washington County. For 28 years he held membership in the Buffalo Creek congregation. County records note many marriage ceremonies he performed. Thousands of mountain folks heard the gospel preached by Bro. Tipton and multitudes were immersed into Christ by his hands.³¹⁶ For two years he served as traveling evangelist for the East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia Cooperative, baptizing 414 converts.³¹⁷ In 1841 Bro. Tipton, John Wright, David Wright and James Miller conducted a great revival meeting at Boone's Creek which brought 56 new converts into the church.³¹⁸

Poor health ended Tipton's active preaching career. But from his sickbed he delighted to tell his visitors about the Cause he loved.³¹⁹

Brother Tipton died in Elizabethton on January 20, 1861. He and was laid to rest in the Green Hill cemetery. He was spared the heartbreak and suffering of the bloody Civil War. On his tombstone are engraved the words "I am now ready to be offered."³²⁰

315 Mary H. McCowan and Josephine C. Owen, **History of the First Christian Church**, Johnson City, Tennessee, n. p., n.d., p. 97

316 J. W. West, **Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers**, pp. 254-256.

317 Mary H. McCowan, **The History of the Christian Churches in East Tennessee**, The East Tennessee Christian, August 1966.

318 H. C. Wagner, **History of the Disciples of Christ in East Tennessee** Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1943, pp. 52-53.

319 McCowan, **History of the First Christian Church**, Johnson City, Tennessee.

320 West, **Op cit.** p. 256

JOHN WRIGHT

John Wright was born on January 7, 1790, at Sycamore Shoals in Carter County, Tennessee. He was the first of nine children born to Thomas and Eleanor Bogart Wright. His father was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Little is known of his early life and education.

Early in life, John learned the trade of millwright which he followed for several years. He also farmed, as did most Tennesseans of those days.

On December 14, 1817, John was married to Barbara Range of Washington County, Tennessee. To this union four children were born, three girls and a boy. Following the death of his first wife, in 1849, he married a widow by the name of Margaret Beagles. His wedding suit was made by a tailor in Johnson's Depot (later Johnson City) whose name was Andrew Johnson.³²¹ Margaret bore him two sons.

When news of the Creek Indian Massacre at Ft. Mimms, Alabama reached East Tennessee in August of 1813, John volunteered to help put down the uprising. He served in Colonel Samuel Wears' First Regiment of East Tennessee Volunteers. They marched to the Hickory Grounds and fought several battles. He was discharged three months later, on January 8, 1814. For his service he received a land warrant and a pension of \$8.00 per month.³²²

John was baptized c.a. 1807-1808 by a Baptist preacher named Grimsley.³²³ In 1812, he was received into the Sinking Creek Baptist Church "by experience." Sinking Creek was a "Separate Baptist Church." They were sometimes called "New Lights" by other Baptists.³²⁴ He began preaching while among the Baptists. He relates the circumstance which started his questioning the faith he held: "An ignorant woman came forward and gave her experiences to be admitted into the Baptist Church by two dreams.....I had by this time made some start into the ministry and being deeply engrossed with the question of a person dreaming oneself into the favor of God, I read my New Testament with an honest inquiry for the Truth."

321 Mrs. L. W. McCown, *Sketch of Life of Rev. John Wright Soldier in the War of 1812*. Johnson City Chronicle, May 12, 1929.

322 Mary Hardin McCown and Josephine C. Owen, *History of the First Christian Church*, Johnson City, Tennessee. n.d., n.p., pp. 102-103.

323 Mary Hardin McCown, "Christian Church History," *The East Tennessee Christian*, December 1969.

324 McCown, Owen, *op cit.*, pp. 102-103.

That the Baptist Churches were in a degenerate condition at that period is conceded by such a notable writer as Jeremiah Jeter who authored the book **Campbellism Examined**. We quote from Jeter:

“Among the Baptist churches there were some sad evils. In parts of the country, the churches were infected with an antinomian spirit, and blighted by a heartless, speculative, hair-splitting orthodoxy. These churches were mostly penurious, opposed to Christian missions and all enlarged plans and self-denying efforts for promoting the cause of Christ. In general, the careful study of the Scriptures, the religious education of children, the proper observance of the Lord’s day, a wholesome, scriptural discipline, the reasonable support of pastors, and, in fine, devotion to the Redeemer’s cause, were too much neglected.”

Concerning his fellow Baptist preachers, Jeter said:

“Some of them were ignorant, conceited, and vain: others were proud, haughty, and imperious: others, still, were hypocritical, mercenary, and base: and not a few were worldly, selfish, and sycophantic.”³²⁵

A friend put into his hands several copies of Alexander Campbell’s **Christian Baptist** which further stirred the fire of reformation within him. He began to ask his Baptist brethren, who would meet him on the Bible? In 1830-31, he became a reader of Barton Stone’s **Christian Messenger**. During this period of time, Wright worked diligently to reform the Baptists of his community, but found them intractable.

By 1830, Wright could no longer continue a Baptist. On November 30 of that year, he requested a letter of dismissal from the Sinking Creek Baptist Church.

On June 5, 1832, John united with the Buffalo Creek Church of Christ. That same day Elders James Miller and David Duncan ordained him to preach. It is interesting that the church clerk wrote the word “Reformer” by his name. Wright possessed a strong mind that was well cultivated. He was honest in his faith, and thoroughly convinced that the Bible is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.³²⁶

He was not what one would call an eloquent speaker. His voice, though not strong, was clear and agreeable. He was not what the world would call a popular preacher but he made his mark, wherever he went, by adding to that Cause which he held dearer than popularity or life itself.

325 Jeremiah Jeter, as quoted in Moses E. Lard, **A Review of Rev. J. B. Jeter’s Book Entitled Campbellism Examined**. (1857, reprint, Rosemead, CA. Old Paths Book Club, 1955), p. 19.

326 Samuel H. Millard and T. J. Wright, **Biographical Sketch of John Wright**, clipping, n.d., n.p.

The success of his preaching is illustrated in two reports sent to Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger*.

March 30, 1833. "Our congregation at Buffalo has in 9 months increased from 40 to 100. John Wright, Jonesboro Tennessee."

August 27, 1834 "Our cause is gaining ground here, I have immersed 87 in the past 3 months. John Wright, Jonesboro, Tennessee."

During the bloody years of the Civil War (1861-1865), Wright found himself in great jeopardy. East Tennesseans were largely sympathetic with the Union cause. Wright volunteered as an enrolling officer for the Confederacy. Public sentiment was stirred against him which finally erupted into violence. Twenty-seven nights in succession, bushwhackers fired into his home. On one occasion they invaded his home and made him dance as they shot at his feet. His floor was peppered with bullet holes. He was forced to leave his rural home and seek refuge in Johnson City.³²⁷ Following the war he had to take an oath of allegiance to the United States. He received a pardon signed by an old friend and neighbor, President Andrew Johnson.³²⁸

In 1871, while living in Johnson City, Elder Wright organized a church and directed a community Sunday School.

John Wright completed his life's journey on June 22, 1876, being 86 years old. Bro. Samuel Millard conducted his funeral. Before his passing, he had requested that there be no funeral sermon, only songs, prayers and scripture reading. His worn body was laid to rest in Oak Hill Cemetery in Johnson City where he awaits the Lord's return. At his funeral, Millard said, "Fallen, a man of God, and Israelite in deed, a standard bearer of the Cross, mighty in word and deed."³²⁹

327 Mary Hardin McCown, *op cit*.

328 *Ibid*, November, 1969.

329 Hardin and Owen, p. 103.

ELDER D. T. WRIGHT

D. T. Wright was born in Carter County, East Tennessee, January 6, 1817. He was raised in the strict discipline of the Calvinistic Baptists. As a young adult, he enrolled in the Southwestern Theological Seminary, a Presbyterian school at Maryville in Blount County, Tennessee.

In the year 1835, Wright united with the Baptist Church at Sinking Creek in Carter County. He continued his membership with them until 1841. At that time, he broke with the Baptists and took his stand with the Christians at the Turkeytown congregation in Carter County. Shortly thereafter, he was ordained as a preacher of the gospel by elders John Wright and James Tipton. Later, in the year 1841, he was selected by the brethren at the district meeting held at Boon's Creek in Washington County, to be their district evangelist for the coming year. Many souls were won to Christ through his labors.

Following his marriage in 1842, he settled with the church at Concord in Sullivan County. Bro. Wright was not only successful in building up the church through conversions, he encouraged numerous men to become gospel preachers. Among those whom he influenced to preach were; Daniel McInturff of Carter's Station, Tennessee; Thomas J. Wright, Samuel H. Millard, Madison Love, and Dr. David M. Buck.

In 1846, Bro. Wright moved to Missouri where he continued to preach Christ and work among the churches until his demise in 1886. There, he and Dr. John R. Howard published the **Christian Pioneer** gospel paper.³³⁰

330 T. P. Haley. **Dawning of the Reformation, Historical and Biographical Sketches of the Early Churches and Pioneer Preachers of the Christian Church in Missouri** (Kansas City, MO; J. H. Smart & Co., 1888), pp. 504-508.

IV.

MEN WHO LOST THEIR WAY

SIDNEY RIGDON

WHO LEFT CHRIST'S CHURCH FOR MORMONISM

The Apostle Paul warned that some would “fall away from the faith” (I Tim. 4:2). In Paul’s day, there were Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygelus and Hermogenes, Philetus and Demas, who made shipwreck of the faith. The modern history of the church has also been stained by apostates. In this study we focus on Sidney Rigdon who left the Lord’s Church to follow Joseph Smith and his newly formed Mormon Church.

Rigdon was born February 19, 1793, near St. Clair Township, Allegheny, Pennsylvania. He was the son of William and Nancy Rigdon. Because of the poverty of his family, he received only a rudimentary education. However, young Sidney had an insatiable thirst for knowledge that drove him to borrow and read every book available in his neighborhood. He became especially proficient in history and the Bible.

As a youngster, Rigdon fell from a horse and entangled in the stirrup, was dragged some distance. His brother, Loammi, stated that “in this accident he received some concussion to the brain that ever afterward seriously affected his character, and in some respect his conduct.”³³¹

On two later occasions Rigdon suffered temporary insanity: First., when a mob drug him by his heels over frozen ground (1832), and second, when he was beaten, chained, and thrown in jail (1838).³³²

In 1817, Rigdon joined the Peter’s Creek United Baptist Church. He later admitted that he made up the story of his “religious experience” that was required for membership. During the winter of 1818, he began his Bible studies as an apprentice under Andrew Clark, an older preacher of the Regular Baptist Church. Soon Sidney had “acquired a reputation as a powerful preacher and an effective minister.”³³³

In May of 1819, Rigdon became associated with Adamson Bently of the Mahoning Baptist Association. A year later he married Miss Phebe Brooks,

331 F. Mark McKiernan, *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer*. (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1971), p. 15.

332 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

333 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

the sister of Bentley's wife.³³⁴ Rigdon and Bently were highly successful in their work on the Western Reserve which was later to be Northeastern Ohio.

"In the spring of 1821 Rigdon and Bently read a pamphlet reporting Alexander Campbell's debate with John Walker of the Presbyterian Church. They determined to visit Campbell and ask him about his beliefs. In a few weeks the two of them made the 85 mile trip to Bethany to visit Campbell. Campbell explained that he was trying to establish the "ancient order of things" by restoring Christ's Church as it was in New Testament times. They talked through the afternoon and on into the wee hours of morning. Rigdon confessed that "if he had within the last year taught and promulgated from the pulpit one error, he had a thousand."³³⁵ Both Rigdon and Bently adopted Campbell's plea for restoration and devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the cause. Campbell was sufficient impressed with Rigdon to recommend him to the Baptist Church in Pittsburgh whose leaders shared Campbell's restoration views. Rigdon also became a close friend of the great evangelist, Walter Scott. For several years Sidney Rigdon was a highly popular preacher in the Back to the Bible movement. Bently spent the rest of his days in faithful service. After ten years with the reformers, Rigdon abandoned them for Joseph Smith and his new Mormon Church.

In 1830, the Mahoning preachers voted to dissolve their Association and be Christians only. That same year Sidney Rigdon cast his lot with Joseph Smith, Jr. and his Mormons.

Rigdon's defection was not a spur of the moment decision. For several years he had exhibited an unstable spirit. Rigdon "was usually ecstatically enthusiastic about something or totally depressed with the situation in which he found himself."³³⁶ He sought "to convince influential persons that along with the primitive gospel, supernatural gifts and miracles ought to be restored."³³⁷ Also, Rigdon "wanted to establish a community in which all property was held in common..."³³⁸ Additionally, he held the view that there would be a millennial reign of Christ on earth and preached it on every occasion.³³⁹

At the 1830 Mahoning meeting, Rigdon sought to propagate his views on the community of goods and Campbell crushed it with a scathing attack on the man and his views. The latter left the meeting "chafed and chagrined."

334 *Ibid.*, p 17.

335 Robert Richardson, *Memoires of Alexander Campbell*, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1956), pp. 44-45.

336 F. Mark McKicman, *op cit*, p. 26.

337 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

338 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

339 *Ibid.*, p. 27.

He never met with the Disciples again.³⁴⁰ As Campbell mounted a campaign against Rigdon's false views, he retaliated by detaching from Campbell's movement all the members he could take with him, "including the restoration congregation at Mentor, Ohio."³⁴¹

In the fall of 1830, Rigdon was visited by Parley Pratt, Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer and Ziba Peterson, emissaries of the Mormon sect. They presented him with a copy of the Book of Mormon and the claims of Joseph Smith to be God's prophet. When Rigdon read "the Book of Mormon, he claimed that Mormonism was the truly apostolic church."³⁴² Within two weeks 127 of Rigdon's followers embraced Mormonism.³⁴³

In December 1830, Rigdon visited Joseph Smith at Manchester, New York. Smith flattered Rigdon with a "revelation" that God had a great work for him. From then until 1844, Rigdon was Smith's constant companion, counselor, spokesman, and assistant." and Smith dominated his convert's life.³⁴⁴ It was Rigdon who helped Smith revise the Bible.³⁴⁵ He persuaded Smith and his followers to move to Kirtland, Ohio. There they built the first Mormon community which began as a communal society but failed because of the greediness of the people.

In March of 1832, a mob, led by apostate Mormon, Simonds Ryder, drug Smith and Rigdon from their home, beat them, and then tarred and feathered them. Rigdon suffered a brain concussion which left him incoherent for several weeks.³⁴⁶

Rigdon rose to the highest office short of the Mormon presidency. In 1833, Smith appointed him to the council of the First Presidency. Smith, Rigdon, Cowdery and Williams arranged "the items of the doctrine...for the government of the Church" which were later published in the **Book of Doctrines and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints**.³⁴⁷ When the Mormon temple was dedicated at Kirtland in 1836, Rigdon delivered the dedicatory address. When the Mormon Anti-Bank of Kirtland failed, Smith and Rigdon fled to Missouri to avoid arrest and mob action.³⁴⁸

340 *Ibid.*, p. 28.

341 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

342 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

343 *Ibid.*, p. 36.

344 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

345 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

346 *Ibid.*, p. 55

347 *Ibid.*, pp. 67-67.

348 *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

When the Mormon city of Far West, Missouri fell to mobs in 1838, Rigdon was imprisoned along with Smith and 48 other Mormon leaders. Under that strain, his sanity again gave way.³⁴⁹ Although Rigdon remained loyal to Smith until the “prophet’s” untimely death, their relationship was, thereafter, stormy and strained.

When the Mormons relocated at Nauvoo, Illinois, Rigdon saw his position of leadership with Smith deteriorate. The break was caused in part when Smith made amorous advances toward Rigdon’s daughter, Nancy. When the family confronted Smith with the charge, he launched a vicious campaign of slander against her and her father.

On June 27, 1844, a mob attacked the jail in Carthage, Illinois and murdered Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Rigdon being the only surviving member of the First Presidency, claimed that he should be appointed to Smith’s position. He lost in a power struggle to Brigham Young. Defeated, Rigdon was excommunicated and forced out of Nauvoo.³⁵⁰

Following his defeat, Rigdon tried in vain to reform the Mormon Church to its original state. Returning to his old home in Pittsburg he published a paper entitled **The Latter Day Saints Messenger and Advocate**. In 1845, he organized a group called “the Church of Christ,” founded on the Book of Mormon, and was ordained president. In 1847, his church folded. The next 29 years were lived in obscurity. He died from strokes while in Friendship, NY, July 14, 1876.³⁵¹

Sidney Rigdon was “a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (Jas. 1:7). He made shipwreck of the faith (I Tim. 1:19). Like Judas he “fell away that he might go to his own place” (Acts 1:25).

With this information about the apostate Christian, Sidney Rigdon, we can better understand some aspects of Mormonism. At first they called themselves The Church of Christ. They talk much about the apostasy or the falling away of the church and of the “restored church.” They have elders. They immerse for remission of sins. These and other similarities can be traced back to the influence on Sidney Rigdon in the formative days of Mormon doctrine.

** Helpful information was also gleaned from the Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement, Douglas Foster, Paul Blower, Anthony Dunnivant & Newell Williams, editors, (Eerdmans’ Pub. Co. Grand Rapids, MI, 2004, p.652-653).*

349 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

350 *Ibid.*, p. 134.

351 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

DR. JOHN THOMAS

HERETIC

Among the early preachers of the Restoration Movement was Dr. John Thomas. Born in England, he immigrated to America in 1832. He first lived in Cincinnati where he became acquainted with Major Daniel Gano who was associated with the work of Alexander Campbell. Gano introduced the young immigrant to Walter Scott. He heard one sermon and spent a Sunday afternoon with Scott. That very night Thomas was immersed in the Miami Canal for the remission of his sins. In 1833, he made the acquaintance of Alexander Campbell. Campbell insisted that he present a sermon. This was the beginning of a preaching career that wrought havoc and ruin to many churches in Virginia and Great Britain.

Thomas was a medical doctor and at times practiced this art for his livelihood. Circumstances soon thrust him into regular preaching and the editorship of a religious journal called the **Apostolic Advocate**. From the beginning, he was obsessed with the Old Testament prophecies and those of the Book of Revelation. In his first issue, he set forth his speculations about a millennial reign of Christ which later grew to be the dominate theme of his teaching.

The doctor had an exaggerated view of his wisdom and scholarship. We see it reflected in his comments about his article on the Book of Revelation: “and I flatter myself that I shall not have laid before my readers the result of my humble efforts, without having substantiated my claim to the discovery or solution of certain problems in the Apocalypse, which have hitherto baffled the ingenuity and learning of some of the most celebrated illuminati of the religious world” (**Dr. Thomas, His Life and Work**, p. 30-31.) He often styled his lectures as “the Deep Things of God” (**Ibid.** p. 145).

The first agitation Thomas stirred had to do with rebaptism. Contrary to the other Restoration preachers, he insisted that no immersion was valid unless the convert had a complete understanding of the gospel doctrine of the subject. Many of the preachers and members of our church had been baptized as Baptists before learning of the back to the Bible movement. Thomas viewed them as not truly saved. This caused a raging controversy to erupt.

Soon he began to advocate that the spirits of wicked men in no way survived the experience of death. Thus he denied everlasting punishment.

This prompted further controversy and caused Alexander Campbell to write a number of articles in his **Millennial Harbinger** exposing those errors. In October of 1838, Campbell and Thomas met and debated his doctrine at Richmond, Virginia. Campbell insisted that it not be opened to the general public, but only to brethren, and that it not be published lest it cause embarrassment to the Lord's cause. Thomas was no match for Campbell and his friends urged him to sign an agreement that he would cease to publish his views for the welfare of the church. This he honored for only a short while. When Thomas recommenced his work, it was filled with hateful personal attacks against Campbell whom he viewed as the epitome of all evil. It is evident that he saw Campbell as the chief obstacle to his goal of pirating the Restoration churches for his own movement.

The damage done to our churches in the Southern Piedmont and Southeastern sections of Virginia was great. Before this heretic appeared on the scene, it looked as though the Restoration plea would sweep the whole land. Dr. Chester Bullard wrote, "But oh, what a blunder to have Dr. Thomas. . . the animus of this visit of his, together with his trailing "**Advocate**" threw a pall over the church not lifted for twenty years. Even Alexander Campbell. . . could not remove the blighting mildew" (J. Z. Tyler, **The Disciples of Christ in Virginia**, p.102). For a while, he continued, "the cause did indeed seem dead in Southeastern Virginia."

Thomas' attitude and tone towards those with whom he disagreed was bitter and insulting, whether they were sectarians or brethren. When the Episcopalians allowed the brethren to use their meeting house, Thomas insulted them, to the chagrin of the disciples. A pious Methodist family extended him lodging their home, yet he refused to participate in their devotional prayers since they were unimmersed. Such an arrogance turned the local citizens against the church and made it very difficult for others to gain a hearing.

In 1844, Thomas pulled away a small group of disciples from the church in Richmond and began separate meetings. This was the beginning of a new religious sect later to be known as the **Christadelphians** or **Christ's Brethren**. Only four or five were then meeting with him.

Campbell well described Thomas as "another of these infallible dogmatists, so supremely devoted to his own opinions, and his own glory in defending them, so confident in asserting them, so diligent in propagating them ..." (**Millennial Harbinger**, 1837, p. 578). Later, Campbell wrote, Dr. Thomas is "no longer building upon the foundation with us, but having set out to form a party for himself, has openly completed the character of a schismatic as delineated by the Apostle Paul, and as such is to be rejected by all the

brethren. He is now engaged in the work of discord and division in Eastern Virginia.” (**Millennial Harbinger**, 1843, p 419.)

In 1847, Thomas concluded “that when he was immersed by Walter Scott, he was immersed into a sect merely, and not into Christ,” thus he was rebaptized according to his new found “faith in the hope of Israel.” Following this, he published his **Confession and Abjuration** which set forth the reasons for his change and the sum and substance of his new found faith. (**Dr. Thomas**, p. 152-164).

Not finding a ready reception in the states, Thomas set sail for England on June 1, 1848. His biography, which consists largely of his personal correspondence and published writings, makes it evident he was determined to invade the Restoration Churches there to build his new fellowship. Having received letters of recommendation from sympathetic brethren in this country he was able to make inroads. He hesitated not to use deception in order to gain entrance. Though stoutly resisted by Bro. David King and James Wallis, he still was able to lead astray numerous brethren and splinter several of the English churches.

While in England, in 1849, he published his speculative heresies in a book entitled **Elpis Israel**. While his new sect was slow in gaining a following in his life time, his converts eagerly spread his message throughout Great Britain. They found a more fertile ground in New Zealand and Australia. Many of our modern missionaries have encountered these Christadelphians. Here in the states, they claim some 800 churches with more than 16,000 members.

In doctrine, the Christadelphians are unitarian, denying the eternality of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit. They reject belief in a personal devil. They are strongly premillennial. They have congregational government, and call their local groups ecclesiae. They have no paid ministers, They do not vote or participate in war. They baptize by immersion. (Frank Mead, **Handbook of Denominations**, p 55-56).

John Thomas died on March 5, 1871. He made his place in history, not as a preacher of the gospel of Christianity, but as did Hymenaeus and Alexander who made shipwreck concerning the faith (I Tim. 1:19-20). He went out from us because he was not of us (I John 2:19). He was but one of the multitude who have troubled the body of Christ, “and by their smooth and fair speech. . .beguile(d) the hearts of the innocent” (Rom. 16:18). We yet have his kind in our midst. May we learn from the experiences of the brethren of yesteryear. “A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned” (Titus 3:10-11).

JESSE B. FERGUSON, A MAN WHO MADE SHIPWRECK OF HIS FAITH

We sometime hear brethren assailing the pioneer preachers of the church and asserting their freedom and liberty from “brotherhood” conformity. Some of our intellectuals feel they have something new to tell us; new concepts and insights to share. In days past, men of the same stripe have arisen among us. When their program was rejected by the brethren, they usually renounced the Church of Christ. Some abandoned religion entirely, while others joined various denominational churches.

In the pages of the 1855 **Millennial Harbinger**, we find a story of a notable brother who made shipwreck concerning the faith. The article is entitled “**The Fall of Mr. J. B. Ferguson.**” Ferguson was the preacher for the church in Nashville from 1847-1856. “He was born eloquent and brilliant and he knew it. Flattery fell abundantly on his head, and he grew vain and proud, losing at the same time his spirituality” (Earl West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol 1, p. 261).

As I read and compare the many volumes published by our contemporary “agents of change” and the apology of Jesse B. Ferguson, I find the likeness in content and spirit striking. Hear him:

“... in March 1847, (I) as pastor, took charge of that (Nashville) congregation. During the five succeeding years the most flattering success attended our ministry, and it was decided to erect a more commodious edifice.” (Those of his stripe usually feel the need of telling the world of their greatness and success. Bigness is equated with divine approval).

“...We defined our position upon their charges of heresy and infidelity by showing our independence of all Church creeds, written or unwritten...” (Through the years a certain type of men have protested an unwritten creed in the church, especially when they are charged with heresy!).

“I speak plainly: man was not made to be subservient to religious or any other associates, and when they proscribe his native integrity by rules fit for hideous brothels, it is better for religion and morality to break up. Politic(al) movements in religion are crminating and desolating scourges of the world. Every man that enters this house is my brother, let him be more or less worthy.” (The complaint of mind-control and

political power in the church is still a favorite smoke screen of those walking in paths of apostasy. They want to be able to violate the Scriptural standards without criticism. Seamy adjectives to describe one's revulsion to the laws of the church is still a favorite mode of expression. It is proper to say that then as now the only rule or for the church was the Word of God. Hence, he says it was "fit for hideous brothels."),

"The dome of God's temple includes all mankind, and there is no door into or out of it, NO ACCESSIONS OF EXCLUSIONS, and no knocking for admission into it. We go in and come out without our choice, for whomsoever God creates and vivifies, he, and not man, admits." (In his broad-mindedness, he would claim religious brotherhood with all mankind, regardless of their faith or practice; truly an ecumenical-minded brother!).

"We would plant no dissension by stirring up 'Divine Wrath;' we would not stir up the offensive acts of old comrades to contaminate others; but with pitying affection will declare, that we have no selfish heaven or hopeless hell." (His type always pleads innocent to schism as they are wrecking the church about them. They would have us think that they are only working to heal the wounds others have inflicted).

"... the world is my church; mankind are its members; forms are the rights of the heart. If I comply with your ordinances, or if I do not, you perceive clearly my position. I once admitted your ceremonials, but now they are dead; your organization ceasing to act, is not nominally, but really dead, under my teaching in this house." (He had renounced the forms and ceremonies (as he called them), of the New Testament Church. He was certain the Church of Christ was on its death bed. After all, he was leaving. Would he not be chagrined to see the church today? No doubt, he would be disappointed! How similar is his outburst to those clamoring for change among us!).

"The human mind is bursting the shackles of a superstitious tradition favoring religious dogmatists." (Over and over we hear this type of disenchanting preacher predict that every 'intelligent' person will reject the Restoration concept for his new and enlightened way. Really it is but the fond and hopeful wish of his imagination).

"In our day, God is rearing up a temple whose sunlight will teach you to know, be free, be candid, be a man and think, feel, and act for the day in which you live." (He called for a movement of inner direction that would be relevant to 1855! Bro. Jesse could easily be mistaken for a university professor promoting a new kind of Church of Christ for the 21st century!).

"We are free to serve any society seeking our labors of their own accord.

We pay no servile respect to the doctrines of antiquity—even 5,000 years consecrate the Bible no further than the truths developed in such books.” (He felt free to share his ministry with denomination churches and not to limit it to narrow confines of one church! Do you suppose he called it “dialog” or reaching out to our religious neighbors? He refused to be bound to the doctrines of the old paths of the first century).

“Even Mr. Campbell, who worries his disciples of the ‘Reform of the 19th Century’ with the flippant heraldry of faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins...” (He must have read some of our contemporary church bulletins and books of our “change agents.” It is remarkable the way this element always attack great men of the past when they reject a particular doctrine. I wonder why they do not attack the Scripture those pioneers preachers cited? But that would be too obvious! Today, a new generation of apostates are also casting aspersion on “baptism for remission of sins” and the plan of salvation set forth in Scripture).

“The Pentecost of the ‘reformed church’ is a penitence due to demons. My church will yet love those who deliver it from separating strife and narrow bigotry.” (The great growth of our congregations was, he charged, because people were afraid of the Devil. Come to think about it...I still hear some complaints about preachers preaching on sin, death, judgment, hell and the Devil. They demand a “positive” only message. Perhaps they sprouted from Ferguson’s stump).

“In spirit communion, we hear the voice of he Lord God, as did the fabled Adam...” (He thought God was talking directly to him. For those who feel the Holy Spirit speaks to them, he should be a welcome guest. And there is his ‘fabled’ Adam. The liberals who view the first 12 chapters of Genesis as fable are not new. They are 150 years behind Ferguson).

“We must learn to know man in one brotherhood, though in many families...” (He could have been an associate professor of Bible at Abilene Christian University and a contributor to the “fabled” Wineskins magazine).

*“Self-knowledge is the consciousness of the Divinity in ourselves, for as we are so is God in us...Let the scope of man’s thoughts embrace the Divine germ of spirit growing in his system.” (This is a predecessor of the Emergent Church, spiritual formation programs and mystical practices promoted by our change agents. If you compare it with the vague theological meanderings of the current professors of change you will see a marvelous similarity). All the above quotes are from **The Millennial Harbinger**, 1855, pp. 636-640.*

The man whose words we have considered came to Nashville and found a congregation of some 600 members. In 10 years, “the church was wholly

broken up, and disbanded; so that when a call was made by a few who desired to renew the worship according to the old faith...only fifteen or twenty at first responded to the call” (J. E. Scobey, **Franklin College and Its Influences**, pp. 45-50). Moreover, he led many other congregations off with him. Not unexpectedly, he soon went into Universalism and finally quite preaching altogether. He died in obscurity (H. L. Boles, **Biographical Sketches of Pioneer Preachers**, p.190). Had not Alexander Campbell publicly exposed Ferguson’s error, likely he would have taken many of the Middle-Tennessee congregations down the road of apostasy.

The lessons for us today are obvious:

1. We must constantly try the spirits (I John 4:1). We must take heed what we hear (Mark 4:24). No matter how highly educated, polished or respected a preacher may be, our faith must go beyond him to God’s Word. If he abides not faithfully in that sacred message we must reject him and his message. The sooner the better!
2. Public exposure of doctrinal error is the only way to stop a false doctrine that is being publicly promoted (Rom. 16:16).
3. The defense offered by J. B. Ferguson for his departure is currently being repeated by a multitude of preachers among our churches. Perhaps a similar sickness has affected those who reflect similar symptoms.
4. Only when the apostate was driven out was the wounded church able to recover itself and rebuild. Without his poison, the Churches of Christ in Nashville eventually came to number 135 with many of them exceedingly large.
5. Now as then, when Satan cannot defeat us by enemies from without, he will attempt to subvert us from within. “Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom;” in Christianity as well as in democracy.

D. S. BURNET, ARCHITECT OF APOSTASY

David Staats Burnet was one of the most influential men of the second generation of Restoration leaders. He was born of an aristocratic family in Dayton, Ohio, July 6, 1808. His parents planned for him a career in the field of law. Later he was offered a scholarship to West Point Military Academy but he declined it for a life of preaching.

At age sixteen, Burnet cast his lot with the Baptists, being convinced that immersion was the biblical mode of baptism. It happened that Philip S. Fall was delivering a series of lessons for the Enon Baptist Church when young Burnet resolved to be baptized. It was through Fall that he was introduced to the Restoration tenets of Alexander Campbell. Soon Burnet gained acclaim among the Baptists as the "Boy Preacher," delivering his lessons with great power and conviction.

In 1827, at age twenty, Burnet became pastor of a Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio. Under his leadership, his congregation rejected all human creeds and then withdrew from the Miami Baptist Association. He later helped to organize the Eighth and Walnut Street Church in Cincinnati. The was composed of former Baptists that had followed Burnet's leadership back to the Bible.

D. S. Burnet was an energetic and industrious leaders who brought forth a continual series of projects throughout his career. As an editor, he published **The Evangelical Enquirer** (1830); **The Christian Preacher** (1834); and **The Christian Family Magazine** (1845). In 1837 he was appointed president of Bacon College, the first college within the young movement. Later, in 1839, he founded Hygeia Female Atheneum.

BURNET THE BROTHERHOOD ORGANIZER

The year 1845 found Burnet deathly ill with a fever. As he lay recuperating, he concluded, "It is our duty to organize Societies for the purpose of concentrating our means, and applying them to the conversion of the outcasts of Israel, and the sinners of the Gentiles. It is our duty to organize..."³⁵² When recovered, he devoted the remainder of his days to bringing his resolution to reality.

His task was not an easy one. The earlier teaching of Alexander Campbell had specifically attacked Missionary, Bible and Educational Societies, suggesting that to have and support such organizations would "rob the church of its glory, and exalt the inventions of men above the wisdom of

³⁵² Noel L. Keith, **The Story of D. S. Burnet, Undeserved Obscurity**, (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1954), p. 70.

God.”³⁵³ Campbell’s views had evolved over the years. In 1849 the great leader published a series of five articles in the **Millennial Harbinger** entitled, “Church Organization.” In these he began to pave the way for major changes in brotherhood structure. Opposition from other brethren was a major obstacle.

The first organization was a trial balloon. The **American Christian Bible Society** was founded by D. S. Burnet in Cincinnati, January 27, 1845.³⁵⁴ His board elected him president. To his great disappointment, Campbell offered criticism rather than help and encouragement. It was not that Campbell opposed having such an organization, rather he feared it would drain away needed funds from his newly founded Bethany College. Campbell also wanted to keep brotherhood publishing activities at Bethany, Virginia. The Bible Society died in 1852.³⁵⁵

In 1846 Burnet succeeded in launching the **American Christian Publication Society**. He was the principal leader of this cooperative organization. Not only Alexander Campbell, but W. K. Pendleton and others made attacks against Burnet’s projects. Their opposition was of a personal nature for these men did not object to the organizational concept. It seem they felt that Burnet might grab leadership and power if left unchallenged. The most notable and destructive of Burnet’s achievements was the creation of the **American Christian Missionary Society**, October 21-27, 1849. Building upon the foundation of his Bible Society, Burnet called together in Cincinnati a general convention of representative brotherhood leaders. With the skill of a seasoned political chairman he steered the meeting to adopt the following resolutions:

*“Resolved, That a missionary society, as a means to concentrate and dispense the wealth and benevolence of the brethren of this reformation, in an effort to convert the world is both scriptural and expedient.”*³⁵⁶

The constitution drafted and adopted was essentially that of Burnet’s Bible Society. In a master stroke to neutralize Campbell’s opposition, Burnet saw that Campbell was elected in absentia to the president’s chair.³⁵⁷ How could Campbell oppose that of which he was president?

Burnet’s biographer interprets his determination to accomplish his goal of organizing the church thusly:

353 Alexander Campbell, **The Christian Baptist**, 1 Vol. Ed. The Christian Religion, (Cincinnati: D. S. Burnet, 1835) pp. 6-7.

354 Earl West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, Vol. 1. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Publishing Co., 1953), p. 164.

355 Noel L. Keith, **The Story of D. S. Burnet**, p. 120.

356 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

357 Earl West, **Search for the Ancient Order**, p. 178.

“The struggle of aggressive action, even against some of his closest companions in the movement, if need be, would be necessary...it would be a normal, premeditated aggression, not pathological...he would plan how to escape the conditions which would be most disagreeable; he would disguise the significance of his ultimate aims by attacking the less obnoxious problems first...”³⁵⁸

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Under Burnet’s influence, in 1855, the Sixth Street Church in Cincinnati added instrumental music to their worship.³⁵⁹

Probably more than any other man, Burnet fostered and promoted the idea that preachers should be “pastors” of our congregations just as they were in the denominational world.³⁶⁰ His views of church membership and fellowship were among the most liberal of his day. While in Baltimore he led his church to practice “open membership” with all who name the name of Christ and walk with him, without reservation.”³⁶¹

On July 8, 1867, while at the zenith of his power and influence, D. S. Burnet suddenly died. He did not live to see the bitter fruit of his philosophy when carried to its full end. By 1900, the brotherhood was broken. Two bodies of people claimed to be heirs of the Restoration: the one having bought the liberal approach of D. S. Burnet, the other holding to the more conservative view of accepting only that which is authorized by the Scripture.

Today the Disciples of Christ reflect the thinking expressed by D. S. Burnet. Their full-blown denominational structure owes its origin to the thought and work of Burnet. Their involvement in the World Council of Churches is the application of his views on fellowship. The elevation of their ministers to the office of pastor is the consequence of his thinking.

In this study we see the impact of thoughts and ideas on the church. We see the ability of one man to affect the church for evil. We see the grave danger that always follows when we abandon the principle that we can only do what the Lord authorized in his Word.

The thinking of D. S. Burnet is yet to be found among us. Those who are determined to impose unscriptural changes upon us are his heirs. If their ideas prevail, they will again wreck the church as did those of D. S. Burnet 160 years ago. Pray that this time our brethren will reject them.

358 Noel Keith, *The Story of D. S. Burnet*, p. 71.

359 Douglas Foster and others, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, (Eerdmans Pub. Co. Grand Rapids 2004), p. 414

360 Keith., p. 247.

361 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

DR. L. L. PINKERTON

FIRST LIBERAL OF THE RESTORATION

Lewis Letig Pinkerton, son of William and Elizabeth Pinkerton, was born January 28, 1812, near Baltimore, Maryland. Seven sons were born to William and Elizabeth, five of whom became ministers. The paternal grandparents of Lewis were Irish, and on the maternal side, German. In the year 1821, when Lewis was in his tenth year, his family moved to Brooke County, Virginia (now West Virginia) some six miles from Bethany, the home of Alexander Campbell. The next ten years of the young man's life was spent in school and labor on the family farm. As he grew older, he worked at numerous jobs including coal mining, wood cutting, and fence building. One of his fence building jobs involved cutting the black locust trees for posts and cutting and splitting black walnut for the rails. For his labors he was paid twenty-five cents per eight foot section.

He chanced to see a copy of Alexander Campbell's **Millennial Harbinger**. Upon reading Mr. Campbell's words appealing for truth and justice, young Pinkerton was deeply stirred. He later wrote, "That sentence changed the whole current of my after life."³⁶² He had been raised in the Presbyterian faith of his parents and had studied the **Shorter Catechism**, but found some of its teachings objectionable. He also read John Wesley's **Notes on the New Testament** which made him incline toward Methodism.

Pinkerton became acquainted with William Martin, a member of the Lord's church who made a favorable impression upon him. It was his good fortune to hear the gospel preached by Alexander Campbell in the summer of 1830. At the close of the lesson he confessed his faith and was immersed according to New Testament instruction. He rode home in his wet clothes.³⁶³

Later that year, Lewis enrolled in Pleasant Hill Seminary, near West Middletown, PA, a school taught by Mrs. Jane McKeever, a sister of Alexander Campbell. The following year he settled in Trenton, Butler County, Ohio, where he taught school and studied medicine. One of this students was Miss Sarah Ball, who became his wife in March 1833.

³⁶² John Shackelford, Jr., **Life, Letters and Addresses of Dr. L. L. Pinkerton**, Cincinnati, Chase and Hall Publishers, 1876, p. 13.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

On March 28, 1833, Mr. Campbell wrote an impressive letter of recommendation for Mr. Pinkerton. In it he said: "...from the time of his baptism...until his migration...was always esteemed and loved by all the disciples in the county... I have no hesitation in recommending him to the confidence and communion of the brethren... I think he might be very usefully employed as an evangelist to proclaim glad tidings."

To Pinkerton himself, Campbell wrote: "I would advise you to be instant on all proper occasions in preparing yourself, by laying up and hiding in your heart the law of the Lord. Have the first principles all well arranged in your mind, and the Scriptures which treat of them very familiar. Avoid all appearance of censoriousness, acrimony, or irony in your speaking to sinners. Persuade, beseech, entreat with all long-suffering and gravity, and strive to show yourself a workman who needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Such advice could well be heeded by every man, young and old, who aspires to preach Christ.³⁶⁴ Bethany College would later confer an honorary Master's Degree upon Pinkerton.

By 1835, Pinkerton had advanced in his medical training to the point that he began his practice. In August of 1876, he moved to Carthage, Ohio, near Cincinnati. There, he was privileged to be associated with the illustrious preacher, Walter Scott. For some reason, he for several years had not been an active member of a congregation, although he sought to maintain Christian standards in his life. All of that changed with his relocation in Carthage. Soon those brethren were encouraging him to preach the word. In 1838, he agreed to do so, making a five-year commitment thereto.³⁶⁵ That same year he made his first trip to Kentucky which was soon to become his life-time field of labor. His first Kentucky meeting was at Brunerstown (now Jeffersontown) near Louisville. The results were pleasing to all. Soon he moved to Oldham County and eventually to Middletown. He immediately joined John T. Johnson and William Morton in itinerant evangelistic work. Bro. Johnson wrote of Pinkerton, "He is destined to do much good if he lives. I could sit and listen to him all the time."³⁶⁶ In 1839, the Pinkertons settled in Brunerstown. He established a medical practice and preached by appointment but within a few months he was again in full-time gospel work.

The years of 1836-1842 were rich in their harvest of souls. Converts were won throughout Kentucky by the thousands and Dr. Pinkerton was one of

364 Ibid., pp 21-22.

365 Ibid., pp.23-24.

366 Ibid., pp. 27-28.

the effective reapers.³⁶⁷ He was an “earnest, eloquent, devoted and successful evangelist.”³⁶⁸

In 1840, the New Union Church in Woodford County, Kentucky, invited Pinkerton to work as their minister. The agreement was that he would work part of the time in evangelistic work. He worked with them from July until October of the following year. At that time he moved to Lexington to take up work with the Hill Street Church. It was at this meeting house that the followers of Stone and Campbell agreed to merge their efforts in the Christmas and New Year meetings of 1831-32. Their arrangement was that he would preach for the home church three Sundays of the month and spend his fourth and fifth Sundays in evangelistic work. For this they would provide him \$650.00 per year. A new meeting house was built on Main Street and some of the families placed cushions on their favorite pews with a small metal name tag on the armrests. Others were offended and removed the tags and slashed the cushions. When Dr. Pinkerton openly rebuked this vandalism, it stirred such an unfavorable reaction that he was forced to resign.³⁶⁹ Leaving his pulpit in Lexington, Pinkerton returned to evangelistic work and in addition, he worked on behalf of Bacon College at Harrodsburg.

It was in the fall of 1844 that Bro. Pinkerton was invited to move to Midway, Woodford County, Kentucky. The church was newly formed, and he would be their first minister. The doctor was 32 years old and in the prime of his life. To supplement his salary, Pinkerton organized a female school which he called Baconian Institute. The school met first in the church building but the following year the doctor built a commodious classroom and boarding house. The school was his private enterprise.

In 1849, a dream which Dr. Pinkerton had nourished since 1844 came to fruition. With the able assistance of J.W. Parrish and John T. Johnson, the Female Orphan School at Midway was launched. The school opened with twenty children who were provided a home and education through the benevolence of the Kentucky Christians. This project enjoyed the good will of the brotherhood and was readily supported by the brethren.

On January 1, 1854, Dr. Pinkerton delivered a lesson recounting the growth and progress of the Midway Church through his first ten years of service. They had begun with 32 members and 279 had been added. Of that number, one hundred and fifty-four had been immersed. Seventeen had died and ten had been excluded. Of those excluded, several had been reclaimed. The present number (in 1854) was 168.

367 Ibid., p. 29.

368 Ibid., p. 30.

369 Ibid., pp. 33-34.

In addition, the Midway church had established a new congregation for the black members and provided a comfortable meeting house for them. Pinkerton was a tireless and effective worker who was successful in winning souls and building up the body. John T. Johnson wrote: "If I wished to witness a specimen of primitive Christianity in its modesty, humility, piety, simplicity, order, devotion, intelligence, and liberality in Christian enterprise in providing for the poor, the church at Midway would claim my attention..."³⁷⁰

LITERARY ENDEAVORS

As a literary man, Dr. Pinkerton excelled. For two years (1844-1845) he edited the prohibitionist journal, **New Era** for the Sons of Temperance. In 1848, he edited and published the **Christian Mirror**. He was senior editor of the **Ecclesiastical Reformer** in the year 1851.³⁷¹ In addition to his journalistic efforts, he published a volume entitled, **Bible Questions** which was designed to aid Bible School teachers in teaching the Old Testament.³⁷²

While serving at Midway, L. L. Pinkerton continued an active program of evangelistic endeavor. He often would fill regular monthly appointments for neighboring congregations. Among the churches he thus served were Versailles, Mt. Sterling and Paris. Both Versailles and Paris erected meeting houses while he was working with them.³⁷³

In appearance, Dr. Pinkerton stood six feet in height, with a slender but well-built frame. He stood tall and erect as a soldier. He had eyes of gray which were very expressive and a full head of black hair that silvered with advancing years. He was a handsome man with a likeable personality. He always had a tender spot for the poor and oppressed. He was at home with the rich and powerful and with the poorest slaves. The rights and interests of the black gardener were just as important to Pinkerton as those of the nation's President.

SLAVERY

To L. L. Pinkerton, slavery was a great blot on the face and character of American society. Being a bold man, he never hesitated to declare his abhorrence for the slave system. In 1857 and 1858 he delivered a lecture before literary societies on the subject. Its title was, "Is the civilization of Europe and of the United States preferable to barbarism." In the lecture he roundly denounced slavery. He described a scene at a slave auction where a

370 Ibid., p. 49.

371 Ibid., p. 49.

372 M.C. Tiers, **The Christian Portrait Gallery**, Cincinnati: n. p., 1864, p. 208.

373 Shackelford, **Life, Letters**, pp. 50-51.

black mother and her children are sold one by one to the highest bidders—the crying children torn away from their sobbing, pleading mother. The speech cut to the quick those who owned slaves and defended slavery. The lesson wrought no repentance, it only stirred hostility against the one who dared to say such things. While Pinkerton was not in favor of the reckless abolitionists, he did declare himself an emancipationist and worked to see slavery ended in a peaceful way.

When pro-slavery churchman quoted Noah's words, "cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Gen. 9:25), the doctor retorted: "These disciples, so zealous for the fulfillment of prophecy, seem to forget that a greater than Noah has appeared, of whom a prophet hath said, 'He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives ... They do not seem to care whether this scripture is fulfilled or not; but that other sweet, precious, humane, Christ-like passage, 'Cursed be Canaan,' has corn and cotton in it."³⁷⁴

A favorite saying of our subject was, "If I cannot be a victor, I will at least prove myself invincible; if I cannot conquer, I can fight to the last, and fall at last with my back to the field and my feet to the foe."³⁷⁵ In his war against slavery, his motto was best demonstrated. L. L. Pinkerton also stood squarely opposed to the making, selling and using of alcoholic beverages. He never hesitated to state his convictions in public or in private, even if he stood alone in so doing.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The question of instrumental music in Christian worship had been occasionally discussed prior to 1859, but Dr. Pinkerton carved himself a place in our brotherhood history when he introduced a melodeon into the worship of the Midway Church. The decision to do so was not unanimous and bitter feelings were stirred. Within a few days the instrument disappeared and the mysterious disappearance went unsolved for years. Upon the death of Bro. Adam Hibler, one of the church's elders, the melodeon was found stored away in the attic his home. The story has it that Bro. Hibler and his servant, Reuben, went to the building by night and Reuben passed the little instrument out to his master through the window. It was hauled away and safely hidden. The pro-instrument folks were undaunted, they simply got another instrument for their purposes.

Upon learning of Midway's action, Benjamin Franklin, editor of the **American Christian Review** fired a broadside against them and all who were

374 Ibid., p. 53-54.

375 Ibid., p. 62.

contemplating the same. Dr. Pinkerton took personal offense at the editorial and replied as follows: "So far as known to me.... I am the only 'preacher' in Kentucky of our brotherhood who has publicly advocated the propriety of using instrumental music in some churches, and that the church in Midway is the only church that has made a decided effort to introduce it... I have only this to say... if your article on (the) church reflects the notions of the Reformation as to what constitutes Christian courtesy, manly literature, logic, rhetoric, religion; nay, if any considerable portion of the Reformation can even tolerate such coarse fulminations, then the sooner it is extinct, the better; and I, for one...would feel myself impelled by everything I owe my family, my country and myself, and my Savior, to aid in ridding the world of it, as of an immeasurable abomination.

Finally, I am ready and willing to discuss the subject of instrumental music in churches with any man who can discriminate between railing in bad grammar and Christian argumentation..."³⁷⁶

It is interesting that Pinkerton offered no scriptural justification for introducing the instrument. He said the singing at Midway was so bad that the rats had been scared away from the worship, hence, they needed instrumental accompaniment.

The example of the Midway church was like a match tossed in a field of dry brush. Following the war, churches throughout the land began buying organs and pianos to "aid in their worship." For forty long years the battle raged. Churches, by the hundreds, divided over the issue. Eventually the brotherhood was rent, leaving the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ with their instruments and Churches of Christ with their acapella singing. Dr. Pinkerton's famous melodeon is now housed in a glass case at Midway College. It is an object of pride among those who use instruments in their worship, but viewed as Aaron's golden calf by those who are committed to doing Bible things in Bible ways.

In the year 1860, Dr. Pinkerton resigned his work at Midway and accepted the professorship of English Literature at Kentucky University at Harrodsburg. He relocated his family there but within a year the nation was plunged into civil war.

A UNION SOLDIER

With strong sentiments for the Union and against slavery, Dr. Pinkerton sought and received a commission as a surgeon in the Eleventh Kentucky

³⁷⁶ William H. McDonald, *Whatever Others Might Do, A Look at the Principles of L. L. Pinkerton*, a speech delivered at Midway College on the 175th anniversary of the birth of L. L. Pinkerton, typescript, Jan 28, 1987, pp. 5-7.

Calvary. He commenced active service on September 18, 1862, just four days before Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. His encampment was near Louisville, and the doctor devoted himself unreservedly to the care of his men. Not forgetting his standing as a minister, he conducted daily prayer meetings seeking to undergrid the moral and spiritual strength of his comrades. In less than a year his constitution gave way and he collapsed from a sun stroke and sank into unconsciousness. When discovered and revived, he was taken to the home of an old friend and brother in Christ, Captain Carr. Although the Captain and his wife were staunch Southerners, they gladly nursed their old friend as best they could. Convinced that he was dying, Pinkerton asked J.B. Bowman to take him home to Harrodsburg. That proved to be the needed medicine and he slowly regained his strength.

YEARS OF REJECTION

Following the war, Kentucky University was moved from Harrodsburg to Lexington. Pinkerton and his family made the move along with the other teachers and officers of the school. Having formerly preached at Lexington, he fully expected to resume his place in the life of the church. To his chagrin, he was shunned by virtually all brethren and churches. He was not asked to preach, pray, give thanks or exhort. The great majority of the brethren sympathized with the lost cause of the Confederacy. They despised those who had sided with the North and worn the blue. Especially did they dislike the Republican party which they blamed for the war. Dr. Pinkerton was faulted on all counts.

For a year, he patiently endured insult and snubbing, seeking peace. But in January, 1866 "he drew the sword and threw away the scabbard, determined... if he must die ecclesiastically, that he would die fighting."³⁷⁷ When he heard the Union cause derided or felt the sting of their arrows of prejudice, the doctor stood up like an armed man in battle and made things uncomfortably hot for his antagonists. His bitterness only served to enlarge the chasm between him and his brethren. Many viewed him as an unsound, dangerous man for his politics, if not for his faith.

In 1866 he resigned his chair at Kentucky University. This was done in part because of the "Southern" hostility above mentioned. On January 18 of that year, he was appointed agent for the Freedman's Bureau in Fayette County. He accepted that post, thinking he could help the freed slaves to improve their lot. He met a stone wall of resistance among the Whites and soon resigned. He then sought to work as a missionary among the Blacks. He was able to raise his support among the Northern churches. Although he was able to prosecute

377 Ibid., pp.77-79.

his work among the Blacks he was discouraged by the rejection of his former friends. He wrote John Shackelford, "The clouds gather thick over my head, gather close about me, and pour their chilling treasures on my naked heart, but I am not moved: here I am determined to fight my battle to its close... I am compelled to ask...what end has my poor life served? The very men for whom I have done most...are the men who have shown themselves readiest to traduce me, and most heartily rejoice at my misfortunes and embarrassments."³⁷⁸

In the midst of his sorrows, Dr. Pinkerton was invited to Hiram College in Ohio to deliver a series of lectures to the Bible students. At the conclusion he was offered the presidency of the school, but he declined, being determined to "stick it out" in Kentucky.

Pinkerton and John Shackelford launched a new journal entitled the **Independent Monthly** in January 1869. Its purpose was twofold: 1) To protest the proscriptive, political spirit that prevailed in the Kentucky churches, and 2) to protest what they perceived to be a "fierce sectarian and intolerant dogmatism which had grown up among the disciples."³⁷⁹ Dr. Pinkerton led the battle with saber drawn, slashing and chopping at all he viewed as his enemies. Needless to say, no wounds were healed and the alienation was hardened. Dr. Pinkerton recognized that he was censorious in his manner of speaking and writing. To his daughter, he wrote, "I have been myself a great offender in this respect." He warned young preachers to avoid the habit.³⁸⁰

HERESY CHARGES

Added to the Pinkerton's political disfavor were charges of heresy brought in 1870 by the Lexington church. Having received a letter of dismissal from the Harrodsburg church, and having encountered rejection in Lexington, the doctor had not placed membership with any congregation. It was reported that he claimed to belong to the church universal and was responsible to no particular congregation. Also, they judged that his conduct for several years appeared to be schismatic and calculated to stir up strife and division in the body. Numerous offensive citations were given from his published writings.³⁸¹

In his usual biting and sarcastic style, the doctor looking at the lengthy letter replied that he "would rather plead guilty than read it!" After reading it, he said he enjoyed the extracts from his own writings so well that he regretted the brevity thereof. He closed by saying that if the Lexington elders had

378 Ibid., pp. 87-88.

379 Ibid., p. 93.

380 Ibid., p. 120.

381 Ibid., p. 103.

invited his assistance, he could have gotten up a much stronger case against himself than they had done—that if they were willing he would yet do so and share the cost of printing and circulating them.³⁸²

L.L. Pinkerton has been dubbed “the first liberal of the Restoration movement.” He wore the title without shame or embarrassment. The doctor held heretical views about congregational government and organization. In 1854, he wrote in the **Christian Age**: “It has long been our conviction, that the Presbyterian organization is Scriptural and expedient. We believe that every church should have plurality of elders, one of which should be a preacher...we believe...the Presbyterian plan of operation, through presbyteries and synods, the best extant...Churches are left at liberty to adopt such a plan of co-operation as shall seem best adapted to secure the ends mediated by the co-operation.” The doctor offered no scriptural argument for his conclusion, only expediency. To those who dared disagree he replied, “The greatest little tyrants I have known have been the greatest stickers for what they call the independence of churches.”³⁸³ The doctor was an eager participant at the 1849 meeting held in Cincinnati to organize a general convention of the churches and a missionary society. Pinkerton also strongly opposed “The Louisville Plan” which was proposed in 1869 as a compromise to appease these brethren who objected to the organizational structure of the American Christian Missionary Society. He felt that a general organization was essential.³⁸⁴

His views on church membership were heretical. Pinkerton affirmed that he would accept into fellowship a pious, unimmersed soul who had previously held membership in some other religious body. In an article in the **Christian Standard** in 1873, he wrote, “I will not, therefore, thrust my translation of a Greek word (*baptidzo*) between your conscience and your God.” In the same article he said, “The New Testament is not a code of cast-iron laws for trembling souls; but a rule of life for loving children—not a hole through a granite rock through which fools and Pharisees are required to crawl...but the ‘King’s Highway’ on which rational beings with free spirits...walk.”³⁸⁵

His views on the inspiration of the Bible were faulty. In 1869 Pinkerton wrote: “It is now more than twenty years since we were compelled to abandon what Neander calls ‘the red theory of the Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures... Young men who go out to preach the Gospel in these days, committed to a theory that requires them to believe...that the ninth verse of the one hundred

382 Ibid., pp. 104-105

383 Ibid., pp. 107-108.

384 Ibid., p. 99.

385 Ibid., pp. 109-111.

and thirty-seventh Psalm was inspired...will be liable...to perpetrate a great many follies in the name of the Lord.”³⁸⁶

Pinkerton’s views on salvation grew to be quite liberal. In an article he wrote a spoof about an imaginary “Bob Lawson” from the Gosser Creek Church. He defended Lawson who believed that “a great many people will get to heaven without being immersed.” Bob Lawson believed that only immersion was baptism and that baptism was for the remission of sins, but he also believed “that God will accept the **spirit of obedience** in some cases for exact conformity to law.”³⁸⁷ The discerning reader could see that Bob Lawson was L.L. Pinkerton.

In yet another parabolic story he wrote of Widow O’Flanigan and her son Mike, ignorant immigrants from Ireland. Unchurched and un-Christianized, they died without profession of faith in Christ, repentance, baptism, or church membership. After painting an emotional, heart rending picture of these poor lost souls, Pinkerton wrote, “When I consider the infinite patience of God with sinners here, I am induced to hope that light may rise on the destiny of many poor wretched ones, after they have passed to that undiscovered country...”³⁸⁸

We have already discussed his views and practice on Christian worship. Pinkerton’s biography points out that “no unsoundness can possibly be charged to his faith in Christ—his person, his authority, his mediatorial work.”³⁸⁹ The Lord himself gave a suitable response: “not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the **will** of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

In Kentucky, the alienation of Dr. Pinkerton among the White brethren was complete. From 1866 until June of 1873, he was without regular employment and income. He filled occasional calls with congregations in the northern states and worked among the Negro disciples. He fed his family by cultivating a garden.

In June of 1873 the doctor was appointed by President U.S. Grant as special mail agent. This good fortune kept him from privation in his declining years. In October the year following, his government work carried him into the mountains of eastern Kentucky. On that trip he became quite ill and never fully recovered. Upon his return he preached his final sermon to a little band meeting in a rented hall. The doctors diagnosed his condition as cirrhosis of

386 Ibid., p. 113.

387 Ibid., pp. 115-116.

388 Ibid., pp. 116-117.

389 Ibid., p. 118.

the liver. Their treatment was of no avail. Death came to him on his birthday, January 28, 1875.

Funeral services were held at the Main Street Church in Lexington. R. C. Ricketts read the Scripture and John Shackelford, Jr. delivered the memorial address. The body of Dr. L. L. Pinkerton was interred in Lexington's famous National Cemetery.³⁹⁰

In 1896, the Midway church dedicated its new auditorium. The main stained-glass window bore a picture of Dr. L.L. Pinkerton. To this day those who visit the church can see the doctor looking over the congregation to which so much of his life was given.

Thus ended the stormy life of a man of great talent, energy and ability who made his mark upon the brotherhood of those known as Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches and Churches of Christ. His great potential for good was marred by his partisan politics, his heretical views of things sacred and his unyielding, warlike and censorious spirit. May we learn from his example.

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390 Ibid. pp. 167, 174.

A. I. MYHR

AND THE TENNESSEE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY COOPERATIVE

Andres Ivarson Myhr was born in Norway c. a. 1852. There he received his early education. When yet in his teens, he left home and friends and immigrated to America. He found work with a Kansas Railroad, spent some time in Illinois and then moved to Missouri.

While in Missouri the young immigrant came in contact with the Restoration preacher, W. H. Embry, who challenged his thinking with his messages. Having been raised a member of the Lutheran church of Norway, it took a while before he embraced the apostolic plan, but in April of 1875 he took his stand for Christ and received baptism for remission of sins.

Three years following his conversion, on Feb. 7, 1878, A. I. Myhr entered Christian University, now Culver Stockton College of Canton, Missouri. In June 1883, he graduated valedictorian of his class.

Upon his graduation, Bro. Myhr was invited to preach for the church in Glasgow, Missouri. In 1884 he was elected to serve as "Sunday School evangelist" for the state of Missouri. This post he held from 1884-1887. It was, however, in Tennessee that Myhr was to make his imprint.³⁹¹

On February 11, 1889, some of the members of the Woodland Street Christian Church in Nashville organized a missionary society to facilitate the preaching of the gospel in destitute parts of the state. When other congregations were slow in responding with assistance, some of the women of Woodland Street raised some \$300.00 for their project. Their minister, R. M. Giddens, recommended that they use those funds to bring A. I. Myhr from Missouri to spend a month circulating among the churches of the state promoting the society.

When the Woodland Street elders prepared a letter of endorsement for Myhr, conspicuously absent was the signature of E. G. Sewell, elder and former preacher of the congregation. Brother Sewell had been forced out because of his opposition to such unscriptural, human organizations.

³⁹¹ J. W. West, *Sketches of Our Mountain Preachers* (Lynchburg: published by the author, 1933), p. 217-220.

Myhr was successful in his mission. In the month of November 1889, he secured \$2,300 in cash and pledges for the infant society. The Woodland Street ladies then petitioned their elders to take charge of the program and employ a full-time agent and evangelist. They requested Bro. Myhr to work in that capacity. He accepted and began his work on February 1, 1890.

Brethren who viewed missionary societies as sinful innovations were quick to condemn the Woodland Street Church, Myhr and the society. **The Gospel Advocate** was the medium of protest. One brother wrote on November 19, 1891, that Myhr was to be “paid fifteen to eighteen dollars per year to split the churches in Tennessee.” David Lipscomb wrote on August 6, 1890, “Giddens, Myhr and a few women constitute the whole brotherhood in Tennessee and that the three elders had assumed the position of seeking to control all the money of all the churches and all the preachers in Tennessee.” E. G. Sewell and forty-one other members of the Woodland Street petitioned the elders to lay aside the society project for the sake of peace and harmony. When this request was denied, several of them withdrew and formed the Tenth Street Church of Christ.

The first state-wide missionary convention was held in Chattanooga at the Walnut Street Christian Church, October 6-8, 1890. The 132 delegates at Chattanooga organized themselves as the “State Missionary Convention of the Christian Church in Tennessee.” Disciples historian, Herman Norton, considers this event the point of division in the Restoration brotherhood in Tennessee. Myhr’s report to the assembly indicated that there were some 40,000 disciples in the state, 4,000 in East Tennessee, 6,000-8,000 in West Tennessee, and 30,000 in Middle Tennessee. A. I. Myhr was re-elected state evangelist. David Lipscomb reported, “It looks as though it was a convention of the organ churches. All these churches use music and also have festivals and frolics or excursions to raise money” (November 5, 1890).

As Corresponding Secretary of the Missionary Society, Brother Myhr concentrated his energies on East Tennessee with lesser attention given to the western sector of the state. Middle Tennessee was virtually ignored. **The Gospel Advocate** had its greatest strength in the rural churches of Middle Tennessee. He evidently perceived these congregations as too conservative for his program. The churches of East Tennessee had a long history of participation in cooperative meetings with the congregations of Southwestern Virginia. To those brethren there was nothing new or threatening about a state-wide organization.

Myhr’s case was greatly strengthened in the East by the wholehearted support of president Josephus Hopwood and his staff of teachers at Milligan College in Johnson City. Most of the future preachers of the East Tennessee

Churches would come from this school and they were conditioned to work with the society. So complete was the victory for the missionary society in upper East Tennessee that not one congregation openly opposed it.

Myhr's method of gaining the confidence of brethren and then introducing his plan was exposed in the pages of the Gospel Advocate on November 19, 1891. Myhr was also guilty of shading his statements...to such an extent that one instance, after giving twenty-five discourses before a rural congregation... not a single one considered him to be an advocate of a missionary society.

Again David Lipscomb noted that Myhr's pay of five dollars per day plus expenses made his salary higher than the governor's. Brethren felt that Myhr "openly antagonized the life-long convictions of (the) religious community, flippantly ignored advice and counsel of native preachers" and acted in an arbitrary manner. Herman Norton concedes, "Apparently his personality and temperament were of such a nature as to justifiably provoke some criticism."

To recruit congregations into his society camp, Bro. Myhr used a number of tactics. He raised large amounts of money to help weak churches build meeting houses. Those receiving assistance were thus indebted to the society and expected to be supportive.

Myhr was sometimes less than accurate in reporting his successes. Norton notes that in 1892 he claimed that the number of counties without a Christian Church had been reduced from 50 to less than 20. In reality when Myhr became Corresponding Secretary, there were only 30 counties without churches, not 50.

In 1895 Myhr launched a new periodical to promote the society cause entitled **The Tennessee Missionary**. The paper failed after two years.

In 1896, he proposed that the churches create a Permanent Endowment Fund for missions. Additionally he urged every minister and church to designate the first Sunday of October as Tennessee Missionary Day and to collect a special offering for his work. He also urged that the young ladies of each congregation be organized into missionary bands called the "Queens." He hoped they would raise \$1,000 per year for missions.

In 1897 a Year Book was compiled and published by Myhr. He included all the preachers in the state in his listing, including those who opposed the Society. This was highly offensive to those who saw the Society as a sinful project. This prompted Bro. John R. Williams of Memphis to prepare a list of preachers who opposed organs and missionary societies.

Myhr also liked to list congregations as supporting the Society when in reality only one or a few individuals had contributed. This was creating a false impression in the minds of people.

DIVISION REVEALED

In preparation for the religious census of 1906 the Census Bureau noted the apparent division among the Restoration churches. Brother J. W. Shepherd was employed to gather the information for the congregations that rejected the society and instrumental music. The census revealed that in Tennessee there were 659 congregations with 42,297 members that wished to be listed as Churches of Christ. There were 152 Christian Churches with 14,960 members.

THE SITUATION IN EAST TENNESSEE

In East Tennessee the Christian Churches were an overwhelming majority. Twelve East Tennessee counties had strong Christian Churches but no Churches of Christ at all. Only three counties had conservative churches of any size; Johnson, Hamilton and McMinn.

REASONS FOR OUR LOSS

There were several evident reasons for our overwhelming loss. The long history of participation in the "Cooperation" with the Churches of Southwest Virginia had conditioned the eastern churches for the state-wide missionary organization.

East Tennessee was isolated geographically from Middle Tennessee and the influence of David Lipscomb and **The Gospel Advocate**. The eastern brethren had far more contact and fellowship with the churches and leaders of Virginia who gladly accepted the innovations of the day.

Socially and politically those in the East were quite different in their outlook from their brethren in Middle and West Tennessee. East Tennessee had few slaves prior to the War. It remained loyal to the Union when the rest of the state joined the Confederacy. It did not experience as much military action and destruction as the rest of the state did during the war. Its citizens were treated differently during the reconstruction period. The mountain folk viewed life differently than their neighbors to the West. Politically the Eastern citizens tended to be Republican in sentiment while the rest of the South was solidly Democrat.

A. J. Myhr invested a great amount of time, energy and Society funds among the churches in East Tennessee. By the close of his tenure he had visited and worked with all but two congregations in the region. An article in the **Christian Standard**, October 17, 1908, states, The State Board, since 1890, had assisted every congregation in East Tennessee. They were from the beginning squarely in the camp of the "progressive" brethren. The leadership of Milligan College let it be known that they wished to cooperate fully with the State Society in recruiting and training ministers. The Society Convention in turn endorsed Milligan and

urged the churches and members to support it. For this endorsement and financial backing, the State Board was given some oversight of Milligan College with the authority to appoint the Board of Directors.

Johnson Bible college, while keeping its independence, nevertheless fully cooperated with the Society element.³⁹²

In considering the causes for the complete capture of the East Tennessee Churches,, we cannot overlook the charismatic personality and dynamic zeal of A. I. Myhr. Preston Gray who knew Brother Myhr from childhood, remembered that he was “one with the people.” When visiting in Christian homes he would get down on the floor and play with the children. There was an air of success about him. When he visited a congregation, people expected good things to happen. His sermons were brief, but exciting and challenging. He used humorous illustrations effectively. His message was filled with pathos and tenderness. His voice frequently betrayed emotion and tears filled his eyes.

He was a man of wide influence, being on familiar terms with the important people in the church and the world. F. D. Kershner wrote of Myhr, “He was a marvel of industry, endurance and faith...” Such a powerful, aggressive leader led the brotherhood of East Tennessee away from the strait and narrow path of the New Testament, which their fathers had trod, into the broad and easy way of digression and conformity with the world.

Myhr’s record of success in his field of work was remarkable. Hundreds were baptized by him. He organized 125 new congregations and encouraged dozens of young men to enlist as ministers. The total membership of the churches associated with the Society increased by 15,000 during his 20 years as its principal leader. The Permanent Fund Endowment for state missions reached \$31,500.

In 1910, Myhr resigned his post with the Tennessee Christian Missionary Society. He had succeeded in firmly establishing the Missionary Society within the state but in so doing had driven the wedge that split God’s people. The scars of that division are evident to this day.

For a dozen years, Myhr lived in Bellview, Tennessee and preached throughout the state (1911-1922). The years of 1923-1925 were spent teaching the Bible at Milligan College near Johnson City.

Death came to A. I. Myhr April 13, 1933. He as buried at Spring Hill Cemetery in Nashville. The Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches in East Tennessee are a monument to his labors.³⁹³ His epitaph might well have been “he made Israel to sin” (1 Kings 15:26).

392 Herman Norton, *Tennessee Christians* (Nashville: Reed and Co., 1971), p 189-260.

393 West, p. 220-226.

ROBERT H. BOLL**CHAMPION OF PREMILLENNIALISM**

Robert Henry Boll was born in Germany, June 7, 1875. His early religious training was in the Roman Catholic faith. His family wanted him to become a priest. While yet a young lad, Boll immigrated to America, eventually landing in Tennessee where he worked as a farm laborer. He was fortunate to find work with a Christian family. They not only taught him English, but also the Word of God. Bro. Sam Harris took his confession and immersed him on April 14, 1895.

Desiring to attend college, young Boll was encouraged to consider the Nashville Bible School operated by David Lipscomb and James A. Harding. Although he was penniless and without family or friends to sponsor him, he walked some 25 miles to Nashville in a heavy rain. Through the generosity and kindness of Bro. Harding he was accepted and distinguished himself as a student. While in school he sat at the feet of giants in the faith such as Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, T. W. Brents, Harding and J. W. Shepherd. He preached his first sermon at the Nashville jail in 1896. Upon graduation, Boll spent four years traveling in evangelistic work. In 1904 he settled with the Portland Ave. Church in Louisville, KY and continued there until his death in 1956.

Boll was a brilliant man. He continued his education at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, earning honors. He became proficient in Greek and Hebrew. His Bible knowledge was extensive and in his early days, he was highly popular as a preacher and writer among the churches. He was endowed with leadership ability and for some 50 years was a dominant force in the life of the church. So influential was he that for a 20 year period of time his doctrine threatened the stability of the entire brotherhood, both at home and abroad. He enjoyed a deep degree of love and loyalty from his friends. That he was able to withstand the powerful bombardment of the heaviest guns in the brotherhood is testimony to the strength of his resolve.

Boll's influence was enhanced and spread through his writing. In 1901, within a year of his graduation, he was a regular writer for James A. Harding's paper, **The Way**. Soon he was an editor of Joe Warlick's **Gospel Guide**. In 1904 he was a contributing editor of the **Christian Leader**. In 1909 he was invited to join the staff of the **Gospel Advocate** and was designated front-page editor. That post he held until 1915 when he was forced to resign because of his speculative teaching on millennial themes. At that juncture he purchased a monthly magazine name **Word and Work** and turned it into an organ for the

promotion of his premillennial views and a communication link for his growing brotherhood of followers. He continued to edit the paper until his demise.

HIS DEPARTURE INTO PREMILLENNIALISM

F. L. Rowe, editor of the **Christian Leader**, was seeking to arrange a debate between one of our preachers and the notorious Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Millennial Dawn/Jehovah's Witness cult. Upon the recommendation of Bro. Boll and M. C. Kurfees, Bro. L. S. White of Denton, Texas was chosen to meet Russell. The debate was conducted in Cincinnati in 1908. Rowe wrote of Russell, he "is a man of pleasing manner, and his mild, soft tones were admired by many." Kurfees judged that White did an excellent job of upholding the truth and refuting Russell. But Boll was enamored with Russell's style and embraced his millennial heresy. Bro. G. W. Riggs, recalled that while visiting Boll, he found him eagerly reading one of Russell's books. Like most other premillennialists, Boll developed his own version.

Within two years of the debate, Boll began a series of articles in the **Gospel Advocate** cautiously setting forth his millennial speculations. At first this did not raise a great concern since many of the pioneer preachers had held post-millennial and premillennial views. Among those so believing were Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Robert Milligan, B. W. Johnson, and T. W. Brents. While holding their views, they did not dwell upon them or seek to win a following to their ideas. In 1915, Boll launched a more ambitious series of lessons on Revelation which created a storm of opposition. The editorial staff of the **Advocate** agreed that if he did not cease to promote those views his articles would be rejected. The committee consisted of J. C. McQuiddy, F. W. Smith, H. Leo Boles, A. B. Lipscomb, M. C. Kurfees and G. Dallas Smith. All understood Boll to promise to hold his views on that subject as a personal opinion which he would not publish or promote. Thus he was reinstated, but almost immediately renewed his hobby. His resignation was called for and accepted.

To strengthen his position, Boll developed an ambitious program for propagating and disseminating his speculative views. He conducted a training school each winter for preachers, those aspiring to preach and congregational leaders. Those attending were thoroughly indoctrinated in his premillennial faith. Virtually all of the men who preached premillennialism among our churches were trained at Boll's feet. He also established the Kentucky Bible College which continued in operation for some 30 years.

With the able assistance of E. L. Jorgensen and Don Carlos Janes, Boll was able to recruit and send out a number of foreign missionaries. Most of those sent were missionaries of his millennial doctrine. A notable exception was Bro. J. M. McCaleb. The Boll-trained workers entered several foreign lands

including India, Brazil, Japan and several nations in East Africa. As would be expected, they affected the work being done with their false doctrine.

The millennial message was spread abroad and Boll's followers were indoctrinated by means of his numerous books and tracts as well as his **Word and Work** paper. Among his literary works were **The Second Coming; Unity and Creeds; The Millennium; The Kingdom of God; Is Prophetic Teaching Essential?; The Freedom of Simple Christians; Lessons on Daniel; The Revelation and Lessons on Hebrews**. Most of his works reflected his premillennial bent to one degree or another. Through his literary work a distinct body of doctrine evolved, around which his followers rallied. Thus a splinter group was formed called themselves Churches of Christ, but having millennial theology as their creed.

In 1927, H. Leo Boles engaged R. N. Boll in a written debate on "Fulfilled Prophecy." The discussion was carried on the pages of the **Gospel Advocate** and **Word and Work** and later published in book form. Among the propositions discussed was "The Scriptures teach that the coming of Christ is premillennial and imminent."

The back of the millennial movement among our brethren was broken by the combined efforts of H. Leo Boles, C. R. Nichol, R. L. Whiteside, E. R. Harper, Gus Nichols and Foy Wallace Jr. To the latter goes the credit for delivering the *coup de grace*. This was primarily achieved during his short tenure as editor of the **Gospel Advocate**, 1930-1934, and in his two debates with Charles Neal. The first Wallace-Neal debate was held in Winchester, Kentucky, January 2-6, 1933. It was published in book form. Neal affirmed "The Bible clearly teaches that after the second coming of Christ and before the final resurrection and judgment, there will be an age or dispensation of one thousand years during which Christ will reign on the earth."

BOLL'S THEOLOGY

Not only did Robert Boll subscribe to premillennialism, he held much in common with denominational teachers on other fundamental themes. In his tract **Grace and Obedience**, he states, "if we are saved by grace at all we are saved by **grace only**—not by grace plus something else, but only by grace..." Concerning salvation he wrote, "If then we are asked what it is that God demands of the sinner, the answer is, simply, faith. The reason God demands just that and nothing else is that faith is the one that is non-meritorious."

Cut off from our brotherhood, Boll reached out to fellowship those of the Christian Churches and even denominational preachers who shared his premillennial faith. In debates with our brethren he was often seen seated at the table with the sectarian preachers who were millennialists.

THE SECRET OF HIS POWER

Few false teachers have shaken the brotherhood as did Robert H. Boll. For some 30 years we were agitated by of his harmful influence. Among the factors of his power that people have noted were his intellectual power, his knowledge of the Bible, his peculiar theology, his skillful use of the printed page and his school. In addition, Boll surrounded himself with loyal, capable men who followed him, without question, to the end of the trail. Men like Don Carlos Janes, E. L. Jorgenson, H. L. Olmstead and others held up his hands and carried the seed of his cause far and wide. Boll was a man of the people. He attracted followers from every strata of life. He enjoyed the admiration of people of wealth. Bro. J. H. Stribling liberally underwrote his endeavors. Common folk also found a down-to-earth friend in Boll. Although his following was never large in numbers, they were a loyal band who stayed with him even when he was rejected and shunned by the majority of preachers and elders. One of Bro. Boll's greatest strengths was his graciousness Rather than his logic, eloquence or scholarship it was his kind and gentle way with people that won his following. Even those who strongly disagreed with his doctrine found it hard to dislike the man. Boll was a determined men. He was dedicated to his work. When convinced of his doctrine, he was unmoveable even if it cost him the fellowship of most of the brotherhood.

The tragedy is that Robert H. Boll devoted his tremendous talents and influence to promoting a false view and building up a splinter group devoted to himself. We cannot but wonder what great good would have been accomplished had the man been content to preach the simple gospel of Jesus and call men to the Master rather than dwell on his millennial speculations. The observant reader will notice some striking similarities between the message and method of Bro. Boll and some of our contemporary promoters of change.

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DANIEL SOMMER
THE PILLAR THAT LEANED FAR
TO THE RIGHT

When apostasy swept through the Restoration brotherhood, in the years following the Civil War, there were two elements that stood up to oppose it. In the North, there was Daniel Sommer and his followers who took a radical, legalistic approach to the faith. He not only opposed instrumental music and missionary societies, but innumerable other things that most brethren found to be in the realm of opinion and expediency. He had no interest in working to reclaim those who were drifting. He pushed for and demanded that separation be implemented immediately. Furthermore, his approach was harsh and belligerent to all who dared to disagree with him. He did not distinguish between the apostates and those faithful brethren who would not submit to his dictates. His spirit was one of opposition with little emphasis on evangelism and constructive building of the kingdom of Christ.

Then there was the more moderate approach of Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb. Benjamin Franklin was also of this moderate camp. Sommer gained control of Franklin's paper, **The American Christian Review**, following Franklin's death. Lipscomb's approach was to plead and pray that the digressives reconsider their erring ways. Separation was to him the last resort. Also, Lipscomb was very evangelistic. He not only opposed the error, he constantly urged brethren to be evangelizing and planting new congregations. The fruit of his labors are still evident in the mid-South where Churches of Christ have their greatest concentration of congregations and members.

Bro. Sommer's legalistic approach gave birth to a long line of factions that have plagued the church to the present. Taking his approach, various brethren separated over the use of multiple communion cups, Bible classes, class literature, women teaching children and women, the existence of Christian schools (their existence, not just their support), full-time, located preachers, orphan homes and congregational cooperation, cooperative support of missionaries, eating in church buildings. The leaders of each of the half-dozen movements mentioned above all looked to Bro. Sommer with great admiration. It is safe to say that each of these splinter groups owe their origins

to his approach to Christianity. This unpleasant background information helps us to understand his withering influence on the church.

There have been two biographies written about Bro. Sommer. One by William Wallace, a non-cooperative preacher who was the son of Foy Wallace, Jr. The other, **Like a Lion**, by Otis Castleberry. Sommer was a powerful orator. He had a dominant personality. Through his papers and books he was able to wield control over a small group of congregations from Pennsylvania to Colorado. In his old age, his son rebelled against his autocratic leadership. Even his wife sided with the son. His leadership was ceded to W. Carl Ketcherside who along with Leroy Garrett led the "Mutual Ministry, Non Cooperative" movement until they defected to liberal ecumenism.

As we study the history of our brotherhood, we cannot overlook such influential men as Sommer, but we do need to put his work and influence in proper perspective. He was right in opposing the digressions of the liberals of his day, but rather than helping the cause, he sowed the seed that produced a series of factions that did great harm to the church. To illustrate the difference in Lipscomb and Sommer, consider three Confederate Generals. Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson are revered to this day by Southerners as beloved heroes. William Quantrill, the guerilla leader of the infamous Quantrill's Raiders, made his bloody mark in Missouri, but it was not good for the Southern cause. Nor is he respected for his work.

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

FATHER OF THE CHANGE MOVEMENT

The story of W. Carl Ketcherside's life is recorded in his autobiography, "**Pilgrimage of Joy.**" This autobiography was published first as a series of articles in Leroy Garrett's **Restoration Review**. Later it was issued in book form by College Press, a company associated with the Independent Christian Churches. In my estimation, this is the most valuable book one can read concerning the change movement currently troubling Churches of Christ. This is the case because it reveals the roots and origin of the movement to change the faith, worship and practice of our churches. Anyone who reads this volume will be convinced that what is being promoted today in many of our Christian schools and in hundreds of pulpits is the pure gospel according to Carl Ketcherside. The following information is gleaned from his book with page citations given.

Bro. Ketcherside grew up and was nourished under the influence of Daniel Sommer, a radical legalist, who separated and kept under his influence a group of small congregations who opposed Christian schools, benevolent homes for children and located preachers. Ketcherside notes that Daniel Sommer "had a list of 100 things wherein the 'new digressives' (i.e. us of the mainstream Church of Christ) were in error, where the old digressives were primarily wrong about instrumental music and missionary societies" (p. 88). At his death, Sommer's mantle fell upon the shoulders of Carl Ketcherside (p. 92). The long shadow of Bro. Sommer still affects many in our brotherhood. Most of the ultra-conservative splinter groups that have arisen among us owe their genesis to the influence of this man.

The first 30 years of Bro. Ketcherside's preaching career were spent as a leader in the camp of those who opposed most of what the mainstream of our churches were doing. He had numerous debates with leading preachers and wielded considerable influence on all the churches in his camp. Leroy Garrett describes his transition "from that of a wing commander of a narrow sect...to that of an envoy of peace, unity and fellowship..." (p. 10). The book records the "pilgrimage of one blighted by the factional spirit to one enlightened by an ecumenical outlook" (p. 13). In 1951 he experienced a spiritual conversion that took him from the extreme right of legalism to the extreme left of doctrinal liberalism. But his conversion in no way dampened his dislike for the mainstream of the brotherhood. He simply moved his canon from the right

to the left and devoted the rest of his career to the mainstream's ruin. He found a warm reception among the Disciples of Christ and Christian Churches, Pentecostal and Premillennial congregations. He was even well received by denominationalists of all sorts and kinds. But it was only after his death that the seed he scattered took hold in the mainstream of our brotherhood. Today he is looked to as the pioneer of the change movement. If he could see the success of this errant movement, I am sure he would be delighted in the progress it is making among our people.

The study of this man's life teaches us several interesting things:

I. We see a demonstration of the pendulum effect in religious convictions. It is often the case when those who are legalistic and radically conservative realize the error of their way, rather than move to the middle where truth is found, they swing past it, landing far to the left and enamored with liberalism. Extremism tends to breed extremism. This is the story of Bro. Ketcherside's career.

II. We see the success of patience and a tireless effort to accomplish one's goal. Ketcherside was a man who refused to be turned away or turned off and eventually gained a victory. In the 1950s and 60s he was despised and rejected by virtually every preacher and church among us. Now he is the hero of a sizeable number of our younger brethren.

III. We see how a small step off the path of truth can lead one astray by miles. Bro. K. did not change from an ultraconservative to an ultra liberal overnight. But each step he took led him further from the confines of God's Word. At the end of his career, nothing in the written Word restrained him.

IV. We see the power of the printed page. When Bro. K. could not get into our congregations to preach, nor into our colleges to spread his message, he published his ideas in a small journal called the **Mission Messenger**. He also wrote numerous books. With the help of his sympathizers, these materials were placed in the hands of college students and young preachers all over the country. Error, like truth, can be spread by publications. While others talked, he wrote and published his tares and changed the thinking of many.

V. Although Bro. K. made a comfortable living as a preacher among the many churches under his influence, he made continuing warfare on preachers who received a regular salary and churches who supported them. He was able to adjust his conscience to accept financial support by not having a "contract or a fixed salary" (p. 97). At the same time he was quite at home and at peace with Christian Churches and their full-time ministers as well as any other kind of religious group that would invite him to speak for them. He was very selective in his criticisms.

VI. In the second half of his career, Bro. Ketcherside's thesis was that all preachers of Churches of Christ are guilty of partyism except for himself and those preachers who followed him.

VII. We see his never ceasing hostility to the mainstream Churches of Christ which refused to accept his leadership. In the first half of his career Bro. K fought mainstream churches because they would not allow him to impose his Sommerite doctrine of mutual ministry and opposition to schools and orphan's homes. When he outgrew the limited confines of his small "sect" as he called it, he sought new, greener fields in ecumenical circles, but he still viewed the mainstream of the Church of Christ with disdain and did his best to impose his new views on them. In this he was highly successful. His personal mission was to give the mainstream churches grief. He made it a point to encourage every dissident, no matter, their stripe or kind, hoping to inflict wounds on the body. He infiltrated through every break and tear to impose his doctrine of change. He encouraged and gave aid and comfort to every disgruntled dissident among us. He described those who left us as "freedom fighters' who had struggled with the dogmatism and sterile orthodoxy of the institution and had wrenched themselves free" (p. 304). He obviously had himself in mind. In a visit to the Florida College lectures, he met privately with students in the dorm and at a church following the day's program. He wrote, that he had read "reports that at least fifty of the most brilliant students in the sect have been affected by my plea" (p. 285). Those who followed him were brilliant and those who refused him were sectarians.

Bro. Ketcherside launched his new "spiritual crusade" in 1957. He entitled the 4th chapter of his book, "**The Beginnings of Change.**" This term has become the logo of the liberals who embraced his agenda. The years he spent as a leader of his new movement were spent almost entirely working among Christian Churches at their conventions, colleges and encampments. With all his talk about loving all who believe in Jesus, his acceptance of any and every kind of church that would have him come and speak, he maintained an inveterate hostility toward the mainstream of the Churches of Christ that would not accept his leadership. He described his ecumenical years as a warfare: "They were the first guns fired in my commitment to an unrelenting war against sectarianism and especially against my own" (p. 208). (It was Churches of Christ that were the recipients of his warfare.) "I resolved not to go anywhere but to stay where I was, regardless of what happened" (p. 211), as he tried to impose his new ideology on the brotherhood. He says, "I urged all others to stay where they were until driven out" (p. 211). This was so they could help to implement the changes he desired. Bro. K. pondered, "What would happen in such a place if there were just one person who ignored all of the divisions and simply recognized everyone who loved Jesus as his brother" (p. 295). This expressed his goal; to have one

of his disciples at work in every church. He was determined to infiltrate and occupy the citadels of the Churches of Christ.

Bro. K. became the self-appointed representative of “non-instrumental” Churches of Christ, representing us at virtually every gathering and forum of Christian Churches in the nation (p. 231). Of course the others attendees either did not know, or refused to acknowledge, that he represented no one but himself and those forums were opportunities to promote himself and his new agenda. At the World Convention of Churches of Christ (Disciples of Christ) in 1965, he spoke and notes, “I was the first participant from the non-instrument group” (p. 233). We can see that a multitude is now following in his tracks.

Bro. Ketcherside was delighted when he was privileged to preach at the Riverside church in Wichita, KS where his polemical nemesis, Bro. G. K. Wallace, formerly preached. Robert Meyers was their preacher. He wrote, “Bob was not a traditional Church of Christ preacher, nor a preacher of Church of Christ traditions...” “Eventually Bob...became preaching minister at the Congregational Church in the city” (p. 243). Note that Bro. K. had no regret that Meyers had lost his faith and left the church, only joy that Wallace’s former congregation had been overtaken. Bro. Meyers end is the ultimate destination of all change agents.

VIII. We can trace his ever expanding ideas of fellowship. He came to believe, “Wherever God has a child I have a brother or sister” (p. 17). In his context that of course included, Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals, etc. “It was a solemn thought to me that I had brothers and sisters meeting behind other signboards...” (p. 209).

IX. We can identify his peculiar doctrines which became the theological basis of the modern change movement.

- “I began to wonder if I had ever been right upon anything” (209).
- His central message became, “The only unity that is ever possible is **unity in diversity**” (p. 17).
- “I became convinced that what we term **‘the Church of Christ’ was not identical with the one body for which Jesus died**, but had been fashioned into a party growing out of a historical attempt to restore the primitive order...” (p. 117). “... the first great error of the heirs of the reformers was the equating of the movement with the Lord’s church” (p. 209). “The fantasy that we were exclusively the body of Christ on earth” (p. 209). These words are parroted by every modern change agent.
- “Perhaps the most profound change came with **the realization that the Church of Christ was simply another denomination and a sect...**” “We have been betrayed by circumstances into becoming a

non-sectarian sect” (p. 279). “I was made to realize that the sheep of God were not all in any sectarian fold, but were scattered over the partisan hills” (p. 334).

- Bro. K **“took the position that the body of Christ was given no title, and did not need a distinctive name since it had no rivals. To name it was to denominate it...”** (p. 194). To select a title that is found in the Scriptures gives added weight to the divisive arguments which always result. And, while the expression ‘the Church of Christ’ does not occur in the sacred book, this does not deter some of the trivial arguments used to justify it as the name of the family of God” (p. 333). “It became obvious to me quite early that we had built up a system around the name we had selected and we were seeking to save a man by getting him into that system’ (p. 333-334).
- “I dealt with the **‘five steps of salvation’** and showed that we were not saved by climbing a little ladder into the kingdom...” (p. 211). “We simply took the step of faith and the grace of God, as an unseen power drew us up into repentance and immersion...” (p. 211).
- “I discussed **the nature of worship and showed the folly of the ‘five acts of worship’** when everything that we did on earth under the sovereignty of Jesus was an expression of worship” (p. 211-212). “I had grown up believing there were five acts of ‘public worship’...” “It was a mind-boggling experience, a kind of explosive high to realize that everything—and I do mean everything—was worship...how I mowed my lawn, fixed a flat tire, or shopped at the grocery...” (p. 336). “I could see clearly how the five acts (of worship jhw) had been blown up into something that could be used as a...baseball bat to beat people into submission” (p. 336).
- **“We were no longer under a written code”** (p. 220). **“The new covenant was a person.** The apostolic epistles were not a code of jurisprudence. They were a collection of love letters” (p. 219). “The regarding of the New Testament Scriptures as a written code of laws has coupled with the idea that God provided an exact pattern to be meticulously followed in all ages has operated in such a way as to deny the lordship of Jesus...” (p. 285). “It does not take a lot of study to see the old covenant does not consist of 39 books, nor the new covenant of 27” (p. 337).
- “The brethren are guilty of profound error in their reasoning. They do not **distinguish between the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of the Apostles**” (p. 286). “I learned the difference between the gospel and the doctrine of the Apostles” (p. 337). The gospel...the good

news of what God did for us when we were helpless to do anything for ourselves. Its is to be proclaimed. It is God's message for the unsaved. One cannot evangelize saved people. The doctrine is for those in the body. It is not for the world any more than the gospel is for the church" (p.337).

- **"The Spirit of God was illuminating me"** (209).
- Speaking of the St. Louis Forum in 1975, **"...we had twice invited women to appear as speakers in a survey of women's rights and privilege in the church..."** (p. 331).
- Regarding fellowship he wrote, **"It is foolish for mere weak mortals to talk about receiving one into the fellowship. It is absurd to talk about withdrawing fellowship from him"** (p. 336).
- **"I demonstrated that our restoration movement...was adapted to the cultural needs of man as he then existed on the frontier. We no longer live in those times. We must launch a new movement dedicated to renewal , through recovery of the apostolic proclamation..."** (p. 282).
- In Macomb, IL he found a small non-instrumental group and **"sought to get them to begin clearing the ground for accomplishing some things together with brethren in the Christian Church"** (p. 320).

X. We are impressed by his pride in his own knowledge, genius, and importance. Bro. Ketcherside was a man of massive ego. He confessed, **"I think now that I thought more highly of myself than I ought to have thought"** (p. 106). He was a gifted and talented man who hungered for leadership in the church, but was **"born"** into the smallest, most narrow sect of the greater movement. His entire career was devoted to making war on the main-stream of the Church of Christ. He informs us that the Christian Church preachers at the North American Christian Convention gave him a standing ovation. They still do (p. 228). He tells us, **"I became convinced that the position I held on fellowship was unassailable and invincible, and that all the objectors could do was to quibble and cavil"** (p. 242). **"I felt deeply that the things I was writing would some day be generally accepted. I was content to plant and water"** (p. 214). Concerning his paper, the **Mission Messenger**, **"It was my contention that no one else could edit the paper as I had done. Thirty-seven years of trial and error had stamped it with the impress of my personality and thought"** (p. 323). At Kendallville, Bro. Ketcherside spoke on Heretics and Heroes. He **"made the point that a heretic is a hero ahead of his time."** **"Every thing that has been gained in religion has been gained by those accused of being heretics"** (p. 229).

XI. We find his acknowledgment of his factious spirit. “Our action served to create another schism in an already divided movement...” He admits, “ I helped to create another arrogant and hostile party...” (p. 93). Although he admitted he was a factionist, a sectarian, and a party man, yet he feigned great offense when brethren wrote of his “Divisive Leadership” (p. 160). He confesses, “I was among them as a factional representative” (p. 177). “It came home to me..with force that I had never really labored for the unity of all who believed in Jesus” (p. 177) “...I had actually ...contributed to the fragmentation of the ... movement...” (p. 177). “I had absorbed and sometimes even gloried in a sectarian spirit” (p 177). “I came to realize that I had been wrong all of my life in my usage of scripture to condone and defend our divisions” (p. 184).

XII. Reading the story of his life and work helps us understand why Abilene Christian University and Pepperdine University have emerged as the leaders of the change movement. Bro. K. visited the Broadway Church in Lubbock in 1966. Following the services Bro. Bill Banowsky arose and said of Bro. K, “There was one who was giving such a fresh and wholesome outlook to the churches, that he wanted to come and meet him, for the day was coming when men would say, ‘We had a prophet among us and knew it not’ (p. 241). Today the Lubbock church is absorbed in the change movement. At the “Southern Christian (Church) Convention” in Kingsport, TN (1967), “There was no warm fraternization, except in the case of Bill Banowsky and Norvel Young, who seemed to appreciate being invited by the North American Christian Convention... Bill Banowsky especially treated the folks like brethren: (p. 244). Both Young and Banowsky later served as president of Pepperdine. Bro. Ketcherside was invited to speak at the faculty meeting at Pepperdine (p. 32). Pepperdine’s chorus sang for his meetings at Westchester (p. 320). In 1970, Bro. K. attended the Abilene Christian College Lectureship “I was invited to speak one night at the Southwest Park Christian Church...a goodly number of professors from the school, together with several visiting speakers joined with a large delegation of students who were present” (p. 272). In 1977, he spoke at the Preacher’s Workshop at Abilene Christian College along with Harold Hazelip and Richard Rogers...” The position I advocated there is much more widely accept in these days” (i.e. 1990, how much more today!) (p. 296). Today we see the consequences of that flirting with the heretic. Both Abilene Christian University and Pepperdine University are in the camp of the change movement.... children and heirs of Carl Ketcherside.

Factions that cause division in the church are always formed around influential preachers and editors. The change movement of our day had as it founder, earliest spokesman and leader Carl Ketcherside. Everyone who is concerned about this destructive movement would greatly benefit from studying his life.

LEROY GARRETT**AN INTELLECTUAL WHO LEANED FAR TO
THE LEFT**

At their annual lectureship in Feb. 2004, the administrators of Abilene Christian University honored Dr. Leroy Garrett for his lifetime of distinguished service to the church. For those unacquainted with our history, this sounds like any other recognition of an alumnus of a school. But those who have been around a few years and kept abreast of what was happening in the brotherhood know that his story is unique.

Leroy Garrett has an interesting record. Early in life he earned his doctorate from Harvard University. He spent his early years associated with W. Carl Ketcherside as a militant leader in the "Anti-located preacher movement." During that period he devoted his energies to propagating the gospel according to Daniel Sommer and making perpetual war on Churches of Christ that did not share his views. He and his comrade in arms caused strife and dissension in congregations throughout the nation. His message was disseminated through the pages of his little paper called **Bible Talk**. When they had exhausted their possibilities, both men underwent a spiritual reconversion and emerged as champions of still another strange doctrine. From ultra-conservatism they swung to liberalism. Now it was that we must have "unity in diversity." This meant fellowship with Christian Churches, Disciples of Christ and other denominational bodies. It also meant continued attacks against the Churches of Christ who did not buy their new views. The faith, worship and practice of our churches was subjected to their continual criticism. Garrett's paper for this phase of his ministry was **The Restoration Review**.

Dr. Garrett is no country preacher or piker. He is a well-educated and well-traveled man. For most of his life he taught in various colleges and universities. His best literary work was a large and useful history entitled **The Stone-Campbell Movement** in which he set forth his interpretation of our Restoration Movement.

All the years of his career, Dr. Garrett was on the fringes of the brotherhood, part of one splinter group or another. He worshiped with congregations that shared his misguided views. However, he and Bro. Ketcherside were farsighted in their goal of capturing and imposing their views on the brotherhood that spurned them. They both published their journals and managed to get them

into the hands of our naive young preachers. Over a period of 50 years they thus indoctrinated hundreds of men, corrupting their faith in New Testament Christianity and poisoning them against the church, her faith, worship and practice.

Bro. Garrett and Ketcherside were the first of our modern day change agents. Garrett has lived long enough to see his seed multiply and grow mighty in our midst. All the criticisms of our contemporary young change agents and the changes they are promoting, he has been voicing for the more than forty years.

There was a time when none of our Christian Schools would honor Bro. Garrett with an invitation to speak on their campus. He might attend their lectureships but he was never invited to speak, he taught no classes and he certainly was not honored. They did not honor those who were the enemies of the church. But that was then, and now is now. In some of our leading schools, a new day has dawned with a new vision and a new standard. Having fully embraced the change movement and openly committed themselves to reshaping the church in a denominational mold, these men are ready for the ultimate declaration of their new commitment. They now honor with a place on their lectureships Leroy Garrett, the man who for half a century was viewed as a pariah, they recognize his work and bestow honors upon him. It surely warms the heart of Bro. Garrett to see the sons of his former enemies applauding him. He had made war on the Christian Schools and some of them now come to terms with him. Leroy Garrett has not changed, but the administrators and staff of Abilene Christian University had changed. They had embraced his heresy. Now the flag of truth has been lowered and in its place the flag of compromise and change has been hoisted on their campus. They have chosen to cast their lots with those who have departed from the faith (I John 2:19). The choice each Christian must make is, shall I go with them or bid them farewell?

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