

# Gospel Gleaner

*For the Lord, His Word, and His Church*



## The Men and the Movement

*Early American Preachers of the Restoration*

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## **“The Churches of Christ Greet You” (Romans 16:16)**

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### **The Gospel Gleaner**

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## **Gospel Gleaner**

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## **Inside this Issue**

Andy Erwin

Our plans for the thirty-second volume of the *Gospel Gleaner* are ambitious. With God's will and blessings, we plan on dedicating each issue to a study of the history of the Restoration Movement in America, culminating with the status of the church in America in the present day.

In this issue we are honored to have writing for us the following men: David R. Kenney, instructor of restoration history at the West Virginia School of Preaching; John W. Moore, instructor of restoration history at the Bear Valley Bible Institute; Wayne Kilpatrick, instructor of restoration history at Heritage Christian University; Mike Greene, director of the Nashville School of Preaching and also an instructor of restoration history; and Bradley Cobb, owner of Cobb Publishing and author of numerous works in restoration history.

I appreciate these men for sacrificing the time and effort to contribute to the *Gospel Gleaner*. My prayer is that we will understand, appreciate, and learn from our history so that we might better chart our course for the future. Allow the story of the restoration to inspire and motivate you. Truly, we are standing on the shoulders of great men!

# Thomas Campbell: *Architect for Restoration*

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By David R. Kenney



Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) is one of the key figures in mankind's efforts to leave the fragmented world of denominationalism and return to the New Testament pattern.

Born in County Down, Ireland, he was an esteemed educator and instilled the value of Christian education in his son, Alexander. His father, Archibald Campbell, was once a Roman Catholic, but then joined the Church of England. His mother's name was Alice McNally. Thomas had three brothers: James, Archibald, and Enos. Infant mortality rates were high then, and there were other children who died.

The times were such that religious partisanship was bitter between the Catholics, Anglicans, and other Protestants. Some theorize that Thomas went with Presbyterianism as an alternative to the religious inclinations of his father who said he preferred to pray "by act of Parliament."

## Education

Someone took an interest in Thomas and financed his advanced studies. Thomas graduated from University of Glasgow (1783-1786). The records of his attendance at the University of Glasgow have been lost in a fire. He continued his studies at Whitburn Seceder Seminary (1787-1791). The theological background of the seminary was the Anti-Burgher branch of the Secession Presbyterian Church. Thomas was multi-lingual (English, Latin, Greek, and French).

## Marriage and Family

Thomas married Jane Corneigle in June 1787, who was a descendant of the French Huguenots. They had several children (some of whom died at infancy) including: Alexander (1788-1866), James (1789-1792), Dorethea (1793-1861), Nancy (1798-1841), Jane Corneigle (1800-1871), Thomas, Jr. (1802-1842), Archibald William (1804-1878), and Alicia Anne (1806-1839).

## Attempts to Mend Division

Thomas was both a classical educator and a minister. He taught privately and preached in various locations in Ireland and the United States.

The divisive nature of denominationalism is seen by Thomas' religious pedigree. He was an Old-Light Anti-



Burgher Seceder Presbyterian. Thomas became troubled by the religious division, so he studied the New Testament to reconcile these variances. He attempted to repair the breach among the Presbyterians over the Burgher issue. Around 1805, he formed the Evangelistic Society of Ulster to address the breach, but it was broken up by the Secession Church though the division would later be resolved in 1820.

### **The Move to America**

At the age of 44, his health deteriorated to the point that his doctor recommended relocation to the New World. Accordingly, he left April 1, 1807, leaving his family and Alexander Campbell to run the Rich Hill Academy. An important restoration history chronological note: *The Last Will & Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* had already been published by Barton Warren Stone and those at Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1804.

Thomas arrived in the United States in May 1807. We often speak of the importance of historical context in the study of the Scriptures but the same applies when studying restoration history. Some facts about the United States as Thomas Campbell found it:

- Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States.
- There were 17 states making up the United States.

- The national population was 6 million (the 2017 population of Ohio was 11.6 million).
- In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the nation. Ohio also became a state.
- The slave trade with Africa ended in 1807, but the issue of slavery was far from settled.
- There was no public education available.

Thomas Campbell presented his credentials to the North American Synod in Philadelphia and was assigned to work with the Chartiers Presbytery in Washington County, Pennsylvania. Thomas was on a collision course with the Presbyterian Church, as he continued studying and preaching from the New Testament. Charges were brought against him in October 1807 by the Chartiers. He was suspended in February 1808 and then admonished by the North American Synod in May 1808. He resigned from the Presbyterian Church on September 13, 1808 in a letter that would dispel any notion that Thomas' meekness was a sign of weakness.

### **The Declaration and Address**

Thomas was not the only one who saw variances between the doctrines of the Presbyterians and the New Testament. His supporters encouraged him to write a declaration for this new group called "The Christian Association." On September 7, 1809 he completed *The Declaration and Address*

of the Christian Association of Washington which was printed and sent out to area denominations in Washington County, Pennsylvania with a plea to join in the effort to following a guiding principle—"Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." An honest investigation of the intent of silence leaves no doubt that the Campbells viewed silence as *restrictive* rather than permissive. The discussion surrounding the principles enunciated in *The Declaration and Address* led not only to the repudiation of infant baptism, but also the acceptance of immersion for the remission of sins of confessing believers.

When Alexander Campbell and the family arrived in September 1809, the association had already approved the printing of *The Declaration and Address*. The organization would ultimately become the Brush Run Church. Alexander pledged himself to the ministry, and his father was his instructor. Alexander preached his first sermon for the Brush Run Church on September 16, 1810.

### **Baptism**

Efforts to go back to the pattern of the first century church did not happen overnight. The catalyst for the rejection of infant baptism and acceptance of immersion would not be fully realized on Thomas (though he rejected infant baptism prior) until he was immersed in Buffalo Creek along

with his wife, Jane; son, Alexander; daughter-in-law, Margaret; daughter, Dorethea; and others on July 4, 1811.

Some debate of whether or not the Campbells fully understood the purpose of baptism as this time; however, one should keep in mind that Alexander sought to be immersed *independent* of Baptist doctrine and in accordance to the book of Acts.

The service at the immersion included a discourse by Alexander and Thomas that lasted *seven hours*. There is no record of what was stated; however, it is difficult to imagine they did not understand the purpose of baptism. The Brush Run Church was now observing weekly communion and requests for immersions were received.

Thomas Campbell decided to relocate to Cambridge, Ohio in October 1813 where he operated a farm and established a school. He was a much sought-after educator, but the ministry was not as successful. He decided to move to Pittsburgh where he established the Mercantile Academy as well as a church. Because of the Baptists' acceptance of immersion, the Campbells joined their associations provided they were free to keep their own doctrinal views.

### **Reformation among Baptists**

Thomas sought admission for the church in Pittsburgh to the Redstone Baptist Association in 1816 but was refused because the doctrinal divide

between the Reformers (those following the teachings of the Campbells) and the Baptists was becoming more pronounced and publicly disruptive to the Baptist Church. This rejection led Alexander to deliver his famous "Sermon on the Law" to about 1,000 people including 22 preachers. This would lead to a fissure with the Baptist Church and the use of the term "Campbellite" by the Baptists and other critics in denunciation of those who accepted the views of the Campbells.

Thomas decided to move to Newport, Kentucky where he served as headmaster of a new academy. He taught a group of slaves and was advised that he was in violation of the law of Kentucky. Repulsed by this, he left immediately and returned to help Alexander in the management of Buffalo Seminary. This would free Alexander's time to prepare for his first debate which was on infant baptism with Secession Presbyterian John Walker.

In August 1823, a plot by the Redstone Baptist Association to humiliate Alexander was discovered. To counter this plot, Alexander elected to form a congregation in Wellsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia) which was outside of the Redstone's jurisdiction. Thomas would remain with the Brush Run Church during this period. In 1826, the Redstone Association expelled the Reformers, but significant damage was apparent after this action.

Thomas assisted Alexander with his debates, writing articles, and operating the printing press for both *The Christian Baptist* and *The Millennial Harbinger*. Thomas was sent to investigate some fascinating evangelism reports by a preacher on the Western Reserve by the name of Walter Scott in 1828. Thomas was excited by Scott's approach to prompting people to obedience to the gospel and wrote glowing reports back to Alexander while he continued to tour with Scott in Ohio.

Thomas travelled to attend meetings of the North District Association and Elkhorn Association in Kentucky to respond to charges in "The Beaver Anathema" in 1830. These meetings would lead to further separation from the Reformers by the Baptist Church in Kentucky. Entire Baptist Churches and properties were lost (which explains the antagonism the Baptists have toward churches of Christ even to this day).

### **Mormonism Rejected**

In 1830, the Campbells realized a new threat to the restoration plea in the form of Mormonism and its claim to be a restored church with "another testament" produced by Joseph Smith. One of their associates, Sidney Rigdon, defected to the Mormons and was one of their prominent leaders for a period. Thomas was visiting his daughter in Mentor, Ohio when he came to realize the gravity of the Mormon threat. Thomas, who was

reluctant to debate, wrote to Rigdon and challenged him to debate on the tenets of Mormonism. Rigdon promptly destroyed the letter, but Alexander would lecture on the subject in 1831 for several days and publish those lectures.

### Later in Life

Thomas continued writing and publishing in support of his son's efforts. He also went on extended preaching tours until a horse-riding incident in September of 1832 slowed him down some. Once he recovered, he continued to be active and toured. In 1832, the Bethany church constructed a stone building for worship that would last until Thomas' farewell sermon.

He and his wife Jane decided to move into their daughter's house due to the failing health of his wife. Jane Campbell died April 28, 1835 and was buried in the Campbell family cemetery (God's Acre). Thomas would continue working on *The Millennial Harbinger*, but he was now also assisted by Robert Richardson who was once his student and would become his son's biographer.

Always an educator, Thomas served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees for a new college, Bethany College, in October 1840. The college was founded on the premise that the Bible was to be the foremost textbook. By 1843, Thomas was advanced in age and decided to live at Bethany Mansion with Alexander and his sec-

ond wife, Selina. (Alexander's first wife had died of what was called consumption.) Thomas decided to go to Cambridge and preach again, and many various religious groups opened their doors to hear him preach. He was well enough to attend Alexander's final debate with Nathaniel Rice in Lexington, Kentucky in 1843, but it was apparent that his health was diminishing.

By 1847, Thomas' eyesight and hearing were significantly diminished. Even though he could no longer see, he was seen quoting scriptures, singing hymns, and teaching the children from his vast memory. He consented to give a "farewell sermon" at Bethany Church of Christ on June 1, 1851 even though he was now totally blind. He spoke on "The Two Greatest Commandments" which was transcribed and preserved by Robert Richardson. Shortly after this address, the stone building was torn down and used as foundational stones for a new Bethany Church of Christ building which stands as the last existing building where Alexander had his membership.

The end was near; as Thomas told Alexander "I am going home and will pass over Jordan." He died January 4, 1854 just one month prior to his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. Ironically, he lived more in the United States than he had in Ireland. He was buried next to his wife, Jane. His son would continue the work for another twelve years before his body would join his father's on

March 4, 1866. Before Alexander's death, the State of West Virginia was recognized as the 35<sup>th</sup> state of the United States of America. Thomas is largely credited with the restoration slogan "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." He sought religious unity but not at the expense of Christian doctrine.

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"Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!..." (Nahum 1:15)

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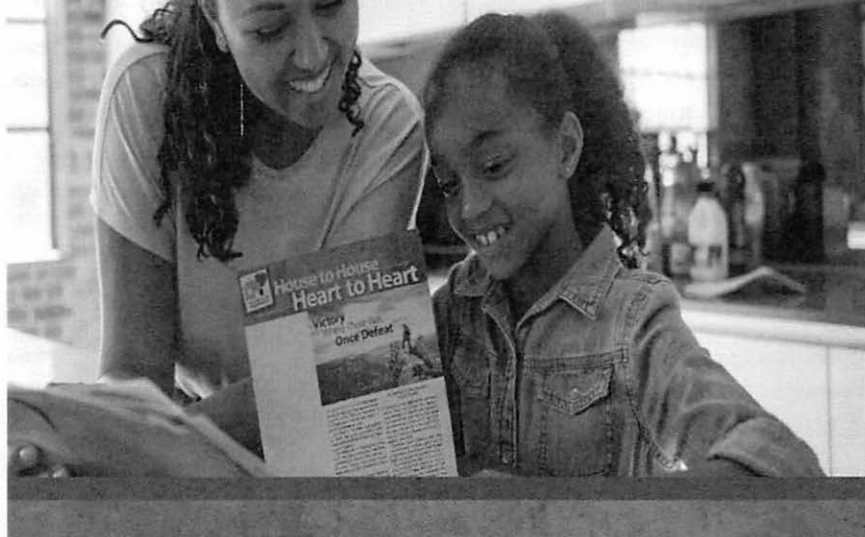
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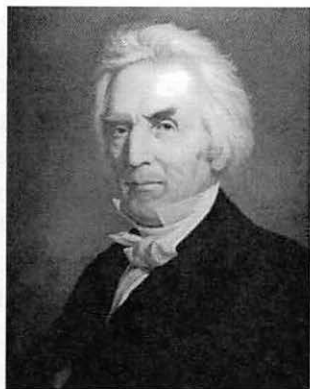
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# Alexander Campbell: *Apologist for Restoration*

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By John W. Moore



The famed Civil War commander Robert E. Lee of Virginia once said that Alexander Campbell was “a man in whom were illustriously combined all the qualities that could adorn or elevate the nature to which he belonged...a man who if he had been delegated the representative of his species...would have suggested a grand idea of the human race.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, Campbell was a remarkable man with many admirable qualities, but he also had an enormous impact on the social, intellectual, and religious institutions of 19<sup>th</sup> century America. Campbell was a scholar, preacher, and debater. He was the

editor of numerous periodicals, the author of several books, a college president, and a delegate of the Virginia State Constitutional convention.

He was a personal friend to Henry Clay, Jefferson Davis, Andrew Jackson, and Presidents James Madison and James A. Garfield, as well as many more well-known dignitaries and influential people of the era. In June of 1850, his influence reached into the highest political body in the land, where, in Washington D.C., he delivered an address before both houses of Congress. However, his greatest achievement wasn't in politics, business, or education, but rather in his relentless pursuit to “abandon the whole controversy about creeds and reformatations, and to restore primitive Christianity, or to build alone upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself the chief corner.”<sup>2</sup>

Campbell certainly wasn't alone in his quest, as many before and after his time sought to achieve the same goal.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Lee, “The Late R. E. Lee’s Letter,” *Apostolic Times*, Vol. III, No. 4 (May 4, 1871), p. 27, quoted in Earl Ervin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order: A History of the Restoration Movement 1849-1906 Vol. I*, (Nashville, TN, Gospel Advocate Co., 1974) 37.

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Campbell, *Christianity Restored* (Bethany VA., Campbell, 1835) 119.

<sup>3</sup> Many movements to restore “primitive Christianity” (i.e. New Testament Christianity) had already been underway both in America and abroad. Men like the Haldane brothers of Scotland, Abner Jones and Elias Smith in New England, and Bar-

He was, however, arguably the most gifted, influential, and best known preacher of the Restoration Movement, and his voluminous works and lasting legacy are a hallmark in the annals of church history.

### Early Life and Religion

Alexander Campbell was born in Ireland to Thomas Campbell and Jane Corneigle sometime between the years of 1786 to 1788.<sup>4</sup> His father Thomas was a minister of the Seceder Presbyterian Church (Old Light Anti-Burgher) in northern Ireland, near the town of Rich Hill, and had by the time of Alexander's birth become increasingly dissatisfied with the many factions and sectarian groups among those professing to follow Jesus.

In 1807, Thomas migrated to America, leaving Alexander and the rest of the family to depart at a later date. On October 1, 1808, Alexander, along with his mother and younger siblings, boarded a ship for the United States. However, after surviving a shipwreck in the North Sea, they came to temporarily lodge in Glasgow, Scotland where Alexander attended the local university. It was here for the first time that many of Alexander's private musings and struggles about

the non-biblical practices seen in the sects finally became public.

Among many of the religious sects, a practice once existed that required congregants to obtain a communion token before being allowed to receive the emblems of the Lord's Supper. The token could only be obtained when a church member, after being examined by the minister, proved that they understood and practiced the basics of their religion and had led good moral lives. The "token", and other such man-made traditions, was an attempt on the part of the clergy to keep the church pure and clear of the undesirables.

Recognizing this hypocritical and unscriptural practice levied by the priest, Alexander gave up his token, refused communion, and abandoned the Presbyterians. According to Thomas Grafton, "The ring of that token, as it fell from his hands, like the ring of Martin Luther's hammer on the door of the Wittenberg cathedral, announced the renunciation of the old church ties, and marks the moment of which he forever ceased to recognize the claims or authority of a human creed to bind upon men the conditions of their acceptance with God."<sup>5</sup>

After Alexander's departure from the Presbyterians, the Campbells resumed their journey to the United States and were reunited with Thomas

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ton W. Stone in Kentucky represent only a few of the early attempts at reform.

<sup>4</sup> According to Earl West in his book, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, (Nashville, TN, Gospel Advocate, 1974, p.38) Campbell's date of birth is in dispute.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas W. Grafton, *Life of Alexander Campbell* (Melbourne, Australian Publishing Co., 1899) 40-41.



in 1809. Not long after their arrival, Alexander discovered that his father had likewise made the decision to abandon all sectarian practices and creeds. Thomas had already begun his work on the one of the most important documents of the Restoration movement called the *Declaration and Address*, which, in summary, was an appeal for Christian unity among the sects “to be at rest” and to “restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole church of God.”<sup>6</sup> Alexander agreed, and in one of his earliest writings vehemently expressed his views against creeds and denominations by saying they were “hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity, and joy of Christians, and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Baptism, Communion, and Controversy**

While the Campbells had made an appeal to Christian unity because of their insistence on following the Bible as the complete rule and guide for faith and practice, they soon found it difficult to maintain a consistent form of fellowship with any one group. Many of the churches whom they sought to influence held vigorously to cherished beliefs and doctrines which characterized elements of their respective denominations. For example, the

practice of sprinkling instead of immersion among the Presbyterians, and false notions over the nature of the Old Law promoted by the Baptists, kept the Campbells, and others, from uniting permanently with these groups. It was argued by Alexander that Christians must “take the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible as the foundation of all Christian union and communion.”<sup>8</sup>

It was further emphasized in his book, *Christianity Restored*, that “We choose to speak of Bible things by Bible words, because we are always suspicious that if the word is not in the Bible, the idea which it represents is not there.”<sup>9</sup> Because of this position of believing and practicing only those things which can be found in the Bible, Alexander soon found himself at the center of debate and controversy.

Initially, Alexander rejected public debate, seeing it as a tool which further “breathed the spirit of partyism” and where “disputants strove for personal victory rather than a victory for the truth.”<sup>10</sup> However, after a great deal of urging from a Baptist preacher by the name of John Birch, Campbell was encouraged to meet the Presbyterian preacher John Walker on the polemic platform to discuss the topic of baptism. Earlier that same year, Birch had baptized several adults in Mount

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address* (St. Louis, Bethany Press, 1955) 19.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System*, (Cincinnati, Standard Publishing Company, 1839) 8.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Campbell, *Christianity Restored* (Bethany, VA. 1835) 125.

<sup>10</sup> West, p. 64.

Pleasant, Ohio who had been baptized as babies into the Presbyterian Church. The “rebaptisms” had created a bit of controversy among the citizens of that community, and likewise angered the Presbyterians.

The stage was set for a lively discussion, and Walker was set to defend his position on infant baptism. Much of the debate focused on the nature and mode of baptism. Walker argued that Old Covenant and New Covenant were essentially one, and that the church or congregation of the Lord existed under either covenant. He likewise argued that infants were a part of the “household baptism” referred to Acts 16. Campbell’s rebuttals of these arguments were masterful, but some of his responses soon put him in conflict with the Baptists over his teaching of the abdicating of the Old Law as being spiritually binding upon New Testament Christians.

Despite the rigors of the debate, Campbell came to see that the polemic platform proved to be an extremely useful tool for convincing others of the truth of scripture, and to likewise help him further refine and clarify his own doctrinal positions. In the years that followed, Campbell found himself engaged in four other major public discussions which included the following topics: baptism (vs. William McCalla, a Presbyterian, in 1823); Christianity vs. Skepticism (vs. Robert Owen, in 1829); Roman Catholicism (vs. John B. Purcell, a Catholic Priest, in 1837); the Principles of the

Restoration Movement (vs. N.L. Rice, a Presbyterian, in 1843). Each of the debates have been preserved in written form and have had an enormous impact upon the proclamation and defense of the principles of New Testament Christianity.

### ***The Christian Baptist and Millennial Harbinger***

While Campbell’s debates served to promote and defend the principles of New Testament Christianity, nowhere were those principles broadcast any further than in his work as a writer and publisher. Campbell was a prolific author and understood the power of the printed page. Periodicals such as his *Christian Baptist* and *Millennial Harbinger*, which he owned and edited, were the television and YouTube of that day.

Written material, widely disseminated, was an excellent means of advancing the cause of Christian unity and refuting error. In his inaugural edition of the *Christian Baptist* (1823), Campbell stated that its purpose existed, in part, to “espouse the cause of no religious sect, excepting that ancient sect called ‘Christians First at Antioch.’ Its sole object shall be the eviction of truth, and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice.”<sup>11</sup> The *Millennial Harbinger* began in 1830 and, along with the *Chris-*

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<sup>11</sup> Alexander Campbell, editor. “Prospectus of the Christian Baptist”, *The Christian Baptist* (Nashville, Gospel Advocate Company, 1955). iv.

*tian Baptist*, constituted a combined 43 years of monthly publications. In 1864, a little over a year before he died, Campbell entrusted the *Harbinger* to W. K. Pendleton, who continued its publication for another six years and brought it to a close at the end of 1870, completing 41 volumes. Its purpose, as defined in its very first issue, was “devoted to the destruction of Sectarianism, Infidelity, and Anti-christian doctrine and practice.”<sup>12</sup>

### **Campbell's Legacy**

At the time of Campbell's death in 1865, the combined efforts of many restoration preachers had made an enormous impact on the social and religious life of citizens within the United States and beyond. While issues relating to the Civil War and matters concerning the establishment of the American Missionary Society weakened the unity and stability of the restored church of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, her legacy nevertheless continued to endure.

The works of Alexander Campbell continue to be studied and analyzed, with many individuals in the 21<sup>st</sup> century still considering many of the principles he espoused to be valid and centered upon the biblical text. Those who shared his vision of a restored church from the primitive era saw a proliferation of congregations dedi-

cated to the “ancient order of things”—a vision and legacy that continues today among those committed to Jesus who is the head of the body, the church for which Jesus so lovingly sacrificed himself.

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<sup>12</sup> Alexander Campbell, editor. “Prospectus of the Millennial Harbinger”, *The Millennial Harbinger: Volume I* (Bethany, VA. 1830) 1.

# Walter Scott: *Advocate for Restoration*

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By Wayne Kilpatrick



Walter Scott was born in Moffatt, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, on October 31, 1796. He was the fourth son and sixth child of John and Mary Innes Scott. He was a bright child and was always interested in learning. At the age fourteen he entered the College of Arts in Edinburgh. By age twenty-one he was graduated from the University of Edinburgh. William Baxter, his biographer, wrote:

He was of the same ancestry as his world-renowned namesake Sir Walter Scott, whose poems and historical novels created such an interest in the reading world in the early part of the present century, and which have given him such a distinguished and permanent place among British authors. In the veins of both ran the blood of the heroes of the famous border feuds, among whom Wat. (Walter) of Harden held so notable a place for deeds of daring not so honorable now as then; but blood will tell, and the spirit which made

Wat. of Harden the most chivalric and fearless of raiders, under different and more benign influences, made one of his descendants the foremost author of his day, and another, one of the chief movers and promoters of the greatest religious Reformation of modern times. (William Baxter, *Life of Elder Walter Scott*, 1874, p. 29).

## Life in America

He was privileged to come to the United States through arrangements made by his mother's brother George Innes, who lived in the city of New York. He arrived on July 7, 1818, at the age of twenty-two. Through his uncle's influence he soon obtained a position as Latin tutor in a classical academy on Long Island.

By May 7, 1819 young Walter walked to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. He began teaching in the school operated by George Forrester. Forrester was the preacher for the "Haldane" church (known as reformers in Scotland). Mr. Forrester's peculiarity consisted in making the Bible his only authority and guide in matters of religion. Walter had been brought up to regard the Presbyterian Standards as the true and authoritative exposition and summary of Bible truth. Soon Scott was immersed. In the Spring of 1820 George Forrester withdrew from school, leaving Scott responsible for

school. Later in the year Forrester drowned in the Allegheny River. This left Scott responsible for the church as well.

In the Spring of 1821, Walter Scott read the tract "On Baptism" written by Henry Errett, father of Isaac, who would later become a preacher. He decided to go where there was a church that practiced immersion. He went to New York to visit Errett's church. However, he became disappointed and returned to Pittsburgh to tutor Robert Richardson (also a later preacher) and a few other boys.

### Scott Meets Campbell

During the winter of 1821-1822 he met Alexander Campbell for the first time, at the Richardson's home. Alexander Campbell, nearly twenty years after they first met, wrote to Scott:

We were associated in the days of weakness, infancy, and imbecility, and tried in the vale of adversity, while as yet there was but a handful. My father, yourself, and myself were the only three spirits that could (and providentially we were the only persons thrown together that were capable of forming any general or comprehensive views of things spiritual and ecclesiastical) co-operate in a great work or enterprise. The Lord greatly blessed our very imperfect and feeble beginnings; and this is one reason worth a million that we ought always to cherish the kindest feelings, esteem, admiration, love." (William Baxter, *Life of Elder Walter Scott*, 1874, pp.67-68).

This feeling was fully reciprocated on the part of Scott. The meeting of


Scott and Alexander Campbell paved the way for Scott becoming an acquaintance of Thomas Campbell. The relationship of these three men along with Barton Warren Stone brought about the title of "the Four Lieutenants of the Restoration Movement." The old cenotaph that stood in front of the Disciple's Historical Society Building in Nashville, Tennessee depicted these "Four Lieutenants." These four men influenced more Americans in the Restoration Movement, than any other four men.

By the end of January 1823, he had married Sarah (William Baxter, *Life of Elder Walter Scott*, 1874, page 72). By Spring of that year, he suggested to Campbell that he title his new Journal the *Christian Baptist*. By August of 1823 he began to write articles for Alexander Campbell's *Christian Baptist*. Scott wrote under the penname—"Philip."

In October, as he was traveling with Thomas and Alexander Campbell to the debate with W.L. McCalla in Washington, Kentucky, Scott suggested to Alexander that he use "baptism for the remission of sins" as an argument in the debate and Campbell did just that. McCalla was stumped because he had never heard such before. So, here one can see that Campbell had a lot of confidence in Scott's judgment (Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, Philadelphia, 1870, Vol.2, p.8).

*Continued, page 18*

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*"Jeff is genuinely concerned about souls. Diligently and fully engaged in the Lord's work... it's a blessing to have Jeff Archey working with the International Gospel Hour."*

Jeff has and will continue traveling to multiple congregations to inform others of the great work being done by IGH in spreading God's word.

Please keep the IGH in your prayers as they look to continue and grow this good work.

## Let's Get Social!



### **As a Writer, Preacher, and Publisher**

In 1824 Scott's Haldanean congregation merged with the Baptist church in Pittsburg which was Sidney Rigdon's congregation. Scott and Rigdon worked together until Rigdon left for Ohio in 1825. Scott assumed control of that congregation until Spring of 1826, when he moved to Steubenville, Ohio. He soon opened an Academy there. August 25-27, he went with the Campbells to a meeting of the Mahoning Baptist Association in Canfield, Ohio. While there he preached on Matthew chapter 11. His presence among the Baptist was strong for seven or eight years.

In the Spring of 1827, he decided to publish his own journal. The released prospectus for new journal, "Millennial Herald," was reported in June 4 edition of the *Christian Baptist*.

On August 23, 1827, he attended the Mahoning Association meeting at New Lisbon. He was employed as evangelist to Western Reserve. He preached during this period of evangelism the theme he had suggested before the McCalla debate "faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, and receiving of the Holy Spirit." Only 34 baptisms reported in previous year, but under Scott's preaching there were 1000 reported at the next Association meeting.

### **Baptism for Remission of Sins**

On November 18, 1827 William Amend was baptism—becoming the first person baptized for remission of sins, by Walter Scott.

A little more than a year before (1826) Tolbert Fanning, Allen Kendrick, and James Clark Anderson had been baptized for remission of sins, in North Alabama under the preaching of B.F. Hall. Hall had read the Campbell-McCalla Debate in the Spring of 1826 and he believed it and taught it from that time forward. It is worthy to note that Hall's introduction to the idea concerning Acts 2:38 came from Scott's suggestion to Campbell in 1823.

Why did Campbell and Scott not began preaching that in 1823? Why did they wait four or five years later to begin preaching "baptism for remission of sins?" It Took Scott's reading of Errett's tract "On Baptism" to awaken the idea that baptism was for remission of sins. It then took nearly two years more for him to introduce the concept to Alexander Campbell. Why did it take so long for the truth to be understood?

### **Break with the Baptist Church**

In 1830 the Campbells and Scott dissolved their Mahoning Association. This was their official break with the Baptists. The name calling from the other side began—Campbellites, Campbellism, etc. In 1836 Scott was



elected as first president of Bacon College—the first College among our brethren.

In 1832 he published the first volume of the *Evangelist*, which he published intermittently until 1844. The next year he published the *Protestant Unionist*, a journal that sounded very Episcopalian in content. Scott was

morphing into a man who did not seem to know where he was religiously. His influence was slowly slipping away. His earlier days were his most influential in our Restoration Movement. He did make a great contribution to the movement by his connection to the Campbells, and especially to Alexander Campbell.

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# Barton W. Stone: Pointing to the Polar Star of Unity

By Bradley Cobb



Barton Warren Stone first preached “baptism for the remission of sins” in 1804,<sup>1</sup> though there is debate as to whether he was himself baptized at that point.<sup>2</sup> Then for years, he hesitated to proclaim that gospel message until Alexander Campbell convinced him of its necessity in the 1820s.<sup>3</sup> This strange set of truths helps us to sympathize with a man whose love for God and Jesus Christ cost him friend-

ships and job security, and made him the target of his former associates.

## Early Life

Stone was born in 1772, and became fatherless by the time he was three. As a youth, he had a heart for God, but was lost in a world of religious confusion and bickering. He attended the preaching of the Baptists, and listened with great interest to the converts tell “how and when they obtained deliverance from their burdens.”<sup>4</sup> Then the Methodists arrived in his area, and brought a “grave, holy, meek, plain, and humble” style of Christianity. The Baptists and Episcopalians in the area went on the attack against them. Young Barton desperately wanted to follow God, but knew not how, especially in view of the hateful division among professed ‘Christians.’ Instead, in despair, he quit praying and chased after entertainment.<sup>5</sup>

When he turned 17, he decided to work towards being a lawyer. This led him to take classes in Latin, which were taught by a Presbyterian minister. While he was a student at this academy, he had continual bouts of mental anguish over whether to “embrace religion” or reject it and “be

<sup>1</sup> Barton W. Stone, *The Autobiography of Barton W. Stone* (Charleston, AR: Cobb Publishing, 2019) 56.

<sup>2</sup> There is debate, even among those who were close to Stone, as to when he was actually baptized. The offered dates (each of which is given as definitive by the authors) range from 1804 to 1807. See Scott Harp, “Barton W. Stone.” History of the Restoration Movement. Accessed January 9, 2020.

[https://www therestorationmovement.com/\\_states/kentucky/stone.htm](https://www therestorationmovement.com/_states/kentucky/stone.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Stone, *Autobiography*, 56.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 5-6.

damned.”<sup>6</sup> In 1791, he heard a sermon expressing the Scriptural truth that “God is love,” and that evening he decided to embrace God with all he had.

Like so many other well-known (and not-so-well-known) preachers of the early Restoration Movement, Stone was trying to figure things out on his own—seeing that his new denomination (the Presbyterians) showed a love for God, but also noticing some very unsettling problems there, mostly due to their strong Calvinism.<sup>7</sup>

Some years later, at his ordination examination, he was asked, “Do you receive and adopt the [Westminster] Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible?” His response was loud, clear, and intentional: “I do, as far as I see it consistent with the word of God.” That was enough, and he was ordained.<sup>8</sup> This statement, however, set the tone for the rest of Barton W. Stone’s life—the Bible is the only standard; doctrines which contradict God’s word must be rejected, regardless of the fallout; and he went to his grave believing that if men would follow the Scriptures without addition or subtraction, there could be true religious unity.

## Cane Ridge Meeting

It was the 1801 Cane Ridge (Kentucky) camp meeting that again brought the idea of religious unity to the forefront of his mind. Over 10,000 people gathered to hear preaching done by ministers from the various denominations in the area, all working together. Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians—all preached of Jesus and the need to accept him. But as soon as the meeting was over—after hundreds, if not thousands, “found religion”—the denominations started bickering over the converts and bragging of the numbers they gained.

## Quest for Unity

The prospect of unity vanished, and it affected Stone. However, Barton W. Stone was not (as some liberal historians try to imply) one for whom unity was the be-all, end-all. He did say that unity should be our “polar star,” but he absolutely believed there must be a standard on which the unity must be based. In 1803, he and some other preachers (Richard McNemar, John Dunlavy, Robert Marshall, and John Thompson) rejected the authority of the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky, and they created their own self-governing “Springfield Presbytery.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Stone elaborates on these in chapter 5 of his *Autobiography*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 28.

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<sup>9</sup> A lengthy explanation of their reasoning can be found, written by Stone, in his *Autobiography* in the section called “An Apology [Defense] For Renouncing The Jurisdiction of the Synod of Kentucky,”

A year later, realizing that there was no Scriptural authority for such an organization, they dissolved it, and determined only to follow what could be found in the New Testament, so far as church government, items of faith, and Christian practice were concerned.<sup>10</sup> He desired unity, but only on the basis of what God said.

It was during this same period, in 1804, when Stone preached a particularly moving sermon, and was asked by heart-pricked listeners, “What shall we do to be saved?” He quoted Scripture: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins.” Some accepted this gospel message, and were baptized. Some of his preaching friends (since they were still influenced by their Presbyterian training) rejected the notion of immersion or of any actual benefit from baptism, and thus opposed Stone. This appeared to make him question his conviction, for he states he didn’t actively preach that message again until convinced of its importance by Campbell over a decade later. After being shown baptism’s true place in the plan of salvation, he never ceased to point people to that Great Commission statement: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

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which was originally published as a standalone tract in 1804.

<sup>10</sup> This was done in a document entitled “The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery,” which is contained (among other places) in *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*.

Heartbreak hit Stone in 1805, when Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy (two of his closest companions in preaching) defected to join the Shakers.<sup>11</sup> He vigorously denounced this new form of “Christianity” as being anti-Christ, he begged, pleaded, and reasoned with these two men, but they instead clung tighter to their new-found “gospel” that was not really another gospel. Then, in 1811, Robert Marshall and John Thompson rejoined the Presbyterian Church, leaving Barton W. Stone as the only remaining preacher (of the original five who left the Presbyterians) who determined to follow only the Word of God.

### Stone and Campbell

Stone could have sought for unity with the Presbyterians, but that would mean forsaking what he knew to be true from the Word of God—the standard upon which unity could be built. David Purviance, whom Stone baptized in 1807, said “Had it not been for Stone remaining firm and unmoved, and... able to maintain and defend the truth, the consequence must have been disastrous.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Shakers were a cult that followed Ann Lee, who taught she was God incarnate. They forbade marriage, and preached a requirement of communal living. As of 2015, there were only three practicing Shakers known. See *A Sketch of the Life and Labors of Richard McNemar* for a more detailed description.

<sup>12</sup> C.C. Ware, *Barton W. Stone: Pathfinder of Christian Union* (as quoted by Scott

Over the next two decades, Stone brought thousands of people to the Lord, baptizing them in conformance with the examples found throughout Acts. Alexander Campbell, a man well-known for his writing and debating, initially was skeptical about Stone, mainly because of Stone's loose connection with the Christian Connexion in New England, which counted among its members some universalists, and a large number of Unitarians—those who believe that Jesus is the Savior, but that He is not deity. But after corresponding with each other, and finally getting to meet face-to-face in 1824, both left with high levels of respect for the other. From that point forward, Campbell frequently referred to Stone as his brother in Christ.

Through their periodicals, Stone's *The Christian Messenger* (which he begun in 1826), and Campbell's *The Christian Baptist* and *Millennial Harbinger*, these two men encouraged their followers to recognize that they were on the same side. This unity of the two movements was resisted by some, but through his tireless work, Stone helped bridge the gap. In 1831, a joint gospel meeting was held with Barton Stone and "Raccoon" John Smith, a Kentucky preacher associated with Campbell. From this sprung the idea of a formal union between the

groups, which would be discussed over the next month.

Stone spent his entire preaching life trying to bring unity to all followers of Jesus, based on God's Inspired Word. As part of this effort, in 1831, he announced that John T. Johnson (another preacher associated with Campbell) would join him as co-editor of *The Christian Messenger*, and these two also published a joint hymn book. But perhaps the moment he is most remembered for came on New Year's Day, 1832.

At a meeting of preachers from both the Christian Church (followers of Stone) and the Disciples of Christ (or "reformers," followers of Campbell), "Raccoon" John Smith stood up and said:

"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 set of men, in the wide world."<sup>13</sup>

Stone arose, and after speaking for a few moments, concluded by stating:

"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.”<sup>14</sup>

The biographer reports, “He turned as he spoke and offered to Smith a hand trembling with rapture and brotherly love, and it was grasped by a hand full of the honest pledges of fellowship, and the union was virtually accomplished!”<sup>15</sup>

Over the next fifteen years, Barton Stone traveled across Kentucky, Illinois, and other Midwestern states, working to spread this unity. When he moved to Jacksonville, Illinois, he found both a Christian Church and a Disciples’ Church. He refused to join either one until they joined together as one congregation—which they did.

### Legacy

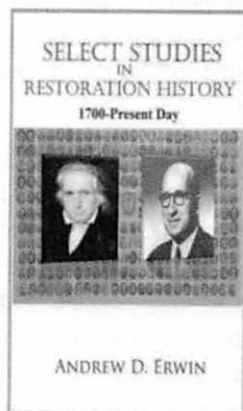
On November 9, 1844, Barton W. Stone died returning from a preaching trip. Upon hearing the news, Alexander Campbell wrote the following, which serves as a fitting conclusion to this look at Barton W. Stone’s life:

“Though much engaged in controversy, and much opposed, he seems never to have lost a good and persuasive spirit... his good character and benevolent spirit extorted from [his former Presbyterian brethren] the confession that “his life was sound, though his doctrine was not.” ... [H]e was the honored instrument of bringing many out of the ranks of human

tradition, and putting into their hands the Book of Books, as their only confession of faith and rule of life, and will no doubt, on this account, as well as others, long continue to be a blessing to those who, by his instrumentality, have already been, or may hereafter be, translated into the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Stone, *Autobiography*, pages 99-100.

# "Raccoon" John Smith and His Journey Out of Calvinism

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By Mike Greene



Among the teeming millions who immigrated to the shores of colonial America prior to the separation from England was one George Smith, the young and only son of German parents. He arrived on the shores of colonial Virginia around the year 1735 and settled near the headwaters of the James River. Though left an orphan, through the charity of a benevolent friend, he grew to adulthood and married Rebecca Bowen, another immigrant of Irish heritage. To this union were born at least thirteen children.

George, as did many immigrants, fought for his adopted country in the war for independence. When his service to country was over, he moved his growing family beyond the mountains into what is now northeastern Tennessee. It was there in the fall of 1784 that his son John, the object of our study and the ninth of the Smith's thirteen children, was born. Not long

afterward George moved his family across mountains yet again. This time through the Cumberland Gap on the Wilderness Trail blazed by Daniel Boone just twenty years earlier into what is now Wayne County in southeastern Kentucky. It was in Wayne County and environs that John Smith spent most of the remainder of his life.

George Smith was a faithful member of a strict sect of Calvinist Virginia Baptists, and he raised his children in that faith tradition. It was not only the Baptists of the area that held to the teachings of Calvinism. The established Presbyterians also held to the principles of Calvinism as expressed in the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, the creed of both ecclesiastical bodies.

## Calvinism

A brief reminder of the teachings of that creed is in order. Calvinism is generally explained by use of the five letter anacronym TULIP. The letters standing for total heredity depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, and perseverance of the saints. Three practical aspects of Calvinism that concern us in our study and which impacted John Smith in his journey from Calvinism to pure New Testa-

ment Christianity are election and predestination of all men from the foundation of the world to be one of the elect or one of the damned, the fate of those who might die in infancy, and how faith comes. Is faith a gift of God's irresistible grace and something one cannot have or come to on his own or is there sufficient evidence in God's word to produce faith in the heart of the hearer?

### Early Life

John Smith grew up among the rocks and hills on the banks of the South Fork of the Cumberland River where the saltpeter caves abound, and the racoons live. As most of his contemporaries on the rough frontier of America, he knew nothing of the luxuries of life. He was, however, very familiar with the privations of frontier life. He received little education beyond a few weeks' instruction at the hands of an inept school master. But he learned to read, had a desire to know and learn that gave him an education which was in some ways superior to a formal education. He also had a practical knowledge of people. He was naturally analytical and logical in his thinking and sought reasons for his beliefs and practices.

As he grew to maturity his natural curiosity and the preaching he heard in the Calvinistic Baptist tradition of his fathers led him to ponder his eternal destiny. Was he among the elect or the damned? This weighed heavily on John's heart and mind. In 1801 he traveled to Russellville, Kentucky. On

the return trip he attended the great Logan County Revival held on the banks of the Red River near what is now the little town of Schochoh, Kentucky. Thousands of people gathered to hear the preaching. And it was reported that 3,000 "got religion" and were baptized in the muddy waters of the Red River. Here John saw Calvinism on full display as people sought salvation as he himself had been doing though struggles and pleadings at the mourner's bench, yet getting no relief. He also saw the supposed signs of the grace of God coming upon people and their "getting religion" that turned him away in disgust.

Still, his spiritual appetite was not satisfied as he continued to struggle with his own eternal destiny. Finally, after months of spiritual pleading and introspection, John relates his struggles to the Clear Creek Baptist Church, is accepted as one of the elect, so marked by the "experience" of his struggles and is immersed into the Clear Creek Baptist Church on December 26, 1804. But his soul is not satisfied as his analytical mind struggles to accept the principles of Calvinism, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, and what he was hearing from the pulpits in Wayne County.

Meanwhile, on December 9, 1806, John marries the beautiful Anna Townsend, the only maiden he ever loved. John and his new bride come to the rustic, spartan log cabin on his farm and begin their life together. For months that drug into years, John



struggling to make a living and Anna labors in the care of the four children who blessed their union.

### **As a Baptist Preacher**

Isaac Denton, preacher for the Clear Creek Baptist Church, rightly saw in John Smith the characteristics of a leader and felt John was destined to become a preacher. After yet another period of time searching for a sign from God that he was chosen and called to be a preacher, John was ordained a preacher for the Stockton's Valley Baptist Association in May, 1808. As with everything John Smith did, he dedicated himself to fulfill what is perceived as his divine duty with all the energy he could muster and became an effective and beloved preacher for the Baptists of the area.

However, the more he studied his Bible the more dissatisfied he became with Calvinism and the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. Reconciling the scriptural teaching of the mercy and goodness of God with the thought of some being arbitrarily chosen from the foundation of the world to election or damnation, even those who might pass from this life in infancy grew more difficult. As did reconciling scriptural teaching that faith comes from hearing the word of God and is available to all with the doctrine of irresistible grace.

### **His Desire for Prosperity**

He and Anna passed their time in relative happiness with their family

and friends around them. In 1810, plans were set in place that would forever change his life. A friend urged John to visit the richer bluegrass region of Kentucky and seek a preaching position with a bigger, richer church that would provide a better life for his family. Though not convinced such a course of action would be fitting for a preacher of the gospel, he nevertheless made a pilgrimage to the richer lands around Lexington, Kentucky. Seeing the prosperous, fine farms in the area he began to develop a plan that would bring him the same level of prosperity he saw among the landowners of the area.

He heard of land in Alabama which could be obtained with very little capital outlay. He saw an opportunity to keep his children from the privations and back breaking labor he had known as a youth and provide for Anna a level of luxury she could only dream about. He would sell his farm, move to Alabama, become a cotton farmer and in a short time become a true southern gentleman with his own plantation and slaves to do his work for him. In 1814, he puts his plan into action. He sells his farm for \$1500, gathers his considerable livestock, loads some of his meager possessions and his family into a wagon and heads to Huntsville, Alabama.

Upon his arrival, he moved his family into a rented log cabin. He finds people who knew his parents in Virginia and relationships with others are quickly made. The people of the

community were glad to have the son of George Smith in their midst and happy to give ear to his preaching.

### **Tragedy Strikes**

Two months after their arrival, Smith was called some twenty miles away to preach to a gathering of his father's old friends. Upon arrival, news and greetings were shared and John Smith retired for the night with joy in his heart for the new friends he had made and the joyous prospects and hope of a prosperous future for himself, Anna, and his precious children; two boys and two girls. Eli, his oldest, was in his twelfth year. Elvira was two years younger. The youngest still a babe in arms.

In John's absence, Anna, who had a lovely singing voice, was called to a nearby cabin and the bedside of a sick friend in hopes her delightful songs could bring some comfort to the dying woman. Anna had taken her infant daughter and made her way to the neighboring cabin. She left the three older children in the care of her brother who had accompanied the family to Alabama. Not long after sundown, tragedy struck. The cabin where the children were sleeping caught fire and only Anna's brother and the youngest of the three children in the cabin escaped. Eli and Elvira were burned to death in the fire. Word quickly reached Anna and she rushed to the burning ruins with her babe in arms and was restrained from rushing into the fire only by quick action of a

neighbor. Two precious lives were lost. Nothing was saved.

Word of the disaster was received by John the next morning about dawn. In his grief he mounted his horse and rushed to the scene. As he rode toward the scene of the disaster, his mind raced trying to put together some words by which he might comfort his grief-stricken wife. But the shortcomings of his Calvinistic faith had no words by which comfort could be offered. Were the children of the damned or elect? He tried to convince himself that non-elect children do not die in infancy, but his logical mind rejected the deception. As he rode on, helpless in the face of grief, his faith in the harsh doctrine of his church was cast aside forever. Never again would he preach such a damnable doctrine that offered him or his wife no comfort.

When he arrived at the scene, he discovered that a mother's love had already predestined her beloved children to be among the elect. She only begged John's forgiveness for leaving the cabin. A new cabin was found, and the family moved in. Among the ashes he found the melted remains of \$76 in silver which was all that remained of the \$1500 he brought with him from Kentucky. But Anna was inconsolable. In a few days Anna died of grief. She had barely been laid in the grave when Smith, a man whose physical strength had never failed him, fell sick and laid on the sick bed for four months.

John finally recovered and took stock of his losses. Eighty-five hogs, fifty cattle, a few sticks of furniture, and all but the \$76 of silver was gone. And the worst? A wife and two children in the grave. He decided this was all a chastisement from God for his desire to be rich. He decided to return to his home in Wayne County, Kentucky and did so with nothing more than borrowed clothes on his back.

### Calvinism Questioned

Soon he was able to return to his preaching, but with a zeal and pathos that grew from his Huntsville experience. His analytical mind began to question; if his creed was wrong about predestination and election, is it wrong in other ways? He begins anew his search for truth and examines every point of his faith in light of the scriptures, knowing his analytical mind would not let him down. As he preached more of the scriptures and less of Calvinism others began to wonder about the orthodoxy of John Smith. Was he lost to the cause?

In the spring of 1822, Smith was preaching and urging sinners to repent and believe the gospel. Jesus died for you he said. But if you do not believe the gospel, you will be damned. His logical mind finally saw the contradiction in what he was preaching and the Calvinism in which he was raised. If the elect who were listening should not believe, his teaching was false for they, according to Calvinism, were of the elect and would not be condemned. And if the non-elect were to

believe, their faith would be false, for they could not have faith until such time as God chose to give it to them. Further, the doctrine of limited atonement said Christ did not die for all, only the elect. How could one of the damned claim a blessing not promised to them? Would the non-elect be damned for not doing what they could not do or for believing what was false? Or the elect be saved though denying the truth?

Too honest to preach any longer he said that something was wrong. He proclaimed that he was in the dark as were they all and how to lead them to the light he did not know. From that time, he pledged to take God's word as the only guide and follow it wherever it led him.

Never again would he proclaim the doctrines of Calvinism. Perhaps providence intervened when a friend placed into his hands a copy of the prospectus of the *Christian Baptist*, a paper to be edited by Alexander Campbell of Bethany, West Virginia. Soon John Smith joined Mr. Campbell and others in their quest for unity based on a restoration of New Testament Christianity.

### SOURCES

Williams, John Augustus Williams, *The Life of Elder John Smith*, Gospel Advocate Company, 1956.

Sparks, John; *Raccoon John Smith, Frontier Kentucky's Most Famous Preacher*, University Press of Kentucky, 2005.

Foster, Douglas A. et.al. editor, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, Eerdmans' Publishing Company, 2004.

# **The Work of the Lord**

**I Corinthians 15:58**

## **Introduction:**

1. It is easier to sing, "I want to be a worker" than to be one.
2. The beginning of a new year gives us an opportunity to think.
3. Three things from 1 Corinthians 15:58:

## **Discussion:**

### **I. The Personnel to Do "The Work of The Lord."**

- A. "My beloved brethren." No set class named.
- B. Every member of the body. Romans 12:3-8
- C. We have our differences in ability, but no one is excluded.

### **II. The Manner in Which This Work Is to Be Carried Forth.**

- A. "Steadfastness." Fixed. I Corinthians 15:3
- B. "Unmovable." Perseverance. Not moved by:
  1. Fear of man. Matthew 10:28
  2. Wiles of the Devil. Ephesians 6:11
  3. Allurements of the world. 1 John 2:11-17
  4. Discouragements. Galatians 6:9
  5. Sorrows and sufferings. 1 Thessalonians 3:3
- C. "Always." Constancy. 2 Timothy 4:2. Regardless of all else!
- D. "Abounding." To be over and above.
  1. Let us be willing. Matthew 20:1
  2. Fervent. Heated to a boil. Romans 12:11
  3. Sincere. From the heart. Ephesians 6:6
  4. Priority. Number One. Matthew 6:33

### **III. The Reasons Why This Work Should Be Done This Way.**

- A. "Wherefore." There is a future life. I Corinthians 15:50-56
- B. "Knowing." There is a reward. Galatians 6:9; 2 Timothy 4:8
- C. "Not in vain." Revelation 14:13; Hebrews 6:10
- D. "In the Lord." Philippians 4:13; Ephesians 3:21

## **Conclusion:**

1. Let us examine our service from last year and our plan for this year.
2. The night is coming for us as well. John 9:4
3. You cannot work for the Lord outside of His vineyard.

*- Mike Kiser*

# Good Causes in Need of Support

Andy Erwin

## Kisumu, Kenya

In December, I had the opportunity to travel to Kisumu, Kenya and teach in the Kenya School of Preaching. I was very impressed with the school and the quality of the students. The school is sponsored by the Charlotte Avenue church in Rock Hill, South Carolina. David Pharr is one of the faithful elders of this good church. Many of you may remember David from his days directing the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. Bear Valley Bible Institute also sends teachers from time to time. If you are interested in partnering with Charlotte Avenue to assist in sending funds to support the school, please call: (803) 327-7853.

While there, I was able to speak privately with these men and assess their individual needs as well as the needs of their respective congregations and ministries. I plan on doing what I can to help them (the students and the churches) and will be traveling back to Kenya as often as possible. If you would like to learn more about how you can work with me to help our brethren in Kenya, please contact me by email or by phone.

[andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com](mailto:andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com)

(931) 433-6542

## Wesley Simons

Recently, I received the following letter from Wesley Simons.

Dear Brethren,

I am writing to inform you that I will be retiring as the preacher of the Stoney Creek Church of Christ at the end of May 2020. At that time, I will give up all of my current salary. My salary will be needed to help pay the new preacher's salary.

I will continue as the Director of the Tri-Cities School of Preaching and Christian Development. I will be teaching classes in the school and for the congregation. I will also be doing the *Arise To Truth* radio program, making DVD's on various Bible subjects, functioning as an elder, etc.

However, to continue this work I must raise my salary. I will need between 48-52 thousand dollars a year. I hope that you can help in this effort. No amount is too small. If you can help, I hope that you will start the support soon because I do not believe that I will have all of my salary raised by the end of May.

Thank you for considering this work. Please pray for us to choose a good man to be our new preacher. I have been the only preacher for Stoney Creek. I have been here twenty-seven plus years. It has been a great work.

Should you choose to help, send all money to the:

**Stoney Creek Church of Christ**

**1162 HWY 91**

**Elizabethton, TN 37643**

Be sure to mark it Wesley's support

Thank you,

Wesley Simons

To know Wesley is to love him. He is a good man who has done a good work for many years. I believe by focusing on the school fulltime, he will only increase the good he can do for the students. The more time Wesley can spend with those young men, the better they will be for it. My son, Jackson, was a student there. I can speak to the soundness and integrity of Wesley Simons.

### **International Gospel Hour**

The West Fayetteville church in Fayetteville, Tennessee is delighted to add Jeff Archey and Van Sprague and their families to our ministry team. Jeff is the new "voice" of the International Gospel Hour. Van is going to help Jeff and the West Fayetteville church family in various capacities.

I have known Jeff Archey for 20 years. He was a teacher of mine at the Nashville School of Preaching. My wife, Melanie, has known him since her childhood. Some of Jeff's first sermons were preached for the Pasquo church where my father-in-law serves as an elder.

I could not think of a better person to preach the plain and simple truth of

Jesus on IGH than Jeff Archey. He is solid in his faith, sound in his preaching, and sincere in his treatment of others. He is a breath of fresh air and an answer to our prayers.

Van comes to us from West Virginia. He was highly recommended by Andy Robison, director of the West Virginia School of Preaching. Van has not disappointed! He is a bright, studious man of the Book. He is a tremendous gospel preacher. I would love for you to consider him as a speaker for your summer series, gospel meeting, or other special events.

Jeff, Van, and the West Fayetteville elders are working together beautifully to ensure the quality of the lessons, the financial stability of the program, and the international growth of the work. Friends, this is a tall order. But, the team of our elders, Jeff, and Van is up to the challenge. I have complete confidence in this group of men because of their love for the Lord and their dedication to His cause. It will only be a matter of time until the International Gospel Hour exceeds and excels with an unprecedented scope and reach for good in radio, television, and beyond.

Take some time and visit the IGH website and listen to some of Jeff's lessons and you will see why we are anticipating great things. Should you or your congregation desire to partner with West Fayetteville and IGH, please call (855) 444-6988.

**[www.internationalgospelhour.com](http://www.internationalgospelhour.com)**

# **The West Fayetteville Church of Christ**

## **Service Times**

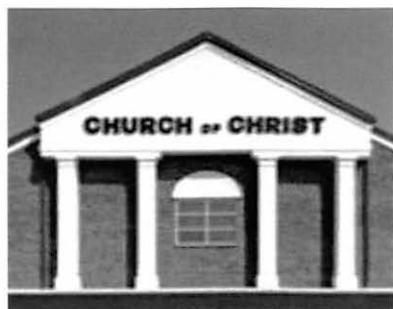
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Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00 pm

Wednesday Evening Worship: 7:00 pm

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# Gospel Gleaner

*For the Lord, His Word, and His Church*



## The Growth of the Church in America

*Historic Highlights from the Nineteenth Century*

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## **“The Churches of Christ Greet You” (Romans 16:16)**

The West Fayetteville Church of Christ is pleased to bring you the *Gospel Gleaner*. Are you familiar with the churches of Christ? Have you ever attended our services before?

Faithful churches of Christ desire to return to the New Testament and to be the church of the Bible. In the Bible, we find that the church is the assembly of all those who have been called out of the darkness of sin by obeying the gospel. These souls are added by God to the spiritual body of Christ, which is His church (Acts 2:42, 47; Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church belongs to Christ. It is His church. We, therefore, seek to honor Christ as our Lord in our worship, teaching, and daily walk.

One can be added to this sacred assembly and spiritual kingdom by hearing the gospel preached (Romans 10:17); believing the facts concerning Christ as revealed in the gospel (John 8:24); repenting of sin (Luke 13:3, 5); confessing faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10); and by being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:11-13; Galatians 3:26-27) to wash sins away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 1:7).

For more information about the church, or God's plan of salvation, we offer free Bible correspondence courses and personal Bible studies. Call or write to us.

### **The Gospel Gleaner**

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Andy Erwin, Editor

Correspondences, news and notes, and article considerations can be sent electronically to [andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com](mailto:andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com). The West Fayetteville Church of Christ reserves the right of discretion in deciding which correspondences, news, notes, and articles to publish.

## **Gospel Gleaner**

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Andy Erwin, Editor

## **Inside this Issue**

Andy Erwin

As we continue our journey through the Restoration Movement in America, our study takes into the nineteenth century. We will learn about early efforts in Christian education, Christian Journalism, noteworthy books from the period, the key debates of Alexander Campbell, and the phenomenal growth enjoyed.

In each issue of the *Gleaner* we try to publish a sermon outline of Mike Kiser's. This practice has been in place since 1985. Mike always does a good job with his outlines, and I believe our preaching brethren will find this particular outline to be very preach-able as it pertains to Luke 15.

In this issue we are also honored to have writing for us the following men: Todd Brenneman, professor of restoration history at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama; Bradley Cobb, author, publisher, and owner of Cobb Publishing; Scott Harp, webmaster of [www.therestorationmovement.com](http://www.therestorationmovement.com); Barry Jones, curator of the Restoration Digital Library.

We are thankful for the increase in subscriptions, the generosity of our readers, and the West Fayetteville church of Christ. Without you, this work would not be possible.

# Christian Education in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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By Scott Harp

“The power of surrounding circumstances to mould (sic) human character is familiar to all, and it is one of the most interesting points in the lives of those who have become distinguished in any particular field of labor to note the methods by which Divine Providence has thus often prepared their hearts and minds for the sphere for which they were designed, and changed or modified (t)heir own purposes and plans until these were in harmony with their appointed life work.”

—Robert Richardson, 1868<sup>1</sup>

The Second Great Awakening spawned a revival of spiritual awareness that Barton W. Stone described as spreading “like fire in dry stubble driven by a strong wind.”<sup>2</sup> This awareness ignited with it a sense of desire for knowledge in general but undergirded by the word of God. Alexander Campbell aligned this driving force for understanding with “the formation of moral character, the culture of the heart,” and in his thinking was “the

supreme end, all other purposes being held subordinate.”<sup>3</sup>

## Education Advances Education

The leaders of the Restoration Movement in America in the early years of the nineteenth century were educated men. Stone was a linguist, having been educated by Princeton University graduate, David Caldwell, at his Log College in Greensboro, North Carolina. The University of Glasgow, Scotland, was the alma mater of both Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott was a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. They, along with other early Christian educators, shared a firm belief that, besides the personal benefits of mind development, it was the best way to further enhance the restoration plea. The more one knows about himself and his God, the more apt he is to convey the same knowledge to others. (2 Timothy 2:2).

In 1986, Dr. D. Duane Cummins released a work entitled, *The Disciples Colleges: A History*.<sup>4</sup> In it he offered

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Richardson, *Memoirs Of Alexander Campbell*, Vol. I, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & CO., c. 1868, pages 147, 148.

<sup>2</sup> Elder John Rogers, *The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone, Written By Himself, With Additions And Reflections*, Cincinnati: J.A. and U.P. James, c. 1847, page 37.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Richardson, *Memoirs Of Alexander Campbell*, Vol. II, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & CO. c. 1868, page 464.

<sup>4</sup> Note: The branding of all colleges in this work as “Disciples of Christ” schools is somewhat misleading. Until the 1906 official recognition of division among Restoration Churches noted in the U.S. Census, the designations of “churches of Christ,”

an overview of the history of education through the centuries as well as the education efforts among Restoration Movement churches in the 19th and 20th centuries. He calculated,

### Earliest Efforts

Fourteen educational institutions are known to have been founded by Disciples ministers prior to 1840. Eleven of those were established during the 1830s, the decade in which the entire American educational enterprise began its unprecedented expansion. Not one of the fourteen institutions survived beyond the Civil War. Only two of the institutions were colleges. The others were academies, institutes, or seminaries, all forerunners of the modern primary, middle, and high schools.<sup>5</sup>

Among the fourteen, the earliest of these schools, Cambridge Academy (1813-1815) in Cambridge, Ohio, was conducted by Thomas Campbell. Moving briefly to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1815, he directed Campbell's Academy (1815-1818). Alexander Campbell led Buffalo Seminary in his own house from 1818 to 1823. Philip S. Fall headed Popular Hill Academy, Kentucky (1831-1863).

---

"Christian churches," and "Disciples of Christ" were used interchangeably. Cummins stays with the "Disciples" identifier to all the colleges throughout the book.

<sup>5</sup> D. Duane Cummins, *The Disciples Colleges: A History*, St. Louis: CBP Press, c. 1968, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Dwight E. Stevenson, *Lexington Theological Seminary – 1865-1965: The College*

### Bacon College

Most prominently known of these pre-1840 schools was Bacon College, founded in Georgetown, Kentucky, by civil engineer, Thornton F. Johnson, in 1836. Walter Scott was its first president. He served in that role only during its inaugural year but maintained life-long support for the institution. While Cummins was technically correct that all fourteen schools started before 1840 did not survive the Civil War, it should be noticed that the closing of Bacon College was temporary. In brief, the school had moved to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, in 1839 for several reasons, mostly financial. In 1850, the college failed, but a high school continued under the direction of Dr. Samuel Hatch. The college was re-chartered in 1858 when the Kentucky State Legislature approved a name change to Kentucky University.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1840 and 1866, the year of Alexander Campbell's death, one hundred and fifteen educational institutions were founded by Restoration Movement leaders. Cummins added, "Of that number, eighty-three constituted an uncoordinated, localized, and disparate network of private high

*of The Bible Century*, "Appendix IV," Bacon College and Kentucky University (1836-1865), St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1964. p. 409. Note: For a fuller explanation of the evolution of Bacon College into what is now the University of Kentucky, this volume is essential reading. Today, the university has no connection with the Restoration Movement.

schools variously called academies, institutes, or seminaries.”<sup>7</sup>

### **Franklin College**

The Civil War took its toll on schools across the country. Many students left the classroom to take up arms. It forced the closure of many programs that never reopened. Several did survive, but most efforts were touch and go throughout the war years. One of note was Tolbert Fanning’s Franklin College that closed during the war. The school resumed in the fall of 1865, but in October, a freak accident burned the main building, the Fanning’s residence, the libraries, and classrooms to the ground. Not to be dissuaded from the challenge, the Fannings purchased nearby Minerva College in the spring of 1866 and opened a school for girls called Hope Institute.

From the days of reconstruction to the end of the century, “seventy-nine colleges and seventy-four academies and institutes” were established in the Restoration Movement.<sup>8</sup> Of those, the broader distribution of colleges was: twenty in Kentucky, eighteen in Missouri, fifteen in Tennessee, eight in Texas, eight in Ohio, and eleven in the “trans-Missouri west, primarily in California and Oregon.”<sup>9</sup>

Without a doubt, all institutions of learning started with a dream, a mission of sorts, of what could be. However, the success, or failure, of all

ventures of learning in the nineteenth century can be attributed to several variables. Economy weighed heavily on survival. With no financial support, there was no school. Students were another factor—and not just any students.

### **Bethany College**

Campbell’s expectations for Buffalo Seminary were to prepare young men for the ministry, but very few of his students seemed to show any inclination toward it. In the end, he abandoned the seminary. He opened Bethany College in 1841 with similar dreams. However, worldliness has so affected the institution that today’s campus life reflects very little of its founder’s intentions. Bethany College stands as a great example of what can happen to any institution of learning in the Restoration Movement which loosens the moorings of its initial purposes. (Hebrews 2:1).

Other contributing factors that brought about decline were remote locations, poor management, curriculums that were irrelevant to needs, and the expansion of public education. The biggest threat, especially in the last half of the century, was due to theological shifts in the movement. Missionary societies and the addition of the instrument to the worship of supporting churches affected school success.

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<sup>7</sup> Cummins, p. 35.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Changes in the church more often than not came about through the influence of the colleges. Many have touted, “so goes the school goes the church.” By the end of the century, most of the existing Restoration Movement related schools had shifted their leanings toward the more liberal end of the spectrum.

The history of the Restoration Movement would be incomplete without recognizing the impact of education on its overall success. The history of education in the nineteenth century will provide fodder of discovery for researchers for generations to come.

### For Further Study Visit

[WWW.THERESTORATIONMOVEMENT.COM](http://WWW.THERESTORATIONMOVEMENT.COM)

Is it possible to read your Bible and, from your reading, see that in the New Testament there is a Church that Jesus established? Is it possible to see in the Bible that God set forth His standard of acceptance in salvation, worship, church organization, and daily living? Is it possible to follow the teachings of God, revealed in the New Testament, to direct our lives in the same way as He did first century Christians?

The answer to all the questions above is a resounding, Yes! For, since the writing of the New Testament, men and women of all walks of life have studied their Bibles and have seen how one, even to this day, can become a Christian the way those in New Testament times became Christians. They have seen how one can participate in the Church of the New Testament by emulating its structure, worship, and activity.

Faithfulness to the New Testament pattern does not begin with, nor is it limited to, the work of people in North America. People all around the world for centuries have been searching and following the Scriptures as their only standard of faith and practice. Historically, when they searched the Scriptures, obeyed the gospel, and worshipped as the Bible directs, then they considered one another brethren. Many who did this were never aware that others were doing the same things in other locations around the globe. Efforts continue to learn about these people and remember their efforts. Someone has rightfully expressed that we should always remember to stop and show appreciation for the bridges we have crossed. For the Christian, this is especially true! Not only are we to be thankful for the work of the apostles and early church workers in the 1st century A.D., but we should also remember the value of all those since who have directed others to give up the shackles of religious error and only take on the truth revealed in God's Word.

This website is dedicated to the many men and women who have struggled in the Restoration of New Testament Christianity, to take us back to the Bible, and to let it be our only standard of faith and practice.



*"Behold upon the mountains  
the feet of him that bringeth  
good tidings, that publisheth  
peace!..." (Nahum 1:15)*

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# The Key Debates of Alexander Campbell

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By Todd M. Brenneman

In the nineteenth century, religious debates were prevalent throughout a large section of American Christianity, broadly considered. Historian Brooks Holifield has noted that after 1820, religious debating had become very prevalent and had taken on the form of entertainment and not just intellectual investigation.<sup>1</sup> Debating has been a significant part of Restoration Movement history, especially in the Churches of Christ wing, and those debates have provided a context to distinguish the church from other religious groups and to clarify doctrines through a process of scriptural and theological investigation.

While many nineteenth-century debates were focused on a key doctrine, they were also about distinguishing the Restoration Movement from other religious groups in nineteenth-century America. Whether the topic was baptism, the Roman Catholic Church, or the work of the Holy Spirit, Restoration Movement leaders were also drawing boundary lines that separated their work at restoring the church from the work of denominational leaders.

While several leaders were involved in debates, the key debates that have had the most significance to the Restoration Movement involved Alexander Campbell. Campbell's five major public debates, and his less formal debates in the pages of *Christian Baptist* and *Millennial Harbinger*, garnered him attention and helped others see what the restoration of New Testament Christianity might look like. Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell did not appear to take to public debating—and the controversy that came with it—like Alexander Campbell did, once he overcame his initial hesitation against it.

There is not space to do justice even to Campbell's five debates. Those interested in getting a good overview of the debates, their issues, and Campbell's opponents, should refer to J. J. Haley's *Debates that Made History*, Bill Humble's *Campbell and Controversy*, or the appropriate entries in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*.<sup>2</sup> These works present excellent overviews in an accessible manner that provide readers insights

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<sup>1</sup>E. Brooks Holifield, "Theology as Entertainment: Oral Debate in American Religion," *Church History* 67 (1998): 502.

<sup>2</sup>J. J. Haley, *Debates that Made History: The Story of Alexander Campbell's Debates with Rev. John Walker, Rev. W. L. McCalla, Mr. Robert Owen, Bishop Purcell, and Rev.*

*Nathan L. Rice*, Restoration Reprint Library (reprint, Joplin, MO: College Press, 1966); Bill J. Humble, *Campbell and Controversy: The Story of Alexander Campbell's Great Debates with Skepticism, Catholicism, and Presbyterianism* (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1952); Douglas A. Foster, Paul

into the debates without the need to access the sometimes mammoth volumes that record the transcripts of the contests. In this format, though, it is more appropriate to provide brief summaries of the debates.

### **Campbell-Walker Debate**

Campbell's first debate was with Presbyterian minister John Walker from Mount Pleasant, OH, in 1820. The focus of the debate was infant baptism, something Campbell had believed but later denied after the birth of his first child, Jane, in 1812. Walker argued that baptism had essentially taken the place of circumcision in the new covenant. Campbell, in turn, responded that since the new covenant was superior to the old, anything under the old covenant was not valid for the new. He also took great pains to demonstrate that immersion was the only appropriate format for Christian baptism. Walker, unprepared for Campbell's arguments, decided to cut his participation short.<sup>3</sup>

### **Campbell-Maccalla Debate**

The second public debate with William Maccalla (1823) covered similar territory. "The arguments advanced by

Maccalla were very similar to those utilized by Walker three years earlier, though presented more fully and more capably."<sup>4</sup> While the arguments were essentially the same in this debate, Campbell grew frustrated with Maccalla because he only read prepared speeches that did not specifically address his arguments, which focused on the importance of belief prior to baptism, the Greek evidence privileging immersion, and the purpose of baptism being for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>5</sup>

### **Campbell-Owen Debate**

In 1829, Campbell debated Robert Owen. This debate was quite different than the previous ones. Owen was a skeptic who promoted socialism and a utopian vision of communities without religion. He had challenged various clergy to a debate but received no response. Campbell, hearing about Owen's challenge, responded to him and arranged an eight-day debate in Cincinnati, OH. The focus was on the impact of religion on humanity. Owen's main line of reasoning was related to twelve propositions that he believed were laws of human nature. Campbell, in response, addressed the question of the existence of God and

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M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams, eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 142-47.

<sup>3</sup>Bill J. Humble, "Campbell-Walker Debate," in *The Stone Campbell Encyclopedia*, 147; Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, 158-72; Eva Jean Wrather, *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom, a*

*Literary Biography*, vol. 1 (Fort Worth: TCU Press, 2005), 229-34.

<sup>4</sup>Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, 174.

<sup>5</sup>Bill J. Humble, "Campbell-Maccalla Debate," in *The Stone Campbell Encyclopedia*, 142-43; Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, 172-84.

evidences for Christianity. Owen, though, was not as focused on addressing Campbell's attacks and simply read a manuscript of his laws. He repeated these several times before tendering the remainder of the time to Campbell, which he was happy to use.<sup>6</sup>

### **Campbell-Purcell Debate**

Campbell's fourth debate was against Catholic bishop John Purcell in Cincinnati in 1837. The focus of the debate was the Roman Catholic religion and its validity as both a Christian group and as a religion in the United States.

Purcell was much better prepared for this debate than Campbell's previous opponents. That could be due to a couple of factors. In Campbell's earliest debates with Walker and Maccalla, he was a little-known actor, so as a debate opponent he was an unknown quantity. Owen was so focused on his own work that he likely did not prepare for addressing Campbell as much as he prepared to present his own work.

By 1837, though, Campbell had an extensive corpus and notoriety. Additionally, as a Catholic, Purcell had probably faced many of the arguments Campbell made so that he was better prepared to address them. Many

scholars, Restoration Movement scholars among them, believe Campbell lost this debate or at least presented his worst showing here.<sup>7</sup>

### **Campbell-Rice Debate**

Campbell's final public debate took place in 1843 against Presbyterian minister Nathan L. Rice. There was controversy in trying to get the participants together, especially since Campbell did not consider Rice a worthy opponent. The topics for the debate included baptism, the activity of the Spirit, and the role of creeds and confessions of faith.

Rice was even better prepared than Purcell and incorporated Campbell's writings into his various arguments. Unlike the Purcell debate, the two ministers seem to have been more evenly matched. As an interesting side note to this debate, Campbell and Rice argued about whether the Greek word *baptizo* and its cognates and antecedents always indicated immersion or dipping, with Campbell claiming it did. Rice argued from several translations and early Christians that indicated some translators and early Christians believed words suggesting "sprinkle" were appropriate words to translate *baptizo* and similar words. Campbell argued that there must have been

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<sup>6</sup>Richard J. Cherok, "Campbell-Owen Debate," in *The Stone Campbell Encyclopedia*, 143-44; Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, 78-118.

<sup>7</sup>Alexander Campbell and Bishop John B. Purcell, *A Debate on the Roman Catholic*

*Religion* (Cincinnati: J. A. James, 1837; reprint, Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1914); Mark Weedman, "Campbell-Purcell Debate," in *The Stone Campbell Encyclopedia*, 144-45; Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, 119-56.

another reading or manuscript that used another word suggesting “sprinkle” that was behind these translators and authors. Rice ridiculed him for this baseless assertion. In 1859, however, Codex Sinaiticus was discovered, which used a word meaning sprinkle that was not connected to the word *baptizo*, proving Campbell correct.<sup>8</sup>

There are other debates Campbell was involved in. Many of those involved exchanges in his periodicals or between his periodicals and those of others. Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, David Lipscomb, and others were also involved in public debates in the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> In many cases, these debates were important, but they have not risen to the level of influence like Campbell’s five public debates have.

## Conclusion

Writing about the interest nineteenth-century Americans had in debate, Holifield states, “Whenever theological questions appeared in a format that featured the drama of public contest and conflict, people could listen—for hours, days, sometimes weeks—to disputes over relatively abstract ideas,

biblical commentary, theological distinctions, and sometimes even the findings of biblical critics. What the debates suggest is that ordinary folk could get excited about the kinds of questions theologians wrote about and the kinds of answers they proposed.”<sup>10</sup>

This was certainly true about Campbell’s debates, which often drew large crowds, but they were also a way to set the burgeoning Restoration Movement apart from other religious groups. The propositions were not just about understanding the biblical mode, actors, and purpose of baptism. They were also about attempting to explain why such a new religious group was needed and how that group was different than others that came before. In so doing, debate became a central part of Restoration Movement identity in the nineteenth century and beyond.




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<sup>8</sup>Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincot & Co., 1868; reprint, Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, n.d.), 508-509. See the exchange in *A Debate between Rev. A. Campbell and Rev. N. L. Rice on the Action, Subject, Design and Administrator of Christian Baptism* (Lexington: A. T. Skillman & Son, 1844; reprint, Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, n.d.), 119-37.

See also, Edward H. Sawyer, “Campbell-Rice Debate,” in *The Stone Campbell Encyclopedia*, 146-47; Humble, *Campbell and Controversy*, 185-225.

<sup>9</sup>See Holifield, “Theology as Entertainment,” 518-20, where he lists the debates he examined.

<sup>10</sup>Holifield, “Theology as Entertainment,” 499-500.

# Noteworthy Books of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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By Bradley Cobb

Some of the well-known preachers of the Restoration Movement are known for their preaching and activities (“Raccoon” John Smith is one that comes to mind). But there are others who, while they still traveled and preached (and had biographies written about their life and labors), gave perhaps an even more lasting legacy as writers. While the articles and books they wrote are all over 100 years old (some nearing 200 years old!), they are still very worthwhile, instructive, and surprisingly relevant in today’s society and culture.

There are certainly many other books that could be added to this list, but the ones listed here are ones that I would consider must-haves.

## ***Commentary on Acts***

**J.W. McGarvey**

Written in the midst of the Civil War, McGarvey’s *Commentary on Acts* is a classic that is still used as the textbook on Acts in many schools of preaching. It was written when this man, who was supposedly called “the ripest Bible scholar on earth” by the *London Times*, was in his mid-twenties.

This commentary spends a good deal of time proving the truth about baptism, including thoroughly debunking the prevalent argument that the apostles couldn’t have immersed 3,000

people in one day. He also spends a decent amount of time on the baptism with the Holy Spirit, combatting false doctrines surrounding that event.

Though written over 150 years ago, the book is thoroughly readable (the language is not archaic, as one might assume) and makes for an excellent study aid when reading, studying, or teaching on the book of Acts.

An interesting side note, McGarvey loved the book of Acts so much that a couple decades later, he wrote a *new* commentary on Acts. Both commentaries are still in print and available from some brotherhood publishers.

## ***The Christian System***

**Alexander Campbell**

Don’t let this description scare you away, but this could be described as Campbell’s “Systematic Theology.” Divided into seven parts, Alexander Campbell covers creation, the Scriptures, the Godhead, man, the purpose of religion, sacrifice, the Messiah, faith, repentance, baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit, ministry, expediency, and heresy—and that’s just in part 1.

The second section sets forth the principle that Scripture is the foundation of Christian Union. Part 3 is comprised of essays on the kingdom of heaven, including sections on the patriarchal age, circumcision, the Law of Moses, the church, the elements of a

kingdom, and the coming of the kingdom.

Part 4 explores what the Bible has to say about remission of sins, in eleven propositions of truth. Here, Campbell destroys the Calvinistic ideas on salvation and remission, and in addition to using the Bible, he also shows that the early church writers never taught Calvinism. He then compares the Biblical truth of remission to the practice of prominent denominations and responds to their objections. In a similar vein (though excellent on its own), Part 5 deals with regeneration.

The sixth part is an extensive look at the Lord's Supper—its contents, its meaning, its practice, and its frequency. In this, he defeats the idea of taking the Lord's Supper on a monthly, semi-annual, or annual basis.

The conclusion of the book is a three-part invitation to the reader. To Christian readers, he encourages continued faithfulness. To interested non-Christians, he offers Christ's promise of salvation and shows Christ's terms for entrance. To "belligerent" non-Christians, he warns of judgment to come and pleads with them to come to the Lord.

In all, if you want to dig deeper into baptism, salvation, the Lord's Supper, or any of the other topics mentioned above, this is an excellent resource. I

don't know if any brotherhood publishers are still printing this classic, but it is available on Amazon, or you can read it online at [GravelHill-ChurchofChrist.com](http://GravelHill-ChurchofChrist.com).

### ***The Gospel Restored***

**Walter Scott**

Nicknamed by some "The Golden Oracle," Walter Scott was perhaps the most prominent evangelist in the Restoration Movement. Thomas Campbell reportedly said to his son, Alexander, that what they had taught and written about in principle, Walter Scott was preaching in practice. Though many historians refer to the Restoration Movement as the "Stone-Campbell Movement," it could well be argued that Walter Scott was just as influential to the everyday man and woman—perhaps even more so—than either Barton W. Stone or Alexander Campbell.

Moses E. Lard (a fascinating study in his own right) once approached Walter Scott and said, "Brother Scott, you are the first man who taught me the gospel!" When Scott asked how that was possible, Mr. Lard replied that it was through *The Gospel Restored*.<sup>1</sup>

*The Gospel Restored* presents biblical truth on different aspects of the gospel. To quote Scott's own assessment of the purpose of the book:

In regard to sinners and sin, six things are to be considered: the love of it, the practice of it, the state of it, the

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<sup>1</sup> Baxter, William, *The Life of Elder Walter Scott* (Charleston, AR: Cobb Publishing, 2017), pp. 195-196.

guilt of it, the power of it, and the punishment of it. The first three relate to the sinner; the last three to sin. Now, faith, repentance, and baptism, refer to the first three — the love, the practice, and the state of sin; while remission, the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection, relate to the last three — the guilt, the power, and the punishment of sin; in other words, to make us see the beauty and perfection of the gospel theory, as devised by God: faith is to destroy the love of sin, repentance to destroy the practice of it; baptism, the state of it; remission, the guilt of it; the Spirit, the power of it; and the resurrection to destroy the punishment of sin; so that the last enemy, death, will be destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

The book is divided into several parts.

Part 1 deals with the fall of man, which necessitated the need for a Savior. Part 2 focuses on the Messiahship of Jesus, His role and work as Christ, and the many proofs from Scripture that Jesus was indeed the Messiah. Part 3 views faith from many different angles (as a response to testimony, its connection with works, etc.). Part 4 is an extensive look at repentance. Part 5 covers baptism thoroughly. Part 6 explains the purpose, necessity, and means of remission of sins. Part 7 is about the Holy Spirit, how He converts sinners, and what the “gift of the Holy Spirit” is. Part 8 is about the resurrection promised to all faithful Christians, confirmed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This book is a goldmine for preachers and Bible class teachers, but it is just as powerful—perhaps even more so—for the Christian who wants to bring others to Christ but feels like he/she doesn’t have enough knowledge or understanding to answer questions or objections. *The Gospel Restored* contains straight-forward but in-depth answers about the Savior man needs and man’s response to that Savior. Scott also presents many of the objections that he expected and answers them for the reader.

### ***The Gospel Plan of Salvation***

**T.W. Brents**

One biographer called T.W. Brents “superman,” long before the superhero of the same name was ever created. Brents was a champion debater (some said he was better than Alexander Campbell), mastered English, Greek, and Latin, and possessed three earned doctorates—all in different fields. He planted churches, debated false teachers, and wrote a long-running column called “The Alien’s Department” in *The Gospel Advocate*.

*The Gospel Plan of Salvation* is such a powerful and helpful book that it has never gone out of print since it was first published in 1874.

In this book, Brents expands on some of his *Gospel Advocate* columns, presenting in a clear, straight-forward style that mankind is lost because of sin and hopelessly separated from a loving

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.



and holy and just God because of it. But he just as powerfully presents the love of God expressed in working for millennia to bring about the Savior who could bring His creation back in reconciliation to God and remission of sins. To make sure that he didn't leave readers uncertain about what their response should be to such love and work on God's part, Brents expounds man's response to such a great and generous offer of salvation, love, and forgiveness—faith, repentance, baptism, and continual dedication to Christ.

If you've never read this book, you're missing a great blessing.

***The Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio***

**A.S. Hayden**

Very often, people take for granted that which they didn't have to work for. This is one of the great reasons to read books about the history of the Restoration Movement. There are several biographies of individuals in the movement, but Hayden's *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve, Ohio*, is more broad in scope than that.

The Western Reserve (modern northeast Ohio) was a rapidly growing area of the country when Americans began migrating westward from the original 13 colonies. This area was witness to much growth of the church and was home (at least for a time) to many of the early prominent preachers of the attempt to get back to biblical Christianity.

This book takes the reader through the trials, struggles, and triumphs of the church in the early 1800s. The reader gets to experience the travels of Alexander Campbell, the practical preaching of Walter Scott, the debate challenge of Thomas Campbell, and the destructive power of a man named Sidney Rigdon. In addition to the historical narrative, A.S. Hayden gives biographical sketches of the prominent preachers who appear in the book.

If there was only one book of Restoration Movement history in your library (and I can't fathom that you'd only want *one!*), this should be the one.

**Honorable mentions**

There are so many other books that could have been included on this list, but for the sake of time and space, these will have to suffice. But, in case you have all these, and you wonder, "What should I pick up next?" here are some suggestions:

- The Campbell-Owen Debate on the evidences of Christianity
- *The Scheme of Redemption* by Robert Milligan
- *Commentary on the Minor Epistles* by N.T. Caton
- *Life of Elder Raccoon John Smith* by John Augustus Williams
- *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* (biographies and sermons of 28 then-living preachers—including Benjamin Franklin, J.W. McGarvey, Moses E. Lard, Isaac Errett, and others).



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# MEET THE DIRECTOR & SPEAKER



Jeff Archey, a native of middle Tennessee, husband, evangelist, and now Director and Speaker for The International Gospel Hour.

Jeff has worked as an evangelist in the Lord's kingdom for more than 35 years. His work as an evangelist, with GBN and hosting multiple radio programs has given Jeff the experience needed to help the IGH grow.

Jeff's goal with this new position is to *"carry forth the vision of the speakers before me and all the elders that have overseen this work..."*

What is that vision? To proclaim the gospel to all the world! And that is just what they are doing by broadcasting from multiple radio stations across the world and looking to expand their media type. Former Director and Speaker of IGH, Jody Apple, had this to say about the new director,

*"Jeff is genuinely concerned about souls. Diligently and fully engaged in the Lord's work... it's a blessing to have Jeff Archey working with the International Gospel Hour."*

Jeff has and will continue traveling to multiple congregations to inform others of the great work being done by IGH in spreading God's word.

Please keep the IGH in your prayers as they look to continue and grow this good work.

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Christian Quarterly	1869-1876	(8 vols)	10.00
Christian Quarterly Review	1882-1886	(6 vols)	10.00
Elam's Notes	1922-1946	(25 vols)	40.00
Evangelist	1832-1842	(11 vols)	20.00
Faith and Facts	1973-2001	(29 vols)	25.00
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Gospel Advocate	1855-1861, 1866-1970 (111 years)		100.00
Gospel Echo	1866-1871	(6 vols)	10.00
Gospel Guardian	1935-1936, 1949-1980	(36 vols)	40.00
Gospel Herald (Roy Hearn)	1950-1955	(6 vols)	10.00
Lard's Quarterly, index	1863-1868	(6 vols)	5.00
Millennial Harbinger, + index	1830-1870	(41 vols)	40.00
Minister's Monthly	1955-1971	(17 vols)	40.00
Sound Doctrine	1941-1944	(4 vols)	5.00
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The Way (J. A. Harding)	1899-1903	(5 vols)	15.00
Word and Work	1915-2008	(102 vols)	75.00
20 <sup>th</sup> Century Christian (incomplete)	1949-1983	(vols 11-46)	50.00

# Christian Journalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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By Barry Jones

It is very interesting to observe how religious journalism had its start in America. Regular newspapers began reporting the religious activities of the “Great Awakenings,” (the first wave in 1740s, the second in 1780s) and the reporting caused greater excitement than the preaching. As newspaper reporters piled in to report the events, differences of opinions started “paper wars” over the interpretation of the events and the meaning of the sermon exposition.<sup>1</sup> This hullabaloo gave a few enterprising preachers and educators the idea to publish a clear statement of their views about religious matters on a regular basis like the newspapers.

Elias Smith, who had published books and tracts for the public’s edification, decided he would regularly present before the public his views relating to the Christian faith. In about 1805 he began a work entitled the *Christian’s Magazine*.<sup>2</sup> Two years later he settled on *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*. Other journals sprouted up in the colonies, and journalism and religion were thus married... and sometimes, as marriages battle stormy seas, journals settled their disagreements in the public eye.

This contention was just a reflection of the times, as religious bodies wrestled over major moral and religious issues caused by the American Revolution and nationhood, the heavy-handed

control of the denominational groups over the people’s beliefs and how to assign evangelist duties, and the correct understanding of the Bible. The public hungered for any reading materials, good papers, and good preaching by trained ministers—some of the best sermons could last two hours.<sup>3</sup>

## Christian Journalism and the Restoration Movement

The true “trail blazers” of the Restoration Movement all used this new medium to teach the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.<sup>4</sup> They also included, with scriptural discussions, the progress of the cause by relating gospel meetings, baptisms, the adventures of evangelists, and the health of the newly formed congregations.

James O’Kelly (1735-1826), Abner Jones (1772-1841), Elias Smith (1769-1846), Barton Warren Stone (1772-1844), Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), Walter Scott (1799-1886), Tolbert Fanning (1810-1877), Moses E. Lard (1818-1880), Ben Franklin (1812-1878), J. W. McGarvey (1829-1911), David Lipscomb (1831-1917), James A. Harding (1848-1922), and T. B. Larimore (1843-1929) all had three qualities in common: (1) they were serious Bible students and educators, (2) they were evangelists of the Word, and (3) they used the journals to propagate

their teachings, either by discussing the issues through their pages or by being editors of the papers.

These journals could allow students of scripture to read carefully worded articles explaining the scriptures and challenging the erroneous opinions of their day. Sometimes the editors would disagree, and the reader could follow the discussion as the young brotherhood hammered out its positions. Most readers used the timely issues as talking points with their neighbors and friends. Some eager Bible teachers and preachers used the journal's issues as the Bible lessons for their Sunday morning services.

What is most significant about this era, which seasoned students of the Restoration Movement acknowledge, is the fact that the journals and their editors drifted away from engaging the public to clarify their views of the First Century Church, as they did earlier in the movement. They changed their target audience from the corrupt clergy of denominationalism and the twisted doctrines they espoused to their own brethren with whom they disagreed on specific issues not understood by the general denominational population.

The significant journals that shaped Restoration History in this time period were: *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* (1808-1817), *Christian Baptist* (1823-1830), *Christian Messenger* (1826-1845), *The Evangelist* (1832-1842), the *Millennial Harbinger* (1830-1870), the *Gospel Advocate* (1855-1861,

1866-current), the *American Christian Review* (1856-1887), *Lard's Quarterly* (1863-1868), the *Christian Standard* (1866-current), the *Christian/Evangelist* (1882-1959), the *Firm Foundation* (1884-2010), and the *Christian Leader* (1886-1960).

[For extensive research on these journals refer to: Scott Harp, [therestorationmovement.com](http://therestorationmovement.com); R. L. Roberts, *Union List of Restoration Periodicals in Participating Christian College Libraries*, 1982; Robert Shouse, *A History of Publications among the Brethren of the Disciples of Christ*, 1991; Claude Spencer, *Periodicals of the Disciples of Christ*, 1943; and the *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 2004.]

### ***The Herald of Gospel Liberty* (1808-1817)**

Elias Smith attempted to unite all Christians on the scriptures alone and was very interested in the current revival and B. W. Stone's followers. He reprinted the "Last Will & Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" of June 28, 1804 in the first issue of *The Herald of Gospel Liberty* and wrote: "It is our design in future numbers, to give the readers an account of the beginning and progress of the revival, and, the view [of] those reformed ministers and churches [described as] the church of Christ as described in the New Testament."<sup>5</sup> Smith believed the Holy Spirit had been poured out on America<sup>6</sup> and only those who have hardened their hearts against the Holy Spirit cannot see it.<sup>7</sup> The history of the paper was tied to Smith, who wavered between

Calvinism, Universalism, and bankruptcy. Even though by August 1817 he had 1,500 subscribers, few would keep up their obligations to pay. He gave up printing the paper and left his search for the ancient order October 1, 1817. The value of this journal is seen in the attempt to find a pattern for worship in the New Testament and in all the early news of revival in the Northeast—in Kentucky, New Hampshire, Maine, and Pennsylvania.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Christian Baptist (1823-1830) and the Millennial Harbinger (1830-1870)***

By far the most educated, most mature and steadfast of all the early attempts of restoring the ancient faith of the early Christians were the efforts of Alexander Campbell. His monthly discussions from Bethany, VA about current issues became a steady diet for the young movement. From these pages, we realize how much A. Campbell read from the other journals and newspapers...and mentioned them in his efforts.<sup>9</sup> In this writer's opinion, his ability to make pertinent observations and analyze the situation without giving in to the idea that the Holy Spirit guided Biblical understanding was his most valuable asset. Consider the following wisdom:

"At present, however, we would only impress upon the mind of the reader; that the very fact that we have a written revelation, that this revelation was first spoken, then written, supposes that there is somewhere, a native

or an acquired 'art' of interpretation; that the persons addressed were already in possession of that art: for without such an understanding, there would have been neither wisdom nor benevolence, in giving to mankind any verbal communication from God."<sup>10</sup>

To Campbell it was ridiculous to suppose that God gave man a written, inspired communication that could not be reliably understood without the help of the Holy Spirit guiding him. A pouring out of the Holy Spirit did not cause the restoration movement—the reading of scripture with a basic understanding of how language works—this is what spurred men to read and understand the Bible. There were certainly many claiming "inspiration" from the Holy Spirit who could not understand the basics of the teachings of Jesus and the establishment of the early church.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Christian Messenger (1826-1845)***

Barton W. Stone, from 1826 to 1834, edited this monthly from Georgetown, KY; he then moved to Jacksonville, IL and took the *Christian Messenger* with him, which he published until his death in 1844. Stone's journal contributed to the communication between his followers, the *Christian Connection* (Elias Smith and Abner Jones), and the O'Kelly Christians in the east. This journal ultimately failed due to its lack of support from its subscribers. The last year of the journal (1845) was edited by D. P. Henderson.<sup>12</sup>



## ***The Evangelist (1832-1842)***

Walter Scott, being the first evangelist for the Mahoning Association on the Western Reserve from 1827-1830, literally wore himself out baptizing an estimated 3,000 souls for the Lord in those years. He had to resign for health reasons and began publishing the *Evangelist* in Cincinnati, OH. His goal was to write as he preached to bring souls to the Lord. Scott's promotion of William Miller's mania about the coming millennial reign of Christ and A. Campbell's continual censorship proved injurious to the popularity of the *Evangelist* and it ceased publication.<sup>13</sup>

### **Endnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> See Lisa Smith, *The First Great Awakening in Colonial American Newspapers*, (Lexington Books: New York, 2012); and R. Lora, and W. H. Longton, *The Conservative Press in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century America*, (Greenwood Press: West Port CN, 1999).
- <sup>2</sup> See J. P. Barrett, *The Centennial of Religious Journalism*, (Dayton, OH: Christian Publishing Association, 1908).
- <sup>3</sup> See Earl Irvin West, *The Trials of the Ancient Order*, (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing, 1993), p. 4-ff.
- <sup>4</sup> See J. P. Wilhite, *The Trail-Blazers*, (Shreveport, LA: Lambert Book House, 1965).
- <sup>5</sup> Elias Smith, *The Herald of Gospel Liberty*, "Religious Intelligence,"

vol 01 n 01, p. 2, Sept. 1, 1808.

- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., page 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., "Description of a Contrary Man ...," vol 01 n 03, p. 12.
- <sup>8</sup> Earl Irvin West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1949), vol 1, p. 15.
- <sup>9</sup> See Barry Jones, *A Chronological Index to the Christian Baptist*, (PDF publication, Restoration Digital Library, 2019); David I. McWhorter, *An Index to the Millennial Harbinger*, (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1981). This author conservatively estimates that A. Campbell cites or alludes to over 300 newspapers and journals in the *Christian Baptist* and the *Millennial Harbinger*.
- <sup>10</sup> See Alexander Campbell, *Principles of Interpretation*, (Richmond, VA: M'Vay and Ewing, 1835) p. 17.
- <sup>11</sup> B. Humble, *The Story of the Restoration*, (Indianapolis, IN: Faith and Facts, n.d.), p. 32.
- <sup>12</sup> See Barry Jones and Charles Dorsey eds., *Christian Messenger Index*, (Lincoln, IL: Charles Dorsey, 1984), "Introduction," pp. 3-8 of the preface.
- <sup>13</sup> See Earl Irvin West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, vol 1, pp. 79-89; and Stafford North, "The Evangelist," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), pp. 322-323.

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# The Growth of the Church in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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By Andy Erwin

In 1830, two predominant groups were seeking to restore New Testament Christianity in America. Barton W. Stone and his friends were seeking to restore the faith in Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. They went by the name "Christian" and were typically known as Christian Churches or churches of Christ. Thomas and Alexander Campbell, along with Walter Scott and John Smith, were seeking to restore the faith among Baptists primarily in Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and what is now West Virginia. They were usually called "Reformers" or "Disciples." Unity between the two groups of Stone and Campbell, however, would have to come over the course of time.

Alexander Campbell's 1823 debate with W.L. Maccalla in the state of Kentucky, where the Stone group was strong, certainly helped lay some of the groundwork for unity. Campbell was received so well by Kentucky Baptists that he scheduled a three-month preaching tour the following year. While on this tour, Campbell and Stone met for the first time in Georgetown, Kentucky. Soon the *Christian Baptist* had a large circulation in Kentucky and many Baptists came to accept the concept of restoration which Stone had been preaching in their home state.

Congregations of the two groups (Stone and Campbell) began to extend fellowship to one another and some eventually merged. The first such merger occurred in Millersburg, Kentucky on April 24, 1831. The two groups agreed that they were one as far as faith and practice were concerned and decided to meet as one congregation.

Another development that helped to aid unity was when the brethren of the two groups worked together on joint projects. For example, Walter Scott and Joseph Gaston worked together as traveling evangelists in the Western Reserve of Ohio. Also, Stone conducted a gospel meeting in November 1831 at the Great Crossings congregation where John T. Johnson was the minister. John T. Johnson would later serve as the associate editor of Stone's paper *The Christian Messenger*.

## Unity between Stone and Campbell

"Raccoon" John Smith and John Rogers joined with Stone and Johnson in a series of unity discussions. The four men decided to call a general meeting to discuss unity at Georgetown, Kentucky on December 23-26, 1831. A second meeting was conducted over the New Year's weekend in Lexington, Kentucky. Smith was the spokesman for the Campbell

group and, after having pled for unity, concluded by saying:

“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 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.”

On this basis he and Stone extended the right hand of fellowship to symbolize the unity of the two groups.

Bill Humble cites the following six similarities:

- (1) Both groups accepted the Bible as the sole rule for faith and practice – rejecting creeds, etc.
- (2) Both pleaded for Christian unity on the basis of a return to the Bible.
- (3) Both denied Calvinistic teachings such as limited atonement, predestination, and total depravity. They believed the gospel should be preached to every man and that any man could accept it.
- (4) Both rejected infant sprinkling and accepted immersion of believers as the only scriptural form of baptism.
- (5) Both refused to wear unscriptural and sectarian names.

- (6) Both regarded denominational organizations such as presbyteries, synods, and ruling associations as unscriptural.<sup>1</sup>

However, the two groups also had their differences. Humble cites the following four:

- (1) They disagreed about names. Stone’s group believed the name “Christian” was the name given by God and superseded all others (on the basis of Acts 11:26). Campbell believed they should wear the name “disciples.” Both names continued to be used even after the Lexington meeting.
- (2) They differed on the emphasis placed on baptism. Stone’s group had yet to conclude that baptism was essential for the remission of sins, although some of them had begun so teaching. Also, Stone believed the church could fellowship those who had yet to be immersed while Campbell did not. (In all of these things, however, it matters not what Stone or Campbell said, but what the Bible says. See Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:21.)
- (3) Stone’s group had not been practicing weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper as had Campbell’s. Unity was eventually achieved on this issue based on such passages

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Humble, *The Story of the Restoration* (Henderson, TN: Hester Publications, n.d.), 31-32.

as 1 Corinthians 11:17 ff. The churches of Christ continue to observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week when we come together into one place.

- (4) Stone's group also placed more of an emphasis on the Holy Spirit's working in conversion than Campbell's group did. Campbell's approach was more logical than emotional. He emphasized the role of reason in conversion while Stone emphasized the role of emotion.<sup>2</sup>

Following the Lexington meeting, John Smith and John Rogers traveled throughout Kentucky urging brethren in every community where two congregations existed to become one. Barton W. Stone said, "This union...I view as the noblest act of my life."

### Results of Unity

With a united front, numerical growth was inevitable. The decade of the 1830s saw incredible increases in the numbers of the local churches and the work being accomplished. At least 28 journals were published during the 1830s, the most notable being Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger* (1830), Scott's *Evangelist* (1832), while Stone's *Christian Messenger* (1826) continued growing.

The 1830s saw the founding of Bacon College in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1836 with Walter Scott serving as its first president. Alexander Campbell began Bethany College on his homeplace in 1840, while Tolbert Fanning opened Franklin College north of Nashville, Tennessee in 1845.

### Numerical Growth<sup>3</sup>

It has been said that the preachers of this era relied solely on their Bibles, knowing little about philosophy. By 1836, D. S. Burnett documented that the church numbered over 100,000 and ranked as the fourth largest religious body in America. By 1850, another man cited in the *Ecclesiastical Reformer* that the church numbered 200,000 strong.

By 1860, a census showed that the church had over 2,000 congregations – 1,200 in the North and 800 in the South and 225,000 members. The church was seventh overall in size in the nation, but first in rate of growth. Within 60 years (1810-1870), the church grew to approximately 350,000 members in 2,800 congregations and was one of the five largest religious bodies in America.

The 1870 national census showed churches of Christ to be fifth in size, with 350,000 members in 2,822 congregations. By 1875, the church was

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<sup>2</sup> Humble, 32.

<sup>3</sup> A helpful resource for citing the statistics from this period is the two-volume work of John T. Smithson, III, *Tracing Our*

*Steps: A Chronology of the Restoration Movement* (Henderson, TN: Hester Publications, 2008).

estimated to have 400,000 members in America. By the year 1880, the church had grown to number approximately 563,928. The church consisted of approximately 4,768 congregations and employed an estimated 3,488 preachers. By 1900, the church had an estimated 1,120,000 members in America.<sup>4</sup>

### **Division in the Church**

The decade of the 1850s was one of opposition to the newly formed American Christian Missionary Society. The decade of the 1860s was marked by division over the issue of the Civil War. The decade of the 1870s was marked by controversy surrounding the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. During this period, the church lost some of its valuable leaders, while gaining others. Satan seemed to strike during a period of leadership transition.

The period of 1871-1900 was indeed a period of transition for the church. Two differing sides emerged and stood firmly entrenched in their convictions and were philosophically opposed to one another. The period began with an imminent division looming and ended with two bodies, where once there stood one.

By the end of this period, the unity Stone, Campbell, Smith, and others delighted to see had been replaced with

bitter discord, a lasting division, many lessons learned, and many lessons unlearned. Amazingly, even though brethren differed bitterly in their beliefs on missionary societies and instrumental music, the period leading up to the division of the 1890s was one of phenomenal growth. The time was ripe for growth. The War Between the States had people searching for God, and the poverty-stricken Southland was searching for hope.

By the census of 1906, the combined number rose to 1,142,359 members in 10,942 congregations. Of this number, 982,701 members in 8,293 churches called themselves the Christian Church or Disciples, while 159,685 members in 2,649 congregations were known as the churches of Christ.

Just think of what might have been accomplished in the twentieth century had there been no division in the nineteenth century.



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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that these figures are only approximated by the records provided by preachers and churches in the

various journals and censuses of the day. The accurate number of saints in the body of Christ has only ever been known by God.

# LOST and FOUND

Luke 15:4-6

## Introduction:

1. The whole chapter (Luke 15) goes along with this theme.
2. Jesus is the Shepherd. Psalms 23:1-4; John 10:11-15; I Peter 5:4
3. We are pictured as "sheep" gone astray. Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 9:36

## Discussion:

### I. The *SITUATION* of The Lost.

- A. They are lost from God. Isaiah 59:1, 2; Ephesians 2:1
- B. They are lost in sin. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; Matthew 12:30
- C. They are lost to their neighbor. Romans 14:7; Matthew 5:16
- D. They are lost to hope. Ephesians 2:12; Galatians 6:7, 8
- E. They are lost to saving themselves. Romans 5:6; Ephesians 2:8

### II. The *SEEKING* of The Lost.

- A. The idea of Jesus looking for a person is a most unusual picture. The Lord always seeks after lost men. Genesis 3:8, 9
- B. The picture also reveals man's worth to God. Consider the value He placed upon us. Mark 8:36, 37; John 3:16.
- C. This is a picture of divine love. John 15:13; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 5:25.

### III. The *SAVING* of The Lost.

- A. It means the bringing of the alienated one back into fellowship with God. (Look at all the parables of Luke 15.)
- B. It means the deliverance from the practice, pollution, and penalty of sin. John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38
- C. It means salvation from an awful doom. Sin is a hard master that will eventually destroy us. Luke 5:32; 19:10
- D. It means the restoration of our usefulness to God and man. 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:20, 21; Romans 6:16-18

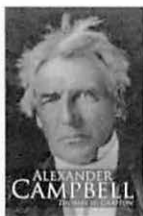
## Conclusion:

1. If this book is true, then we are lost and can be saved.
2. The shepherd is searching for you right now. Matthew 11:28-30

- Mike Kiser

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# Good Causes in Need of Support

Andy Erwin

## Drought in Zambia and Malawi

Dear Andy,

Just a brief report from Webby in Zambia and Vinjero in Malawi concerning the food relief. Due to the short supply of maize the price has gone up. In both nations they are paying about \$30.00 for a 50kg bag. A family of 5, I am told by Webby, will need one bag and a half for 30 days so about \$45.00 per month per family of 5. Misika & Siamafumba, Zambia seem to be hit very hard again this year and there are good rains in Ngwezi for John.

I sent \$1,000.00 to Misika and \$1,000.00 to Siamafumba and \$800.00 to the nation of Malawi about a week ago. The school at Livingstone has around \$3,000.00 of our funds they are holding for food relief, that I thought we could send at the first of next month.

There are around 100 congregations in these areas in Zambia where our brethren are suffering in need of food. There are also many areas in Malawi where our brethren are in need of food.

It would be good if we could come up with more funds to send by the end of March. I plan to put something in our next Newsletter asking for help with the food relief. First picture Ngwezi, Zambia about 4 hours north-west of Livingstone, Zambia, there

they got rains this year. Second picture a field in Livingstone, Zambia no crop this year, no rains.

Thanks,  
Ronald D. Gilbert



## Bibles for South Africa

Dear Bro. Andy

We are reaching the end of our Bible drive for this year. Many have

gone the second mile to get our container full. Please can you deliver the used Bibles you collected to the Healing Hands agency in Nashville by 20<sup>th</sup> March? As we do not want to clutter their space, so we ask that as a matter of urgency, you drop off the Bibles at healing hands with a South Africa bound note attached.

If you have collected money for Bibles, please can you send that along to Diane Paul at Crieve Hall within the next week so that this drive can be concluded?

We truly appreciate the work you have done on behalf of Christians and potential Christians in Africa. We will keep you in the loop as to when the shipment leaves Nashville and we will send photos of its arrival. In our monthly reports we will also tell you about the progress of the distribution.

Thank you for partnering with us to do this great work. To God be the glory.

Because of a cross

Paul Gerber

[Note: As you can see, both notes referred to dates which have since passed. However, these are good works which are maintained throughout the year. If you would like to help Ronald Gilbert to feed

starving brethren in Zambia and Malawi, send your donations to the Rock Valley Church of Christ in Tompkinsville, KY. PO Box 49494, Cookeville, TN 38506.

If you would like to help Paul Gerber distribute Bibles in South Africa, or support the school of preaching he directs, send your donations to the Crieve Hall Church of Christ in Nashville, TN. 4806 Trousdale Dr, Nashville, TN 37220.

### **Tornado Damage in Tennessee**

Lives were forever changed when at least seven tornadoes tore across seven Middle Tennessee counties on March 2-3. killing at least 25 and injuring approximately 300. Many brethren were also affected by the storms and the many lives that were lost.

The West Fayetteville congregation has sent donations to the Sycamore church of Christ in Cookeville, TN. Their mailing address is 1144 Crescent Dr, Cookeville, TN 38501.

Of course, manpower is always needed, and if you are able to lend a helping hand, I am sure the brethren there will know where to direct you.



# **The West Fayetteville Church of Christ**

## **Service Times**

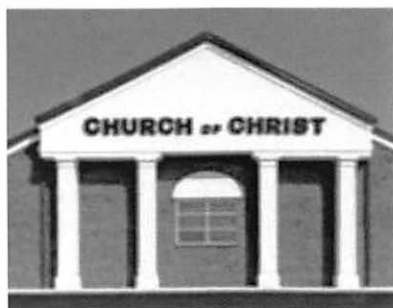
Sunday Bible Study: 9:30 am

Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00 pm

Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 pm

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# Gospel Gleaner

*For the Lord, His Word, and His Church*



## Overcoming Conflict

### *Controversial Issues in the Restoration Movement*

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Sam Hester	The Split with the Christian Church	p. 6
Todd Brenneman	The Conflict over Premillennialism in the Twentieth Century	p. 12
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Hugh Fulford	The Simplicity of New Testament Christianity	p.26
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## **“The Churches of Christ Greet You” (Romans 16:16)**

The West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Tennessee is pleased to bring you the *Gospel Gleaner*. Are you familiar with the churches of Christ? Have you ever attended our services before?

Faithful churches of Christ desire to return to the New Testament and to be the church of the Bible. In the Bible, we find that the church is the assembly of all those who have been called out of the darkness of sin by obeying the gospel. These souls are added by God to the spiritual body of Christ, which is His church (Acts 2:42, 47; Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church belongs to Christ. It is His church. We, therefore, seek to honor Christ as our Lord in our worship, teaching, and daily walk.

One can be added to this sacred assembly and spiritual kingdom by hearing the gospel preached (Romans 10:17); believing the facts concerning Christ as revealed in the gospel (John 8:24); repenting of sin (Luke 13:3, 5); confessing faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10); and by being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:11-13; Galatians 3:26-27) to wash sins away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 1:7).

For more information about the church, or God’s plan of salvation, we offer free Bible correspondence courses and personal Bible studies. Call or write to us.

### **The Gospel Gleaner**

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Andy Erwin, Editor

Correspondences, news and notes, and article considerations can be sent electronically to [andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com](mailto:andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com). The West Fayetteville Church of Christ reserves the right of discretion in deciding which correspondences, news, notes, and articles to publish.

## **Gospel Gleaner**

Vol. 32 ♦ No. 3

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## **Inside this Issue**

Andy Erwin

As we continue our journey through the Restoration Movement in America, our study critiques some of the conflicts which occurred in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century. We ought not to consider religious controversy to be strange. Whenever we find the church growing in the book of Acts, it is not long until some conflict arises which had to be addressed. How we determine to address the conflict will ultimately affect the spiritual growth or decline of our home congregations, families, or ministries.

In this issue we are honored to have writing for us the following men: Todd Brenneman, Associate Professor of Christian History at Faulkner University in Montgomery, Alabama; one of his students and my son, Jackson Erwin, the preacher for the Phenix City congregation in Alabama; Sam Hester, retired Professor of Bible and Christian History at Freed-Hardeman University and owner of Hester Publications; Gary Colley, a teacher in many different schools of preaching and a gospel preacher for many years; Hugh Fulford, a gospel preacher and author for many years, and Mike Kiser, an instructor at the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies and a gospel preacher.

Thank you for your contributions to the paper!

# The Controversy between Alexander Campbell and John Thomas over Re-Baptism

Jackson Erwin

Throughout the American Restoration Movement, the desire to study the Bible and learn the inspired message has been the center of its purpose. However, in this endeavor, some things have been heavily discussed and debated among the leaders of the movement that have made a significant impact on the church. There are six issues which brought about heated debates and diligent study: instrumental music in worship, the use of missionary societies, eschatology (last things), non-institutionalism, Christians in government, and the re-baptism of those among the sects. It is this last issue that will be discussed in this article.

## John Thomas



One of the first times the question of re-baptism was discussed was in the 1835 issue of the *Millennial Harbinger*. In this volume, Alexander Campbell refuted the teachings of John Thomas, a preacher for the Disciples in Philadelphia. Thomas was a trained surgeon who immigrated to the United States from London in 1832. On his way to New York, his ship encountered a

terrible storm. He prayed that if God spared his life, he would dedicate it to the study of religion. When he survived, Thomas fulfilled his promise.

After landing in New York, he travelled to Cincinnati, Ohio, and encountered the disciples. After being convinced of the Restoration Plea and the essentiality of baptism, he was immersed in 1832. Soon after, he met Alexander Campbell. Campbell encouraged Thomas to “give himself to the study of the Word in order to general usefulness, and gave him some directions as to the proper field he should occupy.”<sup>1</sup> Through Campbell’s instruction, Thomas began preaching in Philadelphia, later encountering Campbell a second time in 1833. Campbell described Thomas’s work in the area when writing:

The brethren in that city in general gave him a good character—said that he improved in the knowledge of the Scriptures; but was too self-opinionated and dogmatical. I apologized for his youth and inexperience, and advised a kind and courteous treatment of him, alleging that this infirmity would wear off in time.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Campbell, “Extra, No. I,” *Millennial Harbinger*, ed. Alexander

Campbell (Bethany, VA: Campbell, 1837; reprint Joplin, MO: College Press), 579.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 579.



In 1834, Thomas became the writer and editor of a paper which he entitled the *Apostolic Advocate*. The first issue appeared in May and primarily focused on eschatology. A proposal for the paper was published in the *Millennial Harbinger* and gave six subjects discussed in the publication. They were as follows:

1. The Non-Identity of all Popular Religion with the Religion of Christ.
2. The defence (sic) of the Holy Scriptures against all creeds, 'Confessions of Faith,' Commentators and System Makers.
3. The *objects* proposed by the proselyting Spirit of the Age as developed in the so-styled "*benevolent institutions of the day*," incompatible with and contrary to the predictions of the Ancient Prophets.
4. The modern *dogmas* of physical and spiritual operations, *not* the *doctrines* of the Holy Spirit taught by the Apostles.
5. The Fates and Fortunes of the Kingdoms of the World fore-shown by prophecy.
6. Religious, Moral, and Literary varieties; with Essays on various interesting and important subjects in relation to the kingdom of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> John Thomas, "Proposals," in the *Millennial Harbinger*, ed. Alexander

Campbell was optimistic of Thomas and the paper at first. This was demonstrated in his comments on the proposal for the *Apostolic Advocate*. Campbell wrote:

Brother Thomas is already known to many of our readers from his able review of the Catholic controversy, and to myself he is so well known as a talented, devoted, and zealous disciple of the Messiah—as an honorable and independent advocate of the truth, who has, through his veneration and affection for the apostolic institution, sacrificed his temporal and professional interests and honors that I cannot but announce with pleasure his project as above developed.<sup>4</sup>

### Conflict with Campbell

The relationship between Campbell and Thomas soured in a matter of years. The roots of their division are found in 1835, but the final break is revealed clearly in the 1837 issue of the *Millennial Harbinger* on the issue of re-baptism. The disagreement between Thomas and Campbell on this subject arose when Thomas refuted the belief held by Campbell and many other disciples that those who were immersed for reasons other than remitting their sins had to be re-baptized for their immersion to be accepted by God. While this is the mainstream view held today among conservatives in the church,

Campbell (Bethany, VA: Campbell, 1834; repr., Joplin, MO: College Press) 189.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

such was not the case in the early-mid 1800s. Of course, there were many others who agreed with Thomas on the issue.

In 1835, Campbell responded to an article written by Thomas in the *Apostolic Advocate*, in which he gave a defense for re-baptizing Baptist converts for the remission of their sins before accepting them as members. Campbell makes his conviction on the subject clear in his reply to Thomas, writing:

We have hitherto thought, and yet think, that when an immersed person presents himself as an applicant for admission into any particular congregation, having either oral or written testimony of his having been an orderly member of a Baptist community, he ought forthwith to be received—his application being evidence of his desire to submit to the institution of the Messiah, as laid down in our Statute Book—the *New Testament*. If himself satisfied with his immersion, the church has no liberty, or is under no precept or obligation to demand re-immersion for its satisfaction.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that, while it was the common practice of Campbell to publish the opposing side's arguments and then respond to them, he

gave no such right to Thomas. In the conclusion of the 1835 edition of the *Harbinger*, Campbell wrote:

Closing our volume for 1835, and for other reasons, we have not as yet complied with the request of brother *Thomas*, as to the republishing his pieces on that question. Indeed, I do not desire a discussion of such a matter at this crisis. I should have to accompany those pieces with strictures, which might operate in a direction and to an issue wholly unsuspected by our too sanguine friends. Let it be for the time being attributed to my cowardice, or to any other cause as probable, which the brethren please; but, in my judgment, this is not the time nor the place for such a discussion, nor is *the work* to which we are at present called.<sup>6</sup>

The issue was largely set aside in the following year but reemerged once again in 1837. This time, however, Campbell was much less gracious in his refutation against Thomas. He attributed to his former student a cultic mentality and compared him to others who left the Restoration Movement, specifically Sidney Rigdon and Elias Smith. Having recalled the previous apostates of the Movement, he writes:

---

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Re-immersion and Brother Thomas," *Millennial Harbinger*, ed. Alexander Campbell (Bethany, VA: Campbell, 1835; repr. Joplin, MO: College Press), 566.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Re-baptism," *Millennial Harbinger*, ed. Alexander Campbell (Bethany, VA: Campbell, 1835; repr. Joplin, MO: College Press), 619.

We have indeed met with some two or three infallible, or rather, indomitable spirits, who, while they admitted the propriety of this course in reference to others, would not be governed by it themselves. Of this class was Sidney Rigdon, of Mormon memory. Exceedingly fond of *new ideas*, and always boasting of originality, he sought distinction by his lubrications on the Prophecies. He became a flaming literalist of the school of *Elias* (Smith,), a Millennarian of the first water... Finally, having discovered the Golden Bible, he and Joseph Smith covenanted for a new religion, and delivered us from a great calamity. And now I fear we are about to find, or rather have found, in the person of Dr. Thomas, 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, that, to oppose him is, as he avers, to call the doctrine of the conditionality of eternal life, *materialism*.<sup>7</sup>

In this lengthy piece, Campbell provides a background of his experiences with Thomas, from his time meeting him in 1832, to his commendations on Thomas' debate on Romanism in 1834, to the growing hostility between the two largely due to

misunderstandings and personal attacks (primarily on the part of Thomas). More importantly, Campbell provides a reason for his silence on the subject in 1836 and Thomas' retaliation against it. He recalls:

All this was patiently endured in hope that I might save him from his suicidal course, till his reply to my essays on Materialism extinguished the last lingering ray. More barefaced perversion of scripture and reason, more unblushing sophistry, and, when all the circumstances and relations are considered, more insolent treatment has not fallen in my way during my editorial career. I resolved on silence for a time, and so intimated. But this was immediately perverted into "a very convenient way of evading very inconvenient arguments"—"a violation of the Christian spirit...." My silence, then, only emboldened the Doctor to propagate his opinions with more determination, and to treat me with still more disrespect.<sup>8</sup>

### Thomas' Legacy

The time frame in which Campbell wrote his refutation brings more light on the conflict between him and Thomas as well. When reading these pages outside of their historical context, it appears that Campbell is simply attacking an innocent man who disagreed with him about re-baptism.

<sup>7</sup> Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* (1837), 578.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Campbell, *Millennial Harbinger* (1837), 581.

However, at this time, Thomas was forming his own sect based upon the issue of re-baptism, the millennial reign of Christ, and many other issues surrounding prophecy and the future. In 1847, he was baptized for a third and final time. Over the next few years, his group became known as the Royal Association of Believers but did not have an official name among themselves until the time of the Civil War. In 1864, Thomas identified his fellowship as the *Christadelphians* (or “Brothers in Christ”).

Thomas wrote many works on the subject of prophecy, namely a three-volume commentary on Revelation entitled *Eureka*, one which predicted a future return and restoration of the Jews to Palestine called *Elpis Israel*, and an exposition on the book of Daniel. The prophetic interpretations that began to arise in the mind of Thomas

(later to be published) raised concerns with Campbell. Even though Thomas was correct on the necessity for re-baptism, it was this negative influence in the Restoration Movement that would inevitably cause many to join Campbell in its refutation.

While this was one of the earliest recorded cases on the debate of re-baptism, it would not be the last. In the next issue, we will examine the discussion between David Lipscomb, James Harding, J.D. Tant, and Austin McGary on this historical matter. The debate between the *Gospel Advocate* and the *Firm Foundation* was arguably the most influential event which led many in the churches of Christ to see the need for re-baptism and demonstrates a transition in thought among many in the Lord’s church regarding this subject.

## The Split with the Christian Church

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Sam Hester

The early restorers in America restored the teaching, the worship, and the will of God in the church. They did this by *disregarding* the opinions, inventions, and the devices of man. Then, by putting their faith in God and his Word, they *held to* the authority and judgment of God. But new beliefs and practices were introduced, causing controversy, division(s), and finally a split. What are some lessons we can learn from the split?

1. *Insistence to name the church was uncalled for.* Alexander Campbell liked the name “Disciple” because that term was used in the first two chapters of Acts. Others preferred the name “Christian Church.” All of them had no objection to the designation, “church of Christ,” but they insisted on having a name. Ben Franklin explained, “. . . in nine cases out of ten we will be perfectly understood by saying ‘the church,’ ‘the body,’ or the ‘kingdom.’”

There is no necessity for lugging in such terms as ‘Christian Church,’ ‘Disciples’ Church’ or ‘Disciple Church.’ This is as ridiculous as ‘Disciple Preacher.’ If we have simply *the mind* of the Lord, we can express ourselves in *the words* of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup> Any of the 96 images of the Lord’s people in the New Testament<sup>2</sup> were scriptural to use, but no one of them to the exclusion of the others. The root word for “name, nomos” is the same root word for “denominate.” Instead of applying a name, all brethren should have been satisfied to “live by every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God.”

2. *The innovator became the deformer, challenging the restoration of God’s intended church.* To innovate means to depart from the standard. The Christian Church (Disciples) loved to refer to themselves as the “progressives.” Actually, they became “progressive deformers” and slowly quit even trying to restore the church.

3. *Those who initiated and facilitated the innovations used “expediency” to trump scriptural accuracy.* Expediency became their watchword. But expedients are to be used in a matter only when the matter is scriptural to

begin with!<sup>3</sup> All innovations in church history, including during times of restoration, came in because something was considered an emergency, or an innocent thing, or a convenience.

4. *Several initiators and facilitators were associates of Alexander Campbell.* Younger influential men around Campbell in the last few years of his life, like D.S. Burnett, Isaac Errett, James A. Garfield, and Robert Richardson, were all busy writing in his paper and discussing ideas with him. Naturally, they were very willing to “assist” him in influencing some things in the brotherhood, especially when it was on a large scale. Campbell clearly began a change after 1845 by teaching the absolute necessity of *all the churches* to cooperate in evangelism.<sup>4</sup> Hugo McCord well summarized the absence of a gospel pattern of trying to operate some good work that would involve all congregations in the world. He said, “The church universal did not operate in New Testament times. Only the church local operated, sometimes alone (Phil. 4:15), sometimes in cooperation with other local churches (Acts 11:22), sometimes in helping private

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Franklin, “What Name Shall We Wear?” *American Christian Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 26 (June 26-June 27, 1871) 204.

<sup>2</sup> Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960).

<sup>3</sup> Hugh F. Fulford, “Expedients of Additions?” *Restoration News and Views: The Pleas, Principles, Perspectives and Personalities* (Henderson, TN: Hester

Publications, 2018) 73-79. See also G. K. Wallace, *Lectures on Denominational Dogmas* (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman College, 1978. Reissued by Hester Publications with permission, 2006) 155-172.

<sup>4</sup> Everett Ferguson, “The Doctrine of the Church in the Writings of Alexander Campbell,” *Restoration Quarterly*, Winter 1958, 2:228.

homes (Acts 6:1), but never in a collective sense.”<sup>5</sup>

5. *D.S. Burnett began the first brotherhood missionary society (Cincinnati 1849).* Many brethren like James Alexander Harding believed that “human organizations as substitutes for the divine arrangement of the church were an arrogant indictment of God’s wisdom.”<sup>6</sup> Campbell was voted in as president of the missionary society. Though he was not present for the vote, he willingly served. Since Ohio was the mother of the society idea, it was natural that Ohio led the way in establishing state societies of mission works.<sup>7</sup>

It was also in an Ohio Missionary Society Convention (1861) that a vote was taken to urge the brethren to “do everything in their power to promote the Union of the United States.” McGarvey recommended they confine themselves to mission work, but his proposal was voted down. The chairman then called a recess, James Garfield appeared in army uniform and spoke to the delegates, and a vote (though an unofficial vote because it was in a recess) was taken.

McGarvey and others were discouraged by this entry of the society into politics. But the society took a stronger stance in an 1863 vote against the

South. At that time McGarvey would no longer support the society at all. Tolbert Fanning in Nashville was insistent that the society repent for their resolutions or their southern brethren could no longer fellowship them. More divisions were being made.

By 1875 some Northern brethren became impatient for even more power for the society. That year they established a more powerful society (AFMS) “whether some brethren liked it or not.” The fear that more overreaching by societies would occur proved to be true! Officials began to make more laws for all the churches to follow. And more separations came.

6. *Isaac Errett and other brethren vigorously supported the Civil War.* Errett made many speeches in support of it. He asked the Governor of Michigan to appoint him to the position of colonel so he could raise a group of soldiers and command them in battle. He was refused because all positions had been taken. J.W. McGarvey begged Errett not to be involved in the war effort, but Errett absolutely refused. History shows that it was here in Michigan that Errett began to exhibit a religious liberalism.

7. *Errett introduced a creed with by-laws in 1863 in a Detroit congregation.* He and some members of the

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<sup>5</sup> Hugo McCord, *Fifty Years of Lectures, Vol. II* (Atwood: TN) 195.

<sup>6</sup> L.C. Sears, *The Eyes of Jehovah* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Company, 1970) 75.

<sup>7</sup> James Deforest Murch, *Christians Only* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard, 1962) 189.

congregation drew up a document called, "A Synopsis of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ," which many in the brotherhood were convinced was a creed. The creed gave power to the by-laws. The by-laws, naturally provided a way to get around the authority of the New Testament Scripture. Moses Lard printed the creed and by-laws in his *Quarterly* in September 1863.<sup>8</sup>

The by-laws did things like create a pastor position in the government of the congregation. Errett himself, of course, became the pastor. The by-laws allowed for "bishops and deacons," but Errett or anyone holding the position of pastor had more power than the bishops or the deacons. The pastor was in charge of all operations of the congregation and always chaired the business meetings. The pastor was in charge of the worship, did the preaching, and chose whoever assisted him in the services.

Moses Lard wrote a withering refutation of the creed and by-laws.<sup>9</sup> He said that the brethren in Detroit should "repudiate at once this 'Synopsis,' and to rescind these laws. That they have erred and wounded their brethren needs no proof."

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<sup>8</sup> Moses Lard, "A Synopsis of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ," *Lard's Quarterly* (Georgetown, KY: 1864. Reissued by Old Paths Book Club: 1949) 95-100.

<sup>9</sup> Lard's eight pages of comments (100-107) followed the printing of the Synopsis and By-laws.

8. James A. Garfield led in beginning a new paper in 1866 – *The Christian Standard*. Garfield wanted a paper that would promote Christians getting into politics – something the *Gospel Advocate* (edited by David Lipscomb) and the *American Christian Review* (edited by Benjamin Franklin) did not promote in their pages. Garfield chose Isaac Errett to help him organize a group of influential and wealthy men to establish the paper.

Garfield ensured that Errett was made editor. Through this paper, and with the work of James H. Garrison, Errett led almost all Northern brethren to accept the afore-mentioned innovations, and especially instrumental music, in the last thirty years of the 1800s.

Errett considered the members of the Restoration Movement to be a denomination because they were a "class or collection of individuals called by the same name." He felt that immersion was unnecessary to be a Christian because denying this principle would damage the plea for Christian unity.<sup>10</sup> As two distinct views of instrumental music became prevalent in the church, Errett championed the idea that instrumental music was a matter of opinion.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Monroe Hawley, *Redigging the Wells: Seeking Undenominational Christianity* (Abilene, TX: Quality, 1976) 70, 100.

<sup>11</sup> Earl West, *Search for the Ancient Order, Vol. II* (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950) 88.

Errett thought the restorers of his day had outgrown the preaching of the earlier frontier times. Franklin declared that he was tired of hearing “progressives continually talking about a ‘higher order of Christianity,’ and ‘keeping up with the times,’ who only seek conformity to the world.”

9. *Robert Richardson began to advocate a Calvinistic view of the Holy Spirit.* After he became motivated about the view by reading some German sources, he advocated it in the *Millennial Harbinger*.<sup>12</sup> He speculated that the restorers’ view of the work of the Holy Spirit was too much influenced by the writing of John Locke. Locke taught that our knowledge came through our five senses. Richardson called this “dirt philosophy,”<sup>13</sup> convinced that the Holy Spirit was more a matter of the heart than of the mind. Both Thomas and Alexander Campbell had read Locke’s works, especially on religious toleration, and referred to Locke as “the Christian philosopher.” Locke’s writings had influenced English Parliament, the king, and religious liberty in England and America.

Alexander Campbell had taught differently on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and he gave strong biblical and historical reasons why. In his debates with Walker, Maccalla, and Rice, Campbell stressed that Presbyterian Calvinism had “tried in vain to justify infant baptism on a faulty alignment of old and new covenants, specifically a faulty typology of circumcision, but it had confounded the whole process of conversion and regeneration by disassociating the operations of the Spirit from the converting Word, and by relegating the regenerative work of the Holy Spirit to the dramatic bestowal of saving faith rather than to the baptism of the conscious believer, the ‘bath of regeneration’ (Tit. 3:5).”<sup>14</sup> In the debate with Nathan L. Rice in 1843, Campbell summarized why he stood so vigorously against the Calvinists’ unproved supposition: “I, therefore, *ex animo*, repudiate their whole theory of mystic influence, and metaphysical regeneration, as a vision of visions, a dream of dreams, at war with philosophy, with the philosophy of mind, with the Bible, with reason, with common

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<sup>12</sup> Richardson assisted Campbell as an associate editor of the *Harbinger* for 30 years.

<sup>13</sup> According to C. Leonard Allen, Richardson called Locke’s popular philosophy “dirt philosophy” because of its insistence that God could influence human beings only through material objects or through revealed words. *Distant Voices: Discovering a Forgotten Past for a Changing*

*Church* by C. Leonard Allen: ACU Press; 1993. See also [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Richardson\\_\(physician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Richardson_(physician))

<sup>14</sup> Paul M Blowers and James O. Duke, “Calvinism” *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004) 110.



sense, and with all Christian experience.”<sup>15</sup>

Tolbert Fanning objected to Richardson’s views, but Campbell did not do anything about it. Several historians suggested that Campbell was beginning to get feeble at this time and allowed some men around him to take on more of the duties of his work. Richardson was Campbell’s personal physician and an associate editor with Campbell in the *Harbinger* for thirty years, in addition to being a teacher and administrator at Bethany College.

10. *Several good men warned in word and in print about the above innovations:* J. W. McGarvey<sup>16</sup> (preacher, Bible teacher, college president, editor), Benjamin Franklin (preacher, corresponding secretary of a missionary society for 17 years,

editor), Tolbert Fanning (preacher, Bible teacher, college president, editor), Moses Lard<sup>17</sup> (preacher, editor), David Lipscomb (preacher, college Bible teacher, editor of the *Gospel Advocate* for almost fifty years), E.G. Sewell, and others.

## CONCLUSION

Brethren turned away from the Christian Church (Disciples) as the doctrines mentioned above were introduced. When the innovators did not cease, two different bodies of Christians slowly grew apart. Separations in the original fellowship of hearts, minds and bodies began to form in 1845, 1849, 1860-63, 1866, 1875, 1878, and in other years. Finally, the U.S. Census in 1906 reported two different bodies.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Alexander Campbell and Nathan L. Rice, “Proposition Fifth: In Conversion and Sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on Persons only through the Word. Mr. Campbell affirms. Mr. Rice denies,” pages 611-758. Reissued in one volume [print], Henderson, TN: Hester Publications, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Though McGarvey taught against instrumental music in worship, he was not able to convince even his former students to abandon it or to teach against it. When discussing the matter with Jesse P. Sewell, McGarvey commended Sewell’s approach more than his own. What was the difference in approaches? McGarvey and Sewell both taught against it, but McGarvey would fellowship those who used it and Sewell would not. McGarvey was wrong. When McGarvey thought that instrumental music in worship was a fad that would pass away, he again was wrong. When he gave his name and influence to a paper that advocated instruments, again he was wrong.

<sup>17</sup> Lard did not object to missionary societies because he believed they were unscriptural; he objected because they were dangerous for “their extreme liability to usurp power that does not belong to them,” cited by Bill Humble, *The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms 1964) 173, 175. Put in print by Hester Publications.

<sup>18</sup> Some Christian Churches separated from the Christian Church (Disciples) in 1927 when un-immersed persons were accepted into membership. These Independents then began to send out missionaries directly from the congregations and established their own convention. T.L. Meithe, “Christian Churches/Church of Christ (Independent)”, *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990) 255.

There were noteworthy reasons these two bodies separated. Things that were only expedients were made into beliefs and practices: instruments of music in worship, instituting pastor rule in a local congregation, writing a creed or by-laws, or otherwise speaking where the Bible did not speak and not remaining silent when the Bible was silent. The result of doing these things in many cases forced some Christians to either worship in ways that had no foundation in New Testament Scripture or to leave the group. One example was when an instrument of music was introduced in the church's worship in Newbern, Tennessee. A lawsuit ensued and after a two-

year trial, the judge awarded the building to the Christian Church (Disciples). Adron Doran's description of the outcome of the trial depicts the starkness of religious division — plus the significance of such division: “. . . John W. McGarvey, the *Christian Standard*, and the College of the Bible were on one side; and David Lipscomb, the *Gospel Advocate*, and Nashville Bible School stood on the other side. The Christian Church won a lawsuit in 1905 and a church building, but the price was the loss of the local church. Churches of Christ were put on immediate notice that the Christian Church valued the organ more than Christian unity.”<sup>19</sup>

## The Conflict over Premillennialism in the Twentieth Century

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Todd M. Brenneman

Belief in the premillennial return of Jesus Christ has a long history in Christianity. There is evidence of it in the earliest centuries, and there have been other times in Christian history where it has made a resurgence. Today, premillennialism is a popular view among many religious people in the United States and elsewhere.

The view that Jesus will return and inaugurate a 1000-year kingdom on

earth, however, is not that common within churches of Christ. There is some evidence that the premillennial view so present in a lot of religious groups is making in-roads into the church, and there are some pockets in various places throughout the United States with premillennial congregations. In most congregations, however, premillennialism is not too prevalent a view. While there was some

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<sup>19</sup> Adron Doran and J. E. Choate, *The Christian Scholar: A Biography of Hall Laurie Calhoun, Protégé of John William*

*McGarvey* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1985) 219.

acceptance of premillennialism in the nineteenth century in the Restoration Movement, by the middle of the twentieth century, the doctrine was largely dismissed and banished from most churches.

### **Nineteenth Century**

Premillennialism became popular in the nineteenth century, even among some in the Restoration Movement. Barton W. Stone appears to have held some premillennial views, but he also had a negative view of whether or not human beings could affect real change in society. While Stone influenced some to hold premillennial views, others adopted premillennialism through the teachings of a Baptist minister named William Miller.

Miller believed that his study of the books of Daniel and Revelation especially had led him to discover that Jesus would return sometime between March 1843 and March 1844. When Miller started to promote his beliefs, he gained a significant following.<sup>1</sup> Walter Scott was one influenced by Miller into believing both premillennialism and the imminent return of Christ (although he was not particularly supportive of determining a date). When

Miller's dates passed without the return of Christ, Scott dropped this view.<sup>2</sup>

### **Russell-White Debate**

There were other examples of premillennialism in the nineteenth century that were not as influential on the Restoration Movement. Charles Taze Russell's Bible Students—the precursor movement to the Jehovah's Witnesses—were also premillennial, and Russell attempted several times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to date the return of Christ.<sup>3</sup> Again, there were not as many in the Restoration Movement who had been influenced by Russell's movement.

In fact, in 1908, brother L.S. White from Texas debated Russell on a variety of propositions, including that "[t]he Scriptures clearly teach that the second coming of Christ will precede the millennium."<sup>4</sup> This was apparently one of the few times Russell publicly debated his views.<sup>5</sup> It is also interesting that M.C. Kurfrees and R.H. Boll were the ones who had suggested White as Russell's opponent.<sup>6</sup>

### **R.H. Boll**

By the twentieth century, many in the churches of Christ had adopted a

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<sup>1</sup>See Paul K. Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 117-24.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Rollmann, "Eschatology" in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnivant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 305.

<sup>3</sup> Conkin, *American Originals*, 145-51.

<sup>4</sup> Charles T. Russell and L. S. White, *Russell-White Debate* (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1912; reprint, Rosemead, CA: The Old Paths Book Club, n.d.), xv.

<sup>5</sup> Russell and White, *Russell-White Debate*, vi.

<sup>6</sup> Russell and White, *Russell-White Debate*, vii.

view that the millennium was not a literal concept. Throughout the history of the Restoration Movement, there had been an emphasis that the kingdom that Christ preached was not a physical kingdom, so Christians need not look for Christ to return to set up his kingdom. Indeed, many noted the connection between the kingdom and the church in the New Testament. There were some, however, who continued to believe in premillennialism as a valid teaching in scripture. One of those was Robert Henry Boll.



Boll came to the United States as a German Catholic but was baptized in Tennessee and became a part of the church of

Christ.<sup>7</sup> He attended Nashville Bible School and preached in various places before arriving in Kentucky in 1904.<sup>8</sup> He also became a frequent author and front page editor for *Gospel Advocate*, where he developed his thoughts on prophecy and the Millennium.

Boll expanded his thoughts on the Millennium beyond just certain passages in Revelation. By 1912 he was seeing “premillennialism in every parable and lesson of the New

Testament.”<sup>9</sup> He was forced out in 1915 because of opposition to his promotion of premillennialism. He moved on to serve as editor of *Word and Work*, a premillennial journal.<sup>10</sup>

Historian Earl West referred to Boll as a “serious and dedicated Bible student who commanded widespread admiration” and “possessed an infectious spirituality that attracted numerous friends.”<sup>11</sup> Several preachers adopted Boll’s views and promoted them in the early part of the twentieth century.

Boll also faced substantial opposition. While still a writer with *Gospel Advocate*, Boll faced opposition from F.B. Srygley, F.W. Smith, M.C. Kurfess, and others. These preachers continued to reject and contest Boll’s views even after he left the *Advocate*.<sup>12</sup>

### Boll-Boles Debate

One of those who publicly confronted Boll on his views was H. Leo Boles, at the time president of David Lipscomb College (formerly Nashville Bible School where Boll had attended). In 1928, Boll and Boles met to debate several propositions related to premillennialism, including the restoration of the nation of Israel, the arrival of the kingdom of God on Pentecost, the earthly reign of Christ, and the question of Christ’s “premillennial and

<sup>7</sup> Hans Rollmann, “Boll, Robert Henry (1875-1956) in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 96-97.

<sup>8</sup> Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 3, *A History of the Restoration Movement, 1900-1918* (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1979), 394.

<sup>9</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 3:296.

<sup>10</sup> Rollmann, “Boll,” 96.

<sup>11</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 3:392.

<sup>12</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 3:399-403.

imminent” coming.<sup>13</sup> At the end of the debate, both Boll and Boles had very positive things to say about their opponent as well as the attitude and manner in which the debate had been undertaken.<sup>14</sup>

### Foy E. Wallace, Jr.



The conflict over premillennialism was not always so genteel, however, especially when it came to the efforts of the most significant opponent to premillennialism in the twentieth century, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Wallace had been successful as a preacher from his youth. He eventually became the editor of *Gospel Advocate* after several years of preaching. By 1933, though, he turned his attention to premillennialism both inside and outside of the church.

Wallace held two debates with Charles Neal, one in Kentucky and one in Tennessee. In the Kentucky debate, Wallace noted that while the debate was between two “members of the same communion,” there was division between them and that it “gives me no

pleasure at all to bring before the world that kind of an open split between brethren.”<sup>15</sup> However, Wallace believed in the need for the debate because premillennialism represented “a distinct menace to the churches of Christ. It involves consequences that are positively vitiating to the gospel of Christ.”<sup>16</sup>

As West notes, Wallace’s “admirers universally agreed that he was the greatest man of the age; his enemies, who were often wounded by his relentless assaults, sometimes thought him narrow, ruthless, and bigoted.”<sup>17</sup> There is no denying that Wallace believed that premillennialism was a serious false doctrine that needed withstanding.

Among the problems Wallace had with the view (as West notes) were its apparent denial that Christ was currently reigning, its calling into question the fulfillment of God’s promises, its belittling of the role of the church, and its misunderstanding of the kingdom. Wallace created two journals, *Bible Banner* and *Gospel Guardian*, that “specialized in vigorous rebuttals of premillennial positions,” while other

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<sup>13</sup> H. Leo Boles, and R.H. Boll, *Unfulfilled Prophecy: A Discussion on Prophetic Themes* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1954); See also Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 150-51.

<sup>14</sup> Boles and Boll, *Unfulfilled Prophecy*, 393-94, and 410-12.

<sup>15</sup> Charles Neal and Foy E. Wallace, Jr., *Neal-Wallace Discussion on The Thousand*

*Years Reign of Christ* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1933), 20.

<sup>16</sup> Neal and Wallace, *Neal-Wallace Discussion*, 346.

<sup>17</sup> Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, vol. 4, *A History of the Restoration Movement, 1919-1950* (German-town, TN: Religious Book Service, 1987), 176.

journals, books, debates, and ministers engaged the question as well.<sup>18</sup>

The resistance to premillennialism took a variety of forms, with some holding views like H. Leo Boles that respected and loved those who supported premillennialism but also rigorously opposed it as a false doctrine not found in scripture. Others took the more antagonistic approach that Foy E. Wallace, Jr. did that looked at the doctrine as a pernicious weed that could destroy the church and that those supporting it were seeking to create a separate sect.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Impact of the Conflict**

The controversy over the doctrine was not just limited to the pulpit, debate stage, or pages of various journals. The conflict impacted mission efforts

as churches and members wanted to know what missionaries believed about premillennialism. It also impacted Christian colleges. For example, when most presidents of colleges associated with churches of Christ condemned Boll's position, J. N. Armstrong, president of Harding College, decided not to. Because he did not, many assumed he was sympathetic to Boll's position, if not also a premillennialist.<sup>20</sup>

The efforts of Wallace and others, however, successfully minimized the impact and growth of premillennialism. Shortly after World War II, premillennialism was largely limited to churches of Christ in Kentucky and was not a major theology in most other regions.

## **The College of the Bible: *What Could Have Been***

Andy Erwin

The story of the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, makes for a fascinating case study in Christian education. However, the lessons provided from the College of the Bible have not been learned by many sister institutions over the past century. The present study will provide an overview

of the origin, history, purpose, and demise of the College of the Bible.

### **Bacon College**

The story of the College of the Bible begins in Georgetown, Kentucky. It was here that Thornton F. Johnson decided to open a college sympathetic to the Restoration Movement, separating from the Baptist college where he

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<sup>18</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 4:185.

<sup>19</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 4:189.

<sup>20</sup> West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, 4:204-207. See also Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 154, and 161-66.

had been teaching, also located in that town.<sup>1</sup> Walter Scott agreed to serve as the first president. After one year, D.S. Burnett (who would go on to establish the American Christian Missionary Society) became the second president.<sup>2</sup> In 1839 the college moved to Harrodsburg, Kentucky. The name was changed to Kentucky University in 1859.<sup>3</sup> The school that would become the College of the Bible originated as the Department of Hebrew Literature at Bacon College. When Bacon College was re-chartered as Kentucky University, the department was expanded and renamed the School of Biblical Literature and Moral Sciences.<sup>4</sup>

### Kentucky University

In 1865, Kentucky University combined with Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. Kentucky University had lost its buildings due to fire in 1864.<sup>5</sup> However, the school had an endowment of \$200,000.<sup>6</sup> Transylvania University had unoccupied buildings, but had no money.<sup>7</sup> The Morrill Land Act of 1862 also facilitated the merger as federal funds were made available for the establishment of an Agricultural and Mechanical school.

Kentucky University consisted of the College of the Bible and a College

of Arts and Sciences. The colleges of the Bible and Arts and Sciences were church-related and, to an extent, church-funded. The university also had state-supported departments — the Agricultural and Mechanical College, a College of Law, and later a College of Medicine.

### The Bowman-McGarvey Controversy

John B. Bowman was named regent by the state legislature over the Kentucky University and the various colleges which comprised the school. John Bowman was born October 16, 1824, to a rather prestigious family for pioneer days in Kentucky. His father was a lawyer and he too studied law. Bowman was also an alumnus and trustee of Bacon College. He was instrumental in helping the college reboot after it had been closed for a few years in the 1850s.

Each college retained its own president. Robert Milligan was named president over the College of the Bible. Milligan is best remembered for the books he authored, including his *Commentary on Hebrews*, *Scheme of Redemption*, and *Reason and Revelation*. In 1865, Milligan hired John William McGarvey to be a professor at the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard L. Harrison, Jr., "Bacon College," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 55.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved 4-7-20 from LTS Website: <https://www.lextheo.edu/history/>

<sup>5</sup> W.C. Morro, *Brother McGarvey* (Charleston, AR: Cobb Publishing, 2016), 106.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

college in courses under the heading of Sacred History.<sup>8</sup>



J.W. McGarvey was born March 1, 1829, in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. He attended Bethany

College from 1847-1850 where he was introduced to Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Robert Richardson, W.K. Pendleton, Robert Graham, and C.L. Loos. McGarvey, Graham, and Loos would be instrumental figures in the College of the Bible. After preaching for twelve years in Missouri, McGarvey accepted the invitation to preach for the Main Street Christian Church in Lexington in 1862.<sup>9</sup>

McGarvey remains a legendary figure in the church. His *Commentary on Acts* remains a textbook for some schools of preaching. He was a prolific writer, editor, preacher, and professor. McGarvey was dedicated to operating a school which functioned for the training and education of ministers and provided a Christian education for other students. He desired the Bible to be the center of the curriculum. He believed by focusing on the Bible and its teachings pertaining to salvation, the College of the Bible could be the greatest seat of biblical learning in the world.<sup>10</sup>

McGarvey also believed that the College of the Bible existed for the betterment of the church. He believed the school should benefit the church which established and supported it. Bowman believed that the entire university was the church's gift to society.<sup>11</sup> He believed that the school could provide education in secular fields and receive support from secular sources in conjunction with its religious education and church-related support. Bowman also chose to ignore boundaries of fellowship with denominations.<sup>12</sup> While this practice was not uncommon among Christian colleges at this time, it was not in keeping with the founding purpose of the College of the Bible, which was to educate and train ministers for service in the church.

Bowman had ambitious plans for what he believed would become a world class institution. McGarvey also had ambitious plans for a world class institution. However, the two were looking at two different sets of plans. In short, a controversy soon ensued which involved accusations made by and against Bowman and McGarvey. Factions were created. Investigations occurred. An Executive Committee was formed. In 1873, McGarvey was fired despite the church's urging that he be absolved of any wrongdoing. Soon, without McGarvey, enrollment

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>9</sup> During the Nineteenth Century many congregations referred to themselves as "Christian Church" and "Church of Christ"

interchangeably. The name on the building had yet to become a line of demarcation.

<sup>10</sup> Morro, 220.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 111

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



in the College of the Bible fell dramatically.<sup>13</sup> His firing would lead to the collapse of this church-supported/state-supported venture in education.

### **An Independent College**

By June 1875, with a declining enrollment, the school sought to make peace with the church and asked that the Kentucky Christian Education Society nominate men for the professorships in the College of the Bible. The Society nominated Robert Graham for the presidency and J.W. McGarvey to fill his former role. However, it soon became apparent that the university would need to be reorganized.

In 1877 the College of the Bible became an independent institution with Graham, McGarvey, and I.B. Grubbs on the faculty. The College of Arts and Sciences became independent as well, although continuing to be church-related. C.L. Loos was recommended by McGarvey and became its president.<sup>14</sup> The Arts and Sciences college kept the name Kentucky University until 1908 when it assumed the former name Transylvania University. The College of Agriculture and Mechanics and the Law school would be renamed and rechartered as the University of Kentucky in 1878. After 1878, Bowman was no longer associated with the school.

In 1895 Robert Graham would retire from the presidency of the College

of the Bible. J.W. McGarvey became president of the College of the Bible and served until his death in 1911. The enrollment and endowment increased under McGarvey's leadership. He kept a close watch on the classes, textbooks, and teachers who were chosen to work in the school. His primary concern was to train gospel preachers and to avoid theological liberalism.

### **The Calhoun-Crossfield Controversy**

Hall Laurie Calhoun was born in Conyersville, Tennessee, December



11, 1863. Upon graduating high school, Calhoun desired to attend the United States Military Academy in West Point, New

York. Having passed his entrance examination, he was intending to enroll in 1888, when his father persuaded him instead to enter the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky.<sup>15</sup>

In 1892, Calhoun graduated as an honor student from Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and from the College of the Bible with the Classical Diploma, meaning he had met the language requirements in Greek and Hebrew. According to Calhoun's biography written by Doran and Choate, "No student who had graduated from the College of the Bible surpassed him in ability and

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Adron Doran and J.E. Choate, *The Christian Scholar* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1985), 37.

achievement in the estimation of John W. McGarvey.”<sup>16</sup>

With a view to teaching and someday leading the College of the Bible, McGarvey suggested that Calhoun should work toward a greater education. Arrangements were soon made for Calhoun to enter Yale Divinity School. The College of the Bible agreed to support the Calhoun family while he was working on his education with a stipend of \$50.00 per month, with the stipulation that Calhoun would return to Lexington and teach for them after he had completed his education. T.Q. Martin, who was also a classmate of Calhoun at the College of the Bible, remembered how, “J.W. McGarvey once said to me, ‘I have selected Brother Calhoun as the man upon whom my mantle shall fall.’”<sup>17</sup>

At Yale, Calhoun studied elocution at the feet of Samuel Silas Curry, the foremost celebrated speech teacher of his time. McGarvey would later rely on this aspect of Calhoun’s education to provide a new Public Speaking Department at the College of the Bible. In June of 1902, Calhoun graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree, again being awarded with honors. With McGarvey’s permission, in the fall of 1902 Calhoun entered Harvard Divinity School. He remained there for nearly two full years and completed all requirements for the Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees respectively. Calhoun again graduated

with honors and was held in high esteem by teachers and classmates alike.

At Yale and Harvard, Hall Calhoun was exposed to the rankest liberals in the field of biblical criticism. McGarvey had hoped that such training would enable Calhoun to keep similar trends out of the College of the Bible after his retirement. Calhoun returned to Lexington in 1904 and worked alongside his mentor until the time of McGarvey’s death in 1911. In the spring of 1911, Calhoun was appointed dean, and upon McGarvey’s death on October 13, 1911, Calhoun was selected by the trustees as the acting president.

R.H. Crossfield was the president of Transylvania University — consisting of the college of Arts and Sciences. However, he resigned from his office to accept a “pastorate” for a large Christian Church in Atlanta. His resignation meant that Transylvania University and the College of the Bible were both in need of hiring a fulltime president. Crossfield suggested that the time was right to appoint a president over both schools. In December of that year, the trustees appointed Crossfield to fulfill the dual presidency he recommended.<sup>18</sup>

In truth, Crossfield had no business overseeing a Bible college. He was a theological liberal and he had no sympathy for the founding purpose of the school. Slowly the “old guard” which presided over the College of the Bible passed, and by 1917 Calhoun found

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 94, 95.

himself standing as the lone semblance of McGarvey's influence. As they passed, they were replaced one-by-one with liberals of the same mind as Crossfield. Calhoun was helpless to do anything about it as the board and president were aligned.

In the spring of 1917, controversy between liberal teachers and conservative students reached a boiling point, and Calhoun found himself squarely in the middle. One of the liberal teachers Crossfield appointed, William Clayton Bower, allegedly taught that Jehovah was nothing more than a tribal God of Israel, and that a missing link had been discovered – the Java Man – which proved the doctrine of evolution. Another of Crossfield's professors, Elmer Snoddy, was accused of being a "hard evolutionist" and considered the first chapter of Genesis to be mere poetry. A third professor, Alonzo Willard Fortune, denied the physical resurrection of Christ, the complete inspiration of the Bible, and that the men who wrote the Bible were inspired.<sup>19</sup>

After a hearing was conducted into these matters by an already biased board of trustees, the faculty was exonerated of all charges.<sup>20</sup> Calhoun was forced out and the College of the Bible (now Lexington Theological Seminary) went on to become one of the

most liberal "theological" institutions in the country.

### **Lexington Theological Seminary**

The College of the Bible changed its name to Lexington Theological Seminary in 1965 at its 100-year anniversary. From the time that Crossfield gained control of the school, it has succumbed to theological liberalism and ecumenicalism. In the 1960s the school joined an ecumenical consortium of denominational seminaries.<sup>21</sup> From 1987-1992 the school cooperated with the Lexington Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church to develop two master's programs to prepare people for service in that church.<sup>22</sup> In the 1990s they established the Moosnick Professorship in Judaism with the support of their local Jewish community.<sup>23</sup> Any semblance of McGarvey's College of the Bible has long since vanished into history.

### **Conclusion**

Are any lessons to be learned from the fall of the College of the Bible by sister institutions supported by churches of Christ today? We can see that the people who are working together in the leadership of the institution must share the same vision for the school. The board of trustees, president, and faculty must be reading from the same set of plans. Moreover, the regard among the leadership for the

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 95—121.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Richard L. Harrison, Jr., "Lexington Theological Seminary," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Douglas A. Foster, Paul M. Blowers,

Anthony L. Dunnivant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 470—473.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 473.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 473.

restoration of the Lord's church must be complete, without reservation, without compromise, and consistent.

While the College of the Bible is to be esteemed for many things, it lacked this *one* thing. The college was never consistent in its rejection of missionary societies and maintained fellowship with the Christian Church. Many of the graduates also preached for churches that used the instrument in worship. As the Christian Church digressed into manmade organizations and practices, so too did the school.

If the founding purposes of the school are worthy to be maintained, and for a school to remain true to its founding purposes, the board must be knowledgeable, loyal, and true to them. If the trustees overseeing the school are not dedicated to the founding purposes of the school, it will only be a matter of time until the school that once was ceases to exist, and a new school molded and patterned by the ideals of the present-day board begins to take shape.

We also learn that a school cannot lead the charge against theological liberalism without strong leadership from its board and president. Having a few solid teachers on a faculty is not enough to stem the tide of liberalism. The board and the president must have the stomach, resolve, and backbone to stand for what is right even if it requires personal loss or sacrifice. The colleges associated with the church of that day (much like the colleges of today) had the power and the influence to

stop the spread of theological liberalism dead in its tracks. Yet, not only did they not stop it, they embraced it.

The track record of those to be associated with the school must therefore be considered. Is a person being selected to the board because of money and power, or because years of faithful service to Christ have garnered respect? Is a person being selected as president because of fund-raising characteristics or because of faith-building qualities? Is a person being considered for the faculty because of their academic qualifications or because of their reputation for soundness? Is a person being hired as a teacher for what he/she will say or for what he/she will *not* say? Institutions cannot continue to rob Peter to pay Paul on these questions. Faithfulness to God cannot be sacrificed upon the altar of academia. The leadership must be found *following* the right standard if they are going to be found *setting* the standard for the students trusted to their care.

The College of the Bible was lost one bad decision at a time. So often is apostasy developed gradually and over time. The key to preventing apostasy for individuals, families, churches, or schools is to focus on one decision at a time. Use sound judgment. Honor God. Seek first the kingdom. Do so one decision at a time. Had this been done at the College of the Bible, perhaps its legacy would still be honorable and its influence for good commendable.

# "Look How Progressive We Are!"

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Gary Colley

The word "progressive" is a very interesting word. And those who claim to be described by the word may be even more interesting! Webster's Dictionary (College Edition, Page 1164) defines the word "progressive" as "moving forward or onward; continuing by successive steps; to improve; advance toward perfection or to a higher state."

Many of the progressive improvements in our world, such as are seen in medicines, merchandising, farming, etc., are improvements very much to be desired, but there must be limits where laws are broken, and individuals may be harmed because of wrong actions.

## **Religious Progressives?**

A few years ago, the "disciples of Christ" denomination broke away from faithful brethren by their introduction of instrumental music into New Testament worship and the missionary society. They called themselves the progressives and caused deep, distressing division in the body of Christ. The unity which Jesus prayed for His disciples to have and guard was trampled on by these (Jn. 17:20-21). Others who opposed them were termed as the moss-backs and non-progressives, among other less flattering names given by the "progressives." For those whose eyes are now open to the slippery slope of liberalism that these

foolishly followed, they now allow women preachers and women elders, women usurping authority over men in public worship, etc. They ignored and continue to reject 1 Timothy 2:9-13; 1 Corinthians 14:34.

In religion today, some still claim that they are the progressives and suggest that others are in need of "catching up" with the times. Simply because certain things are humanly liked, desired, and practiced, bringing about these departures from the gospel does not make them scriptural practices. Among these "progressives" are the "community churches" who are more interested in pleasing the community than they are desirous of pleasing the Lord. Paul said if he were still pleasing men, he would not be servant of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:10). The apostle John wrote, "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 Jn. 3:22).

## **Where is our Authority?**

We must remember that Jesus, after his resurrection, was given "all authority in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18-20; Lk. 6:46). Jesus' authority is established by direct command, approved example, and necessary inference. To this present time, He has not delegated any of His authority to any man, though some seem to so think

(Heb. 13:8-9). The church of Christ (Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16) does not belong to any man or group of men, though again some seem to so think!

Diotrephes, spoken of by the apostle John in 3 John 9-10, "prated" against the apostle and refused his command! He also, when some opposed him and evidently attempted to correct him, just "cast them out of the church!" John described him, and others who acted like him, in 2 John 9-11, as going onward or beyond the teaching of Christ, which is the meaning of the word progressive! He stated that he would be dealt with in due time.

Jesus made it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that not everyone or anyone who just says, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of the Father who is in heaven. James also states that in order to assure our eternal salvation, we must "be doers of the word and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22-25).

### Antichrist?

John refers to these "progressives" when he writes, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 Jn. 2:18-19).

These were the progressives in the first century! Let us be ready unto every good work (Tit. 3:1). Let us trust God's inspired word to furnish us in all things needed to carry out these "good works." (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

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# THE RICH MAN'S FAMILY

Luke 16:19-31

## Introduction:

1. There are two men in the story, exact opposites in every way.
2. Our focus is upon the one called "a certain rich man."
3. While his family is not discussed in detail, we can learn this:

## Discussion:

### I. It Was an Anonymous Family.

- A. His name was not called out! There was no need to do so!
- B. Jesus came to save not condemn. John 3:17; 2 Timothy 4:1, 2

### II. It Was a Large Family.

- A. Children are a divine blessing. Psalms 127:3
- B. Children come with responsibility. Genesis 18:19; Joshua 25:15

### III. It Was an Affluent Family.

- A. No want—but was there happiness? 1 Timothy 6:10
- B. Neither poverty, nor riches are good! Proverbs 30:8

### IV. It Was a Selfish Family.

- A. What was the excuse for neglecting Lazarus? Proverbs 14:20, 21
- B. Greed can destroy a family from within. Luke 12:13; 15:28-30

### V. It Was a Carnally Minded Family.

- A. Their family Bible was unread. Psalms 1:1, 2; John 5:39
- B. Where was their mind? Colossians 3:1-5; I Corinthians 15:19

### VI. It Was a Bereaved Family.

- A. One brother is now dead. Hebrews 9:27; Ecclesiastes 12:5-7
- B. Who would be next to go? Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13, 14

### VII. It Was a Lost Family.

- A. They probably never thought that of themselves. John 3:1-5
- B. The Rich Man had no desire for a family reunion in hell!
- C. We never condemn our loved ones by obeying the gospel!

## Conclusion:

1. What is your family record? Is somebody lost? Is it you?
2. You can straighten the record out. John 8:44 or Galatians 3:26, 27

- Mike Kiser

# The Simplicity of New Testament Christianity

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Hugh Fulford

The church as established by Christ through the divine agency of His Holy Spirit-guided apostles and Christianity as revealed on the pages of the New Testament was simple and uncomplicated. The church consisted of repentant immersed believers who acknowledged Christ as the Son of God and their Savior and who were committed to following His teaching in all things. Their only organization was simple, autonomous congregations overseen by a plurality of spiritually mature men known as bishops/elders/pastors.

They gathered on the first day of every week to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, to eat the Lord's Supper, to pray, to study and be instructed in the word of God, and to give of their financial means for the work of caring for the poor and needy and for providing the funds needed to evangelize others with the gospel. Their objective was to observe all that Christ had commanded (Matthew 28:18-20), to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42), to do all in the name of the Lord (by His authority and to His glory) (Colossians 3:17), to walk in the steps of Christ (I Peter 2:21), and to be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29; II Corinthians 3:18).

But alas, the original simple way of Christ did not last! Anyone acquainted

with the history of apostasies in Christianity knows that over an extended period of time an elaborate hierarchy developed, culminating in the crowning of the first Pope in A.D. 606. Doctrines and practices strange to the New Testament began to be incorporated into the church: the use of holy water, the doctrine of purgatory, instrumental music, infant baptism, the substitution of sprinkling for immersion, the worship of images, the veneration of Mary, the doctrine that when blessed by the priest (the Bible teaches that all Christians are priests, I Peter 2:9) the elements on the Lord's table become the literal flesh and blood of Christ (the doctrine of transubstantiation), and a host of other doctrines and practices that evolved over the centuries and for which there is not the slightest precedent or authority in the Scriptures.

In time, a protestant (protest) reformation movement (effort to correct) was launched, leading to the formation of multiplied hundreds of denominations, with scores of variations within each of these denominations. Rather than returning to the simplicity of the original church, these denominations retained many of the doctrines and practices of Catholicism and developed distinctive doctrines and practices of their own. Baptists differ from Methodists, Presbyterians differ from



Episcopalians, Lutherans differ from Pentecostals, and the entire system of denominationalism (both Catholic and protestant) is an egregious affront to the unity for which Christ prayed and which He earnestly desires of those who profess to believe in and follow Him (John 17:20-21; cf. I Corinthians 1:10-13). Both Catholicism and Protestantism were born in apostasy and are the fruits of corrupting and departing from the standard of life, doctrine, and practice set forth in the New Testament

Everett Ferguson, in his book *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries*, recounts the simplicity of the church during those early centuries. There were many who held to the unadorned way of original Christianity. While I do not know how many congregations down through the centuries continued to adhere to the simplicity of the New Testament way, it is not hard to believe that there were many who did so. Someone has observed that all the church needs is a Book (the Bible, God's word), a table, a bottle of the fruit of the vine, and a loaf of unleavened bread. If all denominations (both Catholic and protestant) went out of business and closed their doors, simple, New Testament Christianity would not be destroyed or vanish from the face of the earth.

About a dozen years ago, I read an informative book titled *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* by Leonard Verduin, a Calvinist. Two questions he

addressed rather extensively were: "Who was the true Corpus Christi (body of Christ) throughout history?" and "Are the New Testament Scriptures worth dying for?" Those questions were important to several groups during the period of the Protestant Reformation. Regardless of how many did or did not stay true to the apostolic pattern set forth in the New Testament, we know that seed in the natural realm produce after their kind, and that the word of God, the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), produces after its kind—that it will produce in any century what it produced in the first century—plain, undenominational Christians and simple, undenominational congregations (churches) of God/Christ.

Today the churches of Christ are pleading for a return to the simplicity of the New Testament church. They are organized in the same way as were the congregations of which we read in the New Testament. They worship in the same New Testament way and plead for a "thus saith the Lord" in all that they teach, believe, and practice (see Matthew 28:18-20; II Timothy 3:16-17; I Peter 4:11a; Jude 3).

Instead of belittling the restoration plea and questioning the possibility of undenominational Christianity down through the ages, we need to re-commit ourselves and re-double our efforts to proclaiming the New Testament way and to following that way without fear or hesitation and without addition, subtraction, or substitution. On my Facebook page of Wednesday, January

29, 2020, I posted the below illustration that shows both the validity and the reality of simple, original New Testament Christianity in the present age.

If I want to grow watermelons in Tennessee today, I do not have to have an unbroken watermelon vine stretching down through all the millennia from the Garden of Eden to Tennessee. All I have to do is plant watermelon seeds in Tennessee today. They will produce in Tennessee today what they have always produced—watermelons! Similarly, to have the undenominational church of the New

Testament in the 21st century, we do not need an unbroken line of faithful congregations stretching down through all the centuries from the Day of Pentecost to the present. All we have to do is to plant the seed (the word of God, Luke 8:11). It will produce in the 21st century what it produced in the first century—undenominational congregations (churches) of the Lord!

May our world come to see the beauty of Christ and the simplicity of the church for which He gave His life and shed His blood (Acts 20:28)!

## *Remembering James R. McGill*

**1931-2020**

Andy Erwin



On March 16, 2020, James R. McGill was “gathered unto his people” (Gen. 25:8). I met brother McGill when I was a student and he was the director of the Nashville School of

Preaching in the fall of 1999. For the past twenty years, he was a trusted friend, brother, and father in the faith. Many readers and writers of the *Gleaner* will remember brother McGill’s contribution to the paper as the associate editor and a staff writer for several years. Whatever good I may accomplish as this paper’s editor is due to his influence. I would like to spend a short space at this time paying tribute to brother McGill, with plans to pay special tribute to him with greater space in the future.

Brother McGill was born in Nashville on April 27, 1931. While he was

reared in Nashville, he also had family in Bruceton/Hollow Rock, Tennessee, and spent many weeks there during his childhood. His home congregation was the great Chapel Avenue church of Christ. Brother McGill often spoke fondly of this church and her elders. He was baptized by Harris J. Dark in April of 1944. He was also influenced greatly by Carol B. Ellis who preached at Chapel Avenue beginning in 1949.

In 1946, brother McGill began preaching at the Pennington Bend congregation in Davidson County, Tennessee, and at Chapel Avenue by appointment. His earliest preaching appointments found him traveling by bus to rural congregations in Hickman County. He had a monthly appointment with the Rocky Valley congregation near Lyles, Tennessee. Brother McGill spoke of how easy it was to draw a good crowd using an example from his time in Hickman County. On one occasion, an elder at Rocky Valley was checking his mail and it happened that an elder for the Little Rock congregation was a neighbor checking his mail at the same time. The one asked the other if they would like to borrow their preacher the next afternoon. After agreeing to let him preach, the elder made a few calls and brother McGill spoke to a capacity audience the next day. All it took was a brief conversation, an invitation, and a few calls for the young preacher to have a building overflowing with people.

Brother McGill preached the gospel faithfully for 74 years. The last twenty

were spent at the New Hope congregation in Davidson County. He preached mostly in Tennessee, but also in Jackson, Louisiana, and in Germany where he served as a missionary from 1960-62.

Brother McGill was educated at Freed-Hardeman College in 1949-50. He was there during N.B. Hardeman's final months as president of the school. He transferred to David Lipscomb College and received a B.A. He received an M.A. and a Ph.D. from Vanderbilt's Peabody College. His doctoral dissertation was a study of the readability of the King James Version. Brother McGill was a brilliant man and true scholar. I do not use that term lightly. He truly had a magnificent mind and retention for historical facts and scripture. Yet, he was a humble man. He did not flaunt his degree. He did not add it to his signature. He did not expect to be called "doctor." He was simply, "brother McGill."

James McGill used his talent and understanding of the English language for good in the Lord's church. He edited many of the question and answer books written by Leslie G. Thomas. He edited a directory for churches of Christ in Europe. As mentioned, he assisted in editing the *Gospel Gleaner* as well. His editorial work began in 1961 with brother Thomas' book *What the Bible Teaches Vol. 1* and concluded in 2018 with the *Gleaner*. He spent a good portion of nearly 60 years proof-reading and editing biblical studies so that these studies could be presented to

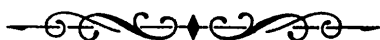
the brotherhood with clarity and soundness.

Brother McGill taught Bible, English, and German, and then chaired the English Department at FHC for several years (1962-1977). He also taught and served as dean of the graduate school at Tennessee Bible College (1979-1999). He was a teacher (1979) and the director (1992-2001) of the Nashville School of Preaching. While serving as the director, the school's enrollment increased from the 20s to the 220s! A new wing was added to the Crieve Hall church building to house the school. Many nights three classes were offered for all three hours. Many of these classes were full. In 2002, a new venture began with the Middle Tennessee School of Preaching. The purpose for this school was to implement the same kind of classes offered at NSOP throughout the rural and outlying areas of middle Tennessee. To this point, classes have been offered in approximately ten congregations. Brother McGill served in various capacities for MTSP. He was also one of the school's primary benefactors. In total, Jim McGill spent almost 60 years in Christian education.

Jim McGill's life and legacy cannot be told without including his family. He came from a Christian home. With Nedra Olbricht, he began a Christian home. He and Nedra married June 23, 1955. She died December 9, 1988. Nedra was the first teacher and head of

the art department at FHC. She was a tremendous student of the Bible. She could look through a concordance for a few select words and tell if it truly was a complete concordance of the Bible! Their children were Ann (Billy Brimm) and James. James has two daughters—Olivia and Sophie. Brother McGill married Mora Rice on November 28, 1997. She died April 14, 2019.

When thinking of brother McGill, one passage of scripture comes immediately to mind — “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8) Brother McGill was a just and upright man. He was blameless and without guile. He loved mercy. Brother McGill was a forgiving person. He sought as much as was within him to live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:18). And brother McGill walked humbly with God. He was a humble, genuine servant of the Lord. He loved the Lord, His word, and His church. He blessed others through his devotion to Christ and we believe he will be blessed forevermore by One who has authored eternal salvation to those who obey Him (Hebrews 5:9).



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## **“The Churches of Christ Greet You” (Romans 16:16)**

The West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Tennessee is pleased to bring you the *Gospel Gleaner*. Are you familiar with the churches of Christ? Have you ever attended our services before?

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### **The Gospel Gleaner**

PO Box 456  
Fayetteville, TN 37334

[www.gospelgleaner.com](http://www.gospelgleaner.com)

Andy Erwin, Editor

Correspondences, news and notes, and article considerations can be sent electronically to [andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com](mailto:andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com). The West Fayetteville Church of Christ reserves the right of discretion in deciding which correspondences, news, notes, and articles to publish.

## **Gospel Gleaner**

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## **Inside this Issue**

Andy Erwin

As we continue our journey through the Restoration Movement in America, our study has reached the period of historic growth for the Lord's church in America. In this issue we will begin to provide an overview of this period, as well as offering various other articles for your edification.

Two preachers are featured in this issue: N.B. Hardeman and J.W. Brents. One is well known; the other is not. However, both left a lasting influence on the church.

In this issue we are honored to have writing for us the following men: Johnny Trail, a gospel preacher and instructor at the Nashville School of Preaching, Scott Harp, a gospel preacher and caretaker of the website: [www.therestorationmovement.com](http://www.therestorationmovement.com), Barry Jones, a gospel preacher and compiler of the Restoration Digital Library; Ronald Bryant, gospel preacher and longtime writer for the *Gospel Gleaner*; Ron Thomas, a gospel preacher from Ohio and writer for the *Gleaner*; David Pharr, a gospel preacher, elder, and educator; and Mike Kiser, a gospel preacher, writer for the *Gleaner*, and instructor at the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies.

Thank you for your contributions to the paper!

# The Fastest Growing Religious Group

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Andy Erwin

The middle of the twentieth century saw churches of Christ become the fastest growing religious body in America according to census records. Some have disputed this claim in recent years;<sup>1</sup> however, one only needs to read the weekly reports submitted by preachers to the *Firm Foundation* and the *Gospel Advocate* to know that something tremendous was happening.

To appreciate fully the accomplishments of our brethren, one must understand the context of the church leading up to that time. By 1900, the church seemed to be at a standstill. Perhaps years of controversy and brotherhood strife were taking their toll. E.G. Sewell observed in the *Gospel Advocate* that churches were not as active as they once were and were having fewer additions.

## Christian Church and Church of Christ

In 1901, A.I. Myhr (a Christian Church preacher and missionary society advocate) issued the fourth edition of the *Year Book* giving only the statistics for the Christian Church. S.N.D. North was the Director of the Federal Bureau of Census in 1906. He had noticed some overlapping between

Christian Church and church of Christ preachers and was curious as to the reason. He wrote to David Lipscomb asking why this was the case on June 17, 1907. Lipscomb informed him that there had been a separation between the two groups, based upon the decision of many to abandon the original intent of restoring New Testament Christianity. The significance of the 1906 census is that it marked the first official government record of the division between the two groups. However, this was a mere formality. The division had been settled in the minds of brethren for some time by the time of the census.

## Growth from 1906-1916

According to the census of 1906, the combined number of the two groups was 1,142,359 members in 10,942 congregations. Of this number, 982,701 members in 8,293 churches called themselves the Christian Church or Disciples, while 159,685 members in 2,649 congregations were known as the churches of Christ. The numbers reported for the churches of Christ may have been lower than actual. Yet, over the next ten years these numbers doubled. While it could be that the

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<sup>1</sup> For several years Leslie G. Thomas gave an approximation of the growth of the church from the reports he was receiving from preachers at the *Gospel Advocate*. His

reporting to the census bureau was not intended to be a factual accounting of every Christian. Only God can do that!

reported numbers in 1906 were on the low side, it could also be that the church simply grew wonderfully at a rate of 99%. If this is the case, God added approximately 158,279 members to His church during this time to bring the total to 317,937 by 1916. 2,921 congregations were reportedly established during this span, which raised the total to 5,570 – a growth rate of 110%.

### **Growth from 1916-1926**

Growth continued over the next ten years at an estimated rate of 36% in membership and 11% in congregational growth. By 1926 there were an estimated 433,714 members and 6,226 congregations. 115,777 souls were added to the body of Christ during these ten years!

Overall, from the 1906 census to the 1926 census, the churches of Christ grew by an estimated 274,056 members and 3,577 congregations. The increase of membership was 171% and 135% for congregations. This period marks the most phenomenal period of growth by percentage for the churches of Christ in the twentieth century. The church outgrew the nation, even as the nation grew very well (38% from 1906-1926).

### **A Tale of Two Churches**

On the other hand, the Christian Church/Disciples movement continued to encounter problems. In 1902, they decided to join Protestant churches in the “Federation of

Churches and Church Workers.” By so doing, these men were simply stating their desire to be one of the denominations. The plea to come out of denominationalism had been lost to them.

In 1909, a Centennial Convention was held by the Disciples in Pittsburg. During this affair, Samuel Hardin (grandson of Barton W. Stone) attacked the old-time beliefs of the brethren, repudiated the Virgin Birth, and stated that baptism should be dispensed with and all denominations accepted without it. It is said that the chairman could scarcely quiet the crowd of protestors. By 1912, at the International Convention of Disciples of Christ which met in Louisville, the Disciples’ leaders decided to establish a delegated central organization to manage and control their denomination.

Clearly, lines were being drawn among the progressive camp of the Christian Church/Disciples. This division would also unfold in the College of the Bible. By 1917, Hall L. Calhoun charged that “destructive criticism” was being taught in the school. While the school denied such, eventually the truth came out, and this was indeed the case. By 1924, a new college was established in Cincinnati and was known as the Cincinnati Bible Seminary. Hall L. Calhoun later withdrew from the Christian Church to work with churches of Christ.

What lesson can we learn from this period of history? On one hand, we can

learn of the power found in a resolve to overcome. The churches of Christ became busy, evangelistic, and effective. They showed a "never give up" attitude. Where would the churches of Christ be today without this outstanding period of our history? On the other hand, the Christian Church/Disciples change agent and progressive movement continued to suffer from internal conflict and doctrinal differences.

### **Growth from 1926-1945**

From 1926-1945, the church grew by a reported **166,286** souls – an increase of **38%**. **1,774** new congregations are believed to have been established during this period for an increase of **28%**.

During the span of 1926-1936, the church's membership reportedly grew from **433,714** to approximately **500,000**. The newly added **66,286** souls increased the body by **15%**. An estimated **474** congregations were established during this time, bringing the total from **6,226** to **6,700** for an increase of **8%**. During this time, the nation grew at a rate of **9%**.

Growth increased greatly over the next nine years (1936-1945). It was reported that **100,000** souls were added from 1936-1945 increasing the body by **20%** to **600,000**. Also **1,300** congregations were established during this period for an increase of **19%**, bringing the total to approximately **8,000**. The nation grew at a rate of **7%**, while the church grew at a rate of **20%**.

Even when the nation's population was not increasing at a rapid rate, the church grew wonderfully. What a wonderful lesson to learn from this period of our history! Truly this is a valuable lesson for small town and rural churches who suppose that, because their town population is not rapidly growing, the church cannot grow.

The gospel can have a powerful effect and souls can be saved regardless of whatever barrier we might suppose. The church can have a bright future in a rapidly growing community or in a peaceful, small-town setting. While one congregation may have three talents as compared to another congregation's one talent, success remains dependent upon faithfulness, not the setting or rate of growth in a given community.

### **Growth from 1945-1960**

In 1945, the U.S. was reported to have had **600,000** members of the church in **8,000** congregations. From 1945-1950, the church increased by **50,000**, increasing the body by **8%** to a total of **650,000**. **750** congregations were started, bringing the total to **8,750** for an increase of **9%**. During this period the nation grew by **11%**.

From 1950-1955, it was again reported that the church grew by roughly **50,000** members for an **8%** increase. In 1955, the total membership was **700,000** in **9,000** congregations.

It was not until 1955 that the church recovered from the loss of membership

due to the Christian Church split. 250 congregations were added at a rate of 3%. During this time the nation grew by an increase of 8%.

The years from 1955-1960 were a considerable period of growth in the church. Membership increased by 100,000 to a total of 800,000. The church grew by 14% while the nation grew by 9%. 250 new congregations were established to bring the total to 9,250. The number of congregations increased during this time by 3%.

### **Keys to Success**

**Solid leadership** could be found in the churches, schools, and papers of the era. A different mentality existed among church leaders in those days. Evaluating their sermons, writings, and stances amid controversy, it seems that a genuine love for the church guided their actions. The leaders of this period were spiritual giants among men.

**Faithful preachers** were the norm, not the exception. Book, chapter, and verse preaching was the rule by which they spoke. Doctrinal sermons and Bible basics appear in all of the sermon books from this era, and it was a golden age of sermon books!

**Evangelistic zeal** pervaded the churches. Cottage meetings, brush arbor and tent meetings, and gospel meetings led to area-wide evangelistic campaigns. On many occasions, these efforts lasted for weeks at a time. Film strips and other materials were developed to help Christians teach the lost.

**Love for the Lord, His word, and His church** can be readily observed when reading the writings of Brewer, Keeble, Nichols, Bradfield, Boles, Nichol, Whiteside, Wallace (Foy, Cled, G.K.), Tant, Woods, Harper, Freed, Hardeman, et al. Yet, without the brotherhood sharing their love for this like precious faith, we would have never known these men. What a tragedy that would have been!

### **Application for Today**

I do not propose to have all the answers to bring about a revival and a return to this type of success in the Lord's church. I only believe such a revival is possible. I do not believe there exists a "one size fits all" answer for today. We are beset by many troubling attitudes, agendas, and factions. However, I do believe that if we will return to biblical leadership and principles, and to preaching the whole counsel of God, our evangelistic zeal will return. For this to occur, our love for the Lord, the gospel, and the church should be evaluated.

Perhaps if we focus on the cross, we will be reminded of the love of God and be inspired to greater faithfulness. If we can come to appreciate the great cost that was needed to purchase the church (Acts 20:28), we can love it even more. Lastly, if we will spend more time studying the blessed Book Divine, perhaps we will fall in love with it all over again. These are just a few thoughts for us to consider.

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# The Lasting Influence of N.B. Hardeman

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Johnny Trail

Nicholas Brodie (N.B.) Hardeman was born on May 18, 1874, in Milledgeville, Tennessee. His parents were John Bellefont Hardeman and Nancy Jane Smith. He was reared in this area of Tennessee, and in the early years of his life, his family knew nothing of the New Testament church, but were members of the Methodist denomination.<sup>1</sup>

When N.B. Hardeman was only two years old, his mother died of erysipelas (a form of cellulitis). Sadly, she was only twenty-eight years old. Dr. Hardeman was left behind with four children to care for and nurture. In 1877, he married Eliza Wade, and their marriage was blessed with five children—Evie, Lon, Ella, John, and Pear.<sup>2</sup> In later years, Nicholas spoke lovingly about the care and nurturing that Eliza had given him.

After his remarriage, Dr. Hardeman's business pursuits performed very well. While things seemed to be going nicely in a material manner, there were evidently some doubts

about the religious traditions that Dr. Hardeman adhered to for salvation. One biographer writes,

"By 1890, Dr. Hardeman had a practice which extended many miles in every direction from Milledgeville.

The produce from his farms was adding considerably to his bank account. His family was large and happy. In his own mind, there was a sense of uncertainty about his religious status. Somehow the teaching and preaching that he received in the Methodist Church did not always correspond to what he read in the New Testament. In the summer of



1890, a brilliant young man, J.A. Minton, from Gravelly Springs, Alabama, came to Milledgeville. Young Minton announced to Dr. Hardeman that he was a 'gospel preacher' and would like to preach a few nights in the community 'in the interest of New Testament Christianity.' The attitude and

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<sup>1</sup> Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order: The History of the Restoration Movement 1919-1950*, vol. 4 (German-town: Religious Book Service, 1987), 101.

<sup>2</sup> James Marvin Powell and Mary Nelle Hardeman Powell, *N.B.H.: A Biography of Nicholas Brodie Hardeman* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1964), 40-42.

proposal of the young man struck the doctor with great force.”<sup>3</sup>

The meeting was met with such enthusiasm that subsequent meetings occurred. As a result of proclaiming the gospel, Dr. Hardeman, his wife, his son, Dorsey, and his two daughters obeyed the gospel. During the years of this interaction, N.B. Hardeman had an introduction to Christian education that set the stage for his future and for so many others yet to be born.

### Education

In 1890, N.B. Hardeman attended the West Tennessee Christian College at Henderson that was operated by G.C. Llewelyn and H.C. Thomas. In this Christian atmosphere, Nicholas obeyed the gospel and was baptized by R.P. Meeks. After this, Hardeman attended school as a boarding student for approximately three years.<sup>4</sup>

It was at about this time that David Nelms and others in the Henderson community determined that a school was needed for their children to attend. Unfortunately, there was no one qualified in their community for the task. This being the case, Nelms took out some space in the *Gospel Advocate*, hoping to locate a suitable teacher. A.G. Freed, of Mitchell, Indiana, answered the advertisement. Freed was well educated and qualified to take the teaching position. One writer avers,

“He had laid well the foundation for a thorough education and had mastered every branch that belonged to the curriculum of the day. He developed into one of the South’s most distinguished preachers and educators.”<sup>5</sup>

### Early Teaching

N.B. Hardeman remained in school under the instruction of Professor Freed until 1896. In 1897, Hardeman returned to Henderson and joined Freed on the faculty of the Georgie Robertson Christian College.<sup>6</sup>

On Sunday evening, April 21, 1901, after regular church services, N.B. Hardeman and “Miss Joe” walked down the middle aisle of the little white Christian Church and were married. When Hardeman and his wife were married in 1901, he was drawing a salary of thirty dollars a month. When Hardeman no longer taught at Georgie Robertson Christian College (due to the influence of the Missionary Society), it further complicated their financial situation.<sup>7</sup>

At this same time A.G. Freed resigned from the faculty of Georgie Robertson Christian College and moved to Denton, Texas. Nevertheless, Freed and Hardeman continued to correspond, and they determined that a new college be built in Henderson.<sup>8</sup> Of course, that college would ultimately become Freed-Hardeman University.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 54-56.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 56.

## Debates

Unlike what modern revisionist historiographies have said, N.B. Hardeman was a staunch defender of the truth and decidedly against doctrines that contradicted the Bible.<sup>9</sup> To wit, Hardeman met several in debates over a plethora of topics. On writer notes,

“The early years of the century were a time of conflict, too. In those days Hardeman was meeting N. Penick, H.B. Taylor, T.P. Clark, Ben B. Bogard, and others in numerous debates; the fight was on to separate the church from the Missionary Society and the mechanical instrument of music – a fight that resulted in division and in the building of a new church house in Henderson in 1908.”<sup>10</sup>

On occasion, Ben Bogard, chief debater for the Baptist denomination at the time, was asked about the ability of N.B. Hardeman as a debater. He replied, “He has no equal.”<sup>11</sup> The Hardeman-Bogard Debate occurred in 1938.

It is described as “an outstanding religious discussion of more modern times.”<sup>12</sup> Many topics were debated in this meeting including, “The Work of the Holy Spirit, The necessity of Baptism, The Establishment of the Church, and the Possibility of Apostasy.”<sup>13</sup> In discussing the Holy Spirit, Bogard argued that the Spirit worked through the word and exercised a “power or influence in addition to the written or spoken word.” N.B. Hardeman held that the spirit worked exclusively through the word. He said, “But how does the Spirit operate? That is the question. My answer, first, last, and all the time, is that he influences through the gospel, which is God’s power. The word is the medium through which the Spirit accomplishes his work.”<sup>14</sup>

Hardeman and Bogard also debated the necessity of baptism for salvation. Bogard denied the proposition which Hardeman affirmed. In defending baptism, Hardeman said,

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<sup>9</sup> Gary Holloway, “Not the Only Christians: Campbell on Exclusivism and Legalism.” *Christian Studies*, no. 15 (1996), 53. Holloway avers, “Hardeman made it clear that he thought there were Christians in the denominations.” Then he quotes from *Hardeman Tabernacle Sermons*, vol. 2, pp. 252-253. However, the same volume quoting N.B. Hardeman says, “Now, in all candor, let me say, because truth demands it, history verifies it, and everybody knows it, though it is not popular to say it, that the church of the Bible is not a denomination...I have too high a regard for the intelligence of your people, to believe that any man is ready to march out and assume the

laboring oar in defense of the absolutely unprovable proposition that the Scriptures authorize denominationalism, and it would be the greatest blessing this world has ever seen if all denominationalism and parties unknown to the Bible could be obliterated and buried in the gulf of forgetfulness,” page 255.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 56

<sup>11</sup> Alan E. Highers and Jim Laws, eds, “Precious Memories,” *The Spiritual Sword* (1995), 26:2. p. 56.

<sup>12</sup> *Hardeman-Bogard Debate* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1938), 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

“Now then, every passage of scripture in the Bible bearing upon the subject of salvation must, of necessity, correspond, coincide, and acquiesce in the sentiment as here expressed. So, I just want to suggest to you that when salvation is predicated upon any condition whatsoever, that condition is essential. There might be more conditions added, but there never can be less.”<sup>15</sup>

Sadly, many of the positions that were formerly debated and defended by sound gospel preachers (such as N.B. Hardeman) are not even mentioned in some of our pulpits. As a matter of fact, there are some who are denying the importance of baptism and the sin associated with using a mechanical instrument of music in the worship assembly.

### Tabernacle Meetings

In the 1920's there were fifty congregations of the churches of Christ in Nashville. In 1921 they decided to have a centralized gospel meeting and selected N.B. Hardeman to be the speaker. To that end, they rented the Ryman Auditorium and conducted a series of meetings. As a result, many

individuals were restored and over two hundred people were baptized.

Moreover, the *Tennessean* and the *Banner* published every sermon that Hardeman delivered in a word-for-word fashion.<sup>16</sup> J.M. Powell writes,

“It is doubtful whether any preacher of the Restoration Movement previously was ever so extensively quoted or had his sermons printed in full for so long a series by the secular press. The Hardeman Tabernacle meeting over a span of twenty years, from 1922 to 1942. All the sermons were printed in book form.”<sup>17</sup>

### Legacy

N.B. Hardeman left an indelible mark on the churches of Christ. When one considers his humble beginnings, it is amazing to consider the thousands of lives that have been influenced and redirected by one who proclaimed the unadulterated truth in its simplicity. The church of our age needs more preachers like Hardeman, who taught citing book, chapter, and verse, to support the message they are proclaiming.



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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>16</sup> These sermons can be read in the *Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons*, vols. 1-5 (Henderson, TN: Freed-Hardeman University, 1991). During the time that this writer was a student at Freed-Hardeman University, the family of N.B. Hardeman graciously made these volumes available to

students in the Bible program free of charge. They are among some of my most treasured books.

<sup>17</sup> J.M. Powell, *The Cause We Plead: A Story of the Restoration Movement* (Nashville: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Christian, 1987), 191-192.

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# The Life and Legacy of J.W. Brents

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Scott Harp

James Wilson “Jim” Brents was born May 1, 1884, in Petersburg, Tennessee. His parents were Wilson P. Brents (1843-1912) and Victoria Stillwell Brents (1847-1932). His paternal grandfather was James Monroe Brents (1809-1883), the elder brother of Dr. T. W. Brents (1823-1905), the distinguished Tennessee preacher and educator and thus, Jim's great uncle.

## Education

At the age of 21, Jim was baptized by Allen B. Barrett (1879-1951), the founding president of what is now Abilene Christian University. He attended Georgia Robertson Christian College in Henderson, Tennessee, from 1905 to 1907. A. G. Freed (1863-1931) was the college president at the time. In his second year there, young Brents began preaching in DeQueen, Arkansas. After completing his work in Henderson, he shifted to Nashville to attend Nashville Bible School, studying under David Lipscomb (1831-1917).

In 1910 he attended Trinity University in Waxahachie, Texas. While there, he met Sally Davis, a fellow student. They fell in love and were married the following year. For the next several years, the new family was involved in evangelistic work, mostly west of the Mississippi River. Jim

preached in Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and as far west in Colorado during this time.

## Baptism of H.A. Dixon

Consider what makes for a “good” gospel meeting. While living and preaching in Italy, about an hour south of Dallas, Texas, in 1918, he made his way back to south-central Tennessee for a short meeting in the small town of Dellrose. Upon returning home, he sent a brief message to the *Gospel Advocate* describing the effort as a “good meeting.”<sup>1</sup> What makes a “good meeting?” Besides the 1,500 miles of travel to and from home, there was only one baptism in that meeting, a thirteen-year-old boy by the name of Hubert Allen Dixon (1904-1969), who later became a gospel preacher and president of what is now Freed-Hardeman University.

## Fulfilling His Ministry

In December of 1920, the Brents moved back east, settling in Athens, Alabama. The work was very weak there as most congregations in the region had gone with the digression around the first of the century. Though based in North Alabama, he continued his travels back to Texas and other places for meetings. In 1921 they moved to Springfield, Missouri, to

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<sup>1</sup> *Gospel Advocate* (July 25, 1918), 705.

work with the Broadway & Madison church of Christ. While based there, he continued to venture far and wide preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ.

One of Jim's good friends from his days at GRCC was Brodie Hardeman (1874-1965). In 1922, above forty of the churches in Nashville, Tennessee, worked together to organize the great Hardeman Tabernacle Meetings at the Ryman Auditorium. Each day thousands of people poured into the arena to hear the sermons from the nationally acclaimed N.B. Hardeman. Reporters from *The Tennessean* and the *Nashville Banner* painstakingly wrote every word and published it in the newspaper. J.W. Brents suggested that the transcriptions of those sermons be printed in book form. Today, the five volumes of the Hardeman Tabernacle Sermons are standards in most preachers' libraries.

In August 1924, the Brents moved to Topeka, Kansas. Quickly the brethren far and near relied on his assistance as he drove hundreds of miles weekly to preach out in remote locations, often reporting to the brotherhood papers the sheer volume of his activity and begging for assistance in the region. He was based there until July of 1925 when the family moved back to Henderson, Tennessee, to study at Freed-Hardeman College. The gospel of Christ drove him. When not studying, he preached mission meetings in Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, Texas, and Missouri.

Being supported financially by the brethren, in the fall of 1926, he began doing mission work again west of the Mississippi. Initially, he moved to Canyon, Texas, to preach. After a year there, he moved south to Idalou, Texas. In 1928 he shifted north to Weatherford, Oklahoma. Up to this point in time in his preaching career, he had not based himself in a location where he could work with just one congregation, as located preachers were very scarce up to that point. But this was soon to change.

### **Preaching in Muskogee**

In June 1929, the Brents family moved to Muskogee, Oklahoma, to work with the Spaulding Boulevard church of Christ. With a membership of around 450, it was possible to be fully supported by the congregation, thus becoming Jim's first located work. That said, his work was by no means limited to the group. He made strong efforts toward evangelizing among the black and Indian populations in the area. He raised money to provide thousands of copies of the New Testament for distribution among the Indian nations.

In September 1930, he invited Marshall Keeble (1878-1968) to come to Muskogee to help build a work among the black people of the area. Keeble, who was fully supported at that time by A.M. Burton (1879-1966) to evangelize, had come off one of his most successful campaigns in Fort Smith, Arkansas; there he, assisted by G.P.

Bowser (1874-1950), baptized eighty-six souls into Christ. Brother Brents made the “Macedonian call” of sorts to see what might be accomplished in Muskogee. Brother Keeble was there for a two-week effort that led to “two hundred and four baptisms among the blacks, one Indian, and a number of white people,”<sup>2</sup> – reportedly the best results of his entire career.

### **Back to Tennessee**

Later, J.W. Brents said, “I consider my efforts in Muskogee the outstanding work of my life.”<sup>3</sup> He strengthened the church, baptizing many, and assisted the brethren in building a new auditorium that could seat 700. However, as happened so often with him, success in a work meant that departure to other fields was close at hand. By September, the family moved to Jackson, Tennessee, to work with the Central church. There only a year, in January 1934, the family moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he once again entered full-time evangelistic work, this time with the Twelfth Street church of Christ. The next year he moved to Springfield, Tennessee, to be nearer a sister who had health problems. During this time, he still made trips into Nashville and also preached for the churches at Springfield and Coopertown.

At the end of 1937, he wrote to the *Gospel Advocate* of a most eventful year.<sup>4</sup> He explained that he did preaching in Florida, West Virginia, Chicago, Illinois, and as far north as Manitoba and Winnipeg, Canada. Other missions were in St. Louis, Missouri, several meetings in “Old Kentucky,” a visit to the “Lone Star State,” South Carolina, and closing the year back in Florida. Similar travels were planned for the following year. His visit to the Carolinas initiated a mission focus that continued the remainder of his life.

A similar report was made at the end of 1938.<sup>5</sup> In it, he mentioned starting the year with a meeting in a tobacco barn near his home in March. Then, he reported on meetings in Missouri, Florida, Indiana, Texas, and South Carolina. He devoted a good bit of space to talk of the fledgling efforts in South Carolina, describing it as a “long-neglected state.”

On November 7, 1941, Jim and his children were shocked at the passing of wife and mother, Sallie Payne Davis Brents. Her obituary expressed that she was born in Lebanon, Tennessee, on March 9, 1888. At a young age, she was left an orphan but was raised by H.N.C. Davis, a lawyer in Milford, Texas. She was educated at a Presbyterian School in Milford but also attended Trinity University in

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<sup>2</sup> *Firm Foundation* (October 27, 1931), 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* (March 22, 1932), 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Gospel Advocate* (November 11, 1937), 1077.

<sup>5</sup> *Gospel Advocate* (December 9, 1938), 1152.



Waxahachie, where she met and married Jim. She taught school for several years and was the mother of ten children, three of whom died in infancy.<sup>6</sup> Together they raised six daughters and one son.

### **In the Carolinas and Nashville Christian Institute**

By 1942, J.W. Brents was conducting as many as ten mission meetings in the Carolinas annually as well as gospel meetings in many other locals. In the mid-1940s, he began teaching at the Nashville Christian Institute, a school primarily devoted to the education of young blacks. Directing the Bible Department starting in 1947, he worked closely with his good friend Marshall Keeble, who was president, and assisted in the school's building for many years.

In October 1946, he reported that the school had 350 boarding and day students.<sup>7</sup> Over the seventeen years of his involvement, he helped to train over 800 preachers of the gospel. Other young men he baptized and helped train as preachers and church leaders were: Texas preacher, Robert Vincent Hamilton (1915-2002); Raymond C. Kelcy (1916-1986), also from Texas, who preached, authored several books, and served as director of the Bible Department of what is now Oklahoma Christian University; and Henry Lloyd Lawhon (1906-2002) of Springfield,

Missouri, who ministered in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Missouri.

In 1943, he married Ruth Isham of Webster City, Iowa. It was also around this time that an annual lectureship for the Carolinas began, alternating annually between the two states. He reported in April that he was involved with his 30<sup>th</sup> mission meeting in the Carolinas.<sup>8</sup>

From 1944 to 1947, Jim preached for the Otter Creek church of Christ in Nashville, at that time, a small and struggling work. He preached for them regularly while teaching daily at NCI. But the summers were always dedicated to mission work in the Carolinas. While in the Nashville area, Jim developed a close relationship with the preacher for the Central congregation, A.R. Holton (1891-1964). At Jim's encouragement, Holton developed a passion for evangelizing in the Carolinas. They traveled together during the summers to preach in meetings all through the two coastal states.

In 1952, the two laid plans for the first annual Blue Ridge Encampment. In conjunction with the West Asheville church of Christ in Asheville, NC, the idea was for a Christian family retreat to take place at a Y. M. C. A. camp in the small town of Blue Ridge, NC, the week of August 23-29, 1952. The first guest speaker was C.R. Nichol (1876-1961) of Clifton, Texas. The annual

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. (February 19, 1942), 191.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. (October 10, 1946), 974.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. (April 22, 1943), 376.

event was conducted for many decades, blessing the lives of many Christian families from all around the world. Through the years, Jim was instrumental in planting 74 churches of Christ in the Carolinas alone.

### **A Lasting Legacy**

J.W. Brents produced a volume through Firm Foundation Publications entitled, *The Great Day of Pentecost* in 1959. It was touted as the only exhaustive treatment of the day of Pentecost in print, Brents was proclaimed a “scholar and prince among preachers.”<sup>9</sup>

Jim finally left local work as he got older, but he hardly slowed down. The family attended the University congregation at David Lipscomb, but he continued to teach at NCI and to conduct mission trips to the Carolinas as long as he could.

Brother Brents died on October 20, 1963, of a heart attack. He was 79 years of age. The funeral was conducted at the University church of Christ with Henry Clyde Hale (1901-1979) officiating. Burial followed at the Woodlawn Cemetery, where many great leaders in the Restoration Movement have been laid to rest.



## **FORMING DESTINIES**

Ronald Bryant

How would you describe where we are as a nation? How would you describe the people of this age? Long ago, indifference toward the things of God gave way to hostility. The downward spiral described in Romans 1:18-32, is on-going in our age; and many have reached the level of “the reprobate mind.” (v. 28). This undeniable fact should serve to open the eyes of those who claim to know and honor God to the incredibly important work that is theirs – the great necessity of their faithful imitation of Christ and the proclamation of His gospel. Many follow a different agenda, for they have become religious customers and have abandoned the will and purpose of God.

### **The Work Has Not Changed**

The work that God calls His people to has not changed; yet in too many instances, awareness of it and convictions regarding it are weak. The tide of indifference, of detachment, and of resistance to the will of God is not new. It is easy to identify with the church at Ephesus, that “left its first love” (Rev. 2:4), or with the church at Laodicea in their state of apathy, being “lukewarm” (Rev. 3:15ff). While the world is moving away from God, and is hostile toward the truth of God, it is not enough

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<sup>9</sup> *Firm Foundation*, (December 1, 1959), 763.

for those who would truly serve God to simply hold-services or merely wring their hands. Incredibly, some are urging believers to “court the world,” to learn what the people of the world really want and demand and try to honor that. As the churches become more and more worldly, and society becomes more and more hostile toward God, the undeniable fact is that those who would serve God must fully return to the will and purpose of God and determine to do His will, no matter the cost. It remains that doing God’s will necessitates endeavoring to bring hearts and souls captive to His will (2 Cor. 10:5).

### **The Purpose Has Not Changed**

God’s purpose for His people has not changed. Christ’s commission remains the same – “Go make disciples,” “Go preach the gospel to every creature” (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). God’s people are the light of the world, and they must let their light shine. God’s people are the salt of earth, and there is great tragedy attached to their losing their saltiness (Matt. 5:13-16).

God’s plan for the saving of man is one of specific focus, and it requires the greatest of passion and compassion on the part of the people of God. The message is one of specific information and directive; it is not vague counsel or empty appeal. What is at stake is the eternal destiny of eternal souls. God has no other plan for the saving of mankind.

### **Misguided “Professionals”**

The professionals in contemporary religious groups have long championed a program of friendly fellowship, the solving of surface problems, and the tutoring of their clients to accept themselves and their failings in the context of religious trappings. Challenging people to take an honest look at their purpose in life, in view of the will of God, is regarded as intimidating, even inappropriate.

Calling people to faith in Christ and allegiance to Him is treated as secondary, while self-worth and obtaining a healthy self-concept are treated as primary. It is the case that many who attend assemblies of worship, and are looked upon as believers, are not believers at all! Their allegiance is to the leader or to the group, not to Christ. While Christ is the excuse for their acts of devotion, He is not the reason! Many know next to nothing about worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and they know even less about serving Him in reverence and godly fear. They know nothing of biblical obedience, yet they call themselves believers.

### **Consequences Remain**

What about those who are religious but are not Christ-centered, that are not servants of God? What is true about them? They may impress some of the people of world for a moment; however, they do not and cannot represent Christ! In speaking to such pretenders in His day, Jesus said, “These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and

honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:8-9).

What happens when those who call themselves the people of God ignore or neglect the directive Jesus gave to “go make disciples”? How many worship assemblies or classes attended will suffice to make up for their disregard of His charge to preach the word to the people of the world?

What happens when the people of God are content to simply meet and conduct services and enjoy time together in fellowship, but they never truly labor to teach and convert the sinful and erring?

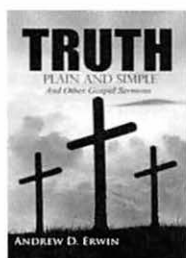
How long will it be before the congregation of which they are part is dead?

*“Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent”* (Rev. 2:4-5).



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# Periodicals of the Restoration Movement (2)

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Barry Jones

As the brotherhood was growing and developing between the years 1800 to 1900, many leaders of the return to New Testament doctrine and practice wanted to be like their hero, Alexander Campbell. His monthly journal, the *Millennial Harbinger*, was the standard for contending for the faith against the Romanists and denominational dogmas that many Americans debated on a weekly basis. Many would-be editors began small journals which eventually failed because of financial issues. Even the most successful journals had editors willing to make significant sacrifices to keep publishing their papers.

Several questions began to be discussed in the brotherhood: How did the primitive church send out evangelists? What type of participation should a Christian have in the civil government? What about slavery? What about open membership, instrumental music, and a Christians' involvement with denominational churches?

In 1866, when Alexander Campbell passed on to his reward, he left a huge editorial void that many sought to fill. Only now does one see the unifying effect he had on the fragile brotherhood. The fractures began as the growing tensions between the agricultural South and the industrial North culminated in the American Civil War and its aftermath of bitterness. They

widened when the American Christian Missionary Society was formed; questions arose regarding its maintenance and the methods it used for training evangelists and faithful preachers, both sorely needed to keep up with the explosive growth of small congregations.<sup>1</sup>

These journals will be the subject of this brief article: the *Gospel Advocate* (1855-1861, 1866-current), the *American Christian Review* (1856-1887), *Lard's Quarterly* (1863-1868), the *Christian Standard* (1866-current), and the *Firm Foundation* (1884-2010).

## ***Gospel Advocate* (1855-1861, 1866- current)**

This began as a monthly edited by Tolbert Fanning and William Lipscomb to counteract the damage being done to the Nashville area by the *Christian Review/Christian Magazine* edited by Jesse Ferguson. The Ferguson fiasco almost destroyed the church in Nashville, and it significantly impressed upon T. Fanning and D. Lipscomb not to trust charismatic preachers.<sup>2</sup>

David Lipscomb served the brotherhood as an editor for the *Gospel Advocate* for over 50 years. His leadership proved to be the significant voice of the Southern churches through the years of testing the scriptural authority of: missionary societies, the use of

instrumental music in worship, fellowship denominational churches, the nature and efficacy of baptism, premillennialism, and the authority of elderships as it relates to the work of the church. Lipscomb's positions became the positions of many churches who subscribed to the *Gospel Advocate* if for no other reason than "Uncle Dave" explained it to them.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to a solid Biblical stance on most issues, the GA became a "blog" of church news and gospel successes. Restoration history can be traced through its pages as evangelists and local churches wrote about their progress or decline. It also served as a meeting place for missionaries and supporting congregations. Instead of writing to individual congregations, evangelists would plead with congregations to support them through the pages of the *Advocate*. Generally, Americans were hungry for news from around the world, and taking the gospel to them was newsworthy.

### ***American Christian Review* (1856-1887)**

Edited by the experienced Benjamin Franklin, who had edited the *Reformer* (1845-1847), the *Western Reformer* (1847-1850), and the *Proclamation and Reformer* (1850-1853), it began as a monthly. It became a weekly by 1858, and Franklin was its editor till his death in 1878.

Franklin was a common man and he had an uncommon popularity with most people. His editorials became a

powerful force in the brotherhood. Yet, he always seemed to go against the flow – when the world was at war, he was a pacifist; when there were shouts to organize and create a missionary society, he at first liked the idea, but he later opposed it when the ACMS made its "war resolutions" (local churches were being bullied into conforming to the will of the ACMS's leadership); his residence was in Ohio, the North, but he had sympathies for the South during the Civil War; he did not believe a Christian could fight against other Christians; when the call came for instrumental music in churches, Franklin used every editorial muscle to oppose anything not found in the Church of the ancient order. Franklin used articles from McGarvey and Lard like hammers every chance he got to oppose the use of mechanical instruments in the assembly of the Lord's people.

After Franklin's death in 1887, the *American Christian Review* floundered a bit before Daniel Sommer, Ben Franklin's unofficial protégé, bought the paper and changed its name to the *Octographic Review* (1887-1913). Earl West said that Sommer was "particularly adept at making close friends and fierce enemies."<sup>4</sup> As is the case with many unpolished students, Sommer went to extremes to prove his loyalty to the most beloved Franklin. If Franklin used a hammer, Sommer used a flame-thrower. This tendency pushed many readers toward the *Christian Standard*.

### ***Lard's Quarterly* (1863-1868)**

Moses Lard (1818-1880) started his *Quarterly* at the worst possible time. It was in the middle of the Civil War, supplies were tight, and tensions were high. Yet, Lard found a way to work for the Lord.

Olbricht quotes Lard, recording that “from April 1863 to April 1864, I preached 370 discourses. These averaged one hour fifteen minutes each in length; that is, I stood in the pulpit 462 hours in the year. The result of this labor was about 350 confessions... and to this be added writing for the *Quarterly*, correcting proof, travelling, and heavy domestic duties.”<sup>5</sup>

He launched the first quarterly of the young brotherhood from Kentucky (Georgetown and Lexington), and he dealt with well-thought-out themes, such as: the validity of the reformation (restoration) movement, open/closed communion, fellowship with denominations, the inspiration of the Scriptures, infant baptism, should Christians go to war, and the differences between the Old and New Covenants.

Along with his editorial contributions to the *Apostolic Times* (1869-1872), Lard's reputation for careful scholarship guided the disciples into many discussions; and, along with McGarvey, his opposition of instrumental music caused many to wonder about this innovation. *Lard's Quarterly* is still read widely today by preaching students.

### ***Christian Standard* (1866-current)**

In an attempt to silence the voice of Ben Franklin in the *American Christian Review*, several wealthy disciples gathered on December 22, 1866 to form the Christian Publishing Association. What developed from that meeting was a pro-war, pro-society, pro-instrument, and pro-liberal spirit as per Isaac Errett.<sup>6</sup>

The goal was certainly to push away the South, banish the crude (Ben Franklin and David Lipscomb), and gather the progressives who wanted to rescue the Church from legalists. After a year and a half, the \$100,000 attempt was near bankruptcy and was handed over to Errett to “save it if you can.” Eventually, it was saved when the R.W. Carroll Co., owned by a Quaker, bought the company and retained Errett as the editor.

### ***Firm Foundation* (1884-2010)**

The best description of the value of the *Firm Foundation* is Lane Cubstead's Master's Thesis for the University of Texas in 1957.<sup>7</sup> Since the new editor, Austin McGary, viewed baptism as the defining moment when a sinner obtains the forgiveness of sins and an entrance into the family of God, he didn't like the way the *Gospel Advocate* and its editor, David Lipscomb, allowed Baptists members to merely transfer their membership to a church of Christ when they joined the church. He also disliked the digressive

individuals moving into Texas and bringing their northern errors of the Missionary Society and instrumental music.

The FF became a forum for discussing Texas issues and brotherhood issues and a place to report church activities, missionary work around the world, and successes of gospel meetings. Some even said that a young man needed only a good Bible and a subscription to the *Firm Foundation*, and he would make a good preacher.

The churches in this time, 1880s-1900s, would focus on evangelism. Their preacher, if they had one, would preach evangelism every Sunday. He would gather up his best sermons and go on gospel meeting tours in the summer. This way, he could make some money from “meeting work.” Some preachers became legendary for the places they went, the extremes they endured (not to mention the wives they left at home to do everything else), and the people they added to the Lord’s church.

One such evangelist was J.D. Tant. Following his work was like watching a cowboy and Indians serial and was very encouraging to young preachers and the faithful in Christ. Other famous Texas preachers aided the brotherhood, like John T. Poe, T.B. Larimore, Guy N. Woods, Joe Warlick, Foy Wallace, Sr., Foy Wallace, Jr, and Cled Wallace.

To really understand the Restoration Movement, one must study its primary sources – its periodicals.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Refer to these titles for exhaustive information on this topic: J. B. Major, “The Role of Periodicals in the Development of the Disciples of Christ, 1850-1910,” (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1966); B. J. Humble, “The Missionary Society Controversy in the Restoration Movement 1823-1875,” (Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1964); *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), D. Little, “The Gospel Advocate,” 361-363; D. Little, “American Christian Review,” 27-28; T. Olbricht, “Lard’s Quarterly,” 451-452, and H. Webb, “Christian Standard,” 197-198; E. I. West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, vol 2, 73-318.

<sup>2</sup> See David Little, “Gospel Advocate,” *Stone-Campbell Movement*, 361-363; E. I. West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, vol 2, 239-268; J. B. Ferguson, *Spirit Communion* (1855).

<sup>3</sup> R. Hughes, “The Editor-Bishop: David Lipscomb and the Gospel Advocate,” in *The Power of the Press- The Forrest Reed Lectures of 1986* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1986), 1-34.

<sup>4</sup> See W. E. Wallace, *Daniel Sommer 1850-1940: A Biography* (no publication information, 1969); E. I. West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, vol 2, 292.

<sup>5</sup> T. Olbricht, “Lard’s Quarterly,” in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 451.

<sup>6</sup> E. I. West, *Search for the Ancient Order*, vol 2, 23-44.

<sup>7</sup> L. Cubstead, “The Firm Foundation, 1884-1957: The History of a Pioneer Religious Journal and Its Editors,” (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Texas, 1957).



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# HOW CHURCH MEMBERS HURT GOD

Psalms 78:40-43

## Introduction

1. The passage speaks of Israel's insubordination in time past.
2. The Psalmist goes back to the time of the Exodus; how often in the desert they rebelled time and again. They grieved God despite His display of miraculous signs in Egypt.
3. Vs. 41. "*Limited*"- "mark off", "provoked", "vexed", or "cause pain"

## Discussion

### I. By Having A Carnal Mind

- A. Worldliness destroys the influence of truth. Matthew 13:22
- B. Worldliness deceives regarding priorities. 2 Timothy 4:1
- C. Worldliness will cause the soul to be lost. 1 John 2:17

### II. By Having A Covetous Heart

- A. It causes disobedience (Achan). Joshua 7
- B. It causes Christ to be rejected (rich young ruler). Luke 12
- C. It causes dishonesty (Ananias & Sapphira). Acts 5
- D. It causes prayers to be unanswered. James 4:3

### III. By Having an Indifferent Attitude

- A. Luxury smothers spirituality. Amos 6:1, 4-6; Revelation 3:14-16
- B. Other responsibilities crowd out Jesus. Matthew 22:5
- C. It aids love of sin. Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 24:12; Revelation 3:20-23

### IV. By Having an Implacable Disposition

- A. It ignores the example of Jesus. Luke 23:34; Ephesians 4:32
- B. It blocks our own forgiveness. Matthew 6:15
- C. It disregards the principle of grace. Luke 17:4; Ephesians 1:7

### V. By Having A Stubborn Will.

- A. The call of the Word unheeded. Acts 8:22; Revelation 3:19, 20
- B. Causes by an evil heart. Romans 2:4, 5; Hebrews 3:12
- C. Causes the soul to be lost. Luke 13:3; 2 Peter 3:9

## Conclusion

1. Are you causing God a problem? Are you a pain in His heart?
2. We are all capable of doing so. Let us beware.

- Mike Kiser

# What a Gospel Preacher Should Be

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David R. Pharr

A gospel preacher should be a preacher of the gospel! Whether he is fulltime or part-time, experienced or a novice, married or single, located or itinerant, eloquent or plain, cultured or uncultured, educated or self-learned, the one thing that defines a gospel preacher is that he communicates the truth of God's word by the best means available to him. All else that might contribute to the effectiveness of his ministry is secondary to the power that is in the message itself.

"For the word of God is living and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:1f).

A gospel preacher should be a faithful Christian. Such as are otherwise are hypocrites and insults to the message, being in themselves "enemies of the cross of Christ" (Phil. 3:18). Preaching as a profession has an unsavory reputation in much of society. Certainly, it is unfair for the name of a good man to be stained by the grime found on other men's characters, especially those who portray themselves as preachers. In morals and ethics, God demands no more of a preacher than is demanded of any brother or sister, but the realities of society demand particular care for a

gospel preacher, that his integrity, speech, manners, appearance, moral uprightness, etc. be unquestioned.

"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:7 ff).

A gospel preacher should be prepared. Jesus kept the apostles in training for three years. Timothy needed time with Paul before he could be left on duty at Ephesus. It appears that John Mark was anxious to get started, but not prepared to stay the course. In time he would become more useful (Acts 15:36; 2 Tim. 4:11). This is not to say education must be formal. It is to say that a man who thinks preaching will just come to him naturally will end up a natural disaster!

A brother told of going to hear a certain denominational preacher who was denouncing "college-bred preachers." He said, "I thank God, I'm an ignorant man. Lord, make me more ignorant!" A voice from the back said, "Lord, you'll shore have a hard time" (H. P. Reeves, *Gospel Advocate*, July 18, 1963). Great men who have done great work first had to be prepared (Ezra 7:10).

A gospel preacher should be a student who never graduates, who has a never-ending thirst to know more—more of the Bible, more of how to communicate, more about answering error, and more about being a better person. “First principles” are not enough (Heb. 5:12ff).

One who teaches others wants to bring them to his level of understanding, but what happens when they get there and he does not know how to take them higher? It has been said that a good preacher preaches from the overflow, meaning he has first been filling himself with Scripture. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16). “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things” (Matt 12:35).

Study is more than putting together a sermon outline. It is building a treasure from which rich things can be shared with hearers. A gospel preacher should approach the Book, and related books, as a place where gold can be found by hard digging. Thus, “Give attention to reading” (1 Tim. 4:13).

Someone told of an older preacher who, speaking to some younger men, boasted that he had reached the age when he no longer needed to study. His very statement showed he had not studied enough.

Paul, in prison and with not long to live, asked Timothy to bring him “the books, and especially the parchments” (2 Tim. 4:13). The other side of 2 Timothy 2:15 is that a preacher ought to be

ashamed if he has not learned to handle the word of God correctly.

A gospel preacher should be a member of the congregation wherever he is, which means he has the same kind of responsibilities as other members have. His place is not as an outsider hired as an independent contractor. He is a member of the body, a brother in the family. The fact that he may eventually move to another place does not give him independent status. He will participate as others are expected to participate, whether in attendance, giving, visiting, personal evangelism, benevolence, building maintenance, etc.

One who is salaried to be fulltime should expect in some things to do more than is possible by those whose time is less available. In every life there are unfair expectations, but one should be slow to insist, “I wasn’t hired to do that.” Jesus taught that menial work is meaningful work (Jn. 13:12ff).

Jack Lewis wrote on the word *doulos* (“slave”) as applied to preachers. “One well-known preacher has stated as his rule of life that if anyone asks him to do something, he tries to do it if he can at all do so. He is a slave to his people” (*Firm Foundation*, Sept. 2, 1980).

Here is what Paul said about his time with the Thessalonians. “But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing mother cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not

only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God" (1 Thess. 2:7ff).

A gospel preacher should be one who edifies the church. Most preachers speak to basically the same audience from week to week. If he speaks to 100 people for thirty minutes, he consumes fifty of their man-hours. At only \$10 per hour, that is \$500 he might have made doing something else. The point to be made is that when a preacher has the opportunity to use people's time, he needs to give them something of value.

Charles Spurgeon said, "Spend more time in the study that you need less time in the pulpit." People come to be fed and they need a balanced diet. Paul told the Ephesians: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Illustrations and thoughts on current events may have some place in preaching, but people need Scripture. "The preacher of small subjects is doomed. The great themes hold the field; and they hold the field simply because people, tired of death of trifles, need a tonic of 'big things'" (Reeves, *ibid*).

A gospel preacher should be an evangelist, one who goes to the people to win them to Christ. "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5). It's a work to do "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20).

Peter had to go to Cornelius's house. Philip the evangelist preached to crowds in Samaria, but he had to get into the eunuch's chariot near Gaza. Much can be done not only by sound preaching from a pulpit but also, as Paul did, by setting up appointments for Bible study (Acts 28:23).

A gospel preacher should be ready to defend the faith, to be "set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:17). Readiness is not only willingness, it is preparedness.

One cannot keep up with every folly invented by men (Eccl. 7:29), but he should know about and be ready to answer the more prominent issues in the ecclesiastical world, as well as the hobbies which trouble the brotherhood.

Knowing how to give an answer (1 Pet. 3:15) includes knowing how arguments ought to be framed. More important, however, is to be able to bring to bear what God's word *actually* says. Jesus knew where to find the text that needed to be read (Luke 4:17). When Pharisees insisted on their own traditions, Jesus used Old Testament history to expose their inconsistency (Mark 2:23ff). In fact, it was by book, chapter, and verse that He silenced His greatest adversary (Matt. 4:1-11).

Finally, and in summation, a gospel preacher is a “man of God.” Paul adopted the Old Testament term for prophets and applied it to Timothy, who was preaching at Ephesus (1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 3:16f).

A gospel preacher is a professional, not because of the source of his income, nor by having been ordained to that position, but because he has chosen to give his life to sharing “the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph. 3:8).

## Political Loyalty or Biblical Unity

Ron Thomas

Politics are directly related to the philosophies of man in the realm of governance and social services. Whatever value there may be in embracing a political philosophy of life (I have done so), I suggest it is better to embrace a philosophy of life that is not of this world. In the Book of Romans, Paul wrote, “for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (14:17, ASV).

First, the kingdom of God is that realm of spiritual location that belongs to the Lord; it is not of man’s making (unlike politics, which is very much the makings of man). In Colossians 3:16, the Lord’s apostle wrote, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns

and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (3:16). As you think about what he wrote, consider that which is to reign in the mind (heart) of each person who identifies with the Lord – the very will of God. Each saint is to look into the Lord’s Law of Liberty, seeking to understand and to make application (cf. James 1:25; Eph. 5:17). With the words of God reigning in the heart, one can be taught and can then teach others.

Since the kingdom of God is associated with the will of God, then we understand there is nothing in this material world, such as food or possessions, that pertain to the kingdom of God. Are you wealthy? It matters not to the Lord. Are you poor? It matters not to the Lord. We know that nothing material is of any special benefit to those who love and serve the Lord. Yet, whatever one has, whether much or little, let him (her) use that to the glory of God.

The material things of life are those things that belong to this life. Righteousness, however, has its origin in the will of God. It is His way of thinking; each of us is to adopt this way as we live in this material realm. The Hebrews writer said, “Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord” (12:14). The word *sanctification* (ASV, NASV) is the word *holiness* in the ESV. In other words, if you do not present yourself to the Lord and to those in the world as holy (not “holier than thou”), it is not possible to please the Lord.

A second point of consideration is the word *peace*. This word is related to Romans 5:1. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We are to live righteously in this world, but we cannot do so unless there is reconciliation (peace) between the sinner and the righteous Lord. With reconciliation in place between the declared righteous one and the Lord, there must be an extended effort on the part of saints to be at peace with one another. Once again, notice the word of the Holy Spirit in Hebrews 12, "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" (12:14). If one does not reciprocate what was given to him or her toward another, how can God's righteousness radiate from within?

What is the "joy in the Holy Spirit"? Perhaps there are several things to consider in relation to this third point. I suggest two that are of importance. First, the joy of the Holy Spirit is God's gift to those who have believed on the Lord, turned away from their sins, and were washed in the blood of Christ; these who have submitted themselves to the command to be baptized in the name of the Lord have the **forgiveness** of sins (Acts 2:38).

Second, the ones who have done as much, they one is **sealed** by the Lord for the day of redemption. Notice the words of Paul, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him,

were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it" (Eph. 1:13-14). Also notice Paul's words to Timothy, "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity'" (2 Tim. 2:19).

Some people like to speak a great deal on which political philosophy they think is best for the community in which they live. "Should we live in a socialistic or capitalistic society?" is a question of great importance, but of greater importance are questions like: "Are you more loyal to your political philosophy or to the Lord?" "Will you maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, or will you allow your political philosophy, your partisanship, to direct how you look on those of a 'like precious faith'?"

My brethren let us be loyal to the Lord and to everything for which He stands, and let us not align ourselves with matters that pertain to this world. I do not want to suggest that you abstain from being involved in the political process; I only want to firmly encourage you to allow the Lord's way of thinking to reshape your approach to life.





*"Behold upon the mountains  
the feet of him that bringeth  
good tidings, that publisheth  
peace!..." (Nahum 1:15)*

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## Update on the Work in Kenya

In the January-February 2020 issue of the *Gospel Gleaner*, I gave a brief report about a recent trip to Kisumu, Kenya, and the Kenya School of Preaching. Several of you have helped in this work. The Smyrna congregation in Culleoka, Tennessee, and the West Fayetteville congregation have made substantial contributions and are to be commended. To date, we have raised over \$50,000 to help these brethren.

We have been able to purchase land for the Migosi congregation to build a meetinghouse. It is my understanding that this congregation has moved eight times to different locations, renting each time. They now have land upon which to build a structure and grow roots in a community. The land is adjacent to the school of preaching campus. The school is sponsored by the Charlotte Avenue church in Rock Hill, South Carolina. David Pharr is one of the faithful elders of this good church. Many of you may remember David from his days directing the East Tennessee School of Preaching and Missions. Bear Valley Bible Institute also sends teachers from time to time and uses the school as one of its international campuses.

We have been able to build a kitchen and dining hall for the students. We are now seeking to build the meeting house for the church. Once it is completed, we would like to purchase a bus for the school and church to use. We also would like to build housing for the preacher of the church and teachers at the school. The estimated costs for our plans are \$160,000. If you would like to learn more about how you can work with me to help our brethren in Kenya, please contact me by email or by phone.

I plan to return to Kisumu this winter if possible. If international travel is permitted, and you would like to assist in those expenses, your help will be most appreciated.

All contributions should be made out to:

West Fayetteville church of Christ

c/o Kenya Mission Fund

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## Exciting News about the Gospel Gleaner

The *Gospel Gleaner's* website has been updated. You can search every issue of the paper dating back to 1985.

You also now have the option of receiving the *Gospel Gleaner* **electronically** if you so desire.

We will continue to print and mail hard copies of the paper six times yearly. All subscriptions are free while supply is available.

The *Gospel Gleaner* is growing. We have doubled in size since moving to West Fayetteville. We see no signs of stopping! **We have increased by over 500 subscribers so far this year!** To God be the glory! If you or your congregation would like to partner with us in this work, we will be glad to hear from you.

[www.gospelgleaner.com](http://www.gospelgleaner.com)



# **The West Fayetteville Church of Christ**

## **Service Times**

Sunday Bible Study: 9:30 am

Sunday Worship: 10:30 am

Sunday Evening Worship: 5:00 pm

Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 pm

*Be Our Honored Guest!*



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# Gospel Gleaner

*For the Lord, His Word, and His Church*



## **Preachers and Preaching – Then and Now**

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## **“The Churches of Christ Greet You” (Romans 16:16)**

The West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Tennessee is pleased to bring you the *Gospel Gleaner*. Are you familiar with the churches of Christ? Have you ever attended our services before?

Faithful churches of Christ desire to return to the New Testament and to be the church of the Bible. In the Bible, we find that the church is the assembly of all those who have been called out of the darkness of sin by obeying the gospel. These souls are added by God to the spiritual body of Christ, which is His church (Acts 2:42, 47; Ephesians 1:22-23).

The church belongs to Christ. It is His church. We, therefore, seek to honor Christ as our Lord in our worship, teaching, and daily walk.

One can be added to this sacred assembly and spiritual kingdom by hearing the gospel preached (Romans 10:17); believing the facts concerning Christ as revealed in the gospel (John 8:24); repenting of sin (Luke 13:3, 5); confessing faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10); and by being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:11-13; Galatians 3:26-27) to wash sins away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 1:7).

For more information about the church or God’s plan of salvation, we offer free Bible correspondence courses and personal Bible studies. Call or write to us.

### **The Gospel Gleaner**

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Andy Erwin, Editor

Correspondences, news and notes, and article considerations can be sent electronically to [andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com](mailto:andyerwin@gospelgleaner.com). The West Fayetteville Church of Christ reserves the right of discretion in deciding which correspondences, news, notes, and articles to publish.

## **Gospel Gleaner**

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## **Inside this Issue**

Andy Erwin

As we continue our journey through the Restoration Movement in America, our study has reached a period of regression. The final decades of the twentieth century and first decades of the twenty-first century have seen a decline in the numerical growth of the churches of Christ in America for the first time in 100 years. This period has witnessed changes in preaching and in educating our preachers. The change in preaching is one of many trends which could be discussed; however, we have selected it as the main theme for this issue. The present time can be compared to the period before the split between Christian Churches and churches of Christ in the nineteenth century. A spirit of rebellion has prevailed over many churches and church leaders in recent years leading to an inevitable and unfortunate division.

In this issue we are honored to have writing for us the following men: Mike Greene from the Nashville School of Preaching; Mike Kiser and John T. Polk II, long-time staff writers for the *Gleaner*; Billy Lambert, host of the television broadcast "Getting to Know Your Bible;" David Pharr, Raymond Elliott, and Tom McLemore, who each are valued contributors to the paper and great preachers. Thank you for your contributions to the paper!

# The Kind of Preaching Needed Today

---

Billy Lambert

For the past 58 years, I have attempted to preach the glorious gospel of Christ. Should I have the option of living my life over, I would choose to do the same thing. These have been rewarding years and I trust that my feeble efforts have helped someone to be prepared along their journey into eternity.

With fondness do I recall older preachers whom I respected. There were giants in the faith like Foy Wallace, G.K. Wallace, H.A. Dixon, Guy N. Woods, E. Claude Gardner, Furman Kearley, Rex Turner Sr., B.C. Goodpasture, Hugo McCord, V.P. Black, Wendell Winkler, William Woodson, Roy Deaver, George DeHoff, George Bailey, Gus Nichols, and Willard Collins, all from whom I learned and profited. All of these men, as well as a host of others, helped mold me in the early days of preaching. Brother Rex Turner had all of his “preacher boys” read Hardeman’s *Tabernacle Sermons*. He had them listen to reel-to-reel recordings of preachers who had been an influence on his life. G.A. Dunn was one of them.

The preaching of these men, and others like them, were a contributing factor in the rapid growth of the church after WWII up until the mid-70s. The church of Christ was on fire.

Since that time, something has caused a turn in the opposite direction. Change has occurred. Not all change is undesirable. Some change is needful. However, from my limited view, it appears that stagnation and decline are the norm. True, there are a few bright spots of growth here and there, but that is often from swelling at the expense of other churches.

How will we stem the tide of indifference that pervades the church in this generation? Elders struggle to maintain the status quo. Preachers who have been on the firing line for years are voicing concern about the state of the church. How can we get back to the same level of enthusiasm and evangelism that existed in the past?

What would be the result if we began to preach like we did when the church was on fire and souls were being saved? Is it not possible that we would have the same outcome we did in the past? Some may say, “These are different times and we must use a different approach today. You can’t preach like was done years ago.” Well, we have tried the new approach, so how has that worked out? If I may, I would like to offer a few observations on the kind of preaching that is needed in the twenty-first century.



## **WE NEED DISTINCTIVE PREACHING**

The word “distinctive” means “different in a way that is easy to notice; a characteristic or quality that makes a person or thing different from others.” It also means to “distinguish.” Gospel preaching that makes a difference is distinct and distinguished from the weak, insipid preaching that caters to the whims of a world that clamors for entertainment and something new. When a man’s sermons could be preached in any church in town without raising an eyebrow, they lack distinction. Some sermons would not disturb the devil. So long as we are going in the same direction as Satan, he will leave us alone.

A distinction must be drawn between truth and error. A distinction must be made between the pure gospel and a polluted, perverted message. A distinction must be made between the Lord’s church and religious organizations started by men. For a number of years, I have been the speaker on a national and international television program. From the responses we get constantly, I can tell you with certainty that people are hungry for simple, plain, understandable sermons that fill their souls with hope.

## **WE NEED PASSIONATE PREACHING**

The late Paul D. Murphy was my mentor. One day he told me that I either needed to put more fire in my sermons or put my sermons in the fire. A

few weeks before the death of brother V.P. Black, who was also one of my mentors, I told him that the one thing I see lacking in some of the preaching being done today is passion. When we have a burning desire to see men saved, we cannot contain ourselves. We will be like Isaiah when he said “cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgressions and the house of Jacob their sins” (Isa. 58:1). What about the weeping prophet Jeremiah, who became so discouraged that he thought about giving up, but he could not because God’s word was burning in his heart (Jer. 20:9)?

A piece of advice I was given as a young, wet-behind-the-ears preacher was, “You preach what you are full of.” I am aware that sentences should not end with prepositions, but the advice was some of the best I ever received. I was in a meeting in a rural congregation near Fulton, Mississippi, years ago. After one of the services, sister Margie Tucker walked up to me and said, “I can tell you what we need to do with some of the preachers today. They need to have their computers taken from them, then lock them up in their office with a Bible and tell them they can’t come out until they know something.” She might have been on to something. I will let you decide. Passion for preaching to save souls is a must if we fulfill the role of a gospel preacher (1 Cor. 9:15).

## **WE NEED BALANCED PREACHING**

Balance is essential in life. The tires on your car must be balanced. Your checking account must balance. There is balance in nature. A person walking a high wire needs balance. Those with vertigo know the importance of balance. We need balance in our spiritual walk as well. When Joshua picked up the mantle of leadership after Moses' death, he was told "turn not to the right hand or the left" (Josh. 1:7). There must be balance in preaching if we truly "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2).

We preachers would do well to look back at the sermons we have preached. I tried to do that sometime back. Being one of those "older preachers," I still have a filing system (albeit a little disorganized). I wanted to see what I had preached on more than other topics. I have thick files on some subjects and scant little in other files. I determined to strive for better balance. During holidays at the end of the year, I try to emphasize topics that help those who hurt because of empty chairs at the table. We need to be sensitive to those who grieve. Birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays are hard on those who grieve.

One year I determined that every Sunday morning sermon I preached would be about Christ. If there is a church that should put emphasis on Christ, it should be the church of Christ. There are limitless subjects that can be covered: the pre-earthly existence of Christ, the birth of Christ, the

death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, the second coming of Christ, the parables of Christ, the miracles of Christ, the church of Christ, the prayer life of Christ, and the earthly ministry of Christ. Each of these can be a series.

When is the last time you heard a sermon on heaven, hell, sin, the judgment, falling from grace, music in worship, baptism, the Lord's Supper, forsaking the assembly, role of women in the work of the church, or Bible authority, to name a handful of subjects. Sermons on examples of conversion in the book of Acts are always in order. Brother Gus Nichols said he had three hundred sermons on the second chapter of Acts alone! Most of these subjects can be preached topically and/or with exposition. The latter is my favorite. Regardless of how it is done, the full gospel must be preached (Acts 20:27). That requires balance in subject selection.

## **WE NEED PREACHING DONE IN LOVE**

Perhaps you have heard the preacher story about a church needing a preacher and as they were parading prospects before the congregation each Sunday, a decision had to be made. A young energetic young man came on a given Sunday and, having prior knowledge of one of the members who was wealthy but not a very liberal man, preached on "The Rich Fool." The very next week another young man came to "try out" for the vacant pulpit. Amazingly enough, he also preached on

"The Rich Fool." When the time came to decide between the two final prospects, the man with money told them they should hire the second man. It was obvious that both men knew of this brother's proclivity for greed and stinginess. They asked why he wanted the second man rather than the first. Here was his answer: "The first man preached like I was lost and on my way to torment and it seemed to please him. The second preached like I was lost and on my way to torment and it seemed to break his heart."

Our preaching must be done in love (Eph. 4:15). It is not enough to speak the truth. It must be done with a loving spirit, the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9). A well-known Alabama preacher once told me, "I like to preach when I'm mad." Who wants to listen to a mad man preach? Jesus did not come into the world to heap condemnation upon the human race. It was already condemned (John 3:14-18). A genuine love for souls will produce loving presentations in the pulpit.

### **I LOVE MY PREACHING BRETHREN**

As a young preacher, most of my time was spent with older preachers. I loved them all. It has broken my heart each time one of the preachers whom I admired went home to be with the Lord. I recall the day I learned of the tragic death of the late Willard Willis. He had just been in a meeting at the old Plateau congregation. I wept. I still grieve the death of V. P. Black, whom

I loved as a father. Just as I have loved those who helped mold and make me, I love my younger preaching brethren. I spend time with them as often as possible. They need encouragement. I know they think I am in a time warp. That is just what I thought of older preachers when I was their age. It is because I love them that I would like to give some advice, as unwanted as it may be.

Young preachers need to read the sermons of older preachers. We live in a different time, but as brother N.B. Hardeman entitled one of his sermons, "The Bible, As It Is, Is Adapted To Man, As He Is." Truth never changes, and the needs of men have not changed. Our methods of preaching have changed, but the message must never change. Some of my first gospel meetings were with charts painted on a bedsheet. PowerPoint is a useful tool to replace the sheet sermon. Learn what those who have gone before you did in preaching that helped the Lord's church start in Jerusalem, spread throughout the world, and finally make it to the shores of our great nation. Those who pioneered in our country made the appeal to "Go back to the Bible."

Now in the twenty-first century, we have the greatest opportunity to preach the restoration plea since the end of WWII. Men are empty and searching. With love in our hearts, let us preach every sermon as if it may be our last one to preach or the last one someone may hear.

# Education for Ministry: Schools of Preaching

---

Mike Greene

As the children of Israel were about to enter the promised land after the forty-year long wilderness experience, Moses reminded them of the responsibilities that would fall upon the people of God. Moses and his generation would soon be gone, and the next generation, and the generations after that, would have the responsibility to pass on to each successive generation the knowledge of God and His will, which God's providence preserved in written form. That responsibility was given specifically by Moses in Deuteronomy 6:4-9:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

By the time of the prophets and kings, it seems schools had sprung up to train men for the prophetic or preaching office. Individuals so trained are referred to in scripture as “sons of

the prophets.” The phrase “sons of the prophets” occurs 12 times in the Old Testament; once in 1 Kings and eleven times in 2 Kings. It also occurs once in Acts 3:25. The phrase first occurs in 1 Kings 20:35. Of this Barnes writes:

It signifies...the schools or colleges of prophets which existed in several of the Israelite, and probably of the Jewish, towns, where young men were regularly educated for the prophetic office. These “schools” make their first appearance under Samuel (1 Sam. 19:20). There is no distinct evidence that they continued later than the time of Elisha; but it is on the whole most probable that the institution survived the captivity, and that the bulk of the “prophets,” whose works have come down to us belonged to them.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most familiar use of the phrase is found in Amos 7:14: “I was no prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet, but I was a sheepbreeder and a tender of sycamore fruit.” By this, Amos responds to the charge leveled by Amaziah the priest that his words should not be heeded, saying in effect that he was not a professional prophet, nor a pupil or member of the prophets’ schools, that is, one who has been trained to prophesy or preach, but that his calling was from the Lord (Amos 7:15-16).<sup>2</sup>

This training to educate those who would teach others the Law of God no doubt continued through the intertestamental period. Witness the rise of the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Rabbis, and lawyers that are found conversing with Jesus about the meaning of the Law during His lifetime. Interesting is the observation of the Jews when Jesus was teaching in the temple: "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?" (John 7:15).

The apostle Paul, in his defense before the Jews in Jerusalem, indicated he received his knowledge of the Law at the feet of Gamaliel, a member of the Sanhedrin and a well-known instructor of the Law (Acts 22:2-3).

The pattern of having schools to instruct those who, in turn, would instruct God's people in the word has continued throughout the Christian age. Many of the great universities of Europe and America have their roots in the religious instruction and training of Christian ministers.

The educational background and vocations of many early restoration preachers assured that such training would continue as they sought to restore the early church. In the first half of the nineteenth century, several colleges were established by these preachers. Among them was Alexander Campbell's Bethany College, Bacon College, and Tolbert Fanning's Franklin College. Before the turn of the century, and after the division of the Christian Church and the churches of Christ,

Nashville Bible School, which morphed into David Lipscomb College, was begun. After the turn of the century, schools such as Freed-Hardeman College, Abilene Christian College, Harding College, and many others were established. Some were short-lived; others continue to exist.

While none of the above-named schools were established exclusively to train preachers, many preachers were trained in Bible programs that recommended them as preachers to an expanding brotherhood of churches of Christ. Where such schools existed, the church tended to be much stronger, with greater membership than where no such schools were found.

After World War II, a unique educational institution, the school of preaching, first made its appearance among churches of Christ. The reasons for this phenomenon could be traced to two factors. First, many of the men who had been involved in the war came home and decided to give greater energy and time to Christian ministry. The G.I. Bill helped many of these men attend Christian colleges to be trained to do ministry more effectively. But as time passed, and despite the opportunities provided by the G.I. Bill, the pressures and demands of time and life kept many men from attending college, which at that time required a full-time commitment.

Second, the rapid growth of the brotherhood of churches of Christ presented a problem identified in the mid-

1960's by Batsell Barret Baxter and reported in the pages of the *Gospel Advocate*. Baxter, at the time serving as chairman of the Bible department of David Lipscomb College, surveyed the nineteen colleges associated with churches of Christ to see how many of their students were planning to be preachers. His research indicated that unless more men were trained to preach, the churches were facing a critical shortage of preachers in the coming years.<sup>3</sup>

A solution was seen in an alternative educational institution which was the "School of Preaching." Matthew Vaughan, in an article "On Schools of Preaching" written in 2012, suggested there were as many as forty such schools in the 1970's and 80's. At the end of the article, Vaughan listed fourteen of the most prominent schools of preaching that were established in the 1960's and 70's – these are still in operation today and offer academic credit, some type of degree, or a certificate of achievement.

Some of these schools, like Memphis School of Preaching, Bear Valley in Denver, Colorado, and Southeast Institute of Biblical Studies in Knoxville, Tennessee, are full time in that students take classes every day. As such, they require a greater commitment. Others, like Nashville School of Preaching, have night classes three nights a week. Others meet only one night a week. Most schools of preaching operate on a two-year schedule, are tuition free, and are overseen and

financed by a local congregation. This model of preacher training has been taken into the mission field and around the world by members of the churches of Christ.

These schools of preaching have trained literally thousands of preachers and sent them into the world to engage in the proclamation of God's word. In doing so, they have provided a trained ministry that would not have existed without the effort of the men who established and conducted these unique educational institutions.

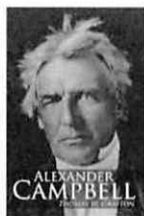
#### For Further Reading:

1. See also Keil and Delitzsch comments on 1 Samuel 19:18 and Amos 7:14-15 and *McClintock and Strong Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, "Prophets, Schools of."
2. See Keil and Delitzsch on Amos 7:14-16.
3. For more on Baxter's surveys and the establishment of schools of preaching, see: "On Schools of Preaching," by Matthew Vaughan, *Journal of Faith and the Academy*, Vol. V, Number 1, Spring 2012; and *Nashville School of Preaching*, by Gary and Cynthia Wilder, and Tom Holland, Sain Publications, 2016 (a history of the 50 years of the Nashville School of Preaching).



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# The Christian Universities (1970-Present)

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James R. McGill (1931-2020)

During the past fifty years, the Christian universities have made many changes. While some of these changes are of little importance, others are of such significance that they threaten to undermine the purpose for which the schools were established.

Five characteristics of Christian schools of higher education have made them distinctive:

- (1) All members of the faculty, board, and administration are members of the church of Christ.
- (2) Every student is required to enroll in Bible classes.
- (3) Students attend regular chapel assemblies that include worship.
- (4) Every course--from history to biology to literature--is taught from a Christian perspective in a manner consistent with the Scriptures.
- (5) Even in extracurricular activities, an effort is made to maintain a Christian school environment.

## Changing to Conform

Some changes over the years have been simply a matter of copying what others are doing, following the trends, or giving in to the pressures to be like everyone else. Some have not been crucial. Some examples:

1. At one time, the schools operated on the quarter (12-week school terms)

system. One by one, they changed to the longer 18-week semesters.

2. Formerly each school had a single vice-president. Now it is customary to have multiple vice-presidents—such as a vice-president for student affairs, an academic vice-president, and a vice-president for business affairs.

3. Originally courses were grouped under departments. Then they began to be called divisions. Finally, these course groupings came to be called schools. Thus, the Bible department became the Bible division and ultimately became the school of Biblical studies.

4. Then the Christian colleges began to make a purely cosmetic change and began calling themselves universities. First George Pepperdine College became Pepperdine University. Then, one by one, the others followed. One of the most dramatic changes was the day International Bible College did a complete name makeover and started calling itself Heritage Christian University. It was the same school the day after it changed its name as it was the day before. But they considered the new name more prestigious.

5. Then the Christian schools started adopting academic rank. The lowest ranking teachers were called instructors. The next rank was assistant professor; then associate professor; and finally, professor. When some teachers



at one of the schools complained that academic ranking seemed inconsistent with the spirit of Christ, the response was that “every other school in the region except one has done it and they are getting ready to do it.”

6. Pepperdine and then Harding started graduate programs. Most of the others have followed.

7. Federal funds began to be an important part of the operation of the Christian schools. These included the Pell Grants and the NDEA loans. But federal aid to students was nothing new. The schools had experienced this in a big way after World War II when so many veterans were attending on the GI Bill.

More recent federal funding, however, includes federal aid to developing institutions, including long-term, low-interest, federally-subsidized loans for new buildings. This type of federal aid has led to “church-state separation” questions about housing religious books and religious periodicals in a library being financed with a federally-subsidized loan. Also involved has been the question of students having their evening devotionals in a dormitory being partly financed by government money.

### **Accreditation**

The pressure to conform and be like everyone else causes schools to drift from the purpose for which they were founded. Yet all other factors combined have not had such a negative effect in destroying the distinctiveness of

the Christian universities as has accreditation.

There are six regional accrediting associations in the United States. Harding, for example, is in the North Central Association, while Lipscomb is in the Southern Association. An institution is accredited when it gains the approval of its regional association. These associations wield enormous power and control over the universities. Former U. S. Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, observed and spoke of this inordinate influence.

A *Wall Street Journal* headline (October 15, 2005) read: “College Accrediting Fight ‘Could Get Ugly.’” This was said in reference to the battle between the six regional associations that have previously had all the power and a new competitor calling itself a national accrediting association.

### **Accreditation among Christian Schools**

The desire for accreditation began among some of the Christian colleges as early as sixty years ago. The result has been to allow the associations to reshape the institutions.

The influence of the accrediting associations has been pervasive in all areas. Representatives of the accrediting associations lack the unique values characteristic of the church of Christ. We should expect that their ideas, requirements, and demands would, therefore, not be in the best interests of the schools’ reason for being.

At this time, though, we want to narrow our focus to the effect the associations have had on Bible teaching in the Christian universities.

### **Then and Now**

Fifty years ago, the men chosen to teach Bible classes were those who were themselves dedicated students of the Scriptures. My Bible teachers at Freed-Hardeman College (1948-1950) and at David Lipscomb College (1950-1952) were not theological seminarians. Neither school was accredited. Yet I could not imagine finer Bible teachers than these men. The books they recommended for supplementary reading were those by such writers as Milligan, McGarvey, Lard, Brents, and Lipscomb.

Accreditation altered this. The emphasis changed completely. Knowledge of the Bible and the ability to communicate that love of the Scriptures is no longer foremost among the qualifications for those who teach the Bible full time in many of these Bible departments.

The schools instead seek those who have doctorates in religion as the full-time teachers in their Bible departments. They do this to comply with the perceived demands of the accrediting association. The result is that most of the Bible teaching in Christian universities has come to be done by men who had been influenced by years of being immersed in religious error in some theological seminary.

The textbooks they use and the outside reading they recommend to their students are overwhelmingly books written by men and women who are not members of the church of Christ. One needs only to look at the books on the recommended lists at a Christian university to see how far they have drifted.

We acknowledge that it is possible for a man of great maturity to go through the years of graduate study in a theological seminary without being damaged. Dr. J. E. Choate Jr. is one example I know of someone who has done that. But it is very exceptional.

### **The Pervasive Influence**

To illustrate how pervasive this destructive practice has become, just notice the exact words of an advertisement for the position of Professor of Bible at one of these schools: "The successful candidate for the position of Professor of Bible will have a doctoral degree in Bible, Theology, or Ministry from an accredited institution." That requirement alone ruled out 99+% of the best Bible teachers they might otherwise have secured. Furthermore, it virtually assures that the "successful candidate" will be a theological seminary more conversant with Barth, Tillich, Heidigger, Buber, and Schopenhauer than with the Bible.

### **"Any Regionally Accredited Institution"**

Sometimes there is even the appearance of elitism in flaunting "accreditation." Notice this brochure regarding another school's graduate program.

Under the heading of “Transfer Credits” is the following:

“As many as 42 hours of A’s and B’s can be transferred in (from any regionally accredited institution).”

It appears that an applicant from a denominational school can transfer his credits – if that school is accredited – and others whose credits are from non-accredited schools will be rejected, even though they might have a better understanding of Scripture.

Accreditation should have nothing to do with it! The right thing to do would be to give any applicant a comprehensive Bible knowledge test. If deficiencies are found, that applicant would be required to complete the appropriate remedial undergraduate Bible courses, thus correcting the problem, and then be admitted.

The only hope for the future of Bible teaching in the Christian universities is for these schools to assert their right to re-take control of their Bible departments, even though this action may risk the displeasure of the accrediting associations.

**[Editor’s Note:** The previous article was first published in the Fall 2005 issue of *Searching the Scriptures Quarterly*. Concerning regional accreditation, schools and universities can receive government funding by being regionally accredited. Students can also receive federal student aid from a regionally accredited school. Can a university function without this aid? It is

hard to know for sure, but we may have to find out soon.

On May 20, 2019, the House of Representatives passed House Resolution 5, otherwise known as the “Equality Act.” The gist of this proposal is to amend the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution to include LGBTQ. If it ever becomes law, the federal funding of Christian universities will be jeopardized. For example, a male student who identifies as a female student will require housing in female dormitories. If refused, the school will be trampling on his “Constitutional” rights. Theoretically, it is conceivable that the loss of federal aid would be threatened by an unsympathetic government. Churches and their property tax breaks could also be threatened. Sermons and classes on the subject, as well as conversion therapy offered by Christian counselors, will be deemed acts of discrimination according to the document.

As we see this issue fast approaching, the question of linking the Christian school to federal funding may be answered sooner than we would like.]



# Abilene “Baptist” University

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Andy Erwin

The following press release is quoted verbatim from Timothy Chipp, *Abilene Reporter-News*, published 3:58 p.m. CT June 15, 2020. I have placed in bold letters some statements which deserve your attention.

## Baptist ministry classes find home at Abilene Christian University

Myles Werntz will spend the fall semester building a new program for Abilene Christian University. Affiliated with the Churches of Christ, ACU will open, under Werntz's leadership, a **Baptist Studies Center** within the graduate school of theology. Werntz currently is the T.B. Maston Chair of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at Logsdon School of Theology at Hardin-Simmons University. His program was part of the latest cuts announced in February at HSU, along with the rest of the Logsdon Seminary.

“I’ll be creating space **for preparing Baptist students for ministry, teaching courses in Baptist theology and history**, and working to help ministry students receive mentoring and **placement**,” Werntz said in social media posts last week announcing his new employment.

“In the wake of the closing of Logsdon Seminary, I’m beyond grateful for the opportunity to continue **the faithful formation of ministers** in this new way,” he said in another post.

Hardin-Simmons University said that while Logsdon Seminary is closing in the next few years, the overall school of theology would remain, serving undergraduate students looking for a Baptist education.

“We are pleased that a number of schools, including Abilene Christian University, will be offering graduate school options **for future Baptist ministry students**,” HSU said in a statement. “Hardin-Simmons University continues to remain committed to our mission of providing students an education enlightened by Christian faith and **equipping future leaders**.”

According to ACU, the center will offer **two courses on Baptist history and polity**, which will pair with the Master of Divinity degree to prepare students for **ministry in Baptist churches**. Additionally, the center will provide **vocational discernment and mentoring to Baptist students and work closely with Baptist**

**ministry partners** to facilitate field education placements, the university said in a news release.

“The BSC will provide a natural transition for current Logsdon students to continue their ministry preparation,” said Tim Sensing, associate dean and director of ACU’s graduate school of theology. **“We are deeply grateful for the opportunity to partner with West Texas Baptist churches that have a long-standing relationship with a regional seminary.”**

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If you give the devil an inch, he will take a mile. On occasion, the *Gospel Gleaner* has brought to your attention the use of denominational professors for special lectureships in the universities affiliated with the Lord’s church. Doing so has raised the ire of the people in our schools who invited them. Yet Jesus said as much would happen when He said, “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed” (John 3:20).

Abilene is one such school. Abilene was once a great school for preachers! The early Abilene Christian College lectures contain some of the best sermons ever printed in this country.

Men like Whiteside, Sewell, and Baxter saw to it. I would like to share with you a statement made by former ACU president, Batsell Baxter, in the 1924-25 Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures. After writing about the obligation the school had to the Lord and the church, he concluded by saying,

“I pledge you today that Abilene Christian College shall remain true to

the Lord in the teaching in her classrooms, that this institution shall remain true to the Lord in the lives of its teachers. Our boys and girls shall know why we exist as a religious people. They shall be taught what we believe and why we believe it as Christians and where the Bible teaches it. That they shall know what the Lord shall have his people do” (p.19-20).

What would he say today? Abilene did not stoop to these depths overnight. They began by giving the devil an inch. One compromise led to another and then another. The digression of Abilene is not *news*. While one or two exceptional teachers might have remained in their Bible department, it can be rightfully said that this school has been untrustworthy for a generation or better. If the Baptists succeed in the “faithful formation of ministers” it will be the first time in a long time that has occurred on the Abilene campus!

What has happened to Abilene should put every university, school, and their supporters affiliated with churches of Christ on notice. If you give the devil an inch, he will take a

mile. If you (the university or school) choose to dabble in the sin of denominationalism by staffing your faculty with denominational teachers, using denominational preachers and authors to speak on your chapel services and fund raisers, and inviting denominational professors to lecture on biblical matters for special lectureships, you are on the same path as Abilene once was. They have arrived at their destination. Look at it. Consider it. Is this where you want to be in the future? Is this what you want for your university? Will this be your legacy?

### **An Alternative**

Some may believe it is too late to clean house in these schools. "They are revolted and gone." I do not. It is time for many of them to take a long and hard look at what they have become and their relationship with the Lord's church. Hit the "reset button." Hold the people in the schools accountable for their actions. "If you resist the devil, he will flee from you." It is never too late to begin resisting the devil.

Churches, elders, and preachers must also bear some responsibility for what is happening in these schools. If we refuse or are reluctant to preach on the sin of denominationalism and the distinctive nature of the Lord's church, this is what will occur – not only in schools but in churches and families as well. The people at Abilene clearly do not believe denominationalism is sinful. Were they ever taught that it is sinful? They clearly do not believe in the distinctive nature of the Lord's church,

or that the churches of Christ are the Lord's church. Were they ever taught?

Not only is their understanding of the church found wanting, but also their understanding of the plan of salvation. The "Baptist theology" to be taught on their campus fails to answer correctly the two most important questions pertaining to a person's salvation: (1) What must I do to be saved? And (2) What must I do to remain saved? Abilene's dean is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the west Texas Baptists. To what end? The Baptists are not going to quit being Baptists. They have made it clear in the press release that they are going to continue training "Baptist" ministers and teaching "Baptist" theology.

Even so, Abilene is "deeply grateful for the opportunity to partner" with them. My prayer is that one day Abilene will again be grateful to partner with faithful west Texas *churches of Christ*!

They have yet to learn that you cannot sit at two tables at once. When they park their feet beneath the table of denominationalism they are no longer sitting at the Lord's table. You cannot sit at two tables at once. "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:21). As in the case of Abilene, we see that if the schools continue yielding ground to the devil, eventually no place will remain for them to stand. When that occurs, we who remain faithful to the

Lord will no longer be able to stand with them.

Is it not past the time that the people who are being entrusted with a measure of responsibility for the spiritual development of our children and future ministers be held accountable for their understanding or lack thereof in these matters? Is it not past the time for Christians to cease supporting schools who have ceased supporting the church? Has not the time passed for Christians to cease from their naivety and biting hook, line, and sinker the reasoning of the schools who do such things?

Abilene "Baptist" University cannot spin this disgrace in any way to appeal to faithful Christians who long for an end to denominationalism and a return to New Testament Christianity. We have urged souls to come out of these manmade churches; Abilene would have them return. We have taught souls to see the distinction between the gospel and the doctrines of men; Abilene would have them believe there is no distinction to be made. We have taught souls belief and practice are matters of the faith; Abilene views them as matters of academics. I fear, like many of the colleges and schools, academics as become their faith.

## "I'm not the man I used to be."

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Raymond Elliott

There is a religious song that is often sung by different quartets, groups, and individuals, emphasizing how one's life has been changed "by Calvary," noting the death of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the sins of the world. Regardless how a person has lived previously, when a person believes in Jesus Christ as being the Son of God, is penitent of sins, and obeys the gospel of Christ, his/her sins are forgiven and forgotten (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Hebrews 8:12).

Mankind is not so merciful and forgiving. Recently, I read that Boeing's communications chief was "forced to resign because of an article he wrote criticizing women in combat in 1987 – more than 30 years ago – when he was a Navy fighter pilot." The gentleman explained he no longer held the same views about women serving in the armed services as he did when he was a young man. Nevertheless, he was forced to resign his position with the company. This is a prime example of the extremes we are now witnessing in our nation.

What if God treated mankind as those responsible for pressuring this person to resign from his work with this company? Consider the following men who said or did something that was not in harmony with the will of



God. The Lord forgave them and used them in His kingdom.

Abraham, the “father of the faithful,” was not perfect. In two incidents, he intended to deceive rulers to protect his life. When Abram went to Egypt, he was concerned because of the beauty of Sarai, his wife. He said to her, “Please say you are my sister that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you.” Thus, Pharaoh and others believed that Sarai was only a sister to Abram and not his wife (Genesis 12:10-20). While this statement was partially true, it was not the whole truth.

Then there was the time when Abraham and Sarah went to Gerar. While there, he told others, “She is my sister.” King Abimelech took Sarah. God intervened and the king did not touch her. (Genesis 20).

David, after much time and many obstacles, became King of Israel. God richly blessed him with abundant power and material possessions. Yet, he lusted after a woman, committed adultery with her, and had her husband killed (2 Samuel 11).

Peter denied his Lord three times (Matthew 26:69-75). The apostle Paul, prior to his conversion, persecuted the church (Acts 9). He referred to himself as being the “chief” of sinners (1 Timothy 1:12-15).

Abraham matured in his faith in God, and his belief “was accounted to him for righteousness” (Romans

4:3,5). King David was truly penitent of his sins (Psalm 32; 51). The apostle Peter was sorry for his denial of Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:75). Saul (Paul) believed in Jesus, repented, and was baptized to wash away his sins (Acts 9:9-11; Acts 22:16).

These individuals were not the men they used to be. God did not hold their past mistakes, faults, and sins against them. Have we not all thought, said, or written something that displeased God and then sought His forgiveness? We should be thankful for the infinite mercy of our Heavenly Father. God has given His children this blessed assurance: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12). “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).





## Remembering Artie Collins

Andy Erwin



“A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1).

“Artie Collins” is a good name in the Lord’s church. Wherever he went and wherever he preached, his name became synonymous with sound gospel preaching.

Artie was born July 11, 1927. He was reared in a denominational family, but through the help of his faithful and beloved Marie, he learned the truth and obeyed the gospel. He was married to Marie Myatt for sixty-six years until September 30, 2013, when her spirit left this world to be with the Lord. For Artie and their family, neither rubies, nor any precious gem could begin to compare to her value (Proverbs 31:10). To their union, God granted four children. Each child is now a faithful

Christian with faithful Christian children.

Over fifty-five years ago, Artie preached his first sermon on a Sunday night in Lyles, Tennessee. He was in the second graduating class of the Nashville School of Preaching. In 1966, Artie entered full-time ministry in Lynnville, Tennessee. In 1981, he and Marie moved to labor for the Springer congregation in Hohenwald, Tennessee, where they would stay for the next thirty years.

Brother Artie was influenced to preach the gospel by men like his brother Charles Collins, W.L. Cochran (a Hickman County educator and gospel preacher), Charles R. Brewer, the early faculty at the Nashville School of Preaching, and Harold Sain.

Brother Harold Sain had a tremendous influence upon Artie through his

chart sermons. Artie began preaching charts on bed sheets and cloth, as most preachers did during those years. His first chart sermon was stenciled on cloth. However, he soon found that he liked using the flannel graph technique better because it gave him the opportunity to study one point at a time with his audience. Through the years Artie made over 200 hand-crafted charts to go along with hand-made boards and stands. He preached these sermons in over 350 gospel meetings, often with dozens of responses in a single meeting. His chart sermons were produced in two books by Sam Hester and Hester Publications in Henderson, Tennessee. Artie also wrote a book of memoirs – *Ramblings of an Old Preacher*.

Artie was a friend to young preachers. While at Springer, he helped to train young men to preach in training classes and while they served as associate ministers. It has also been a distinct honor of mine to have Artie counted among the membership where I have preached. He was always a great encourager. He was a great teacher and preacher until his death on September 3, 2020, at the age of 93. He remained as sharp as ever! He continued to serve the Jackson Heights congregation in Florence, Alabama in any way he could.

I shall always cherish the times we shared together. Heaven only knows the good this man has done. I am thankful to have had him as a friend and mentor.

## Concerning the Collection

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David Pharr

Questions have been raised regarding weekly collections. Does 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 apply to the church today? Should money be collected for things other than benevolence? Should giving be a part of every Lord's Day assembly? How much does "as prospered" require? Is giving an act of worship?

Specific requirements for Christian worship are revealed in the context of New Testament history. There is no single text that defines the approved and required activities in the Lord's Day assembly. Instead, the Holy Spirit's method is to demonstrate authorized practices by historical precedents. For example, we know that from the beginning "the breaking of [the] bread" was part of congregational worship (Acts 2:42; cf. 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:20). It is when we come to the historical incident of Acts 20:7ff that we find the Lord's Supper on "the first day of the week." Jesus had commanded the observance of the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19). By an apostolic example, we know that the proper time for that observance is the first day of the week. Though not stated as a command, such apostolic precedents have the force of commands because they show in practice how the Lord's commands were to be obeyed.

Likewise, the practice of contributing financially every Sunday is established in the historical context of funds being raised for foreign benevolence. Prior to writing the first letter to the Corinthians, Paul had urged them to collect funds to send to help poor saints in Judea, which they had agreed to do (Rom. 15:26f). In 1 Corinthians 16:1f, he gave instructions on how money was to be collected. The circumstance was the need for the money to be ready by the time Paul arrived.

“Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come” (ESV).

“The first day of every week” was when the church would be together (cf. 1 Cor. 11:17f, 20, 33f). While they were together on the Lord’s Day would be the time for taking collections. What “each of you” had put aside for that purpose was to be collected together (“store it up”) week by week. Each person’s liberality was to be determined by his prosperity. In 2 Corinthians, his follow up letter, chapters eight and nine expand on these instructions. His immediate concern was the special collection for Judea, but the principles apply to all giving.

We do not know why he mentioned having given the same instructions for Galatia. It may have been because of some inquiry from Corinth. It need not be assumed that only these two places

had received such instructions. By the time he wrote 2 Corinthians, the Macedonians had already turned over funds for Judea. We are not told how money was collected in Macedonia, but there is no reason to assume it was other than “first day of every week” collections. Apostolic teaching was consistent in every place (1 Cor. 4:17).

Just as before Acts 20, nothing is recorded about the Lord’s Supper on the Lord’s Day, so also before 1 Corinthians 16 there is nothing that defines an orderly procedure for the collection of funds. However, knowing that funds would have been needed in all congregations, and knowing that congregations met every Sunday, it is reasonable to assume the practice of Sunday collections already existed. We cannot imagine that the Lord’s church had existed for decades without any plan for members’ contributions. Part of Paul’s ministry during his eighteen months at Corinth would have involved the proper organization and operation of the congregation. Though during that time he had been willing to forego financial support for himself (1 Cor. 9:12), it would have been necessary for the church to have funds for other purposes. Instructions for the special collection did not preclude collections at the same time for other purposes.

### **Church Treasury**

From the beginning there were financial needs which had to be supplied. The reference to “fellowship” in Acts 2:42 probably refers to mutual participation (by the members) in the

supplying of funds. In the earliest days of the church in Jerusalem, contributions to the treasury were described as money “laid at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:35ff). Later, we read of freewill giving for foreign benevolence, which was sent to the church treasury in Jerusalem to be used as determined by the elders (Acts 11:29f). The business of the seven men appointed in Acts 6 was to properly distribute church money. Some widows were under the charge of the church (1 Tim. 5:16). Certain elders were to be provided honorariums (1 Tim. 5:17f). Preachers should be supported (1 Cor. 9:7ff; Gal. 6:6). Money was sent to missionaries (Phil. 4:15f). God was glorified when members contributed liberally to help brethren and others (2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 6:10). Congregations had many financial obligations and opportunities, which would have made collections necessary.

### **Requirement or Recommendation?**

Was Paul giving a command, or was he only suggesting an option? “As I directed” certainly has an imperative tone. Other translations have “orders,” “told . . . to do.” In other contexts the terminology has the force of a command. Paul had told the Corinthians that the things he wrote are “the commandments of the Lord” (14:37). The question has been raised, however, as to why in his follow-up epistle he said, “I speak not by commandment” (2 Cor. 8:8). Some have argued that this diminishes the seeming force of his

previous instruction, that what he had “directed” was not actually required. But is that the apostle’s intent? Surely Paul does not mean to counter what he had previously ordered. Neither does he mean there is no commandment at all to give. What is it that is not commanded?

The context is the remarkable liberality of the Macedonians. The amount they gave had exceeded what their circumstances indicated might reasonably have been expected (2 Cor. 8:1ff). This referred to percentage. The degree of one’s liberality is measured by percentage. The widow of Mark 12:43f gave 100%. Whatever was the percentage given by the Macedonians, it was more generous than Paul had expected. Paul wanted to encourage the Corinthians by the Macedonian example. There was, however, no “commandment” to match their percentage. The percent given by the Corinthians was to be determined by the sincerity of their own love and their own prosperity, not by whether they went so far as had the Macedonians.

The point is the same in 2 Corinthians 9:7. “Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (NASB). The ESV wording is “Each one must give as he has made up his mind.” Paul’s purpose is not to excuse anyone from responsibility. Rather, he is diplomatically encouraging them to do what is right and to do it with the right spirit. That a command is not to be viewed as

burdensome or unpleasant does not make it less a command. No command of the Lord is to be obeyed with reluctance or under pressure (cf. 1 John 5:3). Nonetheless, it is expected that every command, even the command to give, is to be obeyed. That everyone should do his part, as well as the blessedness of liberality, is too obvious in the teaching of Jesus to doubt its importance.

### **According to Prosperity**

Liberality has always been judged according “as he may prosper.” It is expected that the poor give less and the rich more – in amounts, not necessarily in percentages. A rich person can give a larger percent and still be wealthy. The Lord’s attention is not so much on how much one gives as it on the amount he keeps. “For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have” (2 Cor. 8:12). What each person gives is to be determined by his own circumstances. His liberality is “as he has purposed in his heart” (NASB), “as he has made up his mind” (ESV).

Based on one’s own circumstances, he must decide for himself how much to give, but whether to give is not optional, nor is one excused from giving liberally (Rom. 12:8). Percentages vary according to ability and attitude, but God knows the difference between a willing mind and a covetous mind. He knows the difference between honesty and pretense, between being responsible in supporting the work and

tightfisted neglect. (See Acts 5:ff.) To the extent one prospers, to that extent he is a steward. It is required that stewards be faithful (1 Cor. 4:2; cf. Lk. 16:2).

### **Approved Example**

Paul’s instructions to Corinth assure that giving into the church treasury every Sunday has divine approval. What are proper practices for churches today are determined by what were proper practices then. It has sometimes been argued that inasmuch as Paul’s instruction pertained only to the collection for Judea, that therefore it is not an example we need to follow, that there is no command to contribute in support of the congregation’s work. Such a requirement is implied, however, in the Lord’s expectation that such work be done. If weekly collections were in order to support one work of the church (i.e., foreign benevolence), weekly collections are in order to support all works of the church (e. g., missions, edification). Historical incidents serve as precedents when they demonstrate the way commands were obeyed.

This model for congregations taking collections is no less a model for individual Christians participating. Just as in the historical incident at Troas we find a precedent for Communion every Sunday, so by the instructions to Corinth we can know we are following an approved method for fulfilling our church financial obligations. A congregation which has weekly collections is following the biblical pattern. An individual who

gives on the Lord's Day as he is prospered is following the biblical pattern. God is pleased when "each one of you" "on the first day of every week" gives "as he may prosper." The expression "as he may prosper" need not to be restricted to income of the current week, but "according to his ability" (Acts 11:29) and "according to what a person has" (2 Cor. 8:12). What a person has may be much more than a Saturday paycheck. Thanks be to God for every kind of prosperity.

### **Joyful Worship**

One of the components of the joy of Christian living is liberal giving (Acts 20:35). Christians are commanded to give (1 Tim. 6:18), to give generously (2 Cor. 8:7; 9:6; Rom. 12:8), and to be fair in sharing financial responsibility (2 Cor. 8:14). Some giving is in private deeds of charity (Eph. 4:28; 1 John 3:17). Some is for emergency causes (Acts 11:28ff; Rom. 15:25f). Some is given into the church treasury week by week for the ongoing work of the church. Such participation is worship, offerings which glorify God (2 Cor. 9:13). Such sacrifices please God (Heb. 13:16), "a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God" (Phil. 4:18).



## **The Bible: A Christian Evidence Textbook**

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John T. Polk II

### **The Bible *IS* a "Christian Evidence" Textbook!**

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Faith is based upon "evidence" and it is a solid conviction of "things not seen." Since "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17), then the best "evidence" for faith is "the word of God" and the Creator's Wisdom to which it points! If not, why not?

The Bible makes statements that point to external data, and that makes it a "Christian evidence" textbook. For example:

**Every effect must have an adequate cause.**

"For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4); "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3). All scientific evidences and facts prove that matter is not eternal and must have had a beginning. The Bible begins with one of the

strongest proofs possible that there had to have been The Creator: from nothing came something caused by The Power ("God") who is the uncaused First Cause!

**There is magnificent design and order to life.**

Jesus pointed to the inherent order in agriculture when He said:

"For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come" (Mark 4:28-29).

Such order is impossible without the imposition of law from a Higher Power.

Speaking of the intricacies of human development and birth, David said:

"You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them" (Psalm 139:13-16).

The millions of details involved in each human's normal birth are mind

boggling, and faith building, indeed. The birth of one human demands an imposing attention to details totally impossible without completing the plan of God, the Maker.

Abraham "waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder [Greek, "technician, craftsman"] and maker [Greek, "framer"] is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Truly, the "technology" of life is impossible and nonsensical without the All-powerful, All-intelligent Creator God!

**Life cannot/has not/will not come from non-living matter.**

It is the "God, who made the world and everything in it...gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24-25). There is no construction of material substance that has been brought to life without adding some living components to the experiment. Scientific fact shows that life had to be added to the material earth from an outside source in order for anything living to exist. It is only prejudiced ignorance that would attack Christian faith without dealing with what the Bible, itself, says!

**Atheism Equals Ignorance**

Speaking of "prejudiced ignorance," one readily thinks of an "atheist," a word meaning, "without faith in deity," hence a person who is without faith in God. No one can be an atheist without denying all the evidence for God's existence and the scientific conclusion that necessitates it as fact. In

other words, atheists are known for what they confess they do not or cannot know. "Ignorance" is defined as "the absence of knowledge." It is practically impossible, then, for any atheist to ridicule a believer's "faith" because a Bible-believer has evidence for that faith, but an atheist has reduced his or her intelligence to denial! The evidence for God is so abundant that an atheist can believe there is no God only by closing his/her mind to the factual evidence that would prove otherwise! Atheists have a big void throughout their core intellect, and are as Gentiles, "in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:17-18).

By willfully omitting God from their consideration, the Atheists have "blackened out" their understanding, "gutted" their rationality, and grope about like blind people who have rejected any assistance they have been offered! Belief in God is a normal conclusion of a natural mind that has been given all the evidence.

Atheism is, thus, an unnatural response.

Since God does exist, then His power as Creator justifies His power to: (1) define marriage as one man and one woman united for life (Genesis 2:18-25) and accept no other (Mark

10:2-12); (2) give a day of rest to the Israelites in Moses' Law (Deuteronomy 5:12-15) and not to anyone else; (3) be remembered in our days of youth (Ecclesiastes 12:1), not just "old age;" (4) come to earth as the Christ with total miraculous power over the Creation (John 1:1-18) unlike everyone else who has ever lived; (5) hand over the scroll of judgment against the Jews into the hand of His Son (Revelation 4:1-5:8) which was carried out in the 1st century. Since God, as Creator, can do with His Creation as He wishes ("our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases," Psalm 115:3); and, since no human is Creator (God asked: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding," Job 38:4); then all humans who are created beings ("creature," Mark 16:15-16) will fail to conquer and control the world! There is no policy, people, or plan that God will allow to take His place as Controller of His Creation (Romans 1:19-25). "Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19).





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# THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

1 John 3:1-3

## Introduction

1. The subject of hope is a great Bible doctrine. I Corinthians 13:13; Romans 15:4; Ephesians 4:4
2. Define: "Desire with confident expectation."
3. It is possible to have one without the other. (Illustrate)
4. Let us study with some basic questions:

## I. What Is the Christian's Hope?

*"It doth not yet appear what we shall be."*

- A. The appearing of the glory of Christ. Titus 2:13
- B. The Resurrection by the power of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- C. Being united with the person of Christ. Philippians 1:23
- D. Being conformed to the image of Christ. Philippians 3:21
- E. Spending eternity in the presence of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 4:17; John 14:1-3

## II. What Is the Basis of The Christian's Hope?

*"Beloved now are we the sons of God."*

- A. We are children because of His love. 1 John 3:1
- B. We have an inheritance because of sonship. Romans 8:17
- C. We are children by birth. John 3:1-3
- D. We have hope because we are in Christ. Galatians 3:26, 27; Ephesians 2:12

## III. What Does This Hope Do For Us?

- A. Desire to be purified. 1 John 3:3; 1 Timothy 5:22
- B. Anchors us. Hebrews 6:19; I Corinthians 15:58
- C. Gives us reason to rejoice. Romans 5:2
- D. Enables us to testify to others. 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 1:12

## Conclusion

How strong is your desire to go to heaven? How confident is your expectation about going there? That is about your hope!

- Mike Kiser

# Working Out Your Own Salvation

---

Tom McLemore

In Philippians 2:12, 13, the apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.”

I fear that this passage has been misunderstood. Have you thought that it teaches self-justification? Likewise, some may have understood it to teach that no one can tell you what you need to do to serve God—you must “figure it out” for yourself.

Indeed, the New Testament teaches justification in Christ through obedient faith. God has revealed the way of salvation rather than leaving each one to” find his own way.” However, it is very important to recognize that this statement is written not to alien sinners, but to *saints*. “Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Philippians 1:1). From this it should be obvious that the passage does not address salvation from past sins. Those who are urged to work out their own salvation have already been saved from their past sins and are Christians. Consider carefully the components of this statement.

## Salvation

Salvation in this statement is apparently more than something that God gives us or that God does for us (although that is one aspect of salvation). This statement suggests that salvation also involves something God seeks to *make* of us. It refers to a work God is doing in us. “And I am sure that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

We might draw an analogy. The convicted criminal is presented with two options. One option is merely to pay one’s debt to society (compare forgiveness of past sins). The other is to pay one’s debt to society AND to be *reformed*, becoming what he should have been to start with, a good, productive citizen.

When God has done the work he is doing in us, what will we be? From other statements in the epistle, we gather what Paul has in mind. “And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God....that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without

blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain" (Philippians 1:9-11; 2:15, 16). "Work out your own salvation" is a wake-up call for the Christian who thinks salvation begins and ends in the water of baptism!

### ***Working Salvation***

The Greek word that is translated "work out" is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament with respect to preparing a habitation (Exodus 15:17), fashioning wood (Exodus 35:33; cf. 1 Kings 6:36), dressing a vineyard (Deuteronomy 28:39), and making products from grapes (Numbers 6:3).

The idea is that you have a plan, a design, or a recipe, and then you *work that design into reality* (by carving the wood, building the house, preparing the dish, etc.) This is what Paul says Christians are to do. We are to put forth all our effort to see that *God's design and purpose for us becomes reality*. With ourselves as the raw material, we are to strive to cooperate with God as He works us into the final product.

### ***Working Out Salvation***

Once again considering the term as used in the Greek Old Testament, we find an interesting use of this word in Judges 16:16 (Codex Alexandrinus). There, it refers to what Delilah did to Samson to get him to tell her the secret

of his strength. "And it happened that when she worked him out with her words all night and nagged him, he became discouraged unto death." She kept "working" on him until she had "worked it out" of him.

The idea expressed is that of seeing the task through until it is complete. Compare this "working out" your salvation to "working out" at the gym. In both of these examples, the concept is that of *seeing it through*. As we noticed in Philippians 1:6, God is determined to see us through to the completion.

Jesus and Paul are the models of this idea. Jesus "worked out" His obedience "unto death" (Philippians 2:5-11). Hear His profound words just before He breathed His last: "It is finished." Paul was going to defend his gospel whether in life or in death, knowing that it would "turn to his salvation" (Philippians 1:12-21). We ought to be determined to see it through to the completion, also!

### ***Working Out Your Own Salvation***

When Paul was with the Philippian saints, they always obeyed, but now he is absent. It would be up to them to do God's will on their own. He had confidence that they could do it. "What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:9).

Paul's exhortation stresses the independence of maturity. Children, when small, must constantly be commanded

to obey. When they mature, we expect them to do what is right *on their own*, without having to be told. This is the goal of training and leadership. Too many in the church won't serve and work without being reminded and prodded. Grow up!

Notice, however, that "your own" is plural. Though they were to work it out in Paul's absence, they could not work it out *without each other*! Paul places a practical emphasis throughout the epistle on unity. The task involved being what God desired for them to be *as a*

*church*, like-minded, "with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

Working out our own salvation is what we must be doing today. It is hoped that our study has made us more aware of what this involves. How serious a matter is this? How serious ought we to be about it? The answer to these questions lies in the concluding words of the exhortation: "with fear and trembling!"



"Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!..." (Nahum 1:15)

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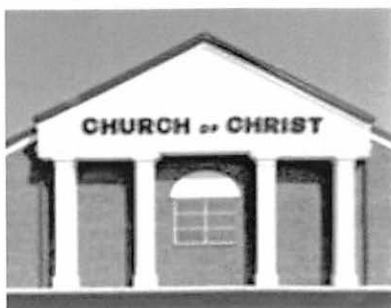
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# Gospel Gleaner

*For the Lord, His Word, and His Church*



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## Where Do We Go from Here?

*Biblical Wisdom for the Next Generation*

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## **“The Churches of Christ Greet You” (Romans 16:16)**

The West Fayetteville Church of Christ in Fayetteville, Tennessee is pleased to bring you the *Gospel Gleaner*. Are you familiar with the churches of Christ? Have you ever attended our services before?

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The church belongs to Christ. It is His church. We, therefore, seek to honor Christ as our Lord in our worship, teaching, and daily walk.

One can be added to this sacred assembly and spiritual kingdom by hearing the gospel preached (Romans 10:17); believing the facts concerning Christ as revealed in the gospel (John 8:24); repenting of sin (Luke 13:3, 5); confessing faith in Christ (Romans 10:9-10); and by being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:11-13; Galatians 3:26-27) to wash sins away by the blood of Christ (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 1:7).

For more information about the church or God’s plan of salvation, we offer free Bible correspondence courses and personal Bible studies. Call or write to us.

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Andy Erwin, Editor

Correspondences, news and notes, and article considerations can be sent electronically to [andyervin@gospelgleaner.com](mailto:andyervin@gospelgleaner.com). The West Fayetteville Church of Christ reserves the right of discretion in deciding which correspondences, news, notes, and articles to publish.

## **Gospel Gleaner**

Vol. 32 ♦ No. 6

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### **The Gospel Gleaner**

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## **Inside this Issue**

Andy Erwin

The November-December issue of the *Gospel Gleaner* concludes this year's brief journey through the Restoration Movement in America. In this issue we will look ahead and ask the question, "Where do we go from here?" Topics discussed include preaching, training preachers, Christian journalism, church leadership, and evangelism. We also have a variety of topics pertaining to other issues critical to the Christian faith.

In this issue we are honored to have men writing for us who write passionately from years of experience in ministry and a deep love for the Lord's church. We would do well to read with equal care the wisdom presented in these articles. For those who love the church, the hope of having a bright future and bringing glory to God are foremost concerns. We desire to see the church grow and be blessed. It is with this hope in mind that we present this final issue of 2020 to our readers.

Lastly, let me say "thank you" to every person who has contributed to the *Gospel Gleaner* in 2020. The readership has increased by 1/3 this year. We appreciate the many fine articles which have been written, the monetary donations that have been made, and the many kind words of encouragement that have been expressed. Thank you for your contributions to the paper!

# Preaching the Word: Where Do We Go from Here?

---

David Pharr

A preacher was needed in Ephesus. Paul urged Timothy to take the job (1 Timothy 1:3ff). One immediate need was for a good man who could authoritatively order presumptuous teachers to cease their useless and false speculations. Other responsibilities included instructing the church in such things as the role of men and women in worship, acceptable elders and deacons, and benevolence responsibilities, as well as Christian conduct. That Timothy, a young man, would be recommended for such demands and challenges shows Paul's confidence that he was ready.

It has been imagined in many circles that Timothy was positioned at Ephesus in a hierarchal office. Some suppose him to have been appointed as "Bishop" of Ephesus, others call him the "Pastor." Some Bible editions and commentaries will refer to the letters to Timothy and Titus as "Pastoral Epistles." (Careful Bible students know "bishop" and "pastor" apply properly to the elders of a congregation as the only ones with governing oversight.) Timothy was only a brother and only a preacher, not an official, but he was a "man of God" (1 Timothy 6:11). The point is that his authority for doing what needed to be done was not in a ruling capacity, but in the persuasive power of truth. All he had authority to do was to "preach the word" (2

Timothy 4:1ff). There is, however, more power in one verse of truth than in all the pontifical offices ever invented.

When Jesus had extolled the importance of John's ministry, He then assured that "he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Luke 7:24). We mention this to remind you that many who may have seemed "least" have been great workers and dedicated servants; yet they may be hardly noticed in history. History does, however, recognize that preachers have made a difference in the cause of the kingdom. Though we know all is according to the providence of God, nevertheless we recognize that stories of progress tend to focus on the ability, soundness, and zeal of certain preachers. This will be found in Acts.

It will also be found in early annals of the church in America—Thomas Campbell, Barton Stone, etc., followed by such as Moses Lard and J. W. McGarvey. Likewise, in more recent decades—Gus Nichols, Hugo McCord, Thomas Warren, Guy N. Woods, etc. Such a sampling of names is not intended to leave anyone out or to overly venerate anyone; rather the point is the difference preachers have made. Where would we be now were it not for such men? No, we do not know what might have been, but we do know

that powerful preaching has always made a difference.

Where do we go from here? Again, it must not be forgotten that God is the source of all good. It seems reasonable and safe to say, however, that the quality and faithfulness of preachers will be a major factor for the future welfare and progress of the church. This does not discount what is expected of others, especially elders (Acts 20:28ff). Paul knew the vital part of elders, but he still thought they needed a preacher like Timothy. The question of where we go from here pertains to the kind of preachers who will work among us.

It is characteristic of my generation—I am an octogenarian—to lament that many of the great preachers of the past may never be replaced. It is a sad fact that too many who fill our pulpits now lack the depth and power that was even in the lesser-known evangelists who labored tirelessly during the years of our more rapid growth. It is also a fact that some appear to be “educated beyond their intelligence,” as someone opined, and “having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling” (1 Timothy 1:6). On the other hand, we are thankful that there are many who are skilled in their presentations and loyal to the Book. They have used their opportunities for better education, have developed skill in speaking, and love the church. Their youth is not to be despised (see 1 Timothy 4:12).

The need is for more good preachers. Families need to realize this. There is no better aspiration for dedicated

parents than that their son might become a gospel preacher. There can be honor and service in medicine, in law, and in a great many other professions; but no work is more worthy of a man's best talents than preaching the word of God. Too often the culture of worldly success has been counter to this noble ambition.

Families will help the church and they will help themselves when their home atmosphere is positive about preachers and preaching. It seems obvious that Timothy's mother and grandmother prepared him for ministry (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15).

Congregations ought to be rearing preachers. Timothy came from a church where the elders commended him to the ministry (1 Timothy 4:14). In modern times there have been some relatively small churches from which have come remarkable numbers of dedicated evangelists. On the other hand, some otherwise impressive congregations seem to have contributed little toward encouraging men to choose preaching as a life's work.

Various reasons exist as to why boys might want to grow up to be preachers. One effective preacher I know said it was because of the visiting preachers he heard as a boy. We have tried to plant the idea by asking little fellows, “Are you going to be a preacher when you grow up?” Some churches have “Timothy” classes. Some send boys to camps where they can learn skills and develop zeal.

Others financially assist men who are willing to enroll in schools of preaching.

In years past, Christian colleges were well known for the good preachers that developed out of their classes. Some people thought making preachers and preacher's wives was the main reason for the schools. Now, emphasis seems to be more toward education for numerous other professions. We do not question the need for broader education, but administrations and faculties should not forget their opportunities to encourage preaching as a life's work.

Timothy's "higher education" was under Paul. What an opportunity! The closest thing I had to that was in classes and conversations with such men as H. A. Dixon, G. K. Wallace, and others when Freed-Hardeman was a junior college. Through the years, by their writing, lectures, and conversations, I have continued to be spiritually enriched by many wise and scholarly

men of God. Whether beginning or experienced, every brother can keep on learning from the experience of others. For many, the best option for preacher training is in schools of preaching. Such schools have the advantage of instructors who themselves have had many years of experience as preachers.

Remembering that only the Lord knows the future, our observation is that for churches to go forward, we will need more of the right kind of preachers. Some have more natural ability than others. Some have a better disposition. Training is important, but bare training, even at its best, will not make a good preacher. We need men of sterling character, men who will persevere, men who can't help but preach because, like the prophets, God's word is a fire in their bones (Jeremiah 20:9). Such men love the truth, hate error, and are zealous and jealous for Christ's church.



*"Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!..." (Nahum 1:15)*

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# Training Preachers: Where Do We Go from Here?

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Andy Robison

Training preachers is a complex task with many factors to be faced and fields of study needed. How do we train preachers for an increasingly atheistic society? It is beyond doubt that society has shifted dramatically from 50-60 years ago. Back then, atheists were hard to find. A door-knocking approach that asked people, "If I show you this in the Bible, will you believe it?" had some appeal. No longer. Even among Bible believers, knowledge levels have drastically (in general) decreased.

The training I received in the 1980s I believed to be good. It focused a lot on learning the text and how to answer false doctrines in Christendom. That is still needed. Now, however, preachers are going to need a lot more training in Christian Evidences. They will encounter people who do not believe in God. Are they trained to discuss the matter? Can they answer the shallow atheist objections? Are the potential preachers versed in the Cosmological (Cause and Effect) Argument, the Teleological (Design) Argument, the Moral Argument? Do they know philosophically and logically how to defend the existence of God?

Preachers will need studies in logic and philosophy. Such is what Paul used in Acts 14 and 17. To convince pagan crowds of an unseen Creator God, he appealed to their reason and

even cited pagan philosophers as their quotes fit his argumentation. Fear of philosophy might emanate from the warning not to be deceived by it (Col. 2:8), but that philosophy is coupled with "empty deceit." There is legitimate philosophy.

Someone working in science who steps outside of the sphere of repeatable experiments and hypothesizes about one-time events is usually entering the philosophical world. This is where one's cosmogony is determined. What does one believe about the beginning of the world? Evolutionists take the evidence and mold it to an atheistic alleged cause. Christians see how the evidence fits the revealed cosmogony of the Bible. Either way, the beginning of the world becomes more of a philosophical and logical question than a scientific one. Preachers will therefore need such studies.

Preachers will need study in epistemology (knowing how to know) and history. Subjects like these surround the study of the validity of believing the resurrection of Christ. While it is true that schools offer classes in such, it needs to be emphasized both to students that they need to so focus and to churches that the focus is good. Older Christians might not see the need for a preacher to engage in such study or to preach such lessons, but this is shortsighted and unhelpful to the younger

generations in the daily battles they face.

One well-meaning brother once remarked to me after I did a series of lessons on Christian Evidences, "I'm glad you're done with that. We already believe that." However, there were teens in that church fighting that battle at school every day. We had already lost one to evolutionism. I strongly disagreed with his assertion. After all, a large part of Christianity is being reminded of things (2 Pet. 1:12-14; 3:1).

Preachers need a lot of cultural training. The rapid shift in my short lifetime is mind-boggling. Servants of God now minister to what is often called a "post-Christian" society. Where does that lead? In my training, there was one class on World Religions. These, at the time, seemed so far away. Now, though, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and a host of other "non-Christian" beliefs seek coexistence in an open-minded, tolerant society, where the only intolerance that is shown is toward Christians.

Preachers need training in social issues. Sometimes Christians take very unchristian positions on public policies regarding things like abortion and marriage. The preacher needs to better prepare churches how to answer, and he needs to have the arguments down.

The preacher is going to need to have knowledge and increase in it. Studying the various religions is daunting. Answering the objections, and the counters to the objections, is time-

consuming. He is going to need to have his nose in the books and at the computer screen. It is his job to inform the congregation of these things so that they can have the knowledge as they evangelize. Remember, that is the plan (2 Tim. 2:2). If the preacher only is conducting Bible studies, building relationships, fostering them, and doing the slow teaching that will be required, growth is going to be minimal. Rather, it is his job to do the research, then teach the church so that they can teach others also.

Therefore, the preacher is also going to need to know how to teach. He is going to need classes and supervised experience in personal evangelism. He will get Homiletics classes, but will he get practical instruction in teaching Bible classes? The acquisition of knowledge is a life-long endeavor. Congregations are the key to motivating this attitude in the men who would fill the pulpit.

Congregations ought to start young. Revive the young men's training classes. Encourage boys to preach. Take them to see sound schools. Help them to afford it.

While they are in school, encourage them, but keep them grounded. An internship is a fantastic way to do this. Sometimes, heads can become rather big with newly found book knowledge. Working with an eldership and an experienced preacher is invaluable. It will cause them to realize they do not know everything. They will become



aware of the practical side and the human component of ministry. It will not be all theory in doctrine; they will see how the doctrine affects people's lives. They will notice how folks need to be helped through difficult decisions. Preachers desperately need an internship.

After they graduate, give them time to study. A letter from the vice-president of the school from which I graduated had advice to this effect: "While here, you haven't learned everything you need to know; you have only learned how to learn." Study is a lifelong endeavor. Congregations need to understand that and allow the preacher time to study. Do not load him down with all sorts of social and janitorial responsibilities—not that he is too good for them, but his focus needs to be elsewhere.

The church needs preachers—some of whom will be full-time and some of whom will be tent-making preachers, by necessity. The church must focus on providing the opportunities—through formal and/or informal training—to make these preachers as smart, as well-read, as grounded in knowledge as they can be. They need to know the Bible and they need to know the culture to which they apply it. It is a daunting job. One man's education becomes a team effort involving his family, his home congregation, maybe several congregations' and individuals' support, and his educators.

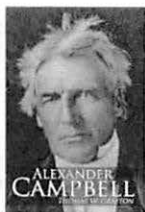
One preacher I know tells me that in the early years of his career, he would be in his study working and one of the elders of that congregation would stop by to say "hi." The preacher, in politeness, would offer him to come in and sit down, but that elder wisely refused, admonishing the preacher, "No, you just keep studying; keep studying."

One of the worst things that can happen to the church is to have poorly trained preachers. Make the effort to train them adequately. Potential preachers: take to heart all the investment that is in you. Don't be lazy. Don't use office time for gaming or chatting. Dig in and work. You need to know. The church needs you to know. The world needs you to know. There are multiple venues out there that offer an overwhelming amount of falsehoods. You have the great task of bringing the truth. You will need the Lord's help. Take it seriously and pray. Then study, study, study.



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# Christian Journalism: Where Do We Go from Here?

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Andy Erwin

Christian journalism has long been a staple of the Restoration Movement in America. We have yet to see the day when the movement was not coupled with Christian journalism. In fact, no one would have known about a “Restoration Movement” had they not written about it!

The *Christian Baptist* was Alexander Campbell’s first periodical. It was published from 1823-1830.

The *Christian Messenger* was Barton W. Stone’s paper, which began in 1826 and continued until close to his death in 1844.

The *Evangelist* was a paper Walter Scott began publishing in 1832. It was postponed for a while in 1835 in favor of writing his great book, *The Gospel Restored*, which was published in 1836. The *Evangelist* was resumed in 1836 and finally ceased forever in 1842.

The *Millennial Harbinger* was Alexander Campbell’s second and final periodical. Campbell chose to drop the name of the *Christian Baptist* and use this name after he had officially separated from the Baptists. This work ran from 1830-1870, although Campbell only served as its editor until 1865 when W.K. Pendleton, his son-in-law, became editor.

The *Christian Review* was Tolbert Fanning’s paper. This paper ran from

1844-1847. It was replaced by Jesse B. Ferguson’s *Christian Magazine*. Fanning also edited a couple of science and agricultural journals. His most notable paper, however, was the *Gospel Advocate*, which began in July of 1855.

The *Reformer* (1846), later the *American Christian Review*, was the preacher Benjamin Franklin’s paper. The *ACR* began in 1856 and continued until his death in 1878. Through the *American Christian Review*, Benjamin Franklin wielded a tremendous influence in the churches in the North, especially after the Civil War.

Isaac Errett promoted his progressive views in the *Christian Standard*. His was probably the most influential voice for liberalism in the church of that period. The first issue appeared April 7, 1866. The *Christian Standard* remains the oldest paper and publishing house among the Christian Church.

Moses E. Lard and J.W. McGarvey first worked together on *Lard’s Quarterly*. This paper is regarded by many to be one of the finest pieces of Christian journalism to come out of the Restoration Movement. Sadly, it ran for only five years (1863-1868) and was discontinued (like many good works) for a lack of funds and support.

McGarvey and Lard next worked together on the *Apostolic Times*. Along with three other Kentucky preachers, these men used this paper in

the 1870s to stand strongly against the instrument of music in worship.

David Lipscomb continued to use the *Gospel Advocate* to promote a conservative viewpoint in the South; however, its readership was not yet to the extent of the *Christian Standard*; neither was it circulated heavily in the North where the *Standard* remained the prominent paper.

Austin McGary (1846-1928) was a fearless gospel preacher. He is possibly best remembered for being the founder and editor of the *Firm Foundation* in 1884.

Twentieth century papers and editors were no less significant to the church. Goodpasture, Showalter, Lemmons, Wallace, and others had considerable influence in papers like the *Gospel Advocate*, *Firm Foundation*, and *Bible Banner*. New papers emerged near the end of the twentieth century and have continued twenty years into the twenty-first century.

Christian journalism continues to play a significant role in the education of the church. While some periodicals may be declining in their influence, brethren are still reading. However, some are reading from blogs and websites more than periodicals.

For periodicals to recapture the interest of their readers, they need to provide something that is deemed essential by their readers. While some papers may not want to address controversy, we believe a paper (or preacher, congregation, or Christian) cannot

intentionally avoid controversial subjects. Good periodicals have always provided a check and balance to liberalism in the church, sectarianism among denominations, and secularism in society. As much as ever before, we need Christian journalism to stand in the gap, expose the wrong, and proclaim the right in these areas of everyday life.

Christian journalism, however, is not solely a matter of standing against error. As has been learned from the Reformation Movement in Europe, one can stand against error and yet never completely stand for truth. Christian papers must stand for Christ, His word, and His church. Periodicals serve to inform the brotherhood about what is occurring in the church and in the world. If done correctly, Christian journalism can be an effective way of teaching God's word through its affirmative articles and negative articles. "Yellow" journalism, however, has no place in a Christian paper. A paper cannot manipulate the reader by creating a false narrative and be *Christian*. Editor "bishops" are not the answer either. The reader can go to heaven without ever knowing the editor of a paper. The reader cannot be saved, however, without ever knowing Christ.

As with anything we do for the Lord, we must determine to do it with the best of our ability, for the greatest possible good, and unto His everlasting glory. Let us keep these things in mind as Christian journalism moves into the future by God's providence.

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# Church Leadership: Where Do We Go from Here?

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Billy Lambert

The late J. T. Marlin, a dear friend and faithful gospel preacher, once said, “We are heirs of the past, stewards of the present, and guardians of the future.” As an elder in the Lord’s church, brother Marlin’s words have special meaning to me.

For years I have heard it said, “We are never more than one generation away from apostasy.” This is best illustrated by a passage in the book of Judges: “And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10).

Where will the Lord’s church be a generation from now? History has a way of repeating itself. What has happened in the past can happen again. There has never been a greater need to teach the principle of restoring the New Testament church. Those who have gone before us proclaiming the “Back To The Bible” plea are never to be forgotten.

We need the wisdom to look ahead and teach the next generation the truth of the gospel of Christ. The restoration plea is relevant in the twenty-first century. The education of the next generation must begin in the home and continue in the church.

## **Our Responsibility to the Next Generation**

Adam Clarke, in his commentary on the book of Psalms, suggests that in the seventy-eighth chapter there are five generations contemplated.

Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God. The children of Ephraim, being armed, and

carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.

Clarke points out at least three specific things about teaching the next generation.

- 1.) Children learn from their fathers (v. 3).
- 2.) They in turn are to teach the same things to the next generation (v. 4).
- 3.) Fathers should teach their children who in turn teach their children God's word (v. 5-6).

Next, the Psalmist assigns five reasons for teaching children:

- 1.) That they might know the will of God (v. 5-6).
- 2.) That they might "set their hope in God" (v. 7).
- 3.) That they might "not forget the works of God" (v. 7).
- 4.) That they might not "be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation" (v. 8).
- 5.) That they might have a steadfast spirit with God (v. 8).

When Moses made his farewell address to God's people, he had a new generation standing before him. Those who serve the flock of God as under-shepherds of Christ, have a new generation standing before them. Never have elders needed to stand in the gap more than in our perilous, turbulent times.

The truth must be preserved at all costs (Galatians 1:6-9; Philippians 1:17). Since there are some who will turn from the truth, in our efforts to restore New Testament Christianity in the twenty-first century, we must "try

the spirits" (2 Timothy 4:1-4; 1 John 4:1).

### **What Do We Teach the Next Generation?**

In a culture permeated with secular, humanistic thought, we must teach the **reality and existence of God**, the uncaused cause, the builder of all things (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 3:4; Psalms 19:1; Romans 1:19-21). The Jewish people not only taught their children that **God is one** (Deuteronomy 6:4), they taught them to **love God** (Deuteronomy 6:5). This is the foundation stone in living the Christian life (1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Matthew 22:37-40; Hebrews 13:1; John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:15; 4:20; 5:3).

Faith in **God's providence** must be taught (Romans 8:28; Matthew 6:33; Psalms 37:23; 1 Corinthians 10:13). There is the realm of God's general providence wherein He sheds blessings upon all men, both good and bad (Matthew 5:45; Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17).

Special providence is reserved for those "that love God" (Romans 8:28). The late Rex Turner Sr., in his book *Systematic Theology*, had this to say about angels: "The saints of God are surrounded no doubt by angels, invisible to them. Angels are primarily ministers of God's providence" (Hebrews 1:14).

The next generation must be taught the **distinctiveness of the Lord's church**. When Christ came into the region around Caesarea Philippi, He

made this announcement, “I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). Note, Jesus did not say, “I will build my churches” as of many, but “church” as of one. Further, He said, “I will build *My church*.” He said *My church* indicating ownership. He owns it because He paid the ultimate price for it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). With this understanding, we need to teach the next generation that the church is distinctive in several areas:

- Its **age** is a distinctive feature. It began on the first Pentecost after Jesus’ resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:1-47). Any church that began later than that is too young. One that began earlier than that is too old. The gospel was to go forth from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4), and this prophecy was fulfilled on Pentecost in Acts 2.
- The **worship** of the New Testament church is unique. It is in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Early saints met on the first day of the week, the Lord’s day (Revelation 1:10), for the purpose of partaking of the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30). This was and is done to remember Jesus (Luke 22:19).

On the Lord’s day there were prayers (1 Timothy 2:8; Acts 2:42), the giving of one’s means (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), the teaching of God’s Word (Acts 2:42), and the lifting up of voices in Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in

praise to God (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

- Another distinguishing mark of the New Testament church is its **mission**. The mission of the church is to preach the gospel to the lost world (Mark 16:15; Romans 10:13-18; Luke 19:18; Acts 5:42). The church is not in the entertainment business, but in the business of saving souls.
- Yet another distinctive feature is the **singularity of the church**. The church spoken of by Jesus was one (Matthew 16:18). The church that began on Pentecost was one (Acts 2:47). The second chapter of Acts is a history of the beginning of the church.

It was not one of many churches because no other church existed. The historical record of the church in Acts 2 was pre-denominational Christianity, before denominations were invented by men years after Pentecost. When men preach the same message as was preached by Peter on Pentecost, it produces nothing but saved souls who are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

The generation to come must be taught the **sacredness of marriage**. Marriage is a divine institution ordained by God in the beginning (Genesis 1:28; 2:22-24). God designed the relationship to be:

- **Monogamous** in design. One man for one woman (1 Corinthians 7:2).



- **Patriarchal** in government (Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22).
- **Procreative** in purpose (Genesis 1:28; 9:1). Children are to be born within the framework of marriage. A rejection of God's law regarding marriage has led to the breakdown of God's intention for marriage.
- **In-dissolvable** in nature (Genesis 2:22-24; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:1-4). It is an until "death do us part" relationship. Only for adultery is one allowed to put away his or her spouse (Matthew 19:9).

In a time where sixty plus million babies have been aborted in America since 1973, our youth must be taught the **value of life**. To kill a baby is

murder (Exodus 20:13). It takes a hard, cold, calloused heart to defend the taking of innocent life. There are many ways to prevent abortion. One way is to teach abstinence before marriage. Another way is adoption into a good, Christian home. We must teach our young to wait for marriage. There is too big of a price to pay to do otherwise. There is an eternal price (Galatians 6:7-8).

### Concluding Thoughts

None of us can foresee the future. The best we can do is to see to it that the present generation is properly taught. There are children yet unborn whose knowledge of truth depends upon the teaching of the present generation (2 Timothy 2:2).



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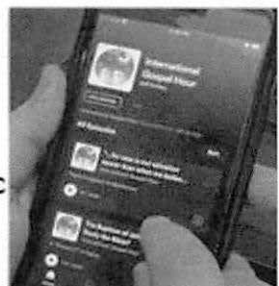
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Let's Get Social!    

# Evangelism: Where Do We Go from Here?

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Roger Shepherd

America has been paralyzed with great fear in 2020. However, some churches have maintained their evangelistic vision. For some, political strife and COVID-19 have produced doubt, unrest, and a loss of faith that God is in control. The preaching of the gospel can make America free.

The Bible shaped the life and work of Patrick Henry, who realized that the gospel was shaping the identity of the then new nation. His observation in 1765 before the Virginia House of Burgesses remains valid:

It cannot be emphasized too clearly and too often that this nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason, people of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here (Christopher Lensch, *A Christian Patriot*).

Realizing the significant work of evangelists, there is a great need to train preachers and evangelists. The church must “Reach Out or Fade Out!” We have learned from the COVID experience that the church is successful when each one teaches one. From the pew, many have learned that they can discuss salvation in Jesus with a friend, family member, or neighbor. As this

continues the church will grow and America will remain free.

## **WE MUST FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST**

The personal teaching ministry of Jesus started in Cana of Galilee where He performed His first miracle (John 2:1; 4:46). Cana is identified as Kana (*place of needs*), a place eight or nine miles north of Nazareth, which lies on the direct road to the Sea of Galilee and twelve miles in a direct course from Tiberias.

In Galilee Jesus and His disciples performed three successful ministries of evangelism (Matt. 4:23–5:1). Jesus made disciples by serving the community of Galilee, which led to personally teaching the lost. He sought the lost at weddings, fellowships, funerals, hospital beds, prisons, homes, with friends, and even while fishing (John 2:1ff). Jesus was a disciple maker (Mark 1: 14–17) and His disciples were also servants (John 2:2, 5, 11). Jesus also taught the apostles the importance of wisdom in winning souls on the limited commission (Matt. 10:5–16).

We should evangelize like Jesus and His disciples. We cannot be “stiff” and teach people. We must not have any strings attached. People must be comfortable with us first and then we can teach.

The growing church has a ministry of intentional evangelism to “make disciples” in every ethnic group (Matt. 28:19). Winning lost souls to the Lord is the most important work assigned by Jesus to His disciples. Jesus instructed disciples to “preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15) and proclaim a message of forgiveness to every ethnic group (Luke 24:47). God “sent Jesus” and He sends Christians today (John 20:21-23).

### **DUPLICATING THE MINISTRY OF JESUS**

First, for there to be effective evangelism, TEACHING must occur to explain truth, just as Jesus did in the synagogue of His hometown (Luke 4:14-37). The synagogues were assemblies for community teaching, worship, and study. Synagogues were also community centers, schools, and places to hold court. The early church taught in synagogues and in homes, continuing the same communal practice (Acts 2:42-47). The early disciples were busy “every day, in the temple, and from house to house, teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5:42).

Second, to be effective in evangelism, PROCLAIMING the gospel of the kingdom with conviction and persuasion must occur. Preach the gospel’s authority and power to save sinners (Rom. 1:16-17). Preach as a herald sent from God (Rom. 10:13-18). Preach to change lives (Rom. 6:23) and bring about awareness of eternal

accountability to all who hear (2 Cor. 5:10).

Third, HEALING must occur for the spiritual disease and sickness among the people. The most common Greek word for healing is *therapeuo*. It is the word from which derive our word “therapy.” It can mean: to serve or do service to another person (Matt. 20:28); cure or restore to health (Matt. 9:1-8); relieve hunger, disease, heal, and cure (Matt. 8:16-17; 15:32); and causes great stress relief through worshipping God. We can heal the hearts of people through outreach ministries and proclaiming the gospel.

### **WE MUST RESTORE EVANGELISM**

The restoration of evangelism is depicted in the Old Testament prophets. The greatest example is Ezekiel, who possessed a new spirit and heart for personal teaching. God commissioned him to restore a new heart and spirit in Israel by teaching the lost and unfaithful believers (Ezek. 3:18-22). He warned the leaders of Israel to shepherd the flock of God and seek the lost (Ezek. 34:1-16).

Evangelism has always been a significant part of the Restoration Movement. Cecil J. Sharp (1924) taught:

By evangelism we do not mean merely the conduct of revival or protracted meetings. We do not mean alone the work done by professional evangelists. By evangelism we do mean the use of the Word of God by every Christian to

win to Christ as nearly as possible everyone who is unsaved. The thought needs to be restored and reemphasized that every minister of the gospel is an evangelist first of all, and that second of all, every Christian is capable of being, and therefore, ought to be, a winner of souls to for Christ. One advantage of the plea is that an ordinary soul can teach it plainly and effectively. It does not require a professional nor a profound theologian to teach the way of life as given in the New Testament (*Evangelism*, 39–42).

### CONCLUSION

What is the lesson application? David “proclaimed glad tidings, grace, the righteousness of God and truth” (Ps. 40:9–10). Jesus taught publicly and one-on-one, successfully gaining many disciples (Matt. 19:16–26; John 3:1–5). He started a movement that continues now and will continue until eternity. The gospel enables us to help others learn and apply the knowledge and instruction of the scriptures (2 Tim. 3:14 ff). By learning of Jesus, these lost souls can have eternal life (Matt. 11:29–30). We are God’s evangelists!



## The Amazing Jesus

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Robert Waggoner

*“For unto us a Child is born . . . And His name will be called Wonderful” - Isaiah 9:6.*

Jesus was absolutely amazing! From the time of His birth, during His childhood, throughout His ministry, in His final days, and throughout history, Jesus has astonished people by His teaching and miracles, by His love and influence. Jesus is unique! He is a source of wonder.

When the angels announced His birth to the shepherds, they “made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it *marveled* at those things which were told them by the shepherds” (Luke 2:17,18). Following Jesus’ birth, when Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple for the required sacrifice, they “*marveled*” at the things spoken by Simeon about Jesus (Luke 2:33). At the age of twelve, when Jesus was sitting in the midst of Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions, “all who heard Him were *astonished* at His understanding and answers” (Luke 2:47). Even Joseph and Mary were “*amazed*” (Luke 2:48).

During His ministry, Jesus astounded His contemporaries by His doctrine. After Jesus delivered the sermon on the mountain, “the people were *astonished* at His doctrine; for He

taught them as one having authority” (Matthew 7:28-29). They were also *astonished* by His preaching in Capernaum (Mark 1:22). In Nazareth, everyone “*wondered* at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22). When Jesus bested the Pharisees in argument over whether to pay taxes to Caesar, “they *marveled* at His answer” (Luke 20:26). When Jesus silenced the Sadducees regarding marriage after the resurrection, the multitudes “were *astonished* at His doctrine” (Matthew 22:33).

When Jesus informed His disciples that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be saved, “they were greatly *astonished*” (Matthew 19:25). Because “all the people were *astonished* at His doctrine,” the scribes and chief priests sought some way to destroy Jesus (Mark 11:18). After listening to Jesus, the officers of the Pharisees said, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” (John 7:46).

Jesus’ miracles also astonished His contemporaries. When Jesus healed a palsied man who had been lowered to Him through the ceiling, “all were *amazed* and glorified God, saying, ‘We never saw anything like this!’” (Mark 2:12). When Jesus raised Jairus’ daughter back to life, “her parents were overcome with great *amazement*” (Mark 5:42). When Jesus cast a demon from a child, “they were all *amazed* at the majesty of God . . . everyone *marveled* at all the things which Jesus did” (Luke 9:43). When Jesus stilled the

stormy sea, “the men *marveled*, saying, ‘Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?’” (Matthew 8:27).

When Jesus cast a demon from a man who was in the synagogue at Capernaum, “they were all *amazed* and spoke among themselves, saying, ‘What a word this is! For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out.’” (Luke 4:36). When Jesus healed a man who was both deaf and dumb, “they were *astonished* beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak’” (Mark 7:37).

Jesus’ amazing doctrine and His marvelous miracles caused His fame to spread far and wide. “Then His fame went throughout all Syria” (Matthew 4:24). “And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee” (Mark 1:28). “And news of Him went out through all the surrounding region” (Luke 4:14). “The report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities” (Luke 5:15). “And they glorified God, saying, ‘A great prophet has risen up among us’; and, ‘God has visited His people.’ And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region” (Luke 7:36-37).

In His final days, Jesus amazed people. When Jesus was accused before Pilate, “Jesus still answered nothing,

so that Pilate *marveled*" (Mark 15:5). When Jesus died after only six hours on the cross, "Pilate *marveled*" (Mark 15:44). When the women found Jesus' tomb empty on the resurrection morning, "they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were *amazed*" (Mark 16:8).

The amazement of the early church toward Jesus took the form of joy in salvation. While the multitude was amazed on the day of Pentecost because they heard the apostles speak in languages they had never learned (Acts 2:7-8), those who believed "ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people" (Acts 2:46-47). An early disciple, Phillip, went to a city in Samaria. There he preached Christ and performed miracles. "And there was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8). Later, Philip taught and baptized an Ethiopian, who went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39). When a Philippian jailer heard and believed the word of God, he rejoiced (Acts 16:34).

Throughout history, people continue to be amazed by Jesus and His love. John Henry Newman, a former slave trader turned preacher, in 1779 wrote the ever popular and well-known hymn, *Amazing Grace*. People continue to be amazed by Jesus' influence. The closing paragraph of the anonymous article, *One Solitary Life*, says it well. "I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever

sat, and all the kings that ever reigned put together, have not affected the life of man upon the earth as has that *one solitary life*."

People continue to be amazed by His person. Napoleon once said about Jesus,

Everything in Him amazes me. His spirit outreaches mine, and His will confounds me. Comparison is impossible between Him and any other being in all the world. He is truly a being by Himself. His ideas and His sentiments; the truth that He announces; His manner of convincing; are all beyond humanity and the natural order of things . . . His birth, and the story of His life; the profoundness of His doctrine, which overturns all difficulties, and is their most complete solution; His Gospel; the singularity of His mysterious being; His appearance; His empire; His progress through all centuries and kingdoms; – all this is to me a prodigy, an unfathomable mystery . . . I see nothing here of men. Near as I may approach, close as I may examine, all remains above my comprehension – great with greatness that crushes me. It is in vain that I reflect – all remains unaccountable! . . . I defy you to cite another life like that of Christ.

Truly, Jesus is wonderful! He was wonderful in prophecy. He was wonderful during His lifetime. And He continues to be wonderful now to those who examine His life and teachings.

# What Loss Has Taught Me

---

Johnny Trail

A central theme of the Bible is the ability of God to use bad circumstances to accomplish His purposes. One must hasten to say that God is not the source of evil, but the omnipotence of God is demonstrated in His ability to accomplish His will in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds. This principle is validated by looking at various Old Testament people. For just a moment, we will consider one of those characters.

The patriarch Joseph is egregiously mistreated by his brothers. They throw him into a pit with the intention of murdering him (Genesis 37:20). Later his brothers sell the youth to Ishmaelite traders who in turn sell Joseph into slavery (Genesis 37:27, 36). In the service of his master, his master's wife accuses him of trying to rape her (Genesis 39:18-19). From this set of circumstances, he is cast into prison (Genesis 39:20) where he interprets the dream of two servants from Pharaoh's court. The interpretations come true and the surviving servant forgets what Joseph has done for him (Genesis 40:8-23).

After some time, Pharaoh has a dream that he wants interpreted. The surviving servant from Pharaoh's court remembers his imprisoned friend, Joseph, and his ability to correctly interpret dreams (Genesis 41:1-36). Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream and

becomes second only to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt (Genesis 41:40).

A drought in the Land of Canaan forces Jacob to send his sons to seek out greener pastures and better dwelling arrangements for his family (Genesis 42:1-2). They travel to Egypt where they unknowingly encounter the brother that they had sold to Ishmaelite traders many years earlier (Genesis 42:7-8). Ultimately, Joseph reveals his identity to them, and they receive deliverance from the one that they had formerly mistreated (Genesis 45:1-3).

This is a great example of God using bad circumstances to accomplish the deliverance of His people. Genesis 50:20 says, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive."

Sometimes we must search to find the blessings in the bad that we witness. If we just read the story of Joseph without the benefit of the last few chapters, we might think it awful that an innocent man suffered so much. When we read the entire story, we understand the workings of God in Joseph's life for the deliverance of the Jewish nation from famine and death.

Since we do not have the benefit of divine foreknowledge in life's circumstances, it is up to the people of God to seek the good when so much evil



abounds. God works in the lives of His people in a providential manner. If we did not believe this, prayer would be a waste of time.

In consideration of these things, it took this writer a long time to recognize the good that came from the loss of loved ones. This is not to say that I wanted to see any person pass away in my family or circle of friends. It is to say that watching people die has taught me valuable lessons about life. Please let me share a few of those with you dear reader.

### **Loss has taught me the value of time.**

When we are young, we think that time crawls by slowly. As we mature, we determine that time is fleeting and is no respecter of persons.

Indeed, the Bible has something to say about the brevity of time. James 4:13-16 says, "Go to now, ye that say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain': Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, 'If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.' But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil."

**Loss has taught me to take advantage of saying the important things while the opportunity exists.**

Colossians 4:6 says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." Solomon says, in Proverbs 25:11, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." So much of our communication is trivial and nonconsequential in nature.

We must treat our relationships as if they are short and precious in nature. Therefore, we are encouraged to dwell with our mates in an understanding, peaceful manner.

1 Peter 3:7 says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Furthermore, we are encouraged to work out conflicts with our brethren. Matthew 5:23-24 says, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Life is too short to remain in conflict with the ones we are supposed to love.

**Loss has taught me to value human relationships over money, status, or fame.**

Before losing my parents, I had always told them and my immediate family that I loved them. From that time forward, I resolved to repeatedly

tell my remaining family how I felt about them. Not a day goes by that I do not tell my wife and children that I love them.

**Loss has taught me to focus on things that are spiritual in nature rather than physical.**

My treasures are not things. My treasures are God, brethren, family, and friends. Matthew 6:19-21 says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

**Loss has taught me the importance and urgency of personal evangelism.**

One cannot take possessions or money with them to heaven. They can take other people. The Master has given us our marching orders for the enlargement of His kingdom, the church. Matthew 28:19 says, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

**Loss has taught me to be prepared for my own passing.**

Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." We must continually be ready for our lives to be over or for the return of Christ.

Even in loss there can be blessings. God's people are blessed even in the face of crippling loss. Sometimes we need to look for those blessings and seek to understand them.



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# A Letter to Diotrephes

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Gary Colley

Dear Diotrephes,

I am writing to you because of a deep concern for your eternal welfare. Examining your record as given in 3 John, and especially your regard for the preeminence among God's redeemed (v. 9), suggests that you should change the name in front of your church building to "Church of Diotrephes." The name "church of Christ" is, as is evident from your actions, no longer what the world calls "truth in advertising!"

At one time, the disciples chosen by Jesus during His personal ministry also desired to know who would be the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus taught them the lesson of humility with the example of a little child (Matt. 18:1-4). If your desire to be great in the kingdom of Christ is genuine, you are to be commended. But from the evidence discovered and disclosed by the inspired John, this does not appear to be the case. Your "prating," or childish, foolish, and idle chatter, against the beloved Christians and faithful apostle John is condemned now and will be eternally punished if you do not repent (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 17:30-31).

But further, you have gone so far as not to receive, but rather to harm, faithful brethren in the church. Our Lord said that when wrong actions against

His people are done, they are actually offenses against Him (Acts 26:14-15). These innocent souls do not belong to you but to the Lord. You have forbidden the members of the body of Christ to render faithful service by both changing the locks at the meeting place and by locking them out of the meeting house! You even attempted – yes, you and others who falsely declare themselves to be "the elders," – to bully and lord over others your arbitrary rule (1 Pet. 5:1-5). You have done these wrong acts personally, while falsely claiming they were generally accepted by "a number" of the other brethren, to withdraw from them and from their rightful place in the church (Rom. 8:31-39). You say you can do this, but God says you cannot without answering to Him (Gal. 6:7-8).

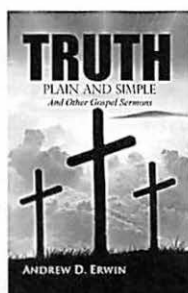
When the men of the congregation tried to meet to discuss this and help you out of your sinful course, you brought women to the meeting, though they are forbidden to do so by Paul's words to Timothy (1 Tim. 2:12). Are these women who participated to be numbered with the "silly women" of which Paul warned Timothy (2 Tim. 3:6-7)? This shows your total disregard for the authority of our Lord (Matt. 28:18).

You have even had "lawyer letters" sent to some of the faithful members in

an attempt to intimidate those who tried to help you! Those who are with you in your departures from the truth seem to be rubber-stamp “yes men” whom you have personally appointed; perhaps their special attention is on the money given to them by you each week. The checks you take such pleasure in passing out to these men seem to cause you to think you have secured a special and desired advantage. Then there are those who simply pick up signed, blank checks, which are then cashed for personal books, etc., without the oversight that other elderships would use. Some have reported that, for some time, one family always gathers tightly around the Lord’s table following every worship service, especially on Sunday evening. Sadly, it has been noticed that money that has been

contributed is not afterward found in the treasury! Several have noted that “it is placed in a shirt pocket” and not recorded for the purposes of extending the gospel.

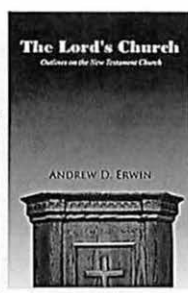
It is hoped that this missive will be received with the spirit of interest with which it is offered. The apostle John’s exhortation is ours also: “Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God” (3 John 1:11). We need to allow Isaiah’s words to penetrate deeply into our souls: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Isa. 5:20-21).



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# Let Us Stay Focused

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Guy Hester (1936–2013)

Some things that we do in life do not require special attention on our part. We can successfully complete some tasks while we have the radio blaring and are talking on the telephone at the same time. Other tasks, however, require us to be completely focused on what we are doing. One that drives a school bus had better keep his attention on the task at hand. The same goes for a doctor that is performing open-heart surgery or a restaurant worker that is pouring hot grease. In so many endeavors in life, for one to lose his focus can cause unpleasant results, even real disaster.

As Christians, we too need to stay focused. We need to always keep in mind who we are, what our purpose in life is, and where we are headed. If we fail to keep our focus, we will soon get off course and into great spiritual danger. On what should the children of God stay focused? Though there may be many correct responses to that question, we want to point out three obvious answers.

## **GOD'S CHILDREN MUST STAY FOCUSED ON JESUS.**

Jesus is the One we are following! Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). If we are to "follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:22), then we need to pay attention to where His steps lead

us. Yes, it is "Follow the Leader," but it is not a game. On the occasion when Peter walked on the water toward Jesus, in the beginning he walked with no problem.

Look at (Matthew 14:25-30): "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me."

Every indication is that at first he was focused on Jesus and not the strong wind. However, when Peter "saw the wind boisterous," his attention stayed on the potential danger and he was afraid. Surely a key lesson from Peter's stroll is for us to keep our eyes focused on the Lord and not the storms of life. All of us are involved in so many activities in life. Some of them are activities at school, at work, or at home. Some of them may be personal acts of kindness or part of the work of the church.

First century saints that were running “the Christian race” were exhorted to look “unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2). May we ever be like the apostle Paul, who said of himself, “For to me to live is Christ” (Philippians 1:21). Let us all strive to do our best not to lose sight of the fact that Jesus needs to be the center of our focus. He died that we might live through Him. That ought to be on our minds each day.

### **FOLLOWERS OF JESUS MUST STAY FOCUSED ON THE WORD OF GOD.**

Today there is a push to get away from “too much Bible.” We expect such from those outside of Christ. It is disheartening, though, to see such an attitude among brethren. Some twenty-first century saints spend little private time studying God’s word, and at the same time they want Bible classes turned into a social hour, shorter sermons, and bulletins that are filled with cute stories and social activities instead of Bible-related materials.

Brethren, we have to keep our attention on the word of the living God! It is God’s word that “is able to save” our souls (James 1:21). “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” It is God’s word that serves as a lamp for our feet and a light for our path (Psalm 119:105). It is God’s word that can build us up and give us “an inheritance among them that are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Nothing else can do that. Let us be like babies and “desire the sincere milk of the word that ye (we) may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

Keep this thought in mind: it is impossible to stay properly focused on Jesus without staying focused on His teaching. When some of Jesus’ disciples left Him to walk no more with Him, Jesus turned to the apostles and asked, “Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:67-68).

To turn away from Jesus was to turn away from the source of the words of life! Remember, Jesus said, “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46). Staying with Christ means staying with His word. Keeping focused on Jesus includes staying focused on His word.

### **FOLLOWERS OF JESUS MUST STAY FOCUSED ON HEAVEN.**

Going to heaven when our earthly life is over – that is what it is all about! Going to heaven must be the goal that pushes us, the reward that drives us, the destination on which our attention is focused.

By faith Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). He, along with Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob desired “a better country, that is, an heavenly” (Hebrews 11:16). You and I must share that same longing.

Hear the truth of (2 Timothy 2:4): “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” As soldiers of the Christ, we must not allow ourselves to become entangled or bogged down with the affairs of this earthly life. We must keep our focus on heaven! Jesus taught His disciples, “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matthew 6:20-21).

May our desires ever be set on things above, where Jesus sits at the

right hand of God. Paul expressed it this way in (Colossians 3:1-2): “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Satan would love to get us so distracted that we would not focus on that which we need to. May the Lord help us all to stay focused on Jesus, His word, and heaven as our final dwelling place.



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# What Is It All About?

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Ronald Bryant

The life of a child of God is a journey to spiritual maturity. The journey of life for each person is a journey to eternity. Along the way, many tasks beckon and many responsibilities arise, yet the focus of the child of God is not merely upon completing certain tasks or fulfilling duties and requirements. The objective of the child of God is to grow up in Christ and to be molded into His likeness.

I know of a man who made it his goal to memorize the entire New Testament. He was determined and seemingly practical, even setting a workable schedule. Yet after many months of literally wearing himself out reading, memorizing, reviewing, and testing, He began to have a major problem. He began to despise the task. The time came, he admitted, that he began to despise the Bible.

What was the real problem? Was his effort to memorize the New Testament such a bad idea? By his own admission, he was so set on reaching his goal that he literally lost sight of the real purpose and benefit of the Scriptures. Instead of feeding upon the word of God, and being nurtured by it, he became consumed with the task he had set for himself – to memorize the words of the text. On one level, the task controlled him; on another it eluded him. In time it created major problems for him.

It is not difficult to connect the dots. He memorized passages that he no longer loved. He quoted passages that he no longer revered. By his own admission, he preached sermons which he no longer believed. He only partially reached the goal he had set for himself and failed completely to reach the one set by God.

Paul gave great emphasis to the power and place of the Scriptures inspired of God. Writing to Timothy, Paul identified God's purpose in giving the Scriptures. He wrote, "The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5).

According to Paul, the goal is love from a pure heart! Love for God is to rule in the heart and the life of the child of God. It is to flow from a heart that is pure, a conscience that is good, and a faith that is sincere. In Christ, love of God is the dominant motive and the life-controlling objective. To love as God intends is to be like Christ. Love as God intends is spiritual maturity.





# The Blessing of Christian Friends

Acts 28:15

1. “A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Proverbs 17:17). On the other hand, “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint” (Proverbs 25:19).
2. “Two are better than one because they have good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up” (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).
3. Review Paul’s journey to Rome; and his meeting with Christian friends.

## I. His Christian Friends Provided Sympathy. *“they came to meet us”*

- A. Paul was being thrust along by the fierce tide of persecution. Yet these brethren sympathized with him (2 Timothy 3:12; Matthew 5:10-12).
- B. Their sympathy was practical, unselfish, and reasonable. They traveled 50 miles to cheer one who could give them nothing.
- C. Showing sympathy is being Christlike (Hebrews 4:15; John 11:35, 36; Romans 12:15; 15:1; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 13:3; James 1:27).

## II. His Christian Friends Promoted Gratitude. *“he thanked God”*

- A. In adversity, contentment was Paul’s attitude (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6; Hebrews 13:5).
- B. Paul was thankful for all the spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).
- C. A thankless person is a contemptible thing in God’s sight. (1) The Israelites (Deuteronomy 32:6). (2) The nine lepers (Luke 17:17).

## III. His Christian Friends Inspired Courage. *“and took courage”*

- A. Paul was a courageous man provoked by the conviction he was doing what was right (Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 4:10).
- B. Courage enables us to endure suffering (Acts 4:19; 5:29) and to persevere in times of poverty and bereavement (1 Corinthians 16:13).
- C. Let us be courageous for: One being can sustain us – Our heavenly Father – and one hope can cheer us – Heaven.

1. We are traveling from earth to heaven; along the way we need the friendship of those of like precious faith.
2. Our Christian friends instill in us Sympathy, Gratitude, and Courage to press on in the Lord’s service. Let us instill in them the same (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

Mike Kiser

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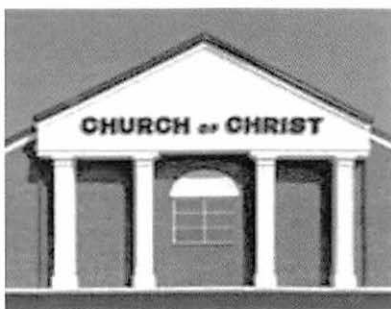
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