

Christian's **Expositor** Journal

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THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Greg Gay

Many years ago, while searching from shelf to shelf in the basement of a used bookstore, I stumbled across a copy of the **Life of Elder Walter Scott**, by William Baxter, published in 1874. Finding and reading that book was an early part of my desire to have a library of Restoration Movement materials.

To one of our brethren who is a bibliophile (a lover or collector of books), the Restoration Movement conjures up images of finding “the” book, whatever it might be, in some forgotten nook for an amount that is too good to be true. Book stories pass from person to person among us when we gather to visit at our meetings.

The Restoration Movement is the history of real people, in real places, who did their best to restore New Testament Christianity. When these men of the late eighteenth and early-to-mid nineteenth centuries studied their Bibles, they discovered their current religious practices did not agree with the New Testament. Instead of ignoring God’s Word, these brave men challenged the creeds of the day and tried their best to get the religions of their youth to change to God’s pattern of work, salvation, and worship. Eventually, though, they had to leave denominationalism behind in order to do what the Bible said.

Imagine the turmoil and hardship as they gave up many things including income, and sometimes friends and family members to become Christians, obeying what God says in the New Testament.

It should thrill us to hear their names: Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, W. K. Pendleton, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel

Rogers, Tolbert Fanning, Jacob Creath, John T. Johnson, Philip S. Fall, "Raccoon" John Smith, Moses E. Lard, J. W. McGarvey, Nathan J. Mitchell, and many, many more.

Today, the religions that claim roots in the Restoration Movement have ended up fractured into many divisions. It is amazing to realize that at one time the Christian Church, the Disciples of Christ, and the Church of Christ were one brotherhood, doctrinally united.

Today, we have reached the point that the Disciples of Christ and the Christian Church in many ways cannot be distinguished from the denominations from which the restorers emerged. What we commonly call the "digressive" Church of Christ, because they commune with individual cups and have Bible classes, is now headed in so many directions I personally wish they would change their name to completely disassociate us with them in any way. At one time we only pointed to the communion and Bible classes as differences between us. Today, their steps are following in the footsteps of the Disciples of Christ and the Christian church with movement toward women speakers, instrumental music, and a greater and more open fellowship.

Today, more than ever, we need to look back at the concept of the Restoration Movement for a perspective of where we are going. What will people see when they look at the history of our fellowship? Will they see that we went full-circle by ultimately accepting the very denominations and their teachings that the restorers fought so hard from which to break free in order to follow the Bible alone?

In this issue of the **Christian's Expositor**, we look back to the Restoration Movement, hopefully for our mutual profit. We look at the origin of the Restoration Movement, various important issues such as instrumental music, missionary societies, and other errors, concluding with an article that points out where we are headed in our fellowship.

Remember, the restorers were men just as we are. They were wonderful, brilliant, dedicated men, but they were not inspired. They did many things correctly, but there were times they made serious mistakes. We have a choice. We can look back, see their mistakes, and learn from them, or we can repeat their mistakes and add more of our own.

AN AMERICAN MOVEMENT

Carl M. Johnson

The concept of restoring the church to pure, New Testament Christianity did not originate with the American Restoration Movement. I believe that from the time the church was established on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), simple New Testament Christianity has existed in every age. Shortly after the establishment of the church, however, Jewish Christians and subsequently Gentile Christians began to depart from the church's divine pattern. Since departures from the divine pattern have taken place in every age, sincere Christians in every age have been faced with the task of restoring the church to the ancient order. This study is primarily concerned with tracing the various restoration efforts in America until the time they are unified into one group in 1832.

James O'Kelly is among the first in America to see the need for restoration of New Testament Christianity. In 1775 O'Kelly begins preaching for the Episcopal Church but converts to the Methodist as a result of the writings of John Wesley who exalts the Bible as authoritative and sufficient for faith and practice. In 1793 O'Kelly withdraws from the Methodist Church because of what he believes to be unscriptural organization. The next year O'Kelly and several other preachers meet in Virginia and plead that the Bible be accepted as their only creed and that disciples be known as Christians only. Later that year they establish the first congregation at Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

While O'Kelly is breaking with the Methodists in Virginia, Abner Jones, a doctor in Vermont and a member of the Free Will Baptist church, begins breaking away from the Baptists for the same reasons. Jones becomes convinced that sectarian names and human creeds should be abandoned and that true piety alone should be made the test of Christian fellowship. In 1801 Jones leaves the Baptist Church and establishes a "Christian Church" in Lyndon, Vermont. By insisting upon the Bible as their only creed and "Christian" as their only name, Jones and his brethren make great strides toward restoring the church to the ancient order. Later, Baptist preacher Elias Smith joins Jones in establishing churches throughout New England.

Barton W. Stone is among the first Presbyterians to see the need for restoring primitive New Testament Christianity. A well-educated and sober-minded man, Stone agrees to support the Presbyterian Confession of Faith only so far as it agrees with the Word of God. Stone cannot harmonize the Presbyterian's Calvinistic beliefs of total depravity and absolute predestination with the teachings of the Bible. He therefore rejects those teachings and calls upon sinners to turn from sin and accept Christ.

In 1801 over thirty thousand people pour into Cane Ridge, Kentucky, for a revival where Stone is preaching. Baptist and Methodist preachers are invited to assist in the revival, and they all work together in such a way that Stone is impressed with the value of and need for unity. When Stone insists that the Bible teaches sinners have the power to decide whether they want to turn to Christ or not, many of the Calvinistic preachers oppose him and leave.

Five preachers—Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar, John Thompson, and David Purviance—join Stone, however, and form a new group called the "Springfield Presbytery." While renouncing the creeds of men and using the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice, they set out to establish congregations after the ancient divine pattern. Gradually, they come to see that their own Springfield Presbytery organization is unscriptural, and they unanimously decide to dissolve it and be Christians only. They write a document to make known the dissolution of their presbytery called "The Last Will and Testament of the

Springfield Presbytery.” Stone and all five of the preachers mentioned above sign the document and explain that such human organizations hinder unity and the salvation of the lost.

In Indiana in 1810, Baptist John Wright begins to oppose human creeds and contends for the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. Adhering to his own plea causes him to realize that the name “Baptist” is not in the Bible as a name for the church. He pleads for the union of Christians on the basis of using the Bible as their only guide “without note or comment,” and three thousand people from many other Baptist churches in the region unite in an undenominational fellowship.

While today the name of Alexander Campbell is the best-known name associated with the American Restoration Movement, Alexander’s father, Thomas Campbell, supplies some of the movement’s most important contributions.

Thomas is reared in an Anglican Church in Ireland, but he leaves the Anglicans for the Seceder Presbyterian Church because he refuses to worship God according to “Act of Parliament.” Campbell decides to move his family to America, leaves Ireland, arrives in America in 1807, and is immediately assigned to the Presbytery of Chartiers in Southwest Pennsylvania.

While there are few Seceders in his area, Campbell finds many Presbyterians and Independents and includes them as brethren in his fellowship. The Seceder Presbytery subsequently censures him for his actions, causing Campbell to determine he cannot be true to his conscience and the Word of God under such human limitations. He therefore renounces both the Seceder Synod and Presbytery and becomes virtually obsessed with uniting all Christians on the basis of the Bible alone.

Thomas is highly respected by his neighbors so his announcement that he is leaving denominationalism rocks the community. He announces a meeting for all sincere people who desire to find a basis for scriptural unity. A large crowd of people show up for the meeting, and Campbell reviews the events that led up to that time. He decries the division fostered by sectarianism and makes a passionate plea for unity. He insists the only basis for unity is the Bible itself, and he asks

those in the audience to accept the plea, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Even though the people cannot see what effect such a resolution will have upon their own doctrine and practice, they cannot argue with it.

Subsequently, a number of these people form "The Christian Association of Washington" in 1809 as a study group to ascertain the best means of achieving religious unity. The group regularly meets in Washington County, Pennsylvania, and eventually emerges with a prepared statement of its objectives called "The Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington." Thomas Campbell does the actual writing of this document that has been called the "Magna Carta" of the Restoration Movement and the greatest document ever written in the advocacy of Christian union.

While Campbell is putting the finishing touches on the Declaration and Address, his family remains in Ireland. They start to join him in America in 1808 but shipwreck off the coast of Scotland. They remain in Scotland for a year, and son Alexander attends the University in Glasgow. They finally join Thomas in Washington, Pennsylvania, in August of 1809, after a voyage of fifty-four days.

Thomas anxiously informs Alexander of his conclusions about accepting only a "Thus saith the Lord" for faith and practice in the church, and Alexander becomes an enthusiastic supporter of the new cause. At the time neither man realizes how far this principle will take them. They do not envision at first that their stand will require them to give up infant baptism and sprinkling as a method of baptism.

In 1811 the Campbells organize the Brush Run Church as a congregation independent of the Presbyterian Church. On the first Lord's Day the church meets, the congregation celebrates the Lord's Supper. They decide that weekly observance of the communion is necessary in order to follow the Bible pattern.

Baptism is not made a test of fellowship initially, but Alexander makes an exhaustive study of the subject and concludes that baptism must be immersion, not sprinkling, and the subject must be a believer, not an infant. He subsequently makes a thirty-mile trip to have Matthias Luce, a Baptist preacher, baptize him based upon his simple

confession that “Jesus Christ is the Son of God” and in precise accordance with the New Testament pattern. Risking censure from his Baptist brethren, Luce baptizes Campbell on June 12, 1812, in Buffalo Creek. The next morning, Thomas Campbell, his wife, and several others are baptized, and thus baptism becomes a basis for fellowship in the Brush Run Church.

The people who refuse to give up infant baptism react with hostility toward the Campbells and the Brush Run Church. Alexander Campbell is challenged to debate the subjects and action of baptism by Presbyterian preacher John Walker. By nature Campbell dislikes controversy, but he reluctantly agrees to the debate. He actually surprises himself so much with the strength of his own arguments and the ease with which he dispatches Walker that afterwards he challenges any other preacher who wants to debate infant baptism.

The challenge is met by one of the greatest Presbyterian preachers of the day, W. L. McCalla of Augusta, Kentucky. The debate is to be held in October 1823, in Washington, Kentucky, a 300-mile trip on horse back from Campbell’s home. It is during his preparation for this debate that Campbell sees clearly for the first time that baptism is related to the remission of sins. During the course of the debate Campbell tells a room full of Baptist preachers that he disagrees with them as much as he does the Presbyterians. He says the Baptists are as far from the truth of baptism as the Presbyterians because the Baptists do not believe baptism to be for the remission of sins.

As the debate proceeds it becomes clear McCalla cannot meet the arguments Campbell presents. Many in attendance are convinced that infant baptism is based upon human authority and not upon God’s authority. The Presbyterian cause suffers a major defeat, and Campbell becomes convinced that “a week’s debating is worth a year’s preaching” (“Debate on Baptism,” **The Christian Baptist** , Vol. I, p.199).

In 1823 Campbell begins publishing a monthly religious paper in order to attack everything he believes to be a hindrance to the restoration of the ancient order of things. He plans to call the paper “The Christian,” but close friend Walter Scott persuades him to call it “The Christian Baptist” in order to give it a wider circulation among the

Baptists and, thus, a greater opportunity for doing good. Campbell publishes the paper for seven years but eventually shuts it down—partly because followers of its restoration principles are being labeled “Christian Baptists” instead of “Christians” only. He replaces it with a new paper called **The Millennial Harbinger**,” a journal not as polemical in tone as **The Christian Baptist** and which also dissociates Campbell’s writings from the “Baptist” name.

Campbell first meets Walter Scott in the winter of 1821, and although they have very different personalities, they become close friends immediately. Campbell is coldly logical and fearless. His oral presentations are consistently excellent. Scott, however, is artistic, emotional, and somewhat timid. The quality of his preaching sometimes varies with the way the audience responds to him. On occasions, however, he can soar to greater oratorical heights than Campbell can. On one such occasion the normally reserved Campbell is so inspired by Scott’s preaching, he jumps to his feet in the middle of the sermon and shouts, “Glory to God in the highest!”

Before meeting each other, Campbell and Scott come to almost identical conclusions about the teachings of Calvinism by virtue of their own independent study. Upon learning they share similar views, they begin working together toward the same goals. One of Scott’s greatest contributions to the movement is his clear analysis of the conversions in the Book of Acts. Using these cases of conversion as a basis for his preaching, Scott becomes the first really successful evangelist of that period baptizing a thousand people the first year.

The people who remain steadfast from the earlier movements led by James O’Kelly, John Wright, and others eventually merge with the group led by Barton W. Stone in Kentucky and the group led by Campbell in West Virginia. The group led by Stone call themselves “Christians.” The group led by Campbell is called “Disciples” and “Reformers.”

The congregations in both groups accept the Bible as the only authority in faith and practice, restore the plan of salvation to what it was in the first century, and accept the autonomy of each congregation—its independence from denominational hierarchies. There is not

much unity, however, among the various independent congregations within the Stone-led group nor the Campbell-led group. Nor is there any merger of these two groups into one fellowship.

By 1826 John T. Johnson begins working with Stone to unite the churches into one fellowship. In 1828 Joseph Gaston of the Stone group begins holding meetings with Walter Scott of the Campbell group, preaching for congregations on both sides. Soon, it becomes commonplace to have a “Stone man” and a “Campbell man” traveling and preaching together. There are, however, some significant differences between the two groups that hinder their complete unification.

In 1832 the leaders of these movements assemble from abroad for a four-day union meeting in Georgetown, and later Lexington, Kentucky. The meeting is for the express purpose of ironing out differences hindering complete fellowship among them. The leaders decide to have one man from each group address the gathering. “Raccoon” John Smith is selected to speak for the group led by Campbell, and he takes the floor first. He assures the assembly that “union” is not necessarily “unity”—that the union Christ prayed for was not just a collection of sects. He argues that unity must be based upon the Word of God as the only standard of faith and practice and that when it comes to discussing speculative issues or opinions we must confine ourselves to “the language of Scripture.” He concludes by saying, “Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stonites, New Lights, or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights. But let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need” (John Williams, **Life of Elder John Smith**, p. 373).

Stone is chosen to be the speaker for his group and endorses Smith’s words immediately. He reminds the audience that his brethren have given up all creeds and have taken the Bible alone as their rule of faith and practice in spite of much opposition. Stone also agrees that if unity is to prevail no one should force his opinions upon another. He concludes with the words, “I have not one objection to the ground laid down by him [Smith] as the true scriptural basis of union among the

people of God; and I am willing to give him, now and here, my hand” (Williams p. 373).

At the conclusion of Stone’s speech, the two shake hands as a pledge of fellowship and brotherly love. Those in the assembly who agree with the union upon the basis of Smith and Stone’s words then shake hands with one another, and thus the union is ratified. After this historic meeting in 1832, the leaders of the two groups work together as one to make the union complete throughout the country.

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UNITY, CHANGING THE AIM AND UNCERTAIN SOUNDS 1832-1849

Alan Bonifay

Unity

On New Year's Day, 1832, one of the most stirring, momentous events in the history of Christianity occurred in Lexington, Kentucky. Preachers from the reformation led by Barton W. Stone and from the reformation led by Alexander Campbell met for the second time in a week in a continuing effort to unite the followers of both movements. After many speeches and long honest discussions regarding the differences between the two groups, it was decided that the last two speakers would be "Raccoon" John Smith, representing those aligned with Alexander Campbell, and Barton W. Stone himself. Mr. Stone suggested that John Smith speak first. Feeling keenly the weight of responsibility resting on his shoulders, Smith spoke with simple dignity. He said,

God has but one people on earth. He has given them but one Book and therein exhorts and commands them to be one family. A union such as we plead for—a union of God's people on that one Book—must therefore be practicable...

But an amalgamation of sects is not such a union as Christ prayed for, and God enjoins. To agree to be one upon any system of human invention would be contrary to His will, and could never be a blessing to the Church or to the world; therefore the only union practicable or desirable must be based upon the Word of God, as the only rule of faith and practice...

I have the more cheerfully resolved on this course, because the Gospel is a system of facts, commands, and promises, and no deduction or inference from them, however logical or true, forms any part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No heaven is promised to those who hold them and no hell is threatened to those who deny them.

While there is but one faith, there may be ten thousand opinions; and hence, if Christians are ever to be one, they must be one in faith, and not in opinion. When certain subjects arise, even in conversation or social discussion, about which there is a contrariety of feeling, speak of them in the words of the Scriptures and no offense will be given and no pride of doctrine will be encouraged. We may even come, in the end, by this speaking the same things, to think the same things.

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 can not depart to meet any, men or set of men, in the wide world. While for the sake of peace and Christian union, I have long since waived the public maintenance of any speculation I may hold, *yet not one Gospel fact, commandment, or promise, will I surrender for the world!* [emphasis Smith's].

Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, New Lights, or Old Lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us all come to the Bible, and to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the Light we need (Williams 371-373).

As John Smith sat down, Barton Stone arose, his heart glowing with love and his hands trembling in hope. Stone began by saying, "I will not attempt to introduce any new topic, but will say a few things on the same subjects already presented by my beloved brother" (Williams 373). After some searching comments in the same vein, Stone turned to face John Smith and with great significance and grand solemnity said, "I have not one objection to the grounds of unity laid down by John Smith as the true

scriptural basis of union among the people of God; and I am willing to give him, now and here, my hand.” As the two great leaders shook hands, for a moment the audience stood in rapt silence and then, unannounced and unexpectedly, men all over the room began shaking hands with those next to them, triumphant and joyful. From somewhere the strains of a song gathered strength until it shook the walls of the church building. With many tearful embraces, brothers and sisters from both camps ratified and confirmed the union. The next day, the Lord’s Day, they broke the loaf together and in that sweet and solemn communion again pledged to each other their brotherly love (Williams 373).

A Decade of Growth

The Restoration movement experienced its most phenomenal period of growth in the years just before the uniting of the Stone and Campbell fellowships. In 1828, when Walter Scott was chosen by the Mahoning Association as its evangelist and sent to the Western Reserve, the Disciples began to swell in number. Conditions were just right for Walter Scott’s offer of a Gospel that any man could understand and of a salvation that any man could obtain simply by believing the message enough to repent of his sins and to be baptized for the remission of his sins. For three years, as Scott strode across the Western Reserve, thousands obeyed the Gospel and many congregations were established.

In Kentucky, the work of men like John Smith, John T. Johnson, and Barton W. Stone rivaled that of Scott and Campbell to the north. In 1832, when the groups united, there were approximately 20,000 to 25,000 members (Humble 36). By 1839, the *Millennial Harbinger* estimated the number of “professors of the Ancient Gospel” at about 200,000 (**Millennial Harbinger**, 1838, p.165). Some scholars think this estimate a bit high and put the more probable number at 180,000 (Garrison 159-160). In any case, the growth was phenomenally prolific. Homer Hailey observes,

How is such a rapid growth, with no societies, no machinery, no central head or headquarters, to be accounted for? The answer is: They had a message. They believed their message to be the greatest discovery of the

age and need of the world. Hence, filled with the zeal of discoverers, they became propagandists of the first rank (Hailey 93).

Bill Humble suggests three reasons for such rapid proliferation. First, the many religious journals published throughout the brotherhood in this period contributed substantially to this growth. At least 28 journals were published during the 1830s; some were short-lived, but others had thousands of subscribers and were more permanent. Alexander Campbell's new journal begun in 1830, the **Millennial Harbinger**, led the way. The very name of Campbell's paper reflected his optimism that a golden age for Christianity was dawning. In 1826 Barton Stone began publishing his **Christian Messenger**, announcing as his guiding principle, "Let the unity of Christians be our polar star."¹ Another key journal in these years was Walter Scott's **Evangelist**, which began in 1832 and ran for over a decade.

Second, the movement's growth was evidenced by and further promoted by the establishment of several privately funded colleges that trained in the 1830s and 1840s a large cadre of young preachers who would affect the Restoration for many years to come. Bacon College was begun in Georgetown, Kentucky, in 1832 with Walter Scott as its first president. In 1840 Alexander Campbell began Bethany College. It was there that J.W. McGarvey, Moses Lard, and a host of other influential writers and preachers were trained. A third important school was started in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1845 by Tolbert Fanning. It was called Franklin College, and many of the prominent preachers of the South were trained there.

Third, the movement's growth was augmented by countless religious debates with the proponents of denominationalism. Again, Campbell led the way. His first two debates (Walker in 1820 and McCalla in 1823) were generally local in their impact. But in 1829 Campbell gained national recognition by defending the divine origin of Christianity against the famous atheist and social reformer Robert Owen. Again in 1837 Campbell rose to national prominence when he defended the Church against Catholicism in his debate with the Catholic priest John Purcell in Cincinnati.

Later in 1843 Campbell defended the basic principles of the Restoration in his debate with the great Presbyterian N. L. Rice. Following Campbell's lead, later generations of Christian preachers have engaged in thousands of debates with opponents of every religious stripe, and thousands of believers have been won to the cause by such discussions.

Cracks: The Changing of the Aim

Alas, as in all the great restorations in history, men are never satisfied with God's way for very long. In the beginning, the aim of the Restorers was fixed upon uniting the denominational world upon the authority of God's word. Thomas Campbell penned the movement's great slogan in the closing words of his famous **Declaration and Address**: "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." (Campbell 53). Campbell hoped that by publishing the **Declaration and Address** unity could be affected among the religious people of the area and that such unity would lead to a more tolerant attitude by all religious groups. In this way he hoped to foster a more Christ-like spirit among his religious neighbors. Stone's aim was similarly focused on union of the denominations.

By 1823 the Restoration was well underway, and its aim had shifted decidedly. 1823 was the year that Alexander Campbell's famous "Sermon on the Law," which he originally preached in 1816, was readied for distribution. Its sharp distinction between the Old and New Testaments and its description of the New Testament as the only law for Christians set Campbell and his followers at odds with the Baptists. Furthermore, 1823 was the year that Alexander Campbell, who had become the movement's clear leader, debated McCalla and for the first time defended baptism as the point in time at which a believer's sins were forgiven. In other words, Campbell defended the truth that the purpose of baptism was to obtain the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Of course, this doctrine only served to further alienate the Baptists. Finally, 1823 was the year Alexander Campbell began publishing his first religious journal, **The Christian Baptist**. In the original dedication of the new periodical, the editor wrote:

To all those, without distinction who acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be a revelation from God; and the New Testament as containing the Religion of Jesus Christ: who, willing to have all religious tenets and practices tried by the Divine Word; and who feeling themselves in duty bound to search the Scriptures for themselves, in all matters of Religion, are disposed to reject all doctrines and commandments of men, and to obey the truth, holding fast the faith once delivered to the Saints—this work is most respectfully and affectionately dedicated by the Editor (Hailey 71).

The thing that strikes the reader most forcefully in this new program of action is the complete absence of all reference to Christian union. There is not one word referring to Thomas Campbell's original goal. The emphasis of the movement now firmly rested upon the principle of Scriptural authority. The focus was now completely on restoration rather than union. Beginning with the February 7, 1825, issue and running through the September 7, 1829, issue, there appeared thirty-two articles entitled "The Ancient Order of Things," which completed the fixed definition and essential elements of primitive Christianity for those who attached themselves to the new movement.

In the early editions of **The Christian Baptist**, Campbell was unrelenting in his opposition to the creeds of the denominational world. He viewed them as the source of all division. He was equally devastating in his attacks upon the clergy of the day. Another matter of this particular period that is arresting was Campbell's attitude toward the missionary societies prevalent among the denominations of that day. In the very first article of the first issue of *The Christian Baptist*, the editor launched a scathing attack against the organized missionary societies of the day on the basis that such institutions were unscriptural and that they robbed the church of glory rightfully belonging to it. Looking back to the disciples of apostolic times and to the churches of the first century for his model, he said,

Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, education societies, nor did they dream of organizing such in the world. The head of a believing household was not in these days a president or manager of a

board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society, his eldest daughter, the corresponding secretary of a mite society; his servant-maid, the vice-president of a rag society; and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday school. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times. In their church capacity alone they moved. They neither transformed themselves into any other kind of association, nor did they fracture and sever into divers societies...

They dare not transfer to a missionary society, or Bible society, or education society, a cent or a prayer, lest in so doing they should rob the church of its glory, and exalt the inventions of men above the wisdom of God. In their church capacity alone they moved... (Hailey 85-86).

In the second issue of the paper, under the caption, "Remarks on Missions," Campbell wrote another lengthy article on the same subject. In it he clearly charged that the manner in which mission work was being done was grossly unscriptural (Hailey 86).

However, as the Restoration Movement grew by leaps and bounds in the years leading up to and immediately following the unity meeting of 1832, and social customs changed, a new attitude shift began to emerge. Some, including Campbell and Scott and the young D. S. Burnet, came to believe that the church should adapt itself to the changing conditions of the times and develop a less combative, more inclusive relationship with the denominational world. Others continued to hold to the original aim that the New Testament reveals a fixed pattern for the church for all time, and that it is the business of disciples of Christ to hold to that pattern, regardless of the consequences. With these two attitudes developing—one holding to a rigid interpretation of Thomas Campbell's famous slogan and the other to a liberal interpretation of its sentiments—conflicts were inevitable. Of course, this rift did not appear all at once, but gradually over time in the 1830s and 1840s. Clearly discernible cracks appeared in the unity achieved so wonderfully in 1832.

Before the year 1829 ended, Campbell had determined to stop the publication of **The Christian Baptist** and to begin a new journal called the **Millennial Harbinger**. Campbell gave two reasons for the change. First, he wanted to enlarge the scope of the paper and to modify its tone. Second, he feared that the name Christian Baptist might become permanently attached to all who embraced the principles of the Restoration. The new publication was clearly milder in its tone although it did not completely abandon the doctrines championed by The Christian Baptist. The new attitude Campbell advocated was early expressed:

But, brethren, while we proclaim the ancient gospel, let us do it in the spirit of the gospel. Let our object be to turn sinners to God. Gravity, sincerity, mildness and benevolence, must be the attributes of every successful proclaimer of the word. If we teach or exhort Christians, let it be with the tenderness, affection, and longsuffering of Paul and his great master—the Teacher sent from God. No witticisms, puns, jests, or satires, become him who pleads with men to be reconciled to God. A dead fly has often caused the most precious ointment of a whole discourse to send forth an unpleasant odor (**Millennial Harbinger**, 1831, 420).

It appears that Campbell began his new paper and softened its tone for several reasons. First, he thought he could see the dawning of a golden age for Christianity—the millennium. In fact, Campbell admitted to such thoughts in an article ten years after the paper began, when he finally explained the basis of its name (**Millennial Harbinger**, 1840, 561). Second, Campbell himself had a growing national reputation to enhance and protect. Third, the movement was already beginning to experience what David Edwin Harrell has called the “sect-to-denomination” evolution inevitable in all such movements (Harrell 4). Campbell was looking to lower the aggressive tone of the Restoration in order to achieve a more respected acceptance among the wider religious community of the denominational world. In addition, it appears that a kind of greed settled upon many of the movement’s leaders. Incredible inroads had been carved out of denominations in a very short time with none of the machinery of denominational organization, and brethren began to speculate as to what now might be accomplished if only some of the organi-

zational structures of the churches (denominations) around them could be adopted.

So, while the 1830s were a time of unity, optimism, and remarkable growth for the Restoration Movement, they were also the years in which the seeds of later controversies were being sown—serious controversies that would ultimately rupture the unity of the movement. In order to increase the movement’s growth even more, Campbell and others began to call for “cooperation meetings,” which would ultimately develop into unscriptural missionary societies. Walter Scott would soon refer to the church as a denomination. A new leader, D.S. Burnet, would emerge and lead the brotherhood into a devastating division. And even Campbell would begin to teach that there were people in the denominations who were Christians even though they had never been immersed for the remission of their sins.

Cooperation Meetings

In 1831-1832 Alexander Campbell published a series of seven articles in the **Millennial Harbinger** advocating “The Cooperation of Churches”. Campbell believed that the world would never be evangelized unless the churches banded together in cooperation societies. He argued that the New Testament provided examples of churches cooperating with one another (2 Cor. 8) and that this provided scriptural authority for such cooperation. He insisted, however, that the exact details of such cooperation were left to the discretion of every congregation. Campbell suggested that the churches of one geographical area might work together by having an annual general meeting, selecting an evangelist, and making provisions for his support.

Acting on Campbell’s authority, churches began to hold such “cooperation meetings” throughout the 1830s. For example, a meeting was held at Wellsburg, Virginia, near Campbell’s home on April 12, 1834. The thirteen churches represented agreed to employ two evangelists, appointed a treasurer to receive funds from the churches for their support, and set up a committee of thirteen men to supervise the work of the two evangelists. However, there was considerable opposition to this “Wellsburg Cooperation,” and a year later it was dissolved.

In the 1830s churches were slow to adopt such cooperation meetings, but after 1840 the concept began to catch on. In 1840 the **Millennial Harbinger** announced that cooperation meetings were being held in six states: Illinois, Virginia, Missouri, Ohio, and Kentucky—a clear indication that such meetings were gaining brotherhood approval.

Some preachers, nevertheless, viewed such meetings with misgivings. No sooner had Campbell begun his first series of articles calling for cooperation than objection was raised by a prominent brother in Virginia named T. M. Henley. Henley wrote to Campbell in 1836 that it seemed to him “like a departure from the simplicity of the Christian institution to have cooperation meetings with Presidents and secretaries calling for the Messengers of the churches and laying off districts” (Humble 38). Henley said this sounded to him like the Baptist associations in Virginia that he had come out of. He said, “The burnt child dreads the fire” (Humble 38). Nevertheless, after issuing a stern warning, Henley proposed his own alternative method of congregational cooperation. He suggested that one church send out an evangelist and oversee his work while calling on other churches to assist in supporting the evangelist by funneling their money through the treasury of the original sending congregation. This model was accepted by many congregations.

Alexander Campbell ignored those who questioned such meetings. He believed that whatever progress had been made was not enough, and in 1841 he began a sixteen-part series of articles entitled “The Nature of the Christian Organization.” In this series Campbell called for the establishment of a “general organization” among the churches. Campbell argued for the organization of the universal church. He pointed out that the church is called the body of Christ and that a body must be organized. In so saying, he backed away from his **Christian Baptist** days position, in which he argued forcefully that “an individual church or congregation of Christ’s disciples is the only ecclesiastical body recognized in the New Testament. Such a society is the ‘highest court of Christ’ on earth” (**Christian Baptist**, 1 – April 22, 1824, 69-71). Campbell now argued in favor of the universal church organizing for evangelization. He admitted that the New Testament does not provide for any general organization of the church but, nevertheless, concluded that the creation of such an organization is left to the judgment of the churches.

Amazingly, when the churches in Cincinnati did just what Campbell called for in organizing the brotherhood to establish the American Christian Bible Society in 1845, under the leadership of one of the brotherhood's rising stars, D.S. Burnet, Campbell opposed it. The reason he gave was that it had been organized by a few Cincinnati brethren rather than by a general convention of churches. More likely it was because Campbell was not selected to direct the ACBS. In fact, "Arthur Criehtfield bluntly charged that if the Bible society 'had commenced at Bethany' Campbell would not have opposed it" (West 117).

These "cooperation meetings" were a source of contention from the beginning. An elder in Georgetown, Kentucky, named W. H. Barlow printed a series of articles in the **Christian Journal** on the history of councils. Barlow argued that the Restoration Movement had thrown off the shackles of councils, synods, assemblies, and conferences and had "taken the Bible alone for their faith and practice." He was deeply "mortified," therefore, that our brethren should accept councils, and he asserted that now we are "taunted by the sects, and we have no answer to give them." He went on to point out that churches of Christ were all independent of each other. All churches are equal with no supremacy among them, and each church is able to manage its own affairs (West 118).

Another early opponent of such unscriptural meetings was Jacob Creath, Jr. Creath pointed out that in 1823 in **The Christian Baptist**, Campbell had denounced missionary societies. Quite obviously Campbell had changed his view in the quarter-century that had elapsed since 1823. Creath reminded Campbell of his earlier views, writing, "If you were right in **The Christian Baptist** you are wrong now. If you are right now you were wrong then." He went on to charge that supporters of societies had "totally abandoned" the rule that "the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants" (Humble 41).

There were also churches and even groups of churches that adopted resolutions opposing the missionary society. The best known of these, adopted by the church in Connellsville, Pennsylvania, stated that the church was "not a missionary society, but emphatically and pre-eminently the missionary society—the only one authorized by Jesus Christ" (Humble 41) [emphasis mine—AB].

An Emerging New Leader

A second crack in the unity established in 1832 was made by D.S. Burnet. Earl West observes that “if a poll had been taken at the mid-point of the nineteenth century, it would generally have been agreed that the mantle of the Bethany President would likely fall on David Staats Burnet, who towered impressively above his peers” (West 63).

By the mid-1840s Burnet saw clearly that the brotherhood was in transition. It had grown, and many urban congregations were much larger now than in the frontier days. Burnet knew that his political skills would assist him in guiding this group into a respectable status as a denomination to be known as the Disciples of Christ. He would inaugurate the pastor system in the churches and introduce the society method of operation. Applying these denominational operations in numerous congregational functions, he thus shelved the concept of a return to original Christianity in favor of a system of religion that would abide comfortably among Protestant denominational bodies (West 67-68).

Burnet possessed an amazing ability to manipulate people, and he well knew the magic connotations linked to Campbell's name. So, he set about to maneuver Alexander Campbell into approving of his denominational goals. The fact that Campbell was already leaning that way himself would make the task all the more easy. Burnet knew when to flatter the old leader and when, as any good politician, to oppose him. In order to affect his purpose, Burnet made himself, as much as anyone could be, Campbell's constant companion. He boasted more than once that he had slept more nights with Campbell than anyone in the brotherhood.

In 1863, when Burnet was compelled to resign his long-held position as Corresponding Secretary for the American Christian Missionary Society, he wrote in the *Harbinger*, “From the time I urged the scheme of associated evangelical action upon the brethren, in 1845, to the present, the work has commanded my best energies, and my means” (Burnet, **Millennial Harbinger** – 2, April 1864, 185).

D. S. Burnet was well aware that it was he who had fastened the Society system of operations on the brotherhood. To do this he not only had to maneuver Campbell, but also other significant leaders in the Restoration Movement. Unfortunately, he had accomplished his task devastatingly well by his death in 1867.

Walter Scott and The Protestant Unionist

A third crack in the wall of unity appeared when Walter Scott returned to his old home in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1844. That year marked the end of his long stay in Carthage, Ohio, and the cessation of his famous paper, **The Evangelist**. At the same time it opened the door to his new publication, **The Protestant Unionist**, and disclosed that a new and different page had been turned in the ongoing development of the Restoration Movement.

In his new paper, Scott argued that Protestantism is correct and that its theology is that of the New Testament. Scott's intent now was to convince his brethren that they should join together as a denomination in harmony with other Protestant groups. How could such a union with religious groups, who did not hold to the full truth of the gospel especially on subjects such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, be effectively accomplished? Scott admitted that it remained a fact that the brotherhood's emphasis through the years on basic first principles of the New Testament was not acceptable to Protestant bodies in general. On the other hand, it was evident that Protestant viewpoints were not acceptable to the proclaimers of Restoration Movement principles. But Scott had a simple solution to all of these considerations: The one common belief among the denominations must become the only essential point of doctrine for the church as well, namely that Jesus is the Son of God. All other differences could be subordinated to this central, cardinal item of faith. An astonished brotherhood now read **The Protestant Unionist** in stunned disbelief.

If Scott expected his new view to be readily accepted by the denominations, he was sadly mistaken. **The Presbyterian Advocate**, **Cincinnati Telegraph**, **Western Christian Advocate**, and **The Western Baptist Review** all took note of Scott's modifications and roundly declined his overtures—sometimes vehemently (West 107).

In the church, numerous leaders responded to Scott's absurd suggestions, but the leading voice was that of a Virginia preacher named John DuVal. DuVal said,

We once contended for the faith of the first Christians, putting our faith and hope in God, that He would bless us in doing the work assigned us by

Him. But if it is right to do as you now propose towards all those warring elements, our course must have been a truly perverse one indeed; and it must have been right then, if it is now (West 108).

When Scott argued that believers get into Christ by faith alone in the divinity of Christ, DuVal replied:

With Paul I affirm that no individual of the apostolic age was addressed or recognized as being either in Christ—united to Him—or regarded as a child of God, or Christian or believer by the Holy Spirit, who was not also recognized as a baptized believer (West 104).

Scott's stunning reversal in beliefs gained few adherents. It was, however, another indication that by the mid-1840s the former calls for the old paths had lost some of their power. Some—too many—were turning away from the restoration of the ancient order of things to an accommodative appeal to denominationalism. A new chapter in the story of the Restoration movement was emerging.

Alexander Campbell and the Lunnenberg Letters

Beginning at least as early as the 1823 Campbell-McCalla debate, all restoration preachers believed that one became a Christian by being baptized, upon faith and repentance, in order to receive the remission of sins. In other words, the point in time at which a lost person enters the saved state is at his baptism. However, in 1837 Campbell made reference in one of his articles to Christians being found in all Protestant parties. The comment was jarring to the ears of many in the Restoration and occasioned the famous "Lunnenberg Letter."

A sister living in Lunnenberg, Virginia, took exception to Campbell's statement that there were Christians to be found among all Protestant parties. She wrote Campbell the following letter:

Dear brother Campbell,

I was much surprised to-day, while reading the **Harbinger** to see that you recognize the Protestant parties as Christian. You say, you “find in all Protestant parties Christians.” Dear brother, my surprise and ardent desire to do what is right, prompted me to write to you at this time. I feel well assured, from the estimate you place on the female character, that you will attend to my feeble questions in search of knowledge.

Will you be so good as to let me know how anyone becomes a Christian? What act of yours gave you the name of Christian? At what time had Paul the name of Christ called upon him? At what time did Cornelius have Christ’s name on him? Is it not through this name we obtain eternal life? Does the name of Christ or Christian belong to any but those who believe the gospel, repent, and are buried by baptism into the death of Christ?

To this inquiry Mr. Campbell replied with the following:

In reply to this conscientious sister, I observe, that if there be no Christians in the Protestant sects, there are certainly none among the Romanists, none among the Jews, Turks, Pagans; and therefore no Christians in the world except ourselves, or such of us as keep, or strive to keep, all the commandments of Jesus. Therefore for many centuries there has been no Church of Christ, no Christians in the world; and the promises concerning the *everlasting kingdom of Messiah have failed and the gates of hell have prevailed against his church!* This cannot be; and therefore there are Christians among the sects [emphasis Campbell’s].

But who is a Christian? I answer, every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God, repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge and his will...

I cannot therefore, make any one duty the standard of Christian state or character, not even immersion into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and in my heart regard all that have been sprinkled

in infancy without their knowledge and consent, as aliens from Christ and the well-grounded hope of heaven...

There is no occasion, then for making immersion, on a profession of faith, absolutely essential to a Christian—though it may be greatly essential to his sanctification and comfort. My right hand and my right eye are greatly essential to my usefulness and happiness but not to my life ... But he that then infers that none are Christians but the immersed, as greatly errs as he who affirms that none are alive but those of clear and full vision.

I do not formally answer all the queries proposed, knowing the one point to which they all aim... (Hailey 118-123).

As you might imagine, this reply inspired a number of subsequent letters from subscribers criticizing the Editor's position. Twice more that year Campbell was forced by the pressure to reopen the issue and try to defend his remarks. He ended up backing down considerably, concluding weakly that he had only been giving his *opinion* that it is *possible* that there are Christians among the denominations.

The point not to be overlooked in all of Campbell's sophistry is that by this time in the Restoration Movement Campbell's focus, and that of some of his fellows, had changed again. No longer was their primary goal to restore the ancient order of things, but rather to seek respectability and acceptance by the denominations around them.

As the brotherhood approached the turbulent decade from 1849 to 1859, when the issues of the American Christian Missionary Society and the use of instrumental music split the church, they did so generally in unity and harmony. They were growing by leaps and bounds as the ancient gospel found receptive ears all across the land. Still, the issues resulting in rapture did not come out of a clear blue sky. By the 1840s numerous storm clouds were gathering on the horizon with evil portent. Earl West cites A.W. Fortune's assessment in his book **The Disciples of Kentucky**:

The fundamental principle of the Disciples, the restoration of the ancient order of things, when carried out literally, demanded that one look toward the past rather than to the future. Conflict was inevitable between those who faced the future and those who held tenaciously to the past...

There were those who believed the church should move on with the world and adapt the spirit of the New Testament to conditions that were changing... On the other hand, there were those who believed that the pattern of the church was fixed for all time, and the fact that certain things were not sanctioned was sufficient grounds for rejecting them... (West 140).

Modern critics of this “let’s move on and adapt” viewpoint would demur that this would be to abandon the fundamental principle of restoring New Testament Christianity, and that it would necessitate the creation of a governing body over the churches to determine which threads in the fabric of a changing social order are to be retained and which must be thrown away with the old garment. Subjoined to this would be a diminishing of the authority of the local congregation. Regarding this “let’s move on and adapt” viewpoint as censurable myopia, churches of Christ have generally rejected, and must continue to reject, such a viewpoint and must continue their search for the ancient order and the maintenance of that already discovered, while also continuing to fully respect the authority and independence of the local church.

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Endnote

¹ Stone continued his paper until his death in 1844

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AMERICAN CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Greg Gay

Today, the once mighty American Christian Missionary Society (ACMS) is no more. The Disciples of Christ website reports that it merged in 1920 with The Christian Woman's Board of Mission and The Foreign Christian Missionary Society to form The United Christian Missionary Society. That society is now "a holding company, responsible for the investing and managing of assets for the benefit of the Division of Homeland Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Division of Overseas Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)." The issues and concerns of the Disciples of Christ today appear to have little to do with the original purpose of the founders of the ACMS.

The ACMS began during the Restoration Movement for the purpose of spreading the gospel of Christ throughout the world. Surely no one would or should disagree with that purpose. After all, Jesus himself said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mt. 28.19-20, KJV unless noted otherwise).

The issue at hand was and is whether a missionary society is included among the proper means by which the gospel should be spread. If the Scriptures authorize it, and if it is helpful in sending forth laborers into the fields, then all should approve and embrace it. However, if it is not authorized by God's Holy Word, as I believe we can conclude, then it is an innovation and a grievous error to be avoided, regardless of its efficiency or the success such an organization could ever achieve.

Sometimes we confuse the success of an endeavor and the sincerity of those involved as proof of blessing and validity for the cause. Such a conclusion, however, is not always true with biblical matters. Cain was sincere but wrong in his sacrifice. Saul did soundly defeat the Amalekites but was still wrong because that was not the same as totally destroying them. More recently, adherents of Sunday Schools and Bible classes are successful in teaching people of all ages but are still wrong in dividing the assembly. Users of multiple communion vessels do so sincerely and efficiently but violate clear and plain Scripture in doing so. Instrumental music makes the rafters ring with stirring, beautiful sounds in many places of worship but is an addition to what God has authorized and is wrong. Similarly, those who advocated the ACMS meant well, but what they did is not according to what is written.

It is surprising to learn that the impetus for adding a missionary society to the church actually came from Alexander Campbell. In his early writings in **The Christian Baptist** he is scathing in his rebuke of all such organizations. Writing on the theme of the church in 1823, he says,

The order of their assemblies was uniformly the same. It did not vary with moons and with seasons. It did not change as dress or fluctuate as the manners of the times. Their devotion did not diversify itself into the endless forms of modern times. They had no monthly concerts for prayer; no solemn convocations, no great fasts, nor preparations, nor thanksgiving days. Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, bible societies, education societies; nor did they dream of organizing such in the world. The head of a believing household was not in those days a president or manager of a board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society; his eldest son, the recording secretary of some domestic Bible society; his eldest daughter, the corresponding secretary of a mite society; his servant maid, the vice-president of a rag society; and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday school. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times. In their church capacity alone they moved. They neither transferred themselves into any other kind of association, nor did they fracture and sever themselves into divers societies. They viewed the church of Jesus Christ as the scheme of heaven to ameliorate the world; as members of it, they considered themselves bound to do all they could for the glory of God and the good of men. They dare not transfer to a missionary society; or bible society, or education society,

a cent or a prayer, lest in so doing they should rob the church of its glory, and exalt the inventions of men above the wisdom of God. In their church capacity alone they moved. Their church they considered 'the pillar and ground of the truth;' they viewed it as the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the house of the living God. They considered if they did all they could in this capacity, they had nothing left for any other object of a religious nature (6-7).

In spite of those bold and correct words, twenty-six years later, in 1849, Campbell became the president-elect of the new American Christian Missionary Society. For that to happen, many changes had to occur in Campbell's and others' thinking.

Campbell ceased publishing **The Christian Baptist** in 1829 and began publishing **The Millennial Harbinger** the following year in 1830. In November 1841 Campbell began a series of articles on "The Nature of the Christian Organization" that were to continue for years. In the first article, he indicates a frustration with the quality of people who were sent out as "evangelists and public instructors" (534). As proof, he quotes a letter from a reader that describes a preacher as an unfaithful man. In an attempt to help the brethren mark and avoid him, the writer offers a physical description that includes "a scar on the end of his nose, it having been badly bit in a fight" (536). Campbell also quotes another letter regarding the same man, saying that he displayed "the most complete personification of hypocritical affected sanctimoniousness that I ever saw" (536). Campbell blamed the methods by which such men were selected and sent out to preach for such problems.

Campbell continued throughout 1842 to build upon the theme that something more was needed in the church than was currently being done. By November 1842, he offered the following under the heading of "Five Arguments for Church Organization; Great need of a more rational and scriptural organization":

1. We can do comparatively nothing in distributing the Bible abroad without cooperation.
2. We can do comparatively but little in the great missionary field of the world either at home or abroad without cooperation.
3. We can do little or nothing to improve and elevate the Christian ministry without cooperation.

4. We can do little to check, restrain, and remove the flood of imposture and fraud committed upon the benevolence of the brethren by irresponsible, plausible, and deceptive persons, without cooperation.
5. We cannot concentrate the action of the tens of thousands of Israel, in any great Christian effort, but by cooperation.
6. We can have no thorough cooperation without a more ample extensive and thorough church organization (523).

Originally, the last two points are both numbered five in error. Obviously, Campbell saw cooperation as the solution to all the issues he named. Cooperation between sister congregations is not wrong; however, he could not see greater cooperation happening without a new type of organization. Given his conclusions, particularly his last number five, it appears to mean Campbell was opening the door wide to exploration of new approaches of presenting the gospel. His last point is particularly onerous because it implies that the Bible does not give guidelines by which to evangelize the world.

At this point, I pause to remind all readers that God's Word has principles for every possible issue the church will ever face. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3).

There is a pattern for evangelism in the New Testament. For example, Paul's first missionary journey, described in Acts 13 and 14, gives us the example of a congregation selecting and sending out men to a work. These men, in turn, are accountable to the congregation as proven by their reporting upon their return.

Acts 15 gives an example of how to handle preachers who present false doctrine. When certain teachers presented false doctrine to the church at Antioch, the brethren of Antioch first rejected it. They then went to Jerusalem because the false teachers that came to Antioch had said they had been recommended and sent out by the church at Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, funds from multiple congregations are never pooled together within a central authority to be dispersed as that central authority desires. Instead, we see a pattern of a congregation's money being accounted for separately until it is given to the intended recipient or congregational leaders (1 Cor. 16). Thus, support for the poor saints was given to the leaders of the congregation to disperse as necessary. Support for a preacher was sent to the preacher directly by the congregation. The funds were always easily traceable from source to recipient (Phil. 4).

Once Alexander Campbell, with his tremendous influence, directed the thinking of his readers toward human reasoning rather than letting the Bible speak, others were quick to join the bandwagon.

Soon, the concept of additional organization was the talk of disciples everywhere. West reports that by November of 1843, when Campbell debated Rice,

...the subject of cooperation was being by now considered so much that few brethren could get together for long without its being discussed. In between sessions of the debate several brethren got together and discussed cooperation along with the possibility of forming a missionary society. Jacob Creath, Sr. "by his tears, his prayers and his arguments" got the brethren to abandon their plan temporarily (161).

The first attempt to create greater cooperation through organization (thus satisfying one of Campbell's 1842 concerns) occurred in 1845 when D. S. Burnet began the American Christian Bible Society. Strangely, Campbell opposed it, not because he said it was wrong, but because Campbell favored a Baptist Bible society and had begun urging people to support it as early as the July 1842 issue of the **Millennial Harbinger** (315-16).

Noel Keith, D.S. Burnet's biographer, surmises Campbell's reasons for not supporting Burnet may have been financial. "The difficulties which he [Campbell] faced in keeping Bethany College and the **Millennial Harbinger** solvent had indicated that the brethren across the country were not exceptionally generous in their stewardship. Support of a Bible Society would endanger perhaps the support of his own enterprises" (74).

As the years passed, Campbell continued to write regularly concerning the organization of the church.

In 1845, he wrote in the **Millennial Harbinger**, "Much as been written, a great deal said, and little done, on the whole subject of Christian organization. But there is a growing interest in the subject manifested, and there is a growing need felt for a more scriptural and efficient organization and cooperation" (59).

Finally, in 1849 Campbell evidently felt the time was right to take the step of organizing a Missionary Society. He wrote,

There is now heard from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, one general, if not universal, call for a more efficient organization of our churches. Experience, than which there is not a more efficient teacher, decides and promulgates that our present cooperative system is comparatively inefficient and inadequate to the exigencies of the times and the cause we plead... (90).

Other religious journals joined in offering suggestions of a meeting of delegates from congregations to begin this new organization. In August of 1849, Campbell wrote in the **Millennial Harbinger**, "I am of opinion that a convention, or general meeting, of the churches of the Reformation is a very great desideratum. Nay, I will say, further, that it is all important to the cause of reformation. I am also of the opinion that Cincinnati is the proper place for holding such convention" (475).

The meeting took place beginning October 23, 1849, in Cincinnati. By the end of four days, one hundred fifty-six delegates had created an organization complete with a constitution and officers.

I summarize here the thirteen articles of the ACMS, created by the delegates who assembled to improve on God's plan to take the gospel to the world.

1. Name: American Christian Missionary Society.
2. Object: to promote the spread of the gospel.
3. Annual delegate fees are \$10 (required to attend the annual convention). Lifetime membership fee is \$20. Lifetime Directorship fee is \$100.00.
4. The society will have one president, twenty vice-presidents, a treasurer and other officers.
5. The society will have an executive board of twenty-five members.
6. Many of the officials must reside in the Cincinnati area.
7. The executive board has the power to appoint agents and missionaries, including determining their pay.
8. Any money designated for a specific work will be given to that work or returned.
9. The treasurer shall be bonded.
10. All the officers, managers, missionaries, and agents have to be members of the church in good standing.
11. The Society will have an annual meeting at Cincinnati.

12. No one can be appointed to a work unless they are of good character and qualifications.
13. No articles of the Society's constitution can be changed without a 2/3 vote of the members present at an annual meeting (West 177-78).

Even though he was absent due to "unusually severe indisposition" (694), Campbell was elected president of the ACMS. He did not decline the election and continued to serve for the next sixteen years until he died. In the December 1849 issue of the **Millennial Harbinger**, he wrote, "Our expectations from the convention have more than been realized. We are much pleased with the result, and regard it as a very happy pledge of good things to come" (694).

Campbell was pleased, but others were appalled. West comments,

Scarcely had the American Christian Missionary Society been organized when a wave of opposition began sweeping over the brotherhood. This opposition came from various localities and for various reasons, but many, it seemed, looked upon the establishment of the society as a dangerous trend in the restoration, some avowing that it was definitely unscriptural. Some viewed with mild alarm the establishment of the Society and issued gentle warnings against it (196).

Particularly offensive was the third article that required the payment of money to be a part of the new organization.

Benjamin Franklin, who first approved then later opposed the Society, wrote in opposition, "They overlook the simple, easy and common-sense arrangement of the New Testament, and complain that we have no arrangement" (West 197).

Jacob Creath, Jr. opposed the Society from the beginning. West writes,

Creath is forceful in demanding of Campbell apostolic authority that authorized the use of conventions. "You say that our Saviour and the apostles did not denounce conventions, as such. Did they denounce Popery or corrupt Protestantism, as such? Did they denounce infant baptism, or creed making, or auricular confession, as such? It is for you to show where they authorized conventions" (202-03).

In the meantime, the Society decided their first mission would be to Jerusalem. A preacher, who was also a medical Doctor, Dr. James T. Barclay and his family were sent there in September 1850, eventually arriving in Jerusalem in February 1851 (West 216).

Tolbert Fanning wrote in opposition,

The church is Heaven's missionary society to a suffering world, and the ministers commissioned, sent out and supported by the church, are God's missionaries to call sinners to life. We have not been able to see the necessity of a missionary society beyond the church. We ask the brethren, in all kindness, if it would not be better even to send our beloved, Brother Dr. Barclay and his most amiable, intelligent and really accomplished family, to Jerusalem, by the agreement and cooperation of the churches than by another and strange body (West 206).

Eventual defenders of the Society would attempt to classify it as an expedient, such as a blackboard and songbooks. Remember, however, an expedient is only an expedient if it does not violate the Scriptures. Otherwise, it is digression and wrong. Frustration with biblical systems does not negate their necessity. Frustration with how long it takes to commune does not negate the pattern and necessity of one cup and one loaf. Similarly, frustration with the need of congregational cooperation and direct support of preachers to preach the gospel around the world does not negate that system and allow societies.

The Society struggled but eventually met with great success. J. W. McGarvey wrote in a tract, around 1909,

In order to greater efficiency in turning sinners to the Lord, both in our own country and in foreign lands, zealous brethren have organized voluntary missionary societies. In almost every State in our Union there is a State missionary society, for the evangelization of the States individually. Besides these, for more general evangelizing in our great country, and for the promotion of world-wide missions, three other missionary societies have been organized, namely, The American Christian Missionary Society, whose field is the United States and Canada; the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, whose field embraces all foreign countries; and the Christian Women's Board of Missions, whose field has no geographical limits. The first is now maintaining some 500 missionaries; the second has missionaries in Japan, China,

Tibet, India, Africa, the Hawaiian and the Philippine Islands, Cuba, Denmark and Sweden. Its number of missionaries and native helpers is more than 600. The third has missionaries in many States of our Union, and in Mexico, Porto Rico, Jamaica and South America. The work of Negro evangelization and education in this country is also in its hands. It employs 500 missionaries and other workers (2-3).

In looking back, it is difficult to count the cost to the brotherhood of the American Christian Missionary Society. There is no doubt the society started the process of a departure from “letting the Bible speak” and became a wedge that divided brethren. The Society issue occupied the minds and time of the leaders of the Restoration Movement for years and most certainly took time and attention that other matters deserved. It led to no good. Even though brethren do not like to acknowledge it today, we must still be cautious of things because of what they might lead to. We need only to look at Alexander Campbell’s early writings on this subject to see that his musings about needing an organization beyond the church led to nothing good. The Society was not necessary because God’s Word is sufficient and has pattern authority to show us how to evangelize the world without resorting to manmade organizations of any kind.

West writes about Benjamin Franklin’s comments from the late 1850’s:

Franklin attempted to get at the very root of the weakened condition of the brotherhood. The most commonly expressed cause of this weakness was the lack of organization, but Franklin took direct issue here. If the cause was languishing, it was so only because the preachers were not as fervent as they once were. He says, “If preachers lament that the cause languishes, let them cease scheming about some organization unknown to the New Testament, and go into the field and labor for the Lord’s sake, and for the Lord’s name, as brethren did years ago, and as we are doing now, and as certain as God is the author of the Bible, we shall prosper.” The thing needed was better preaching, so Franklin adds: “Preaching is what is needed, fervent, soul-stirring preaching, exhortations, entreaties and impressive persuasions with the people to turn to God and be saved.” Unquestionably, Franklin was hitting at the real cause. The history of the restoration movement shows that the less devotion men have to Christ the more they stand in need of human organizations (212).

That last sentence should make us stop and think very carefully and prayerfully about our direction.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Johnny Elmore

How did instrumental music come to be used in worship to God in this Christian dispensation of time? There are no commands in the New Testament to use instruments of music. There are no examples in the New Testament of the use of instrumental music by Jesus, the apostles, or any others. Yet most of the denominations use instrumental music in their worship today.

History is fairly united in its stance that instrumental music in Christian worship began years after the early church began. Historians Howard D. McKinney and W.R. Anderson state, "In the beginning, all the Christian musical practices were vocal" (McKinney & Anderson 168). Donald Jay Grout, writing of the early Christian church, said that "instrumental music was excluded from public worship" (Grout 31). **The New Oxford History of Music** states, "So far as we can tell the music of the early Church was almost entirely vocal, Christian usage following in this particular the practice of the Synagogue, in part for the same reasons" (Westrup 303). A Jewish encyclopedia plainly states, "The use of instruments in the synagogue service was prohibited (and remained so, with certain exceptions, leaving music a strictly vocal art." George P. Fisher writes, "The primitive church music was choral and congregational" (Fisher 121). Although there are some isolated instances of the use of instruments of music in worship around the fifth or sixth centuries A.D., possibly the earliest major addition happened in the seventh century. **The New Catholic Encyclopedia** states, "We know that in the 7th century Pope St. Vitalian (666) introduced the organ in Rome in order to improve the singing of the congregation." It continues, "By the 13th century the organ

was certainly in general use throughout the Latin church” (**New Catholic Encyclopedia**, “Organ”).

What Reformation Figures Say

The great Protestant Reformation was based upon a return to the Scriptures; therefore, we are not surprised to learn that some of the leading Protestant scholars have contended for unaccompanied singing in the worship of the church. Adam Clarke, a distinguished Methodist scholar, says, “Music, *as a science*, I esteem and admire; but instruments of music *in the house of God* I abominate and abhor.” John Calvin, whose theology produced the Presbyterian Church, says, “Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting up of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law.” John Wesley, a Methodist, speaks about the use of the organ in worship, saying, “I have no opposition to the organ in our chapel provided it is neither seen nor heard.” Charles Spurgeon preached to twenty thousand every Sunday in London, England, in Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, but no instruments of music were ever used in his tabernacle. Lyman Coleman, Presbyterian scholar, says, “It is generally admitted that the primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship.” Joseph Bingham, outstanding scholar of the Church of England writes that “music in the church is as ancient as the apostles, but instrumental music is not” (Southern 91). Most of the leading lights of the Reformation, including Zwingli, were opposed to instrumental music in worship.

The Restoration Movement

There was early opposition to instrumental music by the New England group begun by Elias Smith and Abner Jones, usually thought of as one of the three independent movements toward restoration in the United States. In their gatherings, they adopted resolutions disapproving of “preaching by note,” the use of the title “Reverend,” and the introduction of instrumental music into public worship. When Alexander Campbell began his “restoration of the ancient order of things,” he would have opposed instrumental music because there was no apostolic precedent for it. Because it was not a great threat during his

life, however, Campbell wrote very little on the subject. In later years, when melodeons became common in family circles and when some brethren began to advocate the use of instruments in worship, fearing that denominations were getting ahead of them by using instruments, Campbell was urged to address the issue. Campbell wrote a short essay on the subject, saying, in part,

So to those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think with Mr. G., that instrumental music would be not only a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But I presume, to all spiritually-minded Christians such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert” (Campbell, “Instrumental Music,” 582).

Just as the Restoration Movement seemed to be sweeping the country and overcoming all opposition in its path, differences arose among leaders of the movement. In the first issue of the **Christian Baptist**, Alexander Campbell wrote about the primitive church and struck out at societies in these words: “Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, bible societies, educational societies; nor did they dream of organizing such in the world” (Campbell, “The Christian Religion,” 6). But in 1849, he began to advocate a society for the purpose of evangelizing the world, and in the same year, the American Christian Missionary Society was born. Many of the leaders of the Restoration Movement supported the missionary society, including D.S. Burnet, Walter Scott, T. M. Allen, W.K. Pendleton, John T. Johnson, and others whose names have become famous. Campbell’s argument for cooperation in evangelism was based on expediency, that is, that the command to evangelize was so urgent that it was expedient to organize for efficiency. Although this did not immediately result in a fracture of the movement, it represented an attitude that eventually brought about the introduction of instrumental music and thus division.

The Civil War also disrupted the work of the church. Brethren lined up on both sides of the issue of participation in war. Many of the outstanding men of the church were pacifists. Although many denominations split over the North vs. the South issue, the church did not divide over such. Instead, after the war, instrumental music became the wedge that ultimately split the brotherhood apart.

The first church on record in the original fellowship to use an instrument of music in worship was the Midway Christian Church, where the very liberal L. L. Pinkerton was the pastor. Pinkerton advocated admission of the unimmersed to the church and argued against the doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible. According to reports, the singing of the congregation was so deplorable that it would scare the rats from the worship. A small melodeon was used at song practice on Saturday nights to get the pitch. Soon one of the sisters accompanied the singing as they practiced, and the next step was to use it in worship on the Lord's Day. The melodeon is still on display at Midway College in Midway, Kentucky, near Lexington.

As the issue of instrumental music in worship heated up, many churches divided as preachers, churches, and papers lined up on one side or the other. It is said that the first question asked of a new preacher was whether he was for or against the organ. Garrison and DeGroot point out, however, that much Christian forbearance was practiced. They state, "Franklin (anti-organ) advised anti-organists to meet separately for worship if an organ was put in over their protest but not to organize a new church or to create a split. Errett (pro-organ) advised discarding the use of the organ where there was opposition by a considerable majority" (Garrison & DeGroot 346–347).

Other leaders were more adamant about their positions. In 1864, Moses Lard wrote, "Let every preacher resolve never to enter a meeting-house of our brethren in which an organ stands. Let no one who takes a letter from one church ever unite with another using an organ. *Rather let him live out of a church than go into such a den.* Let all who oppose the organ withdraw from the church if one is brought in" (Garrison & DeGroot 345).

J.W. McGarvey began to speak against instruments in worship about the same time. In 1881, he wrote a series of articles in the **Apostolic Times** describing their use as a positive sin. McGarvey thought the use of instrumental music in worship was a fad that would pass, giving some the idea that he had changed positions. In 1881, he wrote, "I have not withdrawn my opposition to the organ. I would not hold membership with, nor contract to preach for a church using one. Its introduction against the conscientious protest of a minority is high-handed wickedness, and can be prompted by no spirit but that of the world and the flesh" (McGarvey 51).

In the final analysis, it was the introduction of instrumental music that brought division. Those who thought instrumental music sinful could not

worship in a congregation where it was used without violating their consciences. Those preachers who spoke against instrumental music were not used by those who advocated it, and those preachers who spoke for it were not used by those who opposed it. Ultimately, those who opposed it were forced to withdraw fellowship from those who used it. Guy N. Woods points out that the division grew out of a difference in attitude toward the Scriptures. He says, "It is the same as that which occasioned the famous controversy between Luther and Zwingli: whether we are at liberty to do anything not expressly forbidden, as Luther contended, or are bound by what is written, and must, therefore, do nothing for which there is not a 'thus saith the Lord,' or an approved apostolic precedent, as Zwingli argued" (Woods 195). By 1906, the division was officially noted when the churches of Christ were listed in the U.S. census separately from the "Christian Churches" or "Disciples of Christ."

It is interesting to note that there has been an evolution in arguments in defense of instrumental music. Every new defense made in behalf of instrumental music, however, is a repudiation of all others that have been made. Robert Richardson, viewed by many as one of the "big four" of the Restoration Movement, effectively answers the expediency argument set forth by such men as Isaac Errett and J. B. Briney when he writes, "As it regards the use of musical instruments in church worship, the case is wholly different . . . This (instrumental music) can never be a question of expediency, for the simple reason that there is no law prescribing or authorizing it. If it were anywhere said in the New Testament that Christians should use instruments, then it would become a question of expediency" (Richardson 409).

In a 1903 debate with Joe S. Warlick, J. Carroll Stark affirmed that instruments are authorized in the Bible. Stark spent his time arguing that instrumental music was authorized in the Old Testament, and Warlick beat him to death, so to speak, with infant membership, incense, polygamy, and dancing by showing that the Old Testament could be used to support such acts as well.

In 1908, J.B. Briney and W.W. Otey discussed the societies and instrumental music. Briney affirmed that the society was authorized but would not affirm that instrumental music was authorized. His very weak defense was that there was no law against instrumental music and that he did not care anything about instrumental music. He said, however, that it was a matter of expediency and that the use of instruments inhered in the word **psallo**.

In 1920, O.E. Payne, a Christian Church preacher, analyzed the Greek word **psallo**, the Greek word used in Ephesians 5:19 (“make melody”), and wrote a book arguing that if we forego musical instruments we cannot conform to the divine injunction to **psallein**. This was a departure from previous arguments because it made the use of instrumental music a command and also included it as an act of worship. The book led to a discussion in 1923 between Ira M. Boswell and N.B. Hardeman with Boswell affirming that instrumental music in church worship is scriptural. Boswell came with an array of scholarly evidence designed to show that the Greek word **psallo** includes the idea of an instrument. Hardeman introduced Thayer, Bagster, and Sophocles to show that **psallo** in the New Testament means simply to sing. He showed that the forty-seven scholars of the KJV and the one hundred and one scholars of the ASV were members of churches that use instrumental music, but when they relied upon their scholarship, they translated **psallo** “to sing and make melody in your heart.” He asked, “What is the instrument that accompanies the singing?” He showed that Paul settled the question when he affirmed that we **psallo** with the heart, therefore the heart is the instrument that accompanies the singing.

In the later years, two young preachers of the Christian Church engaged in several debates, contending that instrumental music was only an aid. Their argument was that just as people need hearing aids, eyeglasses or false teeth to obey certain commands of the New Testament, they also need an organ or piano in getting the pitch and in maintaining the pitch. In these debates, it was pointed out to them that all the things mentioned, except instrumental music, are subordinate to a command, but playing on an instrument is a coordinate—a different kind of music.

In 1985, Don DeWelt, an influential preacher and educator of the Independent Christian Church, wrote a letter to Guy N. Woods, stating, “There is no command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the New Testament for congregational singing with or without an instrument.” In effect, this argument says, “It is true that instrumental music is unauthorized, but so is congregational singing.” Guy N. Woods, who was then editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, showed that the teaching, admonishing, and speaking commanded in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 involves reciprocal action, that is, mutual action. Where else would this be done besides in the assembly? Woods wrote in the *Gospel Advocate* on May 16, 1985, “Gone, then, accord-

ing to him, because they never existed, are the grounds on which Briney, Boswell, Payne, Walker, and all other scholars among them, for a hundred years past, sought to show that the Greek word **psallo** signifies the use of a mechanical instrument accompanying singing in congregational worship.”

One of the last attempts to defend instrumental music was in 1988 when Given C. Blakely of the Independent Christian Church met Alan E. Highers of the church of Christ in Neosho, Missouri. Blakely was endorsed by nearly every debater of that fellowship. He was obligated to prove that instrumental music is scriptural and in harmony with the Word of God. In the debate, however, Blakely repeatedly said that there is no such thing as approved acts of worship and no such thing as corporate worship. In taking such a position, he went against all that previous debaters and preachers among them ever taught, including his own father.

I agree with Guy N. Woods who said that the real reason so many unauthorized things came to be practiced was the same reason as that given by Henry Ward Beecher, an eminent denominational preacher, who frankly said that he practiced infant baptism for the same reason he used an ox yoke—*he had tried them and both worked* (Wood 195). In our time, those innovators who love large crowds and big churches have found that instrumental music and other unauthorized things work to do that which they cherish most—meet popular demand—whether it pleases God or not!

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THE FORGOTTEN THEME

Ronny F. Wade

When Thomas Campbell arrived in the United States, he soon found himself at odds with the Presbyterian communion of which he had been a part. These disagreements soon led to his withdrawal from them. He continued to preach, however, in an attempt to draw people together in a union where fellowship in Christ and freedom from sectarian narrowness could be enjoyed. It was in one of the assemblies where he first preached the famous rule “where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” We are told that when Mr. Campbell made this statement, a silence fell over the audience. They had never before heard religious duty presented in so simple a form. Whether Campbell realized it or not, he had, in the pronouncement of this simple slogan, suggested an attitude toward the Scriptures that would change the thinking of the religious world of that day. Robert Richardson, in his **Memoirs of A. Campbell**, says

Thus the silence of the Bible was to be respected equally with its revelations, which were by divine authority declared to be able to make the man of God perfect and thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Anything more, then, must be an encumbrance. Anything less than the whole counsel of God would be a dangerous deficiency. Simply, reverentially, confidently, they would speak of Bible things in Bible words, adding nothing thereto and omitting nothing given by inspiration.

When Campbell finished speaking, a Mr. Andrew Munro responded, “Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism,”

whereupon Mr. Campbell replied, "Of course, if infant baptism be not found in Scripture, we can have nothing to do with it."

Regarding the occasion when this now-famous rule was first spoken, Mr. Richardson further notes,

It was from the moment when these significant words were uttered and accepted that the more intelligent ever afterward dated the formal and actual commencement of the Reformation which was subsequently carried on with so much success, and which has already produced such important changes in religious society over a large portion of the world.

Some years later Alexander Campbell concluded,

The Bible alone must always decide every question involving the nature, the character or the design of the Christian institution. Outside of the apostolic cannon, there is not, as it appears to me, one solid foot of terra firma on which to raise the superstructure ecclesiastic.

One can but admire the attitude toward the Scriptures adopted by these early reformers. Living by the sentiment expressed in the rule, however, was much more difficult. Homer Hailey points this out when he writes,

But as the body of believers grew, and social customs changed, there appeared those who believed that in its method of working, the church should adapt itself to the changing conditions of the times. Others continued to hold to the original attitude that the New Testament reveals a fixed pattern for the church of all time, and that it is the business of disciples of Christ to hold to that pattern, regardless of the consequences. With these two attitudes developing, one holding to a rigid interpretation of Thomas Campbell's famous slogan, and the other to a liberal interpretation of its sentiments, conflicts were inevitable.

In time, disagreements developed. Issues involving the clergy, missionary societies, instrumental music, and others emerged. The ultimate result was division. The divisions generally followed the two differing views of the application of Scripture as outlined by Hailey in the previous quotation. Those who

felt the church should adapt to changing conditions and times embraced the changes and innovations popular at the time. Those who felt the New Testament revealed a pattern rejected such things. It was, without doubt, the attitude each held with regard to the authority of Scripture that shaped and formed his actions.

Why did this division happen? What kind of climate existed that led these dedicated men and women to so soon stray from their spoken intent to speak where the Scriptures speak, and be silent where they are silent? It may be that the answer lies in an Old Testament event recorded in Judges 2:6-10. These verses tell us that when Joshua and his generation died, another generation arose that "...knew not the Lord nor the work He had done for Israel." This generation, only one generation removed from the great leader Joshua, worshipped at the shrine of idolatry. They came to have more in common with their enemies than they had in common with the Lord. "And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the Lord to anger" (Jgs. 2:12). This generation could no longer stand before its enemies. They had forgotten. The memory of God's great works had gradually faded away and with it, the influence such works had upon their hearts. The seductions of idolatry and the influence of heathen example were ever fresh and powerful. Hence, they drifted. What had happened at the Red Sea, Jordan, and Sinai did not mean as much to this new generation of people as it did to those who were actually there. This new generation did not appreciate the hardships and sacrifices of the previous generation; they were bent on change. For these reasons it became much easier for them to make accommodations with the people around them and to adopt their ways of worship. Their apostasy began with them forsaking God. This is where all sin begins because while we live near Him, it is impossible for us to love and follow evil. The next step was the worship of other gods. The shrine of the heart cannot long be empty; it has to be filled with something. In this instance, the people filled their hearts with idol worship. It is interesting, however, that there was nothing inventive about the apostasy of Israel. The people adopted the old deities of the native population about them. They saw what other people were doing and joined in the practice of the same thing. They became like the nations about them. Why did it happen? As long as Joshua and his contemporary elders lived, the people

remained faithful. Apostasy arose in the new generation “which knew not the Lord.” It seems obvious that the former generation had failed to properly teach and train the younger. Had they done so, the people would have not been ignorant and might never have followed the gods of the day. Another contributing factor can be found in the fact that this new generation was surrounded by circumstances of ease. The moral heroism the people displayed while they were surrounded by the perils of the wilderness melted beneath the sun of peaceful prosperity. Worldly comfort brings a great inducement to religious negligence. When a people no longer have to fight for their existence, when they are surrounded by ease and pleasure, they tend to let their guard down. During such a time, evil is often tolerated. In this case the earlier generation had failed to extinguish the idolatry of Canaan. It then became a stumbling block for the younger generation. The service of the world is more agreeable to the pleasures and sense of selfishness. It is always much easier to worship Baal than to worship the Eternal. Baal is always in the here and now, and God seems far away. What everyone else is doing seems so important at the time, while doing what is right seems so out of step and different.

That raises an important question for us: Have we in our day forgotten that we are a people of the Book? Are we in danger of becoming like the nations about us? Do we actually speak where the Scriptures speak, and are we silent where they are silent? This so-called rule is really more than that. It is a bed-rock principle of truth. In 1 Peter 4:11 the Holy Spirit says, “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.” Obedience to this command means that we will talk of Bible things just as the Bible talks about them. We will do only as the Bible directs. Unfortunately, that is unpopular today because many are much more interested in what others are doing than in what the Bible commands us to do. This same attitude came to popularity among some of the restorers. They reasoned that the silence of the Scriptures was permissive. In other words, if the Bible did not say, “Thou shalt not,” they were permitted to do it. Silence became license. This led to the missionary society, instrumental music, and a host of other innovations that eventually side-tracked and divided the movement. A review of the history of that period reveals that the group which adopted the idea that “silence gives permission” continued to drift from the original intent of the early reformers and the Bible itself. They did not stop with just one or two changes. The Disciples of Christ denomination today represents the end result of such thinking. A

careful study of their theology indicates that not only have they changed drastically from the Bible pattern, but also that they continue to change even more as the years go by. If we as a brotherhood of people allow and tolerate the thinking and teaching that “if the Bible does not specifically prohibit a practice, then there is nothing wrong with it,” we are headed for the same fate as those before us who adopted the same line of reasoning. When people leave the truth, they do one of two things: they return to the truth, or they continue to travel farther away from it. Sin or digression is never stagnant; it is always progressive. A number of years ago preachers warned those who utilize the Sunday-school arrangement, with women teaching some of the classes, that such would eventually lead to women in the pulpit. The Sunday-school group steadfastly denied that such would be the case, but time has proven them wrong. Today, women speak in some of their pulpits. When some among them began to reach out and embrace denominational bodies, they were warned that such would lead to unscriptural teaching and practices. These warnings were ignored, and today they have preachers and churches that teach salvation occurs at the point of faith and not at the point of baptism. They also embrace the idea that salvation is by grace alone and that there is nothing one can do of himself to be saved. Instead of returning to the Bible, these groups continue to drift farther away from it.

Could this happen to us? Obviously it can, and it will if we do not continue to speak where the Scriptures speak and remain silent where they are silent. If we fall in love with the “nations about us” or if we want to be like them, we will suffer the same fate as Israel of old. May God help us to awaken before it is too late. I fear that many of our people do not know why we believe the Sunday school arrangement is wrong, or why instrumental music is wrong, or why individual cups in the communion are wrong. Only eternal vigilance and sincere dedication to that which is written will stem the tide that divided the reformers in by-gone years and threatens those of us today.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Voice of the Golden Oracle, Dwight E. Stevenson (Christian Board of Publication, 1946).

Walter Scott is one of the “big four” in the history of the American Restoration Movement. Among Scott’s major contributions to that era was his exhaustive study of the conversions of the Book of Acts and his use of those cases as models to follow in his own evangelistic efforts. His “five-finger exercise,” which he used to illustrate the conditions of salvation, was an outgrowth of that study. Scott also saw the simple confession of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, as occupying a central position in the gospel. Scott referred to this confession as the “Golden Oracle,” and he advocated it as the creed of Christianity and the basis of Christian union.

Stevenson offers anecdotal information about Scott that I have not found in any other source. While he writes with a sympathetic appreciation of Scott throughout the book, his work cannot be labeled as a hagiography. There is no trace of that type of blind, hero-worship in the book. The author’s purpose, rather, is to present a flesh-and-blood man, with all his virtues, all his faults, portrayed against the historical, geographical, social, and religious background in which he labored. *Carl Johnson.*

Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement Homer Hailey (Guardian of Truth Foundation Publications, 1975)

Most members of the Church of Christ have some knowledge of what is commonly called “The Restoration Movement.” During this period of religious ferment America went through a religious transition. Men like Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, and others arose pleading with a divided

religious world to return to the scriptures. The call was heralded, "Speak where the bible speaks and be silent where the bible is silent." At the outset thousands responded to the call. For a time the movement burned with a fire that seemed unquenchable. However, as too often is the case, some joined the movement that did not fully espouse its initial plea. Men like D.S. Burnett, L.L. Pinkerton raised their influential voices against such stalwarts as Moses Lard and J.W. McGarvey resulting in a variety of innovations. The missionary society, the melodeon and other non-scriptural practices eventually fractured the fledgling movement opening fissures that continue to this day.

In this book Hailey traces some of the historical influences that spawned the Restoration Movement and how various attitudes toward the scriptures produced, and continue to produce, consequences we see today in the church of Christ. *Carl Johnson.*

The Fool of God: A novel based on the life of Alexander Campbell,
Louis Cochran (College Press Publishing Co. 1985)

This book is for those who love history but despise the tedium of dry historians. Cochran is a master story teller. Using factual data Cochran takes the significant facts in the life of Alexander Campbell and weaves a historical novel that accurately tells the story of one of America's most overlooked, yet influential men. The author makes it clear in his preface that he does not presume to present a study of Campbell's religious thinking. Neither does he set out to give a detailed account of the movement that sought to re-establish Christian unity by the elimination of human creeds. This book is about the "man" behind the movement. It seeks to paint a portrait of a man whose heart embraced his fellow man and whose mind searched for "truth." Cochran is successful in his purpose and his book is highly recommended as an "easy read" on the man behind the Restoration Movement. *Mike Criswell.*

In a future issue we will have more information about building a library on the history of the Restoration Movement and biographies of its leading lights.