

# The Harding College Lectures 1950

"RESTORATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT  
CHURCH-----A PRESENT NEED"

HARDING COLLEGE PRESS  
SEARCY, ARKANSAS  
1951



The Harding College Lectures  
1950



# CONTENTS

<i>The Lectures</i>	vi
<i>Preface</i>	vii
I. THE CHURCH AND THE NAME OF JESUS	9
II. PRESENT DAY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESTORATION	19
III. HISTORY OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT	30
IV. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES	66
V. TOLBERT FANNING AND THE RESTORATION	76
VI. SIXTY-FOUR YEARS AMONG THE CHURCHES	82
VII. THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN THE ORIENT	94
VIII. THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN GERMANY	105
IX. THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT ON THE WEST COAST	122
X. THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IN PROPHECY	131
XI. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH--A MODEL FOR ALL AGES	139
XII. RESTORATION OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY	146
XIII. RESTORATION OF NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP	159
XIV. RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT ZEAL	163
XV. DIGRESSION WITHIN THE RESTORATION	168
XVI. NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY TODAY	173
XVII. THE ESSENCE OF DENOMINATIONALISM	181
XVIII. RESTORATION PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO FELLOWSHIP	191
XIX. HOW TO PRESENT THE RESTORATION PLEA TODAY	201
XX. THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN CHRIST	210

# The Lecturers

Jesse P. Sewell, Lecturer in Bible, Harding College

George S. Benson, President, Harding College

Earl West, Minister, Irvington Church of Christ,  
Indianapolis, Ind.

A. R. Holton, Minister, Central Church of Christ, Nashville,  
Tenn.

E. W. McMillan, President, Southwestern Christian College,  
Terrell, Tex.

Otis Gatewood, Missionary, Frankfurt, Germany

James H. Sewell, Elder, Broadway and Walnut Church of  
Christ, Santa Ana, Calif.

James D. Bales, Professor of Bible, Harding College

Frank Winters, Elder, Culbertson Heights Church of Christ,  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Leon Burns, Minister, Seventh Avenue Church of Christ,  
Columbia, Tenn.

Melvin J. Wise, Minister, Pearl and Bryan Church of Christ,  
Dallas, Tex.

F. W. Mattox, Dean of Students, Professor of Bible, Harding  
College

## Preface

The theme of this Lectureship—"Restoration of the New Testament Church—A Present Need"—indicated that the emphasis in some lectures would be on "what lack we yet," and not on what success already has been attained. Building on, and not rejecting, the firm foundation which has already been laid, the speakers urged us to go on unto perfection. Some speakers especially emphasized our present shortcomings, dangers, and needs.

The restoration movement, of course, is not our standard of authority. It is not our model. Our standard is the word of God. Our continual effort should be to search the scriptures in order that we may plant simply the word of God. Where ever the word is planted in good and honest hearts people become members of Christ's church. This is true regardless of whether or not those individuals know about us or we about them.

One must not assume that the primary message which must be preached to the world is the unity of those who believed in Christ. Of course, unity is a consummation devoutly to be wished. No one who knows Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20-21), can claim really to love the Lord, and to want to be loyal to Him, and yet fail to try to live so as to answer Christ's prayer for unity. Every member of the body of Christ must apply this scripture to himself, and then to others. But our primary message is not unity of believers with one another, but unity of believers with God. Our primary purpose is not to get men to walk with us, but to walk with God. For to walk with God is to walk in the light, and to walk in the light is to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus (I John 1:7). Salvation from sin through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is the fundamental message which must be proclaimed. To be united with one another outside of that blood may avail for some worldly purposes, but not for the purpose God wants realized in human life.

It is true that the lack of unity hinders world evangelism, and thus hinders people from coming into fellowship with God. Some individuals see the divided condition of professed followers of Christ, and they conclude that the Bible must be false, since they think that it teaches such contradictory ways. There are others who are not given an opportunity to hear and believe, because denominationalism consumes time, money, and men which could otherwise be released for world evangelism. So some today do not believe because denominationalism has hindered world evangelism. This shows that it is extremely important to *preach* and *practice* the New Testament teaching concerning unity of believers. And yet, we must never forget that it is to Christ, and redemption in Him, that we want to lead men, and not to ourselves. Unity with God, and not unity with men, is the fundamental message. Those who unite with God, and continue to stand on His word, are thereby united with one another. These must strive to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. They should prove all things including these lectures and hold fast to that which is good.

It is our sincere prayer that this volume of lectures may help increase the determination, of those who read it, to seek to plant the word of God in the hearts of men that men may be restored to fellowship with God, and with one another.

Harding College  
Searcy, Arkansas  
November 21, 1950

James D. Bales



# Chapter I

## THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH AND THE NAME OF JESUS

by

*Jesse P. Sewell*

*"And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).*

Clearly this is the message which the New Testament church and her inspired teachers set out to make clear and convincing to the world.

They pointed men to Jesus Christ as the name above all other names, rejected and crucified by men, but raised from the dead by God and exalted "Far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come" (Ephesians 1:21).

The New Testament church and its inspired teachers pointed men to Jesus Christ as the teacher divinely sent. They remembered the Mount of Transfiguration; that while this man Peter "Was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5).

Years later the Holy Spirit testified in the following wonderful words, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all

things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:1-4).

The New Testament church and its inspired teachers pointed men to Jesus as the world's only redeemer, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (II Corinthians 5:19). "But Christ having been a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:11-12).

This was their gospel. They had no other. Paul declared, "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:1-2).

The New Testament church and her inspired teachers demanded for Jesus the place, the entire place in the faith and loyalty of men.

They confronted an age which believed in many gods.

To that set of mind the New Testament church said, "there is no other name except that of Jesus whereby men must be saved."

Josephus says, that Alexander Severus, who became emperor of Rome in the year 222, placed in his private chapel statues of Abraham, Orpheus, Appollonius, and Christ. This was typical of the age.

Had the New Testament church and its inspired teachers been able to have Christ counted just another one of the gods Rome would have added Him to its Pantheon. But Christianity, under inspired direction from God, could not accept a place for His Son.

It demanded the whole place.

The second thought which gathers about our text is that it is what the modernists call narrow, dogmatic, intolerant. The timid, shallow, broad and thin modernist shivers and shrinks when he hears these words, "No other name," "Whereby men must." These words are far too definite and positive for modernists. Such words jar their sensitive ears and shock their cultured souls. To them such words are narrow, dogmatic, and intolerant.

Nearly thirty years ago I preached in the Southside church building in Ft. Worth, Texas, a little sermon I call "A Way that is Right and Cannot Be Wrong." The thesis of the sermon is, let others be right, or let them be wrong, Christ is always right and cannot be wrong on any question on which He speaks.

At the close of the sermon two young gospel preachers came to me and expressed their regrets and humiliation that a college president should talk about "A way that cannot be wrong." They informed me that such narrow, dogmatic intolerance is entirely out in this age of culture. I was as kind to them as I could be, but, with sadness, said in my heart, "They won't be gospel preachers long." For years one of them has been identified with the modernist group of the Disciples and in that very heart of the infidelity of Chicago University. The other has long been a member of the Methodist Church and in the very center of the modernism of Southern Methodist University.

In many respects the modernism of today is exactly like the modernism of the world which confronted Christ, the Apostles and the early church. Modernism is quite ancient. It originated in the Garden of Eden.

The modernist, in substance, said to Eve, I understand God has given some rather narrow and unreasonable commands. O, replied Eve, they are not so bad. He has told us only one thing we must not do. But, the modernist replied, don't you see how beautiful that fruit is, and how good it is to eat? Wouldn't you like to be wise as the gods? And that idea you will die if you eat of it grows out of age-old superstition and lack of culture. Maybe it was all right for primitive

people thousands of years ago, but for a cultured, broadminded woman such as you are it is just out of the realm of reason. Surely a woman of your enlightenment will not listen to a thing so unscientific and dogmatic. You know the rest of that story.

Paul found modernism in full flower in Athens. We read about it in verses sixteen through thirty-one of the seventeenth chapter of Acts.

The philosophers were there, even of the Epicureans and the Stoics.

Paul was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

They thought he might have a new god for them to add to their collection. They brought him to the Areopagus and said, Now tell us about this new thing. "And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with the inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD" (Acts 17:22-23).

There it is, the modernism of all the ages. It's all right, be religious, have your god or as many as you like, as long as you are not sure about it. But Paul said, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you" (Acts 17:23). "Being then the offspring of God we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent" (Acts 17:29-30).

It is the business of Christianity to dispel ignorance, darkness and superstition and to bring knowledge, light and faith. The New Testament church was constantly busy at that task. Jesus says, "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Here we have a very definite condition, "If ye abide in my word." Remain within my word, allow yourself to be hedged in by it. If you fix your faith, convictions and conduct by my word. Narrow? Yes, just as narrow as the authority

of God's gracious Son. Here we have three positive promises based on this very definite condition:

1. "Then are ye truly my disciples."
2. "Ye shall know the truth."
3. "The truth shall make you free."

Dogmatic? Yes, "then are ye truly my disciples"—not perhaps or it is possible—but ye are.

"Ye shall know"—not maybe, or let us hope—but you shall -know, *Know what?*

"The truth"—not the wisdom, the philosophies, dogmas, traditions and commandments of men—but that truth that originates in the infinite mind and gracious heart of God and is revealed to us in His Son, Jesus Christ.

"Shall make you free"—positively, without the slightest doubt. This is not the language of doubt, uncertainty, hesitation. It is the language of knowledge. It is the language of authority.

John says, "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (I John 1:1-3).

This is not the testimony of gossip, hear-say, or rumor. It is the testimony of knowledge. "We saw, we heard, we handled." We know. The Christian's faith rests on the testimony of knowledge.

Paul says, "I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel; only there are some that trouble you, and would prevent the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:6-8).

Intolerant? Yes, just as intolerant as the gracious heart of God, who "So loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

God could not be the God of love and justice and tolerate disbelief and disobedience to His Son. "He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

Just so God tolerated no perversion of the gospel of His Son. His curse rests on man or angel who dares to preach another gospel.

John says, "And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ, for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night, And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death" (Revelations 12:10-11).

Beloved, this battle has been raging throughout the ages. Many of the Lord's redeemed soldiers have fallen out along the way because of timidity, the lack of courage to endure. Many others have fallen by the way because their affections had never been won away from "the accuser of our brethren" to be centered upon the Lord of our salvation. Many others have fallen because, in their common human weakness, they failed to learn that there is a source of strength that never fails and to stand in that strength.

Many others bold, courageous and energetic have fallen beneath the weight of personal ambition, the love "to have the preeminence." These fight with much boldness and power, but often much more to destroy "our brethren" than to destroy the "accuser of our brethren." When the battles are over with them, many of "our brethren" will have been severely wounded and the "accuser of our brethren" will be much stronger as the result of their activities.

Since Christ joined this battle with the enemy of our souls there have been soldiers, with undivided heart fixed on

the Captain of their salvation, courageous to endure, looking ever to Him for strength and wisdom, who have fought to the end without yielding or compromise. They are the ones who have been able to lay their armors down and look back on a good fight, faith unbroken, and a finished course; and forward to "the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give . . . to all them that have loved His appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-8). Perhaps at no time during this fierce war have the battles raged with more bitterness and hate than during this generation. Likely the bitterness and fierceness will not be abated as long as God permits the war to continue.

But one day, out yonder somewhere, the last battle will be fought, the war will cease, the victory will have been won. "The salvation, the power, and the kingdom of God, and the authority of His Christ" will be announced by a great voice in heaven. "The accuser of our brethren will be cast down." What a victory! What a glorious victory! And who are they who shall have part in this glorious eternal victory? Here they are; those who "loved not their life," who lost themselves completely in Christ "even unto death," as they testified to the power of His blood. There will be a great concourse of them, angels and redeemed souls, round about the throne of God. Listen to what they shall sing: "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing. . . . forever and ever," (Revelation 5:12-13).

Again, who are these who are permitted this glorious experience? Those who give "their life" without reservation in "testimony" and overcome "because of the blood of the Lamb." Let us get this exactly right. There are going to be many disappointed people when the war is ended and the final sentences are announced. Listen! Jesus says, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?" (Matthew 7:22). What is wrong? They believed, they prayed, they testified, they worked. Still Jesus says, "I never knew you: depart from

me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). What is wrong? Here it is. Jesus declared, "whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth *them*, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock and everyone that heareth these *sayings of mine*, and doeth *them not*, shall be like to a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand" (Matthew 7:22-26).

The testimony makes a great deal of difference, doesn't it? One of these groups heard the testimony, the sayings of Jesus, and did *just that*. Jesus pronounced them wise. The other group heard the same testimony, the sayings of Jesus, but *did something else*. That is all. Yet, the first group will have part in that glorious experience about the throne of God. And the second group must accept those terrible words, "I never knew you; depart from me." It really does make a great deal of difference as to our testimony, doesn't it?

The one who testifies and sets up a law where Christ has not testified is declared by Christ to be a "vain worshiper." The one who goes beyond, transgresses the testimony of Christ is declared by John not to have God (II John 9). Jesus sets up the law in these words, "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," (John 8:31-42). It is because they keep their testimony within the words of Jesus Christ that these soldiers of His overcome because of the power of His blood.

The New Testament church understood, believed and practiced that fundamental law of the New Covenant, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." It is this name and this name only that carries with it authority and that conveys the blessing of God. If our testimony is not by His authority; if it is not to be found in His word, then, regardless of all else that may be true of it, it will make no contribution to the victory that is "because of the blood of the Lamb." And any other victory will be complete and awful defeat. Any testimony, any act of worship, any act of service, any act of righteousness that fails to bear the name of Christ, that is not performed by His



authority will fail utterly to make any contribution to that great and glorious final victory. Perhaps there is no lesson that the church of today needs to get fixed on its mind and heart more than this one.

There is a wide-spread tendency to feel that this is too narrow, dogmatic, intolerant. There is a very wide-spread and determined theory today, that in religion men can never *know* and consequently all men must be allowed to believe, teach and practice as their own minds and emotions suggest, and this without criticism or objection by any one. But, beloved, I submit to you the fact that the Christian's faith is based on the testimony of knowledge. On the birthday of the church Peter said to those men who believed and felt that Jesus was an impostor and who had recently crucified Him, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ," (Acts 2:36).

The testimony of the apostles was the testimony of knowledge. Paul said to the Galatians that Jesus Christ gave himself for our sins, that he might "deliver us out of this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:4).

Immediately after this he expressed his astonishment that they should be so "soon removed . . . unto another gospel" and declared: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Galatians 1:8).

The liberals affect to forgive this as the unhappy beginning of intolerance. But, beloved, I suggest to you that neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament presents a religion without intolerance. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other god before me"; and the last commandment of the New Testament is, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book: and if any man shall take from the words of this book of this prophecy,

God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

If you cannot truthfully say about the gospel you preach, the testimony you give, "If any man preach any other gospel let him be accursed," then you need to look to your gospel. If you do not have the *only* gospel you do not have a *gospel at all*. Nothing else has stamped upon it the name of Jesus Christ. No other testimony will overcome in the power of the blood of the Lamb.

## Chapter 2

### PRESENT DAY SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

by

*George S. Benson*

In my opinion the restoration idea is a principle that has great significance for our generation. The specific developments of the restoration movement in America also are of great importance. I remember hearing Brother J. N. Armstrong say, "every reformation movement needs itself every so often to be again reformed." There's a reason why that is true, and I would like to develop that reason as we continue this study.

Let me say in the beginning that nothing in which man is engaged remains for very long static. That is because man never remains the same. Nothing with which man deals ever remains for very long the same. For instance, no form of government has long remained the same. The Egyptians 4,000 years ago had the greatest nation in the world of their day, but that nation's glory passed away, and nothing of very much significance has been rebuilt on its foundations. Egypt was followed by Babylonia, Persia, Assyria, Greece, and Rome. No one nation long retained the good principles that government itself had developed. I agree they shouldn't remain unchanged. They should be changed constantly, but the real objective would be to get rid of the poorer principles while retaining the better. On the contrary, each government has somehow let the best slip away, and the vices have become so great that that nation itself has soon failed. I am just saying that even though man may develop something good, he doesn't hold it very long. It soon becomes full of corruption and disappears.

According to that very same principle, no dispensation under which God has placed man has remained very long in the condition in which God inaugurated it. Man has not long remained entirely faithful to God's laws under any dispensation. This is of great significance, because God's religion is an authoritative religion. Each dispensation stood firmly established on God's authority. In the religion established by God, man was not at liberty to change it. There has never been a case in history where man himself figured out a way to worship that pleased God. Man has not been at liberty to change a single policy or a single principle or a single condition in any of the dispensations under which God has dealt with man. Religion is authoritative; God is the authority. God has established each dispensation after his own wisdom and man under that dispensation and holding fast to the traditions established therewith has been able to enjoy God's favor. But when man has departed from the laws that God has given, he has not been able to prosper.

Man is entirely helpless to seek out a way to please God. That is why God said, "Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22), "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23), and "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Now let us observe some examples of man's rather rapid departures from God's ways. Remember Adam and Eve were created in the Garden of Eden. They were assigned certain responsibilities: to multiply and replenish the earth and to care for and keep the garden. But it wasn't long until they were misguided and misled and decided that God had unduly restricted them and concluded that it would be better for them to do differently than God had ordained. They decided that they would actually benefit from eating the forbidden fruit, so they ate thereof. The result: immediately the human race became a dying race. Adam and Eve began to die that day. Otherwise they need not have feared oncoming death, but might have eaten of the Tree of Life and have lived

indefinitely. But they became dying creatures when they transgressed God's law. They paid the penalty that God had said would be paid, and in addition to that they were banished from the Garden of Eden, lest they continue to eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. But my point is that man didn't long remain in the Garden of Eden under that marvelous system that God had ordained.

Then the descendants of Adam and Eve, after a system of animal offerings had been established to atone for their sins, soon became exceedingly wicked, so wicked that God determined to destroy the whole human race with a great flood. The flood came in the days of Noah and all the people were destroyed except eight who were in the ark. All were destroyed except those who feared God. Noah was a man who feared God and kept his commandments, we are told. Noah was satisfied with God's law and he was willing to obey him, but the others to whom he preached, as the ark was being constructed and as the flood was approaching, considered his words as foolishness. But with the destruction of all others there was a restoration. There were left only eight souls and they were all people who feared God and kept his commandments. Man was restored to his relationship to God, and the people who lived on the earth feared God and sought to do his will.

But how long after the flood was it until again man was departing from the commandments of the Lord? In a few hundred years God chose Abraham and promised that of his seed he would create a great nation, the Jewish nation. To that people God gave the law of Moses on Mount Sinai. God appeared on the mount. But Moses went up into the mountain and there received the law and returned and delivered it to the people. Moses urged the people to fear God and to keep his commandments.

God gave a number of specific examples to lead the people to fear and respect him. You remember when the law of Moses was just being established they had just completed the tabernacle and the instruments that were to go in it; the garments for the priests to wear had just been finished.

Nadab and Abihu had dressed in their garments and were being ushered into their new duties as sons of the high priest when they made a fatal mistake. They did most of the things that God had said to do, but one thing they did wrong. They didn't use the fire that God ordained for burning incense. They brought strange fire, which probably seemed just as good to them. Their punishment came immediately. Fire came down from heaven and destroyed them both. They fell dead at their post of duty, and God commanded Moses and Aaron that they should not even weep for them. God was teaching the people that he must be respected, that his religion is authoritative, and men have no right to change anything about it; and when man does change it he makes it unacceptable to God.

There were other similar incidents and God through various lessons tried to teach the people to fear him and keep his commandments, and to realize that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

Israel was led triumphantly into the land of Canaan. They possessed cities already surrounded by walls, vineyards they had not planted, and fields they had not cleared. They entered in and possessed because of the power of the hand of God. However, it wasn't very long after they had been settled in their land till they began to turn aside to idolatry. Let me say again, man has never for very long remained entirely faithful to God. By the time Solomon was king he was able to lead much of that nation into idolatry. As punishment the kingdom was divided. Ten tribes went away in revolt and were soon carried away into Assyrian captivity. The remaining two and one-half tribes likewise refused to hear the preaching of the prophets who urged them to repent and return to the Lord. A restoration was needed. As punishment they were held captive in Babylonia for 70 years. Then came Daniel who began to pray for them. God heard Daniel's prayer and Israel was restored to the land of Palestine. The temple and the walls of the city were rebuilt and worship was restored.

In due time came the Christ, foretold by the prophets,

to establish a new covenant that would include both Jews and Gentiles, a covenant for the whole world. A new dispensation was begun. In this new dispensation God attempted to teach the same lesson he had taught in the days of Nadab and Abihu. This time it was Ananias and Sapphira who tried to lie to the Holy Spirit. Ananias fell dead at Peter's feet; he was carried out and buried. His wife, coming in a little later and not knowing what had happened, attempted the same deception. She likewise fell at the feet of the apostles and was carried out and buried by the side of her husband. This was God's way of teaching fear and respect for his word. Paul, in his latter days wrote the people, urging them to hold fast to the traditions which they had received. He said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you any gospel other than that which we have preached, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8). There could be no other gospel, no other doctrine. Paul was trying to drive home the fact that religion is authoritative, that no man has a right to change a single principle, policy or practice of the church. Jude, Peter, James and John in their epistles all felt the importance of urging people to hold fast to the doctrine, to be willing to endure persecution, suffering, even death.

But even so, man soon began to change the doctrines of the Lord's church. Within 150 years after the apostles preached and worked here on the earth, even within 150 years after Jesus had returned to the Father, man was changing the organization of the church. One of the first changes was regarding the eldership. The Lord had ordained that there should be a plurality of elders in every church; sometimes called elders, sometimes bishops; and sometimes pastors. They were elders because they are elderly, pastors because they are to feed the flock, and bishops because they are to exercise the rule in the church. But soon it became a practice to establish one of these men above the others, and to reserve for him alone the title of bishop. Then the bishops (the chief elders in the different churches) began holding meetings to legislate for the church. In 325 A.D. 318 of these

bishops wrote the Nicene Creed, the first human creed after the establishment of the church of the Lord.

About that same time Constantine sought a church organization with political power. He had usurped the throne, had become emperor of Rome, but had not been accepted by the aristocracy. Consequently, it was necessary for him to find some other means of support. Looking about he saw the Christians who were willing to die for their faith; heathen people were not. Constantine concluded that if he could get behind him such a group and enjoy their support, it would be of great advantage. So he tried through various means to cater to the Christians. For the first time in the history of the church, the Christian religion was legalized. Constantine stopped the persecution and almost made the Christian religion the official religion of the empire. He offered small gifts and a white robe to each one who would be baptized. Multitudes came into the church, nominally. Christianity was popular; the emperor was behind it, giving prizes to all who were baptized. (People who have worked in heathen fields can understand the power of that influence. I have seen times when I could have baptized 100 people, if I'd offered each of them a quarter's worth of candy.)

Constantine then sought a type of organization that would give the church political power. It wasn't a change that came about in a day. The church didn't depart from the old landmarks too fast. Usually, departure is so slow that no one generation gets very much excited about it. Little changes take place, one by one, and the people are unconscious of how serious those changes are. It was 300 years before there blossomed forth the organization of the Roman Catholic Church, but within that period it had become very much like the empire. The empire was accustomed to an emperor, governors, lieutenant governors, etc. In the church there was established a pope, as the emperor of the church, and under the pope cardinals, corresponding in a measure to the advisors of the emperor; then under the cardinals were the archbishops, corresponding to the governors; the bishops, similar to the lieutenant governors, etc. The organization



grew and was similar, politically, to the empire. It became a mighty political power, a power God never ordained for his church.

As the Roman Catholic Church became a mighty political force, it also became a very corrupt force. Under this new organization the church became so powerful it was able even to set up and remove kings and emperors. It changed church doctrines and practices. For example, under Romanism sprinkling was legalized as baptism, the use of images and pictures was instituted and instrumental music was introduced. Then Romanism claimed the sole power to interpret the Bible. They ignored God as the source of authority, and the pope became the authority; he alone could interpret the Bible. Then, in order to make that effective they developed the doctrine of infallibility, which said that when the pope was speaking *ex cathedra*, or officially, it was impossible for him to err; he was infallible. He could even change the Bible.

Under that exercise of power the Roman Catholic Church became more and more corrupt. There was established the sale of indulgences, whereby a person could buy the right to commit a sin, even to murder. He could pay for this sin and the priest would take care of him, so far as his relationship to God was concerned. The system of confessions, whereby a priest stood between a man and his God, gave the church complete disciplinary control. They could tell a man how much he must give, tell him what to do about anything.

Finally, this corruption led to rebellion. Rather strangely, the rebellion broke out about the same time in England, France, Italy, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and Switzerland. For a time Rome persecuted everyone who criticized, putting to death not a few; but people kept rising in opposition. Finally, someone dared translate the Bible into English. He was put to death for it, but still others wanted the Bible in their own language. It was translated into German and French. The people were getting the Bible and learning that the practices observed under Romanism were not ordained in the New Testament church. The rebellion spread.

Finally enough people had become interested in a reformation that two men were able to stand out as great reformers and still live. Martin Luther came forth saying to the people that they should sit at the feet of Jesus and learn only from him. He advanced the principle, "we shall do nothing which the Bible condemns." Luther was well accepted in France and Germany and acquired no small following. After Luther died his followers suddenly discovered there was no one among them of his stature to continue to guide their course. So they reasoned, we must write a creed to hold our people together, otherwise we will divide into many groups. They were not growing at the same rate in their knowledge of truth, and of course it was too much to expect of Luther, coming out of the darkness of Romanism, to come all the way back to the fullness of New Testament truth. It is amazing that he discovered so much truth. There were practices that Romanism had established that Luther never questioned that were unscriptural; there were others that he did question, but I say he did well to find as much truth as he did.

So the followers decided to write a creed. They did. It was largely the defense that Luther had prepared (but was never allowed to read) at the council of Worms. Luther had written very carefully his beliefs and why he believed them. His followers adopted these beliefs as a creed and decided to call themselves Lutherans. So there was established the Lutheran Church, the first Protestant denomination. (Do not mistake Romanism for the New Testament church. It was the New Testament church in apostasy.)

Coming out of that church and protesting against its corruptions was the first protestant denomination, organized with the wisdom of men, and according to the leadership of men. It was a denomination with a creed which represented the teachings of Martin Luther, and named after Luther. Both of these things Luther had asked them not to do. Luther wanted them to continue to learn from Jesus. Had they done that they would have continued to move closer to the New Testament pattern of the church. Instead they crystallized

Luther's doctrines and have come no nearer the truth during the past 400 years.

About the same time, over in Geneva, Switzerland, followers of John Calvin were faced with a similar problem. Calvin, a man who like Luther had turned from Romanism, had learned much truth. But Calvin died, and his followers sought to stay together. The result was another creed and the Presbyterian Church, another denomination.

A little later on the scene came the Wesley brothers, John and Charles, who decided they disliked the formalism in the Protestant church. They wanted a little more zeal and warmth, so they advocated different methods, and the Methodist church was a result. Like that, denominations continued to grow up around strong and powerful individuals, and more and more of them came into being.

This was about the time of the settlement of America. Here in the new country the weaknesses of the denominational system became quite evident. One of the first to recognize this was Thomas Campbell, a well-known Presbyterian preacher, who had come to America from England. He set about serving the Presbyterian churches in the little settlements near him, but he was discouraged when he found in the small towns little groups of Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, and others who couldn't afford preachers. Perhaps once a month a Presbyterian preacher would come to the town, but the Methodists and Baptists don't come to his meeting, and they didn't have a preacher. He wondered why. Didn't they all read the same Bible? Didn't they all believe in the same God? He began to study the matter as to why they couldn't worship together and he placed the blame on denominational creeds and barriers. He tried to overlook these barriers, but it didn't work. He found that people were more offended if you criticized their denomination than if you criticized the Bible. Denominational loyalty was much stronger than loyalty to the Bible itself. So he began to strike at the heart of the evil by advocating the discarding of creeds. "God didn't give any of them," he argued. "They were all written by man in just the last few

hundred years, the oldest of them being 1400 years newer than the Bible. So, why do we have them at all?" He urged getting back to the New Testament pattern, not reforming the denominations, but ridding themselves of the human names and creeds which separated them and restoring the church of the New Testament.

It was a great idea and today it represents a great need. Campbell didn't have in mind a better denomination. He didn't have in mind a denomination at all. He wanted to restore that New Testament pattern of Christianity. There is a great difference between denominationalism and New Testament Christianity. I remember listening to a group of people one time entering a certain denomination. Here was the question asked: Do you agree to be cheerfully governed by such and such a discipline? Answer: I do. Now, really, we've no right to agree to be governed by human traditions and human authority. Ours is to be governed by the Bible itself, not by what some group of people has written in addition to the Bible.

The early reformers had a great acceptance. Their ideas spread like wildfire. Sometimes whole congregations of various denominations would change, almost in a body, getting rid of human creeds and names and striving to be Christians and Christians only. It was a great movement. But somehow today it has slowed up. The movement isn't growing like it did. What is the matter? Maybe we ourselves need a restoration. You know we have almost adopted an unwritten creed. I wonder if that may be one of the reasons we are not moving forward as our fathers did. Is that the reason we are not appealing to good and honest hearts? Let me suggest this. This world was never in greater distress than in our generation. We have a real need for Christ. The only hope of the world is Christ, and the church should stand in a great united phalanx, one body, one faith, one baptism, and one doctrine, in order that an unbelieving world might hear the powerful message of Christ in this critical hour. There is need of a restoration among all who are seeking to follow Christ, that we might be one in glorifying God. Why should

the church stand so weak, in a time when the challenge before us is so great? I am persuaded that there are millions of honest hearts seeking God's truth, people who would act if they had an understanding of the New Testament church. Isn't there some way we can interpret our understanding of the restoration movement to these honest hearts, that there may be a renewed period of energy and success in the declaring of this great message?

# Chapter 3

## HISTORY OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

*by*

*Earl West*

The impressions that you and I should get from a study of the restoration movement will be helpful to us today as members of the New Testament church. I want to suggest at the outset that in these lessons there is one principle that ought to be kept in mind. I think it is always wise to preface any study of the restoration movement with a reminder that the movement is not, in any sense of the term, an authority for us today.

How many times is it true that people go back to Alexander Campbell, to Thomas Campbell, or other great pioneer preachers and say, now this is what he believed on a certain point, so it is what we should believe today. Anyone that takes that attitude, whether he means to do it or not, is simply taking the authority away from the sacred scriptures. Thomas Campbell was not an authority on anything, nor was Alexander Campbell or Barton Stone. While you and I should take the attitude that we can learn from these men, nevertheless, it ought not to be our interest to try to look to them with the idea that "this is what so and so said, therefore it is true." Very frankly, there are a number of things that Campbell said and taught that I think are absolutely wrong from the standpoint of the Bible. While it may seem presumptuous for a young man to say that concerning a man of the intellectual capacity of Alexander Campbell, yet any one of us can study the Bible and compare his teaching with it, and come to an understanding of the Word of God. So we should remember that the restoration movement is not for

us any kind of an authority. It is a valuable thing for us to study, and I believe next to the Bible it is the most important study for a preacher to acquire, but nevertheless it is not our authority.

I will very briefly outline the points which we intend to cover in these lectures. First, we will discuss the "Christian connection" which will get us back into the early American restoration movement, before the days of the Campbells. The reason we do that is simply to make clear the causes of the restoration movement. The second lecture will deal with the European background of the restoration movement, going back to the days of the Campbells in Scotland; then we shall study the activities of Barton Stone and the Campbells in America and conclude with restoration activities that have occurred since the Civil War.

Now, to understand the causes of the restoration movement we will notice the "Christian connection." In the early days of this nation a group of people who formed a part of the restoration movement found a pleasure in using the term "connection" instead of "denomination." An individual might be asked, "what denomination are you a member of," or "to what denomination do you belong?" If the reply were, "I am of the Christian connection," he simply meant that he was a Christian and a Christian only.

There were definite causes for the existence of the "Christian connection." There are those that insist that every movement owes its origin to a chain of circumstances, or environmental factors. And there are those that insist that this is the only thing that has anything to do with the production of a movement. They would say that the factors that were in existence in colonial America brought about the "Christian connection" movement. And of course it is true that the conditions of a nation reflect themselves within the condition of the church. That was certainly true in Revolutionary War days. Back then one thought was predominant in the minds of men. Everybody was thinking in terms of liberty, the individual's right to think for himself and act. So the idea of liberty was certainly a factor in bringing into

existence the "Christian connection" movement.

There were people who thought that liberty was needed in religion. They were tired of the tyranny of human creeds and an overbearing clergy. They were beginning to believe it was the right of an individual to study the Bible for himself with full liberty to understand it, without some clergyman telling him what it has to mean. Now we know that the desire for liberty had been active even back in the days of the reformation movement. Martin Luther led the rebellion against the tyranny of the papacy and the priestcraft in Romanism. It was Luther, and men like him, who insisted that men ought to read the Bible without obligation to accept the interpretations of the clergy. Yet Luther held to conceptions closely allied to Roman Catholicism, even after he broke with Romanism. He believed in the "divine right of kings"—that the earth and all that was in it belonged to the king, that every person who was a member of a nation belonged to the king, and he must do as the king said, whether he wanted to or not. That idea is something that has clung in the German mind from that day to this. I remember reading a statement in *Time* magazine, from Dean Inge back during the war, that if we ever expected to keep Germany from being a war-like nation, the people must be broke from the shackles of Lutheranism; they must get rid of the idea that they have to follow the leader or king, whether he is right or not.

John Calvin, another reformer, who came into prominence as Luther passed off the scene, had a very different idea from Luther. Calvin was one who believed in democracy in religion. John Knox, from Scotland, received this idea from Calvin, and you remember he had quite a fierce battle with Mary Queen of Scots. On one occasion Queen Mary demanded of Knox: "Just who do you think you are in this commonwealth, anyway?" Mary had the idea that all the people belonged to the ruler and ought to submit to her. Knox' reply was: "I am a citizen of the same, and though I be neither earl nor baron, nevertheless God has placed me in this relationship that I might serve him." Someone has commented that with those words we have the beginning of modern



democracy.

But it was the idea of liberty in germ form, and gradually it was extended larger and larger and had its effect on people's thinking. People were desiring both political and religious freedom.

And so in colonial America the Revolutionary War broke out, a rebellion against the dictatorship of King George. And in fighting for political freedom they began to desire religious freedom, too. They could see the discrepancies in the Bible and what the clergy told them to believe and they began to reason: "We can't do that; we are free people and God holds us responsible. We must be honest with ourselves and do what God says." This spirit began to manifest itself in colonial America first in the Methodist Church. Most of you, I am sure, know the history of Methodism. John and Charles Wesley, over in England, broke with the state church because they believed it too cold and formal. They could not see any religion of God in it. But John Wesley, strange to say, was never a member of the Methodist Church. He lived and died an Anglican priest and was buried in his Anglican robes. But he paved the way for the establishment of the Methodist Church. Contrary to popular belief, the Methodist Church is really of American origin, not European. It has its roots in England, but it began right here in America.

But back to the "Christian connection" movement. The state church of England had been transported over to America. It was supported by public taxation. But here in the colonies there were people who didn't like Britain. That's the reason for the Revolution. They were rebelling against the British, and against the British political and religious set-up. They were against paying taxes to support a clergyman transported over from England.

Meanwhile, over in England, John Wesley had begun to form groups known as Wesleyan societies. These were groups of people right within the Church of England, still part of the Church of England, who set themselves apart and determined to follow the scripture rather than the Church of England.

Here in America, within the Anglican Church, the Wesleyan societies were also formed. In these Wesleyan societies there were to be found a great number of preachers. These preachers here in America had had to undergo considerable embarrassment because of a certain doctrine of the Anglican Church. The Church of England taught that no man could perform the duties of a bishop—administer the sacraments, preach a funeral, baptize, perform marriage ceremonies, etc.—unless he had been duly ordained (had hands placed on him) by another who had been duly ordained, by another who had been duly ordained, etc., on back to the apostolic age. It was the idea of apostolic succession.

But these preachers in America could not perform any of these functions because they had not been duly ordained, and being members of the Wesleyan societies, they looked to Wesley for an answer. Wesley was a duly ordained man, so he ordained a young man, Thomas, and sent him over to America. He went to Barrett's chapel in Delaware and called a meeting of the preachers, Francis Asbury being among the leaders of that day. Asbury was made superintendent of all the Wesleyan societies in the colonies. This was in 1784. On Christmas Day of that year, in the city of Baltimore, a meeting of all Wesleyan preachers was held, some 68 Methodist ministers attending. Coke and Asbury presided over the meeting.

During the course of that meeting it was decided that Wesleyan societies should have some form of government, so they organized a government and called it the Methodist Episcopal Church. That was in reality the birth date of the Methodist Church.

In setting up this government of the societies a compromise was made. From their point of view, it was a move that would make the church popular here in the colonies. They knew that the people had just finished a war and that they would not have the church government that they had been under before, yet they were reluctant to overthrow the idea of the episcopacy. So they did this. They discarded the idea

of apostolic succession. But in order that there might be an element of democracy in this new government, to please the people, they decided to transact their business in a Conference, with certain people having the right to vote on any legislation proposed. So they retained the Episcopacy to please the British loving people, and injected a little democracy to please the others. Out of these events the government of the Methodist Church was formed.

Among those present at the occasion was a hot-headed Irishman, James O'Kelly, who rebelled against it. O'Kelly had been active in the Revolutionary War, had fought against the British, and had a tremendous love for personal liberty, and having acquired liberty from political forces, he was determined not to surrender it in religion. O'Kelly charged Asbury that the whole proceedings were just a means of putting himself in absolute control of the church, by taking away from the people authority that belonged to them. Asbury denied it, of course.

But O'Kelly's revolt brought immediate protest against the new church government. He said the new government was not at all the kind of government ordained in the New Testament Church. But for the time being he and a few others just voiced their protests and went their respective ways.

From 1784 to 1792 a number of different meetings was held and always some friction arose about this matter of liberty. In 1792 an especially famous meeting was held. At one of the sessions O'Kelly brought up the matter of liberty again. He introduced it this way. Suppose the superintendent gives each one of us an appointment of a circuit to ride. Well, suppose we don't like it. What can we do about it? Can we appeal to the Conference? Opinion was divided. The Southern preachers thought they should be able to do so, and some of the others thought so, but some didn't. The matter came up for debate which lasted three days.

Of course Asbury knew that O'Kelly was actually striking against his rule, so he left the room. O'Kelly introduced the motion because he felt he had Thomas Coke, the

chairman of the meeting, on his side, but Coke was not behind him as he later found out. When a vote was taken O'Kelly was defeated, so he said, if that's the kind of situation you want, a one-man rule, I rebel. He did leave and a few others went with him. O'Kelly and his followers began to hold conferences and the next year they met at Reese Chapel in Charlotte County, Virginia. They sent a petition to Asbury, asking to reunite, if he would surrender his rule, but Asbury ignored the petition. Another meeting was held in Manikintown, Virginia. At this meeting a man called Rice Haggard stood up, pointed to his New Testament and said: "Brethren, this Book ought to be our only rule of faith and practice. When I read my New Testament, I read that the disciples were called Christians, and I hereby make a move that we be Christians and Christians only." Haggard's motion was passed unanimously and the group decided to be known as Christians and to take the New Testament as the only rule of faith and doctrine.

A committee of seven was appointed to draw up, in accordance with the teaching in the New Testament, a rule of government for the churches. As they drew up the rule, it was presented that in the Conference every person should have a right to express himself. There would be no dictatorship. They called themselves Republican Methodists. (The word "republican" to them denoted freedom. They had a motive in attaching it to their name. The prominent political party in Virginia at that time was the Republican, and they hoped to gain in popularity by using the name.)

So we have in these events the beginning of the "Christian connection" movement. Let me say regarding this movement there were five different principles on which it operated. They were:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.

5. The right of private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

I think that all of you can see that there were weaknesses in those principles. Some places were pretty hard to define. For example, vital piety was to be the only test of Christian fellowship. Who is going to say what is vital piety? Who can say whether a man is pious and another man is not pious? Later, there was some difficulty on the question of what constituted opinion, what constitutes a matter of judgment, and what is a matter of faith. But we have here an early effort in America on the part of some people to get back to the Bible.

### *The European Background*

We have called attention to man's demand for liberty as one of the leading motives bringing about the restoration movement. People were fighting in Revolutionary War days for liberty, politically speaking, and the same motive led them to inquire into their religious beliefs, to see the tyranny of creeds, the clergy and the priesthood, and demand liberty in their religious life.

Of course there were other factors at work, too. The Bible itself was gradually coming to have a greater emphasis on men's minds. Many people have observed that the nineteenth century is the only Bible reading century in the history of mankind. If you will stop to think, you will see the truth in that. Never in any other century has the Bible been so prominent. For one thing, the nature of frontier life helped it along a great deal. People living along the frontier were in homes almost isolated from each other. In the evening the main pastime was to sit around the fireplaces in the old log cabins and read the Bible. And as men began to pore over the scriptures they began to see that they were not practicing in their denominations the religion ordained by God. So that reading of the Bible was a fundamental reason for the

restoration movement. In reading the Bible these men could not help but compare and contrast what they found with their own religious practice and see their error.

The religious division in existence then was another contributing factor to the restoration movement. Men began to see that the only remedy for the religious divisions existing was to get back to the Bible as the only basis for Christian unity. Sometimes we say today that the object of the restoration movement was to restore the New Testament church. Well, now strictly speaking, that is not true. The real object, in the minds of both Alexander and Thomas Campbell, was the bringing about of Christian unity. But they thought that the only cure for religious division, the only basis for unity, was to get back to the Bible. The *method* which they proposed was restoration of the New Testament church.

Now let us notice some of the religious conditions in Europe. You know, of course, that both Alexander and Thomas Campbell came to America from Europe, and so far as the crystallization of their thoughts, this had taken place in Europe. So we should notice their European background. Both the philosophy and the religious environment of that day had their effect on the Campbells. Sometimes today, and I think perhaps we rightly do it, we look upon philosophy as something foolish. In a sense we are right about it, if we mean by philosophy that we ought to go preach what some human philosopher or thinker has brought into existence in some different line. We ought to recognize that there isn't anything infallible about philosophy, no saving power behind it, and therefore it ought not to be preached. But if we are to be logical in our study, we must realize that such forces are at work, even if we think they ought not to be at work.

In the study of history there is a prevalent danger that we will try to make certain persons fit into certain molds we have made for them. It is not a matter of what you think a person ought to have been, but it is simply a matter of what he actually was. Such a tendency is prevalent in studying Alexander Campbell. We may like to think he was a great

man, and therefore could not have been favorable to missionary societies. We may take his writings and try to make them fit our ideas of him and have him speaking out against missionary societies. But it can't be done that way. Alexander Campbell was in favor of missionary societies, and it doesn't hurt me to say so, because I am not a Campbellite. The only thing I am interested in is to find what he did believe and what influenced him. Once we have determined that, we have to be honest with the facts, whether we like them or not. The same should apply to these other men, Walter Scott, Robert Milligan, etc.

Alexander and Thomas Campbell studied philosophy a great deal. And there were things in the philosophy they studied that influenced them throughout their entire lives. In Germany 200 years before either of the Campbells lived the idea of rationalism was very prominent. The old rationalists had always ended with a strict denial of the existence of God, and they deified intellectualism altogether. It was their God. You will recall John Locke and his school of empiricism, as it was called. Locke was reacting against the rationalism particularly of Germany and France. Locke raised the question, what is the origin of knowledge? What is its source, and how can we be sure that we *know* something? Locke wrestled with these questions and he came up with these ideas. The only way that we can know anything is by the experiences that we have. If we could somehow take all the experiences of men and bring them together, we would have the only source or origin of knowledge. This was the empiricism of John Locke which held a great sway in intellectual circles in Europe and in England.

Time went on and men began to react against the empiricism of Locke. The reaction was particularly forceful in Scotland. David Hume studied the philosophy of Locke and he arrived at these conclusions. If, what Locke says is true, then in the final analysis, we can never get to the point where we could arrive at absolute knowledge. David Hume didn't believe that, but to him that was the logical end of Locke's reasoning. So Hume began to think, and he turned

to skepticism, becoming the father of skepticism in Scotland. At the age of 23 Hume went to France where he became acquainted with a Jesuit priest. The old priest came to him one day bragging about some miracle that had occurred in a cave outside the city. Hume laughed at the idea, and began to investigate the subject of miracles. He concluded with some prominent writings in which he denied emphatically that there ever could have been any such thing as a miracle. So Hume, like the Frenchman Voltaire, went to extremes on things. (But personally I have a bit more tolerance for both these men when I realize the background from which they came. Voltaire was a rank atheist after he saw the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. He saw its corruption and said, if this is from God, I do not believe in God. It never occurred to him that there might be a religion in the New Testament that in no way compared with Roman Catholicism.) Neither did Hume think to go back to the New Testament church, but he saw the corruption in the church of his day and he turned completely from it, becoming a skeptic.

Then in Scotland there arose a reaction against David Hume. This reaction was led by a man named Thomas Reid who taught at Glasgow University and after Reid there was his disciple, Dugald Stuart. Reid became the founder of what was known as the Common Sense School of Philosophy, sometimes called Universal Reasoning. Reid had tried as hard as he possibly could to make his philosophy fit into the pattern of the teachings of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact Dugald Stuart and Thomas Reid were about the only philosophers of their day who maintained even a semblance of belief in the Bible and the inspiration of the scriptures.

That was the kind of thinking in Glasgow University where Alexander Campbell went to school. When Alexander Campbell was there all the students were drilled in Reid's common sense philosophy. It was a philosophy that, instead of taking their minds away from God and into infidelity, had a tendency to draw them closer to God and to a profound conviction and belief in him and his son, Jesus Christ, and



the inspiration of the Bible.

I have been interested to know something about the men who taught Alexander Campbell. One of his professors there at Glasgow University was Dr. George Jordan, who taught Logic. They say that, as a teacher Jordan never could teach the students much logic, but he did have one prominent ability: he was able to teach the students to speak or write in such a manner that they could make their thoughts perfectly clear. No doubt more than one of his students owed his success in writing and speaking to George Jordan.

Turning from that side of the picture, I believe we will find of interest the religious environment in which Alexander Campbell lived. It would take a long time to get a complete picture of the religious conditions in Scotland in those days. It was a very complicated thing and hard to understand completely. Some of the names and the titles and the controversies mean nothing to us today, but they were very vital in that day.

In 1707 there came a unity between the Scottish and British parliaments. Now in Scotland religion had altogether a different aspect than in Britain. The church in Scotland held the tenet that it was the right of the people to select their preachers. Dissension arose in 1712 when the Union Parliament took away the right of the people to select their preachers and restored patronage. As time went on religious conditions in Scotland grew worse. But even long before this, there had been controversy in the Scottish church about the form of church government. Some people were in sympathy with the episcopacy form of government, or the rule of the bishop over the church, and others believed that the church should be ruled by elders in the local church. And there began to emerge two different religious groups, one of them calling itself the Moderates and the other called itself the Evangelicals. The former fell in with the spirit of the times and the latter stayed loyal to the old orthodoxy. What did they believe? The Moderates insisted the secular and cultural aspects of life should be emphasized. The Evangelicals maintained the majority. Theirs was the orthodox faith.

They continued to preach Calvinism and predestination. The Evangelical group began to grow and the Moderates diminished. But a controversy arose within the Evangelicals in about 1731. The General Assembly passed an act declaring that when a vacancy was to be filled by a Presbytery, the election should lie with the "heritors, being Protestants and the elders." The Evangelicals considered this a virtual surrender of their rights, and so, led by Ebenezer Erskine and three others, they strongly objected. Erskine was promptly expelled from the ministry of the church. The next year he and others formed an Associate Presbytery and thus the Secession Church, or the Seceder Presbyterian Church, was born. As far as belief, they still held to the old Calvinistic doctrines. After a few years the Seceders began to divide among themselves. Now Thomas Campbell was a member of the Presbyterian Church. He was an Old Light in the Seceder Church. So he was a man that knew religious division well.

In the heart of Thomas Campbell there was a desire to try to bring about unity. He grew up where all he heard was people dividing and quarreling and fighting among themselves. So more and more he came to the conviction that unity could be achieved only by getting back to the Bible.

Alexander Campbell said that when he was a boy many times he came in and found his father reading the Bible. In those days it was common for a preacher to delve in to all kinds of theological works, and he marveled at seeing his father study just the Bible. So he became more and more convinced that if men would follow the scriptures there just wouldn't be any such thing as the division that prevailed.

Well, there were other groups that influenced Campbell in a religious way. You may have heard of the Glasites. It was an independent movement started by John Glas in about 1710. Glas believed in what he called extraordinary and ordinary officers in the early church, the extraordinary officers being the apostles and prophets, and the ordinary being the elders and deacons and evangelists. The extraordinary, he thought, went out of existence with the close of the apostolic era; the ordinary had stayed in existence.

Then there was Robert Sandeman who believed a number of things similar to Alexander Campbell's belief. He believed in the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, and that faith was the acceptance of testimony (something revolutionary for that day). Campbell was sometimes accused of being a Sandemanian. He joked about it, but he said he had gleaned truth wherever he could find it and from any man, no matter whom the individual might be.

### *Barton Stone and The Campbells*

Anyone who has ever done any study of history, whether of a political or religious nature, has come to understand there is a certain kind of history that cannot be fully understood without studying the biographies of the men who made it. That is particularly true of the restoration movement. There is a sense in which you cannot get all of the truth out of the restoration movement, nor can you appreciate all of that movement, without some understanding of the men who make it.

We will study now Barton W. Stone's contribution to the restoration movement. In Barton Stone we find an outstanding person, while in intellect he was far from being the equal of Alexander Campbell, and though in his general approach to the whole problem of his day he was different from Campbell, nevertheless the two men arrive at very nearly the same conclusions. It has been said that Campbell opposed denominationalism because he considered it a sin and an affront to God, whereas Stone opposed denominationalism because to him it was a social inconvenience. Well, they both came to the same conclusions, they both opposed denominationalism, but for different reasons.

As we study Stone I believe it would be wise for us to preface our thinking with an understanding of some of the threads of Calvinism that had come on down from the reformation movement and infiltrated into the thinking of Protestantism in colonial America. We have said on a previous occasion that Luther's influence in Germany in effect

established a state church. Martin Luther held the idea that the religion, the people, and the territory belonged not to the Pope, as the papacy had claimed for so long, but to the emperor. A tenet of Lutheranism was that every person ought to submit himself unto the king no matter whether the king was right or wrong. This philosophy infiltrated the thinking of the German people and it is still there. You cannot understand the German mind at all unless you know that.

Then there was John Calvin who followed after Luther and was the leading thinker after Luther's death. Calvin was born in Picardy, attended the University of Paris, and became known by the nickname "the accusative." When he left the University of Paris he went down to Geneva, Switzerland and took up the work started there by Zwingli, building the system of Calvinism. People came from all over Europe to hear his teachings.

On the "divine right" theory Calvin differed from Luther. Calvin believed that every person is responsible to God and that each individual belongs to God. He believed that God's all-seeing eyes are over the activity of every person, and further, that each person's thoughts and activities are foreknown by God from the beginning of time.

Have you ever observed that in countries where Lutheranism is predominant dictatorships arise the easiest, whereas, in those countries that are dominated by Calvinism, dictatorships are unknown. The people who believe in Calvinism will not tolerate dictatorships. They are keenly conscious of their responsibility to God and do not allow such things to arise in their country.

It was through the influence of Calvin that Protestantism grew in Europe. It spread all over Scotland and to a large extent in England. Calvin's teachings permeated Protestantism, and when the people of Europe began to colonize America, naturally, they brought with them their Calvinistic ideas. They believed that their lives were absolutely under the control of God at all times, so much so that they could do nothing of themselves to please God. They held that it was up to God to in some way point them out or

identify them as the elect. That attitude in Protestantism prevailed for over a century. They believed also that they had no way of extending themselves; they had no evangelistic fervor. Calvin had said, "there is no need to study the Bible, go to church, or pray to God. If you are one of God's elect, he'll let you know, and if you are not one of his elect, you can do nothing about it. All you can do is just thank the Lord that you are condemned to an eternal Hell, if that is his will." That was Calvinism. Consequently, people were not evangelistic.

In the meantime there were some who came forth with the idea that this teaching of Calvinism was at least in part wrong. They thought they should try to do something to extend themselves, to make converts. And there arose a party of people in Protestantism who held the idea that people should try to persuade God to consider them as his elect; that instead of not going to church and being irreverent, people should begin to ask God to make them his elect. In England it was John Wesley who took up that idea. Wesley saw the coldness and formality of the Church of England and decided that a kind of evangelistic fervor should be inculcated into their religion. This was the doctrine which helped to form the Methodist Church.

The same thing was taking place in the Presbyterian Church about the time that Barton Stone grew up. The Presbyterian Church was divided into the New Lights and Old Lights, the latter group being the orthodox Presbyterian people. The New Lights were those who had accepted, in part, Wesley's theory that man should try to come to God. This idea permeated the Baptist Church also.

Stone was born in 1772 in Port Tobacco, Maryland, a little town on a navigable creek where boats traveled hauling tobacco. Stone's childhood was typical of any boy of his time. The Revolutionary War had been fought in his childhood days and he had been close to the fighting, though not actually involved. His family moved south to the state of Virginia when he was just a boy. It was in Virginia that his thoughts and ideas began to take form and he decided to

become a statesman, or a lawyer. It was natural for a boy in Virginia to plan that way. After all, the state had given to the colonies some of its leading people. Patrick Henry, for example, was then living, and it had been his fiery eloquence that hastened the war with, "Give me liberty or death." It was natural for Stone to want to become a statesman.

His father died and his mother plead with him to "get religion." She wanted him to become a Methodist like herself. Stone had a very poor opinion of religion in general and preachers in particular. He looked upon them as a corrupt lot of men, and so did not give any consideration to religion at all, and finally, to get away from his mother's interest in his religious welfare, he decided to go down into North Carolina to a school. A man named David Caldwell had come from Princeton University into the hills and had opened up a little log cabin school house. He lived up in the top of the thing and down below carried on classes. Caldwell was thoroughly Presbyterian.

Stone entered Caldwell's school and made some very close friends. But some of the boys got a little worried about his religion and they urged him to become religious and join the Presbyterian Church. He found out that he was as bad off at school as at home on that score. He got tired of it and decided to leave it all behind. He got ready to go one evening, but it began to storm, so he decided to wait until the next day. But the next day his roommate persuaded him to go hear James McGready preach. Stone gave in just to silence the boy, more than anything else. But he heard McGready and before he left the meeting he "got religion." He had some sort of feeling that made him think he was one of the "elect" of God, and so he went back to school thoroughly determined to spend his life as a loyal Presbyterian.

Stone began to study the Bible and read the Confession of Faith. This he studied very thoroughly. He was to appear before the Conference and be given license to preach. As a part of the examination he was to preach a sermon. He had had no experience preaching so he went to Isaac Watt's old book of sermons called, "Glories of Christ," and began to

study it. He practically memorized it, and when he went before the Conference he preached one of Watt's sermons. (I wonder sometimes just how much enthusiasm a young fellow could put into a sermon, preaching it like that.)

The Conference asked him: "Do you thoroughly subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith? Stone replied: "I do insofar as it agrees with the Bible." (He thought that was a pretty good way to get out of it because, actually, he didn't know what the Westminster Confession of Faith said, and what he did know, he didn't understand.) He passed the examination and received his license to preach for the Presbyterian Church.

Stone left David Caldwell's school, went over into Georgia and began to teach there. He didn't stay long, but went back to Virginia. For some time he roamed about, not knowing what he wanted to do, preach, or teach school, or if he wanted to settle down at all. He finally ended up over on the Virginia border in the little community of Fort Chisiwell. He preached for the Presbyterian Church there for about a month. This particular fort was a sort of gateway between the east and the badlands of the west, and every day, going through the fort, were long wagon trains of people headed west. The fever got him, and he decided to go along. He reached the city of Nashville, Tenn., stayed a while there, then went to Concord, Ky., where a little school had been started. Concord is about 10 miles northeast of Cane Ridge, over north of Lexington. He taught school in Concord, preached on Sunday and held meetings in the school houses and brush arbors round about. He was there about a year.

In his religious life Stone was beginning to get an evangelistic fervor in his heart and soul. He felt that this idea of doing nothing in the way of converting people was all wrong. This was about the year 1800 and James McGready, the fellow who had preached when Stone got religion, was in Logan County, Ky., holding a revival meeting. Hundreds of people attended. Stone decided to go over there and hear McGready. He did. As was customary, McGready's sermons

were intensely emotional. He would take an emotional theme and stir the audience to hysteria. Men and women would scream and pull their hair and cry out. Stone saw this and thought, "these folks have something here." So he went back to Cane Ridge and decided he would introduce the McGready type of evangelism there. You possibly know the story of the Cane Ridge revival. Thirty thousand people assembled for about six days, about the first of August in the year 1801. They came on horsebacks, in buggies, and by wagon loads, camping in a large grove near Cane Ridge. There were preachers from everywhere—Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists—all of them preaching at the same time. A Methodist preacher would occupy a stump here, with people gathered around him, and a distance away another preacher would be on a stump blazing away. Well, naturally, in all this, the folks began to get religion.

When we look back on those camp meetings today, the things that took place may seem humorous and ridiculous. But they were very serious to those people. Conversion was quite literally a convulsion. Converts went through a series of bodily agitations. There were about five general types of these physical contortions: (1) the falling exercises, the most common. The subject would cry out in a piercing scream, fall flat on the ground and lie for several minutes as though dead; (2) the jerks, in which various parts of the body would jerk violently; (3) the dancing exercise, which began as jerks, then passed into dancing; (4) the barking exercises, when the person's body jerked violently, causing a big grunt; (5) the laughter and singing exercise, which was just what the terms signify.

These things went on at Cane Ridge.

After the camp meeting was over Stone sat down and began doing some serious thinking. He didn't feel quite right about things. He thought there was something wrong somewhere. In the first place, he reasoned, we are telling the people to come here and get religion and come to God, and on the other hand, our Calvinism says that they cannot get religion. He read in the Bible that in New Testament times



the preachers demanded that men and women believe upon Christ, and that they go further and act in accordance with their faith. He knew that he and his associates hadn't been doing that. So he began working to change it. In his preaching he began to plead with people to believe in Christ and then act in obedience to the commands of Christ. Well, when he did that the presbytery began to prick up their ears, and they noticed that Stone and others were beginning to do the same thing. They said, "You men are Armenians, and we are not going to tolerate that in the Presbyterian Church. You will have to change your views."

About the same time Richard McNemar was called on the carpet by the Synod of Kentucky. They brought McNemar forth and asked, "What are you teaching?" He told them what he and Stone and the others were preaching, that they were telling people to believe on Christ and act in obedience to that faith. They accused him of Armenianism and demanded that he renounce it. He said, "I cannot renounce it, because I believe it is so." He was promptly excommunicated by the Synod of Kentucky.

News of McNemar's excommunication came to Stone, Robert Marshall and John Thompson, and they began to talk among themselves. They knew that what had happened to McNemar would happen to them, so they decided to beat the Synod to the job. They withdrew from the Synod of Kentucky. They joined with McNemar and decided the next move was to form a presbytery of their own. This they did, calling it the Springfield presbytery. This presbytery took in the same territory as the Presbytery of Washington, which extended from Lexington around to Cincinnati and over into Kentucky. Because of this overlapping some of the people began to complain against them, and they issued what is known as the *Apology for the Springfield Presbytery*, by which they defended their action. But this set them to thinking and they realized what they had done. They had renounced the Washington Presbytery and the Synod of Kentucky on the ground that there was no Bible authority for them, and they had started another of the same. So they

decided to dissolve the Springfield Presbytery. They wrote that classic document *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* by which they dissolved the organization to become a part of the church of Christ as a whole.

The next few days were hard ones for Barton Stone. He had made a great number of enemies, and his own ranks began to dwindle. The men who had stood behind him, Dunlavey, Marshall, McNemar, now abandoned him and began to follow the Shaker religion. Stone was alone. Opposition came from every direction—men saying that he was trying to form a party of his own, and Stone insisted that he wanted only to restore the church of the New Testament. In Millersburg, Ky., in 1821, Stone held a meeting and preached a powerful sermon. When he had finished he stood up in confusion before the people and cried, "There is something wrong with us. I read in the New Testament that when the apostles preached the gospel they told them that believed to repent and be baptized. We are not doing that." The audience froze at his outcry, and some said that he was "beside himself."

Stone met Alexander Campbell for the first time in 1824. He recognized Campbell as the outstanding leader of this restoration movement. In 1831 there came about in Kentucky a union of the forces of Stone and Campbell. Stone had gone along without even knowing of Campbell's work, and Campbell didn't know about Stone. There were churches all through Ohio and Kentucky and in part of southern Indiana that followed the teachings of Stone. Soon these people began to ally themselves with the congregations that had come up through the influence of Campbell. In principle the groups were together. So they decided to unite. In 1831, over in Lexington a big meeting was held with "Racoon" John Smith as leader. Smith had cleaned out an old factory building on North Broadway in Lexington and invited the preachers and members together. He told them, "Brethren, let us all understand that we ought not be Stone-ites, or Campbell-ites, or New Lights or Old Lights, but we ought to take the Bible and follow it." In consequence of that, the

two forces merged. John Rogers, as he wrote the biography of Stone said, there was no surrendering of anything in this union. The groups were on common ground, and they decided to move forward together.

Stone died in 1844. He began in 1826 publishing a paper, the *Christian Messenger*, which he published until or near the time of his death. He spent his last years at the home of his son-in-law in Hannibal, Mo. Shortly before his death he was visited by Jacob Creath, who asked him, "Do you have any regrets for anything you have taught or done religiously?" Stone replied, "We've made mistakes, of course, but I do believe we are on the right road back to the apostolic church and to pleasing the Lord. That was their final conversation.

### *Thomas and Alexander Campbell*

As we approach the study of an individual like Alexander Campbell, we should realize that he is no authority for us in any sense of the term, nor did he want to be. Rather he was interested in directing us back to the pages of the Bible and getting us to focus our attention upon the scriptures alone.

An incident from the life of "Racoon" John Smith seems to illustrate this point, that we should not consider Campbell an authority, very well. Smith lived in an old log cabin out in the wilderness. If you have read his biography, perhaps you remember this story. Smith was reading from Campbell's *Living Oracles* the translation that had been given to a certain passage of scripture. He turned to his wife and said, "You know, Brother Campbell made a mistake in interpreting the Greek word here. It doesn't mean what he says at all." Making fun of him, she said, "John what on earth do you know about Greek? You wouldn't know a Greek letter from a chicken track." He replied, "I may not know one Greek letter from another, but nevertheless, I have a little bit of common sense, and I know from the context that this passage could not mean what Alexander Campbell says it does." He

went on to say: "You know, we need to be careful when reading from great men like Campbell, lest we take them as *the authority*, instead of the Bible." There is good advice in that for all Christians, and I commend it to you as we begin a study of the Campbells.

Thomas Campbell was a preacher in the Seceder Presbyterian Church, of the Old Light and Anti-Burgher group. In 1807 he left Ireland, for his health's sake and came to America, landing at Philadelphia. He at once presented himself to the Synod that was then in conference, and because of certain prejudices of American Presbyterians against Irish preachers, he was sent far out into Western Pennsylvania. He obediently went. He presented himself to the Chartiers Presbytery and began to receive weekly appointments from them. One Sunday he was sent to Pittsburgh, another to Buffalo, and he was kept pretty busy preaching.

Time passed and one day in a meeting of the local presbytery a matter concerning a fellow named Anderson was brought up for discussion. Anderson hadn't kept an appointment, and he was called for questioning. (The Chartiers Presbytery disciplined any preacher who failed to conform. For example, if a preacher didn't keep an appointment, unless he had a good excuse, he was punished by being sent out into the woods to stand on a stump and preach a sermon.) Anderson was asked why he didn't keep the appointment, and he replied, "Because of this fellow, Thomas Campbell, you were sending with me. He isn't sound, according to the Presbyterian Confession of Faith." They began to look into the matter and found that Campbell had been preaching to the people that they should come to the Bible as the only and sufficient rule of faith and practice. In private conversation Campbell had pointed out that the only means of unity in religion was a return to the Bible and the renouncing of human creeds. Anderson objected to this. He said, "I'm orthodox and I can't go along with such a man."

The Presbytery looked over the audience and asked if anyone else had heard anything like this about Thomas

Campbell. A fellow in the audience stood up and made another report. He said he had been with Campbell once when he had insisted that the Lord's supper be taken on that particular day, and further, that Campbell had been trying to get churches to practice it every Lord's Day. The Presbytery decided to investigate Campbell. He was brought in and confessed: "I am guilty as charged. I do believe we must follow the Bible, and furthermore, I believe that faith is nothing more than the acceptance of testimony, which testimony is found in the Word of the Lord." "But that is not according to our creed," they objected. "But it is according to the Bible," Campbell said. Some argument followed that and they decided to penalize Campbell by taking away his next appointments.

But Campbell wasn't stopped after he had served his penalty; he continued teaching the same thing, and again he was called before the presbytery. This time they decided on a more severe penalty. They expelled him from the presbytery. Campbell appealed to the higher synod in Philadelphia. Their decision was that Campbell was in the wrong, but they agreed to be lenient with him and withdraw the disfellowship penalty if he would go back and not cause any more trouble. Campbell went back but he continued preaching as he had before. He was called again before the presbytery, and by this time he had decided that he could no longer work under them, so he resigned and started out as a preacher on his own.

He began preaching in the groves, in the schoolhouses and under brush arbors and shade trees, anywhere that folks would come listen to him. His friends began to rally around him and he acquired quite a following. A meeting was held at the home of Abraham Altars at which Campbell got up and made a speech which he concluded with that now famous motto: "Where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent." For a moment after he uttered that statement everybody was silent, then one man, William Munro, a book seller, spoke up, "But Mr. Campbell," he said, "if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of

infant baptism." And another man in the audience arose and said, "I hope I may never see the day when my heart will renounce that blessed saying of the scripture, 'suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" The meeting closed with a little bit of anxiety, but still the majority of them thought that they were definitely on the right road.

Another meeting was held. In August of 1809 they formed what they called the Christian Association of Washington. Now this association, they strictly emphasized, was not a church, but "a society for the promotion of Christian unity." Shortly after this Campbell wrote the *Declaration and Address*, containing the purpose and plan of the association. One point in this document was that the church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one. Another was that the scriptures and the scriptures only should be the sufficient rule of faith and practice; another, that men should have liberty in matters of opinion, and that no one should follow anything for which there is not an expressed declaration in the Bible.

With that the movement began to grow. They decided to establish a congregation. A Mr. Sinclair, who owned a farm over near Buffalo creek, offered lumber and the land to build a meeting house. The house was built and the congregation meeting there was known as the Brush Run Church. After the church had been meeting there for a while it was noticed that certain ones were not participating in the communion service. Campbell wondered why and asked about it. He found that they were worried about the sprinkling they had received as baptism. From Bible study they had concluded that sprinkling wasn't valid baptism, hence they felt they had no right to participate in the Lord's Supper. Campbell decided to do some study of his own on the matter.

In the meantime, his wife and son, Alexander, and other members of the family had arrived from Ireland. Campbell had talked with his son about these things and had let him read the *Declaration and Address*. They had gone over the points together, and Alexander had said to his father: "I

want you to know that I believe in this cause that we have espoused here, and I am going to spend my life in preaching these things." Furthermore, he said he was going to do so without accepting pay. To this part his father replied, "Son, I'm afraid if you do it on that basis, you'll go about with many a ragged pair of pants." I don't know that he ever did that. In one way he was more successful than the average preacher—he married a wealthy woman.

But the point in this is that Alexander Campbell believed as his father did. The question of baptism arose again, the immediate cause being the birth of Alexander's first child. He was undecided about whether to have the child sprinkled, so he decided to give the matter a lot of thought and study. He sent to Munro, the bookseller, and collected all the books available on the subject of infant baptism. He studied the Bible and he began to read what others had written on the subject, and he came to the conclusion that immersion was baptism. He contacted a preacher by the name of Mathias Luse who agreed to immerse him. Shortly after practically the whole Brush Run church followed suit.

The local Baptists became interested in this turn of events and issued an invitation to have the Brush Run people join them. Campbell was hesitated at first, and then later the Baptists weren't so fond of Campbell's preaching that people should follow the Bible instead of creeds.

The Red Stone Association was a Baptist organization popular in that community. A while later, over on Cross Creek, the Red Stone group was having a meeting and the Baptist preacher in charge of the meeting as host had invited preachers from everywhere. From over in Ohio he had called a Baptist preacher by the name of Stone who was to speak at the meeting. Stone had heard a lot of Alexander Campbell, about his ability as a speaker, and so he went to his host and offered to relinquish his time so that Campbell might speak. The host objected, even after much persuasion, so Stone became "sick" just before his time to speak and suggested Campbell as a substitute. Some of the others agreed with him, and so the host was over-ruled.

So Alexander Campbell began to speak. He started off in an impromptu manner on his famous sermon on the law, discussed the fact that the old law had been abolished and that the new law of Christ is in force. As he was speaking two of the Baptist preachers went outside the building, one of them the host, who was pretty angry. He said that Campbell must be stopped, but his companion argued that to stop Campbell would do more harm than good. An old lady in the audience got sick and caused quite a disturbance, but Campbell continued preaching with people trying to figure out a way to stop him. The sermon that Campbell delivered on that occasion has been preserved. Some 30 years later he wrote it down from memory and it was printed in the

The Brush Run Church finally was admitted into the Red Stone Association, but as time went on Campbell began to see that they were becoming unpopular and likely would be expelled from the organization. Meanwhile over in the Western Reserve there was started the Mahoning Baptist Association. Adamson Bentley and Sidney Rigdon were the two most influential men in that organization. The Brush Run Church was invited to join this group and they did. There was some reservation though; they made it expressly known that they were following nothing except the New Testament. In 1830 the association disbanded because there was a growing concern among the members that it was an organization without Bible authority.

Campbell continued to study and grow and use his influence to spread the cause of the restoration. Though he didn't like religious debates he was persuaded to enter his first one, in 1820, with John Walker, a Presbyterian preacher, on the purpose of baptism. At the close of the debate Campbell issued a challenge to debate anybody who occupied a similar position as Walker. This resulted in a debate with W. L. McCalla in 1823.

About the time of the McCalla Debate Campbell began a paper which he called the *Christian Baptist*. In issues of the *Christian Baptist* is to be found some of the finest material



that ever came from the pen of Alexander Campbell. The name of the paper, *Christian Baptist*, was not at all Campbell's preference for a name. He wanted some other name, preferably just the name *Christian*, but Walter Scott, who had become a very close friend of Campbell, persuaded him to use the term "Baptist" because of its possible influence on the Baptist people. The paper continued for about seven years, but was dropped at the end of 1829, and in 1830 Campbell began another publication, the *Millennial Harbinger*. Campbell had his reasons for making this change. He was concerned about the trend in the congregations to band together, and he was fearful the name "Christian Baptist" might cause them to adopt a denominational name.

The articles in these publications give a good insight into some of the things Alexander Campbell believed. For instance, Campbell held some revolutionary ideas on mission work. He believed that the way to do mission work was for a whole congregation to move to the new place and start a church. Such a thing actually happened. Campbell lived at Wellsburgh, and he persuaded several families of the congregation to move with him over to Zanesville. That was his method of doing mission work.

But back to the *Millennial Harbinger*. Campbell had some very definite reasons for giving the paper this name. His theory went something like this. The ultimate goal of Christianity is the conversion of the entire world to Christ. But before that can be accomplished, there must be unity in the religious world, and the only way to have unity is to destroy denominationalism. (Now there was a difference in Campbell's point of view, and, as was suggested yesterday, Barton Stone's. Stone was against denominationalism, but to him it was more of a social inconvenience. Campbell, on the other hand, considered denominationalism a sin before God.) Campbell believed the day would come when there would be a perfection on earth, with the entire world being converted to Christ. To him this was the *millenium*, and since the only way to reach this goal was the destruction of denominationalism, and the only way to destroy denomina-

tionalism is to preach the Word of God, he published the *Millenial Harbinger* as the "harbinger" of that "millenium." It was the purpose of the paper to help bring about the era when all men and women would be Christians.

### *The Beginning of Digression*

We will notice now the events of the restoration movement that occurred between the year 1849 and those following the Civil War, with particular emphasis on the beginning of digression. We will notice especially three different occurrences—the missionary society, the introduction of instrumental music in the worship, and the rise of liberalism.

The American Christian Missionary Society was established in October, 1849, in the city of Cincinnati at a meeting of various brethren at the old church building, corner of Walnut and English Streets. Its beginning immediately set off a wave of opposition. Of course it was not something that just occurred over night. It wasn't a matter of a few individuals getting together and in a moment's time establishing a society. It had been worked on and advocated by certain men a number of years before it came into existence.

Alexander Campbell's influence in the movement is not to be underestimated. I know there is a tendency among us today to think of Campbell as a man who was influenced in his dotage to favor the missionary society, when he was actually against it, but the facts do not substantiate the idea. If you were to take the time, you could go back into the files of the *Millenial Harbinger* and find the very principle of the missionary society is one that Alexander Campbell advocated very thoroughly. As far back as 1831, for example, Campbell began to plead with the brethren to establish an organization through which all of the churches might concentrate their efforts in getting evangelistic work done. Campbell was interested in it. He presented his missionary ideas through the *Harbinger*, but met with a great deal of opposition. Brethren objected on every hand, so Campbell was quiet for a while, thinking that later on the time would come when

brethren would be more lenient and accept it. He waited for about 10 years, then decided that the time was right to go into the subject again. He wrote a series of articles in the *Millennial Harbinger* on the subject of church organization. He wasn't writing of the local congregation, but rather of an agency through which all of the churches might concentrate their evangelistic efforts. Now it ought to be remembered that this particular agency that Campbell had in mind was not just a missionary society. Rather, he planned an agency that would regulate and control all the various activities of the brotherhood—for example, education, publications, and mission work. This organization would be one large agency through which all the churches would work, and it would be dedicated to religious education, the distribution of Bibles, mission work, and other religious activities.

Campbell finally got his way, in part, but the brethren did not go all the way with him, because they concentrated upon a society that would attend to missionary activities solely.

There was an undercurrent of opposition to Campbell in those days. Some people thought he was trying to be a bishop over the whole church. He was called bishop. In the days around Bethany College Campbell was referred to, not as Brother Campbell, but as "the bishop." Well, there was some reason for people thinking Campbell wanted to control everything. Campbell was an enthusiastic booster of Bethany College, but other schools he fought. In 1854 there was a move on to establish what is now Butler University in Indianapolis. (Then it was called Northwestern Christian University.) Campbell opposed the school and argued that all support should go to Bethany College. Then in the matter of religious publications Campbell argued that not many were needed—just a monthly, a weekly, and quarterly. Of course the monthly would be his own *Millennial Harbinger*. The brethren resented all this, and so you can see why instead of establishing an agency such as Campbell wanted, they established instead a missionary society.

In the summer of 1849 Campbell wrote of the proposed organization in the *Millennial Harbinger*, "We have heard from far and distant places and interests in the establishment of this organization." (He never referred to it as a missionary society until after it was established.) He said brethren from far and wide wanted to establish the agency, and he asked for a meeting of brethren. Other papers took up the idea, which was favored generally, and a meeting in Cincinnati in October of that year was proposed. But Campbell objected to this because there was an epidemic of cholera in Cincinnati. He was over-ruled, however. They had the meeting there anyway, but Campbell became "sick" and didn't attend. Many thought he didn't go because he didn't get his way.

Afterwards, of course, a wave of opposition arose. A church in Pennsylvania wrote the *Millennial Harbinger* opposing the society as unscriptural. Other congregations took the same action, and still others kept quiet, showing their opposition by their refusal to support the society. Jacob Creath, Jr. was the first and foremost leader in the opposition. Creath wrote to Campbell and accused him of changing positions. In the days of the *Christian Baptist* he had written against such an organization. But Campbell said that all he had opposed was the misuse and harm that can come in such an organization. He never seemed to realize that he had made any change in position, whatsoever.

Here are some of Campbell's arguments for the society. His reasoning began with the conception of the church in its universal aspect. (And unless you follow along that line you cannot begin to understand how he could favor a missionary society.) Campbell said that the Bible refers to the church in a local sense and also in the universal sense. He said the responsibility of doing mission work was committed to the church, but not to the local church, the universal church. Then, he reasoned, it is the duty of the church in its universal aspect to do mission work, but what is to be the method? God has not stipulated. Therefore, Campbell argued, it is a matter of expedience, and a missionary society is expedient. To him, any method that would do the job was all right.

Opposition against the missionary society followed along different lines. Some said it was unscriptural, that by implication it was a substitution of human wisdom in the place of divine wisdom; an implication that man can improve upon the wisdom of God; and an institution based on that principle could not bring men closer to God.

There was opposition because of the membership terms, too. The constitution stated that members of the society must pay a stipulated amount of money. Against that Jacob Creath said, "I read in my Bible that the Lord didn't have any place to lay his head; Peter and John had no silver and gold to give to the lame man. Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter and John, his apostles, couldn't be members of the society if they were living. Any society that would keep out the Lord and his apostles will keep me out."

It would be an interesting thing if we had time to trace the history of the society. I'm sure you know some of its activities. The first missionary was James T. Barclay who was sent to Jerusalem. The brethren selected Jerusalem as the first place for mission work out of purely sentimental reasons. The gospel had first come from Jerusalem. Now they would send it back. Barclay lived in Jerusalem for about 10 years but didn't accomplish much. The Jerusalem mission was closed.

The society decided to send a preacher to Africa. Ephraim Smith, of Bourbon Co., Ky., one day saw an old Negro slave addressing a group of Negroes on the Bible. He listened a while and conceived the idea of training the Negro to preach and sending him to Africa. He presented this to the society, the Negro's freedom was purchased and he was sent to Liberia, in Africa, as a missionary. The Liberian mission was short-lived, too. The Negro, Alexander Cross, died of a sunstroke not long after his arrival there.

So the society had a number of setbacks. The Civil War came and a group of brethren, predominantly Northern men, passed some resolutions favoring the Northern Army. After that was done brethren in the South began to complain, and for a while the society was intensely unpopular.

Passing from the missionary society, let us notice the second controversy—instrumental music. Sometimes the question is raised, just when was the first instrument of music used in the worship of the church? That is pretty hard to determine. Back as early as 1844 the paper, *Christian Teacher*, carried an article stating that some of the churches were using instrumental music. About five years later John Rogers, one of Kentucky's pioneers, wrote Alexander Campbell that such a thing was happening. Campbell wrote an article saying that to any spiritual-minded man, use of an instrument of music in the worship of God was like a cow bell in a concert.

It is still impossible to say just who began to use instrumental music first, but it is true that the instrument was used once in a while back then. In the year 1859 several articles appeared in the *Christian Review*, edited by Ben Franklin, in which he deplored the congregations in some places using instrumental music. L. L. Pinkerton, of Midway, Ky., saw the articles and wrote to Franklin complaining. Pinkerton said: "As far as I know we are the only congregation anywhere using instrumental music, so your articles must mean you are attacking us." That was in 1859, and the place Midway, Ky., so that is the first accurate record we have of the use of instrumental music in the worship. There is an interesting little story connected with that event.

It seems that the singing in the Midway congregation was deplorable—bad enough to scare the rats away, according to Pinkerton. They decided to do something to improve it, and they began meeting on Saturday night for practice. Somebody brought along a melodian for accompaniment, and they began to use it in their practice. Before long the people decided it would be all right to use it in the worship, and one Sunday morning one of the women in the congregation played the instrument as they sang.

That little old melodian is still in existence today. They are rather proud of it. After the instrument was first used by the congregation one of the members, Adam Hibler, objected, but rather than cause a disturbance he simply

arranged with one of his slaves to go by night and steal the instrument and hide it in his attic. That melodian remained hidden until 15 or 20 years ago when it was discovered.

Attention was diverted from these issues during the civil war and a controversy began over whether or not a Christian should go to war. Then along toward the latter part of the war, J. W. McGarvey introduced the music question again. McGarvey thought it was time to put a stop to this digression, before it spread further. So he began writing articles for the religious papers. For a period of years the question raged in the *American Christian Review* and the *Millennial Harbinger*, and as time went on, use of the musical instrument spread. In 1867 Ben Franklin estimated that of 10,000 congregations, no more than 10 were using instrumental music. But five years later that number had multiplied greatly. In 1869 the controversy raged in the St. Louis, Mo., church. Hiram Christopher, the brother-in-law of J. W. McGarvey was one of the elders in that congregation. It was decided to have a committee study the matter of using an instrument in the worship and their conclusion was that the instrument should not be used. However, the advocates for the instrument withdrew from the congregation and began to meet elsewhere.

Well, the mechanical instrument controversy is one that has never ceased. The issues involved are much the same as those involved in the missionary society question. Some argue that the Bible does not say, "Thou shalt not use instrumental music," therefore, it is all right; it is a matter of expediency. Even those who do not use the instrument sometimes hold this idea. They say, "we counsel against it because we think it unwise, but we do not think it is sinful." Of course, there are a lot of arguments about what constitutes expediency. Robert Richardson wrote a series of articles on this point in the *Christian Standard*. He was very close to the truth on most points.

Let us notice now the rise of liberalism in the church. I have often wondered, as has sometimes been quoted, if there is anything new under the sun. Even in the restoration

movement times there were some of the attitudes that we find among brethren today. In the very first issue of the *Apostolic Times* Moses E. Lard, wrote that he deplored the trend among preachers to become liberal, to preach sweet and pious sermons when denominational people were in the audience, but to become critical and bitter when preaching to their own brethren. He said they thought of themselves as scholarly, but of their brethren as ignorant men. That is the way Moses E. Lard described the rising generation of preachers of his own day.

We see the same things among us today. We have some preachers who can't speak of a brother without making fun of him. They ridicule them, call them unscholarly, but refer to "Dr. So and So" of "Such and Such University" as a pious, Godly, spiritual man—always bragging about infidels and modernists and being critical of their own brethren.

In the early days these modernists developed into what is now represented as the *Christian-Evangelist* group. They discredit parts of the Bible, ridicule such things as the Virgin birth, the verbal inspiration of the scriptures and the miracles. Some of the statements of the early liberalists when put beside those of our modernists are identical. The early forces of liberalism were led by J. H. Garrison and W. T. Moore. Moore was a son-in-law of R. N. Bishop, mayor of the city of Cincinnati and an elder in the congregation there. Bishop had a profound influence and the liberal spirit grew right in the church there. A climax came on Dec. 2, 1889, in the St. Louis church, when R. C. Cave preached on Sunday morning, making fun of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, saying they knew less of God than modern man. "Any man is a Christian," Cave said, "who is honest with himself, whether he believes in the virgin birth or the inspiration of the Bible." At that a rebellion arose among the brethren. And Garrison, who had been falling behind in popularity, decided that he should take offense at this turn of events. He rebuked Cave for his modernism, though everybody knew that Garrison was as bad as Cave.

There was a series of articles run by David Lipscomb in



the *Gospel Advocate* for two years called "Rationalism" in which he tried to combat modernism. McGarvey began work on his *Christian Evidences* about this time. Still trying to restore himself, Garrison edited a book called "Old Faith Restated."

## Chapter 4

---

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF RESTORATION PREACHERS

*by*

*Jesse P. Sewell*

From the lectures this week, one might get the idea that we are exalting some men above others. I can't see anything wrong about that. God is the creator of us all. Well, it so happens that he makes some folks much larger than some other folks. He gives some people intelligence far superior to the intelligence that he gives to some other people. He just makes some folks bigger than others, and he holds them responsible for the way they use that superior ability. Christ clearly teaches this lesson in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:15-30). Why shouldn't we gather from these men the good lessons that are to be found and why should we not follow their examples?

In this age we are liable to overlook those who spread the religious principles which lie at the foundation of our intellectual and material advancement.

I am going to read in this connection a sentence or two from Brother David Lipscomb's book, *The Life and Sermons of Jesse L. Sewell*. They were written by Brother Lipscomb I am sure to keep people from thinking he was giving undue credit to a man. He said, "It is well that a remembrance of those who have labored for the good of others, who have benefited their fellow men and who have left the world better for having lived in it should be cherished. It is good to show an appreciation for those who have unselfishly devoted their lives to the salvation of men and to the service of God and to hold them up as examples worthy of the admir-

ation of the aged and the emulation and imitation of the young."<sup>1</sup>

I am sure that it is in that spirit and for that purpose that all of us are bringing to your attention any of the great men connected with the restoration movement.

I will present only a few incidents that I know personally or that I have received from direct testimony that could not be questioned. You will pardon me if I relate a few things from the life of Jesse L. Sewell, my grandfather.

Jesse L. Sewell was never connected with a paper; he never at any time was connected with any center of influence, and on that account he is not as well known, and his life and wonderful achievements are not as familiar to you as are those of men who were connected with the more public services. With reference to him, Brother Lipscomb wrote, "No trait of Jesse L. Sewell was more striking, even down to old age, than his reverence for the word of God, his quiet yet unyielding determination to be true and faithful to that word, to believe and teach just what it taught, and to follow just where it led, and to bear with cheerfulness whatever lot fidelity to that truth imposed upon him."<sup>2</sup>

My most cherished memory of my grandfather is the picture of him as an old man, after the vigor of manhood had passed, after long years of hard work and continuous service had taken severe toll of his physical strength, as he sat at his little table in his room by day and by night, and his big Bible open, reading from the word of God. People would sometimes say to him, "Brother Sewell, since you know the Bible so well, since you are so familiar with it, why is it that you continue to read and study it day in and day out?" His answer was like this: "I never read this Book that I do not get something good, something fine that I had never seen in it before." And he would say, "To my mind that is the outstanding difference between this Book and all other books.

<sup>1</sup> David Lipscomb, *The Life and Sermons of Jesse L. Sewell*, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Here in my book case I have a number of very fine books that have been written by men, but when I have read them a time or two, then the next time I read them I get little or nothing. But during all of my life, from my childhood to this day, I have been reading the Bible earnestly, and attentively, each day, and still I find something fine, something good in it that I have never seen before." This was from a man who knew the New Testament from memory.

I have seen my grandfather submit to this kind of test. You could read any verse in the New Testament that you cared to read, and he would give you the chapter and verse, and quote the verse before and the verse following it. He never missed. He could go for hours like that. In the Old Testament he would not always be able to give the verse, but practically never would he fail to locate it in the chapter where it belonged. Yet with that knowledge of the word of God and his wonderful comprehension of it, he found that every time he re-read it, he always received something new and fine and good. That was an outstanding characteristic of Jesse L. Sewell.

As a preacher Jesse L. Sewell had studied just one book, and as the result of his understanding and knowledge of that book, he was able to defend and teach its truth, and its spirit under any condition or circumstance which might present itself. Brother Lipscomb relates this incident.

When Dr. Brents and Dr. Ditzler first met in debate at Flat Creek, Tennessee, Dr. Brents was sick the morning before the debate was to begin. The question with him and his friends was whether it would do for him to enter the debate in his condition of health, and if not, what should be done. Brother Lipscomb said they talked it over, all the preachers that were congregated there for the debate, discussed it, and prayed over it, and decided that if they didn't have the debate on the grounds that Dr. Brents was sick, then they would be accused of being afraid. But if the debate was to be held they were compelled to ask somebody to meet the great Dr. Ditzler without any special preparation. (And he was great. He was a scholar, a man of unusual intellect, broad

culture and training and a great debater.) They looked among themselves and chose Jesse L. Sewell. Dr. Brents by the next morning was able to go into the debate and Brother Sewell did not have that work to do. I mention this incident to show the confidence that the preachers of that section and that time, many of them highly educated, had in this man of "One-Book."

Overton County, Tennessee, is far away from the highways of men. It is still an isolated county. In 1818 there was no method of approach to it except by private conveyance, walking or on the mail hack that went there twice a week. These people were separated from the outside world. Generally speaking, they were poor people, and had none of the advantages and opportunities of the outside world.

My grandfather grew up in that country and his formal education was about a third or fourth grade education as our public schools are organized today. He was married on July 21, 1839 and began to preach in the Baptist Church two years after that. The Baptists largely controlled that country at that time, and they are influential there yet. They were peculiar in many respects from the viewpoint of anything that you younger people have seen and observed. Their preachers all believed in a special call to preach. They thought that by some kind of vision, dream, or experience that was brought into their lives by the Lord, that they were especially selected from among men and called to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they felt that being thus specially picked out and called to preach, that God would furnish them with the things to preach. Consequently, they did not study the Bible. It was a reflection upon a preacher if he did.

In those days when a preacher got up to preach, he would announce: "I have no idea what I am going to say to you on this occasion, beloved, but as the Lord gives it to me, I will give it to you." And the preachers depended upon the Lord to put into their mouths what they should give to the people. That was the attitude toward preaching and toward the Bible in that country.

That is illustrated by this little story that I heard my grandfather tell. On one Saturday as he was riding toward the place where he would preach, there came in from a side road one of his fellow preachers and they rode down the road together. As they went along his fellow preacher discovered that my grandfather had his Bible with him. He said, "Brother Sewell, I'm awfully sorry to see that you are taking that book with you." My grandfather asked, "Why? Why shouldn't I take the Bible with me?" The man replied, "Well, I'm afraid that the people will think you get your sermons from it."

Those were the conditions and attitudes under which my grandfather grew up, yet all the days of his life he was not able to understand this attitude toward the Bible. He had always studied it carefully each day, and when he began to preach, he preached just what he found in the Bible. As a result, on the first Saturday night in February, 1842, he was turned out of the Baptist Church for preaching faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sin. He was first charged with heresy. But in his defense he said, just charge me with preaching what I preach, and then determine the question of whether that is heresy. Well, they changed the charge, and charged him with preaching faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sin. He was promptly turned out of the church.

As he and his wife went home that night they talked the matter over. They reasoned that surely the church couldn't be wrong, yet they were convinced they were right in preaching exactly what they found in the Bible. So they decided to take a year to think the matter over, looking for their error, and studying the Bible very carefully. At the end of the year they called their neighbors together in a school house in the community, and Brother Sewell preached to them his first sermons as a member of nothing, except that to which the Lord had added him. He had been turned out of the Baptist church, had not joined anything else, and he was a free man in Christ. In a few months a congregation was started after the New Testament order, committed to the principle, where

the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent, we are silent.

That church progressed and much work has been done in sections round about. The congregation still lives on Wolf River in Overton County, Tennessee.

Brother Lipscomb described Jesse L. Sewell thus, "I've heard Alexander Campbell with his clear thoughts, reverential manner, noble bearing and profusion of imagery; Tolbert Fanning with his Websterian clearness and force of statement and majestic mien and forceful manner; Moses E. Lard with his close and clear analysis and elucidation of his subject, and his power to touch the sympathy and to stir the feelings with his tender pathos; I've heard Dr. Brents with his well-laid premises and strong and convincing logic; but for a well-rounded, finished, complete sermon, setting the full truth on his subject in a manner so simple that the humblest could understand it, and guarding at every point against possible misconceptions or objections, my conviction has been for years that Jesse Sewell in his prime was the superior of any man I have ever heard preach."<sup>3</sup>

He was never known, so I am told, to express an opinion or to take a position on anything aside from the theme of the sermon that he was preaching at the time. He never allowed himself to detract attention in any sort of way from that particular thing that he was discussing, and he discussed it as though he felt it was the most important thing in all the world. And outside of the pulpit nobody ever thought of him as a Democrat, or a Whig, or Republican, or as this or that, but they simply thought of Jesse L. Sewell as a preacher of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brother Lipscomb relates that during the Civil War he passed freely back and forth and preached wherever he desired to preach, to the soldiers of the North on one day, and the next day to the soldiers of the South. He was never stopped one single time. Nobody ever interfered with him. He lived in a community during that war where all of the

<sup>3</sup> Lipscomb *op. cit.* p. 118-119.

prosperity of most of the people was destroyed or taken away, but he never lost a single possession. Nobody took a thing from him.

There may be a lesson for us today, fellow preachers. Maybe if preachers of the gospel were just preachers of the gospel and let other men do the thinking, and talking and discussing and the action that's necessary to run the affairs of the world, possibly we would find more minds and hearts open to us in our efforts to preach the gospel.

Brother Sewell baptized 26 preachers. I remember many times, as a boy, I would see him going to the pulpit on Sunday morning or afternoon, to preach, and if there was a Methodist or Baptist or Presbyterian or any other denominational preacher in the audience, Brother Sewell would invite him to the pulpit with him, ask him to read the scripture, or lead the prayer, and then in this kind gentle spirit and complete understanding of God's teaching, he would stand there beside that preacher and teach him the truth from the pages of the New Testament. If I were to go to that community today and invite a denominational preacher into the pulpit with me, the meeting would close then and there. I am wondering, beloved, if there are not some things we could learn from these great old men, who worked and preached with such marvelous results, from the viewpoint of procedure and treatment of people in order that their minds might be open to the truth. I am not advising any of you to do that, but I am telling you that it was common practice among gospel preachers then, and they were able to convert hundreds and thousands of people.

According to Brother Lipscomb's information between 6,500 and 8,000 people were baptized by Jesse L. Sewell. His family feels, on the basis of records that they have, that the figure is nearer 10,000. He never compromised the truth with anybody anywhere on any thing. He never at any time approached any man or woman in an effort to teach them the truth with any attitude other than that "you are just as honest and sincere as I am. The only thing necessary for us to get together is for both of us to come to know this Book."



Some way it worked. It might work today if we would try it more.

One more quotation from Brother Lipscomb, "My conviction is, the hold the Christian religion has upon the people of Middle Tennessee, is due, under God to Jesse L. Sewell, more than to any other one man."<sup>4</sup>

I want to tell you one incident each from the life of David Lipscomb and J. W. McGarvey that I happen to know first hand. So far as I know, these have not been reported to the general public.

I entered the Nashville Bible School in the fall of 1894. I was in and out there until the spring of 1898, and during that time this event occurred. I lived in the home of my great uncle, Elisha G. Sewell. E. G. Sewell was associated with Brother Lipscomb for more than 50 years as an editor of the *Gospel Advocate*. One night about 10 o'clock someone knocked at the door. It was Brother Lipscomb and he, of course, was invited in. In our homes at that time we didn't have living rooms and other rooms, we just had a room. Everybody stayed in that room around the fire and we studied, or sewed or read all of us around that fire. Brother Lipscomb was brought in to the fireside and he sat down there with my uncle. He said about this, "Brother Sewell, a very important thing has happened this afternoon, and I wanted to talk with you about it. Brother Hall Calhoun came down from Lexington today and came to me and told me he was afraid he would not be able to win the fight for New Testament Christianity in the College of the Bible; the odds are against him. He said he wants to devote his life, without any reservation, to the restoration of New Testament Christianity. He is afraid that he will not be able to do that at Lexington, and he wants to join forces with us in the Bible School." Brother Lipscomb told my uncle that he had called together the men directly responsible for Nashville Bible School and all of them had laid down this definite condition: "they would accept Brother Calhoun if he would sign a statement that he

<sup>4</sup> Lipscomb, *op. cit.*, 119.

had been thoroughly converted on all points of difference between us and them."

Brother Lipscomb said, "I haven't asked him whether he is thoroughly convinced on all these points. What he has told me, has convinced me, that he is committed without any reservations to the restoration of New Testament Christianity, and that he is completely honest, and my feeling is that if he hasn't learned the truth on all these points, if we take him with us here, give him a chance to do the thing he wants to do, then he will learn, will be convinced, and there will be no trouble over it, and he will do great good." Then he asked my uncle what he thought about it. The answer was, "I think you are right."

Brother Lipscomb went back the next day, had conferences with the other men of the school, but they stood their ground. They would not accept Brother Calhoun unless he would sign a statement, definite and positive, that he had been thoroughly converted on all the points of difference. Brother Lipscomb told them he would not ask Brother Calhoun to sign a statement like that. "It would be utterly worthless," he said. "If the man is not honest, if he is insincere, and does not mean what he says, if he has an ulterior motive, then he would sign any statement, and what would the statement be worth? Any statement that he would sign wouldn't change it one way or another." But the men stood their ground and Brother Calhoun was sent back to Lexington, where he spent many years in a fruitless fight, and the cause of pure New Testament Christianity lost the influence of his great intellect and heart for many years.

I am calling your attention to this incident, beloved, that you may see this fine trait in Brother Lipscomb, his wonderful common sense, his wonderful judgment, his ability to be fair and give every person an opportunity.

Now I will tell this incident in the life of Brother J. W. McGarvey. In January, 1902 or 1903, I was preaching for the Pearl and Bryan Streets Church in Dallas. Brother McGarvey, an old man at the time, was invited to speak at the Central Christian Church in Dallas. We had three men

in the Pearl and Bryan Streets Church who had graduated from the College of the Bible in Lexington, under Brother McGarvey, and they were great admirers of him. They suggested that we invite Brother McGarvey to preach at Pearl and Bryan that night. We did so. I was just a boy of 24 or 25 then. I was sitting by the side of this great old man on the front seat, waiting for the service to begin. As we sat there talking, Brother McGarvey said to me: "Brother Sewell, I want to say something to you, if you'll accept it in the spirit in which I mean it." I told him I'd appreciate anything he had to say to me." He said about these words, "You are on the right road, and whatever you do, don't ever let anybody persuade you that you can successfully combat error by fellowshiping it and going along with it. I have tried. I believed at the start that was the only way to do it. I've never held membership in a congregation that uses instrumental music. I have, however, accepted invitations to preach without distinction between churches that used it and churches that didn't. I've gone along with their papers and magazines and things of that sort. During all these years I have taught the truth as the New Testament teaches it to every young preacher who has passed through the College of the Bible. Yet, I do not know of more than six of those men who are preaching the truth today." He said, "It won't work."

That experience has been an inspiration to me all the days of my life since. It has helped me, when I was ever tempted to turn aside and go along with error, to remember the warning of this great old man.

# Chapter 5

## TOLBERT FANNING AND THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN TENNESSEE

*by*

*A. R. Holton*

To rightly view the life of any man, you would have to give something of his background, the day in which he lived. And then you will have to tell something of the activities of his life, and movements to which he gave his life. There would be something about his preparation for his work, his methods. You would have to tell something of his contemporaries, and you would have to give an estimate of his contribution to the work of his life. Tolbert Fanning takes his place as the fifth of the great Restoration leaders. He takes his place with Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, and Barton W. Stone. We do not have time to go into a full definition of the restoration movement, but suffice it to say that it was a movement begun by Barton W. Stone, Thomas Campbell and others, the purpose of which was to restore the New Testament church in organization, in worship, and in practice. Tolbert Fanning made a distinct contribution to this movement in Tennessee.

Tolbert Fanning was born in 1810, in Cannon County, Tennessee. He died at the age of sixty-four in the year 1874. 1810 to 1874 were tumultuous years in American history. The Fanning home, known as Elm Crag, was five miles from Nashville, on the Murfreesboro road. The Nashville airport, known as Berry Field, is now part of this farm, having been sold to the City of Nashville by the Board of the Fanning Orphans' School. Tolbert Fanning was fifty-five years old when Alexander Campbell died; he was fifty-one years old when Walter Scott died; he was thirty-four when Barton

W. Stone died. Therefore, Stone, Scott, Campbell and Fanning were contemporaries in the restoration movement.

He was President of Franklin College from 1846 to 1865. Franklin College was on his own grounds, and the property was largely controlled by money that he himself had contributed. Franklin College rates as one of the great pre-Civil War institutions of the South. Fanning made great use of Franklin College as an instrument in furthering the restoration movement. He was a great teacher in the classroom; he was great in discipline and in the direction of faculty and students. And in the brief years of the life of Franklin College, Tolbert Fanning was considered one of the leading educators of the South, and he was among the first citizens of Tennessee. Some of the graduates of Franklin College will show the caliber of the institution. Among the number of graduates we find the names of David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, T. B. Larimore, F. M. Carmack, R. N. Gardner, and others. Tolbert Fanning believed that work was one of the great features of an education. It was his firm conviction that no man could be happy without work to do, and that no nation could be a happy nation that was not engaged in work. Therefore, Franklin College was a school where great attention was given to agriculture, to industry, and to all the professions. Tolbert Fanning led his students by his own example. He labored with his own hands on his farm, met his classes, and carried on his other work with great distinction. It was his belief that idleness was a curse to an individual, to a school or to a nation; and therefore when students came to Franklin College thinking that they had found a kind of elite club, they were soon disillusioned. Franklin College was a place for work.

Another feature of the educational procedure at Franklin College was the long trips made by the faculty and students. These trips were in the interest of scientific knowledge. They made trips to the mountains in eastern Tennessee; they made trips to the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky; they made trips into the great agricultural lands of the south, and to the north of Nashville. On these trips wagons would

be loaded with provisions and camp outfits. At night the students slept under tents, and their food was prepared on open fires by the side of the road. These trips would consume two or three weeks of time. A teacher always accompanied the group, and they made first-hand study of many scientific problems. He was greatly in advance of his day as an educational leader.

The Bible was taught in Franklin College and had a prominent place in the mind and life of every one, both faculty and students. Not only was the Bible taught and its influence respected, but every class and every laboratory carried a spirit that was thoroughly Christian. Tolbert Fanning believed it was not enough to have some Bible classes in Franklin College. What was needed was that the influence of the Bible would go into every class and into every department of the college life. Therefore, the boys who did the milking and who had chores to do on evenings knew that their work was as much a part of Franklin College as any other department, and that the Christian spirit was to be manifest in their work, just as if it were a Bible class. In a way, this is the key to the tremendous influence of Franklin College. It turned out great leaders in agriculture, in science, in industry. It turned out great ministers, great lawyers, great leaders in all departments of life, and we believe for the reason that Tolbert Fanning saw life as a whole, and sought to develop and improve every phase of human life on this earth.

His next instrument of influence was his work as an editor. He began the *Christian Review* in 1844. The *Christian Review* was a magazine whose avowed purpose was to encourage the church to do its whole duty, in organization and in work. The *Christian Review* was set to defend the church against all human institutions. The churches of Christ were facing great issues at this time. Great numbers of people were coming into the churches; they were growing in numbers faster than the leadership could be produced, with the result that there were great dangers and departures from the simple New Testament plan. Tolbert Fanning and the

*Christian Review* sought to stem the tide and magnify the church and give it its rightful place in the world. In 1855, with William Lipscomb, he began publication of the *Gospel Advocate*. Now it is interesting to note that his connection with Franklin College is continued down to this day through the Fanning Orphans School, and his editorship is continued down to this day through the *Gospel Advocate*. There are twenty-five young women in David Lipscomb College receiving the benefits from the Fanning Orphans School fund. This fund is in excess of \$200,000. When you come to think of it, no other of the leaders in the Restoration movement has continued his active work and influence as long as has Tolbert Fanning. As an editor, the pages of the *Christian Review* and the *Gospel Advocate* were always open to both sides of any controversial subject. Tolbert Fanning's articles were short but to the point. As you glance through the old copies, you can almost tell at a glance an article from Tolbert Fanning. His style is simple, direct and forceful. He had a kind of magic in the use of simple English words. These perhaps did great service to the restoration movement in Tennessee, in that in magnifying the church and its work, they enabled the churches in Tennessee to steer clear of missionary societies and conventions that made havoc with the churches in many parts of the country. The restoration movement went almost into the work of the missionary society in all states except in Tennessee. This can be explained only on one basis—the influence of Tolbert Fanning as president of Franklin College and as editor of the *Christian Review* and the *Gospel Advocate*, and his insistence in the school and in the papers, that the church was the Lord's great instrument in furthering his cause upon this earth; that the church was the body of Christ.

In addition to his work as college president and as editor, Tolbert Fanning was a leader in agriculture and stock raising in the state of Tennessee. It never occurred to him that there was anything out of the way and anti-Christian in his enthusiasm for better agriculture and better livestock. If you will think for just a moment, he did his greatest work

ten years before the Civil War and five years during the war and ten years after the war. It doesn't take a long stretch of the imagination to picture the need of the South in these stirring times. The South had to rebuild her economy, and it was to be rebuilt largely on the farms of the Southern people. Therefore, Tolbert Fanning thought it as much his duty to further the agricultural interests of Tennessee as it was to develop the churches of the restoration movement. And therefore we find him publishing and editing agricultural journals; we find him exhibiting his stock at the county and state fairs in Tennessee. He did all of this to encourage his fellow man in better living conditions. It was his belief that a happy and contented people could be developed in Tennessee and in the South, if they understood the simple principles of agriculture and the development of finer livestock.

In addition to all of this, Tolbert Fanning found himself busily engaged from time to time in evangelism. He was a great preacher. His influence throughout the South as a minister was very great.

Now to sum up something of the contribution made by Tolbert Fanning. In the first place, he has never been given his rightful place in this movement, because this history has been written by those under the influence of the Campbells and of Scott and of Stone. Tolbert Fanning made a distinct contribution in Tennessee that was different from any of his contemporaries. His insistence on the church and its work spells the difference between the restoration movement in Tennessee and in other states. There needs to be a re-study of the life of Tolbert Fanning; there needs to be an investigation of his influence and work. Just now the State of Tennessee is beginning to recognize his great contribution in the field of agriculture and in live stock raising. Just now at the State library we have several men working in that field, uncovering the great contribution made by this man in the field of scientific agriculture. It remains for us to give him his rightful place with Alexander Campbell and Walter Scott and Barton W. Stone. The churches of Christ, as over



against the Disciples of Christ and the Christian Church, owe largely their existence to the work and influence of Tolbert Fanning and his co-workers in Tennessee. The students of Tolbert Fanning were among the leaders in Tennessee who were engaged in the great fight for the churches of Christ and their liberty and their place. This leadership was furnished largely by the influence of Tolbert Fanning and Franklin College. This is a matter of history. I hope that none of us will think of it in any partisan way, but merely from the historical viewpoint. History needs to be written, in order that it may be helpful to every generation. To pass over lightly and without consideration the work of Tolbert Fanning would be a blunder in historical judgment. Last summer we watched a group of young people sail on a great ocean liner out of New York City for Germany. In a little while the great boat was out of sight, and we said, "They are gone." But on second thought, we said, "No, they are not gone. They are coming in." Others across the ocean were to watch the approach of this great liner, bringing these young people to Germany and to France, to work and to live for New Testament Christianity. This is a kind of parable for Tolbert Fanning. We have said that he is gone, but on second thought, "No, he is not gone; he is but coming in." And we need his influence today to magnify the church and its leadership, to prevent us from being swept into error. Liberalism, modernism, and every other "ism" is striking today at this restoration movement. It can never touch us if the influence of Tolbert Fanning is maintained, and his work and independency of local congregations are magnified. No influence can ever sweep New Testament churches into error.

## Chapter 6

### SIXTY-FOUR YEARS AMONG THE CHURCHES

*by*

*Jesse P. Sewell*

My first experiences in the church were in the old Philadelphia church and the Antioch church in Warren County, Tennessee, in the summer of 1886. It was in the Antioch building, when I was ten years old, that I made the good confession at the close of a sermon by that great preacher of the gospel, E. A. Elam. I was baptized in Hickory Creek the next day by my father, Wm. A. Sewell. Sixty-four years have passed from that time to this.

I am going to tell you something about the Philadelphia church, the one in which my family held membership. It was out in the country with the meeting house set up on an elevation in the midst of a grove of magnificent oaks. It was just a little four-wall house, always painted spotlessly white, and the most perfectly cared for, the cleanest and most spotless house of worship I have seen anywhere.

The congregation was made up of the country people round about, and included in the membership were a considerable number of Negroes. A section was reserved for them to occupy and the white people stayed out of it, but before the services started they talked and visited among each other and enjoyed the same privileges enjoyed by the white folks and were treated and accepted as members of the congregation.

That perfectly kept house was tended by "Uncle" Charlie Finger and his wife, colored people. They had asked for the job. Uncle Charlie came to the elders one day and said, "We don't have a great deal of money to give to the

church, but I wondered if we might be permitted to keep the Lord's house." They took it in that spirit and kept it in that spirit.

So often during these 64 years I have wondered why we can't find someone that would take the interest in the Lord's house that those Negroes did. They accepted the job as a service to God and considered it a privilege to be permitted to keep that house.

Now a word about the worship in that church. There were two elders of the congregation. One, Brother Mack Ramsey, was a well-to-do, educated, prominent farmer in the community. He was a tall, slender gentleman, with black hair, black beard always perfectly trimmed; he was always immaculately dressed as he came to church in his black Prince Albert coat. The other elder, Brother S. R. Logue, was his exact opposite. He was a little short, red-headed, freckle-faced, tenant farmer. He was always cheaply but cleanly dressed. These were the elders, the bishops, of that church, respected and loved by all.

Every Sunday morning we would assemble to worship. When the time arrived either Brother Logue or Brother Ramsey (they took turns) would stand before the audience, raise his hands and say: "God hath graciously brought us together another week, permitted us to assemble in his house to worship him. May we reverently stand and bring to him the prayer that our Lord taught his disciples to pray." The audience would stand, every man, woman, and child, and join with him in praying that prayer. I heard that every Sunday morning during the younger years of my life.

The Philadelphia church was about three miles from the town of Viola, and out in another direction toward Manchester was the Antioch church. After a few years these two churches came together and built a larger building in the village of Viola. The building of the Philadelphia church was given to the Negroes and they conduct the worship of God in it until this day.

For a few years the spirit of the church in Viola was much the same. Then the feeling of reverence and devotion

began to decline. The Viola church developed a full-fledged Sunday School with a secretary, superintendent, treasurer, etc. I remember very well the excitement on election day for Sunday School officers. Brother J. R. Stubblefield, W. A. Sewell, my father, and some other men in the congregation very stoutly opposed this, but just didn't get anywhere. Then preachers began to come along and preach against the Sunday School organization, and to say that the educational work should be placed under the direction of the elders. Finally, the Sunday School passed away. The Sunday School idea was very wide-spread among the churches at that time. We went the whole distance, and there wasn't anybody who could outstrip us in our interest and enthusiasm in electing Sunday School officers. But finally we learned better and the practice was corrected. I do not know one church of Christ in the entire country that now has a Sunday School.

During those days in the Philadelphia church Brother Jesse L. Sewell, David Lipscomb and Dr. Brents were the principal preachers who came to preach for us. After we moved to Viola there were other men: E. A. Elam, J. M. Kidwell, W. H. Sutton, L. R. and W. A. Sewell and Brother Kirkendall.

In 1892 when I was 16 years old I left Tennessee and moved to Corsicana, Texas. My father had moved to Corsicana previously. I had stayed in Nashville for treatment of a bad eye condition. My father met me when I arrived in Corsicana, and as we were riding in the buggy out from the station I asked my father, "Where's the meeting house here?" "Well," he said, "son, we meet in the City Hall." "What!" I exclaimed. I had never been anywhere where the church was not on a par with anything else in the community. In Viola there was only the church, no Methodist Church, no Baptist Church, no denomination. It was just the church there. Even in McMinnville, Sparta, Alexandria, Nashville, Murfreesboro, where there were denominational churches also, I had always found the church to have a commodious building on a good street, and equal to anything in the town. I was amazed to hear the church met in the City Hall.

My father explained, "We don't have many members out here, son." He was the first full-time preacher in Texas, the first man in the state of Texas to give full time to one congregation and that congregation did not own a meeting house.

As we rode along toward home we passed a nice looking building with a sign on it, "Christian Church." I asked, "What is that?" My father replied, "That is the Christian Church." I said, "Well, isn't that *us*?" "Not in Texas, son," he said. Now up to this time I had been a member of the Christian church. I was 16 years old and I had never heard the church referred to as anything else. It was the Christian church in McMinnville, the Christian church in Viola. In Nashville it was the S. College Street Christian church, Foster Street Christian church, etc. Everywhere it was the Christian church. Oh, maybe the preachers, when they became technical in their sermons would talk about the church of Christ, but I was young and didn't have enough understanding to give much consideration to that.

My father began to explain, "There's been a lot of division out here." I had never heard of that either, didn't know it ever happened. Here I was face to face with a situation where the church was divided. There is the Christian church over there and here in the City Hall is the church of Christ. In those days they were not concerned so much with the scripturalness of the two terms. They didn't discuss it that way. I've heard my own father say, "Well, you know from the viewpoint of what the church is made up of, it's made up of Christians, it's a Christian church. In that sense of the term there isn't anything wrong about it." "But," he said, "you know out here, son, most of the churches, most of the Christian churches have put in instrumental music and societies and things like that, and we just have to have some way of distinguishing ourselves from them. We are the church of Christ, and they are the Christian Church."

I think it is important that we remember that point Brother Holton mentioned in one of his addresses. The

Christian Church, the wave of digression, the introduction of instrumental music, societies, and liberalism did not succeed in Tennessee. At the time I left there there weren't many churches like that. You couldn't find more than a few dozen in the whole state. In Tennessee the great leaders, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, Jesse L. Sewell and others did not yield to these innovations at any time. Tennessee churches did not fall in great numbers. In Texas the opposite was true. Very few congregations in the whole state remained undivided. The restoration movement had been strong in Texas. There were churches all over the state, a strong school, Add Ran College at Thorp Springs, and an orphans home. But practically all the churches were divided. Nearly all the preachers went. I began preaching in Texas as a young boy several years after this. Brother F. L. Young, grandfather of our Brother F. W. Mattox, was the only preacher preaching pure New Testament Christianity in the state of Texas, who had enough education to deserve a bachelor's degree. Add Ran College departed and they took most of the men who had been educated there. The churches over the state succeeded in putting instrumental music in and keeping the property in practically all instances and driving out a little group who could not conscientiously worship with the instrument. There were only a few churches left in the cities and the large towns, and just little groups out in the country and small towns meeting and worshiping in a school house or home. That was the situation. That was the difference between Texas and Tennessee. That accounts for the fact that the church has remained strong throughout the years in Tennessee and has grown. I think it is well for us to remember that history.

Now I want to tell you some things that I think ought to inspire you with confidence and with hope and determination as you look toward the future. In 1894, when I was 18 years old, I went back to Nashville and entered the Nashville Bible School. Then, in its fourth year, the school was out on South Spruce Street. It had spent one year in a rented residence on Fillmore, two years over on Cherry Street, or

maybe it was the other way. Finally they had grown to the point where they had confidence and had bought a little block of ground, about two or three acres, on Spruce Street. There was an old-fashioned red brick house back about the middle of the lot, an old dwelling house, where Brother W. H. Dodd and his wife lived and boarded some of the school boys. They had some classes in that house too. A new building for boys which also contained a small chapel was built. It wasn't finished when I arrived. It was constructed of the cheapest brick that can be made, and everything else was about up to that standard. The furniture had been given by members of the church in the city. One person would give a dresser, another a wash stand, and another a bed, or mattress and springs. You can imagine about how uniform and artistic it was.

The men who made the old Nashville Bible School were David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, J. W. Grant, and Dr. J. S. Ward. Four such men would make a great work for God anywhere in the world. I don't believe that there is any power in this world, or any power in the underworld, that could stop the ongoing of service to humanity on the part of a combination like that. No one might have done much by himself, but with those four men together the Lord had a combination that couldn't be stopped. There was the solid substantial, dependable David Lipscomb, with his good judgment, strong unimpeachable character. He at all times stood like a stone wall against every innovation upon the authority of Jesus Christ as head of His church. He was slow of motion, physically and mentally. Always he was deliberate and calm. He was well-to-do financially. He did not need to have any pay for his preaching or for anything else that he did for the Lord. He gave most of the money that was necessary through the first few years of the building of David Lipscomb College, and finally gave to it his home farm out there where the school stands now on its beautiful campus.

James A. Harding was different. He was never slow. He was full of optimism and hope and faith. Brother Lipscomb might want to know "how" a thing was to be done. Brother

Harding would say, "Why worry about it? Let the Lord worry about it. He promised to see us through." Between the two of them they worked out an aggressive program. Brother Lipscomb sometimes was a bit reluctant, and Brother Harding always sure. These are elements of leadership you need in a school.

Brother J. W. Grant was, I suppose, one of the greatest mathematicians who ever taught in Tennessee. You know in a school you need some people who, in addition to these elements of leadership, are genuine scholars. Brother Grant was that. At the same time he was firmly grounded in the faith of the gospel.

And in that same field came Dr. J. S. Ward, the son of a well-to-do, prominent member of the church, he had been educated in medicine. Dr. Ward resigned his position as chief medical man in the New York Insurance Company in Tennessee to teach in David Lipscomb College. He is still living and as long as he was able to work at all he did every thing in David Lipscomb College that he was called on to do. He served from janitor up to president and president down to janitor. Just whatever place was vacant and they couldn't get anyone else to do it, Dr. Ward did it. He is a man who would take just any place that's vacant and do the work with gladness, and do it well. A sweeter or more consecrated Christian than Dr. J. S. Ward would be hard to find.

Listen to me just a minute. If the people of that generation and the ones following them could in Nashville build from six congregations up to sixty, one in every nook and corner of the city, and then along with it this great institution of learning, consecrated to the promotion of New Testament Christianity, what should the young people of today be able to do with what they are inheriting? There just isn't any limit to what can be done if we will but allow the Lord to lead.

I spent the summer of 1895 in Texas and during that summer I held my first meeting. I wasn't expecting to be a preacher. I was determined from the time I was a little boy to show the people that one Sewell didn't have to preach.



There were ten Sewells in Tennessee preaching, and I thought that was enough. I had my arrangements made to study medicine with Dr. T. A. Miller, that great Christian doctor in Corsicana. But that summer I went with my uncle, C. W. Sewell, to a camp meeting, and he asked me to preach twice. Well, I didn't know how to refuse him, so I tried. I preached four other sermons. My father was away and I received a letter from him, in which he said, "Son, I was to preach out at Hayes in Robertson County, on Saturday and Sunday and Sunday night, and I am having a good meeting here. I can't afford to close it. Will you go out there and preach for me?" I had those three or four sermons—I had six, in fact. So why shouldn't I go preach for my father? I went out there and preached Saturday night in a little school house full of people. Sunday morning I preached again, and again Sunday night. (Three sermons used up). Sunday night we had four confessions.

Now I don't mean this in the wrong kind of spirit, but I just hardly knew what to do with those folks. I hadn't prepared myself for anything like that. Of course, I had heard these things all my life. I knew what to do. I took their confessions and was just ready to say the benediction when somebody spoke up, "Brother Sewell, you have to stay until tomorrow evening to baptize these people. Why not have preaching tomorrow night?" I still had three sermons, so why not? I stayed the next day, did the baptizing, and preached again. That night there were six confessions, so I had to stay over again. But the next night my sermons were nearly all gone, and I was hurrying to get through when a brother said, "Brother Sewell, it won't do to close this meeting. Preach tomorrow night on the conversion of the jailor." I thought it might as well be the conversion of the jailor as anything else, since I would have to prepare the sermon anyway. If you ever saw a 95-pound boy study and pray, I did it. I got that sermon and I preached it. There were more confessions. The meeting continued until Sunday night. During that period fifty people were baptized; 12 Methodists, 17 Baptists, 5 Presbyterians; that left just 16 ordinary sinners! By the way,

in that connection, I've been preaching more than fifty-five years, and I have held meetings in every section of the United States. The Lord has been so good to me in my preaching that I have held only twelve meetings during all these years in which I have not baptized at least one person, and in which I have not baptized at least one denominationalist. Don't you think that is a fair record for a "soft" preacher?

But that meeting did something to me. I couldn't get it out of my mind. If that could be done, why waste my time practicing medicine. So I went back to Nashville Bible School.

The next summer I spent out in the Abilene country, holding meetings at Sunset, Lytte Cove, and at Crossroads. At that time there was no congregation in Abilene, none in Cisco, and none in any of the larger towns up and down the Texas and Pacific Railroad. To brethren out in that country such a thing as a loyal church in Abilene was unthinkable. They thought it would never be. Today in the city of Abilene there are eight or nine congregations, some of them with 600, 700, or 1,000 members. They are doing not only their own work, but preaching the gospel all over the world. And there is Abilene Christian College, the first standard four-year college that was established where all the students study the Bible. And it is consecrated to preaching and spreading New Testament Christianity. More than 1,600 college students, including more than two hundred young preachers, are in attendance there today.

Why am I telling you this? This is a part of the history of the church during these sixty-four years. If that kind of thing can be done, if those little country churches, without education, without money, without organization, with nothing but their faith in God and their loyalty to his truth, within the lifetime of one man, can change the map of the great state of Texas, from a religious viewpoint, as it has been done, what can the youth of today do with what they have inherited? The answer to this question depends on their loyalty to Christ, his truth and his way and their willingness to serve.

In the latter part of 1900 I was invited to come to Pearl and Bryan Streets Church in Dallas. The first of January, 1901, I went on this basis: We would pay all the expenses of the church and I would receive the balance of the offerings. Maybe I didn't have much sense, but I had been around Jesse L. and W. A. Sewell and James A. Harding until I had a lot of faith. Today I am glad I had more faith than sense. Here is what I found in Dallas. After General R. M. Gano, then a very old man and an elder in the church, had worked the city as thoroughly as we could we had between 65 and 70 names on the record. This was the church in Dallas. On the same land where the Western Heights church now is there was a congregation of about thirty members. This was well in the country then. Now, a little Dallas history. The Pearl and Bryan Streets Church was the first church of any kind established in Dallas. Its first house was located near the old "Katy" station. Dallas was a village then. After it had grown into quite a town a Brother Peak gave them the lot on the corner of Pearl and Bryan. He placed in the deed a clause forbidding the use of instrumental music in the worship. There they built the house that was being used when I went there in 1901. It had been the First Christian Church from the beginning and the sign on the house announced that name until after we built the new building which constitutes a part of the present building. The sign on the old house was quite nice. When the old house was torn down some of the brethren put the sign away. When the new building was finished they put the old sign on it. The "war" broke out. It was hot for some time. When it was over the sign was down. But we lost two elders and a few others. The strange thing is that the two elders and the others we lost were the ones who most bitterly opposed the old name and sign. As far as I remember all of the ones who fought for the old name and sign remained with the church. Most of them have been buried from that house. Strange things happen in church disputes! When I was in Dallas about two years ago brethren showed me a list of more than 50 congregations with their locations. Faith, loyalty, and courage again!

In the spring of 1905 the doctors told me I had a very definite tuberculosis condition in one lung and that I must go west. They suggested San Angelo. So in August 1905, I went to San Angelo. I did not know one person there, in the church or out. There was a little church of about 35 people there; some of the best and most genuine Christians I have ever known. I went to a hotel. Before bed-time one of the elders of the little church came to see me. I have forgotten how they learned I was coming. He insisted that I should the next day go to his home. I urged that I would be dangerous to them. But he said, "We are accustomed to T. B. here and we are not afraid of it and you are not going to stay in a hotel here." The Doctor said, "You have a good chance to get well if you do two things; go to bed and quit work, especially preaching. I couldn't go to bed. I had a wife and baby and \$65.00. I couldn't quit preaching. Christ died for me and if preaching for him killed me that would be perfectly all right. The little church paid me \$35.00 a month. I found a little fire insurance agency for sale for \$500.00. I went to the First National Bank and asked them to loan me the money. They didn't have any more sense than to do so. I bought my agency. I bought a little horse and open buggy and went to work writing fire insurance through the week and preaching on Sunday. When they asked me in 1912 to come to Abilene and take the presidency of Abilene Christian College, I was well of T. B. We had a church with 350 members with the ground on which their present excellent house is located with a good frame house on it. I owned a half interest in the largest fire insurance agency in West Texas. Now there are, in addition to the old congregation, several good ones in the city. Another instance of faith, loyalty, and courage. All the Lord's church needs anywhere is a chance.

I give this history especially that it may inspire the church of today to see and feel its great possibilities. If the little groups I knew as a boy and up to 1912 could, with God's help, do what they have done, what can the churches of today with their members, money, education, influence and power, do? Again, I say, the answer depends on their loyalty

to Christ, His truth and His way, and their willingness to serve.

As usual my time is gone and I have not finished my task. I cannot relate my experiences in Ft. Worth, Corsicana and San Antonio, Texas and Riverside, California. In each place there are lessons which fit into the situation of today in such a manner as to emphasize the limitless opportunities for the extension of New Testament Christianity and of the call upon us to be committed to just that, nothing less, nothing more and nothing different. The call of the day is that disciples of Christ be one even as God and Christ are one, that we allow no selfish ambition or other thing to come between us and Christ, that we give ourselves without reservation to teaching and preaching His gospel in its original purity. No power on the earth or under the earth can defeat such a program. The Lord's churches, congregations, can defeat themselves. No other power can defeat them.

On the basis of sixty-four years among them I have confidence in my brethren. There is not even a slight doubt in my mind as to their loyalty to Christ and his will and way. In spite of our human limitations and weaknesses and the unfortunate situations into which these often bring us I believe we will move closer and closer to Christ and thus closer and closer to each other until God's eternal purpose is accomplished and the church will stand before him sanctified and cleansed, without spot or wrinkle, the most glorious thing in all the universe. May God help each one of us to be a part of it when that day comes is my prayer.

## Chapter 7

### THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN THE ORIENT

*by*

*E. W. McMillan*

In the first chapter of Romans, and the 16th verse, Paul was writing near the middle of his preaching life. In retrospect his mind reviewed all that he had experienced as a preacher of the gospel. Then he looked ahead to those he had never met. He wanted to visit them next and after that planned a visit to Spain. Paul considered himself in debt to both the Jews and the Greeks, bond and free. "I'm ready," Paul said, "to preach it to you that are in Rome." "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God to salvation, to every man that believes; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In that statement Paul wrote an idea for every Christian that has lived since, concerning that person's own obligation. I am in debt; I owe every man and every woman in the entire world, within the limits of my power, a knowledge of the saving Grace of my God and my redeemer.

One year ago today, I was in the province of Assam, India, in the capital city of Shillong. I was there at the request of the brethren in the states, to look in upon the most enchanting story that I have ever known, concerning the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the lives of innocent and honest men and women. In 1932 a man stood up in the Scottish Presbyterian church and defied the ecclesiasticism of the whole Presbyterian Church.

This man wanted to go out in the K & J hills of Assam and teach the gospel to people who would never know it unless somebody like him did it; but he was forbidden by the Presbyterian preacher, because he was uneducated. He

walked out and opened a house of worship in his own home; 14 others joined him. They had no book but the Bible. From that day until this day, the influence of that movement has had no book but the Bible. Beginning with 15, they have increased to approximately 1,000 today. The most of them can neither read nor write. None of them at the beginning had gone beyond the sixth grade. But they knew their mother tongue, and they started reading the New Testament. It never dawned on them that anybody else in the world believed what they came to believe. On that independent study of the Bible with no book but the Bible to read, with no preacher to lead them, with nobody to forbid or encourage them, with no commentaries, no quarterlies, no decrees of synods and councils, they entered upon an independent study of the scriptures on this beginning thought: "If the Presbyterians are wrong on one point, they might be wrong on two. We'll study the Bible and see where we end." Today these people, some of whom are very scantily clothed and go barefooted, walk 10 and 15 miles over rugged hills and sharp rocks to listen to the preaching of the word, are among the best Christians I have ever met. Those people, in that humble way have studied the Bible and have come to the conclusion that the Bible teaches there is only one body, therefore denominationalism has to be wrong; that the Bible calls the believers in Christ, Christians, and as groups, churches of Christ, churches of God, and they, therefore, reject all denominational names using only the terminologies used in the scriptures. To them, the Bible is the only authority in religion, therefore, they reject creeds, catechisms, and confessions of faith, written by men. They reject all forms of baptism except immersion for the remission of sins. They discard instrumental music as not authorized in the New Testament.

Some of these brethren are well educated now. In their heading they learned there were people in the States called "Churches of Christ." They wrote to Abilene, Texas, an inquiry of beliefs. A correspondence followed between them and Brother Glen L. Wallace, revealing that their beliefs and ours are almost identical. Having learned this, they

wrote this simple pleading note, "We are not asking for money, not asking for clothes; but we over here are brow-beaten by our religious friends. They have told the town and the country all around that we are a group of ignorant, narrow-minded Pharisees who think we have more sense and more religious honesty than other people, and that we are the only people in the world who believe as we do. If you can send a man over here from the States who can tell these people that many others in the world believe as we do, it will greatly help." The College Church in Abilene offered to cooperate with Memphis in sending me on from Japan. So, I went.

Never in all my life have I felt more honored than I felt one day at the end of 40 miles of mountain driving where I preached to a small audience. From the car we walked up a hillside to a little house with a grass roof, adobe walls and a dirt floor. The audience was a group of poorly clad, innocent-faced people. They had come from 10 to 20 miles on foot to see a man who believed what they believed.

While in Shillong I was approached by a Presbyterian, who said, "Come over and preach to us next Wednesday night. Come and tell us where we are wrong. These people, went out from among us. If we are wrong we want to know it. We are honest." I was about to promise, when I consulted Brother Khardukhi. He said, "We're not telling you what to do, but we will tell you what is back of that." He told me that the enemies reported that I was a missionary at large, and I would preach for Presbyterians as quickly as anyone else. They were willing for me to correct them in their own building to have the opportunity of reporting that I had preached to them also. When I failed to go they put out a report that I was not a missionary, but was in India on a secret mission, using the missionary angle as a blind. Under that kind of treatment these humble Indians go in their simple and honest way, reading the Bible and studying for themselves, just because they believe that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it. So much do they believe in the independent convictions of



individuals that when the possibility of sending someone over to help them was under discussion, they said, "We would welcome having somebody, but one question we'd like to ask is, will that obligate us to be subject to the decisions of American brethren?" So, you see the liberty of conscience and freedom of individual faith, out of which their honest faith ascends.

But now, I must give you a sad development of the last six months. A religious group in the States, represented over there, variously styled Christian Church, Disciples, and Church of Christ, learning of this movement, have sent a man in there to capitalize on the influence of American Christianity through my going. They have taken the title "Church of Christ," and have succeeded in dividing the group to some extent. Only time can give the final result.

Now we turn to another, and broader consideration. The entire Far Eastern World today—India, China, Korea, Japan, and the smaller islands nearby—educationally, politically, economically and religiously is confronted with two great alternatives, and only two. These are in the form of two contradicting ideologies, but which though contradicting, have certain parallel appearances of similarity. They are Communism and Christianity. Over and over in 1947 it was said and last year it was repeated many times, that the next ten to twenty years will determine the future of Japan for a 100 and maybe a 1,000 years. Members of the Japanese Diet said it; members of the educational ministry said it; members of the occupation government said it, and MacArthur voiced it when I visited him in his office in Tokyo last fall. He spoke of the unrest, the fear and the burden in every heart. He expressed the desire to come home, then of his duty to remain there until his job is finished. He told graphically of Communism and its many ways of doing its work. Over against that, he placed the spiritual forces of the world. Whatever importance may be rightly placed on military Power and control, General MacArthur stressed the fact that the job in the Far East will be well done only when Christian faith is the guide in each life. I am not an excited sensational-

ist when I tell you now that the whole Far Eastern world will follow mainly Communism or Christianity. Communism today controls about two-fifths of the world's population. Scientifically, we have done well in producing out of the nations of the world a group of neighboring communities. If we had done as well religiously, these nations would now be one common brotherhood in Christ. But on the alternates of denominational dogma, sectarian bias, human pride, and religious indifference in general, religious peoples have sacrificed the spirit of true Christianity. Under these circumstances, Communism has grown.

Now, you may be asking why Communism is such a competitor of Christianity? First of all, I reply that the whole Oriental world is living in a mental and spiritual vacuum. They are empty. India has been emptied of external control. They have something that they call freedom and do not know what to do with it or how to use it. China has been overrun by something strange; they have been crushed, they are unfed, unclothed, and untrained. Ignorant, starving, and freezing in the winter, they are receptive to anything with promise.

Japan is not different in some respects from India and Korea. Japanese political and educational leaders said: "In our military defeat, we lost our sense of external protection: when our emperor told us he is not a descendant of the gods, we were emptied of our inner anchorage. We are, therefore, not only as sheep without a shepherd, but also sheep without a pasture."

This is fertile soil for planting of Communistic propaganda. Communists speak freely of what could be done for Japan if the capitalistic Christians were driven from Japan. They unloaded 4,000 war prisoners one day in Japan; they had been well fed and thoroughly indoctrinated in Communism. They proclaimed what Communism would do if given a chance; they could point to the very small amount that Christian people had done. There was no good answer to their charge when "we" had fewer than 25 missionaries in all Japan. It is hard to explain.

Here at home, we hear much about the danger of mistakes. I believe that danger of mistakes is always present, but I also believe that the worst danger in the world is the danger of being so danger-conscious that you will never do anything at all. I wish I could speak that to the conscience of every man in the world.

It is a matter of history, that if there had been in the Japanese Diet just a few more voices favorable to the Christian culture from 1920 to 1935, there could have been no Pearl Harbor. The Japanese Diet, historically, during those 15 years debated much whether their legislation should take the more militaristic trend or adopt a more neighborly policy toward other nations. The military won; Pearl Harbor was the result.

While that was going on, Churches of Christ had fewer than 10 missionaries in Japan. We at home were increasing in luxury year by year. If Christian truth had been in a few more Japanese Diet members, there could have been no Pearl Harbor. Japan today can only assume that the few Christians in Japan correctly represent the Christian spirit. Under this poor showing Communism has a good advantage. Communism feeds, clothes, and promises what it would do if given a chance. That is the reason why it is such a great competitor of Christianity.

The spirit of Christianity is "forward-march." "Go ye into all of the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Don't do it the wrong way, no, but do it. Don't make a mistake, no, but if you do, quit it, but keep going. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

The spirit of the first century encircled the whole inhabited world, under those marching orders. Later on, it crossed the oceans and came to the United States. It came in denominational robes, yes, but it came with an unwavering faith, in the true and living God. Those early pioneers stamped on the American dollar, "In God We trust." Their education was built for the advantage of Christian faith.

I do not need to denounce the Godlessness in much of today's education. I shall, though, point out some chilling

parallels. Less than 100 years ago Japan began emerging from feudalism. Whereas Europe's struggle is hundreds of years old in that respect, Japan's struggle to emerge is less than a hundred years old. And when they started this their struggle for deliverance, what religious insight did they have? None; absolutely none beyond heathenism.

Now, go back to that term, "Church of Christ," which means, if it means anything, that we are like Christ in the desire and the effort to save the world. Review that next 50 years. What did we who claim to be Churches of Christ do in the effort to give Japan a Spiritual light? You know that history as well as I know it. No marvel that Communism can put a silence in all of us when it says, "Is that Christianity?" We neglected the Orient. Now, there are small efforts going on in Japan, as you know. I am not going to discuss the Tokyo situation this afternoon. It is a history all of its own. It is independent of all the others. It has nothing to do with the things for which I plead this afternoon.

About 140 miles southwest of Tokyo in the state of Shizuoka, there is a work in which Miss Hettie Lee Ewing and Miss Sarah Andrews labored for years. Miss Ewing is in the States now, and Miss Andrews is in Japan. Joe Bryant and his wife, whom Harding College produced, are either there or on their way. The work has great promise. Half way approximately between Tokyo and Shizuoka there is another work. It was started about two years ago, under the influence of R. C. Cannon, whom you know, with Nona, his wife. Ed Brown is there now and his wife, Edna. Bill Carroll and his wife are there. The Hamlin, Texas, church sponsors Ed and his wife. The Sears and Summitt church in Dallas sponsors Bill and his wife. When I was there in the fall of '47 and made an address a man told me: "I was baptized two weeks ago. I live in this town. There is not within 10 miles of this town, a doctor, a nurse, a store for medicine, or a house of worship. If brethren in the states will send missionaries here, we can take this town for Christ within 10 years." I told that story everywhere I went, and about the 40th time I told it, the Hamlin elders said, "We'll take the area of Torizawi."

They built a house of worship and paid for it. They built a home for the missionary and paid for it. We have three doctors in the congregation now. We have nearly 100 members, and they are really taking the Torizawa area for Christ.

But 100 miles northeast of Tokyo is the greatest center of activity. When I was there in '47, we had six struggling congregations, approximately 125 faithful members, not a foot of land, not a building of worship, not a missionary; only a residence. Today we have 15 missionaries there. We have 26 congregations in that state. Almost 3,000 people have been baptized within the last 2% years. We have four buildings of worship, paid for; we have a standard high school, and a standard junior college, whose graduates can enter any university in Japan, and receive full credit without a question. Our school has been selected as the training center in the state of Ibaraki for democratic education in a special course each summer. The Ministry of Education is co-sponsor with our school of that summer short course. And General MacArthur said to me in person, "We're proud of your school out there. You people know how to run democratic education, and it's an example to all the rest. If you get into any complications we'll see you through."

All this is true because enough people in the States have caught the vision and the understanding and have accepted the responsibility. They feel the Text: "I am debtor to bring the gospel to all the world." It is a part of the conscience of enough people in the States to get the job partially done. More and more people need to go, though; more and more money needs to be spent. Now, we have between 15 or 20 preachers in training who study the Bible every day, and go out on the Lord's day to congregations recently established in revival meetings. And that kind of thing is going on all the time.

But my friends, there is an impending danger now. It is the danger of sectarianizing a plea. It's a fine thing to talk about the Restoration Movement. It is a fine thing to build a theme around it. That is worthy. It is a great thing to stress

the principles of it. They are true. But after all, it's fine, worthy, and true, and good only if we understand that these words are just an effort to capitalize on something that is "catching on," and that, in reality, all we mean by "Restoration Movement" is that we are trying to get the simple truth of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as it was taught originally by the apostles and Christ, into the hearts and the minds of people who are lost. People that are lost in heathenism, people that are buried in sectarianism.

I want to close with this simple appeal to you. My brethren, there is a great job that needs to be done. Somebody has to do it. I don't know how to go about proving that others have more obligations than I have, but the job has to be done. I hope that you will accept the same conscientious responsibility. Don't let the fires in your soul die. Never let the flame become obscure; never let the zeal and the ardor cool.

Some years ago, when I lived in Cleburne, Texas, driving an open-top model-T Ford, from Venus to Cleburne, 20 miles distance, over a gravel road, over and over a large car would drive up behind me and honk. Well, you know what a man means when he does that. He's just telling you, get over out of my way. Well, I pulled over and he would whiz by and cover me in dust, and then about the time the dust cleared away, and I got well-straightened out, another honk would come behind me, and I'd move over, and then eat another man's dust. I pulled my handkerchief out and mopped the dust off the left side of my face. After a while, before a man's dust clouded the back of his car, I saw a placard in the back of the window, which said, "Come on, let's go." I asked myself the question, "Am I doomed by fore-ordination to eat the dust of other men?" I don't think so. From that point, I didn't eat anybody's dust.

Brethren, to save my life, I cannot understand why Churches of Christ should eat the dust of other people in fulfilling a Bible assignment. Sure! There is danger of losing the path. Sure! there is danger of getting off of the road. So much is this true that there is not in all history, secular,

or sacred, the record of a single important religious movement that retained its original identity 500 years. Sure! there is danger of getting off the path. But listen, my brethren, just because there is a danger of running in the ditch on one side, that only argues the reason why we should get in the middle of the road and drive on. And the assignment is, "Move on."

"Preach the gospel to all the world." The fact that there is denominationalism, or premillennialism, or modernism, or any other kind of an "ism" in the world, or any part of the world, doesn't give good reason why the rest of us should stay at home and do nothing. The scriptures still read, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." In that lone little spot of 30 acres in the state of Ibaraki, we have a monument to Christian faith, into which we bring daily students and teach them the Bible, along by the side of their secular studies, and to which we hope to bring selected students from Korea, and from India, and from any other portions near and train them in like manner. But this we can do only when we in the States develop the conscience that will lead us to furnish the money to pay their expenses, for they are poverty stricken and cannot come by themselves.

This, the best that I could honestly give it to you, is a representation of the restoration plea, nearly a half-way around the world in the Far East today. I hope and pray that God will move in the hearts of us all until, while guarding against all possible departures, we nevertheless will unite our hearts, our minds and lay our all upon the altar of sacrifice, seeing to it that the gospel is carried in abundance, in true light, in true representation, to Japan, to India, to China, to Korea, to all the European countries and everywhere—wherever a life is found.

Oh, Lord God, our Father in heaven, we give Thee our thanks today that we have seasons like this in which, by the very nature of the circumstances, it is natural to meet and to sit and think quietly upon those important matters. Oh, Lord, do not let us forget: Forbid that we should go out from this auditorium now, and become so engrossed in the affairs of

another nature, that we shall lose the inspirations of these hours. Keep them alive. Keep them fervent, keep them yearning and restless to do greater things. Praise be it to Thy great name for the faith that has brought this audience here today. Somehow we feel that through Providence the lives here have been awakened this hour, and that they will carry the spirit home, transmit it to others, and get others to give money, or to go and carry the gospel into all the world. Lead us, oh God, lest we stray. Guide and hedge us in with warnings, but keep us always moving, and going forward in the preaching of Thy word, until the knowledge of Thy will fills the earth, as the waters cover the sea. In the name of Christ we pray, Amen.



# Chapter 8

## THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

*by*  
*Otis Gatewood*

In bringing you a report on the restoration movement in Germany, I think it would be good for us if we went back a little in history to the reformation movement, because the restoration movement would not have started when it did if it had not been for the fact that Martin Luther started the reformation movement when he did in Germany.

You remember that it was he, a German, who took the leadership in breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church. That resulted in people leaving that country to escape Catholic persecution. They came to America and helped establish a country that guarantees religious freedom to all. If Martin Luther had not started that movement that caused people to protest against the Catholics America today would perhaps be predominated with Catholicism just as the European nations are. We have thought of the German people as enemies, but in the light of this information we can think of them as our friends and as great contributors to the freedom, joys, and privileges that we have here tonight.

In order to tell about the restoration movement in Germany, it is only logical for us to mention that there are groups in Germany, independent of what we are doing there, who are seeking for a restoration movement. I am thinking of a group of Germans known as "Bund Der Freikirchlichen Christen." That means a group of free church Christians. They teach the plan of salvation just as we teach it, have the Lord's supper every Sunday, they have instrumental music sometimes, but not regularly, in their worship. There

is quite a large group of them in Germany. Also there's a group that Brother Bob Helsten contacted recently down in Pfortzheim, Germany. They sprung up on their own, just studying the Bible. There is another group of German-speaking people down in Strasbourg, France, and another in Switzerland. While I am telling of these people I will mention also the Polish people who recently became identified with the church of Christ in Belgium. There were ten or fifteen Polish people who came and studied with Brother S. F. Timmerman, and then took their stand with the New Testament Christians in Liege. They told him that there were about 500,000 people like themselves in Poland and a larger number in Russia. This last summer we had some Russian preachers (white Russians) visit our services quite regularly. They told us that there is a group in Russia that's very similar to the church of our Lord. In Heppenheim I have baptized two people from Czechoslovakia who have shown me baptismal certificates signed *Kirche Christo*, and that means church of Christ.

The brethren down in Italy have also contacted a group that's very similar to the church of our Lord. (I'm saying these things so that you might see that the restoration movement is not something that has been taking place in America only, or by our own efforts, but it is something that is going on throughout the entire world.) As yet we haven't made very close contact with those people, because we haven't had time to do it, and because we didn't believe it was best to have large numbers of them to unite in our work, as it would perhaps lead to difficulties.

In talking about the restoration movement in Germany, as we know it, I think of the time when the war broke out, when Christians were scattered to all parts of the world, just as in the time of the stoning of Stephen, when the church was scattered. I suppose some of the first to preach the gospel in Germany were Brother John T. Fogarty, who went there as a chaplain, and Brother Max Watson, who was there as a soldier. The work that those brethren did in Frankfurt is principally the reason we chose Frankfurt as the beginning

of our work in Germany. Even before any of the evangelists of the church went into Germany, a group of soldiers started meeting in Munich to worship, and these soldiers started inviting their German friends, and the first congregation was established. This congregation met in the home of Brother and Sister McDaniel who are now in Camp Hood. This congregation in Munich has continued to grow and there are 150 members there at present.

Following these efforts you remember that Brother Sherrod and I went to Germany to see what should be done about preaching the gospel of Christ. Now that doesn't mean that this was the first interest that was manifested in preaching the gospel in Germany. When the war broke out in 1944, the Mormon church brought back 300 missionaries from Germany. The church of Christ did not bring back a single missionary. The first time that I spoke before a large group after seeing those Mormons return, I was in Yosemite, California. I mentioned it, and I can remember now that Brother Bob Helsten, who was then in high school, was planning to come to Harding College to prepare himself to go to Germany to preach the gospel. I suppose he is one of the first that made preparation. Shortly after this Brother Richard Walker came to Utah and there labored a year and decided to go to Germany. He moved to Boston and studied at Harvard to prepare for the work.

I remember a story told by Brother Fogarty about a soldier he baptized in Germany. He had taught the young man, and after he baptized him, the soldier gave Brother Fogarty some gold pieces and asked him to use it in encouraging other 'Philips' to come to Germany. Brother Fogarty brought the money to America and gave it to help send the gospel to Germany.

Brother Sherrod and I went in order to see what the possibilities were. We talked to General Lucius D. Clay and received permission to bring the first two American missionaries from any church into Germany. On the sixth of June, 1947, Brother Roy V. Palmer and I moved into Germany and there started preaching the gospel.

Since that time other evangelists and teachers have joined us and at the present time there are about 33 American evangelists and their wives in Germany, teaching and preaching the gospel. Within the last three and one-half years we have established 10 different congregations, have baptized over 1,000 people, and at present time we are teaching in classes between 2,000 and 3,000 people.

To understand how these things came about you must know the background of Germany. You must know what has happened to the people, what kind of frame of mind we found them in, and what kind of an opportunity there is in Germany. It is my conviction that the Lord wants us to go where the fields are the ripest. He told his apostles that if they go into a city where the people would not receive them to shake the dust off their feet and go somewhere else. I believe from the things I will tell you about Germany you will see it is a place ripe unto harvest.

Germany was the seat of the reformation movement, and in later years became the seat of modernism. As a result of the reformation movement there were two state churches, one the Catholic, and one the Lutheran. The Catholics are principally in the South, the Lutherans in the North. Germany is about sixty per cent Protestant. But the two churches were organized to a great extent on the same level, with a state-wide organization supported by taxes from the state. The state pays the preachers, and therefore, if the congregation gets tired of a preacher, they cannot fire him because they did not hire him. The state religions do not mean much to the people. After modernism came Nazism, which is nothing but an outgrowth of modernism. And during the Nazi influence of 12 years, from 1933 to 1945, infidelity was encouraged. Hitler would have people to believe there was no God, that he was God. He didn't close down churches as we have heard. They were given permission to carry on their worship services, but religion was greatly discouraged. No Bibles were printed, and a great distrust grew up among the people. It was the same kind of distrust that can be seen today in the Communist section of

Germany. My wife went over into the Eastern section of Berlin recently. Brother Steiniger just returned from Leipzig over in the Russian section, and they both said as they went along the streets they didn't hear anybody talking. Everybody was quiet. When they came to the Western section everybody was talking and happy. Why was everybody quiet in the Eastern section? They didn't know whom to trust. They didn't know whom to believe in. And I've been told by the Germans that that was the thing that was happening during the Nazi time. Don't trust your son. He might be a Nazi and report you if you said anything against Hitler. Be quiet. Keep your ideas to yourself. So naturally during those times there grew up in the hearts of the German people distrust of one another.

Then came the war. The buildings were bombed. Twenty-two million people were killed. There were more casualties in Germany than in any other nation in the world. You may say that the two atom bombs in Japan were terrible, but they very likely saved the lives of millions of people, because the war was stopped by them. Japan didn't have to go on fighting as Germany did. Every city in Germany with more than one hundred thousand population, with the exception of Heidelberg, was bombed and 80 per cent destroyed. In Frankfurt, a city of 500,000, 120,000 people were killed. You can imagine what followed. If you lived, you had to fight for every bite of food you got to eat. The former ideals of the German home weakened. Homes were destroyed and boys and girls were left upon the street without parents to guide them. Add to this the fact that Hitler encouraged young men and women to have babies without being wed, and thus you can see that ideals and morality were greatly weakened.

After the war came the peace, but the peace was just about as bad as the war itself. Because during the war, as the German army was destroyed, their supplies were turned back to the civilian population, so that during that time there was perhaps not as much hunger as when those supplies were exhausted. Until July 1948 they used the old German

Reichmark, which was no good. Everybody had money but no one wanted it. You had to have something to trade if you got anything to eat besides bread.

A story that a German teacher told me will illustrate the situation. She said that there was a family in Frankfurt that got very hungry for fat, that the wife said to the husband: "I happened to think of it. We have a bedspread here that was handed down to us from our grandparents and it is made with good wool, with a star design. It's too big for the bed anyway, so do you think it will be all right if we took two of those stars off the back side and I would knit a pair of socks and you could trade them to the farmer for some butter?" The husband thought it was a good idea, so she knitted the socks from the wool stars, and he traded them for a pound of butter. The farmer was glad to get the socks, because you couldn't buy them for money in town.

When the family got the butter they devoured about half of it, and then they began to ration it to themselves. Finally, it was all gone, but they had precious memories of the time when they could have butter on their bread. Pretty soon the wife said to the husband: "Don't you think I should knit another pair of socks from those stars?" He said it was right and she did. So this process continued until finally there was only one star left in the middle of the bed.

The wife said to the husband, "You'd better let me knit up that other star so we can get butter from the farmer." The husband said, "I can't do that. The farmer won't give us butter for just one sock; he has two feet." But she finally persuaded him, and she knitted the sock and he took it to the farmer, who said that he'd be glad to trade a pound of butter for one sock. The husband got to thinking about this and he said: "See here, you have been cheating me all this time? For months I've been giving you two socks for a pound of butter, and today you are glad to give me a pound of butter for only one sock." "No," the farmer explained. "I haven't cheated you. You see, my wife has been taking these socks, unraveling them, and knitting a bedspread. She's using a star design, and she needs just one more sock to finish the

bedspread. That's why I was glad to give you a pound of butter for just one sock."

Well, the story goes that later this family was able to buy back their bedspread. But it just illustrates how hard it was to get food during those days.

When we came to Germany and found these conditions we tried to help the people. We told you brethren about it here in America, and you started sending food and clothing.

Since that time we have distributed in Germany over \$300,000 worth of food and clothing to more than 10,000 different families.

Jesus said, "If your enemy hungers, feed him." We went to Germany to preach the gospel of Christ. We went there to tell them about the love of Jesus, but we found out that we had to show them as well as tell them about it. Just to illustrate this, I will tell this story. When we got there we heard about some boys out at an old bombed-out airport who hadn't anything to eat. Brother Palmer and I went out there and found these boys. When we saw the condition they were in we went back to the city and bought some food, some pork and beans, and brought it out there to them. We didn't have a can opener, or a spoon or knife. We opened the cans with a screwdriver, and the boys took time about eating from the can with that screwdriver. When they had finished they told us about a boy upstairs who they thought was near death. We went up there and found that he had meningitis. We took him out and put him in a hospital, and daily we furnished him medicine and food. When he got well he asked us, "Why did you save my life?" We said, "Because we love you." "You love me?" "Yes, we love you." "But I've been a Nazi soldier. I've tried to kill Americans like you." "We know, but that doesn't make any difference. We are New Testament Christians." "Ah, yes, Christians. I've heard of that before." We answered, "But you see, we are not the kind of Christians you know about. We are Christians who follow Christ. Jesus taught, if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and that is why we are feeding you." Well, he understood us then. He wanted to know more about Christ. He was our first convert in

Germany. His name is Helmut Prochnow.

While Helmut was sick in the hospital he made a friend by the name of Karl Heinz Goebel. When he came back from the hospital he brought his friend with him to our home. This boy, Karl Heinz had a brother who came to visit him. Their parents had both been killed. His brother, Dieter Goebel was with us one day when we were driving our old jeep. It needed some oil and we asked him if he would change the oil for us. He did so, but as he was changing it, looking at the oil pouring from the can down into the jeep, he said, "I'd like to drink some of that oil." "Drink it! we said, Why?" "Because it's been so long since my body has had any grease in it, it needs it worse than this jeep does." You might be interested to know that that boy is in this audience. I'd like for him to come to the platform now. He is a boy who was trained by Hitler but who has now been shown what it is to be a Christian. Dieter, will you speak now?

"Today is a great day for me. Not only because I can be here in the midst of you and listen to all these wonderful messages, but also because today I have seen Brother Gatewood again. The last time I saw him was nearly a year ago, when I left Germany to come over here and to prepare myself to preach the gospel. I believe I do not say too much, when I call Brother Gatewood my father. He is not my physical father, but he is my father in the gospel. And I do not know what kind of father is more important. But of course, I'm just as anxious as you are to hear what Bro. Gatewood has to tell more about Germany and the work that has been done, and what people do there right now. I ask him to go ahead with his report."

Thank you. Dieter is attending David Lipscomb College where he is preparing to preach the gospel and go back to Germany.

While we had this boys' home Bob and Mary Helsten moved out with my wife and me, and there we lived together and labored with those boys, trying to change their destiny. We are glad to know that four of the fifteen boys in that home are planning to preach the gospel. Perhaps some of you



saw Helmut while he was in America. He is back in Munich now, preaching. I told you a few minutes ago that there were 30 American evangelists and teachers in Germany. But in addition to that there are three young men who are giving full time to preaching. Already we have developed native preachers. They are: Dieter Alten, Brother Fred Casmire, and Brother Helmut Prochnow. Then there are Brother Miller, down in Munich, and Brother Steineger over in Frankfurt, both giving full time to the work.

I want to give you some information now about some of the co-laborers in Germany, then I will tell you how we work. Sometimes when I begin a report people go away saying, "Isn't Brother Gatewood doing a great work in Germany?" But the work in Germany is not done by Brother Gatewood. I am just a small part of it. It is being done by numbers of other workers. Who are they? I will name them.

Brother and Sister Roy V. Palmer, working under the Culbertson Heights church in Oklahoma City; Brother and Sister Weldon Bennett, under the Jackson Ave. church in Memphis; Brother and Sister Loyd Collier, alumni of Harding, under the 12th and Drexel church in Oklahoma City.

(Everybody in Germany loves Loyd and Sarah, and you won't find anybody more willing to work than they are. Loyd had one of the hardest jobs this last summer. He didn't do any preaching during the tent meetings that were held, but he had the responsibility of going out and erecting those tents, seeing that literature was printed, setting up the chairs, managing all those things. Brother and Sister Collier work very hard. They have had two children since going to Germany.)

Then there are Brother and Sister Bob Helsten. Bob and Mary Belle are here in the audience tonight. They went to Hanav, a little city of about 25,000 people and started the church there. There are now about 60 members in Hanav. Bob and Mary Bell came back to the states because of Bob's mother who died last month. They will be going back to Germany about the first of December. Brother Helsten teaches in our school.

Others working in Germany are Brother and Sister Jack Nadeau, now in Munich, working under the direction of the Central church in Denison, Texas; Brother and Sister J. C. Moore. Brother Moore was business manager of David Lipscomb College. We knew we'd be putting up some new buildings over in Germany, spending money that you brethren would be contributing, and we needed a man to manage our business affairs. Brother Moore is bonded and is responsible for caring for all these things while the rest of us are preaching. In Germany there are a thousand and one things you have to get a permit for. Brother Moore takes care of that.

Brother and Sister Russell Artist are supported by the Sears and Summitt church in Dallas, Texas, and the church in Gladewater, Texas. Brother Artist had been a skeptic, an infidel. He has his doctor's degree in science. He is now preaching for the church in Frankfurt, and he is also teaching in the school.

Brother Delmar Bunn was the first one to go to Europe. In 1946 he went to Switzerland. He is supported by the Charlotte Ave. church in Nashville. He speaks German like a native. Brother and Sister Keith Coleman are also in Germany. Now that may sound strange to you that I say Brother and *Sister* Keith Coleman. As you know, when Keith came to Germany he was a confirmed bachelor. He didn't have time for girls, much less for a wife. He didn't have time to even look at a girl. But one day he did look, and it was just too bad. Because he fell in love with one of the finest Christian girls in our congregation, Giesela Eber, and in just a short time they were married. Keith did a pretty good job when he got married. He not only got a wife—she has her doctor's degree, she can speak German, English and French, she can take dictation in German and English—he got a stenographer, a private tutor, and a translator. And she doesn't get homesick and want to come home. Keith did all right.

Brother Herman Zeigart is working under the church in Tracy City, Tenn.; Brother and Sister Dick Smith work

under the Grove Ave. church in San Antonio, Texas; Kathryn Patton is supported by the Sunset church in Dallas.

You may ask what a girl can do over there. Well, if you get a letter in English, it is very likely written by Kathryn. Sister Dorothy Baker was one of our stenographers in Frankfurt, but she married Max Watson and they are now living in Munich. These women not only type letters, they do personal work, and Kathryn teaches two ladies' Bible classes. Irene Johnson teaches the Sunday School teachers who are teaching our children. Sister Elizabeth Burton, who is also here tonight, was in Germany for a while. She and Sister Helen Baker are registered nurses, and they do a lot of good. The German people, poor as they are and undernourished, have a lot of sickness. We go into homes and find the people ill and we call Elizabeth and Helen. They go there and take care of these people, give them medicine, food, and vitamins, and before long they are restored to health. I suppose there are 15 or 20 people in our congregation who would not be alive today if Sister Baker and Sister Burton had not helped them. Sister Marguerite Dunn is also over in Germany. Brother and Sister Bob Hare also live in Munich. And those are the ones who are helping us preach the gospel of Christ.

I said we went to Germany to teach, but for a while we had to give much of our time and attention to benevolent work. We never intended to do that over a long period of time. Last summer we got to wondering if we shouldn't close it entirely. We thought that people might be coming to hear us preach just because we were giving food and clothing. So we stopped giving food and clothing during the summer, but they continued to come and be interested. We found a number of different reasons why they are interested. One reason is that we preach the Bible. When they go to their own churches they hear politics. I told you that during the war they didn't trust anyone. You find a lot of that distrust among the German people today. They don't trust one another; they don't trust their leaders; they hate each other. They aren't naturally that way, but war and hunger have made them that way. There was Mrs. Schmidt Mrs.

Schmidt's heart is broken. During the war her home was bombed, her husband killed, her son died as a soldier. She wants to tell her troubles to her neighbor, Mrs. Brown, but her neighbor doesn't want to listen. Why? Her husband was also killed; her home was also bombed, and she lost three children in the war. She has troubles of her own.

When we got to Germany we were curious to know what made these people think and act as they did. We asked them, and they told us their stories. More than one time have I had someone to tell me his story, then break down and cry and say, "Oh, thank you for listening. That's the first time I've been able to tell it." These people found out that we loved them and were willing to show some sympathy.

As we preach to them, I've heard them say, "Your sermons are logical. We can see that you preach the New Testament, but there is something worth more than that. It is the tone of your voice when you preach. Your preach with love." Sermons of denunciation are not very well appreciated in Germany. They have been denounced and condemned for practically everything, by their own people and by the whole world, and they are tired of it. We preach the gospel in love, and that is the reason they want to listen.

Our problem has never been how to get them to hear. Our problem has been, how can we take care of them when they do come. They are curious to know what Americans believe, and they are thankful to the American people for having delivered them from the Nazis. They are thankful for the Marshall Plan. I suppose that there has never been another thing like this in the history of the world—one nation defeating another, completely destroying it, then building it again. I'd like to say tonight that the Marshall Plan has done far more for Germany than all the weapons and re-armament programs that America is putting on. The Communists got only three per cent of the votes in the last election. The Communists are not popular in the Western zone. One can readily see how much America has helped Germany if he goes over into the Eastern zone and then comes back over to the Western zone.

The German people are thankful for our help; they are thankful they have been delivered from the Nazis; they want to know what Americans believe. It is somewhat of a curiosity to hear somebody speak German with a Texas or Arkansas accent. I remember when I stammered and stuttered through my first sermon in German. Brother Palmer and I had studied German before we went there, but you don't really learn German until you live among the people. We preached in English to our first audience of 22 people. The next one was 50, and the audience kept growing. Finally, there were 100 or more and they said, "Can't you say something in German?" We decided to try. We wrote our sermons out in English, had them translated into German and then read them. My first sermon in German was the biggest day's work I ever did. I stammered through it and I was sure I had failed, but when I finished a German lady who spoke English said to me: "I surely did appreciate that sermon. I got a lot out of it." "You did! I didn't." "Yes," she said, "you see, I had to listen so hard to understand anything you said, that I just got a lot out of it." We have continued to read our sermons in German, and the people have continued to come and listen to us. Brother Helsten can preach without reading his sermons. Brother Palmer and Brother Bunn are throwing their manuscripts away. When we can all throw these things away we can preach much better.

One German preacher who attended our tent meeting this last summer said, "You know, it's funny to me, the way people come out to hear you Americans preach. I preach for a church that has a membership of 10,000 people, and I really feel lucky if I can get 30 or 40 of them out to hear me. I've always wanted my son to be a preacher, but I don't want him to be one like I am. I wonder if you could take him and make a preacher out of him?" Brother Palmer told him we'd do our best, and that boy is in our school this year. We are training him to preach the gospel of Christ, and I believe that next year we will be training his daddy.

Brethren, we have found a field that is ripe unto harvest. If you were to go to our offices and look, you would see letter

after letter from different cities in Germany asking us to send them missionaries. They come from Berlin, from Hamburg, from Cologne, from Hanover, from everywhere. But we can't go to all these places. We don't have enough workers to go. We believe that the best way is to concentrate within one community until we have built up strong congregations before we move to another place. We can't go yet.

We have started printing the gospel. We send out our little paper, *New Testament Christianity*, to 10,000 names each month. We also have a correspondence Bible school. Thus we are trying to contact more people. On October 17, we had an offer from Radio Luxembourg, and we can now preach the gospel by radio. It is our first opportunity to preach by radio. This station is the strongest station in Europe, and the only one you can buy time on. We are anxious to take advantage of that because in preaching by radio we can go into many homes, and we can do it for about what it would take to support two additional workers. Some of your home congregations might like to send us \$50 or \$100 a month to help on the radio. We believe we can do something in spreading the gospel in Germany in this way that we haven't been able to do before. We have the men who can speak the language. Brother Palmer has been training a group of singers, and they can sing the gospel of Christ and do a good job of it. We'd like to take advantage of the opportunity to preach the gospel by radio.

Someone may be thinking, why don't you go more into detail? You say you are concentrating within a certain community. Have you developed congregations that can carry on their own responsibility? I told you we have established ten congregations. Out of those ten congregations we have three who, if they had their own buildings, could take care of their running expenses. The men in the different congregations have regular business meetings, take care of their money and make their own decisions. Usually the preachers who preach for the congregation meet with them in the business meetings.

Let me tell you about the Teagarten church, which I

know most about. They have 350 members. The men were holding their business meeting and having a hard time getting all the business transacted. One would want this, another that, and they just weren't getting anywhere. Now this will show you the wisdom of the German mind. To facilitate the handling of business matters they chose three men who would meet before the regular business meeting and plan the matters to be discussed. Any matter to be dealt with in the meeting was presented to these three, and they talked it over and discussed possible solutions. Now the German brethren are able to conduct more business in an hour than American brethren can in a half day.

In developing these congregations, we teach classes for elders and deacons, and we are trying to develop these leaders as soon as we can. They are still novices; they have not been appointed yet. We are trying to develop preachers, too. We have three studying in America, and we are sending two more over. In Frankfurt we have our own school where we teach the Bible and train young men to teach and preach the gospel. Brother Palmer and Brother Bunn started the school about two years ago, and when it had been in operation about a year we combined it with the boys' home. Last Sept. 25, when the school was opened, 27 young men and women registered. There was one from France, one from Spain, one from Holland, one from Belgium, one from Switzerland, three from the Eastern zone of Germany, and the rest from the Western zone. Some of these young men have been studying with us for two years. In another year we hope to have them developed to where they can go and preach for these congregations we have established.

We are hoping that some American students will come over and study in our school. The school, after the first of the year, will be in a new building just across the street from the University of Frankfurt. American students can study Bible with us and secular subjects in the University. When you have studied the Bible with us for three years and finished the graduate course, you will have the equivalent of a master's degree in religion. And we believe that if you study

with us for a couple of years you will want to remain and work with us.

Parents can support their children in a school there just as inexpensively as they can support them in America. It would be a great education for Americans to be there and have the privilege of associating with these other students.

During the summer last year we weren't able to teach enough young people in our classes, so we bought a tent. We moved that tent from one city to another, and the people came. We held eight tent meetings, preaching to as many as 800 people per night. Many times we had twice as many people present to hear us as there were members of the church.

As we went out to do personal work we would take these young men we are training to preach with us. We would take turn about with the young men talking to the people. It is a joy to do personal work in Germany. Instead of acting as though you are an intruder, they treat you as a king. These young men are a great help. They correct us in our German as we try to help them teach the word of God. We have some young men who are able to teach the gospel as faithfully and as truly as you would teach it. Dieter Alten, who was in David Lipscomb College last year, is one of these. He is an outstanding speaker and we believe that he will mean to the restoration movement in Germany what Luther meant to the reformation movement.

Brethren, our work is on the move. You say, if there are that many opportunities in Germany, what are you doing here. I'm here because we need more money. We need \$200,000. That's a lot of money, but that is what we need. What are we going to do with it? Build church buildings—seven of them. We can build seven church buildings for \$200,000. That's not bad, prices being what they are. But we have one advantage. Labor is cheap, so we can build somewhat cheaper than you can here in America.

Why do we need buildings? Well, so far we have been teaching and preaching in rented buildings and schools. Some of these places are closing their doors to us. While we



had only small groups they allowed us to use their buildings, but now they think we ought to get out on our own.

The brethren in Germany have asked me to come back to raise this money. In Kansas City the other day I was apologizing for that amount—\$200,000. But one brother said to me, "Brother Gatewood, you ought not apologize for that. You ought to ask for \$2,000,000." He went on to explain that the Community Chest in Kansas City is raising \$2,000,000. There are more members of the church in America than there are citizens in Kansas City, so it should be possible to raise \$2,000,000. That's not a bad idea, and if someone wants to give us \$2,000,000 instead of \$200,000, we can put it to work over there.

We are hoping the American brethren will help us. I have been speaking for three weeks now, and brethren have contributed about \$60,000. I hope to stay six months to get the rest of the money. I believe it can be done. The money won't be given in large gifts. So far we've had only two large gifts—\$5,000 and \$14,000. It will be financed by donors of \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 gifts.

When Brother Palmer and I arrived in Frankfurt in 1947 there wasn't a person to greet us at the station. But when our train pulled out of the station a few days ago about 200 people told us goodbye. They were not only friends; they were brethren. I thought as I looked out on them, that if they had met us five years before they would have tried to kill us. But now they love us and would die for us.

When we left there the brethren said they would pray for us. Brethren, why have these people changed? The gospel of Christ has done it. And now we need buildings to continue to reap the harvest that is ripe. We hope we can get them.

# Chapter 9

## THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT ON THE WEST COAST

*by*

*James H. Sewell*

As I talk on the subject of the restoration movement on the Pacific Coast, I wonder first just how much work out there could properly be called "the restoration movement." Also, I want it thoroughly understood that I am no authority on the subject. Of course, we don't have any other authorities either, so I presume I can do as well as the average in discussing the question.

I've been on the West Coast a long time. I first went to California with my father who was holding some meetings there in 1905, and although quite a small child at that time, I knew that the work was pretty small, too. I am going to make one sincere apology, now. This analysis of the work on the West Coast is going to have to be made from my worm's-eye view of the situation. So if I talk quite a bit about myself, it will be because I know of no other way to give you the picture of the past work of the restoration movement, and the present situation, and perhaps some thoughts and hopes about the future.

When I said that I wondered how much of a restoration movement we had on the Pacific Coast, I didn't mean to decry the good work that is being done and the greater work we are trying sincerely to do. But sometimes we do wonder why we can't grow a little faster, why we can't move in a more important way for the Lord, thus justifying the term, "restoration movement."

In 1905 when my father went to California to hold some meetings and took me along with him, there were, I think,

six congregations in the entire state. Most of them were small and struggling, and the work could not be compared with what we are doing today, even in the way we conducted the worship. There was a little congregation at Santa Ana, the Broadway and Walnut congregation of which I am now a member. It was started that year. Brother G. W. Riggs at that time was just a young preacher, fresh out of Nashville Bible School. At the urging of a Brother Sanders of Los Angeles he had come to southern California and had taken up the work there. Brother Sanders also helped support Brother Riggs in his evangelistic work through the state. In the course of his labors for the Lord, Brother Riggs had gone to Santa Ana, located a few brethren there, organized them for a meeting, and finally established a congregation. They had an all-day meeting on the fourth Sunday in June, 1905. Brethren came from Los Angeles, and from as far away as 100 miles or even farther. Of course, that was in the day of the horse and buggy, so many of them began to arrive several days before Lord's day, and they were taken care of by the Santa Ana brethren. There was a large crowd there on that fourth Sunday in June. They had a grand all-day meeting, with Brother Riggs preaching, and that day a precedent was established. There has been an all-day meeting at Broadway and Walnut, Santa Ana, on the fourth Sunday in June ever since, and Brother Riggs has spoken 39 times at these meetings. Today he is blind and unable to speak in public, but we were thrilled the fourth Lord's day of last June when his son, Sanders Riggs, came wheeling him into the auditorium in his wheel chair.

We moved to California permanently in 1910, and there had been very little change in the church in those intervening years. Everything seemed just about the same. However, we became cognizant of a movement that for a time was a rather important one, namely the so-called Apostolic movement in the church. They had congregations in Riverside, Long Beach and Los Angeles, as well as having some very able preachers. We had a difficult time breaking down the barrier that was being raised by the Apostolic Review doctrines. But over a

period of years it was broken down, and that was to many of us one of the greatest victories ever achieved in the restoration movement in California. Today some of our most loyal brethren and most successful churches are those who long ago tried to drive a wedge of division and disfellowship into the work.

Now I would like to return to some of the early days and give you another picture of how things were. I remember the little congregation at Madera in 1910. They conducted their meetings on what was called the "social meeting" plan which was in general practice on the coast at that time. There is something to be said for the "social meeting" idea. This meeting was conducted so that any brother who had something to say during the course of the service could get up and say it. One thing to be said for that system is that gradually every member in the church learns to get up on his feet and speak. Oh, there are a few who never do, but they are few and far between.

The great weakness of that system was the lack of organization. Whenever someone would get up and start a subject, instead of following through on that and giving the congregation a well-rounded discussion of some good Bible subject, the next speaker often considered the matter closed and the next person would speak on another subject. Usually there was no planning and very little preparation. A meeting would go something like this. Some brother would get up, clear his throat and say, "Well, brethren, I think I'll talk to you from the second book of Peter, no I guess I'll talk on the first chapter of Luke. Well, it says this, brethren. . . ." By the time he got through, of course, you had a fair idea of what he had read and some of the comments were helpful. One of the benefits of the system was that a great deal of scripture was read and that's an improvement over some of our modern day preaching.

I do say a lot of good came from it. I know there are many church leaders today who got their first opportunity to appear in public on that basis. And I know that in some very large, fine congregations today there are men who could

become great church leaders, men who could be preachers, except for the fact that the congregation has a regular preacher who preaches all the time, and he delivers such wonderful sermons that they just never get a chance. I am not inveighing against preachers. I preach for the Broadway and Walnut church myself, and I know that preaching is necessary if we are going to build churches and save souls. Yet I wanted to say these things about that other system, for many people seem to have forgotten.

We ought not think that a church cannot carry on its work if it happens to find itself temporarily without a preacher. As long as it has a few elders and as long as it has good Bible teachers that know the Bible, and who can get up and speak intelligently, that church should be able to carry on its work. I also believe that when a church does have a fine preacher, they should not keep him preaching to that congregation all the time. Let the elders carry on the work for a little while and send that preacher out into some place where the church needs to be more firmly established. That's the way it was done in the early days on the Pacific Coast. We had some good preachers out there, but no church that I know of had a located minister.

In 1915 we moved to Berkeley, which is the home of the University of California. In Berkeley I again met Brother William Green, whom I had met previously in Santa Rosa. He is now a professor at the University of California and an elder in the Berkeley church. Also it was there that I first met Brother Ralph Chase, who was later an elder in the church at Sacramento and is now at Arcadia. Also there I met Brother LeMoine Williams and Brother A. J. Dumm. We met with a little group in San Francisco, which was the only congregation around the San Francisco Bay area at that time.

At that time each one of the men I have mentioned here was under the age of 21. In spite of that fact, we had all had considerable opportunity to take leading roles in the work. They found out that I could lead the singing and they started me doing that. We began to organize the work, with three or four of us making talks. We tried to improve on the system,

by getting together, selecting a subject, assigning a topic to each one. Between us we managed to bring a complete sermon each Lord's day.

I mentioned Brother Dumm. I want to tell a pointed story of our association with him. I think there's a lesson in it that some of the brethren could use. The little congregation in San Francisco was then meeting in the B'nai B'rith Hall. After we'd been meeting there a while, Brother Dumm and his wife and child began to attend services. He was working for the Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco and was living in Berkeley. Now those who lived in Berkeley had a rather "long haul" to go to church in San Francisco. There was a 20-minute train ride, 20 minutes on the ferry boat and 40 minutes by street car. So we knew that if a fellow went to all that trouble to get to church he must have some zeal. He came Sunday after Sunday, and finally we became curious as to why he didn't place his membership with us. Brethren Green, Chase, Williams and I talked it over and I was commissioned to talk to him about it, so I went and asked him why. He told me that he came from Indiana and had been reared under the influence of the Apostolic Review and said he didn't know whether he should come in with us or not. He said they would like to join us and that he would never cause any trouble or try to make any converts to his anti-college ideas, but he was afraid we would object to his privately held ideas. He had one request, which he said his conscience demanded. That was that he have an understanding with the brethren that we would not send any collections out of the church treasury to any Christian college. That was an easy request to grant. None of us wanted to send such contributions anyway, and our collections were so poor we weren't sending contributions to anybody. I assured him we would have no difficulty there, but as to the matter of his Apostolic Review beliefs, I would talk to the other brethren. I thought I knew their hearts in the matter. I was sure they would say that as long as these things were his private opinion they would want him to work with us. I took the matter up with them and they all agreed. Brother Dumm

joined with us and we never had a serious difference of any kind. At the time of his death he was the business manager of George Pepperdine College and we never discussed the college issue again.

I believe we can learn from experiences like these. We are now coming into a day in which some people in the church are beginning to inquire into your secret thoughts, and if they don't coincide in every respect with theirs, they won't have any fellowship with you. Out in the early days in California if we had made demands of that kind we just wouldn't have had any fellowship with anybody.

After we had lived in California awhile we persuaded Brother T. B. Larimore to come out there. His second wife, Miss Emma Page, was my mother's sister. Brother Larimore began to do our regular preaching in San Francisco, and this continued for a number of years. I'm sure the finest example in preaching the gospel I could have ever received, I got from T. B. Larimore. You couldn't listen to him and fail to absorb some of his wonderful kindly spirit. And I learned then something a lot of preachers apparently don't know today. I learned what "hard preaching" is. Brother Larimore was about the hardest preacher that I ever heard. I mean by that word "hard," effective. The sword of the spirit really pierced what it went after when he was wielding it. And yet I never heard him at any time say anything in a gospel sermon or in any private interview that was designed to wound the feelings of a single soul. Now we have some so-called "hard preachers" today, and their idea of hardness is to say things just as mean and as hard as they know how to say it. That is not "hard preaching." That is soft, rotten preaching, because it destroys the quality of the sword of the spirit and it has no piercing ability. And so I say I found out what "hard preaching" really is, when you think of it from the standpoint of the results achieved. I'd like for some young preachers to make note of that. If you want to be a hard preacher, if you want the word to act like a sledge-hammer upon the hearts of people to whom you preach, learn to preach with the spirit and power of T. B. Larimore, and that's

the spirit and power of love. He never preached to any audience that did not feel the warmth of his great loving heart. I could take up a lot of time giving you personal incidents about Brother Larimore, the great work that he did for the church in San Francisco, and later for the church in Berkeley, and all the Bay area, how he moved to Santa Ana in 1927 and the last few years of his life preached for the church at Fullerton.

Many people do not realize that Brother Larimore was a man with a tremendous sense of humor. One of my fondest remembrances is of him sitting with a group of people and telling some of the funny things that had happened in his long career. He would laugh and wipe the tears of laughter from his eyes with a white silk handkerchief. I believe there were few men in the brotherhood who knew of more funny things that happened in debates. I want to give you just one incident as a sample. Brother Larimore told this story about Brother Joe S. Warlick who was debating a Presbyterian preacher on the subject of infant baptism. It appears that the Presbyterian preacher decided that he'd have a demonstration during the course of the debate, and he got a lot of mothers to bring in their little children for him to sprinkle. Brother Warlick recognized that his opponent was making quite an impression on the audience as he performed the ceremony. He didn't know just what to do, as he could see that some of the people were being taken in by it. And then good fortune in the form of a little boy came his way. The little boy was along toward the end of the line of children waiting to be "baptized." He wiggled out of his mother's arms, ran down the aisle to the door, and just as he was scooting through the door, Brother Warlick raised half-way up in his seat and said, "Brother Brown, if you had a squirt gun you could get him, too!"

Brother Larimore passed away in 1929. He and his wife and my mother are buried in the same plot of ground, Fairhaven Cemetery, just out of Santa Ana, California.

The present condition of the work in California is both good and bad. We have been suffering from the effects of a



group of preachers who are loyal to a certain party line, and I think sometimes they are so loyal to the party that their loyalty to Christ is subordinated. Certainly their love for the brethren seems to be reduced. These men usually pride themselves on being hard preachers, and as stated before, in my opinion they are really the softest preachers in the brotherhood. I must tell you this. I was talking one day to one of the Los Angeles congregations. I mentioned Brother Larimore and told of a work that he had done a number of years ago, when he converted an entire Presbyterian Church. I made the statement that at no time during the entire conversion of the church, preacher, elders and members combined, did Brother Larimore ever say anything against the Presbyterian Church as such or against any individual in it. I further said I believe that that is the way to accomplish results, to preach the truth in love and show consideration for the personal feelings of those you are trying to teach. One of the preachers in the audience came to me later and said, "You know if I had to be that soft, I would just quit the pulpit entirely." Shortly after that this preacher went to hold a meeting at a certain place where he might have been able to convert a whole church, as Brother Larimore had done, but his "hard" preaching was so rotten and offensive that the brethren themselves closed the meeting after the second night. His viewpoint should have been amended—don't you think?

However, I feel that the brethren are slowly coming out of that attitude. They are gradually learning better. I am not looking into any crystal ball, and I claim no powers of prophecy, but I believe that within the next five years it is possible that the work on the Pacific Coast will be as great as that in any other section of the United States. But there is one comment I must make. If you know anybody that you don't want back here, keep him here and straighten him out before you send him to us. We have all the strange characters we can use. But if you have some fine preachers, young or old, who love the Lord and are really devoted to his cause, who love the brethren, who are neither modernists, "pinks," nor party men, who are willing to preach the unsearchable

riches of Christ powerfully but lovingly, who love and understand human beings, and who will not stand off and carp at every individual who tries to do something constructive— if you have any like that, send them out. We can use them.

# Chapter 10

## THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH IN PROPHECY

*by*

*James D. Bales*

To speak of the "New Testament Church in Prophecy" is to speak of the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1.18). "Church" and "kingdom" are simply two ways of speaking of the same body of people. When we say "church" we think of the body of Christ, of which he is the head. When we say "kingdom" we think of the kingdom of which he is king. In both cases we indicate his authority over his people.

This kingdom, or church, or relationship, between the Messiah and his people is something for which the Old Testament is preparation and which the New Testament presents.

The church was no more unexpected than was the cross which made the church possible. Christ died to take out the middle wall of partition in order to make of Jew and Gentile one new man, which is the body of Christ, the church (Ephesians 1:22,23; 2:10-20). *This result or consequence of the cross was no more unexpected than was the cross.* The church is the redemption-relationship through the blood of Jesus Christ. If the church was unexpected, redemption was unexpected. This cannot be since the cross was foreshadowed in the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament and clearly stated in prophecy (Isaiah 53). Thus Paul wrote of the "*gospel* of God, which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures" (Romans 1:1-2).

The prophets prophesied "*of the grace* that should come unto *you*: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when *it testified*

*beforehand the sufferings of Christ*, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but *unto us they* did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (I Peter 1:10-12).

Not only the grace which we have received, and as a result of which we became members of Christ's body, was prophesied, but also the glory which followed the suffering of Christ. What glory followed his suffering? The entering into his kingdom, for he ascended to God's right hand there to reign until all of his enemies are conquered. *To be in his glory involved being in his kingdom.* The two sons of Zebedee wanted to "sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, *in thy kingdom*" (Matthew 20:21). In Mark's account, it is written: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, *in thy glory*" (Mark 10:37). The prophets had foretold that Christ would suffer *and then* enter into his glory, or kingdom (Luke 24:25-27; 1 Peter 1:10-11).

These things had to take place before the church could be established: (1) The kingdom of heaven could not be established until the fourth empire (Daniel 2) had come into existence. The kingdom was to be established during the time of the fourth empire, the Roman, and thus the Roman empire had to come in existence before it could be established. (2) Christ's suffering had to take place first. "Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24: 25-27). The Spirit of Christ, or of God, in the prophets testified beforehand "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11). His glory could not have come before his suffering. Isaiah is one of the prophets which showed that his glory should come *after* his suffering and rejection. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put

him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand . . . . Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:10-12). Triumph came *after* he had poured out his soul unto death.

I say it with grief, but there are those, who have long studied the Bible, "fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25), when they maintain that John the Baptist and Jesus first offered to Israel a kingdom in which Christ would have ruled triumphantly on earth without being rejected. This could not be, for the cross had to come before the crown. Thus the nature of the kingdom which was offered in Matthew 3:2 took into consideration the fact that rejection and the cross came before the establishment of the kingdom. And the kingdom which takes this into consideration is the kingdom of God's dear Son which has been established (Colossians 1:13), and not some so-called Davidic millennial kingdom. Thus the kingdom offered in Matthew 3:2 was not the type which at least some of the premillennialists think that it was. Thus the kingdom prophesied by the prophets was not what they conceive it to be, since the prophesied kingdom is the subject of Matthew 3:2.

(3) The Old Covenant had to give way before the New Covenant church could be established (Hebrews 10:9). This had to be, since the New Covenant was not to be like the Old Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13).

(4) John the Baptist had to come, as the forerunner of Christ, before Christ could establish his kingdom (Malachi 4: 5-6; Matthew 11:14).

Thus we see that not only was the church prophesied, but that it was also prophesied that certain things had to come to pass before the church could be established.

Before we can understand some of the ways in which

the church was prophesied, we must first realize that the prophets prophesied in *different* ways. "God, who at sundry times and *in diverse manners* spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Hebrews 1:1). *It is impossible to interpret all prophecy alike since all prophecy was not uttered alike. It was spoken in different manners.* Thus all cannot be interpreted literally because all was not spoken literally. If all had been spoken literally, the prophets would have spoken in the same manner all the time; but they did not, they spoke in diverse manners.

What are some of the manners, or variety of ways, in which the prophets spoke? (1) They sometimes spoke literally. For examples see Deuteronomy 28; and some references in Isaiah 13:53. (2) They sometimes spoke in figures and in symbols (Jeremiah 13:10). (3) They sometimes spoke in types. The type was put when the antitype was meant. For example Elijah was put (Malachi 4:5), when John the Baptist—the antitype who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17)—was meant (Matthew 11:14).

One of the chief themes of prophecy was the Messiah and his kingdom. Since the prophets spoke in different manners *we should expect that prophecies of the Christ and His kingdom were sometimes uttered in different manners.* And such we find to be the case.

How shall we tell which way some particular prophecy speaks? Prophecy must not be so interpreted that it contradicts the New Testament application of the prophecy, or any other principles in the New Testament. Christ and his word constitute our final court of appeal in the interpretation of prophecy as well as in other matters.

(1) *The forerunner of the King was prophesied under the type Elijah.* John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come (Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:17; Matthew 11:14). Since the forerunner of Christ was prophesied under a type, should it be surprising if the King himself should be prophesied under a type, in some prophecies?

(2) *The King was prophesied under a type.* Sometimes the Messiah as king is prophesied as David's son and God's

son (Psalms 110:1; Isaiah 9:6-7), but sometimes Christ was prophesied under the type David (Ezekiel 37:24). The King ascended to his throne after his resurrection, and men were informed of his enthronement on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:30-36). There the promise of David's throne to Christ was mentioned, and the meaning and the fulfillment of the promise were stated. Someone may say that he is not now on David's throne, because he is not on David's old literal throne. But Christ has complete authority over Israel (Acts 2:36), and those who refused him were cut off (Acts 3:22-23; Romans 11:2-0). Furthermore, David was a type of Christ. *David the king, ruling on his throne, was a type of Christ* (Ezekiel 37:24). Thus when we find Christ we find the antitype of David, the type. And when we find Christ on his throne, we find what was meant by Christ on David's throne—since David the king, David on his throne, was a type of Christ and his rule. Of course, just as the type, David, is inferior to Christ, the antitype, just so Christ's throne is superior to David's throne. The antitype is superior to the type, thus we would expect that his throne would be greater than David's which typified it.

Christ also was prophesied as king without types being used (Acts 4:25-27; Psalms 110:1; Acts 2:34-35).

Since the forerunner and the king were sometimes prophesied under the types, should it be surprising if sometimes the kingdom itself was prophesied under the type.

(3) *The kingdom sometimes prophesied under the type.* Israel was evidently a type of the present kingdom of God. Paul said that the Gentiles, who had been aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers, were no longer strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Ephesians 2:12,19). To what had they been foreigners? The commonwealth or kingdom of Israel. Are they any longer foreigners? No, they are fellow citizens. Fellow citizens where? In the commonwealth of Israel, since to it they were once foreigners. But is it the old commonwealth of Israel? No, it is the new spiritual commonwealth of Israel. The Kingdom which was taken away from

the Jews was given to the nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (Matthew 21:43). But the kingdom which was taken away was the old commonwealth of literal Israel, and the kingdom which was given is a spiritual kingdom. Thus it must be that the old was a type of the new, and that is the sense in which the old was taken away from them and given to those who bring forth the proper fruits.

David on his throne ruling over Israel is a type of Christ's rule. (Ezekiel 37:24). But it is antitypical David and not literal David who rules. What right has one to say that it is literal, instead of antitypical, Israel over whom he reigns. Who has the right to make the king typical and the kingdom literal?

(4) *The conquests of the kingdom are prophesied sometimes under the type of the conquests of Israel over her enemies.* A comparison of Isaiah 11:10-11 and Romans 15:12 shows that we are now in the time mentioned in Isaiah 11. Romans 15:12 shows that the root of Jesse has arisen and is reigning over the Gentiles (15:12-16). In the same day (Isaiah 11:10-11) that this was to take place Israel was to be recovered a second time, and to be victorious. Even her ancient enemies are mentioned as being conquered. But this did not mean that literal Israel was to have a literal restoration to her literal land, and her literal enemies restored and conquered in a literal carnal war. For the things mentioned in Isaiah 11:10-16 were to take place in the very day in which we are now in, according to Isaiah 11:11-12; Romans 15:12. But it is not literally accomplished in Christ's present reign. Thus we must conclude that the conquests of literal Israel are here used as a prophecy, clothed in the language of types, of the victories of Christ's kingdom.

For example, Christ's being crowned king in spite of the raging of the nations, (Psalms 2) is fulfilled in Christ's ascension to his present throne (Acts 4:25-27). But no carnal war was involved on Christ's part, and furthermore, the holy hill of Zion on which he was placed is not the old literal Zion, but a spiritual Zion of which the old was evidently a type (Hebrews 12:22).



(5) *Its worship was sometimes prophesied under the type—the Levitical worship.* We know that the Old was typical of things under the New (Hebrews 9:9, 23-24; 10:1). We know that the animal sacrifices, and the Levitical system, will not be restored. They were until the time of reformation (Hebrews 9: 10), in which we now live. They foreshadowed the blood of Christ, and thus there is no need for them since Christ has died on the cross. Because his sacrifice takes away sins, there is "no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). Thus we know that the Levitical system will not be restored with the authority of God. It has served its purpose, so the shadow fled away when the reality came (Hebrews 10:1; 9:9). Thus we must interpret certain prophecies not as a future restoration of the Levitical system, but as types which foreshadowed the New Testament worship system. (Malachi 3:3-4; Ezekiel 40 and chapters thereafter. See especially Ezekiel 45:17; Isaiah 60; 66:20-23).

(6) The church was also predicted under the idea of a covenant, which would supplant the old covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-10:9).

(7) The rule of Christ was prophesied under the idea of the restoration of the tabernacle of David, as a result of which the Gentiles could seek the Lord. (Acts 15:14-17).

(8) *It was prophesied as an everlasting kingdom,* by Daniel in his interpretation of the king's dream. The kingdom of heaven was to be set up in the days of the fourth empire. The first empire was the Babylonian (Daniel 2:38); the second that of the Medes and the Persians (5:28); the third the Grecian (8:4-7,20-21). The fourth empire, which followed the Grecian, was the Roman. It was fourth in point of time, and even premillennialists realize that it is the fourth empire, although they say that it will be restored in the future and the kingdom of heaven then established. This is not so, since during the days when all know that the fourth empire existed, God set up a kingdom like the one Daniel described. It was small in its beginning; universal in its nature and scope; established in the days of the Roman empire; established without hands in that it was not done

by human power; established by the God of heaven; and it is everlasting. The kingdom which we have received is everlasting since it will not be shaken or moved out of its place as was the old covenant kingdom (Hebrews 12:28). Thus it cannot be taken out of the way for another kingdom to be established on earth, as some maintain when they maintain that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 has not been established. If it has not, the present kingdom (Colossians 1:13) will have to be moved so that the coming one can be established. But it will not be moved (Hebrews 12:28). The present reign of Christ continues until the judgment, and then he will turn over the kingdom to the Father and his reign as mediator will cease (Acts 2:30-36; I Corinthians 15:24-28).

My brethren, we can rejoice in that we are members of something which God long ago prophesied. Its existence is a testimony to, an evidence of, the divine origin of the Bible. And we can be confident that although it may have its periods of difficulty, yet that it will not be destroyed either by the fury of man or by the onslaught of apostasy.

## Chapter 11

### THE JERUSALEM CHURCH, A MODEL FOR ALL AGES

*by*

*George S. Benson*

By Jerusalem church we mean that New Testament church which had its beginning at Jerusalem, and which the apostles carried to many other points. The word "church" means a called-out people. Let us first have a look at the fundamentals in this model church that began at Jerusalem.

It was bought with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was composed of "called-out" people, a people called out for the definite purpose of evangelizing the whole world. They were to begin at Jerusalem, at home (that's the place where every individual and every congregation should begin), then they were to reach out into Judea, the home state, then into Samaria, the neighboring state, and then into all the world. Not only were they to evangelize all these regions, but they were to teach the evangelized all things that Jesus had commanded. A big charge, a great mission, wasn't it?

Then, having a mission, it was necessary to have an organization. How else could they accomplish such a task? The organization was built on a basis of local congregational responsibility. Sometimes we hear it said, "congregational independence." I don't like that word "independence" very well, because some of the congregations get so independent they think they are just about independent of the Lord, and they don't do much for the Lord. So I'd rather use the word "responsibility." They weren't under a congregation somewhere else. Each had its own responsibility before God. So each of the local congregations, in order to shoulder its

responsibility, had an organization. Leading that organization were elders, or bishops, or pastors. (All three terms refer to the same men.) Under those elders and assisting them were deacons, helpers, servants; and finally there was the membership. That made up the local congregation.

Since the congregation has members, there must be terms of membership or admission. In the early days of the restoration it was Walter Scott who analyzed and set forth in definite order those scriptural terms of admission into the kingdom. It seemed that during the Dark Ages people had become terribly confused about how to become Christians. Walter Scott attempted to clarify that important issue and did a wonderful job. The first requirement is faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Then repentance, the turning away from sin with all the strength of one's being, is required. Then to become a Christian one must confess Christ before men. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Then the believer is to be baptized in water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Those were the steps that Walter Scott outlined as the terms of admission to the kingdom. He correctly outlined them. Three blessings then belonged to the new Christian: remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. Those were the same terms of admission and the same blessings that were promised in that early church under inspired guidance.

If we are working today to maintain that New Testament pattern, we must first understand what the pattern is. Every denomination in the land today would be happy to sit and listen to a message on the *importance of maintaining* that New Testament pattern; many would not welcome a vivid description of the pattern itself.

For members of the divine family specific worship was ordained. Each individual Christian is a branch, and must abide in the Vine (Christ), if he is to bear fruit. So worship, through which man would maintain contact with God, was necessary. This worship was to consist of prayers (Christians

are taught to pray without ceasing), singing ("speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;" Ephesians 5:19), teaching, exhorting and admonishing. For worship on the Lord's day two other items were ordained. The Christians were taught to break bread, commemorating the Lord's death, and reminding each individual of the price with which he had been bought. And they were taught to give of their means, laying by in store for the work to be done. This work included care of the widows and fatherless and the evangelizing of the whole world. This was the worship ordained in the New Testament church.

Zeal was a characteristic of the Bible church. Has it ever occurred to you that as Christians we are the sole stewards of the one message of life in all the world? The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth; but we are the sole stewards. So, realizing that they were the sole stewards of this message of life, that early church was a zealous church. Some of them were so zealous that they sold their property and brought all the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. Those early Christians were so zealous that when persecution arose at Jerusalem, and they were scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word. You know they might have gone grumbling and complaining, forgetting that they were servants of the living God. But instead they went everywhere preaching the word. I take it that means they didn't worry very much about the necessities of life. Preaching the gospel was first. And because of their great zeal Paul could say, during his generation, that every nation had heard the gospel. Now wasn't that a demonstration of zeal? I don't know where all of the apostles went. Tradition would tell us that some of them went far into the Orient, India, and China. Certainly enough there are on stones that have been unearthed in China records of the preaching of the gospel in an early age. These brethren not only had a zeal for preaching the message, but they thanked God for being counted worthy to suffer persecution. They counted themselves debtors. You remember Paul

said, "I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome" (Romans 1:14-15). He had preached the gospel in four provinces, and had in ten or twelve years so planted churches there, and so trained leadership that he was ready to go to other new territory. I wonder today how conscious we are that we are debtors. We have received salvation freely, but in receiving it we have become debtors and we are not our own.

Another characteristic of the Bible church was love for one another. The New Testament church was taught to love one another, even preferring one another before themselves. You know that love covers a multitude of sins. Where there is no love, we like to point out either the shortcomings, or the imagined shortcomings of other people. But where there is love, we realize our own shortcomings and that no one is perfect. Remember Jesus' teaching, "if thy brethren sin against thee, go to him alone," not to everybody in the community, but to him alone. That is a demonstration of love. Show him his fault, and if he hears you, you have saved a brother. Paul said: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you" (I Thessalonians 3:12), and Jesus taught, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). So love was made a characteristic of the church. That is why they could sell their houses and bring the money in and lay it at the apostles' feet to feed those in their midst from other countries who needed to be kept there and schooled in the principles of the gospel until they could carry it back to their own people.

Then, being all of God and having a world-wide mission, they were a united people, speaking the same things, glorifying God with one mouth, without division or faction. Today people are so conscious of the need for unity and some of the best known denominational preachers are devoting much time to that theme, but I am afraid the religious world

will never reach that goal through the methods they advocate. We can only arrive at the truth by learning from Jesus the Master Teacher and re-establishing the New Testament pattern. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., has declared that he has no more money to give in a way that would increase denominationalism. So, many people are recognizing the importance of unity, but seem at a loss to find the basis on which they can unite.

We have the pattern of the New Testament church, with its congregational love and unity. A great pattern! The pattern is worth restoring, worth holding to. We've done a pretty good job restoring the formal side—we have the organization, the worship, the name. We've done a fair job of restoring the teaching. Those things were the easier. But the zeal and love we have never yet restored; and we have a long, long way to go. If we were able to restore the love, then the zeal would be relatively easy to restore, and during our own generation we could preach Christ to the whole world. We have the means needed. We have methods of travel far exceeding what the apostles had. Our world is bigger than theirs, but our means are far greater. Within our grasp is the evangelizing of the world, the fulfilling of our mission, if we can really succeed in restoring the zeal and restoring the love which characterized that early church.

I'd like to see us working a little harder to restore that zeal and love that we might carry it along with that formal pattern that we have restored, that we might reach the world with this message, and that men who are striving to be Christians might be able to stand together in one solid phalanx. A lost world is crying out for Christ, and we are challenged to work harder to restore this New Testament pattern that was lost in the Dark Ages.

Why is the Jerusalem pattern a model for all ages? Why shall we not alter the pattern as we pass along through the ages, as conditions change? Here are the reasons. The church<sup>^</sup> is a divine institution. Man did not organize the church, nor provide the redeeming blood, nor determine the terms of admission, or the worship. "It is not in man that walketh to

direct his steps." It is the Lord's church, an authoritative religion, and man isn't free to alter a single principle or practice ordained by God in that church. That is the pattern to be carried as our model to the end of the world, till the Lord comes back again. We are just his servants, working in his church, with no authority to change anything within it. Departures are dangerous. God's ways are as high above man's ways as the heavens are above the earth. We should recognize every departure as a dangerous step, and these departures are deceptive. We don't realize that we're starting something. We don't know where they shall lead. They are gradual, sometimes imperceptible, and yet important. The development of the Roman Catholic Church went through more than 300 years. The tremendous departures that took place in those years are easily detected as we look back now, but they began as harmless little things, one change leading to another, until the New Testament pattern is not at all recognizable in what became Romanism.

Luther and Calvin were leaders in the reformation movement. They tried to get back to the New Testament pattern, but denominationalism developed, with apparently no protest. It was about 1800 A.D., that the Campbells and others began to recognize the disadvantages of denominationalism and began to plead for unity. Luther's followers were really seeking a means of maintaining unity when they wrote a creed and took a name. The same happened with Calvin's followers. What men thought would bring unity forever in the end brought division. It was 300 years after this reformation before men began to realize where denominationalism had led them.

We ourselves today are inclined to say the restoration movement is a matter of history. We could make no greater mistake. I believe our greatest danger is still to be found in the tendency to pitch camp beside the teachings of our leading men, as though the whole truth had been finally rediscovered and the New Testament pattern adequately restored. But the truth is we will never reach the point where we can fold our arms and say, "Thank the Lord, the job is



finished." Every so often every reformation movement still needs itself again to be reformed, and every restoration movement needs to be again restored. So continually we should be inspecting the Book instead of camping beside Campbell, or Stone, or any of the men in our own generation. We must with determination keep the New Testament pattern, realizing that while man may err, God is infallible.

Let me say again, our greatest danger today is that we might crystallize around certain doctrines, feeling that the restoration has been perfected. We can thus become just as sectarian and just as denominational as any other group in the country. So let us work continually for a fuller measure of the restoration movement, working to restore the simplicity of the New Testament church in every respect. Not just in worship, terms of admission, and in name, but let us try to restore the zeal and spirit of love that characterized the brethren in the days of the apostles. Let us realize that we have not fully arrived. Some congregations have advanced more than others, but what church is there tonight who can say, "We've fully restored the New Testament order"? There isn't one. Even Paul, when he was an old man and had accomplished so much, said: "Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and stretch forward to the thing which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). So may we as disciples today in humility realize that we have not attained, as individuals, or as congregations. May we in humility pray God for courage and faith that we may press on toward the mark till we have restored to a fuller measure the New Testament pattern.

## Chapter 12

### RESTORATION OF THE SPIRIT OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

*by*

*Frank Winters*

In the beginning of our study tonight, we wish to consider, for a brief moment, some things concerning the realm of the spirit and their place in our religion. Though the spirit is invisible and untouchable by mortal man, it is infinitely more real and more powerful than anything material. Strictly speaking, no one has ever seen a person. When, at death, the spirit takes leave of the body, though the body we still see, yet we know that person has gone away. We know that in nature also, as in religion, the really great forces are invisible, as we think of electricity, and gravity, and atomic energy, and many others. Scientists say that the science and the mastery of nature progress as men are able to see the invisible beneath the surface of the visible. We live in a world that appeals to our five senses—a world of sun and sky, of rivers and beautiful scenery, but the germ of life that makes all living things grow, no man, with the most powerful microscope, has ever seen.

It is so in the true religion of Christ which rests not upon temples or buildings, or organizations or any works of man, but upon an omnipotent, invisible Spirit originating in the heart and spirit of God and which has to do with the spirits of men. It is heartening to know that our God is Spirit, and Paul declares him to be immortal, eternal, and invisible! And it is comforting to feel that, when the death angel shall knock upon the door of our soul, our eternal salvation shall not rest upon anything that we can see and touch, but upon a God who is present everywhere, one that is very real and,

though invisible, is immortal and eternal. In the 22nd chapter of Proverbs, the wise man gives us this brief but very meaningful scripture, "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord." It is not that God has placed a lamp in the spirit of man, the spirit itself is the lamp, which God lights with the Word of His revelation. Within this master creature, man, God has placed an instrument that may be attuned to his own spirit to light the inward man. The light may be dimmed, by sin and error, but the lamp is there always, in every person born of Adam's race, ready to be made trimmed and burning. It is also God's favorite way of letting his light shine in this benighted world.

What is the spirit of Christianity? Webster says the spirit of a thing is its animating principle, its pervading influence, its peculiar quality. Tonight, as we search the Word of God to find the animating principle of Christianity, we shall use scriptures with which all of you are very familiar. You have known them long and well. However, it is said that in studying a scripture for the thousandth time, it often yields more fruit than it did at first. It is certainly possible for us to have read a scripture a thousand times, yet never to have learned it at all, for we have not known it unless and until we have received it into our hearts and lived it in our lives.

We should like now, as it were, to take every one of you by the hand and all walk together along a familiar path, searching these inspired passages to find the spirit of that finest and sweetest Way of life the world has ever known. We may experience a surprise and shock, for we shall probably find that the greatest teaching Christ ever gave has been by us, the members of the church of Christ, the most neglected. Now, we come to the age-old city of Jerusalem, finding Jesus and his disciples assembled in an upper room. He has just instituted the Lord's Supper and, in humility and love, he washes the disciples' feet. We imagine he is a little more particularly kind and loving with Judas than with any of the rest. Now, Judas has gone out into the night. As if a burden has been lifted from his heart, the Lord begins talking to the

faithful eleven, talking earnestly, and tenderly, and touchingly of things near to his heart as recorded in the 13th chapter of the Gospel of John. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another." He spoke many things to them that night, things they didn't then understand at all, but in the days and weeks and months and years that were to come, as they saw the unfolding and functioning of the scheme of redemption, they must have looked back, as we look back tonight to this new commandment as the spirit of Christianity. That a holy passion of love and particularly for one another was the animating principle of Christianity no one will deny.

A new commandment! Love was not new to the religion of Jehovah. It was the foundation upon which rested all the law and the prophets, but added was this new commandment which was to be love of a different kind and order, and the measure was to be "as I have loved you that ye also love one another." Of course, until now, there was no brotherhood in Christ, no one another. That was a new feature, but it was more. When the Holy Spirit came rolling into this planet, it brought something foreign to this world, something from God and something of God, something, not for one prophet alone, but for all the masses of the people who would, by the hand of faith, receive it. It brought the germ of eternal life—of the new spiritual birth, and those who were born of water and the spirit, with new hearts and new lives and new divine spirits, congregated to make heavenly bodies in different sections of the world. Each congregation was a nucleus from which Christ's religion was to spread, and love was to be the divine tie to bind them together more closely than even the ties of flesh and blood.

But it was still more. When the gospel of the love of God and Christ had lighted their spirits, the light that shone from

these lamps of the Lord within them was their love of one another, so unlike anything the world had ever seen. This light was to draw the world to Christ: "By this shall men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another." He gave them their uniforms that night, not as the Roman soldiers wore, or the Jewish priests as they walked the streets of Jerusalem, but, as the apostles went up and down the face of the earth to make disciples of Jesus Christ, these soldiers of the Cross were known and recognized by the sweet spirit of mutual love for one another. In the Jerusalem church which was founded a few days after the giving of the new commandment a situation arose and was disposed of in a way which has always been a kind of shock and challenge to Christians of our day. It was the generosity of giving their money, and even selling their houses and land, to relieve the needs of one another. But let us not be alarmed, neither let any man say that it was a mistake, for it occurred under the very eyes and with the evident approval of the apostles themselves. This was not the requirement of any apostle, nor a condition to membership in the church, and not any socialistic economy. It was the spontaneous expression of love for one another which had taken possession of every heart.

The golden thread of love runs throughout the entire New Testament scriptures, and on this thread is strung all the other virtues and graces of Christianity. The same sweet lessons which Jesus gave concerning love are recorded on almost every page of the New Testament, but we shall have time to notice but a few pages which we have chosen from the great trio, Peter and Paul and John.

Peter had been called the impetuous apostle, but his writings are particularly clear and calm and so practical to every day needs of the Christian. Peter, no doubt, recalled the words of his beloved Jesus in repeatedly asking if he loved him and repeatedly commanding him to "feed my sheep." So Peter, in the first chapter of his first epistle, writing to young lambs of God he loved to call "the sincere milk of the word," says unto them, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love

of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." And in the first chapter of Peter's second epistle where he sets those Christian graces that seem to be the embodiment of all that is noble and good, he climaxes these graces with the words, "and in your godliness, add love of the brethren, and in your love of the brethren add love."

We come now to interview the old apostle John, in his first epistle. John, you gave us the account of the words of the new commandment, the giving of which happened when you were a young man. You are now old and have been in the church sixty or seventy years and are still filled with the Holy Spirit. What do you say of love? I say, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." I say, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another." I say, "No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is made perfect in us." I say, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." If we were to read every expression of love that these three writers recorded, it would consume my entire time.

Now, Paul was not a natural lover as was John. When we first meet Paul, his hands are stained with blood, but his thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, regarded by many Christians as the finest chapter in the Bible, is, of course, the great New Testament psalm of love. He sweeps his hearers from his detailed instructions of the twelfth chapter into "the more excellent way" of this glorious thirteenth chapter, the language of which is so wonderful that it seems almost unreal. We have said before that love was the most neglected teaching of Christ. I was shocked a few years ago to note for the first time in the comment of Brother J. W. McGarvey on this chapter that he said, "This scripture has been admired by all ages, but unfortunately it has been kept by none." Aren't these the most striking words that ever came from the tongue or pen of man? "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," "Though I have the gift of prophecy and can understand all the mysteries of Heaven," "Though I have so great a faith as to speak to a mountain and see it move into the sea," "Though I give all my goods to

feed the poor, every dollar and every dime and everything that I possess," "Though I walk bravely up to the stake and give my body to be burned for Christ,"—if I have not love, I am a lost soul. I still lack something which makes me absolutely unacceptable to my Father in Heaven. In amazement I cry, "If there is something so tremendously important, then let me not rest until I have found it and embraced it and proclaimed it from the housetop to all professed followers of Christ!"

No one seems able to define love. Even Inspiration portrays it in likeness and figures and symbols. To Henry Drummond we are indebted for some of the finest thoughts ever written upon this chapter. Perhaps everyone of us has seen the science teacher take a crystal prism and pass a ray of sunlight through it, and we have seen it come out broken up into all the colors of the rainbow, these being the different colored rays of which the ray of sunlight is composed. Love is like that. It is a compound thing like light. So, Paul passes love, the ray of light, through the prism of his inspired mind, and upon the page of inspiration appears these colorful quantities of which love is composed: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, it is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." We behold in that rainbow patience, kindness, long-suffering, generosity, humility, unselfishness, good temper, purity, faith and sincerity. It is a perfect Christian character. If we have perfect love, we have all these qualities, and without love we cannot have them at all. God is love, and in this chapter his divine likeness is portrayed.

In the first century, millions of souls were converted to Christ, and the history of the world was turned around. In that age the critical importance of mutual love of Christians was everywhere recognized. Jerome preserves this story of John. In his old days, when he had to be carried into the church and was too old to speak for any length of time, he

would simply repeat to the brethren over and over, "Little children, love one another." Christians then, as they have ever since that time, became impatient with the simple teaching, and the disciples asked John why he always said this. "Because," said John, "it is the Lord's command and, if it only be fulfilled, it is enough." Tertullian of the second century described the impression made on the world by the love the disciples had for one another. "Everyone said, See how they love one another. See how they are ready to die for one another." That is the unanimous record of historians of that day.

Two hundred years after Tertullian, there lived a more illustrious man of the church, Chrysostom, perhaps the ablest man of his day. We now quote from Hastings, a most reliable authority regarding this man. Hastings says, "Chrysostom is commenting on Christ's new commandment and the testimony which by obeying Christians are to convert the world. After his practice he draws upon his intimate knowledge of the religious life of his time in order to illustrate the sacred text and to press home to his hearers its practical lesson. 'Miracles' says Chrysostom, 'do not so much attract the heathen as the mode of life, and nothing so much causes a right life as love.' Chrysostom then gives account of some examples of believers in Christ and their unChristlike treatment of other Christians. He told how it discouraged unbelievers and kept them out of the church. Speaking of the heathen, Chrysostom said, 'Their own doctrines they have long condemned. In like manner, they admire ours, but they are hindered by our mode of life. Wherefore, I fear lest some grievous thing come to pass and we draw down upon us heavy vengeance from God.'" No wonder he saw this danger. The shadow of the dark ages had already begun to surround him. It is significant that a man, standing within the first shadows of the great apostasy, feared that a calamity was about to occur and attributed its primary cause to the fact that the Christian love of the first age of the church had been by the disciples of Christ forsaken and abandoned.

Love is certainly the greatest thing in Christ's religion.



It is almost all of it. But it seems there has always been, through our age at least, a lack of love among us such as existed generally in the primitive church. There have been glimpses of it and instances of it which all of us have known, but not the fellowship of brotherly love that drew them into that blessed spiritual family relationship that Jesus and the apostles taught were so essential to our religion. Formalism, legalism and materialism have largely supplanted brotherly love and heart felt religion. Many things which might be truthfully said about the faults of our brethren, the love in our hearts for the church of God constrains us from saying.

We are so thankful for all the fine things in the brotherhood of Christ, and any word of criticism is certainly spoken in the spirit of love with a sincere desire to help our brethren. We believe it is apparent that generally among the congregations and the individual members of the church, there is a great lack of the spirit of Christ, of the love of God, of the love of one another. Millions of heartaches and millions of mistakes might have been avoided if only Christian hearts had been filled with love. We have seen so many instances of members coming into the houses of worship with a noisy party spirit, seemingly unconcerned and indifferent about others and with no apparent reverence or piety. They sit down to hear sermons based largely upon the errors of others, of the mistaken ideas of first principles by our religious neighbors, but with very little teaching upon that one divine quality held in common by the Father and his children, the quality of love which is the heart of our religion, Then on the other hand, we have seen congregations where love was taught and emphasized and applied in practice, have seen it make them over into bodies of absolute unity and happiness, and have seen the members thrive and grow stronger and more spiritual every day, because of their love. With this as a premise, we shall try to make some simple helpful suggestions for restoring the spirit of Christianity.

For many years, I have been trying to do my duty as an elder (poorly no doubt, but God is merciful), yet only in recent years have I become awakened to the importance

of love in our religion and the need of it, not by a few members, but by everyone of us, including preachers and elders as well. Preachers and elders are largely responsible for the quality of religion that exists in the church. It is a responsibility that makes us tremble, but an opportunity that should thrill our hearts. Preachers, as one who has sat on the front seat and looked up into your faces many thousands of times and who loves every one of you, I beg of you—*preach more love to your congregation and live a life of love before them.* A preacher who leaves love out of any sermon makes a vital mistake. If he preaches several times without making love the theme of one sermon, he is not a good preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Education is a fine thing and is so helpful to the preacher, but the philosophy of the religion of Jesus Christ, of the love of God for us, of our love of him impelling us to obey him, and likewise of our love for one another, is so simple that the most illiterate of earth may have as much of it as the most learned man in the world. Preacher friend, seek first to have a heart full of love and study every day how you may inspire your people to love one another. I think that we should have classes in the church of both young and old to train them in love. Make your mid-week meetings services of holiness and humility and quiet reverence and loving kindness. Make them worshipful and spiritual. You will be amazed at its effect.

If every religious paper would be filled with language reflecting the spirit of love, without an eternal criticism back and forth between preachers, it would almost create a revolution in the church. And, here again, our love constrains us from saying more. If every Christian college could include in their curriculum brotherly love, it would work wonders in their achievement. These young men preparing to preach the Lord's gospel, they are not prepared unless and until they are inspired with the spirit of love, and are still unprepared until they are able to inspire those who hear them. I pay a sincere tribute to Harding College for the spirit which they have implanted in their boys and girls, but, brethren, I doubt if we have begun to see the glory and the possibilities

for good which lie across this threshold on which we stand.

The wisdom of Providence in arranging the independence of each congregation is a blessing beyond our power to describe. Let our congregations be as they will, we can make ours a little of heaven on earth, and I have known the influence of such a one to extend throughout the whole brotherhood. We may have truth and righteousness, peace and joy in the body which meets in our meetinghouse if love prevails and the spirit of Christ is there. And, oh! how thankful we are that every individual Christian may be all that God wants him to be, regardless of others. Let others do as they may, he may have the Kingdom of God within himself, with a loving heart and a lowly mind in which Jesus loves to dwell.

Christians, if you are not thoroughly happy in your spiritual life, I want to let you in on a magic formula, one that will be worth more to you than all other things you may possess. Get to loving people. Love your brethren. If some do not love you, your love for them will make your experience sweeter. You will be surprised to see the effect it has on them and on you. You can almost work a miracle in your own heart. Ezekiel said in the long ago, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit." Don't allow yourself to think evil. Try to see good in all the disciples of Christ. You will get the surprise of your life at how much good you will find in them and how happy it will make you feel. Another surprise will be the unbelievable good you will be to them. It is the source of the finest pleasure in this world. It is also the only source of peace and unity among brethren. Pray for it and practice it, and see how many times you can use it every day.

Undoubtedly, the greatest difficulty in this lesson is the failure of almost every one of us to realize his own need of it. We are inclined to think, oh, how it applies to some other person and that Brother Winters probably has him in mind. But there is no one individual I have in mind. Well, there is one brother in the church that I am thinking of tonight. I have known him a long time. He is naturally a critical fellow, and, though he has preached love and led

others into it, and his heart has been overjoyed at the workings of it, yet, as he stands before you tonight, he realizes he has but touched the hem of its garment and still stands in need of it every hour.

Christian friend, have you not dreamed and wished that you might live in a land where every one was good, where everyone you met loved you, where you might be happy and contented every day? Enough of love will just about make this dream a reality.

Tonight I am wondering what the spirits of departed brethren might say to us if the curtain could be lifted between us and them. I think they might say, "Why did you not teach us more of love? We find over here it is a great essential in our religion. A host of souls of the early age of the church seem to have abounded in it. And about the new commandment which Jesus gave? The entrance into the Holy City and the right to the Tree of Life is for those who keep his commandments, but we seem to have failed to learn and to fulfill this greatest commandment of all. Send someone to teach it to my brothers and sisters still alive in the world. Teach them that God is love and if they have a Christ-like love for one another God dwells in them and they dwell in him. Tell them that without this spirit they are none of his, but that if the sweet spirit of Christ dwells in them, God shall some day raise them up to bring them to dwell with him where all is love and joy forevermore."

## Chapter 13

### RESTORATION OF NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

*by*  
*A.R.Holton*

The classic statement of New Testament worship is in Acts 2:42. 'And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.' This scheme of things in Jerusalem was preceded by all examples of Jesus and his leadership in prayer and worship. You will remember that it was in worship that he announced his great plan for his life. He had just come from the temptation, when he came to the synagogue at Nazareth. In the temptation, Satan had said, "Make bread out of stones, fall down and worship me, create some kind of a circus and climb up on the temple and jump off and it will not hurt you." In Nazareth Jesus announced, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; and he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, restoration of sight to the blind, release to the captives, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." The important thing about this is that this whole teaching is set in the background of worship. It was at the time of worship, it was in a place of worship. Jesus was handed the book, and he read, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Now somehow this connection between worship and work was carried on in the New Testament church.

There were three things necessary for public worship in New Testament times. First, they needed a day, they needed a place, they needed a body of truth to teach. As you look at the New Testament you find that the New Testament church had all three. They had a day, they had a place, they had a

body of truth that they taught. The place sometimes was a home, sometimes an upper room. We do not know about the place, but it does not matter. They met in homes, they met in public buildings. They met wherever they could. Now, as to the day. In Acts the 20th chapter and 7th verse: "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow and continued his speech until midnight." You will see now that we are going back over the scripture we introduced in the beginning of this talk. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Yes, here is the actual example of the public worship of the New Testament church. They met upon the first day of the week.

We go next to Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, and here we find him as he tells us in the great 11th chapter of First Corinthians something about the Lord's supper and its place. They had a body of teaching, and you notice that they were misapplying, misusing. He tells them in this great 11th chapter, "I praise you not, you come together not for the better, but for the worse." You see, something was wrong. "For eating, everyone taketh before another his own supper and one is hungry and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" They had missed the whole point of the Lord's Supper. Then Paul goes on to say, "I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you that the Lord Jesus in the same night in which he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and after the same manner also he took the cup." Here you have the background of public worship, the Lord's Supper. You notice we introduced this great fact as we talked about the spirit of worship. Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and here it is set in the public worship of the church.

And then again there were other things that this great group did. "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders of the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay

by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Here is the day, and here are some of the acts. They kept the Lord's supper. They gave of their means.

And then we have to look a little further at this great activity. In Ephesians the 5th chapter, speaking to the church there, beginning with verse 19 of the 5th chapter: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." You see, we are going over the outline we gave you in the beginning. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer. They had a day on which they did these great things. The first day of the week. They had places to meet in, and now they had a great body of truth to teach.

Let us look for a moment at Paul's letter to Timothy. He gives him some things there concerning these great activities. In reference to the teaching, he tells Timothy that the church in which he was to have many things to do, was mis-applying the great truth of God. In this great letter of Paul to Timothy, he tells him that "I exhort therefore, first of all, supplications and prayers and intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." He tells them in the 4th verse of this first chapter that they had missed it. "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." This body of teaching was not fables. It was not endless genealogies. It was the truth about Jesus Christ. It was the truth about God. It was the truth about man. Be faithful in teaching it, and offer public prayer for kings and for all that are in authority. We then have noticed some of the particular events that took

place on the Lord's Day, upon the first day of the week in the New Testament churches. It is a simple worship. It is keeping the Lord's supper. It is singing spiritual songs. It is giving of our means. It is teaching the great body of truth that is involved in Christianity. It was an evangelistic meeting. It was a teaching meeting. It was a worship meeting. In fact, all things they did are set in the background of worship. The giving of our means is an act of worship, and here set in this great background of worship are these simple details. We believe, ladies and gentlemen, that here is something that when we talk about the restoration of the New Testament church, we have to include the restoration of New Testament worship. Its simplicity, its glorious outlook upon life, upon human destiny. And as this church launched out in the Roman empire, it had a day on which to meet. It had a body of truth to teach, and whether their places of worship were homes, or public buildings, they carried on this great program. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Over it all was a love—love to God and love to men. Here we have the New Testament in its great simplicity of public worship. Let us then upon the Lord's Day do all we can that the songs lead us to God, that the prayers bring us closer to God, that the Lord's supper is observed in the right way, and that we remember him, and that here we dedicate our lives, our means and all we have to the progress of the church and to the evangelization of the world. We are reminded of that great 6th chapter of Isaiah. Why, Isaiah said that "in the year that the king died, I saw the Lord;" and then he said, "I saw myself. I as a man unclean. I saw my people. They are unclean. A coal of fire was passed across my lips and I was made clean and then I said, 'here am I, send me.'" Yes, the New Testament church in its public worship dedicated life and means. They kept the Lord's supper, they sang songs of praise, they offered prayers to Almighty God. They were faithful to the teaching of the Word of God. This, ladies and gentlemen, we believe to be



the restoration of New Testament worship.

According to Paul in First Corinthians, the one great danger to the church was the fall down in public worship. They were misusing the Lord's supper; they were not partaking of it for the purpose of remembering Jesus. They were using it for unholy and unworthy purposes. And Paul tells them, for this reason, you are asleep, and you are sickly and you are perishing. And we need not say to an audience like this that the greatest need of our churches today is a recovery of this spirit of real worship. Because without God and without worship, we do not know who our neighbor is, we do not know the difference between right and wrong. We do not know that life is significant, without God. With him, however, everything takes its place in order. We have left God out of so many things, and we have a society that is largely secular. Man found himself on this earth in the beginning not knowing the laws or rules or regulations. God gave him the rules. Man sinned against God; man tried to live his life on this earth without God, and ruined his Garden of Eden. From that day until this day, man has ruined every Garden of Eden that he has ever had by leaving God out. Our great scientific age will be a curse to our civilization without God. Yes, brethren, the one great thing we can do is to recover and restore the spirit and the practice of New Testament worship. Any worship that leaves out the proper place of God and of Christ is a false worship. Our generation is a lost generation. We are lost in our homes, we are not a sober nation any longer. The alcohol habit has fastened itself deeply in the life of the American people. This lostness of ours is reflected in our lowered mentality, in our lowered moral stamina. It is reflected in the weakness of our public life and in our private life. If Isaiah, in his day, saw the great need of human kind when all secular forces were breaking up, it is certainly our part to see the same need when these secular forces have just about wrecked our world. Because our world is exhausted, it is divided, it is awaiting some force or power that will make it one. The hope of the world is that We shall find this unifying power in the living God. "Thou

shalt worship the Lord thy God, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." We shall never go very far wrong if we keep these two things together. "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

"Oh that my ways were established  
To observe thy statutes!  
Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold  
Wondrous things out of thy law.  
Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law;  
Yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart.  
Before I was afflicted I went astray;  
But now I observe thy word.  
The wicked have waited for me, to destroy me;  
But I will consider thy testimonies.  
Oh how love I thy law!  
It is my meditation all the day.

## Chapter 14

### RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT ZEAL IN A LOCAL CONGREGATION

*by*

*Leon C. Burns*

One cannot read the New Testament without being impressed with the zeal of early Christians. Then, as we look about and see that this zeal is grossly lacking today, we naturally ask: what can we do to restore New Testament zeal in the local congregation? I would that I could give you a simple and concise answer to this question, but this would be impossible. To answer this question fully, we would be forced to give attention to every phase of the New Testament, and the Christian life—a thing which time would forbid on this occasion.

Let us begin by trying to learn just what New Testament zeal was. I have learned that one of the best ways to find out what a thing is, is to find out what it is not, and by the simple process of elimination arrive at the correct definition of the matter under consideration. Following this procedure, let us look at the many kinds of zeal we see manifested by those about us. But, before we do this, it might be well to take a look at the definition of the word "zeal." Webster tells us that the word means: "Ardor in the pursuit of anything; ardent and active interest; enthusiasm; fervor." This definition forces us to the conclusion that zeal must have an objective, and this objective will determine its value.

Paul said of certain ones in his day: "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2-3). Here

we see a people who had a selfish motive in their zeal. They were more concerned with maintaining their own righteousness than the righteousness of God, and had become a proud and arrogant people. These people were very zealous for their own ideas and conceptions, and cared little whether those conceptions were right or wrong. We see this type of zeal manifested on every hand. It is seen in those who become so wedded to their own conceptions, and so impressed with their own intelligence, that it never occurs to them that they might be wrong. It is also seen in the hobby-rider, who is so impressed with his hobby that it becomes the most important thing in his life. Someone has said: "There is no zeal on earth like that of the hobbyist for his hobby." This is certainly not the zeal we see in the New Testament, and certainly not the zeal we would restore in the local congregation.

In this same vein, we find those who have great zeal with no greater objective than success itself. Such zeal is false and very dangerous. Those who manifest this type of zeal feel that they must succeed regardless of the cost to themselves and others. I have long since learned to be afraid of the man who must succeed at all cost. Such a man will have no regard for the feelings of his fellowman, and will ride rough-shod over the rights of others to gain success. I have seen this same zeal manifested by some of the leaders of our schools, orphan homes, and even our congregations. It is dangerous, indeed, when we would stoop to any method and go to any extreme to gain success. Working, as I do, with one of the oldest and largest congregations in the brotherhood, I find it hard to make our elders realize that success can come too high, and that we must have a higher motive for our zeal than mere success.

Turning now to the zeal we see in the New Testament, we ask: what was it that inspired such zeal on the part of early Christians? In answering this question, we can do no better than simply look at the life and teachings of the Apostle Paul. Perhaps, we cannot say that Paul had more zeal than the other apostles, but zeal was certainly more

apparent, and he seemed able to inspire great zeal in others.

The first thing we see in Paul was his great faith; faith that was born of a deep-seated love for God, Christ, and the Holy Scriptures. To Paul, the gospel of Christ was the greatest thing on earth, and no price was too great to pay for its eternal blessings. In I Corinthians 9:16, Paul said: "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." Paul felt so responsible for preaching the gospel that he knew he would be lost if he failed. If we would restore New Testament zeal in churches today, every member must be made to feel as Paul did. It matters not how much zeal the gospel preacher may have, if this zeal is not transmitted to the membership, there can be no such thing as a zealous congregation. While in Abilene Christian College, I used to hear Brother Bell say: "Boys, if you can be happy doing anything else, don't preach." At first, I did not appreciate this statement, but as time went on, I learned what Brother Bell meant. He simply meant that unless you can feel as Paul felt, you cannot succeed as a gospel preacher.

Another reason for Paul's great zeal was the fact that he placed a knowledge of Christ above all the knowledge of the world. In I Corinthians 2:1-2, we hear Paul say: "And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Paul was an educated man, and could have met the philosophers of his day on their own grounds, but none of this had he preached unto the Corinthians. Paul was not condemning excellency of speech or the wisdom of men, as some have supposed, but was simply pointing out that such things have no place in God's plan for the salvation of man. It is possible that this statement was occasioned by the fact that some in Paul's day were more zealous for the wisdom of men than for the simple gospel of Christ. If Paul were with us today, he would have ample grounds for making the same statement.

Again, Paul said in II Corinthians 11:3, "But I fear,

lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ." Religious history has proven that Paul's fears were justified. The very existence of denominationalism, and the religious confusion about us, must be attributed to the fact that some have departed from the simplicity and the purity that is in Christ. The gospel is for all men, and is the "power of God unto salvation." For this reason, it must be simple. Only in the simplicity of the gospel can the world see its beauty and its power. If, in our efforts to preach the gospel, we rely upon the knowledge and wisdom of men to give it its power, we not only deny the power of the gospel, but we cause souls to be lost.

Another reason for Paul's zeal is seen in Romans 1:16, where he said: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel." The word "shame" suggests a number of things as Paul uses it here. Shame always carries with it an element of regret. All of us have done many things which we regret very much, and just to remember them brings a blush of shame. Paul's language here simply means that he had no regrets that he had become a Christian, or that he had suffered so much for the gospel and for Christ. In reading Paul's own account of his hardships, we cannot escape the impression that if ever a man lived who could feel some regret that he was a Christian, it was the Apostle Paul. But, instead of regretting his choice, Paul rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for Christ. When I hear Christians complaining about the burdens they must bear, and the sacrifices they must make, I am forced to feel that such people are ashamed of Christ and the gospel.

The word "shame" also suggests an apology. All of us are inclined to apologize for those things of which we are ashamed. In the midst of all the philosophy and wisdom of men, Paul had no apology to make for the simple gospel of Christ. Some in Paul's day might have felt some hesitancy in going before the educators of the world with nothing more than the simple gospel, but not Paul. When I hear some of my brethren complaining about the "backwardness" of the

church, and suggesting that we must bring ourselves up to date in our preaching, I am forced to feel that they are ashamed of the simple gospel of Christ. If such men preach the gospel at all, they will do so with an apology. Christ himself said: "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man also shall be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

Looking, as we have, at the life and teachings of Paul, it is not hard to see why early Christians were so zealous for Christ, nor should it be hard to see what we must do if we would restore New Testament zeal in the local congregation. New Testament zeal is not a thing written upon paper and pasted in your Bible for easy reference, nor is it the high-sounding schemes and plans of men. New Testament zeal is something that exists in the hearts of Christians. It springs from a deep-seated love for God, Christ, and the souls of men; a faith that will not waver, and a heart that will trust in God for strength and courage to bear life's burdens, and tell the sweet story of Jesus and his love. A zeal that springs from anything less than this is false, and unworthy of a true Christian.

If the things we have presented to you in this lesson do not tell us how to restore New Testament zeal in the local congregation, then there is no answer to our question.

## Chapter 15

### DIGRESSION WITHIN THE RESTORATION

*by*

*Leon C. Burns*

In studying the restoration movement as you are doing here this week, giving attention to every phase of the movement, I have been impressed with your realization that the restoration movement is not a thing which belongs to the musty pages of history, but is in existence today and very much alive. Like many others in the church, I grew up to feel that the restoration movement was something that occurred many years ago, filled its mission and ceased to be; that it made interesting reading, but had no special application to our problems of this age. Fortunately, however, I soon learned that this was a mistaken conception, and it is encouraging, indeed, to notice that you are thinking of the restoration movement not as something that is dead, but much alive and greatly needed today. As long as we have about us, religious groups claiming to stand upon the Bible, claiming to accept God as the creator and preserver of the universe, yet at the same time practicing and preaching things contrary to the New Testament, just that long the restoration movement must continue.

In every great restoration movement, whether it be religious or otherwise, there is always the danger that some will deviate from those principles that gave it its birth. This was true in the movement to restore New Testament Christianity in our country. This great movement had not been long under way until some men lost sight of the fundamental principles of the restoration, and were injecting into their teaching the opinions and doctrines of men. In this manner



mechanical instruments of music and missionary societies were brought into the church. To some, these things seemed harmless enough at first, but they were steps in the wrong direction, and those who followed them, were lead back into the realms of denominationalism. As we strive to keep alive the restoration movement, the extent to which our digressive friends have gone should be a constant reminder that any deviation from New Testament teaching, however slight it may seem, is a dangerous thing.

You will recall that during the last war, Eddie Rickenbacker and his companions were forced to crash-land their plane in the sea, and drifted for many days upon the bosom of the deep. As Mr. Rickenbacker and his companions were taking off on their flight, a tire blew out, causing their plane to careen and crash into a plane standing close by. They were forced to transfer to another plane to continue their flight. In the crash, the navigator's instruments had been thrown against the side of the plane. The navigator checked these instruments carefully, and believing them to be undamaged, carried them with him into the other plane. By these instruments they set their course, and all seemed well until they reached the point where they should be sighting their destination. When they were unable to do this, they sent out a radio message only to learn that they were hundreds of miles off their course. They had no choice but to land in the sea and trust that they would be rescued. These men were all experienced fliers and navigators, but they were completely lost. They had set their course by an instrument that was inaccurate. So small was this inaccuracy that it could not be detected by an experienced eye, but the farther they went into the distance, the farther they were from the course they thought they were following.

This story of Mr. Rickenbacker's experience is a good illustration of the dangers of digression that are ever present with us. The slightest deviation from God's simple truth, however unimportant it may seem at the time, will lead us farther from our course the farther we go into the future.

In reading the wealth of restoration literature, it seems

to me that the one basic fact that contributed to the success of pioneer preachers more than anything else was the simplicity of their plea. In the midst of the cold and ritualistic beliefs and practices of religious groups in this country, a plea for simple New Testament Christianity found a ready response in the freedom-loving people of that day. The people were crying for something they could understand. In recent years I have been forced to the conclusion that people of this day, as those in by-gone ages, are tired of the cold ritualism and formalism that characterizes religion in our country.

A few weeks ago, I was surprised to receive an invitation from the Episcopal church in the town where I have lived for ten years, asking that I come before the men of that church to set before them the beliefs, practices, and distinctive doctrines of the church of Christ. I welcomed this opportunity, but I went into the meeting with some misgivings. I was surprised that I should receive such a wide-open invitation, but I was to receive a greater surprise when I appeared before these men.

In gathering material for my sermon before these men, I realized that the pioneers of the restoration movement had come from the ranks of Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism, and what could I better do than to present the restoration plea. This I did, with all the power God has given me. After speaking about thirty minutes, I then threw the meeting open for questions. To my astonishment, I could not have written a list of questions that would have given me a better chance to present simple New Testament teaching than the questions those gentlemen asked. I was impressed with the sincerity and earnestness of these men. Again to my astonishment several of the men rose to their feet, and said, "There is no doubt that you have the truth." One gentleman arose, lammed the table with his fist, and said, "That's God's way!"

What I shall be able to do with those Episcopal gentlemen from here on out, I do not know, but I came from that meeting with the indelible impression in my mind *that the denominational world is tired, confused, and spiritually sick;*

*that it is crying for something simple, and is realizing more and more that simple New Testament Christianity is the only answer.* I also came from that meeting thoroughly convinced that our hope for conquering the world for Christ lies not in our ability to surpass, or even compete with, the scholastic accomplishments of the denominational world, *but in holding up the beautiful simplicity of Christ.*

Paul, in writing to the Corinthian brethren, said: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (II Corinthians 11:3). Religious history has proven that Paul's fears were justified. All the religious confusion that is in the world today must be attributed to the fact that men have never known, or they have departed from the simplicity that is in Christ. If we would keep alive the restoration movement; if we would safeguard ourselves against every kind of digression, let me plead with you from the depths of my heart, *we must not depart from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ.* Only in the simplicity of the gospel can the world see its beauty and its power.

I would be unworthy of your confidence if I did not tell you that I see on every hand tendencies toward a departure from the simple gospel of Christ. The belief, on the part of some, that the church of our Lord must compete with denominationalism on its own ground is a step in this direction. Let me emphasize, with every energy of my being, that *the church of Jesus Christ is not in competition with anything that is on this earth.* The church is opposed to all that is evil and bad, but it cannot stoop to compete with the things of the world and maintain its identity. To compete with a thing, you must place yourself on the same level as the thing with which you wish to compete; you must go into the same business, and the business of denominationalism is the propagation of theories, opinions, and doctrines of men. The very word "competition" implies a change of policy and principle when occasion demands. If we set ourselves to follow the whims and fancies of denominationalism,

and compete with the scholastic standards of the world about us, it is inevitable that the gospel of Christ should be lost in an unending maze of religious dogma and theory.

Concerning the gospel, Paul said: "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:1-4). Brethren, that is the gospel. That is the good news the world wants to hear.

Paul also said: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). By this, Paul meant that God had placed within the gospel the power to move the heart of stone; to turn a cruel and sinful world back to him. Let us ask, what it is about Christ that appeals to people the world over? Is it the fact that Christ was the greatest philanthropist the world has known? Was it the fact that he went about binding up broken hearts, healing the withered limb, causing the lame to leap as the hart, and the dumb to sing his praises? Was it the fact that he was the Master teacher, confounding the doctors in the temple at the age of twelve, and holding his own with the philosophers of his day? To all of those questions, the answer is, NO. The power of the gospel to draw us away from sin and into a life of righteousness lies in the simple and beautiful fact that, while we were yet in our sins, Christ died to save us. Profound theories and high-sounding phrases of men might lead to a different life, but only the gospel, in its beauty and simplicity, can lead the world to Christ.

Let us count it life's greatest privilege and joy to present to a hungry world the simple gospel of Christ. In our efforts to convert the world to Christ, let us know nothing but Christ, and him crucified. And as we go, on the greatest of all missions, let our motto ever be: "*I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation.*"

## Chapter 16

### NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORLD TODAY

*by*  
*James H. Sewell*

This week has been a source of rich and happy experiences to my wife and me. We've enjoyed every moment of it, and we hadn't been here very long before we found out why so many people have fallen in love with Harding College. In this short time we have succumbed to its spell. We love the spirit you have here. We love the friendly young people that greet us as we walk about the campus. We haven't found a stranger here yet, and we love it.

Now, I am going to get to my subject: New Testament Christianity in the World Today. We should be thinking very, very seriously about the position of New Testament Christianity in the world today. As I see it, not only from our situation on the Pacific Coast, but from traveling all over the United States and attending services here and there, I am convinced that right now, this year of our Lord 1950, that we are in a time of great decision for New Testament Christianity. I believe the church is in the process of deciding whether it is going to be a great movement sweeping the world, or on the other hand, are we going to try to be just one more respectable denomination among a lot of respectable denominations. And it makes all the difference in the world, not only to the church, but also to the world, how that decision is finally made.

Now if we should decide that we want to settle down and become a respectable denomination, and that is what the church in some localities has tried to do, we shall be defeated in that decision. For even though some like to do

that, our training and background for 100 years is such that we are just not going to be able to do it. What we will do, if we do not become a great movement to take the world for Christ, is this: we'll not settle down to being a respectable denomination, but will deteriorate into small groups of bickering sects, each fighting the other and each seeking to destroy the other.

You analyze the church of the Lord Jesus Christ today, and you will find, if you think seriously about it, that those are really the only two alternatives which face us. We cannot become another denomination; we cannot "settle down to respectability." We must be a great movement, or we will kill each other off, and sometimes I think we are in the process of doing the latter right now.

If I were to select a text for this lesson, I would take the Great Commission, for you cannot consider New Testament Christianity in the world today without a thorough understanding of, and faith in, the purposes of the Great Commission. I'll read it as it was given in Matthew: "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" (Matthew 28:19-20).

This mission to go teach and baptize and then continue to teach is the militant mission of the church in the world, and as long as we are doing that work to the limit of our abilities we are pleasing to the Lord. Whenever we fail to do it, we are failing in our mission; we are failing God, and we are not pleasing to him. When he said to preach the gospel to all the world, he not only gave them a work, but he gave them a tremendous responsibility, for he placed in the hands of the members of his body the responsibility for the souls of all mankind. Christ's church still has that responsibility.

Now we have some defeatists in California. I don't know whether you have any here or not. They will quote from Luke 18:8 where the Lord asked, "When the son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" And they quote

Matthew 7:13-14, where Jesus said that there was a broad way and a narrow way and few will find the narrow way. And they will say, "Don't you realize that means that the true church will always be a small, struggling band?" We should point out to the defeatist brother that there is nothing in those passages except the realization on the part of Jesus of the weakness and frailty of mankind. No matter how hard we strive, and no matter how successful we might be, the fact remains that there have already been so many folks lost in this world that the saved will be relatively few by comparison. If we could carry on as a great tremendous movement that would influence the course of history for the next 1,000 years, there would still be many more in the broad way than we would get into the narrow way.

Surely you will agree with me when you read the New Testament thoroughly that it was Christ's will that his church should be just as successful, just as strong and prosperous spiritually and every other way, as it could possibly be. There was a time when the church at Jerusalem was tremendously strong. We find no attitude on the part of the apostles at that time to whittle down the number of converts in order to fulfill what they thought might be a statement of Jesus that his church would have to be weak and small. Paul and Peter, James and John and all the great ones of that time were seeking to build up and strengthen the church, to add to its number and to add to its spiritual power. They thought in terms of success, not in terms of failure and defeat. New Testament Christianity today must be a surging, pulsating movement throughout the world, or it will pass from our hands. I am convinced that God's will is going to be done in this world. If we won't do it, I believe that he will raise up a people who will. My hope and my prayer for the church of our Lord is that we will continue to be his church and that we will not lose our place as the Israelites did of old, but will measure up to our divine destiny.

And now what is going to keep the New Testament church today from being a great aggressive movement in the world? What can we do to make sure it will grow and thrive

and its influence will be felt throughout the world? There are many places in the world today where the word of God is unknown to the people. If we are going to do God's will, we must think in world-wide terms, and we must think in terms of doing God's will, not 100 years from now, but *now*. We must get the vision Jesus had when he looked out and said, "Behold the fields are ripe unto harvest, but the laborers are few." We must get more laborers into the harvest!

Now in order to do this I think we are going to have to make some changes in our ideas. When I say "our" I am not meaning everyone, because there are many, many people thinking along these same lines. But, if we are going to do God's work, I believe we are going to have to work harder at converting people to Christ, instead of to "our position." You cannot make a Christian just by selling a man on "our position." You may make a sale, and you may have something as the result of it, but that result will not be a Christian. Your convert may have zeal; he may be a fighter; he may make a name-caller of the greatest potency, but if he is not converted to Jesus Christ, if he doesn't love Christ and his fellow man, then he is not a Christian.

Also, if we are going to carry out God's plans on a world-wide basis, as the Lord wants us to, we must emphasize things in the way the New Testament emphasizes them. Sometimes, in all zeal we put too much emphasis on some things and too little on others. For many years we preachers have known the principles of God's plan, had them fixed in our minds—we could name them over. But I believe we have not been putting the emphasis where we ought to put it.

There are three important things in New Testament Christianity; the doctrine, the work, and the motive power behind the work. All three should be right and scriptural, but more than that each of the three should have its proper emphasis in our preaching and teaching. Let us compare those three things to similar ones in the building of a building. The doctrine of Christ is the blueprint, the building in theory. I would liken Christian work to actually putting the material into the building, and I would say, as I read my



New Testament, the Christian's motive power in this spiritual building is love. In fact, love should be the motive power behind every thing that we do, either as individual Christians or as the church. And if we do not operate from that motive power, then something is wrong with our operation.

One of the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law? And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second like unto this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matthew 22:35-40). Love was the motive power that brought Jesus himself to earth. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). The power that moved God into giving us the great plan of salvation was love. And love must be the power behind everything we do for Christ, if he is to be with us and is to lead us to victory.

The trouble with us is—let us face it frankly—that many times we have failed because we have put much more emphasis on the blueprint than we have on either the work or the proper motive. Now don't go away from here and say that Brother Sewell said that Christian doctrine is not important. I cannot think of anything in the world today that is more important than Christian doctrine, for it is the blueprint of God's kingdom. I would not pull down the value of Christian truth in your minds one iota. What to do is to elevate the other parts of Christianity to the important position we have given to doctrine. Many times we have emphasized doctrine to the point where we have paid little attention to other things. If a man is "sound in doctrine," the church will sometimes overlook unsound things in his life. A man may be totally without love, kindness, understanding, but if he is sound doctrinally, some brethren will not only put up with him but will often exalt him to a position of leadership.

When Jesus comes and sits upon the throne of his glory, he said he is going to separate the sheep from the goats. Is

he going to say to the sheep, "Blessed are you of my father. You were absolutely sound in doctrine at all times"? Or will he say, "I was hungry and you fed me; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; sick and in prison and you visited me"? Jesus was here emphasizing the true value of Christian living. What I am pleading for tonight, is not for the church to drag down doctrine from the high place it should hold, but to hold up Christian love and work and living, and to give them equal importance.

Next, if we are going to do this work, we need to quit this business of tearing each other apart, and seek the broadest basis of fellowship which is possible under the leadership of the scriptures. That is largely a question of attitude, and we ought to have the attitude of Christ on that. If you will turn to the first three chapters of the book of Revelation and read the letters of the Lord to the seven churches of Asia, you will see what I am talking about. Christ told these churches that if they persisted in error the time would come when he would take away their candlestick—would have no fellowship with them. First, however, he praised them wherever he could. Then he gave them an opportunity to correct their faults, while at the same time enjoying full fellowship with him and with the other churches. Patience with erring brethren, and preserving the fellowship as long as possible while teaching them, is Christ's way. It should be our way!

Now, some of our people disfellowship other Christians at the slightest provocation. This is the way it works out, "If you don't agree with me, you are wrong and I am right. So the thing for me to do is write you up in a religious paper. I'll hold you up as being 'unsound', and then I'll disfellowship you, and then we'll have unity. Of course, it may be a rather small bunch, but there will be unity in our bunch because I'll be dictating, and I am right."

When we get narrower in our fellowship than the New Testament we are too narrow, just as when we get broader than the New Testament we are too broad. And I am convinced that it is just as bad to be too narrow as it is to be too broad! Let us try to study what the New Testament teaches

and adopt its attitude and emphases and many of these things which plague us will disappear. And that also means that we should try hard to preserve the fellowship, even with the disfellowshippers.

Brother Benson asked me tonight if I intended to pursue this subject on the basis of my business experience. I said I was not, except perhaps I would mention what I have learned in business about the importance of positive thinking, and the error of negative thinking. If there is any one thing I have learned in business it is this: You can't accomplish anything constructive with negative thinking. If you are going to do something, you have to think affirmatively. You've got to think in terms of *it can be done*. If you approach it timidly or negatively, believe me, brother, you won't succeed!

There is also some value to negative thinking and every firm ought to have at least one negative thinker in it, but not one that runs off and pouts every time you turn down his negative idea. I wouldn't want to run a business firm that didn't have one grouch, one fellow who would say, "We can't do it." Because people like that make you stop and think (and maybe your plan does have a flaw). You can eliminate the flaw and go ahead to a successful operation. Negative thinkers also have their purpose in the church if their number is limited. But let them not disfellowship the rest of us while they are accomplishing that purpose!

I would like to close with a lesson from the story of the good Samaritan. In this story, as I see it, Jesus taught a lesson on the importance of Christian kindness as opposed to Phariseism and legalism. The priest went by and saw the injured man lying there. Undoubtedly the priest was doctrinally "sound," so sound in fact that he couldn't do an "unclean" task like binding up some bloody wounds. We've got some brethren today who think like that. The Levite was a man-follower. He saw that his superior, the priest, had passed by, and to him the priest could do no wrong, so he passed him by, too. We also have some man-followers in the church today. The Samaritan recognized a need. He probably didn't know enough about the old Hebrew scriptures to see just how he

could bind up the wounds scripturally, but he knew the wounds needed to be cared for and he did it. Now I am going to say to you, let us do the work of the Lord, and do it scripturally. Sometimes, however, we have to choose between doing something that some brother might think is unscriptural. Let's do our duty and argue with the brother later! I am convinced that when we get to doing God's work, if there are some possible improvements here or there in the scripturality of our methods, we will have no difficulty in discovering them. In the meantime we are working. And this we know—when we try to substitute argument with the brethren for preaching the gospel souls are being lost—and that's *really* unscriptural.

It is my prayer and my belief that the thoughts expressed in this lectureship will have a great effect in making the New Testament church the great onward movement in the world that the Lord Jesus Christ wants it to be. Let us work and pray to that end.

# Chapter 17

## THE ESSENCE OF DENOMINATIONALISM

*by*  
*Melvin J. Wise*

My brethren, I am delighted to have the wonderful privilege of studying with you the lesson assigned for this morning. I call our attention briefly to some passages of scripture that should serve as a basis for our study upon this theme: The Essence of Denominationalism.

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me for you, my brethren, by them that are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name" (I Corinthians 1:10-15).

The essence of denominationalism—by essence we mean the nature, the substance of a thing. Therefore putting our subject in the form of a question, we might well express it in these words: What is denominationalism?

I am sure in our modern religious parlance there is no other term more commonly used by people in religious circles

than the term denomination. But unless we have a clear understanding of its meaning, its cause, its consequences and its cure, we might be guilty of building up that which we ought to seek to tear down and destroy.

There are many people who seem to have the conception that a denomination is just anybody but us. But, brethren, it might be us. Those of us who claim to be non-sectarian and undenominational in our plea and in our practice might be guilty of building up a denomination. Webster says that a denomination is "a class or party of individuals called by the same name; a sect." I would say further that a denomination is a group of people, religious in nature, who are in agreement in doctrine, in practice, and in name; but that doctrine, that practice and that name all distinguish that religious group from all other religious groups. I would say further that a denomination is a religious party of people unscriptural in name or creed or both.

For example, the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest of denominations. It is certainly unscriptural in name. You may search the holy scriptures from Genesis to Revelation and you will be none the wiser in the term "Roman Catholic Church." The Roman Catholic Church is unscriptural in doctrine, which organization, doctrinally speaking, is based upon the Nicene Creed, which they have chosen to call the Apostles Creed.

Take another example. The Lutheran denomination is unscriptural in name—a name unmentioned in the holy scriptures. It is unscriptural in doctrine because as a denomination it is based upon the Augsburg Confession of Faith, and not upon the scriptures and the scriptures alone. (We need to take note here that a denomination may teach some truth. Those principles and practices of a religious party do not necessarily have to be all erroneous in their nature for that organization to be a denomination, because all of them teach some truth.)

The church of our Lord Jesus Christ was built upon Jesus Christ and the apostles. In writing to the church of our Lord at Ephesus, Paul said, "Now therefore, you are no

more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

The early church in Jerusalem, Luke said, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." Now any religious party that varies in any sense from the apostles' doctrine is definitely a denomination. A denomination may come about as a result of a mixture of the apostles' doctrine and the opinions and theories of men. For instance, some of the apostles' doctrine mixed with the opinions of Calvin brought about Calvinism. Some of the apostles' doctrine, mixed with the theories of Luther produced Lutheranism. Some of the apostles' doctrine mixed with the ideas and theories of Wesley produced Methodism. But those of us who have the plea of undenominational Christianity contend that denominationalism is wrong and sinful, not simply unwise in its nature and in its working, in its procedure and its result, but unscriptural and sinful in the sight of heaven.

May I offer just a few reasons why we believe that denominationalism is wrong and sinful? *In the first place it is wrong because the holy scriptures teach that there is but one church.* I did not say that experiences of men have driven them to conclude that there ought to be just one church; but irrespective of the opinions and experiences of men, the Bible teaches that there is just one church.

The first time we find the word "church" mentioned in the scriptures is in the reply of Christ to Cephas, after Peter had confessed "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Jesus answered: ". . . upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). He didn't say a church, or *the* church, but he said *my* church. The term "church" appears again in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. Jesus taught "if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be

established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church" (Matthew 18:15-17). He said *church*, not *churches*.

Have you ever noticed in studying about the church in the New Testament under every figure of speech through which the church is depicted, only such figures of speech are used that would infer the idea that there is but one church? In the scriptures the church is presented under the emblem of the body of Christ. Paul said: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another" (Roman 12:4-5). Again in Colossians 1:18, Paul said: "And he is the head of the body, the church. . . ." Now ordinarily how many bodies does one head have? Just one.

You know at this point, my friends, Catholicism is a hundred times more consistent than Protestantism. The Roman Catholic Church, though it claims two heads, Jesus in heaven and the pope on earth, yet it does make the claim of being united in one body; while Protestantism claims but one head, Jesus as the head of the church, yet Protestantism is divided into more than 200 bodies.

The church is also presented in the New Testament as the bride of Christ. Paul said: "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Corinthians 11:2). In Ephesians 5:22-25, the apostle takes the relationship that prevails between the husband and wife and likens that unto the very intricate and precious tie that prevails between Christ and his bride, the church. He said: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Now beloved, how would we have to read this passage today for it to fit perfectly with modern Christ-



endom, with its multiplicity of churches? Here's the way we'd have to read this passage, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the *churches*, and he is the savior of the bodies. Therefore as the *churches are* subject unto Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the churches, and gave himself for them." We have no right to thus change the scriptures. Neither does anybody upon the earth have the right to change the divine order that calls for the church and establish a multiplicity of churches.

*But, again, we believe that denominationalism is wrong because the Bible teaches that religious division is wrong.* I would have you understand that this is not merely my opinion, or the opinion of men, but *the Bible teaches that religious division is wrong.*

There are those that say that denominations are but component parts of the whole body of Christ. Grant that for the moment. Religious division is a thing condemned in the scriptures within the body. Paul said: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (I Corinthians 1:10). Unity in doctrine, in practice, and in name, is the very essence of that passage, or else I am unable to understand holy scripture.

*Furthermore, We believe that denominationalism is wrong, because Jesus earnestly prayed that we might be one.* "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20-21). Jesus here earnestly prayed for the oneness of his disciples for all time. Therefore, he in those very words condemns anything that would promote division among professed disciples.

We see on the very surface of this study that the church of the New Testament is undenominational and non-sectar-

ian. The church of the Lord as mentioned in the scriptures is the body of Christ, and all Christians, individually and severally, make up the body. Paul said there are many members yet but one body (Romans 12:4-5). The body of Christ, the church, includes all of its members. The church is God's family upon earth, and God's family includes all of his children. God has no children outside of his family. Therefore, any organization that does not include all of the saved, all of the redeemed, all of God's children, all Christians, cannot be the church of the living God.

In the New Testament the term "church" is used in two senses, in the aggregate to include all the saved, and in the local sense to include all the saved in the local community. There is no denomination upon the earth that claims to include all of the saved. And a denomination, whatever its name or nature might be, is larger than the local church; therefore, a denomination is too big at one end of the line, and too small at the other end of the line to be the church that we read about in the sacred scriptures. The church of our Lord includes all of the saved, and to take the terms church, church of God, church of Christ, and apply them to a limited number of Christians is to sectarianize and denominationalize the church, as well as the name of the church of our Lord.

Even though the church of the New Testament is undenominational and non-sectarian, the sad truth is that through the centuries that church did apostatize from its pristine purity. That apostasy was gradual; it was not overnight. And it was brought not about by men that were altogether evil of design and intent, but by men of zealous heart yet without an understanding of the simple plea of New Testament Christianity. There is the great danger, brethren, in our midst today of certain innovations being brought into the church, and the church of our Lord making certain departures from the apostolic pattern, all because we do not know what is in this Book as we ought to. Preachers, elders, and leaders of the church are not able to say truthfully "Where the Bible speaks we speak; where the Bible is

silent, we are silent." I plead with all of us that we find out the sacred contents of this holy volume and use it as our guide in faith and in practice. Then there will not be the danger that prevails so much in our midst today of departing from the apostolic order of faith.

But now let us come to this very important study in our discussion. Sectarianism can arise within the church all because of unscriptural loyalties. A Christian should be the most loyal person on earth, but his loyalty should be centered in one person, namely King Jesus. But when loyalty to men transcends loyalty to Christ, that can produce nothing but a sectarian spirit and a sectarian body. When you and I are confronted with conflicting loyalties, and should choose between loyalties to Christ and loyalties to men, we should say in the words of Peter: "We must obey God, rather than men" (Acts 5:29). When men come to love Peter and Paul and Apollos in a partisan spirit it is only when their love grows cold for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here are some unscriptural loyalties that can bring about sectarianism within the body of the church of our Lord. *First, I would say loyalty centered in evil men.* It seems that we should need no warning in this connection, for surely Christians would not knowingly run after evil men and center their loyalty in them. However, this warning is needed for two reasons. In the first place because there are some in the church who are so half-converted that their nature and their inclinations are all the same as that of the evil men in whom they center their loyalty. A man in Texas once commented to me of a certain preacher: "He'll lie, he'll cheat you in a business deal, he'll misrepresent, but, brother, how he can preach!" Well, now, that man centered his loyalty in a man whose designs and purposes were evil.

Secondly, this warning is needed because there are men of evil designs and purposes who would create a following about them for selfish ends. Such people dress themselves up in sheep's clothing. Jesus said: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

*Another loyalty that can bring about sectarianism in the church is loyalty centered in good men who teach error.* There are some people that are willing to accept what a man says all because they have confidence in that man. They regard him as being good and sincere and pious, and therefore surely he teaches the truth. Have you ever heard it said: "Our pastor is a good and sincere man, and surely he cannot be wrong?" Now we can have the same attitude in the church of our Lord toward brethren in Christ. Good men have been wrong, and evil men have taught truth, but you and I should always examine the scriptures to find out what truth is, and accept truth regardless of who teaches it and reject error regardless of who teaches error. Jesus said: "The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; for they say and do not" (Matthew 23:2). He said of the Pharisees: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9). So it should be our policy to accept the truth, regardless of who teaches it; but reject error regardless of who teaches it. We should examine what good and evil men teach in the light of the holy scriptures and, like the noble Berean church, search the scriptures daily to see whether those things are so (Acts 17:11).

*Thirdly, denominationalism might develop in the church when loyalty is centered in good men who teach truth.* A preacher in a local congregation may himself become the very center of a sectarian dispute. And unless he is as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove that dispute may end in division and strife in the church. All preachers of the gospel who have a pleasing personality and preach sound doctrine will have the confidence and esteem of their brethren, and such they ought to have, but that admiration should not be cultivated into a blind acceptance of every word that falls from the preachers' lips as a "thus saith the Lord." I think I know not a few brethren over the country that will not occupy any position upon any issue unless they've found out what the position of their favorite preacher is, and when

that favorite preacher announces his position upon that issue, they'll come forward and take their stand, unswervingly and uncompromisingly, without ever examining the scriptures to find out whether the preacher's position is wrong or right. Let us be governed by a "thus saith the Lord" regardless of the opinions of our brethren.

Is it possible, one might ask, for sectarianism to develop around the preacher who is good, morally, and doctrinally sound? Oh, yes. Was Paul a good preacher? Why, he was the outstanding evangelist of all ages. And yet at Corinth there was a faction built around him. And so were Cephas and Apollos good preachers. There were even those in Corinth that made a sect out of Christ. But Paul condemned that, and so should every gospel preacher today.

*Fourth, denominationalism may develop in the church over loyalty to some religious journal.* You know sometimes a Christian's loyalty is gauged by some brethren by or according to the religious journals that he reads. Now I like all of our papers. I think that they have made a fine contribution to edifying the brethren, teaching even the unsaved, and keeping the brotherhood informed about the activities of the church in various fields. Religious papers are fine, but no religious journal has any right to claim to be a standard of loyalty in the brotherhood. And when a journal seeks such a sphere of influence, it becomes a sectarian organization.

*Fifth, denominationalism can develop in the church by loyalty centered in a congregation.* I have preached for congregations both locally and in evangelistic work in cities where there are more than one congregation, and I have found brethren that have a spirit of Congregationalism, loyalty to a congregation above loyalty to Christ and his word. Well, now, we owe loyalty to our home congregation more than to another, but let us remember that in the same city there are other brethren of like faith who have a loyalty as fervent and devoted as our own. Therefore, we should not seek to build up our own congregation to their loss. As humble disciples of Christ, we should be more interested in

building up *the* church than a church. I am afraid that some of us preachers have more additions than the Lord has. But remember, if the local congregation is built up numerically by transfers of membership, that's not building up the church.

In the light of these things that I have tried to say from my heart, may we realize that we today, unsectarian and undenominational in our plea, might be guilty of building up within the kingdom of God warring sects and parties. Let us be cautious in trying to abolish the old sects, not to build up new ones within the church. May we take the word of God as our guide and follow after the things that make for peace.

## Chapter 18

### RESTORATION PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO FELLOWSHIP

*by*

*F. W. Mattox*

I come not as an authority on the question of fellowship, but merely as a student of the problems that are involved in it. I believe there is no problem facing the church today that is being discussed more widely and with more shades of ideas than this general question of fellowship. Who is to fellowship whom, and under what circumstances? What are the grounds for disfellowship? These are vital questions.

There are many ideas in regard to what is included in the term "fellowship," and I am not suggesting a cut-and-dried definition. We understand, however, that fellowship means partnership, and partnership means membership. In fellowship we have a basis for cooperation, for worship and service in the kingdom of God with those who are partners and fellow workers. We do not have this basis of warm friendliness and cooperation and unity of feeling that we are brethren with those whom we disfellowship.

The apostle Paul gives us the passage of scripture which serves as a setting for our discussion: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all" (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Consider also that Christ's prayer for unity, recorded in

the 17th chapter of John, has never been answered. The division that began in Corinth, which the Apostle Paul condemned so strongly, has continued to grow. The prophecy that he made to the elders at Ephesus, "that from among themselves men would arise speaking perverse things and draw away disciples," has continued in its fulfillment until more and more factionalism and division has become the characteristic of people who claim to believe in Christ.

Not only is there division in the world that we call denominational, but the division has come within the body of Christ itself, until there are those among us who feel that unless we line up with them and accept their interpretation on all conflicting ideas, then we are not sound and cannot be their brethren. There is a continual need, then, for unity, and the effort toward unity is worthy of all that we can put into it.

If Jesus prayed for unity and the Holy Spirit through the apostles plead for unity, which one of us can claim to be anything like a New Testament Christian who doesn't have the same spirit and the same desire to bring about unity among those who follow Christ? It has been well stated that unity of believers in Christ was one of the first principles of the restoration movement. When Thomas Campbell, in the year 1809, drew up what is called the *Declaration and Address* for the Christian Association at Washington, unity was one of the foremost points in his thinking. It contained some things that many people today have forgotten. I want to read a brief statement of the thirteen principles of the *Declaration and Address* which are as follows:

1. The church of Christ is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one.
2. Although this unity presupposes and permits the existence of separate congregations, there should be perfect harmony and unity of spirit among all of them.
3. The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice for Christians.
4. The Old and New Testaments alone contain the authoritative constitution of the church of Christ.



5. No human authority has power to amend or change the original constitution and laws of the church.

6. Inferences and deductions from the scriptures, however valuable, cannot be made binding upon the conscience of Christians.

7. Differences of opinion in regard to such inferences shall not be made tests of fellowship.

8. Faith in Jesus Christ as the son of God is a sufficient profession to entitle a man or woman to become a member of the church.

9. All who have made such a profession and who manifest their sincerity by their conduct should love each other as brethren and as members of the same body and joint-heirs of the same inheritance.

10. Division among Christians is anti-Christian, anti-scriptural, unnatural and to be abhorred.

11. Neglect of the revealed will of God and introduction of human inventions are and have been the cause of the corruptions and divisions that have ever taken place in the church of God.

12. All that is necessary to secure the highest state of purity and perfection in the church is to restore the original ordinances and constitutions as exhibited in the New Testament.

13. Any additions to the New Testament program, which circumstances may seem to require, shall be regarded as human expedience and shall not be given a place of higher authority in the church than is permitted by the fallible character of their origin.

I believe that all who are interested in this subject should consider carefully the principles that Thomas Campbell here laid down. This is in no wise a creed; it isn't intended to be such. Campbell was trying to think his way out of a problem, the same problem with which we are faced today.

Some have never realized what is involved in this problem of fellowship. If we had only one problem facing the church, perhaps we could solve that problem. We could draw

the line and say that those on the right side of the line we will not fellowship, and those on the left side of the line we will fellowship. But it is not that simple. We have dozens of crossing lines and we find we will fellowship a person on one thing, and will disfellowship him on another thing. Since there are so many problems in the church we need to get down to bedrock principles in regard to the matter of fellowship.

Let us illustrate it by allowing a circle to represent the body of Christ. The circle includes all of the saved. Those in the body of Christ, thus represented, are those who have had respect for the word of God as a foundation upon which they have built and have received their entrance into the kingdom of Christ. Out of this respect for God's word they have developed faith, and they have turned away from their sins, prepared themselves to participate in the great kingdom of Heaven. They have confessed their faith in Christ and been buried with him in baptism, and through simple obedience to Christ have been united in one body and constitute the church of the Lord. Here, in the church of the Lord, are to be found all the saved.

It is to be expected that in the body of Christ all will not be alike; there will be differences. In the body there are babes in Christ; those who have not yet been completely taught. There are also people out of many kinds of backgrounds. But they have all accepted Christ as Lord and have done the same thing in their obedience to bring themselves into Christ. They haven't, however, been taught on many problems facing the Church. Some of them don't even know the problems exist, and they wouldn't know what position they'd take if you were to ask them. Yet, since they have been translated into the kingdom of heaven they need and deserve fellowship.

Since there are in the church doctrines and ideas that some of my brethren don't even know about, let us notice the differences of views that are only doctrines of theory. (Theories could affect practice, but ordinarily do not.) For example, there are people who believe that when you die your soul is asleep and you are unconscious—the soul-sleep-

ing idea. Then there is the opposite idea that we are conscious after we die. Now whether you believe that you're conscious or unconscious when you die may not affect your practice at all but is a doctrine that you hold in your mind. There's a similar idea in regard to whether the body is going to be raised or not. Out in Oklahoma we had a fine old man who believed that these bodies would not be raised at all. He said the soul was going to be raised but not the body, and he had a lot of logical arguments that he presented to prove both rationally and scientifically that the body would not be raised. Whether the Lord raises the body or not is a matter of theory, and it may not affect your practice at all.

There are other theories such as whether or not there is an intermediate state, or whether you go directly to heaven; whether the Lord is going to reign on this earth, or whether he is not going to; whether the Holy Spirit dwells in you separate and apart from the Word, or whether the Holy Spirit is just the Word. These are theories which are dividing brethren. What are we going to do about this condition?

The first thing we might say is that there is a right and a wrong side of each of these questions. This is correct, and I know which is the right side of every one of them. But I know also that some of my brethren differ with me, so what am I going to do with them? Shall I fellowship them or not? You say, well, everybody ought to know what is right. That is so. Everybody ought to take my view on it, because I am right, and I'll prove it to you. I can read you a passage of scripture on every one of these questions. But if I can't convert you to my position, what am I going to do with you? That is the problem.

We have a real problem and it becomes more and more complicated as we turn our attention to those differences that affect actual practice. Whether we use one cup or a tray in the communion services is a very serious thing in some quarters. I held a meeting not long ago where I was called up to help straighten out a difficulty in the congregation. They had for years used a tall, rather fancy cut glass for serving the fruit of the vine. Some of the brethren began to

want a communion tray, and one brother objected. Finally, they decided to start using the tray, but they always put the same glass in the middle of the tray for the use of the brother who had objected to using the tray. This went on for several years and there was peace and fellowship in the congregation. Then a new family came into the church. It was customary to pass around among the congregation the responsibility for preparing the Lord's supper, and the task came to this new family. One morning this new brother thought, "what's the use of keeping this glass on the tray?" so he went to the back door of the church building and threw it out. He didn't know the background of the situation. That morning the old brother who had insisted on using the glass wouldn't partake of the Lord's supper. The other brother apologized to him and said he would bring another glass, but he wouldn't be satisfied. He wanted that particular glass. Here is an instance where theory affects practice.

I have been working near here with some good people, who think they ought not have Bible classes. I am trying to show them they are not doing the teaching that the Lord wants them to do in their plan, and that there's nothing unscriptural, but actually it is more scriptural, to teach the Bible in classes, rather than just to have all come together and use a shot-gun method of teaching everybody who might be there. This is a practical problem, but there are others. Will we have women teachers? What about Bible colleges? Should colleges be in the church budget? If the one-cup question was the only problem, the answer might be found, but these things can get very involved. The brethren who believe in the one-cup may be divided over Bible classes. They will fellowship each other on one point, but disfellowship each other on the next. Maybe they disfellowship each other on the lady teacher question and on the college question. On the other hand, there will be one brother who believes in soul-sleeping, and is a premillennialist. Another believes in soul-sleeping but disagrees with him on premillennialism. What are we to do? Whom shall we fellowship? Is it sufficient to agree with a brother on only one point, or

must we agree on all points before we have fellowship.

Let us notice Thomas Campbell's suggestion. He suggested that in matters of inference and deduction, such problems should not be made tests of fellowship. I believe that here is something of real value.

That there are areas in which we shall draw the line of fellowship is not questioned. Consider the following passages of scripture to show these plain statements of the Lord that will regulate us in regard to disfellowshipping.

In I Corinthians 5:11 Paul wrote: "but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat." In regard to immorality and un-Christian conduct the line is definitely drawn. But we are not talking about that. I gather from this passage however, a principle. When a person becomes a Christian he repents of sin and turns to purity. Accordingly, when one repudiates his purity and returns to sin he nullifies a condition of salvation and should be disfellowshipped. If you will further consider that faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, are all essential to enter the kingdom, then, *anything essential to salvation is essential to fellowship. A nullification of any thing that is essential for entrance into the kingdom is sufficient for disfellowship.* Here is how that applies. Take the modernist who doesn't believe in the blood of Christ as being necessary for salvation. He will nullify faith in Christ as the saviour of the world and his blood being the power to redeem. If he doesn't have faith in Christ, then that's sufficient for disfellowship. If he's immoral in his life, he's repudiating his repentance, which was a turning away from sin, and that's sufficient for disfellowship. This is the principle. *Anything essential for salvation, if nullified, is sufficient for disfellowship.* If it is essential to believe or practice it to get into the kingdom, then if you fail to practice it or nullify it, that is sufficient to put you out. I think that's logical, and I believe that it is also scriptural.

Here is another statement from Paul: "Now we

command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly and not after the tradition which they received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). Isn't that plain? You are to withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly. But who is going to be the judge as to whether one who differs from me in doctrine is walking disorderly? If it is in regard to drunkenness or thievery, you can readily say he is walking disorderly. But who is the judge in regard to these other matters? Is to believe in one cup disorderly walking? So it is very necessary to make applications of this principle with caution and I am not sure that it includes any cases that involve opinions or interpretation.

Another passage reads: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them" (Romans 16:17). That is very clear. We should mark those who are causing occasion of stumbling. Then in Titus 3:10, Paul said, "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse." These passages give us another principle. Any of these theories might be sufficient for disfellowship when a person has followed that course to the point where he has become a factious man. A factious man is to be withdrawn from. But what is a factious man? A factious man is an individual who takes some particular point of doctrine and gives the emphasis that says unless all the rest of the brethren agree with him, he will not fellowship them. This helps toward our solution but let us not yet be satisfied, for it is possible to believe error and not be a factious man. Accordingly can we fellowship a person who differs from us as long as he is not factious? This point, I think needs more thought than many are giving it. You should not accept false teaching, but you should meet with kindness any brother who as well as you, has come into the blood of Christ and yet differs with you. Take the old brother that I mentioned in Oklahoma. He didn't believe in the resurrection of the body. To me that very definitely is a nullification of the teaching in I Corinthians 15. There Paul

argued that if Christ had not been raised, then we will not be raised, but if Christ was raised, we will be raised. He talked about the resurrection of that which went into the tomb and said it went into the tomb in weakness but is raised in power, is buried mortal, but will be raised immortal. This old brother's belief was just the opposite of mine, but he taught a Bible class and was fellowshiped for many years. He was not a factious man. His attitude was, "Well, brethren, that's the way it seems to me. If you do not believe it, we won't have any trouble over it."

So there may be people in congregations who wouldn't agree with me on everything, and yet we can be brethren. If that isn't so, then I don't know any basis for fellowship at all. If all of us are going to have to agree on all of the interpretations and all of the doctrines that can be brought up in regard to Christianity, and if we'll only fellowship those who agree with us, then I'm afraid our fellowship will be very narrow.

This, however, poses a very practical problem: How far can we go? Where shall we draw the line? Let us take what the Lord says about it. If a man is immoral, sinful, unGodly, we certainly cannot fellowship him. If, however, he loves the Lord, has faith in the Lord, has respect for his word, and has a desire for spiritual growth, and yet has a background that has caused him to believe a certain doctrine that I do not believe, then I can fellowship that man as long as he is not factious.

How are we to apply the principles of the restoration to the church today? Well, you might say, why try to? Maybe Campbell was wrong in all of this. He might have been. Yet, he had a problem that we also face today, and if he didn't approach the solution, then what is the solution?

Many brethren say they will fellowship a person only so long as he takes just what the scripture says. Suppose I agree with that, and I know just what the scripture says on every one of these issues. You may say, so do I, but you and I may differ. Shall I say then that I can't fellowship you? Can we have no fellowship at all?

In the New Testament church unity was predominant. The apostles worked for it; the early disciples worked and prayed for it. Today we cannot take a self-righteous attitude and say, "I know that I'm right and you've got to line up with me." That is a spirit of sectarianism in itself, and that spirit will keep the church from growing and taking the world as it ought to take it. We talk a lot about unity. I wonder if we can't practice it.

The only hope for fellowship in addition to the principles I have outlined is that each one restore in his own heart that spirit of love that pervades the New Testament teaching. I think that is vital. I would like to emphasize this again: "*That with all lowliness and meekness with long suffering, forbearing one another in love.*" To me that is the secret of fellowship.

My old grandfather started my thinking in this direction. He said that when there is trouble between brethren there is nothing that will solve trouble like love. He told me of a certain brother who had committed a sin. The brother was a rather prominent preacher, and all of the brethren jumped right on him, criticized him without mercy and consigned him to torment for his terrible deed. They said that he knew better and there wasn't any hope for him. They were harsh and ugly. My grandfather wrote him a kind letter expressing his sorrow and sympathy. He said that he knew the sin was an act of weakness but that God loved him and would forgive him and receive him back. That preacher told my grandfather that his was the only word of encouragement and hope that he had received. All the others had turned against him. Grandfather's letter had its affect; the man repented of his wrong.

I am confident, brethren, that in many situations in the church the spirit of harshness and unkindness and criticism has widened the breach and fellowship has been destroyed because the spirit of love was lacking. Let us continue to study this matter of fellowship and see if we cannot fellowship brethren with whom we differ in such a way that we can all be brought closer to the Lord.



## *Chapter 19*

### HOW TO PRESENT THE RESTORATION PLEA TODAY

*By*

*E. W. McMillan*

I have tonight what I consider one of the most difficult assignments that has ever been given me as a speaker. It is a discussion of how the truth of the New Testament scriptures can be presented in an undenominational and an unsectarian manner. It is difficult first because I have an inadequate knowledge. In the second place, if there are denominational listeners in this audience, I am beginning this very minute to speak against a wall of prejudice, because they realize that the purely denominational qualities in their beliefs are not to find sympathy in this discussion. In the third place, my task is difficult because so many of my own brethren have never taken the time to study whether or not their knowledge of the New Testament is denominational or undenominational.

The method of procedure will be to set out the way in which the Lord himself presented his truth to the minds of the world. And then we shall advance to a study of the sidetracks on which the public mind went when it developed the denominational idea connected with Christian faith. And then we shall finish our study with an honest effort to go back beyond denomination beliefs, and the sectarian terminologies of our generation, and settle our understandings where the faith of the Lord first began. That will be our procedure tonight.

It is most difficult to present to a modern mind an ancient belief when there is so much confusion in modern terminology. We speak of "undenominational Christianity," as if there were any kind but undenominational Christianity.

We hear people referring to New Testament Christianity, as if there were Christianity outside of the New Testament. Furthermore, the majority of religious scholarship today is more the scholars' philosophical conclusions, than a simple belief of the Lord himself. So, it is hard to explain either to a creed-centered denominational world, a philosophic-centered religious mind or one's own religious affiliations who are so unaware of their own sectarian terms at times, the truly unsectarian faith.

Let's begin with the manner in which the Lord and his apostles presented his truth. The appeal of Christianity as presented to the world-mind by them was based on a complete unity of all believers, with truth as the only basis of faith. Every believer was made honor bound to maintain that complete unity. Doing that, he was not to become involved in irrelevant issues, or to follow his mere opinions. On the contrary, he must be conscientious about maintaining the complete unity. The maintaining of that unity in its fullness is expressed in the prayer of the Saviour, in the 17th Chapter of John. And that bond of unity ran through all of the discussions of the inspired writers from the day of Pentecost to the finish of the book of Revelation.

This unity was built around seven major concepts. Paul outlined them thus: There is the one body, which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is the one Spirit, who revealed God's will to men. There is one hope, itself entirely spiritual and eternal. There is one Lord, himself confirmed by infallible proofs as the Son of God. There is one faith, itself inspired by the plainly revealed word of God, not by the opinions and prejudices of men. There is one baptism, itself the act of obedience which Paul names as the door of entrance into Christ. This God as Father, his Son, born of the Virgin Mary, himself as eternal as God, voluntarily giving himself as our Saviour, inspiring in believers the hope of present and eternal salvation, introducing them through baptism into the one body, his Church, which he purchased with his own blood—these are the seven cardinal principles upon which Paul predicates this one full and complete unity.

The guarantee of one's faith, therefore, is the word of God, not the decrees of men or the commands of creeds. Authority in religion comes not from men, but from the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the head of the Church. And here, allow me to insist that much of the so-called conversion in the religious world today is not Christian conversion. It is surrender to a group of beliefs; it is more a dedication to group loyalty than to Christ. It is common to hear people speak of "our teachings," and "what we believe," more often than what the "Lord teaches."

Jesus, the Christ, with all authority in heaven and earth, offers and guarantees salvation through the revelation of the truth of the New Testament. That truth, understood, believed, and obeyed produces the full and complete unity.

We shall now ascertain how believers left this simple unity and formed sectarian denominations. Men in their differing opinions launched upon technical and theological interpretations. These dealt with the nature of God; the divinity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, miracles, divine providence, church government, and the extent and nature in which the Bible is to be a guide in religion. Religious leaders grouped themselves around groups of conflicting beliefs and persuaded others to unite with them in those beliefs. Those beliefs were made a test of loyalty among members. Thus, all denominations were born. All religious denominations have held, and now hold, many beliefs in common; but those beliefs have no bearing on their distinctive denominational origin. It is the beliefs of each group that constitute the purely denominational element in their religion. Moreover, those differing beliefs formed religious groups into separate conscientious parties. It is clear, therefore, that:

- (1) The distinctly denominational beliefs are the wedge of division,
- (2) that division is contrary to the Lord's teaching on perfect unity,
- (3) sectarianism, therefore, is contrary to the will of Christ and can not represent the true church of the Lord Jesus.

Among close students of the Bible and church history, it is well known now that there has been a growing recognition for centuries that religious denominationalism is impossible as an appeal for unity among believers. Through all the struggle of the "Protestant Revolt," there was the undertone of search for truth, and unity based upon it. Whether the immediate outburst was revolt against some distinct perversion of truth or a corruption in some life in respect to the moral and spiritual ethics of the scriptures, the real struggle was a quest for truth and unity based upon it.

When the "Restoration Movement" was begun under the Campbells, Stone, and others, its ringing appeal was "Back to the Bible," which means, unity around Truth. Those pioneers of Bible unity attacked creed-centered faith, denominational loyalties, and appealed for a Christ-centered and a Truth-centered faith. In the Christ-centered aspect of faith, that appeal circumvented and boldly rejected all human authority in religion, all dogmas and creeds proclaimed by men; it liberated the individual mind from the prison of denomination and set each mind free upon the road for a personal search of truth, free to accept and obey that truth when it was learned. In the truth-centered aspect of that appeal, each individual mind was placed upon its own responsibility to unite itself with God according to its own understanding of truth, and thus become conscientiously responsible for its own destiny in respect to truth. Thus, the Bible was taken from the enshrouded mystery with which it had been spoken of for fifteen hundred years and was placed in the hand of each believer, with the command of the apostle. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Perhaps the mind in the honest search for truth is on a journey which is the most difficult and most hazardous of all journeys. Always, there are pressure groups who desire to throw a switch and put the honest mind on a sidetrack. There are ambitious groups, who love preeminence, and can speak with as much authority as an inspired apostle.

There are ignorant groups, who substitute their ego for authority and give their opinions of truth almost an equal place with infallibility. There are always people whose nature puts them in search of the "band wagon," without too much concern about who is driving or blowing the trumpet; they just want to avoid being on the unpopular side. The mind, therefore, which assigns to itself the responsibility of prayerful learning and following the truth will find himself often unable to follow the interpretations of others about what is truth, no matter which of the above groups may be involved at the moment. It will also find itself beset by criticism, rebukes, scorns, and not infrequently, a charge of false teaching, not because it has perverted truth but because it refuses to follow the opinions which seem unguided by truth.

The church of Corinth is an outstanding example of how truth can become so lost in the confusion of personalities that it is completely lost sight of at times. The book of First Corinthians is a treatise by Paul of twelve or thirteen major sins, one of which was division. Another was on marriage, another on the Lord's Supper, another about whose spiritual gift was the greatest, another concerning the resurrection of the dead, etc. Within less than five years from its beginning, that great church was on the verge of complete ruin, because it had lost its way in respect to truth. To this point, the sins were the responsibility of the church members in Corinth. But when Paul set about to restore them to the truth, he became as much involved as they were. He admits that his first impulse was to go over and lay on them "the rod," which means, carry them through a series of very sharp rebukes. He further admits staying away from them for a time "to spare them." When he finally wrote them, he says "I wrote unto you out of much anxiety of heart, and with many tears." When Paul had delivered himself from personal resentment about having possibly "bestowed on them labor in vain" and had regained the grief that all men should have for lost souls, he soon felt hot tears of sorrow for them coursing down his cheeks. Then he was ready to write them. One wonders how

many countless millions may be lost because some correctors of error have not been spiritual, but have been more worldly in spirit, in their efforts to point out truth.

Broken with sorrow for these church members, and with a love as true as the Lord's love was when he prayed for his enemies on the cross, as the reader will find when he reads it, Paul wrote about 100 words of tender affection for these people as his first approach, even calling them still "The church of God in Corinth." Paul's first correction was of the partisan spirit in Corinth. Four groups had formed around personalities, whom Paul called Paul, Apollos, Peter, and Christ. Some members, for unnamed reasons, built around Peter and became so loyal to him that they refused to welcome Paul or Apollos. Others built around Paul, and yet others around Apollos in the same way. Yet others, who were glad to welcome all three of the personalities mentioned, became resentful at the contending factions and formed a group separate from all three. Likely they referred to themselves as the only loyal and scriptural members in Corinth. They do seem to have kept themselves free of the entangling errors which others adopted; but there still was a common bond of truth between them and all the other three groups. When they cut that bond, they cut the lifeline by which they otherwise might have rescued their erring brethren.

Paul's first impulse was to do the same thing. But, we may well assume, on further thought and prayer, he saw in all of them a once saved soul, yet owned by Christ, yet loved by him, yet an object of pity and desire to reclaim. Paul felt a responsibility as an agent of Christ to be led by that bond of interest and truth. Laying hold upon all the truth which was held in common between him and them, he began drawing them closer, and closer by it to himself. With a Christ-centered heart in its motive and manner, and with a truth-centered faith in its procedures, Paul succeeded in redeeming that church from all its sins and reclaiming it for the Lord. His was the only unsectarian, non-partisan spirit.

Running through all the elements of denominationalism, there are two general principles on which the sectarian

spirit is based. One is the restrictive quality in the distinctive tenets of each group; the other is the restrictive title which each bears.

These beliefs constitute the beliefs which differ from all other group beliefs. For the Roman Catholics, these are chiefly: the supposed infallibility of the pope, the doctrine of purgatory, the priestly ministry, the doctrine of transubstantiation, penance, etc. For Presbyterians, they are: original sin, foreordination and predestination, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and the impossibility of apostasy for children of God. Some of these beliefs are accepted by other denominations but they are not distinctive of those denominations in particular. It has been a common practice, moreover, throughout the history of Christianity for certain groups to rise, built around some particular emphasis—such as "Divine healing," or "Soul sleeping," or "Anti-Sunday School," or "Anti-College." At other times, there is the inclination to build around men, or schools, or religious journals, with either the assumption or the claim that a given one of these is the soundest, or the only sound one. The total results of all such is the formation of what amounts to small sectarian denominations within the Lord's church itself.

Certain terminologies and titles also can easily become a distinctive sectarian element with ease, and unconsciously. "Our beliefs," "What we teach," "Our plea," and even certain scriptural terms, such as "Our brethren," "The brotherhood," "The church of Christ" at times become almost entirely sectarian. It is my estimation that three-fourths of the church members who use these terms use them with a denominational concept themselves and convey a denominational impression by their usage. For example, two men are talking; one of them asked the other, "What church are you a member of?" He replies, "I am a Methodist." Then comes the question back, "What church do you belong to?" With no explanation, the answer is given, "The church of Christ." The register has been made by the answers given of two churches, on a par. If the second answer was meant as

the equivalent of "I am a member of the Lord's church," it was not used denominationally, though it did likely leave a denominational impression. But if it did not have that meaning in the speaker's mind, he used it denominationally as well as conveying a denominational impression by it.

At this point I would call special attention to a very common way in which church members often sectarianize truth. During the depression of 1929-forward, I was preaching in a city which had a large church membership, with several preachers in the congregation, who made their living teaching. I knew a congregation within driving distance which was suffering for the lack of preaching, because they felt unable to support a man adequately. I offered to preach twice a month for them for whatever they felt able to pay, and on those days some of the men at home took my place. Under the gloom of the depression I assumed that people would want comfort and assurance. So, I preached on "the Love of God," "the Hope of Heaven," "the Answer of Prayer," "the Joy of Salvation in Christ," and other such themes. One night an elder suggested that on my next trip I give them "A good old gospel sermon." On the next visit, for one topic, I preached on "Can a Child of God Be Lost?" I showed that children of God will be lost and suffer eternal punishment, then closed by showing that a certain denomination is, therefore, wrong. That elder gave me a warm hand shake after the benediction and said, "I knew it was in you, I knew you could do it." Unfortunately, that good man was one of the many who have built up a restricted group of beliefs against denominational errors on those points. What they believe is the truth on the points in mind, but they have become so obsessed with a desire to hear the opposing error condemned that they have formed an estimate of sound preaching, which is about limited to those errors. These people judge gospel preaching and gospel preachers by those restricted points. Those beliefs are an equivalent of a creed, by which they judge the loyalty of others. In that spirit they have settled in a denominational, sectarian state of mind. They are not in the search of all God's truth; they are not



trying to convert people to all of God's truth; they have drawn a circle around certain portions of his truth and that circle has become to them "The gospel" in principle.

Returning to the thought with which this sermon began, let it be said again, that truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth must be the concern of the Christian mind. That entire truth is the light in which we walk; he walks in partial darkness who walks without it. When Christians in America and Christians in Africa and Christians in Europe, and Christians in India, understand that truth, believe and obey that truth, they understand the same things, they believe identically the same things, and they practice the same things. They are not broken down into groups, with distinctive beliefs and loyalties; they are built into one common brotherhood in Christ, and they are supremely loyal to him. That alone is unsectarian and undenominational.

# Chapter 20

## THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN CHRIST

*by*

*E.W. McMillan*

It is a special privilege to appear on this program tonight with Brother James Sewell. He and Sister Sewell have been kind in sharing the hospitality of their home with Mrs. McMillan and me in the past; they say that a certain room is always waiting there. It has a peculiar warmth in it, and I love the people that warm that room. Therefore, it gives me a distinct pleasure to be here tonight, and to be one of two speakers with Bro. Sewell.

Some years ago I read a story about a man in a northern state who was accused of embezzling a bank's funds. He just made some poor investments and they went wrong, but he was imprisoned for 10 years. Very soon he started losing weight. He was given medical attention, but to no avail. Finally when doctors could find nothing wrong physically, they asked, "What's wrong with you?" He said, "I know the world in which I live. It lacks a lot of having a real heart. I made some honest investments. I lost. I lost other people's money. I'm not a dishonest man, but I'm in prison, and I'm wearing stripes. I come from an honorable family. I know the world will never fully forgive me, and I can't face that world with the stripes that will entwine about my reputation all my life. I've set my heart that I'm going to die," and he died. The power of thought.

We are today where our thoughts were yesterday. And tomorrow we will be where our thoughts are today. And the nature of our thoughts make us what we are. We can be as great as our most worthy aspirations. We can be as cheap

and mean as our basest desires. We are what our thoughts make us and we are where our thoughts take us. We frame a group of words and turn them loose and call them a thought. Then we take out after those thoughts and go somewhere. And others take out with us. But words and language are tricky things. They mean to us what we have defined them to mean; nothing more and nothing less. One of the words that has not had an adequate meaning to us is the word "freedom." To some people liberty or freedom is what other people will call license. To some people that which seems bondage and oppression others consider their due liberty.

Each person must understand that there is no such thing as absolute liberty. It's a fine thing to talk about Freedom in Christ. It's a great thing to talk about Christian liberty. But there is no such thing as absolute freedom, and absolute liberty. Each person's rights are limited by the rights of other people. My liberties end where your liberties begin.

We must understand that in this world, and particularly in our Christian world, yea within our Christ himself, we live in a world of paradoxes. We are dead while we live, and we live while we are dead. "For you are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God." We are exalted when most abased, most humiliated when most exalted. "For he that exalts himself shall be humbled. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This means the way up is down, and the way down is up. Our freedom in Christ means, if we understand it, that we are the bondservants of God. Freedom is bondage and bondage is freedom.

Now when we come to the exercise of freedom in Christ on the practical level, some people have no specific conviction about what it means. They have never given it enough consideration to claim an understanding of it. There are others who think that they have the full and complete right to say and to teach anything that they want to teach. There are others who define liberties in the matters of teaching only in terms of what they can approve. All of this means that we need to develop a better understanding of the real mean-

ing of liberty itself.

Freedom in Christ, we must understand, is restricted by the very nature of Christ, and Christianity itself, but that isn't a new thought. That is true of every society. Your freedom in this school is limited by the nature of the school itself. Our freedom in the United States is limited by the nature of the nation itself. Our freedom in Christ Jesus is limited by the very nature of Christianity itself. There is no such thing as the absolute right of any man to think or speak his convictions regardless. Now if he wants to be a libertine, or practice license and call it license that is another thing. But all real liberty is limited. So then, it becomes necessary for us to rethink, the meaning of the term, "freedom in Christ Jesus."

I would like to outline now my views on this subject. First of all, it means that every person who is a Christian has the absolute freedom to go on a personal quest for truth. No person or group has the right, to restrict, or in any sense hinder, other individuals in their desires to study the Bible for themselves. Every individual in this world has the right to sit down before his God with an open Book, and there come to an understanding of what seems to be the meaning in that book. No priest and no pope, no council and no creed, no preacher and no paper, nor anybody, nor anything has any right in this world to say to that person: "You shall not search that Book and come to your own belief, and your own understandings about it." Freedom in Christ Jesus consists in the absolute right and liberty to read that Book and to study it and come to an understanding individually of what it means.

There is another freedom that goes right along with this one. Having come to an understanding of that meaning, every person has the right and the freedom to express that understanding, provided the conscience of that individual drives the individual to the belief that he must make these statements in order that he and other people may be saved. There is a realm that we call opinion. There is a realm of conscientious faith. In the realm of opinion Paul legislated

in the Book of Romans by advising, keep your opinion to yourself and do not try to enforce it upon other people. But if you believe conscientiously that a thing is true, and if you believe that other people must believe the same thing in order to be saved, then you have the liberty to express that belief anywhere, anytime to anybody. Nobody has the right to say you shall not do it. But everybody else has just as much right to tell you that your view is wrong as you had to say that it is so. They have the right to argue against it even to the extent that Paul expressed when he said, "Their mouths must be stopped."

There is now a common but deceptive educational philosophy which says much about academic freedom. Academic freedom is a reality in our democracy. But the view which grants a teacher or preacher the right to express his views, then construes all opposition as a violation of his liberty, is an ignorant view of freedom. Every teacher has the right to teach what he believes, then the humblest patron has an equal right to go to the president and protest against what his child was taught. And the public has the right to say that man should not teach in a given school, provided they are patronizing the school. That is liberty. That is freedom. That is equal liberty and equal freedom. It is not curtailing the liberties of other people to oppose what they say. It is not restricting their religious rights and liberties to say they have no right to be a teacher in this school or in that school. It is not curtailing their rights to say that they are not sound as preachers. That course is acting within the rights and liberties of all men.

A few moments ago it was said that we speak under the stimulation of opinion and faith. Much that is called academic scholarship is within the realm of pure opinion. The same is true of much religious teaching. There is romance in the feeling that a given thought is new or original. Pride is fed and ego is enlarged when one has reason to be confident of superiority in something. Being the first to express an idea or the leader in an idea exalts self-esteem. And being opposed, therefore, is an offense to pride. Under opposition, such

people often cry "persecution," and "freedom," and "liberty." But these are usually cunning means of self-sympathy. When people insist upon the full expression of their opinions, let them accept the normal consequences, which stem from other people's equal rights. And if they are unwilling to accept those consequences, let them keep silent on their opinions. But when conscience urges one that a given conviction is faith one can only speak his faith. There is no other alternative. In this realm of pure faith men should deal with each other in a kind and sympathetic way. Egotism, sarcasm, and ridicule have no place in such a study. The meeting of two minds in the honest quest of God's truth is the most worthy journey ever begun.

Faith travels within three areas—the direct relation to God, the home, and neighbors. We are, though, studying the meaning of freedom within these areas. We are forbidden to love God less than with all the soul, mind and strength. Every inclination to become attached to the world or worldly ways is immediately curtailed by "thou shalt not." In the affections, the speech, and the public worship, liberty is curtailed by positive law. In the home, the nature of our religion regulates husbands toward wives and wives toward husbands, children toward parents and parents toward children, and all of the more distant relatives toward each other. Man-toward-man is likewise much regulated. Property rights, physical rights, character rights and reputation rights are protected in the last five of the ten commandments.

We "walk by faith" only when we know and follow the clear teachings of God in these areas of experience. Words which might possibly mislead the understanding of others about God's truth, or which unjustly undermine confidence in them, are forbidden. The speech is restricted, whether in the pulpit, the classroom, or the private conversation. An honest opposition to a given teaching is not a curtailment of liberty in Christ; it is merely the exercise of a right. Perfect unity is attained only where opinions are subdued and an honest study brings us to a clear understanding of all truth. Under these conditions, each one freely speaks his faith and

all others approve.

It should be stated further that, as human beings, we may never arrive at a perfect knowledge of truth. We, therefore, shall not always agree on how much is faith and how much is opinion. No one can drive down a stake and say: "Your liberty ends exactly at this point"; and no one can insist that his liberty extends to a certain point. Within this boundary, there must be charity on the part of all, and toward all others. There must also be self-restraint, that no one, through a mistaken notion about his liberty, shall speak within the sphere of license, believing he is acting within liberty. Jesus said: "All things whatsoever that we would that men should do unto us, do even so unto them." There must be enthroned in our lives the moral conscience that will restrain. We must understand that our freedoms in Christ Jesus are not things that can be written in the books, in so many words. We must set within ourselves conscientious governors, checks that will keep us controlling ourselves.

What a glorious thing it is to feel that we are free from sin, to feel that if we should pass from the world, the angels would be waiting to carry us home! What a great and refreshing life it is to be lived now in communion with God and Christ, free to build a relationship and companionship between us and them. What an exalted privilege to grow, as Paul put it, "into the full measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Such a life is too strong to become weak, too large to become little, too great to be mean, too righteous to be jealous, too magnanimous to be selfish. What freedom could be more enticing than the freedom to be all this? We are free to believe and teach all truth, but not free to impose our opinions on others: We are free to exercise our religious conscience toward God, but not free to impose it upon others: We are free to expand our personalities until they—free of guilt, free of evil desires, free of worldly lusts—expand into the proportions which made Jesus Christ so great; we are free to grow in grace until we are adjudged ready for fellowship with Christ in heaven. No higher interpretation of freedom can be found, and no deeper satisfaction can be known.

