

**UNITY IN THE MIDST OF  
SLAVERY AND WAR  
CHURCHES OF CHRIST, 1800-1870**

**By  
Dr. Joe D. Gray**

**WITH SPECIAL LESSON  
"Oneness In Christ"**

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Phone (601) 283 - 1192

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## PREFACE

The nineteenth century was a time of vast outreach for Christ by numerous Protestant churches. Late eighteenth century believers were shocked to learn from Captain James Cook of a beautiful race of people scattered over millions of square miles of Pacific waters. These Polynesians had been virtually unknown to Europeans previous to the 1760's. The excitement of the discovery pricked the consciences of many church leaders and was one of the primary reasons for the beginning of the "Modern Mission Period."

Many churches, particularly in England, established missionary societies. Hundreds of teachers spread out across the Pacific, Africa and Asia. Multiple thousands listened and believed.

The wide reception given these mission efforts brought serious attention upon a problem which had plagued the believing world for centuries: division among believers. The tragedy of disunity was highlighted by the efforts to reach the lost world and emphasized by the confusion caused among the new believers. Teachers faced the old problem with new intensity - can we in Christ be one?

The problem was especially acute on the American frontier. The rigid, tradition-based codes of old homeland denominations alienated the pioneers, but their reaction did not express loss of faith in the divine Creator. The rugged frontiersmen longed for godliness.

In this climate of freedom from old restraints and retention of basic faith arose a willingness to try anew the simple pattern of first century Christianity. The extended arms of Protestant outreach thus gave rebirth to the concept of full oneness in Christ.

## INTRODUCTION

In this time of fractured relationships any example of success in uniting men in common cause interests us all. As we see relationships among individuals, groups, nations, and races splintered for almost every reason, it becomes obvious that a search for a means to reverse the trend must be launched. The quest for unity among human beings is basically a religious and not a political issue. This is true because it is in the understanding of the nature of man that the basis for unity can be found. This oneness will never be discovered in bemoaning differences in standards of living or in the oppressions of a particular people both past and present.

A stated goal of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2) is to tear down the walls of partition which separate men and to make all one in His body, the Church. In spite of this truth, historical facts record that humanity has tended to divide even through the misuse of the Christian faith. This tendency toward division is evidenced in the pre-Roman days, in the times of the great power of the Roman church, as well as during the Protestant period of more recent times.

From frontier America in the troubled nineteenth century emerged a dynamic religious movement able to withstand the strains of that tortuous period. At a time when region was aligned against region, state against state, community against community, brother against brother, this fellowship of Christians not only survived in unity but experienced tremendous growth. From virtually nothing, it grew to a membership of 500,000 by the end of the War Between the States. This growth made it the fifth largest group in the country, and in many frontier states it was looked upon as the most active and successful of all religious movements of the time. Its leaders labored and taught during a period of tremendous argument concerning slavery

## INTRODUCTION

and, later, war. Even as this nation was torn apart and practically every religious group in the land divided north and south, the people of the "Restoration" argued, sometimes heatedly, but stood together as a fellowship nationwide, north and south, united in their faith.

How did they stand as one? This study attempts to present basic historical facts, to analyze briefly the factors which made this fellowship possible, and then to evaluate these factors for usefulness today.

The origin and growth of the churches of Christ in the United States presents a curious, interesting, and complex story. It is curious because of its unusual vitality and the enormous rapidity of its growth; it is interesting because it is a part of the struggle for freedom in the minds of many Americans; and it is complex because of the problems with which it dealt. The story spans the nature of men from the depths of spiritual desire to the expression of physical expectation.

This book presents some of the causes of the enormous growth of this movement from its American beginning to a fellowship embracing 500,000 adult members in only half a century. The particular emphasis will be on the attitude of the Christians toward the social problems of the period between 1800 and 1870. Lastly, the effect of these attitudes on the growth of the movement will be analyzed.

## PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

No subject in the Bible is set forth any plainer than that of unity. Christ prayed for it and the apostles preached it. When people obey the Lord's teaching, they become one in him and, as such, they represent him as his spiritual body, the church. They become one in their belief, one in their practice, one in their worship, one in the name they wear, and one in their hope. How could any one read and study the Bible, and do what it teaches, and be otherwise? We are told that God hates division for the simple reason that it destroys.

This book is about unity. It deals with some of the history of the Lord's church here in America in the 1800's, its attitudes toward various social problems of that period, and the stand that it took. You'll find this to be interesting reading and it will cause you to be thankful for the New Testament pattern that enables us to always be able to return to the Lord's teaching for all that we say and do in the name of religion.

My good friend, and brother in Christ, Joe Gray, authored this book. He and I attended David Lipscomb College together, along with a lot of others, and he continues to be associated with Lipscomb, serving in the Bible Department and placing emphasis on Missions. Brother Gray and his family spent several years in Dunedin, New Zealand planting the Lord's church. He has also directed a number of campaigns in New Zealand, Australia, and other places, and has appeared often on mission workshops around the world.

I personally appreciate the author, his work, and his writing. I am glad that we can be associated in the publishing of this book, and I commend him and his work to you.

J. C. Choate  
Winona, MS  
May 18, 1982

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## **PART I**

# **“ONENESS IN CHRIST”**

A SERMON DELIVERED IN LONDON, ENGLAND, June 1977

BY: JOE D. GRAY



# “ONENESS IN CHRIST”

(Sermon Delivered in London, England, June 17, 1977)

By Joe D. Gray

Imagine that you are viewing the interior of a small, simple, second-story room atop Mt. Zion in the city of Jerusalem. Twelve men are gathered there. One obviously is the teacher; the others are learners or followers. As you view the scene, the teacher bows to pray. He understands that He is to be betrayed by one of His closest friends before the evening is over. He is literally to be turned over to His enemies for death by one whom He has befriended and loved. He is also aware that before the next evening falls He is to taste of death, although He has committed absolutely no crime. He is to feel the fullness of the agony of physical pain. He will experience the *pain* of death to its fullest in His body and soul. He literally is to bear the burden of the sins of the whole world in His mind. And with this awareness, He bows to pray.

First, He talks of *His own needs*. He asks God to restore to Him the glory which He had had from the beginning (John 17:1-5). He *then prays for those eleven men* who are with Him (vss. 6-19) asking the Father to be with them as they are sent into the world. He requests that God use them and set them apart in His truth.

One of the most amazing things in all of the scripture is that in this moment of facing death *Jesus thought of you and me*. Has anyone at a moment of death ever called for you? Several times, as a minister, people approaching death have sent word that they wanted to see me. It is always a very sobering thought, that someone at the last moment of life has thought of me. A few years ago, late one night, I received a phone call from the hospital where my physical

father was critically ill. He asked me to come quickly. I did not hesitate because I loved my father, and he, in the moment of death, wanted to see me.

*Jesus prayed concerning us.* What He had to say to us, or about us, must be important if we love Jesus. No words of a dying loved one can be taken lightly or be tossed aside with indifference. Jesus loves us, and in the moment of approaching death, He thought of us.

Consider what He prayed concerning us (vss. 20-21). Look into that simple upper room and listen. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, which shall believe on me through their word." Thus He says, "Father, I am praying for those who, in the future, will believe on me through the words of these eleven." That includes every person today who believes in Jesus. If you believe in the Lord, you do so because you have heard and accepted the words of the inspired apostles.

Jesus then continues, "*That they all may be one.*" He prays that every person, through the ages, who believes on Him through the words of the apostles, be *one* together. That includes everyone in London who believes in Christ. It includes everyone in the United Kingdom, and in the United States, and in the whole world. He prays that everyone who believes on Him through the words of the apostles shall be one.

*What is the nature of the "oneness"* for which He prays? Through the ages men have presented this "oneness" in varying degrees: from a total unity of thought and action; to a superficial, organic oneness; to a very vague oneness based upon a principle fact with all details being unimportant; to a simple oneness in the human race, a oneness of creation, with no involvement of faith or life. Let us again enter the upper room and view the Master kneeling before His Father with death approaching and listen:

“ . . . That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” Soberly listen again, “ . . . *as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*” He prays that everyone in all the world, who believes on Him through the inspired words of the apostles, be one, even as He and God are one.

*How are God and Jesus one?* John says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1). John says that the Word and God exist so much alike that they can be considered as God together. They, along with the Spirit, make up a singular God, although they are three beings. Jesus is of the same nature as Jehovah God. He is God-ness. He is divine, in the same sense that God is divine. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, (*ho theos*) and the Word was God (*theos*). He was *with the* God, but He *was* God - God-ness. Whatever God is, Jesus is also. Jesus, in His life, as He talked with God, and prayed to God, and communicated with the Father, and also communicated with the world, over and over again expresses this one important fact: that He was here to do the will of the Father and that He would do nothing separate and apart or that was contrary to the wishes of the Father. He said that He spoke that which God told Him to speak. His very meat of life was to do the will of the Father. Whatsoever God wants done, Jesus also wants done. Whatever it is that Jehovah says, Jesus says. Whatever it is that Jehovah thinks, Jesus thinks. They are one in mind; they are one in purpose; they are one in action. There is NO difference between them in so far as thought or speech or action is concerned. Jesus on earth was the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

Compare the Lord's fervent prayer in the upper room to the confused state of believers today. Think of Christ

praying, in the hours preceding His betrayal and death, asking the Father to please help every believer to be one with every other believer, as He and the Father were one. Surely those of us who love Him are concerned that His prayer goes ignored and unanswered.

We then hear His reason for this urgent prayer for unity. He says that all believers need to be one so "*that the world may believe that thou didst send me.*" He wants His believers to be one so that the world may believe. Christ says that we pay for division among believers with lost souls! He says that if we who believe want the world to believe on Him, then we *must be one together*. The price to be paid for division among those people who claim to believe in Christ, is the tragic, terrible, horrible cost of lost souls.

With this scene and these words of the Lord in mind, let us ask, "*Are we, today's believers, one together?*" The answer, of course, reverberates throughout the world. It comes back in a thunderous explosion, "No, of course we are not one! Not as They are one! Thousands of different things are taught and done in the name of Jesus!" Contradictory doctrines are widely taught. Believers will not associate with others, while all claim to be followers of the Lord. It is a tragic condition! The world watches this confusion. I believe that there are literally hundreds of millions of people who will not believe in Jesus because of this tragic confusion and division among those of us who claim to believe in Him.

In my experience in talking with people throughout the world, division is the one problem brought up more often than all others combined. I refer to areas in which Christ is not very well known. People who know very little about Him look at the "Christianity" around them and determine how they are going to react to Jesus. ONE THING that bothers them, that destroys their ability to

accept Jesus as the Son of God, more than every other problem is the confused and divided state of those who claim to believe in Him.

There are those who teach that division among believers is acceptable or desirable or even necessary. They thus would have us get used to it, accept it and not worry about it. Do we, who believe in Jesus, *want* to be one together? One, even as God and the Son are one? *If* we love the Savior, we do! *If* the prayer of a Man we love who is facing death touches us, we will want to be one together. *If* we enter into the upper room in our minds, and look at the Son of God, the Being in whom we have placed our faith, and listen as He prays that all of us be one even as He and God are one, then we will want to be one together, you and I.

*Is unity possible?* A Christian evaluates possibilities, not by his experience or his logic, but on the basis of faith. If God says something is possible, then it is possible. If God commands something, it is possible. For instance, since God tells us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, it is possible to preach the gospel to every person alive. It is not possible as long as we refuse to become involved or as long as we make everything else the focal points of our lives. If we do not go teach them, of course they will not be taught. But the world *can be taught*, if we who are God's messengers are willing to go teach.

*Is it possible to be one?* Jesus prayed for the oneness of believers, God has *commanded* the unity of believers. If Jesus prayed for it, and God through the Holy Spirit has commanded those who believe in Christ to be one together, then it must be possible. God never commands the impossible. If He commands of men the impossible, then He makes *void* the Cross. If He allowed His Son to die on the cross that I might live, if He permitted His Son to

endure that agonizing death, and then commands that which is impossible, He violates, He makes void the cross.

The *scriptures contain all truth*. The Bible deals with every problem every person has ever faced. The Word meets every genuine need of every individual in the world. So it is not surprising that the scriptures, though written very early in the Christian age, deal with this problem of oneness. It is a problem that wherever Christ is known, believers are divided into literally hundreds of groups which often have very little to do with each other. Sometimes they even fight each other. Division among believers is real.

*How would God deal with this problem?* In the mid-first century the apostle Paul visited Grecian Corinth and for over two years taught the gospel in its simplicity and purity. He preached Christ and Him crucified. Luke records that many Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8). There, as elsewhere, when people truly came to know Jesus and loved the cross and believed in Him as their Savior, they were baptized. They became God's children, members of His church. That is how the church came to exist in Corinth.

Paul then departed. He later heard that there were troubles in the church at Corinth. Among the many problems within that congregation, the one Paul (guided by the Spirit) judged to be the most serious was that the believers in Corinth were beginning to divide. They were becoming denominational. The word, "denominational" means separated by a name. Its current usage, however, is much broader: separated by name, by doctrine, by practice, by tradition, by attitude. A messenger told Paul one day that Corinthian believers were dividing into several groups. Some were calling themselves after one name, and some after a second name, and some after yet another name (I Corinthians 1:10f).

Paul was disturbed and wrote the church.\* It is important to note that Paul did not say to the church at Corinth that division was permissible. He in no way inferred that it was proper or acceptable unto God for believers to be separated from one another. Paul appealed to them on the highest authority available. "I beseech you brethren in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing" (I Corinthians 1:10). Many claim that it is *impossible* for believers to speak the same thing. They claim that it is impossible for us to be alike. Paul was writing to a vast number of believers in a very large city of the ancient world.\*\* He, in essence, said I command you—every believer in the city of Corinth—in the name of Jesus, the one you love, the very one whom you are following, that you all "*speak the same thing*, that you be of the *same mind*, of the *same judgment*, that there be no divisions among you." If there are believers in Jesus meeting in two buildings in any community, Paul says that the believers in one building *are to think and speak and act as the believers in the other building*. This is to be done, not for human reason, but by command of the Spirit.

Is that thought not serious? Is it not sobering? Paul then explained what had happened. Paul uses the names of Apollos, Peter, Paul and Christ to illustrate the condition. A visitor in Corinth therefore might ask "Are you a believer?" If the answer was affirmative then a second question might follow: "What kind of believer are you?" One might then reply, "I am an Apollosite, or a Cephasite, or a Paulite." Paul rebuked the Corinthian believers and asked, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" He emphatically states

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\* This is the letter we know as First Corinthians.

\*\* Some believe the church in Corinth may have numbered as many as 60,000 members.

that such is not what they were taught. They were taught to think, speak and do the same things with NO division among them (1:10). Why was Paul so firm and clear in his rebuke of denominationalism at Corinth? Why did he not leave them alone realizing that unity of such dimensions is impossible? Their backgrounds were different, their minds were different, so why not let believers be different in Christ?

*Paul explains the reason for inspired rejection of denominationalism:* "For you are yet carnal" (I Corinthians 3:3). The word "carnal" means "worldly, fleshly." It is the direct opposite of "spiritual." He said that many of the believers at Corinth were worldly, not spiritual. They were carnal not righteous, because among them were envying and strife divisions. Thus they were carnal and walked as men (I Corinthians 3:3-6). For while one believer said, "I am of Paul," and another believer said, "I am of Apollos," they were of the world—of the flesh. Could truth be taught more clearly? In a situation in which believers call themselves by different names, while all still profess to be believers in Christ, there is carnality, worldliness, or fleshliness, as opposed to righteousness and spirituality.

*The believing world must listen to the Holy Spirit through Paul.* We must come to grips with the truth that when two believers or two million believers are speaking different things and calling themselves by different names, there is *sin* involved. There is *carnality* involved. The sin may be on the part of one; it may be on the part of the other; it may be on the part of both (or all), but where division exists among believers in Christ, there is, of necessity, sin.

*What can we do about this sin?* What could the church at Corinth do about it? Paul, what would you and



the Holy Spirit have the believers everywhere to do about it? Paul presents the basis for a simple solution. "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes" (I Corinthians 4:6a). The people in Corinth who believed in Jesus were not calling themselves Paulites and Apollosites. I do not know what the names were that were being used to separate believers into smaller groups than the whole church. Paul substituted his own name and Apollos' name for those being used in order to teach an important lesson.

*Why* did you do that, Paul? "And these things brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes that *you might learn . . .*" He transferred names that they would learn something. "That you might *learn in us, not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another*" (I Corinthians 4:6). Paul told the Corinthian believers that if they called themselves after any men and thus came to think of anyone's doctrine as distinctive and different and separate from the way of Christ and the way of the written word, then they had erred.

*The solution* to the problem of division among believers is for *believers not to think of men above that which is written*. That is the call of the scripture! That is the call to test our faith, not on the basis of what our parents have done, or what our neighbors do, or what we did yesterday, or what we would like to do, nor on the basis of what the majority of the people of the world do, but it is a call to test our faith on the basis of the *written word*. The church at Corinth included numerous people with special spiritual gifts, and yet Paul told them that if one should stand before them and speak, even claiming to possess a gift of the Spirit, his message was to be tested by a comparison with the written word.

I have heard hundreds of men in this generation speaking to audiences, claiming the direct revelation of the Holy Spirit. I have heard different ones teach almost everything imaginable, doctrines which often directly contradict one another. They profess to speak by the direct revelation of the Spirit. They even seem to use signs, at times, to prove that they are speaking by inspiration. Yet if that be the case, the Spirit is endorsing by miraculous activities contradictory doctrines and concepts. Would God do this while commanding us all to believe and speak the same things?

Paul says that we are not to follow any man who teaches anything separate and apart from the written word regardless of who he is or what he claims to be. He also says that if we will follow the written word, we will not be puffed up one against another. This is a beautiful truth. The scriptures teach us all the same thing. If you and I believe in Jesus, and yet our faiths differ, at least one and maybe both of us have strayed from the written word. If believers study the scriptures in simple faith, the Word will penetrate the accumulation of environment and tradition and enable all to believe the same things. The gospel is the POWER of God unto salvation. It makes us alive in Christ Jesus. If we will objectively and honestly and openly sit down together and study from His word, we will find the same things taught to all of us in the scriptures.

*This oneness is the plea of the churches of Christ.* It is a plea to go back to the Bible for all matters of faith. If any two of us will sit down together and honestly and objectively study His word, it will teach us the same things. We are commanded to speak the same things (I Corinthians 1:10). Peter also commands us to speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11). If God tells us to speak what He says and then also commands us to speak the same, then His word must teach us the same thing.

It may be difficult for us, at times, to separate tradition from the words of the scriptures, but it is a noble endeavor with positive results made possible through faith and by the power of God. What we try to do in our teaching, and in our services, is simply to teach the Lord's word as it is. Often fine people ask me why we do not have a mechanical instrument of music in our worship. The answer is very simple. As we study the New Testament's teachings about the church of the Lord, we find that the only record of music used in worship was the singing of the saints. Under the old law various mechanical instruments were used (II Chronicles 29:25ff). It may very well be true, if we read Revelation correctly, that in heaven mechanical instruments of music may be used. However, in the Biblical account of the church every time music is mentioned, it is the singing from the heart. We believe that since that is what the Bible says the church did in relation to music in worship, we simply sing. We believe that every believer can sing without any problems of conscience or faith, and that this is the musical means God has described for us to worship.

The same principle explains why we simply use the *name* of Christ to describe ourselves. I am a Christian, not a certain *kind* of Christian. I am a member of the church of *Christ*, not a certain type or denominational group. I am a part of a group which has simply through obedient faith come to the Lord. I have been added to His church by God. We meet together as a group of Christians trying to teach the truth—the grand story of Jesus Christ—and to do things in Bible ways. Our plea to the world is to go back to the Bible—to push aside every thing else and to return to the written word. Paul told the Corinthians that by following this one standard they could find the unity which Jesus commands.

The Savior, bowing in urgent prayer moments before His betrayal, says, "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 they also may be one in us, *that the world may believe that thou didst send me*" (John 17:21).

I remember a number of years ago, sitting in a restaurant in Sydney, Australia. The waitress sat me at a table with a young man from the "Outback." His name was Wallace. He was an Aborigine and had not been in the city very long. Because he loved to sing and to play a guitar, he had come to Sydney to try to make his fortune as a singer. I have some tapes of his singing some of the old songs of his tribal land. They are very, very beautiful. Among all the people I have met, however, rarely has anyone been as troubled as was Wallace. Back in his home area in which he had lived most of his life, he had been taught about Jesus. When he came into Sydney, he happily noticed a church building on a corner near his rooming house. He went to the building on the first Sunday, but he quickly recognized that they were not teaching anything like that which he had been taught. Before the next Lord's day he searched out another church building. Over a period of weeks he visited several churches finding many different teachings and practices. By the time we accidentally met, Wallace had come to the conclusion that Christianity was hopelessly divided. He did not understand it, and did not know what to do about it, and he was about to discard his faith.

I remember holding a meeting in Pennsylvania several years ago. A member told me that a childhood friend of mine lived in the town but had nothing to do with the church. I went to visit my friend. He invited me in cordially. I had known him all my life. We had played together, gone

to school together, double-dated together. We talked a few minutes, then I said, "I have not seen you at the services, what is wrong?" He replied, "Joe, don't talk to me about your God. I am finished with God!" His reason was very simple; his mother and father, whom he loved very dearly, and who were very fine people, were divided in Jesus. He told me how they worked together, lived together, shopped together, vacationed together, did everything together except one. They worshipped the same God, but they would not do it together. He said, "God alone separates my mother and father. I do not want a God like that!"

Jesus said long ago that the price we pay for division is lost souls. And all over the world people by the thousands are scoffing at Christ because we who claim to love Him, are not willing to really find the freedom in Christ by listening to His word. We are unwilling to forget the doctrines, names, and practices built up by tradition, and we thus perpetuate the damnable division among believers.

The story is told of a little girl who was playing in her yard in the great wheat fields of the West. She drifted out into the tall autumn wheat and became lost. Her mother did not miss her until time for the evening meal. She called for her, but the little girl could not hear. The mother became concerned and called the father. They started searching. The evening was very cold. In the middle of the night they brought in the police, and more friends. They were criss-crossing those giant wheat fields of hundreds of acres, searching desperately for the little girl. Very late in the night, as fears mounted for her safety, an elderly man stopped and looked at the dozens of lights going hither and yon in all directions across the fields. He then went back to the yard of the home and rang the giant dinner bell, summoning all the searchers. To the yard they ran, hoping that the little girl had been found. However, they gathered to receive further instructions from this man of wisdom.

He told them that they might never find the little girl unless they worked together. He suggested that they form a straight line standing side by side, join hands, cross one field and then another, and another covering every inch of ground. Searching in this manner, soon someone happened upon the lifeless body of the little girl. As they picked her up and placed her in the arms of her grief-stricken mother, the elderly man was heard to say, "Would to God that we had united sooner!"

May God help each of us to so submit to His will and His way so that on the final day of the Lord there will be no need for anyone to cry "Would to God that *we* had united sooner!"

## **PART II**

### **Unity In The Midst Of Slavery And War: Churches Of Christ, 1800-1870**

## Churches Of Christ: American Origin

It was early summer in Caneridge, Kentucky. The year was 1804. Although the fervor of the great religious revival of 1801 was past, some of the results were still evident. Among them was a cleavage in the Presbytery of Springfield, Ohio. Barton W. Stone and five associates had cooperated in preaching with ministers of various denominations during the revival. Success had aroused their hopes of achieving spiritual unity, which they felt was more important than creedal loyalty. For willingly ignoring the Westminster Confession of Faith they had been arraigned before the synod of Lexington, Kentucky. After withdrawing from the jurisdiction of the synod, they organized an independent body called the "Springfield Presbytery." They soon realized that unity could not be promoted in such an organization. On June 28, 1804 it was dissolved with their signing of "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery".<sup>1</sup> They then dedicated themselves to the task of ending denominational division among those who believed in Jesus. "Christian" was their only name and the Bible their only authority. Of this action Stone wrote:

*Having divested ourselves of all party creeds and party names, and trusting alone in God, and the word of his grace, we became a byword and laughing stock to the sects around us; all prophesying our speedy annihilation. Yet from this period I date the commencement of that reformation which has progressed to this day. Through much tribulation and opposition we advanced, and churches and preachers were multiplied.<sup>2</sup>*



Stone and his associates felt that the division of the religious community was "antisciptural" and placed "insuperable mountains" in the way of the progress of truth."<sup>3</sup> The people of the frontier, so closely associated in every other endeavor of life, could see the advantages of a spiritual union. Concerning the need for union and reformation, Stone wrote that the denominations "profess a great desire for them, and make strong cries and supplications for their speedy return to Zion." Yet strange . . . "when reform is urged all the parties rise up against it . . . The reason is that the means proposed by these reformers impinge upon their party schemes; and strike a death-blow at their party-union."<sup>4</sup>

Dissatisfaction with religious division was not confined to one group of men or one geographical area. Ten years earlier, James O'Kelley, a Methodist minister of Virginia and North Carolina had objected to the jurisdiction of the Methodist Church at the first American Methodist General Conference. He, with several associates, withdrew from the church in 1792.<sup>5</sup> "They then agreed to search the Scriptures for a rule of life, and to believe, preach, and walk as they should direct."<sup>6</sup> On December 25, 1793, the dissenters met in Manakintown, North Carolina, and established the "Republican Methodist Church."<sup>7</sup> In August of the next year they met in conference in Surry County, Virginia. At the first session there was considerable discontent. After much discussion the proposal was made to "lay aside every manuscript, and take the Word of God as recorded in the Scriptures."<sup>8</sup> From this meeting emerged the name "Christian Church" and the dropping of the "Republican Methodist" title. In the next few years there was a steady growth of the group in the area.

About the turn of the century a similar movement

arose among the Baptists of New England. In 1801 Dr. Abner Jones rebelled against Calvinism, sectarian names, and human creeds, and set up a separate church in Lyndon, Vermont. It was called a "Christian Church". In the next four years, with the assistance of another preacher named Elias Smith, Jones established congregations in Hanover, New Hampshire, and Boston and Salem, Massachusetts. These people were unaware of the similar movements to the South until six or seven years later. Their numerical growth was more rapid in this decade than the groups led by Stone and O'Kelley.<sup>9</sup> When in 1830 Alexander Campbell published a "Historical Sketch" from the *Quarterly Register and Journal* on the Christian Society led by Elias Smith, he told the readers that the members of that movement wore only the name "Christian" (regarding all other names as inventions of men), that they baptized only by immersion, and that they professed to receive the Bible as the only authority of faith and practice. He added that they had almost one thousand congregations and thirty thousand communicants.<sup>10</sup>

Thus by 1805 there were three separate groups in different sections of the United States pleading for the unity of all believers in Christ on the basis of the scriptures alone. The leaders of these had relinquished the organizational ties and names of the churches to which formerly they had belonged. Each originally had no knowledge of the existence of the other. The task of publicizing the movements and bringing at least portions of each together in a common work for unity remained for still another group.

On Thursday, October 19, 1809, a young Irishman, just become of age, journeyed through the rugged trails of Western Pennsylvania. For ten days he, with his mother and six brothers and sisters, had been pushing toward a

reunion with his father at Washington, Pennsylvania. Alexander Campbell looked with awe at the glory of God's autumn in the virgin forests. He brought with him credentials from the Seceder Presbyterians of Ireland and Scotland.<sup>11</sup> His father also was a minister of the same faith. Alexander was a deeply religious youth. From 1807 to 1809 he had attended school in Glasgow, Scotland, where he had "formed a very agreeable, indeed, a very happy acquaintance with Dr. Freville Ewing and Dr. Wardlaw, very prominent actors among the Scotch Independents."<sup>12</sup> His faith in "creeds and confessions of human device was considerably shaken." He came to this country with the conviction that "nothing that wasn't as old as the New Testament should be made an article of faith, a rule of practice, or a term of communion amongst Christians."<sup>13</sup> That Thursday afternoon Alexander watched as three riders approached. In joyful surprise he recognized one of them as his father.

At an inn that evening the elder Campbell, who had preceded his family in America by two years, handed his son a proof-sheet of a document he had written entitled "The Declaration and Address." This paper was a result of a series of difficulties encountered as a Presbyterian preacher in America.

While yet in Ireland and Scotland, Thomas Campbell had led the cause of unity among the Presbyterians before at least two synods.<sup>13</sup> He especially attempted to heal the breach between the Burghers and the Antiburghers.<sup>14</sup> Poor health, coupled with the hope of leaving behind these "petty" divisions, prompted him to come to a land so advertised for religious freedom.<sup>15</sup>

Arriving in America he was received cordially by the Associate Synod of North America in Philadelphia and was recommended to the Presbytery of Chartiers in Washington

County, southwestern Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup> A young minister named Wilson, who had accompanied him on a preaching tour in 1807, presented charges against Campbell for offering communion to non-seceder Presbyterians, and for criticizing certain practices of the Church. Campbell did allow Presbyterians to partake of the Supper regardless of the branch of that organization to which they belonged. In his preaching he also had expressed regret that the Christian world was so bound by exclusive creeds that one could associate only with the few whose beliefs were almost identical. The Presbytery of Chartiers condemned him for these actions, and he took the matter before the Synod in Philadelphia.<sup>17</sup> He told the Synod that he had no part in the human quarrels of the various sects or divisions within the sects, and to refuse anyone his "just privilege" (communion) was to oppose, oppress, and injure him. He went on to say that he only begged —

*leave . . . to walk upon such sure and peaceable ground, that I have nothing to do with human controversy, about the right or wrong side of any opinion whatsoever, by simply acquiescing in what is written, as doing, to the study and practice of faith, holiness and love.*

*And all this without any intention on my part, to judge or despise my Christian brethren who may not see with my eyes in those things . . . . As to human authority in matters or religion, I absolutely reject it as the grievous yoke of antichristian bondage which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.<sup>17</sup>*

The Synod, after hearing his defense, set aside the censure of the Chartier Presbytery due to irregularities in their procedures. However, he was censured by the Synod

for evasive answers and for sentiments very different from those professed by that church. Campbell promptly stated that he did decline "all ministerial connection with, or subjection to, the Associate Synod of North America . . . and do henceforth hold myself altogether unaffected by their decisions."<sup>18</sup>

He believed that the Lord desired the unity of all believers. Further study convinced him that the plea of the all-sufficiency of the scriptures was the only basis upon which true Christian unity could be attained. He then proceeded to gather those of similar belief for a series of meetings in the summer of 1809. This group formed the "Christian Association of Washington County, Pennsylvania." Its purpose was to promote simple Christianity free from opinions and inventions of men.<sup>19</sup>

The Association instructed Thomas Campbell to write a declaration of their position. The central theme of the "Declaration and Address" was unity on the basis of "a thus saith the Lord, either in express terms or by approved precedent" for any doctrine or practice.<sup>20</sup> The paper was heartily approved by the group and ordered published immediately. Alexander also endorsed it fully as soon as he had finished reading it.<sup>21</sup> The publishing of the "Declaration" is generally accepted as the starting point of the Restoration movement in America. Alexander Campbell later declared: "The ground occupied in this resolution afforded ample documents of debate . . . We had head winds and rough seas for the first seven years."<sup>22</sup> In 1810 the Washington Association disbanded and two "Christian congregations" were organized in Washington County with the "Bible as their only guide."<sup>23</sup>

That same year, the younger Campbell began preaching and delivered "one hundred and six orations on sixty-one primary topics of the Christian religion."<sup>24</sup> In 1811 he married and moved to Brooke County near Bethany,

Virginia (now West Virginia), where he lived the remainder of his life. A year later the birth of a daughter forced his attention to the subject of infant baptism. Following "a long, serious, and prayerful examination of all means of information" he requested Matthias Luce, a Baptist minister of the Redstone Association, to immerse him "into" rather than "in" the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Six others joined him in the action.<sup>25</sup> The next Sunday morning about twenty members of the Brush Run congregation were immersed and in a short time the number reached a hundred. A few who did not believe in immersion withdrew.

Two results of these baptisms must be noted. The decision to denounce sprinkling and infant baptism by Alexander Campbell led to his recognition as the leader of the movement. The baptisms also led to a union with the Baptists. In 1813 an agreement was reached between the reformers and the Redstone Baptist Association. This union, which lasted for more than a decade, allowed that the newcomers were not bound by the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.<sup>26</sup> The major differences between the two groups were: 1) the restorers completely refused to abide by creeds written by men, due to the belief that the scriptures were all-sufficient; 2) examining candidates for baptism was rejected by the Brush Run group as they taught that admission into the church was a matter between the individual and the Lord; 3) the new group practiced communion around the Lord's table *every* first day of the week; and 4) they did not believe that ordination of ministers was essential. The union gave the Campbells and their associates many opportunities to preach in established churches.

The leaders of Restoration traveled extensively during the following ten years as Baptist preachers. The visible results were few:

*After an absence of some ten years, Father Campbell found, upon his return to Washington County, that but little effort had been made to advance the cause of that religious reformation which he had inaugurated in the year 1810 . . .*

*Besides the two congregations which he had constituted in 1810, but some four congregations had been added . . . Of these two had been formed in Brooke County, Virginia . . . chiefly by the ministerial effort of his son.<sup>27</sup>*

These six congregations could not have numbered much more than two hundred members.<sup>27</sup> The chief value of the period could not be measured at the time. It was a season for formulating ideas and sowing seed. Thousands of sermons were delivered in homes, barns, church buildings, forests, and everywhere people could be gathered. These lessons of Restoration were heard often by large numbers of people.

FOOTNOTES – CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup>For the full text of “The Last Will and Testament” see Appendix A. Information most pertinent to this study is in italics.

<sup>2</sup>James M. Mathes, ed., *Works of Elder B. W. Stone To Which is Added A Few Discourses and Sermons*, Cincinnati, 1859, p. 20. Cited hereafter as *Works of Stone*.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>5</sup>U. S. Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of Census, *Religious Bodies: 1906, Part II, Separate Denominations, History, Description, and Statistics*. Washington, 1906, p. 192. Cited hereafter as *Religious Bodies*.

<sup>6</sup>*Memoir of Elder Elijah Shaw*, by his daughter, 3rd ed., Boston, 1852, pp. 311-312. Cited hereafter as *Memoir of Shaw*.

<sup>7</sup>W. E. MacClenny, *The Life of Rev. James O’Kelley and the Early History of the Christian Church in the South*, Indianapolis, 1910, pp. 112-114. Cited hereafter as *Life of O’Kelley*.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>9</sup>*Religious Bodies*, p. 192.

<sup>10</sup>Alexander Campbell, “Historical Sketch,” *Millennial Harbinger*, I (May, 1830), pp. 214-215. Cited hereafter as *Harbinger*.

<sup>11</sup>Alexander Campbell, “Address To The Public,” *The Christian Baptist*, I (September, 1824), p. 280.



## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>12</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Memoirs of Elder Thomas Campbell: Together With a Brief Memoir of Mrs. Jane Campbell*, Cincinnati, 1861, p. 117. Cited hereafter as *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*.

<sup>13</sup>Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>14</sup>The Antiburghers were opposed to taking an oath promising allegiance to the state religion. This oath was only required in Scotland; yet the division spread to Ireland and other places.

<sup>15</sup>Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 9-10, continued 116-117.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12 For full text of his speech before this organization see "Protest and Appeal" in Appendix B. Information most pertinent to this study is in italics.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 16-18. For the text of his speech upon this occasion (September 13, 1808) see Appendix C. Information most pertinent to this study is in italics.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>20</sup>For the full text of the "Declaration" and a summary of the fundamental truths as contained in the "Address" see Appendices D and E. Information most pertinent to this study is in italics.

<sup>21</sup>Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System in Reference to the Union of Christians and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity as Plead in the Current Reformation*, Bethany, Virginia, 1839, pp. 9-10. Cited hereafter as *System*. He later admitted that he was in no way aware of the "havoc which our principles would make with our

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

opinions." He also noted immediately that such a stand would cause the abandonment of infant baptism. After considerable pause Thomas Campbell responded, "To the law and to the testimony we make our appeal. If not found therein, we, of course, must abandon it. But . . . we could not unchurch ourselves now, and go out into the world and then turn back again and enter the church, merely for the sake of form or decorum." See *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 23-29.

<sup>22</sup>Campbell, *System*, p. 8

<sup>23</sup>Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 121-123. These congregations were at Cross-Roads and Brush Run.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 130-133.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 113-114. Campbell, "Address To The Public," *Christian Baptist*, II (August 1824), 280-281. Baptized with Campbell were his wife, parents, sister, and two friends, James and Sharon Renon.

<sup>26</sup>Campbell, *Disciples of Christ*, Boston, 1835, pp. 6-7.

<sup>27</sup>Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, p. 130.

## Churches Of Christ In America: Growth To 1866

One momentous decision by Alexander Campbell in the year 1820 did much to accelerate the growth of the movement. He accepted a challenge to debate the subject of infant baptism with a Seceder minister named Walker. Campbell wrote:

*I hesitated for about six months whether it were lawful thus to defend the truth. I was written to three times before I gained my own consent. I did not like controversy so well as many have since thought I did; and I was doubtful of the effects it might have upon society. These difficulties were overcome and we met.<sup>1</sup>*

The encouraging results of that first public debate caused Campbell to hope that his plea might be accepted by many people. In 1823, he began an aggressive periodical entitled the *Christian Baptist*. After a second debate with a Presbyterian he wrote:

*We are fully persuaded that a week's debating is worth a year's preaching, such as we generally have, for the purpose of disseminating truth and putting error out of countenance. There is nothing like meeting face to face in the presence of many witnesses and "talking the matter over;" and the man that cannot govern his own spirit in the midst of opposition and contradiction, is a poor Christian indeed.<sup>2</sup>*

This aggressive spirit of controversy, accompanied by success, filled other preachers with Campbell's confidence and zeal.

Opposition to the movement among the Baptists was present from the beginning. This increased sharply in 1816 after Campbell delivered his "Address on the Law" to the Redstone Association. His clear distinction between the Old and New Testaments, accompanied by the doctrine that only the New was binding in the Christian age, was unacceptable to many Baptists.<sup>3</sup> By 1823 the Brush Run congregation was forced out of the Redstone Association. They immediately applied for admission into the Mahoning Association of the Western Reserve and were accepted.<sup>4</sup>

In 1824 Campbell began a lengthy series of articles entitled "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things." He began with a discussion of religious associations; continued with confessions in the second article; unity in the third; creeds in the fourth; and on through twenty-four subjects in three years. From these articles came the additional plea of a restoration of the simple, apostolic order of worship, doctrine and practice. Campbell thus provided answers to questions that had been bothering so many for fifteen years: "What does it mean to speak only with the Bible?" "How can we determine what is condoned by precept and necessary inference and what is not?" As these articles were read, the many years of teaching, debating and writing began to bear fruit. More and more notices of congregations of various denominations (especially Baptist and Presbyterian) withdrawing from Associations and independently standing on the Bible alone were printed in the *Christian Baptist*. The number of immersions reported increased rapidly.<sup>5</sup>

In 1827 Walter Scott was appointed the messenger of the Mahoning Association in the Western Reserve.<sup>6</sup> He

was a capable man who convinced the restorers that the application of their plea was simple and practical. Thomas Campbell, on a trip to Ohio in 1827, gave Scott credit for giving practical application to their teachings:

*We have long known the (theory), and have spoken and published correctly many things concerning the ancient gospel . . . , but I must confess, that in respect to the direct exhibition and application of it for that blessed purpose, I am present for the first time upon the ground where the thing has appeared to be practically exhibited to the proper purpose.*

He then described Scott's method:

*Mr. Scott has made a bold push to accomplish this object, by simply and boldly stating the ancient gospel, and insisting upon it; and then by putting the question generally and particularly to males and femals, old and young. Will you come to Christ and be baptized for the remission of your sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit? . . . Some beg time to think; others consent . . . as soon as convenient; others debate the whole matter friendly; some go straight to the water, be it day or night; and upon the whole none appear offended.<sup>7</sup>*

In 1828 Alexander wrote, "that the cry of 'reform' is now the loudest and longest which falls upon the ear . . . ." <sup>8</sup> His optimism was based upon the great work of Scott in Ohio, where hundreds of various religious groups had "received the ancient gospel," and had been "immersed for the remission of sins." Scott taught the way of the restoration so thoroughly that when the final separation

between the restorers and the Baptists occurred, every congregation in the Mahoning Association remained as simple Christians.

As the cause of Restorers grew, the need for unity among the different new independent groups became apparent. In the *Christian Baptist* of 1827, Campbell wrote a letter to the *Christian Messenger*, a new periodical edited by Stone. Stone was then the recognized leader of the growing numbers of "Christians" in Kentucky, Tennessee, and elsewhere. Many followers of O'Kelley and Jones were included among them. Campbell's letter was addressed to "Brother Stone." Stone was accused by some of being an Arian or Unitarian, and many Baptists evidently criticized Campbell for referring to him as a brother in Christ. Campbell said that he knew nothing of the controversy but gathered that the "Church of Christ" and "Christians" were being "Badged" by those titles. He continued that he hoped they would not allow those names to become sectarian, and closed, "Wishing you favor, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you may never set up a new sect, I am yours in the Lord . . ." <sup>9</sup>

Campbell left the Baptists only when it became obvious that peaceful association was possible no longer. It was not easy for him to discard the benefit derived from being a communicant of a large and accepted religious group. In 1826 a writer asked, . . . "are you a Regular Baptist?" Campbell replied, "Why yes, I am and intend to be in full communion with the whole Baptist society in the United States. Though I agree with you in almost nothing yet by keeping up this nominal fellowship, I can be more extensively useful!" <sup>10</sup> As late as April, 1829, he still listed the Restoration congregations with the Baptists

in a report of statistical estimates. During the year, however, the separation became complete. He announced in January, 1829, that *The Christian Baptist* would be replaced by a larger paper entitled the *Millennial Harbinger*.<sup>11</sup> Among the reasons given was that "hating sects and sectarian names, I resolved to prevent the name Christian Baptist from being fixed upon us, to do which, efforts were making . . . I am resolved, to give them no just occasion for nicknaming advocates of the ancient order of things."<sup>12</sup>

In his concluding remarks in the last issue of *The Christian Baptist* in July, 1830, Campbell summed up the work of two decades by saying:

*Little is done, it is true, compared with what is yet to be done; but that little is a great deal compared with the opposition made, and the shortness of the time in which it has been done. He that sails against both wind and tide sails slowly, and if he advance at all it must be by great exertion of the mariners. The storm now rages more than at any former period; but the current is more favorable.*<sup>13</sup>

He and those around him were confident that sectarianism was on its way out, and that they truly were harbingers of the glorious millennium of Christ.

During these years the followers of Stone had been meeting with those of O'Kelley and Jones. A loose connection had been maintained by a conference of workers from the three groups. The first meeting was held in 1809, the next in 1819 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. This connection continued until 1854 when the question of slavery caused a split north and south.<sup>14</sup> This union involved only the preachers and leaders of various groups.

It never pretended or sought to unite the different congregations.

In 1832 a far more meaningful union began between the "Christians" led by Stone and the "Disciples" under the leadership of Campbell. During the December holidays of 1831, Stone, J. T. Johnson, John Smith, Rogers T. Smith, Jacob Creath, Sr. and others met in Lexington, Kentucky, and vowed to practice as well as preach unity. They agreed upon a union of the two congregations in that city.<sup>15</sup> This union was delayed by disagreement on the name to wear and on the selection of elders.<sup>16</sup> Stone wrote in *The Evangelist* that "Our union is attended with happy consequences, and our meetings crowned with success."<sup>17</sup> The united group in Lexington appointed evangelist John Smith and John Rogers to visit in other places explaining what had been done in Lexington and to urge unity in other cities. This union of the two movements gradually expanded to most areas. In a few instances, congregations associated with Stone formed an alliance with the groups led by O'Kelley. These were first known as the Christian Connection and, later, as the Christian Church, South.<sup>18</sup>

For the next thirty years the story of the movement was one of rapid growth across the frontier. Their basic doctrines were reclaimed on a Biblical base by 1832, their place identified, and their zeal kindled. They were so absorbed with the prospect of uniting all believers in Christ that the imposing problems of society which did not directly involve faith and doctrine were almost ignored. As shall be seen in later chapters, even such problems as slavery and war did not rupture their ranks or deter their course. The Lord added many to the church in these decades. Table I describes their growth by listing various



estimates of their size on different dates. Table II contrasts the government census figures of 1850 with those of 1870. (See below). Tables I and II indicate a growth on the part of the restorers from origin to eighth largest among religious groups in the United States in 1850. By 1870 the Churches of Christ were fifth in size.

The main strength of the movement was on the frontier. Very little success was experienced in the older states. The growth on the frontier is contrasted with that of older states (primarily in the East) in Tables III and IV.

TABLE I		
SIZE ESTIMATES OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST 1830 to 1860		
Date	Source	Membership Estimate
1831	<i>American Almanac</i> <sup>19</sup>	30,000
1832	<i>The Evangelist</i> <sup>20</sup>	25,000
1833	Alexander Campbell <sup>21</sup>	100,000
1836	Alexander Campbell <sup>22</sup>	100,000
1839	<i>Millennial Harbinger</i> <sup>23</sup>	200,000
1840	<i>American Almanac</i> <sup>24</sup>	150,000
1850	Alexander Campbell <sup>25</sup>	200,000 - 300,000
1866	Moses E. Lard <sup>26</sup>	500,000

TABLE II			
GROWTH OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST AS SHOWN IN FIGURES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR OF THE UNITED STATES <sup>27</sup>			
Date	Congregations	Accommodations	Value Of Property
1850	875	303,780	\$853,386
1870	3,578	865,602	6,425,137

T A B L E III

FRONTIER OR RURAL STATES<sup>27</sup>  
COMPARATIVE SIZE OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST  
WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

State	1850	1870
Alabama	14th	4th
Arkansas	none	4th
Illinois	4th	4th
Indiana	4th	3rd
Kentucky	4th	3rd
Missouri	4th	4th
Ohio	9th	4th
Tennessee	4th	4th
Washington	none	3rd

T A B L E IV

EASTERN STATES<sup>27</sup>  
COMPARATIVE SIZE OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST  
WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

State	1850	1870
Connecticut	10th	9th
Georgia	9th	5th
Maine	9th	5th
Massachusetts	9th	8th
New Jersey	8th	10th
New York	11th	10th
Pennsylvania	14th	11th
Vermont	8th	8th
Virginia	9th	5th

The Christians appealed to the people of the frontier by their simplicity of presentation, absence of emotionalism as a necessity for conversion, stress on individual liberty in Bible interpretation, and lack of ritualism and high-church organization. Unity was also more appealing to the frontiersmen who were freer from convention and closer to their neighbors. The shortage of preachers for established churches gave an advantage to the Christians who felt that any Christian could preach, baptize, or administer the Lord's Supper:

*We have seen a new community arise, extending itself all over the United States and Territories, into the Canadas, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. It has even crossed the Atlantic and the Pacific. We have churches in England, Scotland and Ireland; brethren scattered from Oregon to New Zealand and Australia.*

*Time was when two or three minds debated, discussed and digested these great principles. Now, two or three hundred thousand hearts cherish them; and tongues and pens, more than we can tell, promulge and maintain them over much of the surface of our little globe.<sup>28</sup>*

FOOTNOTES – CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup>Campbell, "Concluding Remarks," *Christian Baptist*, VII (July, 1830), p. 308.

<sup>2</sup>Campbell, "Debate on Baptism," *Ibid.*, I (May, 1824) p. 199.

<sup>3</sup>Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 130-133. B. C. Goodpasture, and W. T. Moore, eds., *Biographies and Sermons of Pioneer Preachers*, Nashville, Tennessee 1954. (First printed as *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church*, 1857).

<sup>4</sup>Campbell, *Disciples of Christ*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>"Immersion," *Christian Baptist*, V (January, 1828), p. 138. In 1827 Campbell claimed that nearly 50,000 adults had been baptized by the Baptist and Christian churches.

<sup>6</sup>William Baxter, *Life of Walter Scott With Sketches of His Fellow-Laborers: William Hayden, Adamson Bentley, John Henry and Others*. Cincinnati, 1874, pp. 85-86. Cited hereafter as *Life of Scott*. Campbell, "Anecdotes, Incidents and Facts, Connected With the History of the Current Reformation, Never Before Published," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., VI (January, 1835) pp. 46-49.

<sup>7</sup>Baxter, *Life of Scott*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>8</sup>Campbell, "Address," *Christian Baptist*, V (May, 1828) pp. 26-262.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, V (October, 1827) pp. 67-68.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>10</sup>*Christian Baptist*, III (May, 1826), p. 100.

<sup>11</sup>Campbell, "The Past, The Present, and the Future," *Ibid.*, VI (April, 1829), p. 225; "Proposals," VII (October 1829), pp. 67-69. Campbell was post-millennial in his beliefs.

<sup>12</sup>Campbell, "Concluding Remarks," *Ibid.*, VII (July, 1830), p. 309.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>14</sup>*Religious Bodies.*, p. 192. *Memoirs of Shaw*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>15</sup>Campbell, *Harbinger.*, III (April, 1832), pp. 191-192. Walter Scott, "Extract of a Letter," *The Evangelist*, I (February, 1832), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup>Campbell, *Harbinger*, III (April, 1832), pp. 191-192. John Augustus Williams, *Life of Elder John Smith With Some Account of the Rise and Progress of the Current Reformation*. St. Louis, 1878, pp. 371-372, cont. 384-385. Cited hereafter as *Life of John Smith*.

<sup>17</sup>I (1831), p. 71. The selection of a name (or names) was their most difficult problem. Campbell urged the use of "Disciple" as being less offensive to religious neighbors, while Stone urged "Christians" as the God-given name of the followers of Christ. The result was the use of both with gradual predominance of "Christian."

<sup>18</sup>*Religious Bodies*, p. 92.

<sup>19</sup>Second Edition, II (Boston, 1833), p. 170.

<sup>20</sup>Scott, "Religious Denominations" (March, 1832), p. 72.

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>21</sup>*Disciples of Christ*, p. 7.

<sup>22</sup>"Progress of the Present Reformation, No. I," *Harbinger*, VII (March, 1836), pp. 143-144.

<sup>23</sup>"Sketches of Religious History," New Ser., III (April, 1839), pp. 164-165.

<sup>24</sup>XI, p. 192.

<sup>25</sup>"Prefatory Remarks," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., VII (January, 1850), pp. 3-6.

<sup>26</sup>Moses E. Lard, "The Church of Christ," *Lard's Quarterly: Devoted to the Propagation and Defense of the Gospel*, III (April, 1866), p. 303. Cited hereafter as *Lard's Quarterly*.

<sup>27</sup>U. S., Department of Interior, *A Compendium of the Ninth Census, June 1, 1870*, by Francis A. Walker, Washington, 1872, pp. 514-515. Cited hereafter as *Compendium*. Also reported were an additional 1,100 congregations with 100,000 accommodations among Christians who had not agreed to the union between the various original movements.

<sup>28</sup>Campbell, "Prefatory Remarks," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., VII (January, 1850), pp. 3-5.

## **Attitudes Toward Social Problems: No.1**

### **Recreation**

**Dancing and Card Playing**

**Alcohol and Temperance**

**Tobacco and Gambling**

**Horse Racing and Cock Fights**

The plea of the churches of Christ centered around three items:

In matters of faith: unity;

In matters of opinions: liberty;

In all things: love.

In practice they felt that the first idea was of primary importance. Sometimes it seemed that they were so absorbed in finding and teaching unity in faith that they forgot liberty of opinion. They also were accused of overlooking love.

The preachers of the movement in the first half of the nineteenth century believed that they were instruments of God to bring about an end to the multiplicity of doctrines taught in the name of Christ.<sup>1</sup> A millennium of unity, peace and world-wide evangelism was to be the result of their preaching. To them little else seemed to matter. Politics, philosophy and social reform appeared to them almost superfluous—matters which could present no major problem once the “ancient order of things” was restored. These subjects were rarely discussed in their writings and usually then only incidentally. A wide variety of opinion was found in each of these areas. However, there was a general pattern clearly discernible in their teachings.

First, in matters of morality and purity they spoke with the firmness and rigidity of fundamentalists. Secondly, in matters political and philosophical they were individually opinionated but willing to allow differences within the framework of Christianity. And overall, they exhibited a tendency to be less rigid (especially in regard to fellowship) than their religious neighbors.

On the frontier where they were numerically strong, other religious groups were also conservative in regard to morals. They often drew the line of fellowship more closely than the churches of Christ. The various communities, however, neither opposed nor rejected the Christians because of major differences in the area of social activity.

*The cause of Reformation is progressing in this place notwithstanding the great efforts made to put it down: from the First Baptist Church of this city 68 members withdrew on the 23rd of last month: for opinions was the charge made against them, and we had the choice to withdraw or to be turned out, so with all the facts before our eyes we withdrew. There was not the least charge against our moral or Christian character. We, the 68, have united ourselves as a church of Christ.<sup>2</sup>*

In this chapter will be examined some specific areas of attitudes and actions in the social realm. Occasionally, preachers departed from doctrinal discourses briefly to talk about recreation.

There were a few preachers in the movement who opposed all games of any kind on the ground that "Whatever we do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord."<sup>3</sup> Isaac Errett, a leading preacher and writer, replied with the apparent attitude of the people when he answered:



*We have seen men to whom croquet is an abomination, who yet have no scruples about indulging by the hour in gossip sometimes to the serious injury of others. We know others who decry all social parties, that have no scruples about cracking jokes by the hour when they can find congenial company.*

*In our judgment, recreation is needful, and laughter is healthful to body and mind . . . .<sup>4</sup>*

He went on to list five principles to guide Christians in the selection of recreational activities:

1. Seek recreation only when it is needful.
2. Keep them in the purity and dignity of Christianity.
3. Be careful of your associations.
4. Be careful of your example.
5. Keep on safe ground. Venture not in doubtful territory.<sup>4</sup>

Earlier he had written:

*We are aware of the legitimate demand for amusements. We are not at all disposed to ignore it. Young people must have fun, and older ones are none the worse for it. It is not a true piety that denies all play to the tired faculties and jaded powers, and insists on making all the scenes of social life seriously so severely dignified and solemn. We concede that the question of lawful recreation demands more attention than it receives.<sup>5</sup>*

## RECREATION

Recreational activities condemned generally by the Christians included: gambling, horse racing, cock fights,

theatres, circuses, and billiards. Alexander Campbell wrote on recreation in the 1831 *Harbinger* condemning horse-racing, cockfighting, bullbaiting, balls, card playing and theatres.<sup>6</sup> John Rogers spoke out against going to the circuses and theatres.<sup>7</sup> Errett opposed circuses due to the "low order of clownish jokes and performance bordering on vulgarity" generally found at their functions. He went further to oppose agricultural fairs and Fourth of July celebrations due to the horseracing involved along with "betting, drinking, swearing and unhallowed excitement bordering on the brutal."<sup>8</sup> O'Kelley had special condemnation for preachers who "break all restraints of gospel principle and attend horse races, cock fights, fox hunts" as well as drink wine to excess and play cards.<sup>9</sup>

Calm, beneficial, educational activities were recommended for recreation. In 1840 Campbell suggested "constructive and amusing endeavours such as 'managing a vine, a shrub, a flower . . . ' cultivating a small farm of one square rod, or of ten." He further stated that some things of value "when free from violent efforts or circumstances of danger" (and when explained by a tutor) were: fishing, fowling, hunting, swimming, riding and walking.<sup>10</sup>

## DANCING AND CARD-PLAYING

When this area of life began to receive attention, the list of social activities condemned was much longer than those condoned. Most vigorously condemned were dancing and card-playing:

*Is it wrong for Christians to make or attend social parties for dancing and card-playing?*

*. . . as practiced in this country, they are destructive of piety. They are in the hands of the worldly and are managed in the interest of the ungodly; and it*

*is a sad and base bowing of the knee to the spirit of this world when Christians allow themselves to yield to the entreaties of worldliness and 'join themselves unto Baal-peor.'*<sup>11</sup>

John Rowe heard that "some of our city churches" were winking at dancing. He vigorously opposed it and urged the churches to deny the charge and "vindicate their reputation."<sup>12</sup> He earlier had boasted that his children were grown Christians and had never attended dances.<sup>13</sup> John Rogers denounced dancing in "unmeasured terms."<sup>14</sup> F. G. Allen in his *Autobiography* wrote:

*After I grew to be a young man, I became very fond of fashionable amusements; I liked dancing and went far and near to engage in the fashionable exercise . . . In those years of wildness and wickedness some things I was careful to avoid. I never learned to play cards, to gamble, or to tolerate the company of immodest women.*<sup>15</sup>

Josephus Hopwood asked, "May it not be safely asserted that no one ever knew a card-playing, dancing, theatre-going member of the church to be a praying, loving, working Christian, whose influence with the people stands unqualifiedly for righteousness."<sup>16</sup>

In 1838 Alexander Campbell included in the *Harbinger* an article condemning dancing from a Baptist publication and highly commended it.<sup>17</sup> In 1851 he went further to condemn not only dances for amusements but also those used in religious events. "The Shaking Quaker dances to shake the devil out. Vain man, he shakes the devil in."<sup>18</sup>

Other preachers occasionally wrote to the *Harbinger* about the same subject always with condemnation.<sup>19</sup> In March, 1864, Moses Lard lamented that in many sections of the country "this licentious practice" was found among brethren, some going so far as to send their children to dancing schools. He wrote that if they would not cease:

*Let them go out of the church of God into the world where they properly belong. The church never parts from aught but trouble when it parts from such members . . . the church should make no compromise, not for one day with dancing . . . . Of all the un-sanctioned acts a church has to deal with, none demands prompter treatment than dancing.<sup>20</sup>*

Throughout the study for this paper not one preacher of the movement was found who supported dancing or card-playing in his writings.

## ALCOHOL

As did practically all of the frontier churches, the Christians opposed the drinking of all alcoholic beverages. Campbell was asked by letter in the *Harbinger* in 1835 if a Christian can "own or keep a 'dogger' — 'a grocery of ardent spirits and wines' which he vends 'wholesale or retail'?" He answered with a definite "no . . . nor even stay there for one hour."<sup>21</sup> Probably the most moderate position taken by a leader of the movement was that of Errett when he was asked if it was compatible for a church member to be a regular beer drinker, "frequenting for that purpose a common saloon, though not drinking to drunkenness?" His answer . . . .

*No man has a right to dictate to him that he shall not drink beer. That is a matter in which others may*

*give advice, but in which they have no right to dictate. But when he comes out before the public to drink his beer, and enters into low associations, and his example involves the honour of the Christian name, then the church has a right to insist that he shall abandon what is clearly an improper class of associations and an injurious line of conduct.*<sup>22</sup>

There was considerable disagreement in their attitudes toward the rise of the temperance movement. Alexander Campbell led a sizeable group (probably the majority) who thought that the church should fight the evil of drink in the name of Christ. The use of additional organizations for Christians was unnecessary and even undesirable. In 1835 he wrote:

*We have always and uniformly borne our testimony in favor of temperance, righteousness, benevolence and the cooperation of all Christians and Christian churches in the grand enterprise of converting the world: but at the same time we have borne our testimony against Temperance Associations, Missionary Societies, and every other human institution opposed to the honour, dignity and usefulness of the Christian institution.*<sup>23</sup>

Seven years later he elaborated further:

*We have long since expressed a conviction that the church of Jesus Christ is a Missionary, Temperance, Bible, Education, and Philanthropic Society: — that, in the church capacity Christians move in all spiritual and moral good: — that we ought not to transfer to any human establishment the honours and glory due to the Christian Institution . . . .*

*. . . Her (the church's) members may exhort those*

*without to join the Temperance Society when they see it necessary or expedient. And certainly if any Christian choose to vow that he will never drink wine nor strong drink for the sake of saving some from drunkenness, no other Christian has a right to get angry with him for so doing.*

*I think some of our brethren are, perhaps, too fastidious on this subject. They should rejoice in the present temperance movement.*<sup>24</sup>

Later that year he urged all Christians to oppose intemperance by the use of their privilege to vote.<sup>25</sup> In 1853, he labeled intemperance as the "mammoth evil of this our day, our generation and country." He went on to say that prohibition was the most logical answer to the problem and urged all Christians to use the most "vigorous and persevering effort in aid of this grand reform." If such efforts were not in progress in any states, he urged Christians to introduce them.<sup>26</sup>

A preacher signing "W. C. H." wrote to Campbell in 1842 stating that a number of brethren had joined the temperance societies while others opposed such attachment. He said he had been unable to see how Christians could join although "it may be that I am wrong in the stand that I have taken. If so, I wish to be corrected."<sup>27</sup> In the same issue a preacher in Kentucky (J. H. H.) wrote, "To see the Disciples of Christ forming such an alliance with the world, has, to me, an awful squinting at fornication."<sup>27</sup>

However, a group of lesser-known preachers than Campbell did support the societies openly and vigorously. John Cox wrote on the subject of the Christian duty toward the temperance enterprise:

1. To cease using intoxicating drinks as a beverage.

2. . . . to aid and encourage the progress of the temperance cause. Of course, in doing this, he must be left to the selection of his own means. This will lay an embargo on the weak and silly opposition to, and denunciation of, temperance societies . . . .
3. . . . to exercise their vote in favor of prohibition laws.
4. Preachers should instruct their flocks with regard to their duty touching the temperance question.<sup>28</sup>

Another had earlier written: "The danger of disgracing our cause is not in uniting, but in withholding our efforts from the temperance cause."<sup>29</sup>

The influence of the Christians was cast on the side of temperance in every instance. Direct participation in the societies was discussed with much variety of opinion. Different courses of action were allowed within the fellowship of the movement.

## TOBACCO

In a host of other areas of social activity and discussion, the disciples generally were led by men of conservative attitude. They were unwilling, however, to allow any social problem to become serious enough to wreck their intense drive to unite the Christian world. Their attitude toward the use of tobacco illustrates this position.

During the early preaching life of Thomas Campbell he often in sermons and debates held "his old gold snuff-box, in his hand, and snatching thence, at unequal intervals, a 'hasty pinch' of the good old Scotch, as Henry Clay called it, 'would renew his efforts with energy.' However, he gave up this habit nearly thirty years before his death."<sup>30</sup> Of himself Alexander wrote:

*As I have been reclaimed from this vice, I can lift up my voice against it, and testify that in my judgment it is deservedly obnoxious to the reprobation of the philosopher, the physician, the moralist, the gentleman, and the Christian.*<sup>31</sup>

James Shannon, President of Bacon College in Georgetown, Kentucky, opposed its use on the ground of filth, expense, injury to body, and the worship of artificial appetite. He urged "the press, the pulpit, and every friend of morality and civilization to stand against it until it was completely abandoned."<sup>32</sup> John T. Johnson gave up the habit of chewing when about 35 years of age upon the advice of a doctor. He urged ladies to —

*have nothing to do with a young man who is in the habit of chewing tobacco. While it is possible for him to be a gentleman or a Christian while engaged in a filthy practice, it is barely so: for the tobacco not only injures the brain and heart, undermines the constitution and ruins the health, but it robs God of years that might be devoted to his service, by leading its victim to an untimely grave.*<sup>33</sup>

John Rogers also was "bitter in opposing the use of tobacco."<sup>34</sup> Josephus Hopwood opposed it to the extent that he advocated that the government should prohibit its growth.<sup>35</sup>

Despite such opposition its use was not a matter of fellowship, and a number of Christians (even among the preachers) both used and grew it. John Smith, one of the outstanding men of Tennessee and Kentucky, used it until his death.<sup>36</sup> A disciple in Covington, Kentucky in 1840 sent for Smith to come and assist in establishing a congregation in that community. The meeting was held in his own tobacco warehouse.<sup>37</sup> In 1850 Alexander Campbell went to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, to preach. Upon arriving he went into the law office of Frank Ballinger and asked for a small piece of tobacco, "not to chew, but to take the bad taste out of his mouth."<sup>38</sup>



## FOOTNOTES — CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup>When Campbell changed the format of his monthly periodical in 1830 he chose the name of *Millennial Harbinger*.

<sup>2</sup>"Bro." Brotwright, "Extract of Letters," *The Evangelist*, I (May, 1832), p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Isaac Errett, *The Querist's Drawer: A Discussion of Difficult Subjects and Passages of the Scriptures*, Edited by Z. T. Sweeney, Cincinnati, 1910, pp. 275-276. Cited hereafter as *Querist's Drawer*.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 275-278.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup>"Co-operation of Churches No. IV," II (October), p. 436.

<sup>7</sup>"Dancing," *Ibid.*, 4th Ser., I (August, 1851), pp. 467-468.

<sup>8</sup>*Querist's Drawer*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>9</sup>MacClenny, *Life of O'Kelley*, p. 28.

<sup>10</sup>"New Institution," *Harbinger*, New Ser., IV (March), p. 132.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 12-14.

<sup>12</sup>F. M. Green, *Life of J. F. Rowe*, Cincinnati, 1899, p. 114.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 101.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>14</sup> W. C. Rogers, *Recollections of Men of Faith: Containing Conversations With Pioneers of the Current Reformation: Also Numerous Incidents and Anecdotes of These Heroic Heralds of the Cross*, edited by W. C. Rogers, St. Louis, 1889, p. 206. (Cited hereafter as *Recollections*).

<sup>15</sup> Edited by Robert Graham, Cincinnati, 1887, pp. 28-29.

<sup>16</sup> *A Journey Through the Years*, reprint, St. Louis, 1932, pp. 180-191 (Cited hereafter as *Journey*).

<sup>17</sup> "Dancing" New Ser., II (April, 1838), pp. 155-157.

<sup>18</sup> "Dancing" *Ibid.*, Fourth Ser., I (Sept.), pp. 503-507.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Third Ser., IV, pp. 223-226 and 284-288.

<sup>20</sup> "Instrumental Music in Churches and Dancing" *Lard's Quarterly*, I, pp. 333-334.

<sup>21</sup> VI (February) p. 86.

<sup>22</sup> *Querist's Drawer*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>23</sup> *Harbinger*, VI (September) p. 388.

<sup>24</sup> "Temperance Societies" *Harbinger*, New Ser., VI (February, 1842), p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, (August), p. 372.

<sup>26</sup> "Temperance and the Maine Laws," *Harbinger*, 4th Ser., III, (October), pp. 575-582.

<sup>27</sup> "Temperance Societies", *Ibid.*, New Ser., VI (Feb), 93.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>28</sup> "The Temperance Question," *Ibid.*, 4th Ser., III (December, 1853), pp. 699-700.

<sup>29</sup> Matthes, "Temperance," *Ibid.*, 3rd Ser., I (August, 1844), p. 342.

<sup>30</sup> Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 275-277.

<sup>31</sup> *Harbinger*, New Ser., II (February, 1838), pp. 52-53.

<sup>32</sup> "Tobacco," *Ibid.*, New Ser., V (July, 1841), p. 313. Later this school was moved to Harrodsburg and then to Lexington as the University of Kentucky.

<sup>33</sup> John Rogers, *The Biography of Elder J. T. Johnson*, Cincinnati, 1861, pp. 69-71. Cited hereafter as *Biography of Johnson*.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>35</sup> *Journey*, pp. 166-168.

<sup>36</sup> John Augustus Williams, *Life of John Smith*, p. 447.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454.

<sup>38</sup> W. C. Rogers, *Recollections*, p. 13.

**Attitudes Toward Social Problems: No. 2**

Lord's Day

Woman's Suffrage and Education

Credit and Benevolence

Secret Societies

Capital Punishment

## THE LORD'S DAY

A native of Springfield, Massachusetts, who traveled to Mississippi wrote back to Laura Stebbins that —

*There is a great difference between a Sabbath day in the West and one in New England. Here (West) it is the day for amusements . . . . There are large gardens that are kept for the purpose where they meet with a band of music and spend the day in various sports: drinking and carousing all day. But what appears most strange to me is, that the newspapers should notice them as they do, commending them to all who wish to enjoy themselves on a Sabbath day. This forenoon (Sunday, May 22, 1859), there was a large company of young men and boys past the house just as the bells were ringing for church, each one had some kind of an instrument by which to make a noise and all seemed anxious to make the air hideous and themselves doubly ridiculous. They encamped about one-half mile from the house and are spending the day in their usual manner . . .<sup>1</sup>*

From its inception one of the marks of the Restoration movement was the observance of the Lord's supper

every first day of the week. This observance required attendance at worship each Sunday. It also was generally taught and practiced at worship that the day should be used in pursuit of things for the improvement of self and society. The Christians did not advocate strenuously the passage of laws regulating the day but were not opposed to such. Aylett Raines wrote in the *Harbinger* in 1832 that one of the obstacles to reformation was a habit of the "sectarian systems, of spending the Lord's day improperly; hence it is frequently difficult to persuade the disciples to assemble on every Lord's day."<sup>2</sup> J. S. Ferguson, editor of the *Christian Magazine*, wrote in 1848 that a Christian should use the day "endeavoring to promote arrangements which have a tendency to . . . hastening eternity." All activities with contrary tendencies should be suppressed.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander Campbell wrote a series of articles in the 1830's on the subject of "Reformation." In the twelfth of the series he dealt with the subject of the Lord's Day. "To call it the Lord's Day and then appropriate it to our own business or amusement, would be to rob the Lord . . ." He then condemned loafing at home; neglecting worship and communion; recreation with "aliens;" attending affairs of state, of trade, of agriculture, of general business; neglect of singing, fellowship or contributing. He also condemned conversing on matters of this life on the way to church, merely listening to sermons, and allowing children to wander in town or forest while the parents are at service:

*I beseech them (Christians) to reflect upon the loss which they must sustain, the opportunities of doing good which they must neglect, the ingratitude which they would display to their Supreme benefactor, the contempt which they would offer to their brethren, the deleterious influence they must*

*inevitably exert upon those without, should they fail to celebrate this day in letter and spirit of the examples of the ancient Christian . . . .*"<sup>4</sup>

In 1841 Alexander Campbell stated that in this area Christians had been misunderstood and opposed from the beginning:

*One of our oldest objections to popular and fashionable Christianity is its desecration of the Lord's Day. When first we joined the Baptists we had to stipulate for the privilege of sanctifying the natal day of Christ's church . . . by meeting together on every sacred return of that most memorable of all days, not only of the week, but of all the years of time, to partake of the symbolic loaf and cup. They generously, after some debate, allowed us the privilege of thus not forsaking the weekly assembling of the household of faith to enjoy the family meal of God's beloved children. Still our doing so was often alluded to with no very kind regard, and it was represented rather as a singular peculiarity of ours, than as an essential and divinely ordained part of the sanctification of the Lord's Day.*<sup>5</sup>

Errett was asked in the *Querists' Drawer* if it was wrong to work on the Lord's Day. He answered that the New Testament furnished no law on the subject. He then illustrated with the fact that many first century Christians were slaves whose time was not at their own disposal. Principles suggested by him for the use of the day included: 1) man needs a day away from his labor; 2) we are taught to assemble on that day; 3) there was not only a Lord's Supper in the first century but also a Lord's day; and 4) the salvation of the world depends on efforts that for many must come on that day.<sup>6</sup>

## EDUCATION

One of the more paradoxical situations arising in the movement was in the area of education. The four outstanding leaders were well-educated men. They presented a plea for unity through the liberty of individual study. Yet their lessons were simple and attractive to the people of the frontier, who on the whole were less educated. The movement was filled with both elders and teachers with little or no formal education. Yet almost to a man support was fully in favor of some sort of education for all. Two factors doubtlessly were predominant in this position: 1) the influence of the Campbells, Stone and Scott; and 2) the realization that, if people were to unite on the basis of the scriptures alone, the ability to read and study individually would be invaluable.

Alexander Campbell's initial attack upon existing religion in the *Christian Baptist* was of the "clergy" . . . its attitude, its education, its haughtiness. This initial attack prompted a hesitancy among the reformers to desire religious education in formal schools. Stone maintained this attitude until death:

*I wish we had ten (schools of human learning) for every one we have. The world needs information. But I do not wish to see them made a part of heaven's religion to men . . . We might as well make our policy of civil government a part of Christianity, as some nations have done, as to make colleges a part. Let both occupy their proper places, and not be amalgamated with Christianity, and they will be a blessing to the world, and not a curse.<sup>7</sup>*

Campbell favored a general education for all. He disliked schools of theology and other religiously-oriented schools which "filled the world with idle speculation,

doctrinal errors, and corruptions of all sorts, terminating in discords and heresies innumerable.”<sup>8</sup> He acknowledged in August, 1836, that there were a goodly number of brethren “who think that we ought to build up male and female seminaries, primary schools and colleges . . .” He then stated that schools and colleges are not necessarily hostile to the genius of primitive Christianity, but acknowledged that he did not know whether it was worth the expense and trouble of establishing a Bible school simply to control it. He said that they could continue to convert those educated at others’ expense.<sup>9</sup>

In 1836 Campbell received unexpectedly, the notice of the organization of Bacon College in Georgetown, Kentucky, with Walter Scott as its President.<sup>10</sup> In December of that year Campbell reported that D. S. Burnet had succeeded Scott as President and that the school was operating successfully with two hundred and three students.<sup>11</sup> In October, 1839, he announced his plans for a school at Bethany. It was a comprehensive outline for a “literary, moral and religious school.” The plans were to combine the family, the primary school, the college and the church “in one great system of education.” He said that his plans had been in contemplation before the beginning of Bacon College.<sup>12</sup>

Establishments such as these, however, did not meet the needs for the education of the masses, which Campbell had always favored. “. . . Our churches are filled with persons whose education is so wretchedly defective . . . that they cannot enter into the liberty and boldness of the Christian religion.”<sup>13</sup>

As a delegate to the Virginia Convention in 1829, he proposed a plan for general education which failed to receive support. The Convention “was a scramble for power”



and not to devise ways to provide for the happiest population.<sup>14</sup> The cardinal principles of his plan were:

1. Ignorance is the parent of idleness and bears fruit of immorality and crime.
2. To prevent crime is much wiser than to punish it.
3. *Government* is responsible for trying to prevent such through preserving life, liberty, reputation and property.
4. Schools and seminaries are essential in every community to "the expulsion of ignorance and the promotion of intelligence and virtue."
5. They are the most "necessary, useful, and every way appropriate objects of legislation, and of governmental supervision, protection and support; . . ." <sup>15</sup>

The details of Campbell's plan included the proposal that all land and personal property in the state be taxed sufficiently to provide a good education for every child. One State University should be established and "as many common schools as will make it convenient for all the children in every vicinity to attend." All the professors and teachers should be paid by the State with the State University administering tests to qualify all who teach in the common schools.<sup>14</sup> About this same time he denounced vigorously a law reportedly passed in Georgia which made it illegal to teach a slave to read or write.<sup>15</sup>

Numerous other leaders supported government sponsored, free education for all. J. B. Ferguson urged in *The Naturalist* (as the Tennessee legislature discussed improvement of education):

*Let there be a Board of Education in the state, let the schools be free, or nearly, so, - employ none but*

*competent teachers, and by all means let the State have a practical educated and independent superintendent of public instruction.*<sup>16</sup>

A writer in the *Harbinger*, who signed 'Mattathes', urged the taxation of all, with the rich bearing most of the burden "as those best able to bear" it, for a free school system. He commended Governor McDowell of Virginia for making such a proposal.<sup>17</sup> F. G. Allen in the 1870's noted the vast strides education had made in Kentucky since his childhood thirty years earlier. He bemoaned the lack of schools yet in the rural areas and the lack of facilities in regard to the comfort of the student. "When as much attention is bestowed on these as on jockeys, and on our boys as on our horses, we shall be both richer and better."<sup>18</sup> In that same decade he declared in a speech at his alma mater (Eminence College of Kentucky):

*Our children must be educated in just principles, if we would perpetuate a just government . . . . No man should have a voice in determining the destiny of our nation, (by the ballot) who rejects the means of that culture which alone can qualify him to act intelligently.*<sup>19</sup>

Walter Scott also spoke out in favor of education for all. He supported Thomas Grimke's proposal that the Bible be used as a text book "from the Primary School to the University."<sup>20</sup>

The support of the Christians for education in general is shown in a poll which was taken in Indiana in 1848. The churches were urged to vote as to whether the "brethren" should establish a college in the state and, if so, where it should be located. Seventy-eight churches replied. Nineteen of these with 1,156 members voted for it with Indianapolis

receiving 58% of the vote as to location. Only three churches with 340 members opposed it.<sup>21</sup> The influence of the movement was cast in favor of education for all, either through private or public schools. Many wanted a religiously-oriented education for their children and many "Bible Schools" were established. Most also favored the establishment of public schools for all children by the State and financed by taxation. With one major exception (Campbell at the Virginia Constitution Convention), however, they did not take the initiative politically to bring this into being.

#### WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE AND EDUCATION

The Christians took little or no part in the discussion of woman's suffrage during this period. Their attitudes were entered around two basic thoughts: 1) The woman's place was in the home; and 2) well-informed wives and mothers were essential to improved society.

Alexander Campbell held that it was the "primary duty of all parents to educate their children in all useful knowledge."<sup>20</sup> He later wrote that "the education of the female sex, I contend, is at least of equal importance as the education of our own. In moral results it is perhaps, greater."<sup>21</sup> In 1843 Thomas Campbell wrote a letter to Alexander's daughter, Margaret, who was attending P. S. Fall's Female Seminary in Frankfort, Kentucky:

*I am pleased to learn . . . that you were disposed . . . to continue your studies without interruption . . . Knowledge is the very fund and foundation of all intellectual, rational enjoyment and utility, which constitutes the very high and blissful end of our creation, and without which we must live and die as brutes . . . . And now . . . is your favorable opportunity for obtaining this blissful accomplishment.*

*Wherefore it is my earnest desire and prayer that you may make the proper use of it for this happy purpose.*<sup>22</sup>

A large number of schools for girls began to spring up in the brotherhood in the 1840's and 1850's. Among them were: Patterson Institute at North Middleton, Kentucky;<sup>23</sup> Greenville Institute for Young Ladies at Harrodsburg, Kentucky;<sup>24</sup> Female Collegiate Institute in Georgetown, Kentucky;<sup>25</sup> Hopkinsville Female Academy in Kentucky;<sup>26</sup> Mulberry Grove Female Seminary in Medina, Ohio;<sup>27</sup> Hope Institute in Nashville, Tennessee;<sup>28</sup> Henry Female Academy in New Castle, Kentucky;<sup>29</sup> and co-educational (from its origin in 1855) Eureka College in Illinois.<sup>30</sup>

Alexander Campbell felt the need of the education of women on the basis that "Woman, I believe, is destined to be the great agent in this grandest of all human enterprises—an effort to advance society to the acme of its most glorious destiny on earth." He continued:

*We ask for female cordon to stretch through the whole length of this land, against the appalling progress of fashionable vices, not merely against the luxurious extravagances of costly raiment, splendid furniture, and sumptuous modes of living, which in themselves are great evils, and fast precipitating this nation against that fatal rock on which the proudest empires have been dashed to pieces; but against the remains of barbarism still existing amongst us—dueling, revenge, violence, oppression . . ."*<sup>31</sup>

In that same address he described the bounds of woman's work as being that of tradition . . . moulding the minds of men for the production of better society:

*Woman was not made to found cities and empires, to command armies and navies, to enter the arena of political strife, to figure in camps, in titles and tournaments, to mingle in the intrigues and cabals of kings and courts. She was made for other ends, to move in other circles, and to exert an influence more pure, more powerful, more lasting. She was made to have an empire in the heart of man, and to wield a mild and gracious sceptre over the moral destinies of our race. Hence the domestic circle is the area of which she is the power, the light, the life, the glory. But though this circle be small, it has paramount sway over every other circle in which man lives and moves. Hence the family institution gives laws to the school, the college, the university, the church, the state, the world. And so it comes to pass that woman's power is confined within this narrow circle that it might be the more concentrated and rebound with more force on all the interests of humanity.<sup>32</sup>*

This same view was expressed to his wife in a letter from the 1829 Virginia Constitutional Convention to which he was a delegate. He lamented his long absence from her and home but then announced that he was to take a two week preaching tour at the end of the convention. "I do know that you must suffer more privation than I . . . but it happens well for your sex that you are better qualified to sustain solitude and to submit to privation than mine."<sup>33</sup>

Superior Court Judge Richard Reid (Frankfort, Kentucky) expressed a more progressive attitude shortly after the war. He did not declare himself openly in favor of "woman's rights"; yet his position was one which would lay a foundation for such support. Addressing the girls of Mrs. Harris's school at Mt. Sterling, Kentucky, he said:

*It is an age of grand achievements in human enterprise . . . Down, and down, and down they go, kingdom after kingdom, of cherished idols, of conservative usages and customs, of venerated fashion and service. And in all the old that is passing out, and the new that is coming in, is the old, old life of woman, and the new emancipation that is awaiting her. It is useless to cry out against this any longer. We may call out, "Strongminded!" "Woman's rights!" We may raise the hue and cry and set on the hounds of prejudice and persecution, and seek to run down the unfettered soul of woman, and bring it back to the old limits, restrictions, and narrowness. As well try to stop the tides with the hand, to stay the winds with a breath, to check the lightning with an electric spark . . . .*

*All avenues are open to woman now, and only a few of my own sex stand at the gates of some, with uplifted clubs, to beat her back. She has only to declare her own readiness and fitness in any walk in life, and the way is open to her . . .*

*Equality of wages, equality of privileges, equality in property, and equality in education are the grand rights opening up to your sex today . . . . It is no longer, "Thus far and no farther shalt thou go;" but as far as your intellectual energy, your moral power, your physical strength will carry you, "thou mayest go!"*

*Never before were there such weighty responsibilities resting on each individual of your sex . . . .*

*You have only to choose your path of life—so many paths diverge and open before you. Choose and enter, and be fully equipped for the path you take<sup>34</sup>*

Overall, therefore, the churches of Christ did not take a public or political stand for woman's suffrage. They did

believe and teach that women had the same right and need of education as men. This increased knowledge led to an acceptance of woman in a more exalted position by the leaders of the movement. They yet felt that her place was best filled in the home "rocking the cradle and ruling the world."

#### MISCELLANEOUS

A brief statement on four other areas of social disagreement will conclude this chapter. The two most serious problems of the day are reserved for the next chapters. In that discussion the overall attitudes of the Christians will be more fully discussed.

While some Christians felt that all *credit* should be abolished, Campbell probably spoke for the majority when he wrote:

*We have all suffered by an over-extension of the credit system, many think by having any credit system at all. The morals of the community, as well as its financial affairs, have certainly not much improved by the enormous go-in-debt system, so generally popular for the last ten years . . . .*

*Though we cannot go quite so far, (as some who would abolish the credit system entirely) we politically believe that the speculating credit system should be vastly retrenched, and that Christians should have little or nothing at all to do with it.*

He added that he felt it wise for Christians to go in debt only for benevolence or when in adverse providences.<sup>35</sup> Luxuries were considered dangerous to the spiritual welfare of man:

*We want a combination against luxuries in general, especially of other climes and against gay and splendid clothing. The object of this combination would be to diminish labor, to reduce the burdens of life about*

*three hundred percent, and to substitute reading, conversation and refined social interviews, for the parade, pomp, and show, which beget and cherish pride, vanity, jealousy, and foster the worst and most tyrannical passions of the human heart.*<sup>36</sup>

The leaders felt that the church was sufficient to carry out the *benevolent work* of its members. To join another organization for this cause was unnecessary and inadvisable. They also felt that the need for fellowship was fully satisfied in the church. Especially opposed were secret societies —

*. . . why Christians in the nineteenth century should, after they had tasted the sweet influence and blessings of the kingdom of heaven, seek admissions, through all the pledges, oaths and obligations of secrecy, into the societies of "Free Masons" and "Odd Fellows" is rather a difficult and perplexing problem.*<sup>37</sup>

Campbell also condemned *secret organizations* in a series of articles in the *Harbinger* in 1848 and 1849 due to their "religious rites and secrets."<sup>37</sup> Tolbert Fanning took the same position; "Masonry is a pretty good institution, but there is no room for it in the precincts of Christ's kingdom."<sup>38</sup>

Errett spoke out plainly and firmly for the Christians claiming that *capital punishment* was "proper, wise and just." His reasoning was that the law of Genesis 9:6, "Who-so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" was before Moses and was not abolished when Christ removed the Siniatic law. Alexander Campbell wrote four articles on the subject in the *Harbinger* in 1846 and 1847. His conclusion was: "That divine vengeance will not suffer



a murderer to live, is a universal oracle of God, as felt and expressed in all forms of government.”<sup>39</sup> In an essay at about the same time he wrote –

*. . . . we would advocate a scale of punishment in harmony with the most correct views of the criminality and wickedness of human actions, rising up to capital punishment only in the case of willful and deliberate murder, not to be extenuated in any case by passion, intemperance, or any temptation whatsoever.*<sup>40</sup>

## FOOTNOTES — CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup>Papers of Laura Stebbins, Letter, May 22, 1859, Duke Manuscript Library.

<sup>2</sup>"The Lord's Day," III (January), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>"The Lord's Day," I (August), pp. 246-247.

<sup>4</sup>"Reformation—No. XII," *Harbinger*, VII, (September 1836), pp. 418-421.

<sup>5</sup>"The Sanctification of the Lord's Day," *Harbinger*, New Ser., V (December, 1841), pp. 540-541.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 233-235.

<sup>7</sup>Mathes, *Works of Stone*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>8</sup>"Remarks," *Harbinger*, VII (May, 1836), p. 201.

<sup>9</sup>"Literary Institutions, No. II," *Ibid.*, (August), pp. 375-380.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, New Ser., I (January, 1837), pp. 46-47. The notice was dated November, 1836.

<sup>11</sup>This school later moved to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and still later to Lexington as the University of that state.

<sup>12</sup>"A New Institution," *Ibid.*, New Ser., III (October 1839), pp. 446-451. This school began the next year and was conducted by Campbell until his death and still is in operation today. Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, Embracing a View of the Origin, Progress and Principles of the Religious Reformation Which He Advocated*, St. Louis, 1869, II, pp. 463-466. Cited hereafter as *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>13</sup>“Excursions, No I” *Harbinger*, New Ser., V (May, 1841), p. 226.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, I (December, 1830), pp. 553-556.

<sup>15</sup>“Georgia Slaves,” *Ibid.*, I (January, 1830), p. 47.

<sup>16</sup>“The Common School System,” I (January, 1850) p. 24.

<sup>17</sup>“Message of the Governor of Virginia,” 3rd Ser., I (February, 1844), pp. 49-55.

<sup>18</sup>Allen, *Autobiography*, edited by Robert Graham, Cincinnati, 1887, pp. 10-14.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>20</sup>“Review of Grimke’s Address,” *The Evangelist*, I (March, 1832), p. 67.

<sup>21</sup>James M. Mathes, *Life of Elijah Godwin: The Pioneer Preacher*, St. Louis, 1880, p. 210. Cited hereafter as *Life of Godwin*.

<sup>20</sup>“Remarks,” *Harbinger*, VII (May, 1836), pp. 201-202.

<sup>21</sup>“Female Seminaries,” *Ibid.*, New Ser., II (March, 1838), p. 143.

<sup>22</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 178-182.

<sup>23</sup>*Lard’s Quarterly*, IV, (July, 1867), p. 285.

<sup>24</sup>“Greenville Institute For Young Ladies,” *Harbinger*, New Ser., V (July, 1841), p. 335.

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>25</sup>"Female Collegiate Institute," *Ibid.*, VI (January, 1842), pp. 47-48.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, VII (May, 1843), p. 238.

<sup>27</sup>"Mulberry Grove Female Seminary," *Ibid.*, (November, 1843), p. 527.

<sup>28</sup>James E. Scobey, *Franklin College and Its Influences*, Nashville, 1854, p. 161. Cited hereafter as *Franklin College*.

<sup>29</sup>*Harbinger*, 4th Ser., VI (June, 1856), p. 301.

<sup>30</sup>*Program of the International Centennial Celebration and Conventions of the Disciples of Christ (Christian Churches)*, 1909, p. 75. Cited hereafter as *Program*. (Pittsburg).

<sup>31</sup>*Popular Lectures and Addresses*, St. Louis, 1861, pp. 69-70. Cited hereafter as *Popular Lectures*.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>33</sup>December 23, 1828, Unpublished Letter, Disciple Historical Society Library, Nashville, Tenn. Campbell was elected as a delegate to the convention. His main reason in going was to attempt to bring an end to slavery. He also presented a plan for the education of all children, paid for by the state. He felt the slave-owning aristocracy controlled the convention and fought for the right to vote for all whites. He opposed James Madison, Jame Monroe, John Marshall, and others. While losing his fight, he made friends and later addressed a joint Sunday session of U. S. Congress in Washington.

<sup>34</sup>Elizabeth Jameson Reid, *Judge Richard Reid*, Cincinnati 1886, pp. 130-134.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>35</sup>"The Pecuniary Affairs of *The Millennial Harbinger*," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., I (January, 1844), pp. 47-48.

<sup>36</sup>Campbell, *Ibid.*, I (June, 1830), p. 281.

<sup>37</sup>Campbell, "Odd Fellows and Free Masons," *Ibid.*, New Ser., VI (December, 1842), pp. 557-578.

<sup>38</sup>James Scobey, ed., *Franklin College and Its Influences*, Nashville, 1906, pp. 34-35.

<sup>39</sup>"Captial Punishment," 3rd Ser., IV (April, 1847) p. 189.

<sup>40</sup>*Popular Lectures*, p. 321. This essay was printed in tract form and circulated in America and England. Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, II, p. 540.

## Attitudes Toward Social Problems: Slavery

*In this great crisis in human affairs, "He that walketh slowly walks surely, but he that hasteth in his movements erreth . . . ." Let us show good reason for our course, and a due respect to those who dissent from us, and we shall then, doubtless, ride the storm, control the waves, and finally anchor in a sure and safe haven.<sup>1</sup>*

Alexander Campbell spoke these words during the 1851 controversy about the Fugitive Slave Law. They reveal a basic element of the course of action that enabled the church to remain united while many other religious groups were not able, or were not willing, to do the same. The Christians enjoyed their first period of growth during the time the divisive slavery issue became sectional and heated. They entered the war period with vast internal doctrinal problems; yet they were able to continue as one movement with national fellowship. The explanation of how this varied group of several hundred thousand individuals, centered chiefly in the central west and roughly divided North and South, were able to overcome the emotions and prejudices of the day sufficiently to prevent division is both intricate and interesting.

Circumstantially, the newness of the movement at that time could have weakened or strengthened it. Its youthfulness was accompanied by organizational and disciplinary problems that logically might make it vulnerable to emotional or organized assault. On the other hand, its

youth was a source of strength allowing more flexibility in thought and action. The widespread and often bitter opposition to the Christians served to weld them together and to intensify their desire to find solutions to their problems. When they were called upon to face the crisis of slavery and war, areas of discussion were involved which had been previously untouched. The many ideas and varied habits of the new converts prompted more liberality in matters of opinion than was customary in the surrounding religious institutions. The circumstance of this movement at the time of the controversies of the mid-nineteenth century therefore are important, but they are inadequate to explain fully the ability of the Christians to maintain general unity in these four decades.

There were many internal factors in this period that do not relate directly to the position of the Christians toward the social problems of this work. For instance, the closeness of fellowship among them, due to the cherished notion that they had found the formula for uniting all believers and that they were on the verge of destroying sectarianism, cannot be ignored as a uniting factor. The *devotion* of the "pioneer preachers" and their section-crossing influences must also be considered. The respect for Alexander Campbell among the Christians greatly assisted them on their course. Yet, other religious groups were closely united in fellowship; the preachers of many groups were devoted and journeyed extensively; and the power of a single individual was manifested in other institutions that did not remain united nationally during these times.

Among the unique factors involved in the maintenance of unity among the churches of Christ was their basic relationship to anything considered to be a political controversy. Their *attitudes* toward social problems relating to morals (as they conceived them) were not present in their

regard to political-social problems. Their general tendency, however, was to minimize the action of Christians in government. Stone wrote in the early 1840's:

*We must unite our energies, advance the government and kingdom of our Lord, and meddle not with the government of this world, whether human, ecclesiastical, political or civil; all others aside from that of heaven will be put down by a firm decree of our Lord before the end come . . . . I grant that Christians are bound to submit to the powers as far as to pay their dues, as custom, tax, etc. But they are not enjoined to seek for nor fill those powers, and thus sustain the government.<sup>2</sup>*

Earlier, Scott had voiced a similar opinion in *The Evangelist*. He argued that since God was to dictate the destinies of nations toward a wonderful period of peace, it was important only that Christians prepare themselves for that spiritual life. He further stated that time spent in political debates and actions was wasted.<sup>3</sup> The thousands who had been converted by these two leaders doubtlessly read with interest their comments, and many adopted their views.

On more moderate and more typical ground was the extremely influential Alexander Campbell. He often expressed his opinion on individual political issues.<sup>4</sup> He was proud of the freedom of America, and his speeches constantly exult thankfulness for a government of the people.<sup>5</sup> He considered the preaching of views on civil government, however, "entirely extraneous" for those "contending for the faith formerly delivered to the saints." Campbell's only public entry into politics was as a delegate to the 1829 Virginia Constitutional Convention. He said that he participated in it in order to further the influence



of his writings and in order to work for emancipation. In writing to William Tener in February, 1830 he stated:

*But you may ask, What business had I in such matters? I will tell you. I have no taste or longings for political matters or honors, but as this was one of the most grave and solemn of all political matters, and not like the ordinary affairs of legislation, and therefore not incompatible with the most perfect gravity and self-respect, I consented to be elected, and especially because I was desirous of laying a foundation for the abolition of slavery (in which I was not successful), and of gaining an influence in public estimation to give currency to my writings, and to put down some calumnies afar off that I was not in good standing in my own state.<sup>7</sup>*

He felt that "the Lord sent him to Richmond for more than political purposes."<sup>8</sup> Two weeks after making that statement he wrote more extensively of his lack of enthusiasm for this type of endeavor:

*It is now in the 12th week since I arrived in this city, and about 14 weeks since I left home. I am worn out with fatigue in sitting—now going to meetings as it were and sitting in a large assembly 30 days. I have not been a free man since I came here. It puts me in mind of going to school. I am under tutors and governors and I do not like it . . . I have however, done all I could consistently with duty and circumstances to promote the welfare of my fellowman. But our success has not been equal to our exertions. In the good cause I have been more successful and I hope that my journey here will be long remembered.<sup>9</sup>*

Five years later he wrote in answer to the question "Is the

political arena their (preachers') proper field of action?" "If they *are* what they *should be*, we answer that it is not . . . ." <sup>10</sup> In 1839 he added, "I have never spoken the word of the Lord in Washington. Among other reasons, one is that I know of nothing more antipodal to the gospel than politics." <sup>11</sup>

Mr. Campbell's actions tended to agree with a self-written summary of his political interest found in the "Preface" of the 1846 *Harbinger*.

*As far as politics, no one could say, from anything inscribed upon our pages, whether we had any partisan politics at all, or whether we belonged to any political party in our nation. On my later tour in Missouri, I was gravely asked by a constant reader, to what political party I belonged. He confessed he never could decide from the Harbinger whether I was Whig or Democrat. I did not enlighten him very much on the subject. I stated that there were certain principles and policies to which I sometimes gave my suffrage, but that neither parties nor men were worshipped by me with any blind devotion. In local politics and strifes I took no interest. In grand national concerns, I found it my duty to support principles and measures involving, as I conceive, the best interests of the community to which I belonged.* <sup>12</sup>

Leading more liberal teachers was Isaac Errett, an outstanding minister and well-known editor. He was of the opinion "that a Christian *may* hold office under any government that leaves him free to perform his Christian duties." <sup>13</sup> He *preached* against the Fugitive Slave Law, <sup>14</sup> and his biographer states that he was a "good sound Republican." <sup>15</sup>

Agreeing with Scott and Stone were many outstanding preachers. Moses Lard, of Missouri, wrote in December, 1863, "Politics in the church! my soul, what church can prosper where such is the case? None. The Lord keep the churches to their legitimate business of causing the truth to be preached, and taking care of the children of God."<sup>16</sup> Answering the accusation of being a "Know-nothing" John R. Rowe answered:

*We know nothing about "Know-nothings". We have never sat with them in conclave. We have never seen the shadow of the mystic penetralia of their Arcanum, nor do we want to see. As in religions we are neither Presbyterians, nor Baptists, nor Methodists, nor Lutherans, nor Episcopalians, nor Romanists, nor High Churchmen, nor Dissenters, but Christians, so neither in politics are we Democrats, nor Whigs, nor Freesoilers, nor Abolitionists, nor know-nothings . . . nor any such thing, but patriots.<sup>17</sup>*

Tolbert Fanning, founder and president of Franklin College in Nashville, Tennessee, felt that Christians should stand aloof from all the worldly institutions and give an undivided fealty and service to the kingdom of God!<sup>18</sup>

The array of opinions on the liberal side of Errett could be considered only slightly less imposing. John Smith, one of the movement's outstanding leaders in its Kentucky successes, was a Whig and took active speaking roles in political campaigns.<sup>19</sup> The partisanship of Burke Aaron Hinsdale, of Hiram College, is manifested in the following letter:

*What can be more reckless than Southern character? Why need we not expect the same characteristics to display themselves in national affairs that are*

*so conspicuous in their private transactions? . . . Perhaps this is a very serious view but we can expect that antislavery education of the north and the proslavery teaching of the south during two centuries, can be all undone in a moment? It seems to me that this is but one thing that can prevent the struggle from becoming more and more bitter — and that is a relaxing of public opinion in the north. That, I hope, will not be the result.<sup>20</sup>*

To these men might be added the names of many who served in local and state offices, in the United States Congress, one Attorney-General of the United States and one President of this country.

Doubtlessly, however, the general attitude of the churches of Christ was summarized correctly by Jacob Creath, Jr., the “iron-duke” of the movement, when he answered a query concerning his preaching and politics by saying, “that as a people we were opposed to the introduction of politics into the pulpit; that I had never done it . . . that this was the position of our people.”<sup>21</sup> This disassociation from party politics by the majority of the preachers was a major factor in the movement’s ability to continue national fellowship during those troubled times. Its plea for ending denominationalism on the basis of agreement in matters of revelation, and liberty in all others, prompted the members to be receptive to those ideas which would allow them to maintain their own unity.

Members of the churches owned few slaves and made little progress in converting the Negroes around them. Although a “goodly number of these bondsmen”<sup>22</sup> were reported members of the churches by Alexander Campbell in 1835, by 1849 he stated that in contrast to the Baptists “we have comparatively few in our communities.”<sup>23</sup> The Negro members “assembled around the same table and

were recognized and treated as brethren in Christ."<sup>22</sup> There were usually pews for their race in the back of the auditorium.<sup>24</sup> David Lipscomb attributed the failure to convert more Negroes to their love of "more emotional services than they find among the Disciples."<sup>25</sup>

Statements pleading for understanding and moderation were made early in the slavery conflict by leading Christians. These aided in forming a basis for unity as the debate became more heated. Scott wrote in 1832:

*We may live where we please, in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America, serve whom we please, hire whom we please, hold an office if we please, profess the trade which we please, hold servants if we please, marry whom we please.*<sup>26</sup>

In 1830 Alexander Campbell wrote:

*Now, if I could speak to all the slaves on this continent, I would say to them, Be faithful and obedient servants not only to masters good and gentle, but even to the froward and perverse.*

.....  
*Masters of the South, you will find that I am not visionary on this subject. Nor have I a desire to see you lose one dollar, nor one hour's sleep, nor that you should feel one pang of guilty conscience, because of your happening to possess servants white or black . . . You may be more really slaves than those you designate by that name. The fear of your slaves in many instances is Master over you. You are in this view the slaves of slaves.*<sup>27</sup>

In 1835 he wrote that he would "No more think of wresting the owner, without a full and satisfactory consideration."<sup>28</sup> In the same instance he urged everyone to deal

with the controversy coolly and gravely "after profound examination." Five years later he stated that he had refrained from speaking much about it due to the excitement of both sides. He then regarded slavery, as always, as a great evil while his text warned masters to render their servants that which is just and equal.<sup>29</sup> The early expressions of sentiments by these two men helped prepare the way for their moderate guidance as the controversy increased in the church.

A fuller explanation of Campbell's view (endorsed by his father)<sup>30</sup> is essential to an understanding of the views of the movement of which he was recognized by everyone as the major leader. A series of articles by him appeared in the *Harbinger* of 1845 entitled, "Our Position to American Slavery." The articles purposed to help the churches of Christ escape the fate of the Methodists and Baptists and Christian Connection. His basic plea was to regard slavery as a "great evil" for political rather than moral reason. He claimed that the Bible provided sufficient grounds for a simple master-slave relationship. The use of the argument of the abuses of the system, he said, was valueless in attempting to prove the immorality of the system as a whole. He reasoned that the duties of masters to slaves, and the subjection of slaves to masters were parts of the revelation of God; slavery could exist without these abuses.<sup>31</sup> Campbell had at one time owned a few slaves himself, but early in life set them free.<sup>32</sup>

In May of 1845 he brushed aside the question of morals in regard to slavery and said that the problem was one of expediency: he questioned whether slavery was in keeping with the claims of the equality of the rights of mankind.<sup>31</sup> In June he stated that slavery was a political evil:

*I have been so much opposed to American Slavery because of its abuses and liabilities to abuse—*

*because of its demoralizing influence upon society through these abuses—because of its impoverishing operations upon the states and communities that tolerate its continuance, that I am a candidate and fearless advocate in my political relations, of a state constitutional termination of it by a gradual approach . . .*<sup>33</sup>

The real problem for the churches was “whether a master, professing Christianity, must, for the simple and only reason that he is a master be debarred from Christian fellowship and also all those who associate with him be non-fellowshipped by Christian Society because they will not non-fellowship him?” To Campbell the answer was simple and logical. Since this was a political question and therefore a matter of opinion, “Christian union and communion are not in the least affected by such parties (Abolition and Pro-slavery), any more than by any other political denominations.”<sup>31</sup> It was upon this ground that the majority of Christians stood during the controversy. Therefore great diversity of opinions could exist and not destroy the unity of fellowship.

While defending slavery on moral grounds, Campbell felt that for master and slave, for state and nation, the most expedient course would be one that gradually freed the slaves without financial loss to the owners. He carried a colonization plan to the 1829 Convention which considered slavery a “national debt” to be repaid just as war debts. He proposed ten million dollars annually be paid by the United States Government to colonize all of color, slave or free, “until the soil of our free and happy country shall not tread by the feet of a slave, nor enriched by a drop of his sweat or blood . . . .” Fifteen years later he advanced a second plan of gradual emancipation for Virginia providing

that all slaves born in the state after 1860 be freed at age twenty-one.<sup>33</sup>

Campbell's position was not satisfactory to the extremists of the country on either side of the question. He was accused of having abolitionist sentiment by some;<sup>35</sup> while others claimed that he exerted a pro-slavery influence.<sup>36</sup> His explanations of his position to the Anti-Slavery Society in Edinburgh in 1847 led to a series of challenges for debate between him and James Robertson, secretary of the society.<sup>37</sup>

His course did not satisfy all of the restorers either but the weight of opinion was vastly in favor of considering slavery a political rather than moral problem. Occasionally a preacher or church would resolve to refuse fellowship to an individual or a group for one sentiment or the other. The American Christian Missionary Society, formed by the Disciples in 1849, had difficulty with Pardee Butler, a missionary of abolitionist sentiments in Kansas. Butler was poorly supported in Kansas and was indignant when informed that the Society could not assist him unless he refrained from preaching politics and arousing the people over a matter of opinion. His wrath was further extended when the Society refused to quit supporting a slave-owning missionary, Dr. Barclay, in Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> A few Christians met in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1853 and formed an Anti-Slavery Missionary Society which supported Butler for a few months and then failed.<sup>39</sup> Abolition-minded students caused a minor disturbance at Bethany College in 1855<sup>40</sup> and again in Hiram College in 1859.<sup>41</sup> Two abolitionists withdrew from a church in Jamestown, Ohio, because its preacher, M. H. Winans, agreed with Campbell; and the congregation maintained fellowship with "Southern Christians."<sup>42</sup> But such examples as these, making slavery an



issue requiring either similarity of views or non-fellowship, were rare.

The churches of Christ generally practiced what they taught and held widely variant views while warmly cooperating in teaching the "first principles of the oracles of God"! Alexander Campbell defended the Fugitive Slave Law in the interest of law and order,<sup>43</sup> while his fellow editor in Ohio in "one of the most painful acts of his public life" took issue with him by preaching against the law with "pity for the hunted fugitive."<sup>44</sup> James Shannon, President of Bacon College, zealously defended slavery on all grounds. He remained a close friend in the church with James Garfield, who "was inclined to believe that the sin of slavery is one of which it may be said that without the shedding of blood there is no remission."<sup>45</sup> Alexander Campbell continued to fellowship the church in Berrien, Michigan, after it passed a resolution opposing slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law.<sup>46</sup> An abolitionist of Ohio did not cease to fellowship W. K. Pendleton, co-editor of the *Harbinger*, although he disagreed violently with the latter's charge of 'infidelity' against William Lloyd Garrison.<sup>47</sup>

*I am an anti-slavery man. This is known to the brethren, East, West, North, and South. All my intimate anti-slavery friends know that I never was the friend of church-secession doctrines; that I have always insisted slave-holding was not a sufficient reason for disturbing church fellowship; and that we had no right to repudiate Dr. Barclay in the light of any facts known to be in his connection with slavery . . . I do not regard slave-holders' money as the 'price of blood'. The scriptures do not thus speak of it. There are multitudes in the South whom I honor and love as being the possessors of many noble and shining qualities of heart and soul; and the fact of their being involved in the misfortunes and evils of a*

system entailed on them and in reference to which their education and surroundings give them different views from mine, can not justify me in denouncing them as Judases, or stigmatizing them as robbers or oppressors . . . I have just returned from Eastern Virginia, where I obtained subscriptions to the amount of nearly three thousand dollars to the missionary cause. While my anti-slavery views and feelings were well known, I have it to say, for the honor of the Virginian brethren, that not the slightest difficulty was thrown in my way, nor the slightest allusion made to it, except I led the way. Could I witness an equal magnanimity in the North, I should have brighter hopes of the success with which the cause of mission ought to be crowned.<sup>48</sup>

Campbell's words of 1846 thus seemed prophetic:

*Our great object in declaring our position on the subject of slavery and the propriety of the discussion of it, has been gained—there will be no division in our ranks on that question. On the broad basis of our Christian profession of allowing differences of opinion, while earnestly contending for one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one spirit, and one hope, as there is but one God and Father of all, I presume on this as on all other subjects of human opinion and human expediency, we shall be able to maintain unity of spirit in the bonds of Christian peace.<sup>49</sup>*

In 1866 Moses Lard, without presumption, could conclude:

*From the moment of our denominational origin in this country up to the very present, we have had the exciting and dangerous question of slavery to encounter. Our brethren South stood strongly for, our brethren North strongly against, the institution.*

*Never for a moment did it cease to chafe and fret. At times it certainly became threatening and wore an ugly look. Brethren on both sides would occasionally flame high and talk loud. Still, all through the strife it excited, all through the passion it aroused we lived without even the semblance of a breach . . . . And now the angry topic is laid aside forever. Brethren who opposed it courteously declined to exult; brethren who favored it magnanimously decline to complain . . . . It has spent its force, and still the children of God are one.<sup>50</sup>*

FOOTNOTES — CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>1</sup>Campbell, "Summary," *Harbinger*, 4th Ser., I (January, 1851), pp. 52-53.

<sup>2</sup>Mathes, *Works of Stone*, pp. 217-218.

<sup>3</sup>"Notes on War," I (February, 1832), p. 44.

<sup>4</sup>*Harbinger*, "The Cherokee Indian," I (January, 1830), "Benevolent Enterprises," I (June, 1830), pp. 257-258; "The Fugitive Slave Law," 4th Ser., I (January, 1851), p. 32; "The Pecuniary Affairs of the Millennial Harbinger," 3rd Ser., I (January, 1844), pp. 47-48.

<sup>5</sup>"An Oration in Honor of the Fourth of July," *Ibid.*, I (July, 1830), pp. 301-310.

<sup>6</sup>"Imprudence of Reformers," *Ibid.*, (June) p. 258.

<sup>7</sup>Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, II, pp. 319-320. "Slavery Crisis in Virginia," *Harbinger*, III, (February, 1832), pp. 86-93.

<sup>8</sup>"Letters of Alexander Campbell to His Wife," December 10, 1829. Unpublished Material at Disciples of Christ Historical Society Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, December 23, 1829.

<sup>10</sup>*Harbinger*, VI (December, 1835), pp. 594-595.

<sup>11</sup>"Incidents on a Tour to the South, No. I," *Harbinger*, New Ser., III (January, 1839).

<sup>12</sup>"Impartiality of the Editor of the *Harbinger*," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., III (January, 1846), pp. 4-5.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

- <sup>13</sup>Errett, *Querist's Drawer*, p. 87.
- <sup>14</sup>J. S. Lamar, *Memoirs of Isaac Errett With Selections From His Writings*, Cincinnati, 1893, I, pp. 117-118. Cited hereafter as *Memoirs of Errett*.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 276.
- <sup>16</sup>"My First Meeting," *Lard's Quarterly*, I (December, 1863), p. 226.
- <sup>17</sup>F. M. Green, *The Life and Times of John F. Rowe With Selections From His Writings, and a Brief History of the Religious Controversies in Which He Took Part*, Cincinnati, 1899, pp. 27-29. Cited hereafter as *Life of Rowe*.
- <sup>18</sup>Scoby, *Franklin College*, p. 35.
- <sup>19</sup>Williams, *Life of John Smith*, pp. 452-453.
- <sup>20</sup>Mary L. Hinsdale, Ed., Letter of Burke A. Hinsdale to James A. Garfield, January 8, 1860, *Garfield-Hinsdale Letters a Correspondence Between James Abram Garfield and Burke Aaron Hinsdale*, Ann Arbor, 1849, pp. 46-47. Cited hereafter as *Garfield Letters*.
- <sup>21</sup>P. Donan, Ed., *Memoirs of Jacob Creath, Jr.*, Cincinnati, 1872, pp. 192-194. Cited hereafter as *Memoirs of Creath*.
- <sup>22</sup>"Negroes in Disciples Church." *Harbinger*, VI (Jan., 1835), pp. 16-17.
- <sup>23</sup>"The Largest Baptist Association in America," *Ibid.*, 3rd Ser., VI (February, 1849), p. 13.
- <sup>24</sup>Hopwood, *Journey*, p. 42. Rogers, *Recollections*, pp. 81-83.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

- <sup>25</sup>Scoby, *Franklin College*, p. 109.
- <sup>26</sup>"Formation of Christian Character," *The Evangelist*, Cincinnati, I (December), pp. 268-269.
- <sup>27</sup>"Emancipation of White Slaves," *Harbinger*, I (Mar.), pp. 128-129.
- <sup>28</sup>"Slavery," *Ibid.*, VI (December, 1835), pp. 587-588.
- <sup>29</sup>"Morality of Christians, No. XVIII," *Ibid.*, New Ser., IV (March, 1840), p. 97.
- <sup>30</sup>"Elder Thomas Campbell's View of Slavery," *Ibid.*, 3rd Ser., II (January, 1845), pp. 7-8.
- <sup>31</sup>"Our Position to Slavery, No. IV," 3rd Ser., II (April, 1845), pp. 145-149; "Our Position to Slavery, No. V," 3rd Ser., II (May, 1845), pp. 193-196.
- <sup>32</sup>"Alexander Campbell," *The National Era*, Washington, D.C., I (November 18, 1847), p. 2. Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, II, pp. 501-502.
- <sup>33</sup>"Our Position to American Slavery, No. VIII," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., II (June, 1845), pp. 257-264.
- <sup>35</sup>"Emancipation of White Slaves," *Ibid.*, I (March, 1830), pp. 128-129. "Morality of Christians, No. XVIII," *Ibid.*, New Ser., IV (March, 1840), p. 97.
- <sup>36</sup>A. G. Riddle, *The Life, Character, and Public Services of James A. Garfield*, Philadelphia, 1880, p. 42. Cited hereafter as *Life of Garfield*. "Alexander Campbell," *The National Era*, November 18, 1847, p. a.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>37</sup>"Alexander Campbell," *The National Era*, November 18, 1857, p. 2. *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., V (January, 1848), p. 49. Ser., VI (September, 1849), pp. 532-533. The exchange of challenges led to a lawsuit against Campbell for libel. He was acquitted, then won a countersuit against Robertson.

<sup>38</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, I, pp. 133-134, cont. pp. 214-216.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, I, p. 219.

<sup>40</sup>"Disturbance in Bethany College," *Harbinger*, 4th Ser., VI (January, 1856), pp. 54-60.

<sup>41</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, I, p. 220.

<sup>42</sup>"Abolitionism," *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., II (November, 1845), p. 505.

<sup>43</sup>"The Fugitive Slave Law," *Ibid.*, 4th Ser., I (January, 1851), pp. 27-35.

<sup>44</sup>"Queries Touching the Fugitive Slave Law, etc.," *Ibid.*, 4th Ser., I (April, 1851), pp. 224-226. Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, I, pp. 117-118.

<sup>45</sup>Hinsdale, *Garfield Letters*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>46</sup>"Slavery and the Fugitive Slave Law," *Harbinger*, 4th Ser., I (March, 1851), pp. 171-172.

<sup>47</sup>"Our Voyage," *Ibid.*, 3rd Ser., III (December, 1846), pp. 684-685. William Lloyd Garrison, 3rd Ser., IV (Feb., 1847), pp. 109-113. Mr. Pendleton observed Mr. Garrison in passage to England in 1846. He later reported "it was not till near the end of our voyage that we had an opportunity

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

to hear from his own lips, some of the absurd and infidel principles upon which his system of operation is based. Insulting, dogmatical, and coarse, he seems to have discarded the authority of the Bible, except as a collection of apt adages with which to illustrate and enforce *reason*, the assumed basis of his fabric . . . . The very elements of his nature are gall and wormwood — (and these with a scheming, bigoted mind) make him the most unfit of men to minister about the altar of benevolence . . . .”

<sup>48</sup> Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, I, p. 218.

<sup>49</sup>“Impartiality of the Editor of the Harbinger,” *Harbinger*, 3rd Ser., III (January), p. 6.

<sup>50</sup>“Can We Divide?,” *Lard's Quarterly*, III (April), p. 335.



## Attitudes Toward Social Problems: War

Having withstood the strain of the prolonged crisis over slavery without division by means of relegating it to the position of a political problem, the churches of Christ found themselves confronting the new difficulty of the Civil War. The members were located in border states and were divided almost equally North and South. In Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, and Iowa, great numbers of churches were found; and most of them favored the preservation of the Union. The Confederate cause was dear to the hearts of the numerous members in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Virginia, Missouri and Georgia. Yet these people followed the same course in regard to the war as toward slavery.

Many preachers sought to minimize Christian participation in war, and practically all agreed that it was not of sufficient importance to divide the fellowship. Although the visions of a rapidly approaching millennium were fading, their continued growth enabled them to cling yet to the hope of uniting doctrinally the protestant societies of America. Some preachers did use the pulpit to further their chosen cause, and many Christians were among those volunteering for military service.<sup>1</sup> However, the general position of the Christian preachers is best illustrated by the following circular signed by fourteen ministers in Missouri.

*To all the holy brethren in every state, grace and peace, from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus*

*Christ: The undersigned, your brethren in the Lord residing in the State of Missouri, in view of the present distresses, which is wringing all our hearts, and the danger which threatens the churches of Christ, would submit to your prayerful consideration the following suggestion:*

1. *Whatever we may think of the propriety of bearing arms in extreme emergencies, we cannot by the New Testament, which is our only rule of discipline, justify ourselves in engaging in fraternal strife . . . . To do so . . . would be to incur the displeasure of our blessed Lord . . . .*

2. *It is our duty . . . to remain as we have thus far so happily continued, a united body . . . .*

3. *Knowing, as all history teachers and as the experience of many of us can testify, that military service almost invariably destroys the religious character of Christians who are drawn into it, we cannot discharge our duties to Christ if we see our young brethren rushing into this vortex of almost certain ruin without an earnest and affectionate remonstrance.*

4. *If we remain true to this line of duty . . . we shall be able greatly to glorify the name of our Lord, who is the Prince of Peace. For we may present to our countrymen, when restored to their right mind by the return of peace, a body of disciples so closely bound by the word of God alone that not even the shock of Civil War nor the alarm produced by religious systems crumbling around us could divide us. How rapid and glorious in that event would be the subsequent triumph of truth throughout the whole land! This heavenly triumph is clearly within our reach. If we fail to grasp it, how unworthy we shall prove of the holy cause we plead!*

5. *We are striving to restore to an unhappy and sectarianized world the primitive doctrine and*

*discipline . . . . Let us for Jesus' sake endeavor in this appropriate hour to restore the love of peace which he inculcated; which was practiced by the great body of the church for the first three hundred years, in an utter refusal to do military service; which continued to be thus practiced by the true church throughout the dark ages, and which has been so strongly plead by many of the purest men of modern times, our own Bro. Alexander Campbell among the number.*

*6. We conclude by entreating the brethren everywhere to study conclusively 'the things which make for peace, and those by which one may edify another' . . . .<sup>2</sup>*

Robert Richardson writes that Alexander Campbell foresaw the war in 1840. He was visiting in the Western Reserve of Ohio in the days of the Presidential campaign of that year and asked a man named Rudolph to whom he thought Ohio's vote would be given. The latter's opinion was that Ohio would vote for General Harrison. Mr. Campbell replied:

*I hope it may be so . . . I will vote for him myself, as he is a personal friend and I approve his policy; but the time will come, Brother Rudolph, when the controversy will no longer be between Whigs and Democrats, but between North and South. Heretofore the Northern states have yielded to the demands of the South, but they feel their rapidly growing strength, and the period will arrive when they will refuse any longer their consent to measures for the protection of slavery, and this institution the South will never surrender without bloodshed.<sup>3</sup>*

In 1843 he delivered an "Address on War" in Wheeling,

Virginia, stating that the precepts of Christianity positively prohibited war.<sup>4</sup> During 1860 and until 1861 the crisis of war was ignored on the pages of the *Harbinger*. At that time the editor vaguely referred to the difficult times and urged the continuance of the "good fight of faith" wherein can be found true glory. In the same issue co-editor W. K. Pendleton pleaded:

*O, my brethren! let us sit down upon the quiet plains of Bethlehem with the watching shepherds . . . , and listen to the cry of the angel, who came with the proclamation of "good tidings of great joy for all people," till we catch the spirit of the Prince of Peace, and fill our souls with the power of his divine compassion; — And then let us look upon the warring elements of the field of mortal strife, and ask the heart, subdued by the love of God . . . if it can take pleasure in the cruel spectacle, or part in the bloody work.*<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, Isaac Errett and B. W. Johnson, while opposing the strife, argued for the right of Christians to participate in it.<sup>6</sup> Some lesser-known preachers argued that war was the best way to settle the difficulties, and therefore Christians *should* fight.<sup>7</sup> The American Christian Missionary Society was loyal to the government and passed resolutions to that effect in 1861 and 1863. The tendency to minimize the differences remained, however, throughout the war.

In the Kentucky Missionary Society meeting of 1863 "no political resolutions marred the harmony of the occasion," and the "brethren nobly forgot that they had ever differed on these worldly themes."<sup>8</sup> In March of that year, Jacob Creath, Jr. entered the pulpit in Palmyran, Missouri, and found a question waiting for him as to why he did not

pray for the President of the United States and all in authority. It asked for an explanation and concluded, "Should you refuse, we shall take it for granted that you are disloyal, and shall act in the premise accordingly." Creath later summarized his answer:

*That as a people we were opposed to the introduction of politics into the pulpit; that I had never done it before nor since the war; that this was the position of our people; . . . that it was pulpit politicians who had brought the present distress upon the country by preaching politics instead of the gospel; that at the beginning of the war I had published in the American Christian Review of Cincinnati, Ohio, the course that our people would pursue relative to the war, which was endorsed by Bro. Alexander Campbell; . . . that the clergy had no right to mix politics with the gospel; that they did not allow politicians to intrude themselves into the pulpit nor to assume any of their functions, and, by the same rule, they should not meddle with politics; that God had divided society into various departments, and that no one man was qualified to attend to all the duties of society, and that it was not right for men to meddle with each other's calling. It was wrong to convert the pulpit into a political arena. I hope the American people will never permit it.<sup>9</sup>*

The continued importance of the unity plea can be seen from the writings of Lard in 1863:

*The sects of the day are doing nothing, literally nothing, save growling at one another as of old; while their members hate each other cordially on account of political differences. Let us be unlike them. We are setting them, in many places, a sublime example,*

*and it is having its effect. They are beginning to realize that our plea of Christian union is not a mere pretense; but that, even in the trying present, we are living the thing we have been preaching to others. Even the world is taking lessons of us.*<sup>10</sup>

J. H. Harrison, Restoration minister in Frankfort, Kentucky, during the war, estimates that "nine hundred and ninety-nine in every thousand of the Disciples . . . held firmly that even a complete severance of the National Union ought not to compel division among the people of God."<sup>11</sup> Thirty-one of the preachers investigated by this writer expressed themselves on the war question. One was completely neutral leaving the selection of course to each individual. Nine were for the war or for permitting Christians to actively participate in it. Twenty-one opposed the war or were against participation in it. In all their shades of opinion, none favored forcing one side to their position with nonfellowship as the penalty of failure.

Thus once more M. B. Lard could write in 1866:

*We as a nation and as Christians have just passed the fierce ordeal of a terrible war, a war in which passion ran to its height and feelings became as ferocious as feelings ever get. We had many brethren on both the opposing sides. Many of our churches stood precisely where the carnival raged most. Yet not a rent in our ranks did the war produce. True, for the time being it cooled many an ardent feeling, and caused old friends to regard one another a little shyly. Still, it effected no division . . .*<sup>12</sup>

The year 1865 found the churches of Christ bothered by doctrinal problems but clearly united on the political difficulties that had divided their religious neighbors and

had nearly destroyed their Union. The youth of the movement had served to allow more liberty in opinion and genuine concern for the continued welfare of the cause. The impetus of expansion led the converts, while differing in many areas of thought and action, to look forward with eagerness to the time when unity of faith would include all the peoples around them. The freshness and growth of the organization served to help minimize social and political difficulties.

More important than all of these, however, was the constant guidance on a moderate course by the men looked upon as the leaders. The power of their influence hardly could be overrated. This is true because these were well educated men in a newly restored fellowship composed mainly of rugged, freedom-loving frontiersmen. These people desired simple instruction in basic matters and liberty in all others. Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton W. Stone and others, were willing to offer them just that. These leaders urged them to unite on the basis of a literal interpretation of the New Testament by each individual, and liberty in all things not found therein. Their resolve was to "restore the ancient order of things" and leave all else to the individual conscience.

There are three reasons for the moderate cause pursued by the principal preachers. First, these men knew that they were responsible for the past success of the movement, and they were determined not to allow anything that could be designated a matter of opinion to divide it. Secondly, their determination was increased by the realization that division at that time would destroy the effectiveness of their basic plea: the unity of all believers. Thirdly, they conscientiously and zealously believed in the necessity of unity in order to achieve the salvation of man.

This unity of faith, they believed, could be attained

only when absolute liberty was allowed in matters of personal opinion (matters concerning which the Bible was silent). They therefore walked slowly, gave good reason for their course, granted due respect to those dissenting, and found success in unity at the end of the storm.



## FOOTNOTES – CHAPTER SIX

<sup>1</sup>James Garfield, Josephus Hopwood, H. S. Bosworth, and J. H. Jones were among the Disciple preachers who joined the Union Army. F. G. Allen and at least twenty-four of Franklin College's graduates were in the uniform of the Confederacy.

<sup>2</sup>"Circular From Preachers in Missouri" *Harbinger*, 5th Ser., IV (October, 1861), pp. 583-584. The circular was signed by: B. H. Smith, Sam'l Johnson, E. V. Rice, J. D. Dawson, J. W. McGarvey, T. M. Allen, J. K. Rogers, J. W. Cox, J. J. Errett, H. H. Haley, T. P. Haley, J. Atkinson, R. C. Morton, and Levi Van Camp.

<sup>3</sup>Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, II, pp. 642-643.

<sup>4</sup>Alexander Campbell, *Address on War*, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1853, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>"The Good Fight of Faith," 5th Ser., IV (July), pp. 365-370. "A Plea for Peace," 5th Ser., IV, pp. 405-410.

<sup>6</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, I, pp. 239-240. B. W. Johnson, "The War Question," *Harbinger*, 5th Ser., IV (October, 1861), pp. 584-587.

<sup>7</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, I, p. 244.

<sup>8</sup>Lard, "Kentucky Missionary Society," *Lard's Quarterly*, I (December, 1863), p. 171.

<sup>9</sup>Donan, *Memoirs of Creath*, pp. 192-194.

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>10</sup>Lard, "Note to the Brotherhood," *Lard's Quarterly*, I (September, 1863), p. 112.

<sup>11</sup>J. H. Garrison, ed., *The Reformation of the Nineteenth Century: A Series of Historical Sketches Dealing With Rise and Progress of the Religious Movement Inaugurated by Thomas and Alexander Campbell From Its Origin to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, St. Louis, 1901, p. 171.

<sup>12</sup>"Can We Divide?," *Lard's Quarterly*, III (April, 1866) pp. 335-336.

## Relationship Of Social Attitudes And Reception

The churches of Christ worked diligently to bring about unity of faith. Oneness was believed possible through a literal interpretation of the Bible. They also attempted to minimize the disruption among believers, necessary to the fulfillment of union, by urging complete liberty of opinion in matters not revealed. All political problems, and most social difficulties, were felt to be in this latter category. It seemed to them that by avoiding contention over "non-essentials" everyone should be willing to agree on the things specifically expressed in the Bible.

The handling of social problems by granting liberty of opinion produced two major results. First, as seen earlier, this freedom was a prime factor in the maintenance of unity within the movement itself. On the other hand, it was of little value in persuading people to leave their denominational ties. The reception, or rejection, of the Christians was due to their doctrines and their method of teaching. Environment also was a major factor. A brief summary of how and where they were received illustrates the fact that the latitude of opinion allowed in regard to social problems did not affect their growth appreciably.

The rapid spread of the movement before 1870 was concentrated on the frontier and in other rural areas. In the Northeast, along the Atlantic coast, in larger cities, and in much of the deep South, reception was very slight.

The people of the frontier were rugged individualists, willing to launch into new ground when they felt it wise,

often rejecting the restraining hand of tradition. Living in sparsely-settled areas and amid dangers, they also learned of necessity to love their few neighbors. They did not have time or opportunity for education. Their manner was simple and direct. Many of them were troubled over the Calvinistic doctrine of individual election, and they searched vainly for the experience which would assure them that they were among the chosen (this was the initial experience of Barton W. Stone). Along the frontier there were few trained preachers, and entire communities had no ordained ministers. Under these circumstances frontier people were more willing to reject any creedal condition which forbade the communion and fellowship of neighbors because of differences in doctrine or faith. As Moses Lard wrote, “. . . in a country comparatively new the minds of the people are more accessible than in the older and more stereo-typed forms of society.”<sup>1</sup>

In a land where freedom was king, a gospel of freedom was appealing. The churches of Christ not only taught that the “truth shall make you free”, but also emphasized the idea that each *individual* had the responsibility before God to learn the truth for himself. They urged each man to be the judge of the various doctrines by a personal study of God’s word:

*. . . it should be stated here that the Disciples were a free people. They called no man master . . . . Even the utterances of the greatest name among them, their chosen and honored leaders, were freely brought to the standard and test of the scriptures. These alone were authoritative.*<sup>2</sup>

James A. Garfield, one of the outstanding men of the Restoration perhaps best summarized it as a “movement

hardly possible save amid a pioneer people, who are remitted somewhat to the primary conditions of life, which seem to place them nearer nature and God . . .”<sup>3</sup>

The removal of the mysterious and the presentation of a simple gospel was a mark of the movement. Walter Scott presented the “five finger” method of salvation on the Western Reserve in 1827. By holding up five fingers, one at a time, he outlined step by step the teaching of how to become a Christian — faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup> His simplicity was appealing on the frontier.

J. B. Jeter, a Baptist author and preacher, considered Campbell’s influence as the major factor in the growth of the movement. He listed eight reasons for Campbell’s influence: (1) His opposition to sectarianism; (2) The prevalence of hyper-Calvinistic, or antinomian views in many Baptist churches; (3) His opposition to Christian missions and other benevolent enterprises; (4) His opposition to the clergy; (5) The *Christian Baptist* (6) His long tours and orations; (7) His teaching of “many important truths, exposed some serious evils; furnished some striking expositions of Scripture passages, which, if not original, were new to his hearers.” (8) The fact that he “labored diligently to awaken an interest in the study of the Scriptures.”<sup>5</sup> Concerning the first periodical of Campbell he wrote,

*The Christian Baptist, having attained a wide circulation, exerted a potent influence against the cause of Christian missions, and Christian benevolence generally . . . And what was true of its blighting influence in Kentucky, was equally true of its influence in Virginia, Ohio and every place . . .*<sup>6</sup>

Wherever Campbell preached, large crowds gathered

to hear him. While in Richmond at the Virginia Convention, he spoke often and once wrote that, "I preached yesterday to about three thousand souls, the largest assembly which Richmond has seen for many a day — hundreds had to go away without hearing."<sup>7</sup> He later wrote:

*I do not know that I have ever seen so many great men assembled together before. But I find myself much more at home amongst them now than I did at first. They all know me from the East and West and they all watch my movements with a jealous eye.*<sup>8</sup>

In 1850, he accepted a request to open the Indiana Constitutional Convention meeting of November 9th. Governor Wright and one hundred fifty delegates to the convention attended a service of the church while he was in Indianapolis.<sup>9</sup>

At the conclusion of the Virginia Convention, ex-President Madison stopped for a night at Colonel Pendleton's. When asked about his opinion of Campbell, he reportedly spoke in very high terms of the ability shown by him at the convention and then added, "But it is as a theologian that Mr. Campbell must be known. It was my pleasure to hear him very often as a preacher of the gospel, and I regard him as the ablest and most original expounder of the Scriptures that I have ever heard."<sup>10</sup>

Stone, perhaps best expressed the sentiments of Campbell's fellow workers when he wrote:

*I will not say there are no faults in brother Campbell; but that there are fewer, perhaps, in him, than any man I know on earth and over these few my love would throw a veil, and hide them from view forever.*

*I am constrained, and willingly constrained, to acknowledge him the greatest promoter of this reformation of any man living. The Lord reward him!*<sup>11</sup>

The extent of the growth of the restoration in the West may be seen by statements of four other men. The first is by a leader of the Christians while the other three are by men outside the movement. Stone, speaking in Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1841, summarized, "Beyond our most sanguine anticipations the cause of union prospered."<sup>12</sup> Twelve years later, J. B. Jeter, published a book with this statement in the introduction, "It was vain to deny that Campbellism has exercised an extensive influence on the religious sentiment of the country."<sup>13</sup>

Visiting in America in 1835 were two men from England, sent by the Congregational Union to "ascertain the actual state of religion in the United States and Canada." In their report they said concerning Kentucky:

*The Baptists are very numerous—probably the largest in the state. Their educated teachers are very few: their uneducated and self-constituted teachers are surprisingly numerous.*

*In this disorganized state, Mr. Campbell came amongst them with his new lights, and now nothing is heard amongst them but Campbellism, as it is called.*<sup>14</sup>

The reasons for the growth of the churches of Christ are many, yet it is evident that their attitude toward social problems was not one of them. The movement grew slowly in the cities. In 1838 Campbell wrote:

*. . . we are happy to learn that the good cause we plead is steadily advancing. It is gaining a little in the*

*cities of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Richmond, and the Western cities generally; but in the country it advances much more rapidly. We flatter ourselves that it is about to spread more extensively in the South.*<sup>15</sup>

In the cities the established churches were more organized, and the larger number of preachers were also better trained. The people were more educated, and the simple plea of the Christians was less attractive. The people of the East and in the cities also had become the more orthodox segment of society as the frontier pushed westward. They were less prone to change their religious habits. After a visit to the East in 1842, Campbell wrote:

*The American cities, like all other cities, are not favorable to prevalence of pure religious influences. . . . They are good theatres for . . . such forms of religion as require more soul than spirit, more animal feeling than Christian knowledge. Men unfortunately suppose, that because the inhabitants of cities understand trade, politics and fashionable dress better than farmers, and other country people, that they ought, forseeth, to be regarded as to possess superior Christian science and piety, and higher intellectual and moral attainments. A grand and pernicious mistake! They are generally neither so intelligent in the scriptures, nor so pious as the people of the country. The eastern and western population, living in favorable rural positions, are more learned in Biblical science, and better acquainted with the Christian Institution, and with all the ways and means of exhibiting Divine truth in its proper attractions, than those with whom it has been my lot to mingle in the great cities.*<sup>16</sup>



Reaction to untrained preachers was therefore greater in the cities. Campbell proclaimed that the need for "a better accomplished class of evangelists and teachers, is everywhere being felt and acknowledged." A preacher in Portsmouth, Virginia wrote Walter Scott:

*Reformation principles need a bold and able advocate in this part of our country; prejudices run mountain high. I have not been manufactured for a priest, and the learned and intricate science of religion is conceived by our folk to be beyond the management of a man who works for his daily bread.*<sup>17</sup>

Opposition to the Christians was extensive and vigorous. It was more successful in the cities but was not confined to those areas. Three main charges were made.

The Restorers were accused of being vindictive. Dr. Andrew Reed, an English churchman visiting America for the Congregational Union, summarized Campbell's methods by writing, "He denounces everybody; he unsettles everything, and settles nothing, and there is great present distraction and scandal."<sup>18</sup> Dr. A. H. Redford of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South wrote shortly after the war, "In too many instances sophistry, ridicule, and abuse were the weapons they (Restorers) employed to undermine the faith of those who dissented from their teachings."<sup>19</sup> A congregationalist in Mississippi wrote to Laura Stebbins that "the Methodists and Campbellites are as hostile as ever."<sup>20</sup> Three days later she noted that there were only two churches there (Methodist and Campbellite) and "I think either, not much better than nothing."<sup>21</sup> J. M. Pendleton, a Baptist, opposed Campbell vigorously because of his vindictive approach to religious truth.<sup>22</sup>

F. G. Allen told the story of a conversation with a

Kentuckian who agreed that the plea and concept of the Disciples were grand. The man then stated "serious objections to some of your methods . . . . First, I think your people are too fond of controversy. You are too pugnacious. You delight too much in theological warfare." Allen replied immediately, "Now in this, I frankly confess there may be some truth."<sup>23</sup> Sooner or later, most Restoration leaders agreed.

Thomas Campbell favored gentle methods from the beginning:

*If the public advocates from the pulpit and the press would only keep their temper, use soft words, and hard arguments, it would progress still more . . . . I most cordially wish never to see or hear one ironic hint, one retaliative retort, by any friends or advocates of the reformation.<sup>24</sup>*

Alexander agreed with his father in theory more than in practice. In 1832 he stated, "We have had much controversy, and no doubt too much of its spirit. It is hard for a person to take fire into his bosom and his clothes not smell of it."<sup>25</sup> Just before this, however, he, in the spirit of controversy, had written of Joseph Smith as an "Ignorant and impudent liar."<sup>26</sup> B. W. Stone observed that "we have borne the opposition against us with tolerable patience. But on retrospect I fear we have sometimes deviated from that charity 'which suffereth long and is kind' . . ."<sup>27</sup> Errett, explaining Campbell's methods, perhaps summarized the problem best:

*But, unhappily, all this tended to whet a taste for controversy. Many learned to love it, to rejoice in its excitements and its triumphs, and to view the truth*

*mainly in its controversial aspects. When the victor came to preach it was much the same as when he debated.*<sup>28</sup>

The plea for oneness necessitated abandoning established organizations and uniting in another. Thus while pleading for unity, the Christians were constantly charged with causing division and partyism. William Phillips, a Methodist preacher, wrote:

*Have his (Campbell's) labors diminished the number of sects, checked party strife, or increased the spirit of love and forbearance among Christians? Just the reverse; for he has, in his own followers, formed an additional sect, whose bigotry and intolerance are in a fair way to become proverbial; and instead of peace, he has deluged many towns and neighborhoods with the bitter waters of strife.*<sup>29</sup>

The leaders of the church raised strenuous objections to the charge of partyism. Everything written by the Campbells in the period was against sectarianism. They hesitated in separating from the Presbyterians fearing this very charge. Their fifteen year union with the Baptists was based on the hope of starting nothing new and restoring the old. Alexander attributed the initial growth to the movement to a weariness of sectarianism in America, and other countries.<sup>30</sup> Stone summarized the reply of the Restorationists:

*Often it is said of us, that we are laboring to establish a party. I deny the charge, with respect to myself, with abhorrence of the thing. Our very profession is leveled at the destruction of partyism, as the bane of Christianity. No wonder that those possessed of a party spirit, oppose us so warmly.*<sup>31</sup>

A host of charges in the doctrinal field were leveled at the churches. Major changes in doctrine by them caused basic differences to arise with other groups. The freedom of expression and looseness of organization of the churches of Christ also raised many issues. The leaders of this area were the preachers of the various denominations. To enumerate or describe the doctrinal controversies is beyond the range of this study.

Although opposition was everywhere, the Christians were not rejected because of their method of dealing with social problems. Their position did not satisfy national groups, but locally it caused little, if any, objection. In areas definitely regarded as moral, the Christians normally held the same position as most of their neighbors. Only once in this research was discovered a charge of an immoral act made against a Christian. This involved dishonesty and appeared in an exchange of letters between two young women from New England, who at different times taught in a Mississippi school run by a "Campbellite".<sup>32</sup> In 1892, former Governor of Ohio, General J. D. Cox wrote Errett's daughter that he had heard her father preach many times forty years earlier. He stated that although he was not a member of the church where Errett preached, he usually went to hear him on Sunday night because of the quality of her sermons:

*In preaching he showed large practical sense in meeting thoughtful people on their own ground, appealing to canons of morals and of natural religion which they admitted, and advancing from these by persuasive argument to the argument to the more specific doctrines which he wished to teach. He was fully in sympathy with scientific progress, and never made the blunder of putting the truths taught by the*

*created universe in antagonism to those of revelation. He was at home in all the practical affairs of men, and understood their feelings and their temptations.*<sup>33</sup>

Often Baptist churches would bring charges against various members for sympathy with the "reformers" and their charges were always doctrinal in nature, not involving moral or Christian character.

Again a view each from the inside and the outside of the move will conclude. F. G. Allen wrote, "We have had little or no controversy with our religious neighbors over . . . godliness . . . . Not because we do not value those things as highly as it is possible to value anything else, but because they have not been assailed."<sup>34</sup> J. B. Jeter pronounced, "Whatever may be the ultimate influence of Campbellism on morals and piety, it must be conceded, that it gives no countenance to immorality."<sup>35</sup>

FOOTNOTES — CHAPTER SEVEN

<sup>1</sup>"The Conversion of the World to Christ," *Lard's Quarterly*, III (January, 1866), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, pp. 193-194.

<sup>3</sup>A. G. Riddle, *Life of Garfield*, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup>Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, II, p. 208.

<sup>5</sup>*Campbellism Examined*, New York, 1855, pp. 77-85.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>7</sup>Unpublished letter to his wife, October 12, 1829, Disciple Historical Society Library, Nashville, Tennessee.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, November 4, 1829.

<sup>9</sup>"Tour of Forty Days in the States of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, Number I." *Harbinger*, 4th Ser., I (January, 1851), p. 16.

<sup>10</sup>Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, II, p. 313. Frederick D. Power, *Life of William Kimbrough Pendleton, LL.D. President of Bethany College*, St. Louis, 1902, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup>Mathes, *Works of Stone*, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>13</sup>*Campbellism Examined*, p. x.

## FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>14</sup>"Visit to American Churches," *Harbinger*, VII (April 1836), pp. 174-175.

<sup>15</sup>*Harbinger*, New Ser., II (April, 1838), p. 192.

<sup>16</sup>"Notes on An Excursion to the Eastern Cities, No. III," *Ibid.*, VII (February, 1843), pp. 64-65.

<sup>17</sup>"Correspondence," *The Evangelist*, I (July, 1832), p. 167.

<sup>18</sup>"Visit to American Churches," *Harbinger*, VII (April 1836), p. 175.

<sup>19</sup>S. Noland, *Christians or Disciples*, Nashville, Tenn., 1875, pp. 5-6.

<sup>20</sup>Stebbin papers, Letter from Martha Swann, December 30, 1852, Duke University Manuscript Library.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, January 2, 1853.

<sup>22</sup>*Reminiscences: Of A Long Life*, Louisville, 1891, pp. 115-116.

<sup>23</sup>F. G. Allen, "Rebuilding Jerusalem," Mrs. Z. T. Sweeney Ed., *New Testament Christianity*, II, pp. 103-104.

<sup>24</sup>Campbell, *Memoirs of Thomas Campbell*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>25</sup>"Introductory Remarks," *Harbinger*, III (January, 1832), p. 4.

<sup>26</sup>"The Mormonites," *Ibid.*, II (February, 1831), pp. 86-96.

FOOTNOTES (Continued)

<sup>27</sup>Mathes, *Works of Stone*, p. 47.

<sup>28</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, p. 226.

<sup>29</sup>*Campbellism Exposed, or, Strictures on the Peculiar Tenets of Alexander Campbell*, Cincinnati, 1837, p. 197. Cited hereafter as *Campbellism Exposed*.

<sup>30</sup>*Harbinger*, II (September, 1831), pp. 452-453.

<sup>31</sup>Mathes, *Works of Stone*, p. 157.

<sup>32</sup>Stebbins Papers. Letters from Martha Swann and Laura Stebbins, June 25, July 24, August 16, October 17, December 25 and 30, 1852; January 2, March 19, 1853; July 4, 1855. Duke University Manuscript Library.

<sup>33</sup>Lamar, *Memoirs of Errett*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>34</sup>*Autobiography*, p. 108.

<sup>35</sup>*Campbellism Exposed*, p. 102.



## Conclusion

In the United States, in the beginning years of the nineteenth century, a number of preachers objected to religious division. They began independently, in different sections of the country, to plead for the unity of all believers in Christ. The method proposed to attain that unity was threefold: unity in faith, liberty in opinion, and love in everything.

The first twenty years were spent in formulating ideas and enlarging upon the possibility of unity in faith. The preachers reasoned that since faith comes by hearing God's word, Christians could be one together simply by believing literally all statements of the Bible. Further, they taught that since God's word did not contradict itself, all who accepted only what it said on any subject would believe alike. The specific applications of Biblical principles were also left largely to the individuals. It was felt that although the principles were to be taught explicitly yet no one could impose their own deductions concerning those principles. Therefore, while allowing diversity in practice because of different levels of maturity, the restorers were still able to insist upon rigid doctrinal uniformity. All matters which were not a part of His revelation were to be left to the judgment of the individual. These matters were only subjects of opinion, and differences should not cause division in faith.

Unity was achieved among the majority of the adherents of the "restoration plea" in the early nineteenth century. The simple message of the restorers also was received by large numbers of people all across the frontier. Religious people generally like to feel that the complex is

understood while the application is made extremely simple. Thus the complexities of God's mind were accepted in the simplicity of the five-finger movement of Walter Scott. This is not necessarily true in more established societies, and therefore the reception was slower in the East and in the deep South. By 1870, however, the churches of Christ ranked fifth in size among religious groups in the nation.

The restorers stood staunchly for liberty in non-essential matters. These included all areas of thought and action not discussed in the Bible. To them every political issue and most social problems were in this category. The Christians felt that most moral problems were explained fully in Bible principle, and they were fairly uniform and rigid in this area. They viewed with displeasure many recreational activities.

It is obviously worthy of note that the restorers, due to the youth of their movement, had no real *status quo* to defend. In fact, the early attack on the clergy system allowed them, in a practical way, to consider everyone equal before Christ. This led to an openness in the free discussions of any issue that is rarely found in religious organizations or movements. From the beginning the leaders of the movement displayed a willingness to discuss any controversial topic. As already noted, Alexander Campbell began in his first year of preaching by delivering over one hundred sermons and dealing with what he considered sixty-one primary topics of the Christian religion. As the discussions of war and slavery reached fever pitch, Campbell and others moved to the forefront with lengthy discussions of the issues in the periodicals. The voice of the leaders as they openly discussed the subjects were practically always directly toward moderation.

Led by Alexander Campbell, Restoration leaders argued that the most serious problems of the period, slavery

and war, were basically political rather than moral. Though undesirable and inexpedient in their society, the Bible allowed a master-slave relationship. Christianity and freedom would lead ultimately to its cessation, but no one should point the finger of immorality over the issue. Therefore Christians could hold any opinion on slavery and still enjoy fellowship with those who disagreed. War, with its ravages and death, was held also to be undesirable. Yet government had the right and the responsibility to execute vengeance upon every evil doer. A Christian might, or might not, want to take part in that vengeance (or in government in any capacity), but no one should refuse fellowship in Christ over the matter.

The restorers generally maintained that the church was sufficient to handle the Christian's work in benevolence. The responsibility of the church was to teach what should be done and encourage Christians to do it. They were criticized for failing to participate in benevolent organizations. They taught total abstinence, favored prohibition, but usually did not join temperance societies. They taught the use of the Lord's day for the Savior but generally did not join in "Sabbath" clubs. They were for peace but did not join organized efforts to prevent war. The freedom to do so, however, was defended by most and utilized by a few.

Religious groups around the churches of Christ were not overly impressed. Opinions on social problems often were fairly uniform in each locality. The restorers, therefore, usually held the same view as their neighbors. For instance, those in the South supported slavery, while those in the North opposed it. Thus, on a local level, when they offered freedom of opinion in that area, no concession was recognized. On the other hand, national organizations committed to a specific position were not satisfied with their latitude of opinion.

The importance of the very strong belief on the part of the Restorers in the purpose they espoused cannot be over emphasized. They believed in their purpose and in the possibility of its achievement. They therefore took up the banner of God's dream and as aggressive activists expected to achieve its fulfillment. With the confidence of faith and with the increasing success of their teaching, they could in large numbers sublimate their personal desires to the dictates of the non-doctrinal issues in order to reach their goals. At a later date they lost sight of their goals, turned their thoughts inward, lost the confidence in the achievement of the unity of believers. As this happened individually, and then collectively, the movement lost its aggressiveness, many individuals became self-righteous, and division resulted.

The plea of liberty in non-essentials enabled the Christians to remain united through the war period. All other sizeable Protestant groups divided. This unity in the midst of division gave them strength internally. It gave birth to a dream in the hearts of many that they were harbingers of a beautiful millennium of unity, prosperity, and peace. It filled them with determination and zeal. The dream never materialized, but the strength of their plea was amply demonstrated. The prayer of Jesus for the unity of all believers was a part of God's plan for man—and a foundation principle of the Christian's dream.

## **Appendices**

**ITALICS ADDED FOR EMPHASIS TO  
MOST PERTINENT INFORMATION**

## APPENDIX A

### THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERY JUNE 28, 1804

The Presbytery of Springfield, sitting at Caneridge, in the county of Bourbon, being, through a gracious Providence, in more than ordinary bodily health, growing in strength and size daily; and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; but knowing that it is appointed for all delegated bodies once to die; and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make and ordain this our last will and testament, in manner and form following, viz:

IMPRIMIS. *We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the body of Christ at large; for there is but one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.*

ITEM. *We will, that our name of distinction, with its REVEREND TITLE, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage, and his name one.*

ITEM. *We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the Church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST.*

ITEM. *We will, that candidates for the gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy Scriptures, with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT SENT DOWN FROM*

HEAVEN, without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. And let none take THIS HONOR TO HIMSELF, BUT HE THAT IS CALLED OF GOD, AS WAS AARON.

ITEM. We will, that the Church of Christ resume her native right of internal government, try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach; and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking to them. We will that the Church of Christ look up to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest; and that she resume her primitive right of trying those WHO SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES AND ARE NOT.

ITEM. *We will, that each particular church as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher and support him by a free-will offering, without a written CALL OR SUBSCRIPTION, admit members, remove offenses; and never henceforth DELEGATE her right of government to any man or set of men whatever.*

ITEM. *We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into the life having one book than having many to be cast into hell.*

ITEM. We will, that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh.

ITEM. We will, that our weak brethren who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and wot not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the Rock of Ages, and follow Jesus for the future.

ITEM. We will, that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member who may be suspected of having departed from the Confession of Faith, and suspend every such heretic immediately, in order that the oppressed may go free, and taste the sweets of gospel liberty.

ITEM. We will, that Ja \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, the author of two letters lately published in Lexington, be encouraged in zeal to destroy PARTYISM. We will, moreover, that our past conduct be examined into by all who may have correct information; but let foreigners beware of speaking evil of things which they know not.

ITEM. Finally, we will, that all our SISTER BODIES read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.

#### SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERY

June 28, 1804. (L.S.)

Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar, B. W. Stone, John Thompson, David Purviance

WITNESSES

#### THE WITNESSES' ADDRESS

We, the above-named witness of the Last Will and



Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, knowing that there will be many conjectures respecting the causes which have occasioned the dissolution of that body, think proper to testify that from its first existence it was knit together in love, lived in peace and concord, and died a voluntary and happy death.

Their reasons for dissolving that body were the following: *With deep-concern they viewed the divisions and party spirit among professing Christians, principally owing to the adoption of human creeds and forms of government. While they were united under the name of a presbyter, they endeavored to cultivate a spirit of love and unity with all Christians, but found it extremely difficult to suppress the idea that they themselves were a party separate from others. This difficulty increased in proportion to their success in the ministry. Jealousies were excited in the minds of other denominations; and a temptation was laid before those who were connected with the various parties to view them in the same light. At their last meeting they undertook to prepare for the press a piece entitled, "Observations of Church Government," in which the world will see, the beautiful simplicity of Christian Church government, stript of human invention and lordly traditions.*

As they proceeded in the investigation of that subject, *they soon found that there was neither precept nor example in the New Testament for such confederacies as modern church sessions, presbyteries, synods, General Assemblies, etc.* Hence, they concluded that while they continued in the connection in which they then stood, they were off the foundation of the apostles and prophets of which Christ himself is the chief cornerstone. However just, therefore, their views of church might have been,

they would have gone out under the name, the precious cause of Jesus, and dying sinners who are kept from the Lord by the existence of sects and parties in the church, *they have cheerfully consented to retire from the din and fury of conflicting parties-sink out of view of fleshly minds, and die the death.* They believe their death will be great gain to the world. But though dead, as above, and stript of their mortal frame, which only served to keep them too near the confines of Egyptian bondage, they yet live and speak in the land of gospel liberty; they blow the trumpet of jubilee, and willingly devote themselves to the help of the Lord against the mighty. They will aid the brethren, by their counsel, when required; assist in ordaining elders or pastors, seek the divine blessing, unite with all Christians, commune together, and strengthen each others' hands in the work of the Lord.

We design, by the grace of God, to continue in the exercise of those functions which belong to us as ministers of the Gospel, confidently trusting in the Lord, that he will be with us. We candidly acknowledge that in some things we may err, through human infirmity, but he will correct our wanderings and preserve his Church. Let all Christians join with us in crying to God day and night to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of his work, and give him no rest till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. *We heartily unite with our Christian brethren of every name in thanksgiving to God for the display of his goodness in the glorious work he is carrying on in our western country, which we hope will terminate in the universal spread of the Gospel.*

## APPENDIX B

### PROTEST AND APPEAL

by Thomas Campbell

“THE PRESBYTERY OF CHARTIERS, WASHINGTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA VERSUS THOMAS CAMPBELL, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.” (1808)

It was formally brought before them by “Protest and Appeal” viz.:

“Honored Brethren:

“Before you come to a final issue in the present business, let me entreat you to pause a moment, and seriously to consider the following things: *To refuse any one his just privilege, is it not to oppress and injure?* In proportion to the magnitude and importance of the privilege withheld, is not the injustice, done in withholding it to be estimated? If so, how great the injustice, how highly aggravated the injury will appear, to thrust out from communion a Christian brother, a fellow-minister, for saying and doing none other things than those which our Divine Lord and his holy apostles have taught and enjoined to be spoken and done by his ministering servants, and to be received and observed by all his people. Or have, I, in any instance, proposed to say or do otherwise? If I have, I shall be heartily and thankfully relinquish it. Let none think that, by so saying, I entertain the vain presumption of being infallible. So far am I from this, that I dare not venture to trust my own understanding so far as to take

upon me to teach anything as a matter of faith or duty but what is already expressly taught and enjoined by Divine authority; and *I hope it is no presumption to believe that in saying and doing the very same things that are said and done before our eyes on the sacred page, is infallibly right, as well as all-sufficient for the edification of the Church, whose duty and perfection it is to be in all things conformed to the original standard. It is, therefore, because I have no confidence, either in my own infallibility or in that of others, that I absolutely refuse, as inadmissible and schismatic, the introduction of human opinions and human inventions into the faith and worship of the Church.* Is it, therefore, because I plead the cause of the Scriptural and apostolic worship of the Church, in opposition to the various errors and schisms which have so awfully corrupted and divided it, that the brethren of the Union should feel it difficult to admit me as their fellow-laborer in that blessed work? I sincerely rejoice with them in what they have done in that way; but still, as all is not yet done; and surely they have no just objections to go farther. *Nor do I presume to dictate to them or to others as to how they should proceed for the glorious purpose of promoting the unity and purity of the Church; but only beg leave, for my own part, to walk upon such sure and peaceable ground, that I may have nothing to do with human controversy, about the right or wrong side of any opinion whatsoever, by simply acquiescing in what is written, as quite sufficient for every purpose of faith and duty; and in so doing, to the study and practice of faith, holiness, and love.*

*“And all this without any intention on my part, to judge or despise my Christian brethren who may not see with my eyes in those things, which, to me, appear indispensably necessary to promote and secure the unity, peace and purity of the Church. Say, Brethren, what is my offense, that I should be thrust out from the heritage of*

the Lord, or from serving him in that good work to which he has been graciously pleased to call me? For what error or immorality ought I to be rejected, except it be that I refuse to acknowledge as obligatory upon myself, or to impose upon others, anything as of Divine obligation, for which I can not produce a "Thus saith the Lord?" This, I am sure, I can do, while I keep by his own word; but not quite so sure when I substitute my own meaning or opinion, or that of others instead thereof. And if I should be somewhat timorous upon a subject of such infinity, considering that awful denunciation, (Deut. XVIII:20): . . . compared with Prov. XXX:6 . . . Is it for refusing the Scriptural profession of our faith and obedience, or even a printed exhibition of what may be judged immediately necessary, and to the purpose? Surely not, the former I hold absolutely necessary, and to the latter I have no manner of objection, if justly executed. Is it for objecting to human standards? "Had they been necessary," says Dr. Doddridge, "the sacred oracles would have presented them, or, at least, have given directions for composing and enforcing them." As to the expediency of such I leave every man to his own judgment while I claim the same privilege for myself. This, I presume, I may justly do about a matter on which, according to the learned doctor, the Scriptures are silent; but when the having or wanting the approbation or disapprobation of such is magnified into the unjust importance of being made a positive article of sin or duty, or term of communion in which cases I dare neither acquiesce nor be silent—allegiance to Christ and fidelity to his cause and people constrain me to protest against making sins and duties which his word has nowhere pointed out. And if, in the mean time, my brethren should reject me, and cast me out for evil for so doing, referring my case to the Divine Tribunal, I would say: "By what authority do

ye these things, and who gave you this authority?" *As to human authority in matters of religion, I absolutely reject it as that grievous yoke of antichristian bondage which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.*

"Surely, brethren, from my steadfast adherence to the Divine standard, my absolute and entire rejection of human authority in matters of religion, my professed and sincere willingness to walk in all good understanding, communion, and fellowship with sincere, humble Christian brethren who may not see with me in these things, and, permit me to add, my sincere desire to unite with you in carrying forward that blessed work in which you have set out, and from which you take your name—you will do me the justice to believe, that if I did not sincerely desire a union with you, I would not have once and again made application for that purpose. A union not merely nominal, but hearty and confidential, founded upon certain and established principles; and this if I mistake not, is firmly laid on both sides. Your standard informs me of your views of truth and duty, and my declarations give you precisely the same advantage. You are willing to be tried in all matters by your standard, according to your printed declaration; I am willing to be tried on all matters by my standard, according to my written declaration. You can labor under no difficulty about my teaching and practicing whatever is expressly taught and unjoined in the Divine standard, as generally defined in my "Declaration" and although I have not the same clearness about everything contained in your standard, yet where I can not see believing you to be sincere and conscientious servants of the same great and gracious Master who freely pardons his willing and obedient servants their ten thousand talents of shortcomings, I am, therefore, through his grace, ready to forbear with you, at the same time, hoping that you

possess the same gracious spirit, and therefore, will not reject me for the lack of those fifty forms which might probably bring me up to your measure, and to which, if necessary, I also, through grace, may yet attain, for I have not set myself down as perfect.

“May the Lord direct you in all things. Amen.

“Thomas Campbell.”

## APPENDIX C

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ASSOCIATE SYNOD OF NORTH AMERICA (1808)

by Thomas Campbell

In bidding adieu to Secederism he made, on that occasion the following address:

“Taking into my most serious consideration, the present state of matters between this reverend Synod and myself, upon a review of the whole process and issue as commenced and conducted first by the Presbytery of Chartiers, and as now issued by this reverend court, I can not help thinking myself greatly aggrieved. For, although this Synod in part redressed the grievance I labored under by the hasty, unprecedented, and unjustifiable proceedings of said Presbytery, in holding me to the issue of a trial contrary to their manifest agreement, under the preliminary that no witnesses should be cited on either side, yet, in the issue, that Presbytery is dismissed from the bar of this Synod without the slightest notice of the sin and scandal of this breach of faith, and avowed dissimulation; for Mr. Ramsey declared, at the bar of this Synod, that it was the intention of the Presbytery, to hold me to the issue of a trial, at all events. And also, without any inquiry into the other ground and reasons (though professedly wishing for an accommodation by explications) of my avowed declinature of any further ministerial connection with, or subjection to, that Presbytery in its present corrupt state, (as specified in my reasons of protest and declinature given into this Synod) yet this Synod after examining my written declarations to said Presbytery upon the articles of



libel, and also after a long and close examination of my principles relative to said articles, and not being able to point out a single error in the former, and declaring themselves satisfied with the latter, (the article upon occasional hearing expected) yet *proceeded to find me guilty of evasion and equivocation in my written declarations, upon great and important articles of revealed religion; and thence infer that I had expressed sentiments upon these articles very different from the sentiments held and professed by this church, and upon these presumptions proceed to judge me worthy of a solemn rebuke, while, as I have observed above, no notice is taken of the Presbytery's breach of faith and avowed dissimulation and flagrant injustice toward me, while acting as a court of Jesus Christ, nor of any act of their maladministration toward others, which I had alleged against them, and referred to, as just grounds for my said declinature, as contained in my reasons of protest, and in other documents read and laid upon the table for the inspection of the Synod. Surely, if presumptive evasion and equivocation justly infer a censure of rebuke on my part, their manifest breach of faith and avowed dissimulation (I might add TREACHERY) can not be innocent and unrebukable conduct. Of the justness and propriety of this, let the world judge.*

*"It is with sincere reluctance, and, at the same time, with all due respect and esteem for the brethren of this reverend Synod who have presided in the trial of my case, that I find myself in duty bound to refuse submission to their decision as UNJUST AND PARTIAL; and also FINALLY DECLINE THEIR AUTHORITY, while they continue thus to overlook the grievous and FLAGRANT MAL-ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF CHARTIERS. And I hereby do decline all ministerial connection with, or subjection to, the Associate Synod of*

*North America, on account of the aforesaid corruptions and grievances; and do henceforth hold myself altogether unaffected by their decisions.* And, that I may be properly understood, I will distinctly state that, while especial reference is had to the corruptions of THE PRESBYTERY of Chartiers, which constitute only a part of the Synod, THE CORRUPTIONS OF THAT PRESBYTERY NOW BECOME ALSO THE CORRUPTIONS OF THE WHOLE SYNOD: BECAUSE WHEN LAID OPEN TO THIS SYNOD, AND PROTESTED AGAINST, THE SYNOD PASS THEM OVER WITHOUT DUE INQUIRY, AND WITHOUT ANIMADVERSION.

“Thomas Campbell.”

## APPENDIX D

### DECLARATION AND ADDRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON, PENN. PUBLISHED A. D. 1809

(At a meeting held at Buffalo, August 17, 1809, consisting of persons of different religious denominations, most of them in an unsettled state as to a fixed Gospel ministry, it was unanimously agreed, upon the considerations, and for the purposes hereinafter declared, to form themselves into a religious association, designated as above, which they accordingly did, and appointed twenty-one of their number to meet and confer together, and, with the assistance of Elder Thomas Campbell, minister of the Gospel, to determine upon the proper means to carry into effect the important ends of their association; the result of which conference was the following Declaration and Address, agreed upon and order to be printed, at the expense, and for the benefit of the society. - Sept. 7, 1809.)

#### DECLARATION, ETC.

From the series of events which have taken place in the Churches for many years past, especially in this Western country, as well as from what we know in general of the present state of things in the Christian world, we are persuaded that *it is high time for us not only to think, but also to act, for ourselves; to see with our own eyes, and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the Divine standard; to this alone we feel ourselves Divinely bound to be conformed, as by this alone we must be judged. We are also persuaded that as no man can be judged by his brother,*

*so no man can judge for his brother; every man must bear his own judgment—must give account of himself to God. We are also of opinion that as the Divine word is equally binding upon all, so all lie under an equal obligation to be bound by it, and it alone; and not by any human interpretation of it; and that, therefore, no man has a right to judge his brother, except in so far as he manifestly violates the express letter of the law. That every such judgment is an express violation of the law of Christ, a daring usurpation of his throne, and a gross intrusion upon the rights and liberties of his subjects. We are, therefore, of opinion that we should beware of such things; that we should keep at the utmost distance from everything of this nature; and that, knowing the judgment of God against them that commit such things, we should neither do the same ourselves, nor take pleasure in them that do them. Moreover, being well aware, from sad experience, of the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians; tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit, we would desire to be at rest; and, were it possible, we would also desire to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to our brethren throughout all the Churches: as would restore unity, peace, and purity to the whole Church of God. This desirable rest, however, we utterly despair either to find for ourselves, or to be able to recommend to our brethren, by continuing amid the diversity and rancor of party contentions, the veering uncertainty and clashings of human opinions: nor, indeed, can we reasonably expect to find it anywhere but in Christ and his simple word, which is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Our desire, therefore, for ourselves and our brethren would be, that rejecting human opinions and the inventions of men as of authority, or as having any place in the Church of God, we might forever cease from further contentions about such things;*

*returning to and holding fast by the original standard, taking the Divine word alone for our rule; the Holy Spirit for our teacher and guide, to lead us into all truth; and Christ alone, as exhibited in the word, for our salvation; that, by so doing, we may be at peace among ourselves, follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Impressed with these sentiments, we have resolved as follows:*

I. That we form ourselves into a religious association under the denomination of the Christian Association of Washington, for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men.

II. That each member, according to ability, cheerfully and liberally subscribe a certain specified sum, to be paid half yearly, for the purpose of raising a fund to support a pure Gospel ministry, that shall reduce to practice that whole form of doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. And also, for supplying the poor with the holy Scriptures.

III. That this Society consider it a duty, and shall use all proper means in its power, to encourage the formation of similar associations; and shall for this purpose hold itself in readiness, upon application, to correspond with, and render all possible assistance to, such as may desire to associate for the same desirable and important purposes.

IV. That this Society by no means considers itself a Church, nor does at all assume to itself the powers peculiar to such a society; nor do the members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation; nor as at

all associated for the peculiar purposes of Church association; but merely as voluntary advocates for Church reformation; and, as, possessing the powers common to all individuals, who may please to associate in a peaceable and orderly manner, for any lawful purpose, namely, the disposal of their time, counsel, and property, as they may see cause.

V. That this Society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall, to the utmost of its power, countenance and support such ministers, and such only, as exhibit a manifest conformity to the original standard in conversation and doctrine, in zeal and diligence; only such as reduce to practice that simple original form of Christianity, expressly exhibited upon the sacred page; without attempting to inculcate anything of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship, of the Christian Church, or anything as matter of Christian faith or duty, for which there can not be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord, either in express terms, or by approved precedent."

VI. That a Standing Committee of twenty-one members of unexceptionable moral character, inclusive of the secretary and treasurer, be chosen annually to superintend the interests, and transact the business of the Society. And that said Committee be invested with full powers to act and do, in the name of and behalf of their constituents, whatever the Society had previously determined, for the purpose of carrying into effect the entire object of its institution, and that in case of any emergency, unprovided for in the existing determinations of the Society, said Committee be empowered to call a special meeting for that purpose.

VII. That this Society meet at least twice a year, *viz.*: on the first Thursday of May, and of November, and that the collectors appointed to receive the half-yearly quotas of the promised subscriptions, be in readiness, at or before each meeting, to make their returns to the treasurer, that he may be able to report upon the state of the funds. The next meeting to be held at Washington on the first Thursday of November next.

VIII. That each meeting of the Society be opened with a sermon, the constitution and address read, and a collection lifted for the benefit of the Society; and that all communications of a public nature be laid before the Society at its half-yearly meetings.

IX. That this Society, relying upon the all-sufficiency of the Church's Head; and through his grace, looking with an eye of confidence to the generous liberality of the sincere friends of genuine Christianity; holds itself engaged to afford a competent support to such ministers as the Lord may graciously dispose to assist, at the request, and by invitation of the Society, in promoting a pure evangelical reformation, by the simple preaching of the everlasting Gospel, and the administration of its ordinances in an exact conformity to the Divine standard as aforesaid; and that, therefore, whatever the friends of the institution shall please to contribute toward the support of ministers in connection with this Society who may be sent forth to preach at considerable distances, the same shall be gratefully received and acknowledged as a donation to its funds.

## APPENDIX E

### SUMMARY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS IN THE ADDRESS

Prop. I. *That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.*

2. *That although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, nor uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ Jesus hath also received them, in the glory of God. And for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing; and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.*

3. *That in order to do this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith, nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted, as of Divine obligation, in their Church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament Church either in express terms or by approved precedent.*



4. That although the Scriptures of the Old Testament and New Testament are inseparably connected, making together but one perfect and entire revelation of the Divine will, for the edification and salvation of the Church, and therefore in that respect can not be separated; yet *as to what directly and properly belongs to their immediate object, the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members.*

5. That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, where the Scriptures are silent as to the express time or manner of performance, if any such there be, no human authority has power to interfere, in order to supply the supposed deficiency by making laws for the Church; nor can anything more be required of Christians in such cases, but only that they so observe these commands and ordinances as will evidently answer the declared and obvious end of their institution. Much less has any human authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the Church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. *Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.*

6. That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore, no such

deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession.

7. That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of Divine truths, and defensive testimonies in opposition to prevailing errors, be highly expedient, and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes, the better; yet, as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning, and of course must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion; unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to the communion of the Church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment, or are come to a very high degree of doctrinal information; whereas the Church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers.

8. *That as it is not necessary that persons should have a particular knowledge or distinct apprehension of all Divinely revealed truths in order to entitle them to a place in the Church; neither should they, for this purpose, be required to make a profession more extensive than their knowledge; but that, on the contrary, their having a due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge respecting their lost and perishing condition by nature and practice, and of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ, accompanied with a profession of their faith in and obedience to him, in all things, according to his word, is all that is absolutely necessary to qualify them for admission into his church.*

9. That all that are enabled through grace to make such a profession, and to manifest the reality of it in their tempers and conduct, should consider each other as the precious saints of God, should love each other as brethren, children of the same family and Father, temples of the same Spirit, members of the same body, subjects of the same grace, objects of the same Divine love, bought with the same price, and joint-heirs of the same inheritance. Whom God hath thus joined together no man should dare to put asunder.

10. *That division among the Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils.* It is antichristian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ; as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself. *It is antisciptural*, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority; a direct violation of his express command. *It is antinatural*, as it excites Christians to condemn, to hate, and oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them. *In a word, it is productive of confusion and of every evil work.*

11. That (in some instances) *a partial neglect of the expressly revealed will of God and (in others) an assumed authority for making the approbation of human opinions and human inventions a term of communion*, by introducing them into the constitution, faith, or worship of the Church, are, *and have been, the immediate, obvious, and universally-acknowledged causes, of all the corruptions and divisions that ever have taken place in the Church of God.*

12. That all that is necessary to the highest state of perfection and purity of the Church upon earth is, first, that none be received as members but such as having that due measure of Scriptural self-knowledge described above, do profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures; nor, secondly that any be retained in her communion longer than they continue to manifest the reality of their profession by their temper and conduct. Thirdly, that her minister, duly and Scripturally qualified, inculcate none other things than those very articles of faith and holiness expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God. Lastly, that in all their administrations they keep close by the observance of all Divine ordinances, after the example of the primitive Church, exhibited in the New Testament; without any additions whatsoever of human opinions or inventions of men.

13. Lastly. That if any circumstantialia indispensably necessary to the observance of Divine ordinances be not found upon the page of express revelation, such, and such only, as are absolutely necessary for this purpose should be adopted under the title of human expedients, without any pretense, to a more sacred origin, so that any subsequent alteration or difference in the observance of these things might produce no contention nor division in the Church.

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