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# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*Joseph R. Jeter, Jr.*

**The Forrest Reed Lecture  
April 5, 2001  
Lexington Theological Seminary  
11:00 a.m.  
Lecturer: Leigh Erick Schmidt**

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## — From the Editor's Desk

Sociologists study denominational “switching” with an eye to helping church leaders understand why contemporary Americans switch denominations, the patterns of their switching, and the impact of these patterns on contemporary church membership trends. Examples of sociological studies that focus on the membership “gains” and “losses” of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the latter decades of the twentieth century are included in D. Newell Williams, editor, *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism: The Disciples' Relation to American Culture, 1880-1989*. The article to which this entire issue of *Discipliana* is devoted, Joseph R. Jeter, Jr., “Some We Lost: A Study of Disaffections From the Disciples of Christ” is *not* a sociological study of denominational switching. It does not study persons who were *gained* by the Disciples, but only persons who were *lost* by the Disciples. It is not an examination of contemporary phenomena, but an historical study. Moreover, its purpose is not to help church leaders understand the impact of patterns of switching on contemporary church membership trends. Rather, its purpose is to interpret the nature of the Disciples movement by examining the stories of persons who were lost by the Disciples. In so doing, Jeter tells the fascinating stories of figures from Richard McNemar (a Shaker), to Sidney Rigdon (a Mormon), to James Fort Newton (a twentieth century liberal preacher), to Josiah Royce (an idealist philosopher), to John Muir (founder of the Sierra Club). His *final* observation, though reflective of a fundamental commitment of the Disciples of Christ, may surprise you (Don't read it before reading the rest of the article!). Happy reading!

— D. Newell Williams

## — From the President's Desk

Tony Dunnivant had come up from Lexington Seminary to be with me at the Society's Kirkpatrick Lecture at Bethany College in the fall of 1998. There it became my sad duty to announce the death of Ronald Osborn. It is now my sad duty to inscribe the death of Tony Dunnivant into this historical record of the Society.

On that occasion Tony told me that Ronald had introduced him to the hallowed ground of Bethany. The young student and the older professor were both visitors who took time for each other, sharing the stories and wisdom of the tradition they both loved. Sharing hallowed ground let them span their age difference. Colleagues became friends.

Tony died much too early at the age of 46. He had seemingly done well enough in recovery from a second cancer surgery. Then complications. Then, too quickly, death. We look at the work and friendship he has given us for twenty years and we feel cheated out of the work and friendship promised across the next thirty or forty years. I note a few items associated directly with the Historical Society: his Vanderbilt dissertation--*Restructure: Four Historical Ideals*-- was researched here. He published three books through us: *Cane Ridge in Context*, *Backgrounds for Congregational Portraits*, *Founding Vocation and Future Vision*. He lectured for us. He served on our Board, chairing our Publications Committee. He taught two local-church historians' seminars. He was one of the three general editors of our Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia when he died. Those are the facts of the matter.

This is the heart of the matter. Tony, like Ronald before him, was one of our wisdom figures. The wisdom writers of the Old Testament often presented a piece or a person of the past for the edification of the present. Jonah, Ruth, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes come easily to mind. Tony was sometimes proverbial by helping students be effective in ministry: "be prompt, be patient, be precise"; Tony was sometimes historical in sharing wisdom: Cane Ridge, Restructure.

Primarily Tony's wisdom won its way with us because he was so thoroughly grace-filled by the Gospel. The integrity of his good heart let us know he was special and that we were to pay attention.

Tony, grace-filled and wise, was buried at Cane Ridge, the first in eighty years. The hallowed ground of Cane Ridge is even more hallowed for those of us who knew him and loved him. Shared hallowed ground may even let us span the ages as we ponder the wisdom of eternity.

— Peter M. Morgan

## **SOME WE LOST: A STUDY OF DISAFFECTIONS FROM THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST**

Joseph R. Jeter, Jr.\*

It is no surprise that the history of the Church has often been written on the accession principle. By looking at which individuals or groups were added to the Church or its movements during a certain period, historians can advance theories about the nature of the Church during that time. For example, the conversion of Ambrose and Augustine is often cited to indicate the intellectual vigor of the Church during the fourth century. On the other hand the fact that groups of people, like the Saxons, became Christians only when rulers like Charlemagne forced the religion upon them, baptizing them *en masse* at swordpoint, points toward a religious posture during that period that was more secular than spiritual.

When we come to that American religious movement known as the Disciples of Christ, the principle holds. From, at best, a few score adherents in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the various strands comprising the movement grew to more than a million people by the end of that century. Historical accounts have examined the appeal and methods of the Disciples, have looked at the kind of folk who tended to be attracted to the movement, and have offered interpretive hypotheses based on these observations.

The purpose of this essay is to address the same issue, interpreting the Disciples, from the opposite direction. Who left the movement, and why? Two questions come to the fore: (1) what are the stories? (2) what do these "disaffections" tell us about the nature of the Disciples movement itself?

To keep this study within manageable bounds I have limited the presentation to eighteen persons within three categories: (1) religious leaders of the first generation (1801-1866), (2) religious leaders from the second generation (1866-World War I or shortly thereafter), and (3) other significant persons not known primarily as religious leaders. For the purpose of this study we shall not consider those who moved from one wing of the movement to another, be it co-operative, independent, or non-instrumental. Our concern is with those who left the Stone-Campbell movement altogether.<sup>1</sup>

### **A. RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THE FIRST GENERATION**

#### 1. Richard McNemar

The first major fork in the religious stream that became the Stone-Campbell movement is surely represented by Richard McNemar (1770-1839).<sup>2</sup> Born in Tuscarora, Pennsylvania, he was ordained to the Presbyterian ministry in 1798, just as the western revival was beginning. McNemar preached at several churches in the northern Kentucky – southwestern Ohio area which comprised the Washington Presbytery and was prominent in the large revival

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meetings that culminated in the tremendous camp meeting at Cane Ridge in August, 1801.

There were five ministers in the Presbytery who were preaching that Christ died for all and that salvation was available to all, doctrines in considerable tension with the Westminster Confession of Faith. These preachers, known as revivalists or "New Lights," were McNemar, John Thompson, John Dunlavy, Robert Marshall and Barton W. Stone. The name most familiar to Disciples is, of course, that of Stone. But, as W. E. Garrison has written, "it was by survival, rather than by pre-eminence at the beginning, that Stone came to be considered the founding father of the Christian Church in Kentucky."<sup>3</sup>

Who *was* pre-eminent at the beginning? Since the five named, later joined by David Purviance, operated as an informal fellowship, it is difficult to assert primacy for one man or the other. However, the best case can probably be made for McNemar. He was called the "most conspicuous," the "most aggressive," and the "boldest" of the preachers, as well as the "principal mover and leading spirit" in the revival.<sup>4</sup> When the conservative reaction set in against the preachers, McNemar served as the target. And when the six later issued the "Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," a seminal document in Disciples history, the best evidence pointed to McNemar as its author.<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not McNemar was the the *primus inter pares* of the New Light Christians, he did not remain so for long. In March, 1805, McNemar would leave that fellowship to join the Shakers. The story has often been told of the three Shakers—Issachar Bates, John Meacham and Benjamin Youngs—who came from New York looking for converts among those who had been stirred by the Kentucky revivals.

The Shakers or, more formally, the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, represent one of the more intriguing examples of religious life on the American scene. Their theology was a curious blend of millennialism, spiritualism and communism. They believed Christ had returned to earth in the person of their leader, Mother Ann Lee. They opposed the institution of marriage and sexual activity, while supporting the equality of the sexes. They believed in separation from the world and consecrated work. They believed God's spirit was directly accessible to all believers. And they lived together in highly structured, communistic communities. Singing, marching and dancing were features of their worship.

Bates, Youngs and Meacham knew that if they were to meet with success, they had to convert prominent men, which led them to McNemar, who was then living at Turtle Creek, Ohio. Several meetings were held. Once the Shakers determined that McNemar held millennialist views and expected the imminent return of Christ, they doubled their efforts. According to McNemar's only biographer, J. P. MacLean, two events were crucial in his conversion. McNemar's son James was afflicted with a nervous malady, characterized by periodic seizures of "screaming fits." During one of the seizures McNemar, holding his son tightly to comfort him, said to the missionaries that if they could cure his son, he would follow them. After prayer, the attack stopped and the child never had another one. The second event occurred a few weeks later as McNemar walked in his meadow. He saw the arm of a woman reach out from

heaven toward him. Looking at it intently, he exclaimed, "I will follow thee forever!"<sup>6</sup>

McNemar's conversion was followed by that of his family and many of the members of his congregation. Other prominent leaders also became Shakers, including Malcolm Worley, John Rankin, Matthew Houston, and another of the preachers who had signed "The Last Will and Testament," John Dunlavy. McNemar became a leader among the Western Shakers. MacLean calls him the most powerful preacher the Shakers ever had in the West and the father of Shaker literature and hymnody.<sup>7</sup>

His life as a Shaker was not an easy one. The Shakers were often persecuted for their strange beliefs and McNemar fell victim to attacks from within by jealous brethren. But he never left the Society. He became an expert printer and maker of chairs. The record shows that from 1813 to 1817 he manufactured "757 chairs, 20 big wheels, 20 little wheels, 20 reels, besides spools and whirls."<sup>8</sup> McNemar was expelled by a jealous leader in 1839 and travelled to Shaker headquarters in New York to plead his case. He was reinstated, but the journey and ordeal proved to be too much for him and he died shortly thereafter.<sup>9</sup>

What views did McNemar hold that made Shakerism more attractive to him than the position of the New Light Christians, which he had been so instrumental in developing? Rephrased, what was the difference in religious views between McNemar and Stone who, once friends, became the bitterest of enemies? George Beazley's review of McNemar's *Kentucky Revival* suggests four differences. First, the two men reacted differently to the revivals and especially the "manifestations" that went along with them. Stone had some difficulty accepting them, although he thought there was more good than bad present in the various "exercises." McNemar rejoiced in them, especially the dancing. Beazley concludes that McNemar valued the manifestations of revival more than he valued the preaching of the word or the sacraments, which could certainly not be said of Stone.<sup>10</sup> This led to the second difference: McNemar preferred spirit over scripture where Stone affirmed the primacy of the written word.<sup>11</sup> Third, McNemar came to a rather bizarre theology of the atonement. Christ is example rather than savior. Thus each one must lift him- or herself up, in a kind of perfectionist process, devoid of any real doctrine of grace.<sup>12</sup> Stone's biblical views would not allow any such theory. Finally, there is a strong sense of anti-clericalism in McNemar. Beazley concludes:

Not only is church order set aside, but basically church and Christian tradition are set aside also in McNemar's mind in favor of a spiritual society which gets its mandates directly from God and not through the pages of a book.<sup>13</sup>

This is most interesting in that it was an outbreak of extreme spiritualism among Shakers in 1837 that led to the more "reasonable" McNemar's fall from favor among the Shakers.<sup>14</sup> Fire can warm; fire can also burn. Add to these distinctions an active predisposition toward millennialism and one has a good description of McNemar's thought. Beazley suggests that Stone's move toward a more ordered church came as a result of his experience with McNemar and the Shakers.<sup>15</sup> It is interesting to consider whether or not recent Disciples moves toward an even more ordered ministry came, similarly, as a result of the experience with Jim Jones.

McNemar, Dunlavy, Marshall, Thompson and Stone broke from the Synod of Kentucky in 1803. McNemar and Dunlavy became Shakers in 1805. Marshall and Thompson recanted and returned to the Presbyterian Church in 1812. This thinning of the ranks that Colby Hall called the “Gideon’s band process”<sup>16</sup> meant that Stone alone remained, of the original five, in the movement that would lead to the Christian Church. Who, then, was Richard McNemar? Perhaps Marshall and Thompson described him best: “. . . that eccentric genius.”<sup>17</sup>

If Richard McNemar was the major defector from the early ranks of the New Light Christians, there were a number of contestants for this honor among the Campbellites. Like McNemar, many of them had antinomian and spiritualist tendencies. Many of them also became involved with new sectarian movements. We shall consider but a few of them here.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. The Mormon Connection: Parley Pratt and Sidney Rigdon

Religion on the American frontier was in a tremendous state of flux in the early nineteenth century. Many felt that a new religious revelation was at hand. A new order of politics had come into being. Why not a new religion, one that would complement the peculiarly American *zeitgeist*? In response, movements came and went; revivals rose and fell. And there were those who moved from one group to another, searching for the new “true” faith. Two among those were Parley Pratt and Sidney Rigdon.

Parley Parker Pratt (1807-1857) was born in Burlington, New York. Raised in a large, poor family on the fringes of society, Pratt early on became attracted to religion and relished the stories of the Old Testament, believing them all. As a young man he left home to seek his fortune in Ohio, but found only more hard work. In 1829 a Reformed Baptist preacher named Sidney Rigdon came into the neighborhood to preach. Rigdon was associated with a group unknown to Pratt, popularly called “Campbellites.” In the words of Reva Stanley, Pratt’s biographer:

He found to his joy that the preacher was teaching the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost soon to come. This was the religion Parley had been seeking, and yet there was something lacking. He believed that Sidney Rigdon did not have the authority to minister to holy things, and he told him so. Rigdon admitted that the Reformed Baptists claimed no vision, no revelation, and no right to administer holy priesthoods, but other than that he claimed they were on the right track. There was only one thing the Campbellites lacked, and that was a leader with audacity enough to proclaim himself a prophet.<sup>19</sup>

Even with this shortcoming, the religion espoused by Rigdon was the closest thing to what Pratt had been searching for that he had yet found. So he embraced the Campbellites and sold his farm, determining to become a missionary for the Campbellite cause. His determination proved, however, to be short-lived.

A year later, in Newark, New York, he was seeking to establish a preaching mission when one of the people he called upon told him of a new religious book, purported to have been translated from gold plates by a young man in nearby Palmyra. Pratt got a copy of the *Book of Mormon* the next day, read it, and found the prophecy and the prophet he had been looking for. He

met Joseph Smith, was baptized a Mormon, and later went back to Ohio, looking for Sidney Rigdon. Rigdon, too, was soon converted and baptized by Pratt.

Smith's vision concerning Pratt said, in part:

And now concerning my servant Parley P. Pratt, behold, I say unto him, that as I live I will that he shall declare my gospel and learn of me, and be meek and lowly of heart: and that which I have appointed unto him is, that he shall go . . . into the wilderness.<sup>20</sup>

That he did. Pratt began to have visions himself, confirming him in his calling. He went west with Smith to Kirtland and Nauvoo. En route to Illinois from a mission in Boston when the murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith occurred at Carthage, Pratt escaped the massacre. He served as scout for the Brigham Young party on their trek to Utah, and became a pivotal leader of the church there. He scouted the Valley of Utah and as far southwest as California. He developed a Mormon alphabet but had little success in having it replace English. Under the Mormon doctrine of polygamy, he married twelve women and fathered thirty children. He undertook various missions to places as far away as Chile. On his last mission, in Arkansas in 1857, he was murdered by the vengeful husband of a woman Pratt had also taken to wife.

Pratt's story, fascinating throughout and tragic at the end, is at least constant. Once Pratt had committed himself to Joseph Smith and his religion, he never wavered from the Mormon course. Rigdon's story is different.<sup>21</sup> Of the two, Rigdon was better known and remains historically more important.

Born to a farm family in Pennsylvania, Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876) desperately wanted an education, but his family lacked the money to provide it. Largely self-taught, he delighted in books, especially historical ones. Severely injured after being thrown and dragged by a horse as a boy, Rigdon recovered physically, but ever after suffered from what was called a lack of "mental equilibrium" which left him "inclined to run into wild visionary views on almost every question."<sup>22</sup> Whether or not this injury indeed had an impact on his later religious life, as claimed by Alexander Campbell and others, is the purest of speculation.

Rigdon had a conversion experience in 1817 and soon thereafter became a Baptist preacher, gaining considerable notoriety for his oratorical skills. Ever questing for religious truth, Rigdon came upon the same Shaker doctrines that had won Richard McNemar and found them interesting but not convincing. In 1821 he came upon a copy of the debate between Alexander Campbell and John Walker. Impressed by Campbell's views, he went to see the reformer at his Bethany home. He came away from the two-day meeting a convert to Campbell's cause, lamenting that "if he [Rigdon] had within the last year taught and promulgated from the pulpit one error, he had a thousand."<sup>23</sup> Delighted to gain Rigdon, Campbell looked forward to great things from this gifted preacher.

Over the next several years Rigdon became one of the leading evangelists in Ohio, perhaps second only to Walter Scott. He held numerous successful meetings and attracted a large following. But in these years his thought was also drifting away from Campbell's. He began to espouse communitarian thought and disagreed with Campbell over such questions as the manifestation of spiritual gifts and miracles. Campbell believed that the age of spiritual gifts

was over; Rigdon did not. The conflict came to a head at the 1830 meeting of the Mahoning Baptist Association. Campbell prevailed. And Rigdon left the meeting

chafed and chagrined, and never met with the Disciples in a general meeting afterward. On his way home he commented in disgust, "I have done as much for the Reformation as Campbell or Scott, and yet they get all the honor."<sup>24</sup>

Thus, when his own convert Parley Pratt returned to Rigdon's home in Mentor, Ohio, in 1830 with the *Book of Mormon*, Rigdon was fertile soil.

All those things he found missing in Campbell he found present in the *Book of Mormon*. Declaring himself convinced that Mormonism was truly "the apostolic church divinely restored to earth," Rigdon, his family, and many of his congregation were baptized Mormons. The importance of this cannot be minimized. Prior to Rigdon's conversion, Joseph Smith had been able to gain but a handful of followers. Rigdon was his first well-known convert and surely his most important, because, within a short time, Rigdon would be responsible for adding one thousand converts to Mormonism! Many important Mormon missionaries, including Orson Hyde, Parley and Orson Pratt, Lyman Wright, Edward Partridge and Frederic G. Williams, were former Disciples.<sup>25</sup> So important was Rigdon's conversion to Smith that historian Leroy Garrett has suggested that if Rigdon had been selected evangelist of the Mahoning Association instead of Walter Scott, with the prestige and duty that would have entailed, "there might never have been a Mormon Church."<sup>26</sup> Campbell's co-worker and biographer Robert Richardson flatly claimed that Sidney Rigdon was the founder and architect of Mormonism.<sup>27</sup> Whether or not that is true, it cannot be doubted that, after the conversion of Rigdon, Mormonism quickly grew from a small band of adherents to a major threat to Protestantism of the Western Reserve.

One theory that refuses to die is that Rigdon himself wrote the *Book of Mormon*. The Spaulding-Rigdon theory, first put forward in 1833, was denied by Rigdon. Fawn Brodie, whose biography of Smith is well-respected, devotes a fifteen-page appendix of her work to an investigation of the theory, clearly demonstrating its utter improbability if not impossibility.<sup>28</sup> But the theory persists; even Garrett suggests it is still viable.<sup>29</sup>

Thomas and Alexander Campbell quickly responded to the Mormon threat. Thomas Campbell wrote to Rigdon, pleading with him to reconsider. Rigdon cast the letter into the fire. So Thomas travelled to Ohio himself, following in the footsteps of Rigdon, seeking to undo the damage Rigdon had done to the Disciples movement. The elder Campbell, more irenic than his son and not possessing the same combative forensic skills, nevertheless became so incensed by Rigdon's defection that he offered to debate him. Rigdon declined.

Alexander, too, from his editor's desk, responded to the challenge of Rigdon and Smith. He read the *Book of Mormon* carefully and then roundly excoriated it and its author, whom he never doubted to be Smith. He called the book a fabrication, "patched up and cemented . . . , the meanest book in the English language . . . with not one good sentence in it." And he called Smith "an ignorant liar, as impudent a knave as ever wrote a book."<sup>30</sup>

As for Rigdon, his remarks were softer, but no less sure:

It was with mingled emotions of regret and surprise that we have learned that Sidney Rigdon has renounced the ancient gospel, . . . and that he has fallen into the snare of the

Devil in joining the Mormonites. He has led away a number of disciples with him. His instability I was induced to ascribe to a peculiar mental and caporeal malady, to which he had been subject for some years. Fits of melancholy succeeded by fits of enthusiasm<sup>31</sup> accompanied by some kind of nervous spasms and swoonings which he has, since his defection, interpreted as the agency of the Holy Spirit, or the recovery of spiritual gifts produced a versatility in his genius and deportment which has been increasing for some time.<sup>32</sup>

Of Rigdon's claim to have seen a vision while in prayer, Campbell said laconically, "He who sets out to find signs and omens will soon find enough of them." Campbell was surely saddened by Rigdon's defection, but he was so certain that Mormonism was an evil delusion that he spared no effort to proclaim its falsity and steel his followers against it, saying, "I have never felt myself so fully authorized to address mortal man in the style in which Paul addressed Elymas the sorcerer as I feel toward this atheist Smith."<sup>33</sup> After the initial losses to Rigdon, it appears that the efforts of the Campbells, father and son, prevented further widespread defections.

As for Rigdon, his importance to Smith soon became overtly evident in Smith's move to Kirtland, Ohio, which was Rigdon country. Smith had received a revelation concerning Rigdon:

Behold, verily, verily, I say unto my servant Sidney, I have looked upon thee and thy works. I have heard thy prayers, and prepared thee for a greater work. Thou art blessed, for thou shalt do great things.<sup>34</sup>

Rigdon became Smith's right-hand man and soon began receiving revelations of his own, becoming the only person besides Smith in early Mormonism to claim direct communication with Christ.<sup>35</sup> There were differences between them, though. Their large personalities sometimes came into conflict and, while Smith was a garrulous, good-humored man, Rigdon suffered frequently from depression. They continued their work together in Ohio, Missouri and Illinois, and in 1844 an assembly of Mormons nominated Joseph Smith for President of the United States and Sidney Rigdon for Vice-president. But friction between them increased and Smith tried twice, unsuccessfully, to oust Rigdon from the church. Rigdon's accusation that Smith had tried to seduce his daughter Nancy was perhaps the fatal wedge driven between them. Whatever the cause, as anti-Mormon sentiment in Illinois mounted, Rigdon took his family to Pittsburgh for safety's sake. By the time he returned, Joseph and Hyrum Smith had been murdered. Rigdon boldly asserted his claim to leadership as the only surviving member of the Mormon First Presidency. But he was solidly repudiated. Even Parley Pratt spoke against him. The vote went to Brigham Young. And Sidney Rigdon was severed from the fellowship.

Rigdon tried unsuccessfully to found another church, then retired from active life and lived his last thirty years quietly in the little village of Friendship, New York. To the end he claimed that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that the *Book of Mormon* was true and, of course, that he [Rigdon] had not written it.

### 3. John Thomas

One of the stranger stories in Disciples history is that of Dr. John Thomas (1805-1871).<sup>36</sup> Thomas was born in London, the son of an Independent clergyman. Educated as a physician, he emigrated to the United States in 1832.

Shortly after his arrival, he was baptized by Walter Scott. Acquaintance with Scott and another Disciple, Daniel Gano, eventually led Thomas to Bethany, where he spent a month with Alexander Campbell in 1833. There was mutual admiration and Campbell was hopeful that the obviously talented young doctor would become a significant voice for the Disciples.

Thomas preached and wrote for the Disciples for the next five years in Pennsylvania and Virginia. During this period, as he studied the Bible and applied his mind to doctrinal questions, differences with Campbell emerged that would eventually sever Thomas's relationship with Campbell and the Disciples and lead to the establishment of yet another religious body, the Christadelphians.

Although there were many differences, three doctrinal issues dominated Thomas's dispute with Campbell. The first was baptism. Campbell and his followers believed that baptism was for the remission of sins. Baptists believed baptism to be a sign that remission had already occurred.<sup>37</sup> Thomas therefore deduced that since Baptists had not had the proper understanding of baptism when they were immersed, they had not really been baptized at all. He insisted upon re-immersing them. Since Baptists formed the largest market for Campbell's reformation, this was a major problem. Campbell made quite clear that he did not share Thomas's views.<sup>38</sup>

The second issue involved Thomas's strange belief about the state of the dead. Campbell was orthodox here. Human beings had souls. The souls of those who died in the faith were immediately received to eternal life in heaven. Not so, thought Thomas. He denied that human beings intrinsically possessed an immortal soul. When people died, they died completely. The regenerate, however, would only "sleep" in their graves until the second coming of Christ, when they would be resurrected for the Battle of Armageddon and the Millennium to follow. This doctrine of "soul sleeping," properly called psychopannichism, was bitterly opposed by Campbell.<sup>39</sup>

The third matter was related to the second. Perhaps the central feature of Thomas's theology was a vivid eschatology, one which involved the return of the Jews to Palestine, the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the righteous dead, the Battle of Armageddon against the forces of darkness, the final victory of Jesus Christ, and the setting up of the ten tribes, prior to the millennium of peace. Campbell believed that Christ would return following the millennium of peace, which he believed would be ushered in by the successful mission of the church.

All of these features coalesced to give Thomas's thought yet another distinctive feature. Since the Reformation, Protestants had grounded salvation in faith and Campbell was no exception. For Thomas, however, salvation was based not upon faith but upon hope.<sup>40</sup> Even so, if Thomas had been willing to hold to these ideas as opinions only, he would not have run into the trouble that he did. There has always been a wide latitude for theological opinion within the Disciples. Only when such opinions were set forth as tests of fellowship did the anti-creedal bias of Disciples cease its tolerance. Concerned brethren brought Campbell and Thomas together for a long meeting in 1838, in an attempt to save Thomas for the movement. Those gathered urged the doctor to cease discussion of his speculations. But, as so often happens, Thomas became

even more convinced that his views were not mere opinion but the very word of God.<sup>41</sup>

Dr. Thomas and those who followed him set up separate societies, called *ecclesias* instead of churches. He spent the last three decades of his life working to build the Christadelphian (Brethren in Christ) movement, as he named it. The movement endures to this day, having some ten thousand adherents, primarily in Great Britain and the United States. John Thomas, M.D., is still honored by Christadelphians as their founding father.

I had the opportunity to attend a Christadelphian service of worship in Pomona, California, in 1984. The order, the attitude, the atmosphere were, one might say, rather quaint. The women were covered and silent. The exhortation was given by a visiting layperson, there being no ordained clergy. The communion service was closed to non-members. I almost had the feeling that I had dropped into a Disciples service of the 1840s.

#### 4. Jesse B. Ferguson

In researching the stories of disaffections from the Disciples, one often encounters a note of sadness. But I know of no story in the whole sweep of Disciples history more tragic than that of Jesse B. Ferguson (1819-1870). Born in Philadelphia, Ferguson had but a modest education due to lack of financial resources and suffered a severe attack of tubercular arthritis as a youth which crippled him for life. He worked for a time as a printer. He began preaching at nineteen and in four short years gained a national reputation. When he accepted the call to serve the Christian Church in Nashville, he was the youngest minister in the city, but "he enjoyed the fame of being the greatest and most eloquent pulpit orator in the South."<sup>42</sup> Nashville lionized the young minister and his congregation grew; members constructed a grand new church edifice, and Ferguson, like many leading Disciples voices, soon had an editorial platform as well as a homiletical one, becoming editor of the *Christian Magazine* in 1848. In the pages of this journal in 1852, the seed of controversy was sown that would grow to engulf and destroy Ferguson.

In response to a question about the meaning of I Peter 3:19, Ferguson suggested that, while in the grave for three days, Jesus had preached to the spirits of the nether world. He went on to suggest this meant that those who had not received the faith in this lifetime would have a second chance. Alexander Campbell immediately attacked what he called Ferguson's "post-mortem gospel."<sup>43</sup> Ferguson sought to defend himself by stating that he was only offering an opinion and claiming the traditional Disciples freedom to hold opinions not made tests of fellowship. But instead of decreasing, the controversy increased.

After first denying it, Ferguson admitted that he was a "universalist," saying that "eternal doom or damnation is a hideous fable of a barbarous age."<sup>44</sup> He also admitted to being a "spiritualist" and published a book called *Spirit Communion*, in which he claimed to be able to communicate with those in the "spirit-spheres."<sup>45</sup> He also claimed the label "progressionist," affirming his belief that the human spirit was divine and is created for "eternal progression."<sup>46</sup> He exalted reason over scripture, saying that the authority of the Bible lay in

the authority of the truth it proclaimed.<sup>47</sup> Campbell's attack was blistering and unrelenting, referring to Ferguson's thought as "crude and undigested speculations."<sup>48</sup> Another Campbell supporter in the controversy suggested that Ferguson "had a maggot in his brain."<sup>49</sup> Needless to say, the Nashville congregation was thrown into turmoil. Ferguson finally resigned in 1856.

Consider here two matters: Ferguson's ideas and Campbell's response. First, excepting the aberration of spirit-communion, many of Ferguson's ideas would be commonplace in respected religious circles a half-century after his time. His universalist position is relatively common among twentieth-century Disciples. Many of his thoughts about "spirit" would, under the name "psyche," become central to the field of psychology. He had much in common with the transcendentalists of his time and was criticized for his affinity to Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was also called an infidel by many. Others attacked Ferguson's views as being tainted by the thought of William Newman and Henry James, who were asking some of the questions that would lead to the psychology of religion, long before that discipline emerged. It is ironic that these men are remembered as great Americans.

Ferguson's thoughts about the upward growth of the human spirit would probably be attacked by fundamentalists today as "secular humanism," but they would also be viewed by others as part of that philosophical strand that led to existentialism and other modern philosophies. And Ferguson's views on the Bible were consistent with the biblical criticism that would emerge in the decades after his death. The conclusion is inescapable: Ferguson was born a full half-century ahead of his time. Had he lived with Edward Scribner Ames and others of the "Chicago School," he would have been at home.

Now, concerning Campbell's reaction, a parallel is available. When the young preacher Aylette Raines exhibited universalist tendencies in the 1820s, Thomas Campbell patiently worked with him and defended him in a speech that Garrett calls one of the most dramatic in the movement's history. Campbell described his long discussions with Raines and then said, "notwithstanding the difference of opinion between us, I would put my right hand in the fire and have it burnt off before I would hold up my hands against him."<sup>50</sup> Compare this with Alexander's characterization of Ferguson: "this leprous spot, this gangrene."<sup>51</sup>

Could Ferguson have been saved for the movement? Probably. If he had been treated by Alexander in the same kind, fatherly way that Raines had been treated by Thomas, an accommodation might well have been reached. Working against reconciliation were the facts that Campbell was old, battle-scarred, and not given to the same tolerance that he and especially his father had shown earlier. Moreover, Ferguson, like so many who achieve too much too soon, had a massive ego and did not submit easily to discipline. We are left with this possibility to consider: had Ferguson been born a generation earlier or a generation later, he might be remembered as one of the brightest stars in the Disciples firmament.

## **B. RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THE SECOND GENERATION**

Following the death of Alexander Campbell in 1866, the Disciples

movement almost immediately began to disintegrate. Doctrinal warfare wrenched the movement apart, not once but twice. A number of significant leaders left during the middle and early modern period. For some the problem was a theology they saw as increasingly out of step with the times. For some the problem was not the theological points at issue, but the harsh way in which the debate was carried out. The attacks often became personal and vicious. Some could not take the strain and opted out. Still others had completely non-theological reasons for leaving.

### 1. Errett Gates

“Whatever happened to Errett Gates?” I have asked and been asked that question a number of times. In studying what has been called the “Chicago School” of Disciples or, to use historian Harvey Arnold’s phrase, the “Disciples Illuminati,” one of the first names to be encountered is that of Errett Gates (1870-1951). W. E. Garrison himself called Gates the first professionally trained church historian the Disciples ever produced. His book on the causes behind the separation of the Baptists and Disciples, written in 1904, is still used. He was a co-founder of the Campbell Institute, an editor and frequent columnist for *The Scroll*. The Chicago Disciples frequently found their names in print, praised or vilified: Ames, Willett, Garrison, MacClintock, Morrison, and certainly Gates. Then, suddenly in 1917, Gates simply disappeared. Did he die? If not, what happened?

What happened was one of the saddest disaffections encountered in this research, and disaffection finds its most precise usage here. For Gates’ separation from the Disciples, unlike the other cases in this study, seems to have had nothing to do with doctrine and everything to do with the conflict of personalities.

Gates was born in Courtland, Ohio, in 1870, took his B.A. from Ohio Normal University in 1887, his B.D. from the University of Chicago in 1900, and his Ph.D. in 1902. Almost from his arrival in Chicago, he was associated with the Disciples Divinity House and gained a modicum of fame as a spokesperson for liberal theology among Disciples. However, the relationship between Gates and the Divinity House began to sour after 1910.

Two factors seem to have dominated the deteriorating relationship. First, in the early days of the Divinity House, as with many other institutions, instructors had to “get” their classes, to convince enough students to take the courses offered. There were few Disciples students enrolled and few of them interested in the history courses offered by Gates. So it was that between 1911 and 1915, Gates offered eight courses in the House, had only one chosen, and that by only one student.<sup>52</sup> That is not a particularly good record for a teacher.

The other factor had to do with writing and study. Gates had shown considerable promise as a scholar. But it was a promise which largely went unfulfilled. Chicago granted Gates a year’s leave during 1910-1911 to study Campbellian roots in Scotland and the history of the Christian Union Movements in Europe. The University expected that he would publish the results of his research. But months dragged into years and nothing substantial was forthcoming. As Edward Henry put it in writing of Gates, “His greatest

weakness was seeming inability to complete things.”<sup>53</sup>

Finally, in 1917, after Ames, Willett and MacClintock prodded Gates one time too many, tempers flared and Gates’ appointment with the Divinity House was cancelled. The effect on Gates was massive. He not only left the employ of the Disciples Divinity House, he also left the Disciples of Christ, theological education and religious scholarship. In a long article, published over seven issues of the *Christian Standard*—which was delighted to publish an attack against the “Chicago crowd”—Gates detailed his side of the events in a bitter diatribe labeled “The Inside Story of Disciples Divinity House.” These events resulted, in his words, in

my complete withdrawal from the Divinity House and from the Brotherhood of the Disciples and their work, for which I fitted myself and to which I dedicated myself from my earliest boyhood, and . . . my abandonment of my professional religious career.<sup>54</sup>

The officers of the Divinity House made no extensive reply to Gates, with the exception of a brief letter from MacClintock which labeled “these latest calumnies” of Gates “without warrant in fact.”<sup>55</sup> It appears that they simply desired to have the matter over and done with, to put the “Gates affair” behind them. Subsequent histories of the Disciples Divinity House have also chosen to ignore the matter.<sup>56</sup>

Years later, Edward Henry would write of the affair:

There was a great deal of bitterness and as far as I know Gates never again talked with any member of Ames’ [University] Church or of the [Campbell] Institute. Mrs. Gates very much regretted the incident. She continued her friendship with many old friends including my wife, to whom she once said that she missed her old friends very much. But the break was complete for Gates.<sup>57</sup>

Gates joined the Congregational Church and became an attorney, which vocation he followed for the rest of his life. It is a shame that, with the dissolution of his relationship with the Divinity House, there was no place else for him to go within the Disciples at large. But where else was there for liberal Disciples scholars of that era but Chicago? In this study we have looked at several doctrinal issues that led to disaffection. Gates said that his reasons for leaving were “personal and institutional.” That they were. Institutions create centrifugal force as they spin. For a variety of reasons persons get thrown from the circle. Gates was one of those slung aside. He had his faults, but he was not an untalented Disciple. His loss was a shame.

## 2. Joseph Fort Newton

Joseph Fort Newton (1876-1950) was one of the best known literary figures and pulpiteers of the first half of the twentieth century. Raised a Baptist, he studied for the ministry at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. While there, however, he chanced to hear one of the Disciples’ finest preachers, E. L. Powell. He fell under Powell’s homiletical tutelage and years later would remember Powell with the greatest affection and admiration:

To his high office he brings all the resources of scholarship, the fascinations of personality, the fresh insight born of a solitary intuition of spiritual truth, and the witchery of an eloquence behind which one sees a beautiful soul.<sup>58</sup>

After graduation from seminary, Newton assumed the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Paris, Texas, but soon found himself in a debilitating

doctrinal controversy that eventually ended in a court of law. The question was, according to Newton, whether Christ had died “for us” or “instead of us.”<sup>59</sup> The experience left him profoundly depressed. He resigned his pastorate and accepted the pastorate of the First Christian Church in Paris. Ministerial protocol indicates the danger of such a move within the same area, but Newton was undaunted. Thus, the informal relationship he had with the Disciples through Powell became formalized in a small East Texas town.

But it did not last long. Soon Newton began to sense that he had made a mistake in becoming a Disciple. He wrote:

Even the Church of the Disciples, to whose pulpit I have been so welcomed, originally born of an authentic impulse in behalf of Christian unity, had become just another sect, following the familiar pattern—one more factor in a bewildering agglomeration of factional feud. Its founders and early leaders—Campbell, Stone, Scott—were men of clear vision, seeking the fellowship of the beloved community in Christ, but their dream had bogged down in a too literal reading of the Bible, amid dogmas and rites which looked like the “mint, anise, and cummin” in the days of Jesus. Their famous maxim, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity,” failed to function, since the question as to what are the essentials was left unsettled. Thus a sincere and prophetic hope ended in the development of another denomination, to be added to a list already too long.<sup>60</sup>

In another place, Newton made his objection to the Disciples specific. “While the Baptist Church had a theological test of fellowship, the Christian Church had a ceremonial test of fellowship [baptism by immersion]; and the one was as objectionable as the other.”<sup>61</sup>

Newton visited St. Louis in 1899, where he had occasion to visit and compare theologies with Robert C. Cave. Cave had only recently left the Disciples to form the Non-Sectarian Church of St. Louis. His story will be found elsewhere in this paper. Newton found himself in agreement with Cave and went to work with him. Thus ended his formal affiliation with the Disciples and began his association with what he called “the liberal church.” Newton served a series of liberal, independent churches, including the People’s Church of Dixon, Illinois, and the Little Brick Church of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. From there he was called in 1915 to the famed City Temple of London, where he ministered during the trauma of World War I. Newton returned to the United States and eventually made his way into the Protestant Episcopal Church. During his long career Newton maintained friendships with a number of Disciples, including Edgar DeWitt Jones and Burriss Jenkins.<sup>62</sup> But it is clear that the Disciples movement itself was but a way station on Newton’s journey. The controversies of the early twentieth century drove him and his liberal theology quickly away. Had he come to the Disciples a generation later, when most of those controversies had been settled, either by division, compromise or perhaps even Christian growth, he might have found more congenial surroundings.

### 3. Hiram Van Kirk

Hiram Van Kirk (1868-1920) was a graduate of Hiram College and Yale Divinity School. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1900. A versatile scholar, Van Kirk published in the fields of church history, New Testament, theology and Disciples studies. His study of *The Rise*

of the *Current Reformation* won plaudits from Disciples.

It was Van Kirk who called the meeting in 1896 that led to the formation of the Campbell Institute. He also became the first chairman of the Institute. He served Christian churches, lectured around the country, and was elected dean and professor of biblical theology at the Berkeley [California] Bible Seminary, an educational ancestor of Chapman University. During his tenure there (1900-1908), Van Kirk came under increasing attack from the *Christian Standard* and other conservative elements with the Disciples as a proponent of higher criticism and other assorted deviations from the old path. For some time Van Kirk sought to defend himself against the *Standard*, but reached the point where his anger at its treatment of him boiled over, as in this 1903 letter to the journal:

What reparation is there in your power adequate to make good the damage you have done to my reputation and the work of the Berkeley Bible Seminary, or to remove the suspicion I shall have to labor against all my life in the minds of many who have been prejudiced by your course.<sup>63</sup>

Apparently Van Kirk chose not to struggle against Disciples conservatives for the rest of his life, for he left the seminary in 1908 to return to Yale. He was ordained a priest in the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1910.<sup>64</sup> He taught in the Virginia Theological Seminary and the Berkeley [Connecticut] Divinity School and served as rector of the Episcopal Church in Darien, Connecticut, from 1913 until 1920. That year his health broke and he died, following surgery, at the untimely age of fifty-two.<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. Other Liberals and Prodigals

Several other well-known liberals, most associated with the Campbell Institute, also left during this period, together with a few who left and later made their way back into the movement. Reasons for their disaffections were not always publicized, but were probably related to the incessant attacks against liberals. Constraint of space permits only brief mention of these leaders.

Carlos C. Rowlison (1865-1935) was a rising star. A graduate of Eureka College and the highest ranking graduate of his class at the Harvard Divinity School, Rowlison was much involved in the early years of the Campbell Institute, serving as president from 1903-1906. He served churches in Cedar Rapids and Indianapolis before being elected president of Hiram College in 1905. He had another pastorate in Iowa City from 1908 until 1913, at which time he left the Disciples to become a minister in the Congregational Church. He became a significant leader within Congregationalism, holding state and national offices, and was also active in the Interchurch World Movement.<sup>66</sup>

Guy Sarvis (1879-1958) provides an interesting footnote to Disciples history. A brilliant young churchman, graduate of Drake University and the University of Chicago, where he had been Ames' assistant, Sarvis was determined to go to China as a missionary. He became the focal point of the *Standard* attack on the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, the Disciples Divinity House, open membership, and Ames. Sarvis was subjected to repeated

attacks and inquisitions. He weathered them all in good grace and did go to China for fifteen years, where he taught at the University of Nanking.<sup>67</sup> Returning to the United States, he taught in colleges for the rest of his career and eventually became a Unitarian.<sup>68</sup>

Robert C. Cave (1843-1923) was a Virginian and a Confederate veteran, who came to be known as the Disciples' first "modernist."<sup>69</sup> By the time he became pastor of the Christian Church in St. Louis in 1888, Cave advocated a radical gospel that left old-line Disciples aghast. Slightly more than a year later, he was forced from his pulpit and left the Disciples. Some two decades later he returned, with basically the same views, after the fires had died down and modernism was more acceptable. Interestingly enough, upon his death he was remembered as "a gentleman of the old school."<sup>70</sup>

Burris Jenkins (1869-1945), a disciple of Alexander Procter, the "Sage of Independence," was the "arch-liberal" among early twentieth-century Disciples.<sup>71</sup> After serving as president of the University of Kentucky, Jenkins came to the pastorate of the Linwood Boulevard Christian Church in Kansas City in 1907, where he served for over thirty years. In the late twenties he changed the name of the church to the Community Church of Kansas City, dropping the "denominational" name. The Kansas City Disciples organization dropped the church from its rolls over the issue of open membership and Jenkins left the movement as well. A few years later the Disciples asked Jenkins to bring himself and the church back into the fold and he agreed, with the understanding that his beliefs and the congregation's practices had not changed.

Cecil J. Armstrong (1873-1966), a native of New Zealand, came to this country as a youth. As pastor of the Christian Church in Troy, New York, in 1910, he created quite a stir by resigning from his ministry in Troy and the movement of the Disciples. In his letter of resignation he wrote: "My reason . . . is the growing consciousness, the first dawn of which was during my student days, that doctrinally I am out of harmony with . . . this congregation and our church as a whole."<sup>72</sup>

The issues over which Armstrong left were "baptism, the means of bringing Christian unity to pass, and the value of higher criticism."<sup>73</sup> I cannot determine how long this disaffection lasted, for the record shows that Armstrong was soon serving other churches and had a long, successful tenure as pastor of the Christian Church in Hannibal, Missouri.

## **C. SIGNIFICANT PERSONS NOT KNOWN PRIMARILY AS RELIGIOUS LEADERS**

### **1. Peter Burnett**

The only person in our survey known primarily for his political life is Peter Burnett (1807-1895), the first governor of the State of California.<sup>74</sup> The story of his religious life is told in a remarkable volume entitled *The Path Which Led a Protestant Lawyer to the Catholic Church*. Burnett's parents were both Baptists, but he was a self-described unbeliever until he was thirty-two years old. At that point, in his own words,

My own observations of men and things, as well as the arguments of others, at length satisfied me that the [Christian] system was divine; and I at once acted upon my convictions and joined myself to the Disciples, in 1840.<sup>75</sup>

In 1843 Burnett moved with his family to Oregon. He had occasion to attend the midnight mass at Christmas that year in Fort Vancouver and later remarked that, in all his religious experience, he had never felt an impulse so profound, so touching. But he knew nothing of the Roman Catholic Church and its tenets. In fact, all he had heard of Catholicism in his Protestant world had been negative and hostile. So he was left with a feeling of considerable frustration. Then it happened that the next year he was given a copy of the published debate between Alexander Campbell and Bishop Purcell on the Roman Catholic religion.<sup>76</sup>

Campbell was, of course, well known for his skill as a debater and his debates did much to make his name and that of his movement known to thousands of people, although the acrimony engendered by the debates did little to advance the cause of a united church.<sup>77</sup> Given Campbell's renown as a debater, it is most interesting to find in this case that Burnett, thousands of miles away on the Pacific coast, read the Campbell-Purcell debate and was won over by the arguments of Purcell! It is perhaps even more interesting when Burnett remarks that all his prejudices, in beginning the book, were on the side of Campbell. And yet,

... while the attentive reading of the debate did not convince me of the entire truth of the Catholic theory, I was greatly astonished to find that so much could be said in its support. On many points, and those of great importance, it was clear, to my mind, that Mr. Campbell had been overthrown.<sup>78</sup>

After further study, Burnett became convinced of the correctness of Roman Catholic doctrine:

I examined carefully, prayerfully, and earnestly, until I was satisfied beyond a doubt, that the Old Church was the true, and the only true Church.... I found her, as holy Cyprian of old had said, "The house of unity and peace." I mean to live and die in her communion.<sup>79</sup>

Burnett continues, at great length, to defend points of Roman Catholic doctrine or to show how Campbell had misrepresented the views of the Church. His examination is detailed and, one might even say, Campbellian in its rationalism. But, in the end, he accuses Campbell and Protestantism in general of a kind of laceration of the mind, and concludes that the convert to Catholicism . . .

is conscious that he has embraced a higher grade of faith, has been brought into closer and holier communion with the unseen world, and has adopted a more just and charitable estimate of human veracity. He has taken a step towards the Celestial City, from the low murky valleys of discord, where the fogs of error do love to dwell.<sup>80</sup>

Burnett moved to California in 1848, took an active part in the movement of statehood and was elected the first governor of the state in 1850. After his term as governor, he practiced law, served on the California Supreme Court, and founded the Pacific Bank of California. He died in 1895 as he had promised years before, a Roman Catholic.

## 2. Josiah Royce

Josiah Royce (1855-1916) of Harvard University was one of America's greatest philosophers. Idealism reached one of its peaks in the thought of

Royce. In his later life he became more and more interested in social and religious questions. His concepts of community and loyalty are gaining a new hearing these days in thoughtful religious circles. As his name is heard more frequently, this query is also heard from time to time: did not Royce have a Disciples connection?

The answer to that question is yes and no. So far as I am aware, the person who probed the deepest into a Roycean Disciples connection was Reuben Butchart of Toronto.<sup>81</sup> Butchart traced the Royce family from England to Dundas in Lower Ontario, Canada, to New York, to Iowa, and then, in 1849, to California with the gold-seekers. There, in the little settlement of Grass Valley, the philosopher was born in 1855. Royce's father had come to California a Baptist, but the little Baptist Church the family joined soon disintegrated. And the family became members of a fledgling Disciples congregation founded in Grass Valley by Disciples from Nova Scotia. Royce's father remained a Disciple for the rest of his life. So there is no question that there was a large Disciples influence within the Royce family.

What about young Josiah? His religious program as a child is more difficult to ascertain. There are two sources to consider: the book his mother wrote about the trip to California and the family's life there, and Royce's own writings.<sup>82</sup> Royce was apparently a shy, introverted child who, in his early years, was primarily educated by his mother and sisters. His schoolbook was the Bible: he loved the biblical stories and especially the "brilliant coloring and luxuriant images" of the Apocalypse.<sup>83</sup> The two central themes of his mature philosophical system, loyalty and community, were nurtured during this period.

Royce was later to be baptized in the Baptist Church, but maintained no long-term connection with that church. The only connection that can be asserted with the Disciples is what Butchart calls the "imaginative" one: that the son of a devout father would have a good chance of becoming like him in religious faith and opinions.<sup>84</sup> The fact remains that, however important the church was in the Royce family and however much Josiah was influenced as a child by the Disciples program, Royce wrote as an adult that he had "no present connection with any visible religious body and no sort of desire for any such connection."<sup>85</sup> His interest in later life was in what he called the invisible church," in which the unity lacking in the visible church was made manifest.<sup>86</sup> He was, after all, an idealist. In the words of Royce scholar Robert Gillogly:

Royce seems to have been a first-order ecumenist, one whose works exude lofty ecclesiological ideas and lead us onward and upward on a mystical pilgrimage home, but it has an ethereal quality to it all, a certain rootlessness that perhaps is related to the lack of a specific religious home or denominational identification. [He was] a thorough-going "communitarian" ironically without a community to call his own.<sup>87</sup>

### 3. Edwin Markham

Author of one of America's most beloved poems, "The Man with the Hoe," Edwin Markham (1852-1940) lived to become "the most talked-of literary man in America" and the "the dean of America's poets."<sup>88</sup> His Disciples connection as a child is remarkably similar to that of Royce. Markham's forebears had emigrated from England to America and had

followed the westward expansion of the young country. His parents met and married in the old Northwest Territory and moved to Oregon in 1847 "with a company of Campbellites."<sup>89</sup> Markham was born there in 1852. He received most of his religious training from his mother, since his father died when he was seven. Of his mother, Markham said that she:

was a seeker after religious truth always and took me with her, even as a mere child, on these religious quests. She belonged to the Campbellite Church, known now as Disciples. There was just enough controversy and clash of wits in that early church to satisfy her keen and vivid intelligence. In those days the Disciples specialized in Bible lore, and what was not known to them of immersion as the true form of baptism was not known to any group on earth.<sup>90</sup>

The family moved to a sheep ranch near Vacaville, California, in 1856, and to San Jose in 1870. Markham was baptized there and entered upon an intensely religious period of his life. He studied the scriptures earnestly and had a road-to-Damascus experience that led him to pledge to try to live in conformity with Christ's teachings. Markham's mother entertained hopes that he might become a minister and, when Disciples preacher Alexander Johnston started a school called Christian College, she urged Markham to enroll. He spent the years 1872-1874 at the college.

Whatever thought he might have had of entering the Disciples ministry did not materialize. He graduated from school, became a teacher in the town of Colma, where he joined a Methodist Church. He later moved to Oakland, where he wrote "The Man with the Hoe," which overnight established him as a literary figure. Markham moved again, to New York City, the literary capital of the country and lived there for the rest of his life. He never returned to the Disciples fold. In his later years he became a Swedenborgian, finding the mystical philosopher's ideas and ideals best suited to his.

#### 4. John Muir

John Muir (1836-1914) had an almost Jeffersonian list of accomplishments. He was an inventor of considerable genius, a successful fruit farmer, an important botanist, a geologist who transformed the field of glaciology, probably the greatest mountaineer this country has ever produced, a writer and lecturer of international reputation, America's most eminent naturalist, and a self-described tramp.<sup>91</sup> Since his death he has become the patron saint of the modern environmental movement. His love of nature and the mystical theology which grew out of it developed, at least in part, in reaction to the harsh religion of Muir's father.

Scotsman Daniel Muir was a religious fanatic who had become a Disciple when Campbellism made its way back to its ancestral home. He brought his family and faith to America in 1849, settling in the Wisconsin wilderness. The move to the new world did not soften but rather intensified Daniel Muir's religious obsession. His Campbellism was of the most legalistic stripe. He ran his family with an iron hand and his harsh work regimen irretrievably broke the health of his daughters. He became a preaching elder for the Disciples and it was only when he was off on soul-saving expeditions that the family, under the warm and gentle hand of mother Ann Muir, had a

respite of happiness. Daniel finally abandoned the family and went to evangelize in Canada. It worked well for everyone. He finally found happiness and his family found peace.

The effect of Daniel Muir's religious life upon his son should not be underestimated. On the one hand the son received a solid foundation in the basic tenets of the Christian faith. By the time he had arrived in this country, John had memorized all of the New Testament and three-quarters of the Old. And he would carry a small Testament with him on most of his later ramblings. He also shared with his father an iconoclastic spirit, a distaste for compromise, the Scottish "wandering step," a phobia about purposeless living, an aversion to lowland lifestyles, and a longing for the ecstatic religious moment.

However, the religious views that would characterize Muir's mature thinking were far removed from those of his father. A kind neighboring Disciple named David Galloway helped John to see beyond his father's narrow views, so that when the young man left home in 1861 to study at the University of Wisconsin, he left his father's religion behind. Seldom did he enter a church with four walls again, and the words "Disciples of Christ" do not appear in any of his writings. One can but lament the fanaticism of Daniel and puzzle at the "un-Disciple" nature of his faith.

After leaving college, Muir botanized in Canada, walked to the Gulf of Mexico, visited Cuba, and sailed for California, arriving in San Francisco in 1868. Depressed by the crass commercialism of the city, he asked a passer-by for the quickest way out of town. Asked in turn where he wanted to go, Muir replied, "Anywhere wild."<sup>92</sup> Directed east, Muir finally came to the Yosemite Valley and with it he came home. Muir climbed the first of his many mountains and from its summit shouted the two words that ended his quest and began his vocation, "Born again!"<sup>93</sup>

There in the Yosemite Muir would fashion his own mystical theology. Daniel's god was a wrathful judge; John's, a benevolent deity, best known in the mountains, where spirit was thinly veiled. John became both priest and prophet of his religion. As a priest he dispensed the sacraments of nature to a growing congregation. As prophet, he preached against those who ravaged God's own tabernacles. He wrote a number of books and founded the Sierra Club in 1892. His naturalistic approach to God and creation still speak to people today as the problems and possibilities he addressed became more critical. He summed up his life by saying, "I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in."<sup>94</sup>

## 5. William Maxwell

While the name William Maxwell (1908- ) may not ring a bell with all Disciples, it will with those who have been long-time readers of *The New Yorker*. Maxwell was an editor there for forty years (1936-1976). He has also written a number of books, including a family history he calls *Ancestors*. I have included Maxwell as the only living representative in this survey—at the age of ninety-two—not because his story is unique, but rather because it is told so well.

In his family history considerable space is given over to Campbell and the Christian Church. The Maxwells were long-time Disciples and when young William became a Presbyterian, he “broke a chain that went back through five generations and a hundred years.”<sup>95</sup> Lincoln, Illinois, was the family home of the Maxwells. The first Christian Church in central Illinois had been founded there by Maxwell’s great-great-great grandfather, Stephen England, who chose the family homestead and preached the ancient gospel sitting down when he could no longer stand up.<sup>96</sup> The writer’s grandparents had been stalwarts of the church during that era—early twentieth century—when doctrinal controversies were tearing the Disciples asunder. Maxwell wrote:

For twenty years, my grandfather was an elder of the Christian church in Lincoln, and I have no doubt that the controversies that the Disciples of Christ were expending so much heat and energy on during this period were all thrashed out at the family dinner table, especially when some visiting preacher was bedded down on the couch in the parlor. . . . [My grandfather’s] bent was toward whatever is practical, and he was neither persuaded by nor interested in the argument that because the church in Corinth in Paul’s time did not have an organ, it could not be used in the Christian Church in Lincoln.<sup>97</sup>

His grandmother, on the other hand, bypassed all such doctrinal questions and went straight to the heart of the religion: “She never stopped talking about immersion, or thinking about it.”<sup>98</sup>

In the long run the internecine warfare was to drive Maxwell’s father from the church. Sadly, as so often happens, when one has been soured on religion by a particularly bad experience, the feeling is permanent. Maxwell put it like this:

I knew that he was finished forever with going to church. . . . I don’t know what made him stop, except that what he did not believe in he would have nothing to do with. He almost never spoke of “the Christian Church”; he said “the Campbellites”—clearly with a derogatory intent. They were intolerant, narrow minded, hide-bound, backward-looking, and impervious to reason. Barton Stone’s name must often have been mentioned in sermons my father had to sit through, but I wonder if he knew anything whatever about Stone’s life and saintlike nature. In any case, my father was not speaking entirely from prejudice; the atmosphere of the Christian church in Lincoln was self-righteous and censorious.<sup>99</sup>

Maxwell himself joined the Presbyterian Church and then drifted away from religion altogether. He characterized his position as simple unbelief, unlike the rational atheism of his father. Maxwell’s religion was a negative: “If you could develop a print from it you would have saving faith.”<sup>100</sup>

What was the result of Maxwell’s lack of religious faith? He closes the section on his religious heritage with two statements of feeling. First is the wistful assertion that he would like to believe in God, but not all that much. Second is a touching story with powerful implications:

Reading *The History of the Disciples of Christ in Illinois*, I came upon a paragraph about a man named John F. M. Parker, and in it were these two sentences: “Within eleven months he lost a son, a daughter, his farm and his wife. But then he said: I know whom I have believed, and am now persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.” It makes me hang my head in shame.<sup>101</sup>

Maxwell’s confession brings to mind the old maxim that “God has no grandchildren,” asserting that the Christian faith is always just one generation from extinction. When doctrinal warfare splits churches and drives people from the faith, as it did in Lincoln and many other places among early twentieth-century Disciples, it may drive away not only those proximate to the

conflagration, but generations to come. Had the Maxwell family been members of a congregation that honored and accepted the broad tolerance of views found in many Christian Churches elsewhere, William Maxwell might today be an elder in the church.

## CONCLUSIONS

There are the stories: some matter of fact, some fascinating, some sad, a few tragic. The small sample included in the survey tells us a great deal about the people involved: their doctrinal positions, their predilection for or aversion to controversy, their stability, their goals. Some of the stories are vignettes on the old theme of chance. A different time for Ferguson, a different place for Maxwell, a different father for Muir—and the stories might have had different endings. Such, however, is the stuff of whimsical literature, not history. Our question here is what, if anything, the stories tell us about the Disciples of Christ.

Several things are evident. First, as erratic as he could be at times, Alexander Campbell's pre-eminence as the coryphaeus of the Disciples movement during his lifetime is beyond question. Every major assault on him or his position was repulsed. The persons either recanted, like Aylette Raines; left the movement, like Sidney Rigdon and John Thomas; or were driven out, like Jesse Ferguson.

Related to this, since leadership among the Disciples was charismatic and not official and since the leaders who followed Campbell were diverse spirits, personality clashes sometimes served to drive people from the movement. Such was clearly true of Errett Gates. Obedience to human authority was not one of the pillars of the Disciples' faith and, after Campbell, a spirit of independency prevailed which proved and proves divisive.

The unstable formula we have observed and the doctrinal controversy which grew out of it have also led to people leaving or being driven from the movement. On the one hand consider a 1901 editorial in *The Christian-Evangelist*. Entitled "Was This Change Necessary?" the piece reflected upon an unnamed minister who had left the Disciples and became a Universalist, because he no longer believed in the Trinity, the fall, verbal inspiration, atonement and eternal punishment. The editorial concluded:

The cornerstone of our movement is the transfer of emphasis from these points of creedal definition to active and obedient faith in Christ as the one essential thing. In the light of that principle, is it necessary for a man to leave the Disciples of Christ when he finds that his views of the theology, anthropology, inspiration and so on, are not those held by most of his brethren?<sup>102</sup>

The editorials that were published in a subsequent issue ranged from those who claimed that the change was not necessary at all to those who said that it most certainly was.<sup>103</sup> Lack of consensus on this issue has long been troublesome for Disciples.

Now consider, on the other hand, not those who calmly left, but rather those who were driven from the movement. Conservative elements drove unity advocates from the fellowship; liberal elements drove out restorationists. The two poles continue to snipe at one another. The center has been difficult to fix, being in a tectonic state of movement, pulled first toward one pole, then toward

the other. While this may seem natural, even healthy, people and spirits do get broken in the process.

There have been at least two recurring manifestations of this problem. First, whenever one group has staked out a position and called it orthodox, there have been others who have labeled that action creedal and unbecoming a non-creedal people. Newton and Armstrong are examples of those caught in that dilemma. Second, because the Disciples have no canon law, there have been no procedures for irenic theological discussion, apart from often heated debate and editorial name-calling. Many of the doctrinal disputes have been acrimonious and mean-spirited. Ferguson and Van Kirk were victims here.

Moreover, the Disciples have lacked that "place of authority," where one under attack could grab the horns of the altar and claim sanctuary. Paul appealed to Caesar; others appealed to the episcopacy. But there have been times when there was no sanctuary, no place to which a Disciple under attack could retreat. Some, like Gates, saw no choice but to leave. Others, like George W. Longan and Earl Wilfley, are not in our story because, broken by attacks upon them, they simply died. Disciples did not do a good job of setting options before people. Those caught, for example, in a congregation or other institution much more conservative or liberal than they, like Maxwell, were not made aware that other options for them might have existed within, rather than without, the movement.

For lack of a better expression, extremists in doctrine and action have never fared particularly well among the Disciples. Psychopannichists like Thomas and spiritualists like McNemar and Ferguson functioned outside the mainstream and were cut off. Mystics like Muir drifted away. Social Gospelers have tended to flourish on the periphery of the movement, if at all. The Disciples, then, might be said to have a broad and tolerant middle, one in which liberals and conservatives exist in a generally workable relationship, but narrow extremities, whether far left or far right.

Some who left the movement, like Sarvis, did so not out of great animosity, but simply because denominational identity came not to mean very much to them. Disciples have, perhaps always, lacked a "hook." Many people who may feel comfortable with the Disciples, either because they were raised in the church or stopped in for awhile as they would a way station or half-way house, do not remain Disciples because the hook is not set. The very freedom and openness that Disciples cherish—"We do not claim to be the only Christians"—sometimes works against them by not engendering the kind of affiliative experience that makes people Catholic or Pentecostal for life. Muir, Royce and Markham had Disciples heritages. But when they grew up, they grew away from the Disciples and never came back.

This brings us to the final image that emerges from our study. The Disciples have often been called a "bridge" church, one where families from opposite sides of the theological river may comfortably meet. Disciples tend to relish this image of themselves, enjoying the fact that when an Episcopalian marries a Baptist, they may well find a home among the Disciples. A similar, but slightly different, image is the one mentioned above, that of the Disciples as a "way station" church. People moving left or right have found the Disciples to be a good place to rest for a season. Peter Burnett stayed with the Disciples

for a time on his way from the Baptists to Roman Catholicism. Joseph Fort Newton sojourned with us on his journey from the Baptists to the Episcopalians. Is the image of the way station to be claimed with the same fondness with which we claimed the bridge? I think so. There is something to be said for operating a hostel for weary travellers. After all, in the long run, all of us are but passing through. A church in which people are spun off the extremities in both directions, a church that is always involved in struggle because its middle is so broad and tolerant, a church where people coming from opposite directions may meet, may just be a church that is doing something right.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This list of disaffections is, of course, just a sample. Every reader will be able to add to it from his or her own experience. Two limitations should be noted. First I am aware that the stories of the second generation are generally those of liberals who left the Disciples, believing the movement to be too conservative. I have told these stories because they are the ones which have come to my attention. Whether or not this reflects the place where I stand and from which I view the movement, I cannot say. I do suspect that most of the second generation who found the Disciples to be too liberal simply moved right under the larger umbrella of the Stone-Campbell movement itself, to the emerging Independent Christian Churches or the Churches of Christ. The sample still remains a broad one in many respects, one from which I believe conclusions can be drawn. Many of these stories have, of course, been told before (see note #18). Some, to my knowledge, appear for the first time in a work like this. This is the first work I know which seeks to gather all these stories in one place, for remembrance and interpretation. The second limitation to this study is that, with the exception of William Maxwell, this study excludes those whose contributions have been made in the modern period. Thus, the stories of Margueritte Harmon Bro, Peter Ainslie IV, and Robert Tobias have not been considered. Nor have I looked at contemporary renewal groups.

<sup>2</sup> McNemar's best-known book has as its title *The Kentucky Revival; or, A Short History of the Late Extraordinary Out-pouring of the Spirit of God in the Western States of America, Agreeably to Scripture Promises and Prophecies Concerning the Latter Day: With a Brief Account of the Entrance and Progress of What the World Call Shakerism among the Subjects of the Late Revival in Ohio and Kentucky. Presented to the True Zion Traveler as a Memorial of the Wilderness Journey* (Pittsfield: Phineas Allen, 1808). The author was not at a loss for words. I am fortunate to have, via Ronald Osborn, a carbon-copy of a fourteen-page TMs by George G. Beazley, Jr., entitled "Notes on *The Kentucky Revival* by Richard McNemar." Beazley's notes are incisive and helpful. The only extended biographical study on McNemar of which I am aware is J. P. MacLean, *A Sketch of the Life and Labors of Richard McNemar* (Franklin, OH: Author, 1906). MacLean's work contains a bibliography of other works by McNemar.

<sup>3</sup> Winfred Ernest Garrison, *An American Religious Movement* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1945), 58.

<sup>4</sup> Colby D. Hall, *The New Light Christians* (Fort Worth: Author, 1959), 40; Winfred Ernest Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1931), 67; MacLean, 7, 15.

<sup>5</sup> See William Garrett West, *Barton Warren Stone* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), 77.

<sup>6</sup> McNemar, cited in MacLean, 22.

<sup>7</sup> MacLean, 40, 42-34.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Stone, having received inaccurate information, claimed in his autobiography, *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself* (Cincinnati: J. A. and U. P. James, 1847), 63-64, that McNemar had been expelled from the Shakers because he had become convinced of his error in becoming a Shaker.

<sup>10</sup> Beazley, 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>14</sup> See MacLean, 56-57.

<sup>15</sup> Beazley, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Hall, 52.

<sup>17</sup> Thompson and Marshall, cited in West, 77.

<sup>18</sup> Leroy Garrett's *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981) tells the stories of Sidney Rigdon, John Thomas and Jesse Ferguson in chapter 11. I therefore tell these stories in brief and refer the reader to Garrett. I add the story of Parley Pratt and include some theological and historical material not found in Garrett. Finally, he makes mention of defectors Walter S. Russell and I. N. Carman, whose stories I chose not to tell.

<sup>19</sup> Reva Stanley, *The Archer of Paradise: a Biography of Parley P. Pratt* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1937), 39. Pratt wrote his own *Autobiography*, published privately in New York in 1874.

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Smith, cited in Stanley, 50-51.

<sup>21</sup> The main biography of Rigdon is F. Mark McKiernan, *The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness: Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer, 1793-1876* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1971). The book contains an extensive bibliographical essay. McKiernan's book is heartily disliked by Mormons. See Marvin Hill's review in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7, no. 2 (1972), 54-56. Another source is William J. Morgan, "The Sidney Rigdon Connection—Mormonism and the Restoration Movement," *The Restoration Herald* 58, no. 6 (June 1984), 83ff.

<sup>22</sup> McKiernan, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Rigdon, cited in McKiernan, 21.

<sup>24</sup> McKiernan, 28.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>26</sup> Garrett, 382.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 419-433. If Parley Pratt brought Rigdon a copy of the *Book of Mormon* prior to Rigdon's conversion, it hardly

seems likely that Rigdon was the author of the book.

<sup>29</sup> Garrett, 383-384.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Delusion," *Millennial Harbinger* (7 February 1831), 92, 95.

<sup>31</sup> This sounds very much like what is today called manic depression. Walter Scott had a similar struggle. If Rigdon and Scott, the two most successful early Disciple evangelists, were both manic depressives, it raises an interesting question about the relationship between evangelical success and personality.

<sup>32</sup> Campbell, "Sidney Rigdon," *Millennial Harbinger* (7 February 1831), 100.

<sup>33</sup> Campbell, "Delusions," 96.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, cited in McKiernan, 42.

<sup>35</sup> McKiernan, 68.

<sup>36</sup> The primary biography of Dr. Thomas is by his friend and colleague Robert Roberts, *Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work*. First published in 1873, it has undergone two major revisions, the latest in 1954, and is available in its third edition (Birmingham: The Christadelphians, 1970). Other studies include John Lea, *The Life and Writings of Dr. Thomas* (Philadelphia: Faith Publishing Co., 1915) and William L. Thompson, "A Study of the Theology of Dr. John Thomas, Founder of the Christadelphians" (M.A. Thesis, Butler University, 1946). Thomas's best-known work is *Elpis Israel* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1851), which contains his theological system. He edited a journal, *The Apostolic Advocate*, from 1834 to 1839, while he was a Disciple. He wrote another book called *Eureka*, an exposition of the Apocalypse, edited other journals, and produced a variety of pamphlets and other short works.

<sup>37</sup> William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1975), 140.

<sup>38</sup> Campbell published an Extra to the *Millennial Harbinger* (December 1837), 577-588, to deal with the perceived threat of Thomas and his ideas.

<sup>39</sup> See Thompson, 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>41</sup> Garrett, 395-396.

<sup>42</sup> H. Leo Boles, *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1932), 188. The main sources of information about Ferguson and the controversy around him are his own works, Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger*, James R. Wilburn, *The Hazard of the Die* (Austin: Sweet Publishing Co., 1969), 121-143, and Johnny Tucker, *Like a Meteor Across the Horizon: The Jesse B. Ferguson Story* (Fayetteville, TN: Tucker Publications, 1978).

<sup>43</sup> See Wilburn, 132.

<sup>44</sup> J. B. Ferguson, *Spirit Communion: A Record of Communications from the Spirit-Spheres* (Nashville: Union and American Steam Press, 1854), 272.

<sup>45</sup> Ferguson, *Relation of Pastor and People: Statement of Belief on Unitarianism, Universalism and Spiritualism* (Nashville: Union and American Steam Press, 1864), 12-14.

<sup>46</sup> Ferguson, *Spirit Communion*. . . , 271.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>48</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Spirits in Prison," *Millennial Harbinger* (July 1852), 414. See also "A New Discovery," *ibid.* (June 1852), 313-329; and "The Christian Magazine," *ibid.* (July 1852), 390-398.

<sup>49</sup> Samuel S. Church, "Spirits in Prison," 414.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Campbell, quoted in Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co, 1897), 2:245.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Elder Jesse B. Ferguson's Extra," *Millennial Harbinger* (March 1853), 149.

<sup>52</sup> Errett Gates, "The Inside Story of Disciples' Divinity House," *Christian Standard* (25 May 1918), 1090.

<sup>53</sup> Edward Henry, to Claude Spencer, 13 April 1961, Archives, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville.

<sup>54</sup> Gates, "Inside Story. . .," (27 April 1918), 958. Gates' long polemic against the Divinity House was published by the *Christian Standard* in the 27 April, 4 May, 11 May, 18 May, 25 May, 1 June and 8 June issues of 1918.

<sup>55</sup> W. D. MacClintock, in "The Inside Story . . .," (25 May 1918), 1090.

<sup>56</sup> See Wm. Barnett Blakemore, *Quest for Intelligence in Ministry* (Chicago: Disciples Divinity House, 1970), and Charles Harvey Arnold, "The Illuminati: the Origins of Liberalism among the Disciples of Christ," *Encounter* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1982), 1-25.

<sup>57</sup> Henry to Spencer, 13 April 1961.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Fort Newton, "Liberalism and the Disciples of Christ: A Personal Experience," *Christian-Evangelist* (2 January 1902), 10.

<sup>59</sup> Newton, *River of Years* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott, 1946), 78.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 80-81.

<sup>61</sup> Newton, "Liberalism . . .," 10.

<sup>62</sup> Newton, *River of Years*, 225, 235.

<sup>63</sup> Hiram Van Kirk, "Open Letter to the Editor of the *Christian Standard*," n.d. Archives, Disciples of Christ Historical Society. Another letter, from Van Kirk to J. H. Garrison in 1903 (Archives, D.C.H.S.) stated that the seminary had suffered continued financial embarrassment because of the controversy with the *Standard*. Van Kirk also showed himself to be less than a radical when he said to the moderate Garrison, "Ames, tho well meaning, has gone too far. We shall follow your lead in this matter." The financial problem could have been a factor in his departure. As could his health. Van Kirk was not physically strong. Perhaps he could not hold up under the stress of constant attack.

<sup>64</sup>The path from the Disciples to Episcopalianism was travelled not only by Newton and Van Kirk, but also by many others. It is not an unnatural transition. My unpublished B. D. thesis, "Early Ecumenical Gestures between Disciples and Episcopalians," (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1971) details many historical and theological similarities between the two groups. One former Disciple, having become an Episcopalian, informed me that he was greatly indebted to the Disciples, in that they had properly "prepared" him for the Episcopal Church.

<sup>65</sup> His bishop said of Van Kirk after his death, "He had published work

showing wide and deep research, was a born teacher, had the enthusiasm of a true scholar, and gave promise of a period of rich fruitage of a studious life.” (*Diocesan Journal*, Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, 1921), 94.

<sup>66</sup> See Rowlinson’s obituary in the *Christian-Evangelist* (10 October 1935), 1339.

<sup>67</sup> For the story of the “Sarvis Attack,” see Stephen J. Corey, *Fifty Years of Attack and Controversy* (St. Louis: Committee on Publication of the Corey Manuscript, 1953), 36-43.

<sup>68</sup> Sarvis’s Unitarianism is mentioned in Betty Coe Spicer, “How Young America Lives—at Seventy-five!” *Ladies Home Journal* (January 1955), 113.

<sup>69</sup> The Cave story is told by Samuel C. Pearson, Jr., in “The Cave Affair: Protestant Thought in the Gilded Age,” *Encounter* 41, no. 2 (Spring 1980), 179-203.

<sup>70</sup> E. L. Powell, “A Gentleman of the Old School,” *Christian-Evangelist* (12 July 1923), 880.

<sup>71</sup> Jenkins’ autobiography, *Where My Caravan Has Rested* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Col, 1939), is an outstanding example of the genre and very informative about Disciples. See also Wm. Barnett Blakemore, “Liberal Disciples,” a lecture delivered on the W. E. Garrison Lectureship at Disciples House, New Haven, CT, 14 February 1964, TMs, Archives, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville.

<sup>72</sup> Cecil J. Armstrong, in “An Action Not Ill-advised,” *Christian Standard* (25 June 1910), 1093.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> The second person with a Disciples heritage to become governor of California was Ronald Reagan (1911- ). Reagan was baptized in the First Christian Church of Dixon, Ill, and, with the encouragement of pastor Ben Cleaver, attended Disciples-related Eureka College. A longtime member of the Hollywood-Beverly Christian Church in California, Mr. Reagan served as a deacon there in the 1940s and remained active into the 1960s. Although he typically attended church with his wife Nancy, a Presbyterian, he was still technically a member of the Hollywood-Beverly congregation and contributed monthly to that church during his presidency.

<sup>75</sup> Peter H. Burnett, *The Path Which Led a Protestant Lawyer to the Catholic Church* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1860), v.

<sup>76</sup> *A Debate on the Roman Catholic Religion . . . between Alexander Campbell and the Rt. Rev. John B. Purcell* (Cincinnati: Bosworth, Chase & Hall, 1837).

<sup>77</sup> Tucker & McAllister, 125-126.

<sup>78</sup> Burnett, vii.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 738.

<sup>81</sup> Reuben Butchart, “Religious Background of Josiah Royce,” *The Scroll* (October 1949), 37-40. See also two letters, Butchart to Claude Spencer, 26 November 1947 and 8 February 1952, Archives, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville.

<sup>82</sup> Sarah Royce, *A Frontier Lady: Recollections of the Gold Rush and*

*Early California* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932); and Josiah Royce, "Autobiographical Sketch," in *The Hope of the Great Community* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1916).

<sup>83</sup> Royce, *Hope of the Great Community*, 38.

<sup>84</sup> Butchart to Spencer, 8 February 1952.

<sup>85</sup> Royce, *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1900), vi.

<sup>86</sup> Royce, *Sources of Religious Insight* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 294.

<sup>87</sup> Robert Gillogly to author, 5 January 1984.

<sup>88</sup> Jerry Rushford, "Edwin Markham and the Restoration Movement," *Firm Foundation* (2 June 1981): 340.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> William L. Stidger, *Edwin Markham* (New York: Abington, 1933), 227. Stidger's book is based largely on personal interviews with Markham. For more information on Markham one may contact the Edwin Markham Memorial Library, Wagner Lutheran College, Staten Island, NY.

<sup>91</sup> The material in this section is based upon a paper by the author, "The Wilderness Faith of John Muir," (Claremont Graduate School, 28 November 1978). Muir's works were gathered and published after his death in a ten-volume set, *The Writings of John Muir: Sierra Edition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1917-1924). Muir's unpublished journals were gathered and edited by Linnie Marsh Wolfe, *John of the Mountains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin: 1938). The standard uncritical biography is also by Wolfe, *Son of the Wilderness: The Life of John Muir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945). More recent and of special interest to this study is Michael P. Cohen, *John Muir and the American Wilderness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

<sup>92</sup> Muir, quoted in *Son of the Wilderness*, 116.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>94</sup> Muir, *John of the Mountains*, 439.

<sup>95</sup> William Maxwell, *Ancestors* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 256.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 257. I do not know if Maxwell's ancestor was related to the longtime dean of what is now Phillips Theological Seminary.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 143-144.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 290

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> "Was This Change Necessary?" *Christian-Evangelist* (12 December 1901), 1573

<sup>103</sup> "Responses to 'Was This Change Necessary?'" *Christian-Evangelist* (2 January 1902), 9-10.

DECLARATION OF  
INDEPENDENCE

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DO HEREBY DECLARE  
THEIR INDEPENDENCE

When in the course of the human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, do hereby declare that these United States are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connections between them and that Kingdom are hereby dissolved.

In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands and seals, this fourth day of July, in the second year of the Independence of the said United States.

Attest: My hand, this fourth day of July, 1776.

John Adams, President of the Continental Congress.

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# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

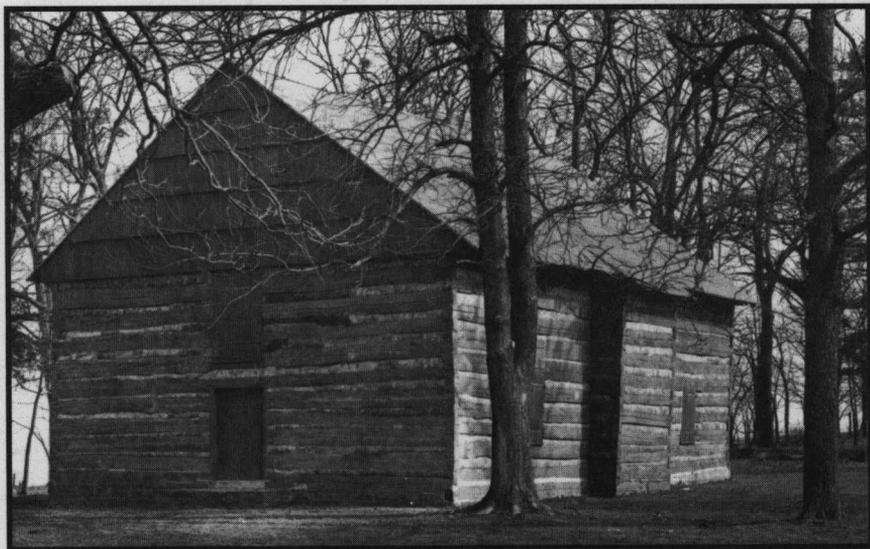
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*Anthony L. Dunnivant*



Cane Ridge Meeting House



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## — From the Editor's Desk

August 6-10 is the two hundredth anniversary of the great Cane Ridge Meeting. The two articles in this issue, both originally given as lectures commemorating historical occasions, examine not only the significance of the Cane Ridge Meeting and its host pastor, Barton Stone, but the very character of historical reflection.

This year's Reed Lecture, "'Practical Remembrance': Cane Ridge in Historical Memory," by Leigh Eric Schmidt marked the beginning of celebrations of the 1801 revival. Schmidt observes, "Cane Ridge has an almost mystical presence for the Disciples of Christ churches." Embracing that mystery, Schmidt shows how the memory of Cane Ridge has developed and functioned in relation to commitments of Christians of the Stone-Campbell tradition. Schmidt also discusses two aspects of the Cane Ridge Meeting that have not been given prominence in most formal remembrances of the 1801 revival: its roots in Scottish sacramental practices and the controversial religious "exercises" by which the revival is yet remembered in the larger culture. Schmidt concludes that the mutability of historical accounts should "occasion little hand-wringing, but should instead call us again to our responsibility for dialogic engagement with the past."

"Barton W. Stone: Portraits on the Half-Century," by the late Anthony L. Dunnivant, was delivered in June of 1995 in commemoration of the one-hundred fiftieth anniversary of the great funeral of Barton Stone at Cane Ridge—held six months after Stone's death in Hannibal, Missouri. With the same historical consciousness with which Schmidt reflects upon the meaning of Cane Ridge, Dunnivant asks, "whom do we see when we look back across history toward Barton W. Stone?" He answers this question by examining views of Stone at the time of the Cane Ridge funeral, the portrait of Stone put forward in the 1890s, the revival of interest in Stone that had occurred by the middle of the twentieth century, and the images of Stone that were emerging by the middle of the 1990s. Dunnivant's conclusion, like that of Schmidt, is not to discount any of the portraits of Stone that have lived in Christian memory, but to suggest that even as a composite, they do not "capture or exhaust his story and its significance for us." The historical task continues.

Pages 60 to 62 are a partial list of the publications of Anthony Dunnivant to whom this issue of *Discipliana* is dedicated with profound appreciation.

## — From the President's Desk

The Historical Society's Reed Lecture traveled to Lexington, Kentucky, to inaugurate the bicentennial celebration of the Great Revival of Cane Ridge. Our lectureship honored the occasion with significant academic work. Leigh Schmidt's lecture, published in this issue, was the centerpiece. An ecumenical panel of Stone-Campbell scholars added to the occasion.

The lectureship also had a festive air as scholars put on academic attire, their colorful "party clothes," and joined the audience in prayers and songs of thanksgiving. After the lecture the party continued over lunch.

Lexington Theological Seminary hosted the event. As we waited to process into Sanders Chapel, President Richard Harrison and I recalled the important relationship of mutual support between the Seminary and the Society. Lexington Seminary leaders are a "who's who" in the development of the Historical Society: Howard Short, Roscoe Pearson, Wayne Bell, Richard Pope, William Paulsell, Harrison, Anthony Dunnivant...the list goes on.

The season of celebration will continue this summer. I hope to see you at the Cane Ridge Shrine for our Kirkpatrick Seminar on August 6 and 7 (see page 49).

In the meantime enjoy your own celebration of the Great Revival by reading this special issue of *Discipliana*.

— Peter M. Morgan

**"A PRACTICALL REMEMBRANCE":  
CANE RIDGE IN HISTORICAL MEMORY**  
Leigh Eric Schmidt\*

Cane Ridge has an almost mystical presence for the Disciples of Christ churches. At an anniversary celebration like this especially, Cane Ridge becomes a living memory, present to those within the churches of the Stone-Campbell tradition as a formative relationship in which the future is imagined through the re-presentation of the past. At previous commemorations, the Christian churches have relied on their own historians, pastors, and denominational leaders to revivify, as one minister put it in the 1950s, the "sacred associations . . . of the oldest and most unique shrine among the Disciples of Christ."<sup>1</sup> I hope that Paul Blowers, Peter Morgan, and others who saw fit to invite me have not taken too grave a risk in choosing to go outside those circles this time around.

For many historians in my guild who like to dwell on the pastness of the past, being confronted with the vitality of historical memory can be unnerving. While it is conventional for ethnographers to worry about their relationships to their living subjects, in situations such as this celebration historians quickly find that they are not at all insulated from those complexities: their subjects, too, are changeable and animated. Thrown off balance, the historian perhaps seeks an equilibrium through a reassertion of distance and mastery, possibly presumptuously attempting to set the record straight: that is, to pronounce "here's what really happened" and to cut through latter-day memorializations as so many romances and inventions. Breathe a sigh of relief: I have no desire to indulge that demystifying urge. I take instead the fluctuating, creative, sanctifying dimensions of memory as the very groundwork for this year's Reed lecture.

"For the better part of my adult life I have been a joyous pilgrim to the shrines of noble personages and historic events," so wrote Edgar DeWitt Jones, President of the Cane Ridge Preservation Project, in 1954. "Thus I have mused at Plymouth," he continued, "where the voyaging Mayflower dropped anchor and the heroic company disembarked . . . I have sat in old St. John's Church, Richmond, Virginia, and recalled that exciting day when Patrick Henry . . . smote his breast and cried: 'Give me liberty or give me death' . . . And I have dreamed in the old Meeting House at Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, Kentucky, where I seemed to see the resolute figure of Barton W. Stone pleading from the pulpit for the reunion of the divided house of God upon a New Testament basis." And if all that was not salute enough, Jones offered this final flourish: "What Plymouth Rock was to New England and St. John's Church was to the

---

\*Leigh Eric Schmidt is Professor of Religion at Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. His book *Holy Fairs* will be republished this year in paperback by Eerdmans. Some of the themes of the Reed Lecture are developed further in that volume.

American Revolution, so Cane Ridge Meeting House is to the history of the Disciples of Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

The sesquicentennial of “The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery,” a charter document of the restorationist Christian movement signed by Stone and five other ministers at the Cane Ridge meetinghouse in 1804, sparked Jones’s remarkable eulogy. Joined to the fundamental foundations of America—the Pilgrim Fathers of 1620 and the Founding Fathers of 1776—Cane Ridge takes on a mythic, enshrined status as “the birthplace of a faith.” It is hallowed ground, Jones tells us, because it is the place of origins for Stone’s Christian movement, the initial “forum of our Founding Fathers,” in Jones’s phrase.<sup>3</sup> The meetinghouse needed to be preserved; indeed it had to be literally set apart and enclosed, in order to protect it as a place of sacred memory. Accordingly, Jones, along with Rhodes Thompson, led efforts to encase the old church within another building, an impressive superstructure that was finished in 1957 and that had the effect of creating a shielded inner sanctum, “a church within a church,” in the phrasing of a current website on the shrine. In the architecture of American Protestant memory, it was an exceptional gesture. As a spatial arrangement, it was a way of commemorating and reproducing the out-of-the-ordinariness of the place. At the dedication service for the new building in June 1957, a soloist sang, “We stand today on Holy Ground.”<sup>4</sup>

It comes as little surprise that, for a restorationist movement, the efforts at architectural restoration (and enshrinement) at Cane Ridge were both a backward glance and a forward vision. Cane Ridge comes into being as a latter-day Protestant pilgrimage site not only as the location of past revival, but also as the site of ongoing renewal. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, Cane Ridge, no longer a congregation of its own, was gradually remade into something of a retreat center, with various kinds of special services and protracted gatherings held there. The place was reimagined as a modern camp-meeting ground, with preaching services held in August, timed in the annual calendar to correspond with the great revival meeting of August 1801. “Whoever has attended these services,” Jones later recalled, “cannot easily forget the experience—the hundreds of parked automobiles, the huge tent, the bright lights, the glorious singing . . . and the sea of expectant, upturned faces. The joy and the wonderment of it all, lingers in memory like the fragrance of a flower or the melody of a favorite hymn.”<sup>5</sup> The historical remembrance of Cane Ridge in 1801 becomes layered upon recent memories of devotion there—memories that have their own shadings, smells, sounds, and emotions. One commemoration echoes another—a bicentennial of Stone’s birth in 1974 recalls the sesquicentennial celebrations of the 1950s, which, in turn, link to a centennial celebration in 1932 of the merger of the Stone-Campbell movement. At this bicentennial, it is important to remind ourselves that we have become part of that palimpsest of historical memory, with all its layers, elisions, and enlargements.

In these tangled threads of anniversaries and remembrance, a proleptic unraveling of the future, based on the past, was almost inevitably spun out. “Who knows,” Jones concluded, “but in days to come Cane Ridge will witness other revivals . . . comparable in various ways to the famous one that stirred all Kentucky.” Twentieth-century celebrations of Cane Ridge served not only as

commemorations, but also as anticipations. In the words of one anniversary poem:

Cane Ridge is calling, calling, calling

Can't you hear the preaching there? . . .

All the amens—all the prayer?

Cane Ridge is calling, calling, calling

Can't you feel the mood it had?

All the fervor and the spirit

The Protestant memory of evangelical affections of olden times invited new feelings, and often enough incited them—emotions at once warmly pietistic and plaintively nostalgic. From Edwards forward, the transitory qualities of revivals had deeply disturbed their admirers and desirers. Preserving Cane Ridge made these awakenings no less fleeting, but it provided a marker, a materialization of Protestant hopes about the history of the work of redemption and its continued unfolding.<sup>6</sup>

The Cane Ridge restoration of the 1930s through 1950s was also a reconstruction of the past in terms of twentieth-century ecumenism. Not that the plea for Christian unity was an unimportant theme in Cane Ridge's early history, but it was far from a univocal or even prevailing one. Stone's own memory of the great revival came to be colored by his increasing efforts in the 1820s and 1830s to unite the Christian movements; interdenominational cooperation came to be seen as a focal point of the Cane Ridge gathering. "The spirit of partyism, and party distinctions, were apparently forgotten," Stone recalled in 1827.<sup>7</sup> His later reflections on how unifying the revival was must be read against the backdrop of his own intensifying desires for Christian unity; it is another instance of memorializing in which the needs of the 1820s and 1830s called forth a certain retelling of the past. "While I hear daily of the great revivals in many parts of the East," Stone wrote, with no small nostalgia in 1831, "my mind with a mournful pleasure reverts to the great revival in the West 30 years ago. . . . Here was unity indeed." The revival at Cane Ridge in 1801, along with the various sectarian debates it energized over the next decade among Presbyterians, New Lights, Shakers, Baptists, Methodists, and Deists, was nothing if not controversial and multivocal. Whatever cooperation evangelicals managed in the immediate revival at Cane Ridge, the larger movement was rife with division and disorder. As itinerant Peter Cartwright said, "Soon a diversity of opinion sprang up, and they got into a Babel confusion."<sup>8</sup>

In the sporadic efforts at preserving and memorializing the old meetinghouse between the 1870s and 1920s, the primary motivation was not the plea for Christian unity, but the local color of Kentucky's early history at the threshold of statehood. The animating desire, as a newspaper account in 1882 put it, was for "the perpetuation of one of the oldest churches in the State, as well as one rich in historical incidents." The old church, seen as having been "fashioned by pioneers on heroic lines," recalled the era of Daniel Boone, undaunted patriots, and hardy forebears.<sup>9</sup> By contrast, the Cane Ridge Preservation projects that stretched from the 1930s into the 1950s (and beyond) took a much broader, even universal tack, reimagining the place as a newly dubbed Temple of Christian Unity. With determination, the restorers sought

to create consensus on the symbolic significance of the shrine, to join the old Cane Ridge Meetinghouse “with the message of Christian unity for which it stands.” As such, the shrine was of significance well beyond the local community and the state of Kentucky. It was, indeed, to be a pilgrimage site “among all followers of Christ who believe in Christian unity.” By the mid-1950s Reverend Rhodes Thompson, one of the principal rededicators of the shrine to “Christlike Unity,” could happily report: “Since that restoration many thousands of people have come from all parts of this country and from other countries to visit this sacred spot.” By the 1960s and 1970s, the memorialized heritage of Cane Ridge was not so much local, embodied, contentious, and tumultuous, but was devoted instead to latter-day hopes for ecumenical harmony and reconciliation. It had been refigured in the universalized terms of “the timeless vision of God’s will for the unity of his people.”<sup>10</sup> The centrifugal force of revivalism in the early republic had, in effect, been contained within a centripetal storyline of advancing Christian unity and nonsectarian consensus. So powerful had that memorialization become that when the Consultation on Church Union met in Lexington in 1965, the group chose to hold its first joint communion service for the different denominational delegates at the Cane Ridge meetinghouse.<sup>11</sup>

To historicize such remembrance takes nothing away from the uses to which ecumenical Protestants put Cane Ridge in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Those irenic gestures served their own vital purposes, especially within the public memory of the Disciples of Christ Churches, with its own long-standing ecumenical commitments. Still, historical memory, like other forms of memory, is selective, partial, and fragmentary. In the very act of foregrounding one thing, public forms of remembrance necessarily obscure the prominence of other things. In reimagining Cane Ridge as a birthplace—of both the restorationist Christian movement and grassroots ecumenism—the preservation projects of the twentieth century tended to drop other aspects of Cane Ridge’s history from view. This is apparent in at least two ways: first, a birthplace is an inauguration, a commencement, and it necessarily obscures or downplays a prehistory—in this case, the longer history behind the Cane Ridge meeting itself; and second, the ecumenical conception prefers universality to particularity, and it thus quietly evades the controversial religious exercises—in all their enormity, difference, and controversy—that were to be met with at the Cane Ridge revival and all the more in its aftermath.

To become a birthplace is to become a beginning and only a beginning. For historians outside as much as those inside the Stone-Campbell tradition, Cane Ridge is a starting point—a place of origins for frontier camp meetings or the Second Great Awakening or even something grander. To the polymathic literary critic Harold Bloom, Cane Ridge is the grand source of gnostic illuminism and radical individualism in American religious life: “The American Religion proper,” he wrote in 1992, “is born at Cane Ridge.” The revival at Cane Ridge is, Bloom says, “the first Woodstock,” drunken, grotesque, orgiastic, and epiphanic. I know of few, if any, interpretations of Cane Ridge that are simultaneously so grandiose, so thin, and so wrong-headed as Bloom’s. Yet, his desire to make Cane Ridge the peculiar birthplace of the American religion is only a hyperbolic rendition of what historians from the frontier

school forward had long been telling us about Cane Ridge—namely, that it is a quintessentially American religious event.<sup>12</sup>

In my book *Holy Fairs*, I turned this familiar story around and wrote it in the other direction. There I considered Cane Ridge not as an American birthplace, but as a culminating event in a transatlantic exchange of religious practices. In post-Reformation Scotland, the celebration of the Lord's supper gradually developed into an extended four-day summer festival—with a fast day and other preparatory services on Friday and Saturday and with thanksgiving services on Monday following the Sunday communion. The Lord's Supper took up most of the Sabbath, with one serving after another at long tables, often set up in the open air, and carefully fenced to assure the worthiness of communicants. By the 1620s and 1630s, these sacramental occasions had become intertwined with popular Presbyterian awakenings in both Scotland and Ulster. The meetings involved scores of ministers and thousands of laypeople, many of whom journeyed long distances to participate in these events. Developing alongside the elaborate liturgical dimensions of these communions were various devotional practices, including intensive self-examination and riveting meditations on the sufferings of Christ. By the 1740s, these sacramental seasons were the occasion of some of the largest evangelical revivals in the Atlantic world, notably those at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in southwest Scotland. These rituals were, in turn, re-created in North America where they also provided a crucial foundation for Presbyterian revivalism in the eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup>

James McGready's accounts of the Kentucky revivals are good indication of how formative those Scottish rituals remained at 1800. "In June [1800], the sacrament was administered at Red River," McGready reported. "This was the greatest time we had ever seen before." "In July," he noted the next month, "the sacrament was administered in Gaspar River Congregation. Here multitudes crowded from all parts of the country to see a strange work, from the distance of forty, fifty and even a hundred miles; . . . [in August] Muddy River Sacrament, in all its circumstances, was equal, and in some respects superior, to that at Gaspar River." And so went McGready from sacrament to sacrament throughout the summer, year after year, and most of the time he talked interchangeably of communions and revivals. In this particular narrative, McGready mentioned eighteen revivals between 1797 and 1800, sixteen of which were directly linked to sacramental occasions. "What is truly matter of praise, wonder and gratitude to every follower of Christ," McGready offered summarily of the spirited revivals of 1800, "is, that every sacramental occasion in all our congregations, during the whole summer and fall, was attended with the tokens of the sweet presence and power of the Almighty Jesus." When it came to describing the revivals in 1801, McGready simply provided "a list of our sacraments, . . . held at different places" as an adequate, if laconic, summation of the work for that year.

The mammoth meeting at Cane Ridge in August 1801, with perhaps as many as twenty-five-thousand people in attendance, was set up and promoted as a traditional Presbyterian communion festival. Amid the ecstasy and fervor, the exhorting, singing, and praying, the traditional rituals remained in place as the underpinning of the event. Minister John Lyle noted in his diary on this

occasion the usual preparatory sermon preceding the sacrament, called in the Scottish parlance, "the action Sermon" and also used the Scottish vernacular for the preaching stand set up on these occasions, referring to it as "the Tent." The long tables were also used following the Scottish form, and there were successive servings, with the usual communion tokens and fencing procedures in place. A typically large number of ministers gathered to assist one another in this time-consuming, voice-straining celebration—in this case, 18 Presbyterian ministers as well as some Methodist and Baptist preachers. As Lyle described the sacrament itself, "In time the tables were serving Mr Sam'l Finley preach'd on How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation. I heard part of that & then went to serve tables. When I spoke I felt uncommonly tender. . . . There were eleven hundred communicants according to the calculation of one of the elders." At the time, Lyle made little of the meeting as an encampment and simply referred to the gathering as the "Cane Ridge Sacrament." As another observer concluded succinctly of Cane Ridge and the wider Kentucky revivals in 1801, "The work is greatest on Sacramental occasions."

The Cane Ridge sacrament—when I started *Holy Fairs* I had not encountered Cane Ridge and the wider Kentucky revivals on such eucharistic terms, but instead as a cataclysm of the frontier. The story of these American revivals, I soon decided, could be profitably told not in terms of the rise of the camp meeting or in terms of frontier conditions, but from the perspective of both late medieval eucharistic piety and post-Reformation liturgical practice. The history could be told not in the rather anachronistic light of what lay ahead, but instead in light of the massive inheritance of sacramental meditations and communion practices within the Christian tradition, Catholic and Protestant. Part of what has made the more anachronistic reading so enduring, aside from prior assumptions about American exceptionalism, was that many of the sources upon which historians rely to get at Cane Ridge and the wider Kentucky revivals are themselves distantly retrospective and are actually constitutive of the forward-looking perspective. This is quite apparent in the account of Methodist Peter Cartwright, whose autobiography from the 1850s included an influential chapter entitled not "Cane Ridge Sacrament," but "Cane Ridge Camp-Meeting." Though within the chapter he initially identifies Cane Ridge as a sacramental meeting, his larger point is a retrospective reinterpretation of that "memorable place called 'Cane Ridge.'" "From this camp-meeting, for so it ought to be called," Cartwright wrote in a transparent shifting of nomenclature, "the news spread through all the Churches, and through all the land, and it excited great wonder and surprise; . . . And I may here be permitted to say, that this was the first camp-meeting ever held in the United States, and here our camp-meetings took their rise."<sup>14</sup> Cartwright remembers Cane Ridge fifty years later in light of the intervening spread of camp meetings as the prevailing form of revivalism, especially within his own Methodist circles. And hence Cane Ridge becomes once again a beginning, worthy of being remembered because, in this case, it is a Methodist birthplace.

In September 1801, a month after the massive gathering at Cane Ridge, Colonel Robert Patterson included a terse description of the event in a letter to the Reverend John King: "On the first Sabbath of August, was the

Sacrament of Kainridge, the congregation of Mr. Stone.—This was the largest meeting of any that I have seen: It continued from Friday till Wednesday. About 12,000 persons; 125 wagons; 8 carriages; 900 communicants; 300 were struck.”<sup>15</sup> In *Holy Fairs*, I wanted to call attention to those 900 or so communicants, to Cane Ridge as a sacramental occasion, and to offer the story of the long duration of those practices of piety. That shift of attention admittedly contained its own limitations of vision, and one group of participants that I had far less to say about was the last group that Patterson mentioned—those 300 people who were struck down. In emphasizing the continuity in liturgical practices and devotional habits, including the continuities in visionary and ecstatic expression, I steered away from the unusual bodily phenomena that left nearly all observers grasping for words to describe the extraordinariness of these exercises. Yet, it was the sheer physicality of these revivals that caught everyone’s eye—the extremity of the falling exercise, those who were struck down to the ground, and the still greater extremity of other bodily movements and outcries.

I am hardly alone in de-emphasizing these involuntary motor movements and vocalizations. Often considered an embarrassment to those within both the Presbyterian and Stone-Campbell traditions, these exercises have usually been passed over quickly, euphemistically muted, blamed on Methodists and Shakers, or simply left aside. As pastor Rhodes Thompson remarked of his beloved Cane Ridge meetinghouse, “From out of its hallowed precincts has issued a stream of sturdy and reasonable faith.” Any weak-kneed, overwhelmed enthusiasts were hidden away in the closet, attic, or gallery of ‘mainstream’ Protestant memory, though they become rather conspicuous in their absence. Even when the exercises are openly acknowledged, it is often only to divert attention from them. As another historian of the restoration movement remarked, “While the more startling parts of the revival such as conversions, ‘experiences,’ ‘jerks,’ ‘holy laugh,’ ‘falling exercise,’ and emotionalized preaching are well known, they fail to tell the whole story. To men of frontier times the revival was remarkable. The churches grew; the West was evangelized; and whole communities were reformed.”<sup>16</sup> Not that historians outside the Stone-Campbell tradition have been any less prone to such sleight-of-hand. University of Chicago professor William Warren Sweet, a Kansas Methodist by background, set the tone in emphasizing the churches as moral courts and advance agents of civilizing order and in downplaying the “emotional excesses” of the camp-meetings. Of the exercises that “agitated hundreds,” he could move right past them in one sentence, dismissing them “as dubious, to say the least.” Even historian John Boles, whose book on *The Great Revival* remains a standard, seemed to want to minimize them: “These grossly exaggerated revival exercises, which have been cited widely to discredit the revival, were probably restricted to a comparative few.”<sup>17</sup>

Such dismissals and deflections have not been particularly effective—either at redirecting popular attention away from the exercises or at safeguarding the memory of Cane Ridge from them. What these evasions have done, though, is to cast these motor and vocal tics adrift, leaving their interpretation to armchair sociologists and psychologists and largely cutting them off from the Christian exegeses employed at the time to make sense of them. Hence Harold

Bloom could casually remark that “the Cane Ridge camp meeting ecstasies” likely arose from “a kind of self-hypnosis” and, still more likely, “were psychosexual in nature.”<sup>18</sup> Nowhere does he find it necessary to probe the exegetical habits that Stone, McNemar, and McGready, among others, developed in order to legitimate and explicate these bodily exhibitions. And again Bloom is only an exaggeration of the larger literature in which the exercises have been surrendered to a thin psychological discourse. In comparison to most other areas of the history of Christianity—whether early ascetics or medieval mystics—the bodily practices of American Protestants and the exegetical traditions that surround those practices are barely visible.

One Christian chronicler of the Kentucky revivals, still overawed by the exercises, remarked in 1860: “I fancy that neither physiology, nor psychology, nor biology, nor any of the ologies or isms, have, thus far, given any satisfactory explanation of the singular manifestations that attended this great revival.”<sup>19</sup> In some ways that was already a naïve assessment, since Enlightenment explanations for enthusiastic religious experience were widespread and were commonly employed by deists and other scoffers even during the revival itself. These explanations ranged from medical psychology (emphasizing various forms of mania and delusion) to social psychology (drawing on such categories as imitation, mimicry, and sympathy). Such theorizing, growing in intellectual heft and mainstream currency, reached the level of a given in scholarly accounts of revivalism by the early twentieth century.<sup>20</sup> In her foundational work on the great revival, published in 1916, Catharine Cleveland paid careful attention to the exercises only to arrive at a series of didactic conclusions: “The value of the bodily exercises was greatly overrated. . . . Too great stress was laid upon emotional piety. Little minds were overbalanced. . . . Children were brought too prominently forward.” These judgments were founded on her own understandings of proper self-control, liberal-mindedness, and mature (specifically masculine) rationality. These conclusions, in turn, were intellectually justified through her appeal to “modern psychological inquiry” from which she pulled theories about hypnotic suggestion, overcharged nerves, and subliminal impulses, all of which, she said, threw “a flood of light upon the revival of 1800.”<sup>21</sup>

Cleveland’s speculations seemed a model of psychological caution and subtlety by comparison to Frederick Morgan Davenport’s *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals: A Study in Mental and Social Evolution*, which had appeared a decade earlier in 1905. Davenport swept the Kentucky revivals, especially the exercises, into the capacious category of primitive religion. Crowd psychology as well as the “nervous instability” and bodily expressiveness of all primitives were his guiding explanations, but these were part of a much larger evolutionary scheme in which the advance of civilization itself was at stake. “For civilization,” Davenport remarked, “shows itself in nothing more clearly than in the growing capacity for individual self-control.” Civilized, modern minds were not to have shaking, leaping, dancing, jerking, twitching, swooning, and rhapsodic bodies.

Davenport offered but one small consolation to the Cane Ridge enthusiasts. He estimated that the exercises affected only one in six people at the Cane Ridge meeting, whereas in the Ghost Dance movement among the

Plains Indians such bodily effects struck one in three. "Measured by this test," he said, "the Kentuckian of 1800 is certainly entitled to the distinction of being twice as civilized as the savage." Given this racialized hierarchy of primitive versus civilized, ecstasy versus self-mastery, why wouldn't any right-thinking, respectable Christian want to run as far away from these bodily exercises as possible? Indeed, in a coda, Davenport made explicit that his evolutionary social psychology was also a blueprint for the contemporary Protestant churches as they wisely laid aside the "crude, crowd coercion" of revival meetings and moved toward a developmental pedagogy for the Christian life. "The ideal way," Davenport said, echoing the theologian Horace Bushnell, "is the path of Christian nurture and not of revival rapture." Davenport encouraged a Christianity cast in a "modern light"—one that made "a straightforward appeal to the intellect" and one that was devoted to social service and progress. Cane Ridge occasioned no nostalgia for Davenport or Cleveland, only needed reminders about the hard-won disciplines (not the discontents) of civilization.<sup>22</sup>

The involuntary motor movements and vocalizations of the Kentucky revival came to have a life of their own when enfolded within the psychology of religion. Given such insistent relocations over the last century, it is perhaps not surprising to see these exercises occasionally floating about now in the literature on Tourette syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorders (TS-OCD) as disjointed, decontextualized automatisms. Illustrative is a passage from John M. Bercz's *Understanding Tourette Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Related Problems* (1992), in which he works from Barton Stone's memoir to arrive at the following observations:

What is remarkable is the extent to which these various 'exercises' resemble symptoms of TS-OCD. In the 'falling exercise,' for example, the persons would, *with a piercing scream*, fall like a log on the earth or floor and appear dead for a short time. The 'barking exercise' seems to have originated with an old Presbyterian preacher from eastern Tennessee, who probably suffered from TS-OCD, and others simply attributed religious significance to his symptoms. He had apparently gone into the woods for his private devotions when a passerby noted that he was 'seized by the jerks.' He caught hold of a small sapling to steady himself, and as his head jerked back and his face pointed upward he grunted and 'barked.' The observer—apparently a bit of a comedian—reported to others that he had found the pastor 'barking up a tree.' The 'barking exercise,' the 'jerks,' even the 'dancing exercises' seem remarkably like a typical repertoire of TS-OCD symptoms.<sup>23</sup>

Where medical diagnoses such as epilepsy, hysteria, and chorea flitted through Catharine Cleveland's account of these motor and vocal tics, the Tourette and OCD classifications have now gained cultural currency as a way to categorize and explain such phenomena.

It seems only fair to ask whether Davenport and Cleveland, Bercz and Bloom, have themselves been barking up the wrong tree? In order to recover the way Barton Stone, Richard McNemar, and James McGready, among others, understood these out-of-control bodies and tongues, the historian has to read against the grain of a century-plus of psychological theorizing.

Through the early eighteenth century, the dominant religious framework within which such behaviors were placed was demonology, possession, and witchcraft. These demonological discussions still resounded

during the Great Revival as a number of critics of the revival exercises suspected demonic influences and accordingly distanced themselves from the meeting at Cane Ridge. The earliest book actually listed under the subject heading of Tourette syndrome in the Princeton University Library is a wrongly classified British pamphlet about demons from the 1780s. Offering a didactic story about a young man who leaves himself open to Satan's ravages through wild participation in Christmas festivities, the tract carried a long and self-explanatory title: *The Expulsion of Seven Devils who had taken Diabolical Possession of one G. Lukins, a Taylor, of Yatton, in Somersetshire, and for Eighteen Years tormented him in the most unheard of manner. By singing, blaspheming, howling, barking, and other frightful Noises. Also, throwing him into strong Convulsion Fits, and molesting him Night and Day.* With the rise of the evangelical movement in the mid-eighteenth century, such bodily movements and vocalizations gained an alternative religious framework through the intensifying emphasis on the new birth and the extraordinary impressions that might accompany conversion. Even in this context, though, caution was usually the order of the day. As Edwards argued in his *Treatise on the Religious Affections*, such somatic displays might well accompany genuine religious experiences, but they remained nonetheless indeterminate signs. "Great effects on the body certainly are no sure evidences that affections are spiritual," Edwards equivocated.<sup>24</sup>

Both Barton Stone and Richard McNemar, paying little heed to the demonological narrative, went considerably farther than Edwards. In writing his autobiography at the end of his life, Stone was presented with an excellent opportunity to take stock of the various exercises associated with the meetings he planned and helped lead. Looking back at age seventy, he could choose to lift them up, to try to make amends for them, or any path in between. He chose the course of bold remembrance and endorsement: "As I have seen no history of these bodily agitations of that day, but from the pens of enemies, or scorners; and as I have been an eye and ear witness of them from the beginning, . . . I will endeavor to give a description of them in a distinct chapter."<sup>25</sup> And that he did in what has become a classic categorization of these remarkable bodily and vocal exertions: the falling exercise, which was the most prominent manifestation at Cane Ridge in 1801; then the jerking, dancing, barking, laughing, running, and singing exercises, all of which came more visibly into play in the years immediately following the 1801 meeting.

Stone's descriptions were vivid. "Many, very many fell down, as men slain in battle," he wrote of one scene, "and continued for hours together in an apparently breathless and motionless state—sometimes for a few moments reviving, and exhibiting symptoms of life by a deep groan, or piercing shriek, or by a prayer for mercy most fervently uttered. After lying thus for hours, they obtained deliverance. The gloomy cloud, which had covered their faces, seemed gradually and visibly to disappear, and hope in smiles brightened into joy—they would rise shouting deliverance." Stone effectively placed these grimacing, groaning bodies within a transformative narrative—a story not of demonic possession or expulsion, not of waggish derision or Enlightenment scorn, but of deliverance from despair to joy. Of those people who were seized by the jerks, Stone remarked that "they could not account for it." He, though,

was able to help them make sense of their uncontrolled bodies as an enfleshment of the agonies of sin and the power of the gospel.<sup>26</sup>

McNemar wrote his *Short History* of the Kentucky revival a mere six years after the gigantic communion at Cane Ridge, but, as his title suggested, the awakening for him was already covered with a certain patina. This former Presbyterian revivalist wrote from the perspective of one who had gone on to better things, indeed final things, in the form of the Shaker movement: that is, he wrote in order “to preserve the memory” of the Kentucky revival as a great preparatory event that had its consummation in the Shaker testimony. Notwithstanding McNemar’s changed allegiance and the controversy it generated, no one offered a fuller sense of what this inchoate and fervent Christian movement was like in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Central to McNemar’s description of the revival were the bodily exercises, and McNemar, even more than Stone, understood them to be, first and foremost, humbling, even humiliating, a self-abnegating cross to bear. “Still more demeaning and mortifying,” McNemar wrote, “were the jerks . . . The exercise commonly began in the head which would fly backward and forward, and from side to side, with a quick jolt, which the person would naturally labor to suppress, but in vain; and the more any one labored to stay himself, and be sober, the more he staggered, and the more rapidly his twitches increased.” Still worse, McNemar reported, were “the *barks*,” “the last possible grade of mortification”—that is, “to take the position of a canine beast, move about on all fours, growl, snap the teeth, and bark.”<sup>27</sup>

McNemar placed these twitching, roaring communicants within the Christian narrative of redemptive suffering. These “disgracing” exercises were experienced by most, he said, “as a chastisement for disobedience”—a vague phrase nonetheless suggestive of endless social, theological, and psychological reverberations in people’s lives, whether the breach be with parents, elders, masters, God or with anyone to which one owed “some duty.” These “spasmodic writhings of body” were not a joyful Methodist shout, so much as a way for these believers to unite with Christ “as a *body* destined to suffer,” in McNemar’s revealing phrase. That these penitential afflictions were not only a matter of immediate deliverance, but also a kind of larger destiny is evident in McNemar’s observation that once these mortifying exercises had descended upon someone, the uncontrolled motions and vocal tics might remain for months and even years. Some people, in other words, continued to fall down, jerk, shudder, or yelp long after the revival meeting ended. In turn, some of these devout folks, McNemar suggested, began to wear the demeaning exercises as “a badge of honor,” instead of “the most vulgar stigma.” They wore them, in other words, as a kind of Protestant stigmata, mortifying marks of both human sinfulness and a close identification with Christ’s own afflicted body. That deep engagement with Jesus’ sufferings hardly constituted a madcap departure from a piety saturated in sacramental meditations on the bloody torments of Christ on the cross. Stone, McNemar, and McGready were all steeped in the popular Presbyterian tradition in which the eucharist deeply affected the bodies of the faithful as they often became overwhelmed by the re-presentation of Jesus’s gory death and collapsed under the weight of evangelical humiliation.<sup>28</sup>

Not that McNemar's theological narrative ended there. McNemar, as much as Stone, looked for transformation of sorrow into joy. These recurrent writhings, McNemar related, were often "not a little alleviated" by many extraordinary raptures, gifts, and blessings. The dancing exercise, for example, took on a joyous liturgical quality in his short history. This was especially evident in the case of Brother John Thompson, who was "constrained . . . for an hour or more to dance in a regular manner round the stand, all the while repeating in a low tone of voice—"This is the Holy Ghost—Glory!" Among the most "singular transports" was a heavenly perfume that filled the air around the folks involved in this restorationist movement. Like the scents that enveloped ancient saints or medieval visionaries, this perfume was taken to be a crucial sign of divine presence. As McNemar described it, "This peculiar fragrance, which could not be found in anything upon earth, . . . seemed of all other things, to bring the heavenly state the nearest to the senses of these people. Under the influence of this singular perfume, . . . they would swoon away sometimes three or four times in a day, recover, rise and dance around with such incarnate and elevated springs, as might render it doubtful to the spectator, whether they properly belonged to the gross inhabitants of this globe, or some other family of beings." What Stone, McNemar, and company embraced was a deeply sensuous, embodied, yet otherworldly piety—one that still allowed the bodily sufferings of Christ to work on their own bodies and souls. It was through contemplation of that visible (and fragrant) gospel that these saints imagined a passage into a quite visceral relationship with the mystical Bridegroom. These were bodily practices worthy, they both insisted, of being preserved in Christian memory.<sup>29</sup>

Cane Ridge, as a Protestant shrine, is a place of many narratives and histories—and thus also a place of diverse futures. Even in the early accounts of John Lyle, Richard McNemar, Peter Cartwright, and Barton Stone, the desire was not only to preserve its memory, but also to shape that history toward particular ends, Presbyterian, Shaker, Methodist, and restorationist Christian. That creative engagement with Cane Ridge's past very much continued in twentieth-century ecumenism and has been dramatically evident again in the readiness of some Pentecostals to lay claim to its heritage. Certainly, the processes of reconnection and reinvention are alive and well with us in this celebration today, and no doubt in multiple, sometimes contradictory ways. Perhaps now as the shrine has taken on a new hyperreality in cyberspace—one can visit it online, see the church within a church, and read its commemorative plaques—it is especially important for us to remember how mutable and unsettled history can be. That the pursuit of a bedrock historical reality is elusive, that the dream of definitiveness is bound to escape us, should occasion little hand-wringing, but should instead call us again to our responsibility for dialogic engagement with the past.

It is also important to remember—indeed, it is most important to remember—how vital memory is within the Christian life. As one Scottish preacher declared on another sacramental occasion in commenting on the scriptural passage "This do in remembrance of me," "This remember is not a bare naked historicall remembrance or a speculative remembrance as we may have of a history but this remembrance is a practicall remembrance when you

are going through your fields and when you are at your employments and at all times.”<sup>30</sup> It is to such “practicall remembrance” that those Christians who have memorialized Cane Ridge—from Barton Stone to Edgar DeWitt Jones to Anthony Dunnavant—have all been dedicated. The Cane Ridge revival was born of sacramental memory—a practical remembrance that embraced all of the Christian life and spanned the reaches of Christian time from the Last Supper to the Cross to the final feast of the saints in heaven.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Rhodes Thompson, ed., *Voices from Cane Ridge* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1954), 17. The best overall bibliographic resource on the event is Lon D. Oliver, ed., *A Guide to the Cane Ridge Revival* (Lexington: Lexington Theological Seminary Library, 1988). For the best source on Cane Ridge in Christian memory, see Anthony L. Dunnavant, ed., *Cane Ridge in Context: Perspectives on Barton W. Stone and the Revival* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1992). For a good account of parallel efforts among Methodists at shrine-making, see Thomas A. Tweed, “John Wesley Slept Here: American Shrines and American Methodists,” *Numen* 47 (2000): 41-68.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 12, 28.

<sup>4</sup> “Cane Ridge Dedication, Sunday, June 30, 1957,” Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tenn.

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 13; Elby A. Boosinger, “The Cane Ridge Retreat,” *Discipliana* 41 (1981): 28-29.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, frontispiece, 13.

<sup>7</sup> *Christian Messenger*, 24 February 1827, 77.

<sup>8</sup> Barton W. Stone, “Revivals of Religion,” *Christian Messenger* 5 (July 1831): 164-167; Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, ed. Charles L. Wallis (New York: Abingdon, 1956), 34.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 23; James R. Rogers, *The Cane-Ridge Meeting-house* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1910), 9.

<sup>10</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 26-27; “Cane Ridge Dedication”; Paul A. Crow, Jr., “Barton Warren Stone: Ambassador of the *Oikumene*,” *Discipliana* 34 (Summer 1974): 22. That Thompson’s emphasis on the thousands of visitors is no exaggeration is confirmed by the precise registration records kept at the shrine. See the typescript report of the curator Homer P. Gamboe who notes 2,696 visitors in the months following July 1965, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee. According to the current curator, Robert Steffer, visitors to the shrine now run about 5,000 to 6,000 annually.

<sup>11</sup> Hoke Dickinson, *The Cane Ridge Reader* (Cane Ridge: n.p., 1972), vii.

<sup>12</sup> Harold Bloom, *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 33, 59, 244, 264, 266.

<sup>13</sup> This background material and the paragraphs that follow are based on Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals, 1550-1850* (Princeton: 1989; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

<sup>14</sup> Cartwright, *Autobiography*, 34.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Patterson, "Extract," in Oliver, ed., *Guide*, 31. Richard McNemar later reproduced a report of another minister that put the figure at ten times this number, or 3000 fallen. See Richard McNemar, *The Kentucky Revival; Or, A Short History of the Late Extraordinary Outpouring of the Spirit of God in the Western States of America* (New York: Jenkins, 1846), 26.

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 17; Edwin H. Enzor, Jr., "The Work of James M'Gready: Frontier Revivalist," *Restoration Quarterly* 9 (1966): 13. On the way this embarrassment has worked to divert attention from both the exercises and Barton Stone, see Max Ward Randall, *The Great Awakenings and the Restoration Movement* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press, 1983), 52.

<sup>17</sup> William Warren Sweet, *Revivalism in America: Its Origin, Growth and Decline* (New York: Scribner's, 1944), 124, 132; John B. Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Lexington: 1972; Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 68. Likewise, Paul Conkin, whose book on Cane Ridge built on and extended the emphasis on its Scottish background, highlighted the bedrock sacramentalism at the expense of the dramatic exercises. See Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990). A nicely balanced synthesis and corrective can be found in Ellen Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 206-212, 218-225.

<sup>18</sup> Bloom, *American Religion*, 64.

<sup>19</sup> William H. Milburn, *The Pioneers, Preachers and People of the Mississippi Valley* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1860), 357-361. Reprinted in Oliver, ed., *Guide*, 44.

<sup>20</sup> The best account of this development is Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). In focusing on the Methodists, Taves does not, however, consider Stone, McNemar, and Cane Ridge nor the specific psychological literature that developed around the exercises of the Great Revival. Directly relevant, though, is her exposition of the shout tradition among Methodists and their "sacralization of the body" both in practice and through scriptural exegesis. See pp. 104-114.

<sup>21</sup> Catharine C. Cleveland, *The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1916), 112-127.

<sup>22</sup> Frederick Morgan Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals: A Study in Mental and Social Evolution* (New York: MacMillan, 1905), 10, 21-24, 73-77, 308-323.

<sup>23</sup> John M. Berez, *Understanding Tourette Syndrome, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and Related Problems* (New York: Springer, 1992), 187.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 132.

<sup>25</sup> Barton W. Stone, *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself* (1847), reprinted in Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 68.

<sup>26</sup> Stone, *Biography*, reprinted in Thompson, ed., *Voices*, 64-65, 70.

<sup>27</sup> McNemar, *Kentucky Revival*, 64-67.

<sup>28</sup> McNemar, *Kentucky Revival*, 64-67.

<sup>29</sup> McNemar, *Kentucky Revival*, 63, 70-71.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 114.

## **2001 Kirkpatrick Historians' Seminar**

### **Millennialism in the Tradition of Barton W. Stone**

Papers to be presented:

- **Barton W. Stone's Millennialism**  
D. Newell Williams
- **The Legacy of Stone's Millennialism in the Churches of Christ**  
David Edwin Harrell
- **The Legacy of Stone's Millennialism in the Christian Churches and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
James B. North

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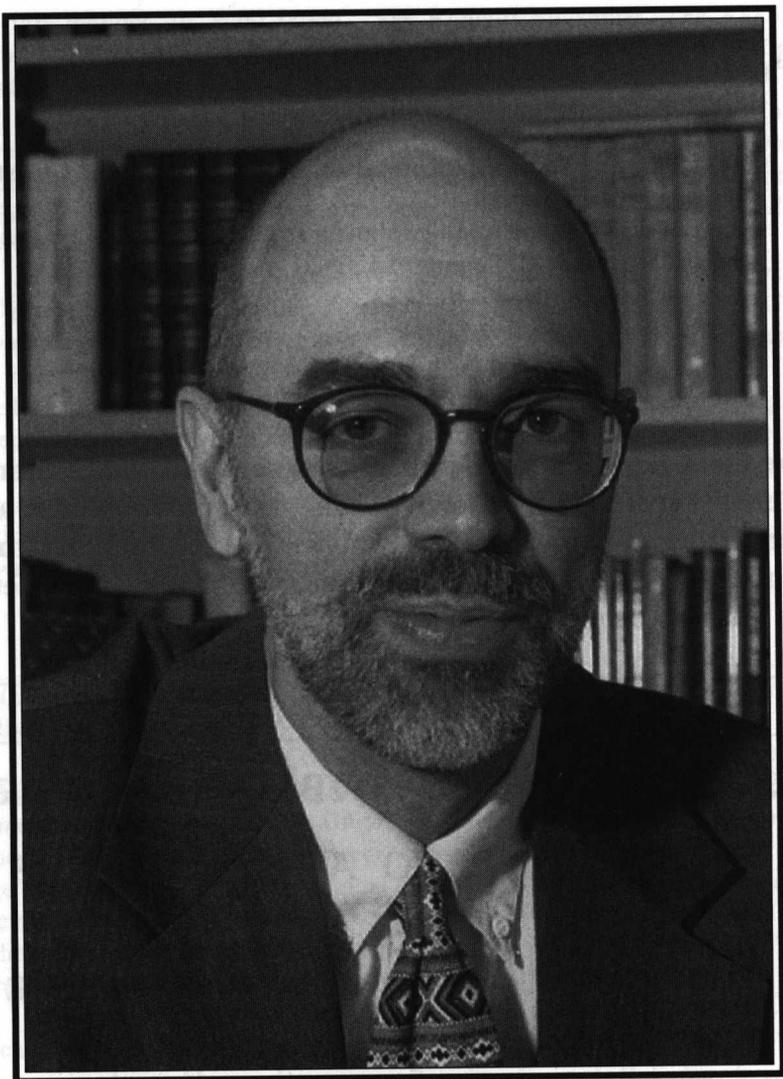
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**Anthony LeRoy Dunnivant**

**1954-2001**

**BARTON W. STONE:  
PORTRAITS ON THE HALF-CENTURY**

Anthony L. Dunnivant\*

June 22, 1995, was the sesquicentennial, the one-hundred fiftieth anniversary, of the great funeral of Barton W. Stone that was held at Cane Ridge. One way of thinking about a sesquicentennial is to think of it as the passage of three-half-centuries. It is helpful to think of a sesquicentennial this way because half-centuries are periods that many more of us experience, remember, and to which we can thus directly relate as opposed to full centuries. Some of you who are reading this have actually lived a half-century, and certainly you know someone who has. Some of my best friends have lived more than a half-century! My parents, who are both still living, have been married more than a half-century. In short, a half-century is a fairly familiar time period to us. It is the time period that falls roughly in between a generation and a lifetime.

After three such periods have elapsed since the "great funeral," whom do we see when we look back across history toward Barton W. Stone? To begin to answer that question, let me remind you of a familiar story that most of you have heard and that I read again recently in Catherine Albanese's book, *America: Religions and Religion*:

It is a story about an elephant and about a group of blind men who had never before encountered one. Each of them felt the mysterious beast, took note of the sensations, and later in conversation described the experience. Some who had felt the head of the animal claimed that an elephant was just like a pot. Others who felt the elephant's ear claimed that it was just like a harvest basket used to separate grain. Still others had touched the elephant's trunk, and they announced that an elephant was part of a plow, while, finally, another group who had patted the trunk thought an elephant was a plow, whole and complete.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, each group or individual observer did not have an entirely false view of the elephant, the problem was that each only had a partial view. The situation is similar to this any time when investigating an historical figure. We have our own particular "blinders" on and our own particular "feelers" out, and the mental picture—the historical portrait—we get of someone from the past is going to be shaped by those blinders and feelers. History, in other words, is always an interaction between our present and the past we seek to know. Our present mistaken notions, prejudices, needs and desires shape the questions that we ask of the past. Our blinders and feelers are mutually influencing and inseparable. For this reason, more truth is probably gained by combining views than by choosing among them. And this, I believe, is certainly true of the

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different understandings of Barton W. Stone that have been advanced in the three half-centuries since the “great funeral.” Combining the Stones of 1845, 1895, 1945 and 1995 will give us a truer portrait of him than any of these views is standing alone, though still not a complete portrait. And so our task for the remainder of this essay is to take seriously the writer of Ecclesiastes who said there is a time “...to gather stones together” (3:5 RSV).

If we begin at the “great funeral” of Barton W. Stone in 1845 and with the notices of his death that were published close to that time, we discover that the blinders and feelers of that time led to the report that Father Stone was a saint and a sufferer.

There were other elements, of course, in the reports of 1844 and 1845. Many familiar and factual dimensions of Stone’s life were recounted at his death—his birth in Maryland, his education in North Carolina, his entering Presbyterian ministry, his involvement with McGready, his coming to central Kentucky, his presence and leadership at the sacramental revival meeting at Cane Ridge, his family life, his involvement with the Springfield Presbytery and its Last Will and Testament, his troubles and final break with the Presbyterians, his pastoral defense against the inroads of the Shakers, his personal involvement in the union with the Disciples, his untiring editorial, evangelistic, educational, and pastoral labor. My impression, however, is that amidst all these familiar details the dominant strains, the most striking images are those that evoke and depict a good man who endured much.

*The Christian Messenger* spoke of his “untarnished character” and declared that “his entire life has been made up of tenderness, amiability and love.”<sup>2</sup>

Stone’s long-time co-laborer T. M. Allen wrote that Stone’s “life was little else than a practical commentary on the pure faith and morality of the gospel he professed.”<sup>3</sup> The Caneridge Church [sic] “unanimously approved” a tribute letter in 1844 that included the affirmation that “no incident in the history of [Stone’s] long and eventful life, has, in the slightest degree, tended to lower him in the estimation of the church or of the world.”<sup>4</sup> Alexander Campbell’s obituary of Stone in the *Millennial Harbinger* noted that Elder Stone’s “good character and benevolent spirit” “extorted” even from the Presbyterians the admission that Stone’s “life was sound though his doctrine was not.”<sup>5</sup> Aylette Rains sounded a similar note in his tribute in *The Christian Teacher* when he declared that Stone’s “bitterest opponents were constrained to say [that Stone’s] ‘moral character is unblamable.’” Another comment from Rains perhaps best makes the point of the prominence of “saintliness” in Stone’s funeral tributes. Of Stone, Rains writes: “He was a good man. Goodness was his chief characteristic. He was great besides his goodness; but goodness was its crown—his glory was goodness.”<sup>6</sup>

With Rains’ words and Campbell’s thought, we begin to hear the other theme alongside saintliness. We also hear of Stone’s suffering. Three kinds of suffering on Stone’s part were recalled at his death: suffering abuse at the hands of religious opponents, suffering poverty and deprivation because of his self-sacrificial dedication to the ministry, and suffering personal grief, pain, and illness—the last culminating in his death. Campbell recalled that Stone had been “much engaged in controversy, and much opposed.” David Purviance remembered several controversial episodes—from the separation from the Presbyterian

Synod of Kentucky, Stone's letters on the Atonement (for which Stone was "tried as with fire"), to their "trial with Shakerism." His recollection was that Stone "remained firm and unmoved, and was able to maintain and defend the truth."<sup>7</sup>

John A. Gano's "great funeral" oration of 22 June 1845 contains several expressions of the theme of Stone's suffering for the sake of his ministry. For example, Gano says that at the Cane Ridge revival "none labored more constantly, efficiently, or zealously than the talented Stone. From his excessive labors he was seized with hemorrhage of the lungs, which threatened his speedy decline and death. But his work on earth was not yet done."<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the most heart-wrenching account of Stone's physical suffering near the point of death comes from the pen of Stone's physician, David T. Morton, who wrote:

I esteem it as one of the greatest privileges of my life, to have been permitted to witness the bright display of faith and hope, patience and resignation manifested by [Elder Barton W. Stone] during a series of painful paroxysms, more lingering and acute than ordinarily falls to the lot of expiring mortals. Notwithstanding his body was racked with torturing pain, his mind was calm and unobscured to the last moment of his existence, and seemed constantly communing with God, or breathing forth in accents of love to the numerous friends who surrounded his bed...<sup>9</sup>

The blinders and feelers of 1844-45 were those of grief, love, and recent memory. And the friends of Stone who were equipped with those blinders and feelers brought to their brothers and sisters of that day and, indirectly, bring to us, the report that "we have encountered Father Stone—he was a saint and a sufferer."

A half-century later, in 1894, the dominant colors in a portrait of Stone would be different. I have encountered no great flood of evidence that the fiftieth anniversary of Stone's "great funeral" was much observed or Stone's ministry much remembered in the years 1894-95. One notable exception is the fact that B.B. Tyler's 1894 history of the Disciples of Christ prepared for the Christian Literature Company's American Church History series contains an account of Stone's life. Tyler's emphases are significant. The Stone of Tyler's depiction was a revival leader and Christian unionist.<sup>10</sup> The features of Stone's life that are brought to the forefront were Stone's participation in the Cane Ridge meeting and the 1832 union with the Campbellite Disciples.

The Cane Ridge Meeting is interpreted by Tyler and others in this period as primarily an evangelistic meeting—a camp meeting revival that resulted in personal conversions, church growth, and social transformation. Within a few years, in 1901, the centennial of the Cane Ridge Revival would be celebrated and this would provide the occasion for further recollection of Stone the revival leader and participant.<sup>11</sup>

The different shading that appears in 1894 (and for several years thereafter) in portraits of Stone makes sense when considered in the light of history. In the years since 1844 the union of the Christians and the Disciples had been further consolidated. Institutions such as academies, colleges, seminaries, benevolent agencies, and—especially—missionary societies had grown up amongst the Christians/Disciples. Missionary societies, cooperation for the sake of evangelization at every level—district, state, national, overseas, and even with some inter-denominational coordination, was the order of the day. This was the

hey-day of evangelistic mission and evangelistic ambition. The Disciples Christian Woman's Board of Missions was only twenty years old in 1894 and the Foreign Christian Missionary Society even younger.

In fact, if we broaden our field of vision to twenty years on either side of 1894 for context—that is to look at the years between 1874 and 1914—here is what we see happening in the Christian/Disciples movement: the beginnings of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, the Board of Church Extension, the National Benevolent Association, the Board of Ministerial Relief, the formation of the Federal Council of Churches, the establishment of the Council on Christian Union, the chartering of the Christian Board of Publication, the beginning of the Men and Millions Movement, and the formation of the Board of Education.<sup>12</sup> Is it any wonder that, in the middle of a period of this kind of activity, when Disciples went back to look for and at Barton W. Stone they found the evangelistic revival leader and Christian unionist? That is, they found a leader who shared their interests in evangelism and church growth.

If we fast-forward to the next half-century we arrive at 1944 and find ourselves encountering a level of interest in Barton W. Stone and Cane Ridge that far exceeded that which we discovered at a half-century earlier. Part of this is attributable to the efforts that had been gathering momentum since the 1920s to remember and preserve the Cane Ridge site. Part of it is attributable to the writings of scholars such as Charles Crossfield Ware and Alonzo Willard Fortune in the 1930s. Part of it is attributable to the centennial celebration of the union of the Christians and the Disciples—a celebration that had taken place in 1932. Part of what we shall find is attributable to the fact that two divisions had by this time largely unfolded in the movement and we now follow the reflections of those informally known as “Cooperative” Disciples. The virtues that Ware, Fortune, and their colleague Elmer Ellsworth Snoddy, saw in Father Stone were 1) Stone's bold opposition to Calvinist orthodoxy, 2) Stone's practical, reconciling ecumenism, 3) Stone's associational churchmanship and 4) Stone's North Carolina and Kentucky regional identification.

A.W. Fortune and E. E. Snoddy were members of the new wave of theologically liberal, progressive, or modernist faculty at The College of the Bible who had arrived after the turn of the century and been sustained during the crisis at that institution in 1917. They were eager to show that their liberalism had long and legitimate rootage in the Stone-Campbell movement. Therefore, when they looked at Stone their gaze was drawn to Stone's questions about the Westminster Confession, Stone's trouble with the Trinity, and Stone's unorthodox view of the Atonement. In the years leading up to the 1940s, Fortune and especially Snoddy reveled in the very controversies that Stone himself and a number of Stone's close associates had bemoaned in the 1840s. Because Fortune and Snoddy had to live with their own conservative critics they identified closely with the Stone who had lived with orthodox critics and opponents.<sup>13</sup>

Because 1932 had been the centennial of the union of the Disciples and the Christians, it was quite natural that Christian unity be a theme that was emphasized in connection with Stone. But the interest in unity was also heightened by the growth in the first four decades of the twentieth-century of the modern ecumenical movement.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, anyone who remembers anything

of the world history of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, will need little convincing that the theme of organizing and creating alliances to solve problems, combat evil, and advance good, was the theme that dominated both secular culture and church in those decades—from New Deal Agencies, to World War II Allies, to the United Nations. During these decades the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America were brought into being and the Disciples of Christ made their first concrete steps toward Restructure.

It is also well to remember that A.W. Fortune and C.C. Ware were advocates for their geographic regions. Fortune was a long-time resident, preacher, teacher, and historian of Disciplesdom in Kentucky. The 1932 centennial of the union of the Disciples and the Christians was the occasion for his publication of a regional history of Disciples in Kentucky. Ware was the long-time “state secretary” for the Disciples in North Carolina. Each was proud of Stone’s connections to his state and each sought to strengthen regional cooperation in this state. So it should come as no surprise that one of the features of the Stoneite churches that they found and commented upon was that of the Stoneites continuing multi-congregation, cooperative associations and ministerial conferences.<sup>15</sup>

And so the particular blinders and feelers of those Disciples who sought the Stone of history in 1945 and thereabouts equipped them to find a progressive theologian, an ecumenist, a cooperative-associational churchman, and a regional hero.

Fifty years forward brings us to 1995. Church historians of the 1990s, who were educated and spiritually formed during the generation preceding that decade, have their own set of blinders and feelers and yet another portrait of Stone has been emerging. Their Stone is perhaps best described as the revivalist theologian and “otherworldly” church leader.

Stone as the revivalist theologian has been most fully and carefully described by D. Newell Williams of Christian Theological Seminary. His dissertation and several subsequent articles<sup>16</sup> have carefully depicted a Barton W. Stone whose theology was not merely the repudiation of Calvinist orthodoxy or of selected parts thereof. Rather, Stone carefully worked out a theology that had much continuity with that of other revivalists of the southern phase of the second Great Awakening. And elements of Stone’s thought evolved with his continuing reflection, engagement with Scripture, and debate and dialogue with others. A main point of Williams’ careful reconstruction of Stone’s theology is that Stone was an early nineteenth-century, Reformed, revivalist theologian. The Stone of Williams’ reconstruction is no progressive modernist—whatever points of disagreement he might have had with orthodox Presbyterians.

What Williams has done for Stone the theologian the recent scholarship of Leigh Eric Schmidt, Paul Conkin, Newton Fowler and Keith Watkins have done for Stone the host pastor of the Cane Ridge Revival. These scholars have documented a centuries-long tradition of Presbyterian sacramental revivalism, traced its lineage directly to Cane Ridge, and reinterpreted the Cane Ridge meeting as an expression of this long tradition.<sup>17</sup> Two main points emerge from this research: 1) the Cane Ridge meeting was not just a preaching event but, at its heart, a sacramental one—an occasion for the Lord’s Supper, and 2) the Cane

Ridge meeting was not just an expression of New World revivalism but of an Old World tradition of popular Presbyterian piety—including its rather extraordinary “otherworldly” exercises.

Some elements of the “otherworldliness” and even “antiworldliness” of Stone’s revivalist theology and piety have been documented in the past generation by both Newell Williams and David Roos.<sup>18</sup> They focused on the ways that Stone thought that Christians should avoid being “ensnared” by the evils of the world. More recently C. Leonard Allen and Richard Hughes have argued that Stone became deeply pessimistic about the world and its future—that he was, finally, an apocalypticist who thought that only a mighty, dramatic act of God could usher in God’s reign. They have contrasted Stone’s view with that of the more optimistic and progressive Alexander Campbell and found in this contrast at least part of the explanation for the division between the Churches of Christ (with their Stoneite pessimism) and the Disciples (with their Campbellite optimism).<sup>19</sup>

Barton W. Stone the revivalist theologian, the host pastor of an extraordinary New World example of an Old World popular sacramental meeting, and “otherworldly” Christian who mistrusted society’s snares and looked to God for history’s triumph—this portrait may be unfamiliar to you. It bears especially little resemblance to the picture of Stone as a progressive and precursor to modern liberalism. But this portrait from our own time has some compelling research beneath it. And, as was the case in our earlier half-century portraits, it follows the outline of certain concerns of the age that produced it.

Ours is a time during which the churches of the older Protestant mainline have been in decline and crisis. Many explanations have been suggested as to why this is the case. But one observation that has been frequently made is that these churches need to reassert a clear and distinctive theological voice.<sup>20</sup> If the recovery of a theological voice, a distinctive word about God and the Good New of Jesus Christ and the Spirit in the Church, is the perceived need in the nineties—is it any wonder that researchers of our era would discover Stone the theologian?

Another proposal frequently made in the face of mainline decline is that the experience of worship should be enhanced, deepened, and made more vividly felt by our people. Is it any wonder, then, that in our time researchers would discover that Barton W. Stone participated in a deeply-rooted sacramental tradition—a worship tradition?

Ours is a time during which society has not been kind to the churches of the old mainline. We have been—some have said—sidelined. We have been sociologically or socioculturally “disestablished.” Is it any wonder that in such a time as ours researchers discover a Barton W. Stone who was otherworldly and pessimistic?

With such a diverse set of half-century portraits of Barton W. Stone one may be tempted to ask “Which is the real Stone?” But remember that would be the same as asking if an elephant indeed is a plow, or a basket, or a pot. We know the elephant has parts that are somewhat like each of those things, that the combination of those parts approaches the reality better than any one of them alone captures it, and that, finally, even the combination falls short. And so it is with Barton W. Stone. Father Stone was saint and sufferer, evangelist and church unionist, anti-Calvinist—at least selectively—and associational

churchman, he was a revivalist theologian and “otherworldly” in his final hope. But even this composite does not capture or exhaust his story and its significance for us.

We have benefited from all of the foregoing images for they have helped keep Stone alive in the church’s memory and in touch with the changing questions that the church has brought to bear on its memory of Stone. But I suspect that Barton W. Stone himself would wish for us to end with the reminder that all Christian biography now and throughout the church’s history has been rooted in the life of Jesus Christ. It is because the very Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us human beings as one of us, that we take a special care with the stories of human lives and of Christian lives. I suspect that Father Stone would have us remember that, as a “Christian,” it was no longer he who lived but Christ who lived in him. That, you will recall, was the name that Barton W. Stone loved—not saint, nor sufferer; not evangelist, nor unionist; not anti-Calvinist, nor associational churchman; not ecumenist, nor even Kentuckian; not revival theologian, nor even apocalyptic pessimist. We need these names for our historical understanding, but we should never confuse them with the name Stone loved: “Christian.” And so I close with the words of the “Caneridge Church” penned just over 150 years ago:

Here it was, also, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, 1804, that Barton W. Stone proclaimed to the church and to the world, that he took, from that day forward, and forever, the Bible alone as a rule of faith and practice, to the exclusion of all human Creeds, Confessions, and Disciplines; and the name Christian, to the exclusion of all sectarian or denominational designations or names.<sup>21</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Catherine Alabanese, *America: Religions and Religion* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1981), 1.

<sup>2</sup>*Christian Messenger*, 14 (7) [Bibliographic information on the periodicals quoted by John Rogers is given here and in several later instances as Rogers provided it and, therefore, does not conform to 1995 standard form], quoted in John Rogers, ed., *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, written By Himself: with Additions and Reflections* (Cincinnati: Published for the Author by J.A. and U.P. James, 1847); reprinted in *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke S. Dickinson (Cane Ridge: n.p. 1972), 102 [page numbers are to the *Reader*].

<sup>3</sup>*Christian Messenger* 14 (8), quoted in Rogers, *Biography of Stone*; reprinted in Dickinson, *Cane Ridge Reader*, 110.

<sup>4</sup>"The Letter: The Church of Christ at Caneridge, to the honored lady an respected children of the venerated Elder Barton Warren Stone, deceased," *Christian Messenger* [March 1845], quoted in Rogers, *Biography of Stone*, reprinted in Dickinson, *Cane Ridge Reader*, 116.

<sup>5</sup>*Millennial Harbinger*, 3rd series, 1 (12: December 1844):622.

<sup>6</sup>*Christian Teacher*, 3 (8) :204, quoted in Rogers, *Biography of Stone*, reprinted in Dickinson, *Cane Ridge Reader*, 116-17.

<sup>7</sup>David Purviance, letter of 5 June 1845, quoted in Rogers, *Biography of Stone*, reprinted in Dickinson, *Cane Ridge Reader*, 119-129.

<sup>8</sup>J.A. Gano, "Discourse Occasioned by the Death of B.W. Stone,"

quoted in Rogers, *Biography of Stone*, reprinted in Dickinson, *Cane Ridge Reader*, 135.

<sup>9</sup>David T. Morton, letter to Brother Henderson, Hannibal, Missouri, 4 December 1844, published in the *Christian Messenger* 14 (8), quoted in Rogers, *Biography of Stone*, reprinted in Dickinson, *Cane Ridge Reader*, 108.

<sup>10</sup>B.B. Tyler, *A History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894), 11, 13, 20, 22, 31, 32.

<sup>11</sup>See, e.g., J.Z. Tyler, "The Centennial of the great Cane Ridge Revival," *Christian Standard*, 9 November 1901, 1421.

<sup>12</sup>Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1975), timeline.

<sup>13</sup>For another account of this shift in the interpretation of Barton W. Stone see my "From Precursor of the Movement to Icon of Christian Unity: Barton W. Stone in the Memory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)," in *Cane Ridge in Context: Perspectives on Barton W. Stone and the Revival*, ed. Anthony L. Dunnivant (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1992), 1-19.

<sup>14</sup>This point is worth noting in connection with the subtitle of William Garrett West's 1954 biography of Stone, *Barton Warren Stone: Early American Advocate of Christian Unity* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954).

<sup>15</sup>For an especially striking instance in C.C. Ware, see his *Barton Warren Stone: Pathfinder of Christian Union--A Story of His Life and Times* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1932), 341.

<sup>16</sup>See David Newell Williams, "The Theology of the Great Revival in the West As Seen Through the Life and Thought of Barton Warren Stone," (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1979); "Barton W. Stone's Revivalist Theology," in Dunnivant, *Cane Ridge in Context*, 73-92; "The Power of Christ's Sacrifice: Barton W. Stone's Doctrine of Atonement," *Discipliana: Quarterly Journal of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society* 54 (1: Spring 1994):20-31; "The Social and Ecclesiastical Impact of Barton W. Stone's Theology," in *Explorations in the Stone-Campbell Traditions: Essays in Honor of Herman A. Norton*, ed. Anthony L. Dunnivant and Richard L. Harrison, Jr., (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1995), 11-42.

<sup>17</sup>Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communion and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989); Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Newton B. Fowler, Jr., "Cambuslang: The Scottish Predecessor to Cane Ridge," in Dunnivant, *Cane Ridge in Context*, 111-16; Keith Watkins, "The Sacramental Character of the Camp meeting," *Discipliana: Quarterly Journal of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society* 54 (1: Spring 1994):2-19.

<sup>18</sup>Williams, "Theology of the Great Revival"; David Carl Roos, "The Social Thought of Barton Warren Stone and Its Significance Today for the Disciples of Christ in western Kentucky," (D. Div. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1973).

<sup>19</sup>C. Leonard Allen, "'The Stone that the Builders Rejected'" Barton W. Stone in the Memory of Churches of Christ," in Dunnivant, *Cane Ridge in*

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<sup>20</sup>For one Disciples of Christ illustration of this kind of proposal, see D. Newell Williams, "How and Why the Disciples Have changed in Relation to American Culture," and "Future Prospects of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)," in *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism: The Disciples Relation to American Culture, 1880-1989*, ed. D. Newell Williams (St. Louis and Grand Rapids: Chalice and Eerdmans, 1991), especially 18-23, 563-570.

<sup>21</sup>"The Letter," 112.

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1954-2001

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## —From the Editor's Desk

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Barton W. Stone was not typically viewed as a “founder” of the Stone-Campbell Movement, but as a “precursor” of the Campbell Reformation. The movement was referred to by historians of the movement as the “current Reformation” or the “Reformation of the nineteenth century.” A century later, there has been a major change in the historiography of the movement. Historians now increasingly refer to the movement not as the Disciples of Christ, or the Restoration Movement (terms widely used in the twentieth century), but as the Stone-Campbell Movement. In a volume published by the Society, Anthony L. Dunnivant has told the story of how liberal, ecumenical Disciples of Christ in the first half of the twentieth century “rediscovered” Barton Stone and gave him a prominent place in the memory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).<sup>1</sup>

In the last two decades, Stone has been “rediscovered” by historians affiliated with the Churches of Christ. Much of the interest in Stone among historians of the Churches of Christ has focused on his millennialism or, what Richard Hughes has called, his “apocalyptic” worldview. Based on a particular interpretation of Stone’s millennialism, it has been argued that Stone was the founder of the Churches of Christ stream of the movement. In this telling of the story, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the Christian Churches and Churches of Christ are descendents of Campbell, rather than of Stone.

This issue focuses on Stone’s millennialism and its influence in the Stone-Campbell Movement. D. Newell Williams examines the development of Stone’s millennialism in relation to Hughes’ understanding of Stone’s “apocalyptic” worldview. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. and James B. North examine the influence of Stone’s millennialism in the Churches of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, respectively. All three papers were presented to the Kirkpatrick Seminar, held this year in conjunction with the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the Cane Ridge Meeting, hosted by Stone in August of 1801.

The pull of God’s future is not much emphasized in contemporary churches of the Stone-Campbell Movement. A careful reading of these articles may lead the reader to ask whether a faith that includes no vision of God’s future is in accord with the New Testament.

— D. Newell Williams

<sup>1</sup> See “From Precursor of the Movement to Icon of Christian Unity: Barton W. Stone in the Memory of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),” in *Cane Ridge in Context: Perspectives on Barton W. Stone and the Revival*, ed. Anthony L. Dunnivant (Nashville, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1992).

## —From the President's Desk

Cane Ridge was our genesis. Two hundred years ago a great gathering of God's people at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, was united in the word of powerful preaching, in the communing with Christ through bread and wine, and in God's animating spirit in a fellowship of devotion. Our genesis gave us love of the word, continuing and frequent hunger for the supper, and a passion for being one people in Christ. When we are true to our germinating origins, by God's grace, the Spirit visits.

A "Great Gathering" returned to Cane Ridge in August of 2001. We re-experienced our genesis moment: word, supper, unity, spirit. We were a people who assembled in devotion to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul and mind. The Historical Society brought to this sacramental banquet of devotion the gift of loving God with our minds. You may wish to unite in our devotion by reading this issue and by praying the prayer printed inside the back cover.

The Kirkpatrick Seminar started in the Meeting House with an exploration of Barton Stone's millennialism. We moved to the Paris church, a house of worship in Stone's legacy, to learn of his millennialism in the churches of his legacy. The Society is honored in this issue of *Discipliana* to make an historic record for a larger audience across time of those papers.

Cane Ridge, 1801, is our genesis. Cane Ridge, 2001, holds the promise of being a genesis. How evident that was in the work of our young Ketcherside Scholars for 2001: Amy Arman, Wes Crawford, Kevin Kragenbrink. These are young scholars in various phases of Ph.D. work and academic careers. All were visiting Cane Ridge for the first time. Each participated by giving initial responses to the papers of the occasion.

It was a promising re-beginning. You will hear more of Artman, Crawford, Kragenbrink. Who knows, maybe their names will someday be said alongside Barton Stone, James McGready and David Purviance. The Spirit does things like that.

— Peter M. Morgan

**FROM TRUSTING CONGRESS  
TO RENOUNCING HUMAN GOVERNMENTS:  
THE MILLENNIAL ODYSSEY OF BARTON W. STONE**

by D. Newell Williams\*

Richard T. Hughes has done more than any other historian to draw attention to the millennialism of Barton W. Stone. In an important article titled, "The Apocalyptic Origins of Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism," Hughes defines what he calls the "worldview" of Stone and his followers:

This worldview could best be described, quite simply, as *apocalyptic*, embracing a radical sense of estrangement and separation from the world and its values and a keen allegiance to a transcendent vision these people described as "the Kingdom of God." That kingdom had manifested itself in the earliest days of primitive Christianity, perpetually stood in judgment on the kingdoms of this earth, and would finally triumph over all things. Because Stone and his people identified so strongly with that kingdom, they typically refused to fight in wars, to vote, or to otherwise participate in the political process.<sup>1</sup>

Hughes argues that this "apocalyptic" perspective, as compared to the "optimistic" perspective of Alexander Campbell, was critical to the formation of the Churches of Christ stream of the Stone-Campbell Movement. In support of this thesis, he notes that when Churches of Christ and Disciples of Christ separated over missionary societies and instrumental music following the Civil War, a major center of Churches of Christ was the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee, an area that had been much influenced by Stone.<sup>2</sup>

Helpful as Hughes' thesis is for understanding the emergence of Churches of Christ, Hughes fails to note that Stone's *radical* estrangement from the world—his pacifism and renunciation of human governments—did not appear until the very last years of his ministry. Indeed, Hughes implies that Stone held this radical "apocalyptic" perspective throughout his ministry, or at least from the 1830s onward. This paper will show that Stone's millennialism was not always wedded to a radical estrangement from the world. On the contrary, Stone came to his radical estrangement from the world only after his experience of the emerging American party system and the failure of various efforts to end slavery led him to a profound disillusionment with American democracy.

The benefits of recognizing Stone's millennial odyssey are threefold. First, it offers a fuller explanation than that provided by Hughes of how Stone came to embrace his "apocalyptic" perspective. Although, as Hughes argues, Stone's Calvinistic appraisal of human nature gave him a pessimistic outlook on human potential and progress, it was his experience with 1840s style politics and the failure of Americans to end slavery that led him to reject civil governments in favor of allegiance to the coming kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup> A revision of Hughes' thesis in light of this paper would note the role of Stone's opposition to 1840s style politics and his disillusionment over the failure of

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efforts to end slavery in the development of a perspective critical to the formation of the Churches of Christ. In so doing, it might help to explain why Churches of Christ flourished in a relatively small region of the South—in Tennessee, southern Kentucky, and northern Alabama, but hardly at all in the deep South and the Southeast. While leaders of the Stone-Campbell Movement in the upper South were antislavery, and thus presumably more open to the disillusionment with America's failure to end slavery experienced by Stone, leaders of the Movement in the deep South and the Southeast defended the South's peculiar institution.<sup>4</sup>

A second benefit of recognizing that Stone's radical estrangement from the world occurred only after his disillusionment with America's emerging political system and the failure of Americans to end slavery, is that it helps to explain how Stone's Christians could unite in 1832 with the followers of the optimistic Alexander Campbell. Seeking to explain how groups holding what he views as radically different worldviews could have united, Hughes notes that the followers of Stone and Campbell shared an emphasis on the restoration of primitive Christianity and the unity of all Christians.<sup>5</sup> While this is certainly true, the Barton Stone of 1832 was far more optimistic regarding reform in America than the later Stone that Hughes describes.

Finally, recognizing that Stone's radical estrangement from the world followed his disillusionment with American politics and various efforts to end slavery, may help to explain why following the Civil War many of Stone's spiritual descendants in Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana and Missouri, in contrast to those of the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee, became Disciples of Christ. Tennessee, like other states of the former Confederacy, experienced poverty and violence against African Americans—circumstances that would have lent credence to the later Stone's "apocalyptic" perspective. It may be no coincidence that David Lipscomb, whom Hughes identifies as having carried Stone's apocalyptic tradition into the twentieth century "more than anyone else," was an outspoken opponent of the racism that viewed Africans as "beasts."<sup>6</sup> In contrast, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana and Missouri, all states that had adhered to the Union, shared in the prosperity and moral confidence of the victorious North. In such a setting, the hope for reform that had characterized Stone's millennialism until the last years of his ministry would have seemed appropriate. Hughes notes that Stone's devotion to Christian unity, as compared to Campbell's, was characterized by a commitment to a nondenominational Christianity free from orthodox constraints, openness to the power of the Holy Spirit, the refusal to make believer's immersion a test of fellowship, and opposition to debating in the interest of the Christian faith.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it may be no coincidence that Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, areas where Stone exerted significant influence, were later the seedbeds for the emergence of liberal ecumenism among the Disciples of Christ. In other words, while recognizing the influence of aspects of Stone's thought, where one lived following the War appears to have been the critical factor in determining whether Stone-Campbell Christians became members of Churches of Christ or the Disciples of Christ.<sup>8</sup>

## Millennial Hope Born of Revival

Stone's millennialism was born of the Great Revival (1797-1805). Like most American Protestants, Stone believed that a one-thousand year earthly reign of Christ and his saints was prophesied in Revelation 20:1-6. The association of the growth and increased influence of Christianity with the coming of the millennium can be traced through English Puritanism as far back as the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards had referred to the worldwide evangelism and social transformation that he taught would usher in the millennium as "the glorious work of God." Speculating that it would require two hundred and fifty years for God to complete this work, Edwards hoped that it had begun in his life. Other eighteenth century Americans, more impressed than Edwards with the significance of the eighteenth-century awakenings in England and America, had believed that the reign of Christ was imminent.<sup>9</sup>

In a sermon preached at the opening of the Synod of Kentucky in September of 1803, the patriarch of Kentucky Presbyterians, David Rice declared that although the question of when the millennium would begin was "too deep" for him, he could not believe that it was "very near." The fundamental reason that he stated for his judgement that the millennium was not very near, despite the great revival in progress, was the "prevalence of arbitrary power in the world; and particularly that professors of christianity [Christians] are not rightly disposed to 'break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free.'" Rice proclaimed that he could have no hope that the reign of Christ was dawning while slavery "abounds and is practiced by christians." Rice offered other reasons, as well, for not believing that the millennium was near in September of 1803. First, there was "too much of a spirit of party, and disposition for party debates" among Christians. He also noted that Christians had not yet disengaged themselves from "national attachments and political connexions, as to look upon themselves, and be looked upon by others, as citizens of the world at large, and equally friends to every nation under heaven."<sup>10</sup>

Stone agreed with Rice that slavery, division among Christians, and the failure of Christians to look upon themselves as citizens of the world opposed Christ's rule. However, in contrast to Rice, he believed that the Great Revival was overcoming those very obstacles. As he would later state, "This revival cut the bonds of many poor slaves," a claim that is supported by a review of manumissions during the course of the revival.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the revival had led to softening of denominational lines, as represented by the prominence of union sacramental meetings, such as the great meeting at Cane Ridge in August of 1801. Stone also perceived a new concern among Christians for all people, regardless of particular "attachments" and "connexions."

Before the conclusion of the meeting of the Synod in September 1803, Stone and four ministerial colleagues renounced the jurisdiction of the Synod rather than suffer censure for refusing to preach the distinctive doctrines of the Presbyterian Confession, forming the independent Springfield Presbytery. Less than a year later, in June of 1804, they signed the *Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery*, willing that their presbytery "die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large." Stone reported that they also

determined in June of 1804 to take “no other name than *christians*.”<sup>12</sup>

In the *Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery*, Stone and his colleagues boldly expressed their millennial hope. Included was the following “*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*.” In their “Witnesses’ Address,” appended to the *Last Will and Testament*, they called on all Christians to join them “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*.” Using the technical language of Edwards, they concluded, “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, and the *unity* of the church.”<sup>13</sup>

Additional expressions of millennial hope by the signers of the *Last Will and Testament* can be found in the records of their October 16, 1804, meeting with a committee of the General Assembly appointed to seek their reconciliation with the Synod of Kentucky. The committee asked if there was any method of accommodation by which they would return to the jurisdiction of the Synod. They responded that there was not, if it would entail their being bound to any creed but the Bible. They further stated, echoing terms used by Rice in his sermon opening the Synod of 1803, “We feel ourselves *citizens of the world*, God our common Father, all men our brethren by nature, and all christians our brethren in Christ.” “This principle of universal love to christians,” they continued, “gains ground in our hearts in proportion as we get clear of particular *attachments* to a party.” “We therefore cannot,” they declared, “put ourselves into a situation which would check the growth of so benign a temper and make us fight under a party standard.”<sup>14</sup> In a letter to the Moderator of the Synod of Kentucky, dated October 18, 1804, Stone and his colleagues declared that “God has begun *a glorious work* in this western country, which calls aloud for the united exertions of all the friends of Jesus, *and of mankind*.” “Some,” they observed, “are groaning for the wounds of the presbyterian cause; some for the Methodist; some for the Baptist, etc. each believing that it is the cause of Christ for which they are groaning—and some are as heartily groaning for the wounds of the Christian cause, without respect to names or parties.” “If,” they advised, “we should unite our groans and cries to the Father of our mercies for the general release, and the *coming of the Lord’s kingdom with power*, God would hear and answer us.” In conclusion, they admonished: “These things, dear brethren, are not vain imaginations, *for God is now about to take the earth*.”<sup>15</sup>

Stone reported that the Christians published Rice Haggard’s pamphlet on the Christian name “soon after” the October meeting.<sup>16</sup> Twenty pages in length, the pamphlet was a vigorous call for Christians to reclaim their family name and to unite on the scriptures, alone, by the power of the spirit. Haggard promised that the millennium *would come* when “the different denominations, which have long been at variance, shall join hands in an everlasting peace.” Haggard asked, “Are you not all praying, brethren, Lord, hasten the approach of that day? The day has already begun to dawn among some. Let a spirit of

union and love (which is the fruit of the spirit of God) prevail among you, and you will find, that this is day in the moral world.”<sup>17</sup>

Stone’s experience of the Great Revival convinced him that the millennium was near. In the revival he saw slaves being freed, Christians uniting, and the emergence of a love for humanity unrestricted by particular “attachments.” Stone believed that by cooperating with God’s “glorious work” of evangelism and social transformation, he would hasten the coming of Christ’s earthly reign. Thus began his millennial odyssey.

### **Trusting Congress**

The Great Revival, of course, did not destroy the institution of slavery. Many white Americans, including participants in the Revival, allowed that slavery was wrong, but argued that universal emancipation of the slaves would result in social chaos. In the 1820s, Stone became a vigorous advocate of the American Colonization Society, whose purpose was “to ameliorate the condition of the Free People of Colour now in the United States, by providing a colonial retreat either on this continent or that of Africa.” The founders of the society, who were primarily seeking to abolish slavery, believed that slaveholders *would* manumit their slaves if assured of their removal. Though established in 1816 as a voluntary organization, the Society sought public funding. In 1821, it purchased a tract of land in Western Africa and established the colony of Liberia to demonstrate to the federal and state governments the feasibility of colonizing free Blacks in Africa.<sup>18</sup>

Stone stated his intention to “awaken the attention of the West” to the Colonization Society in the third issue of his *Christian Messenger*, published in January of 1827. He followed up on that intention by publishing the Society’s appeal “to the Clergy of the United States” to take an offering for the Society on the Sunday either immediately preceding or following the fourth of July. The appeal also called on the clergy to obtain signatures on the Society’s petition, urging Congress to fund the colonization of “free People of Colour” who desired to immigrate to the coast of Africa.<sup>19</sup> In December of 1827, Stone made a personal appeal for support of the society, confidently observing that “It is believed that our Congress can, and will aid in the laudable work,” and that slavery would be removed from America.<sup>20</sup>

Stone continued through the 1820s to promote the Society through the *Messenger*. In July of 1828, he published a letter from the Colonization Society calling on the clergy to aid in establishing state colonization societies, with subordinate auxiliary associations in the counties or towns of each state.<sup>21</sup> Less than a year later, he published an address he had given inquiring whether Christians would be “idle spectators” while “the greatest and most influential statesmen and politicians of our nation” were “attempting to do justice to our long oppressed brethren of color by removing the free ones to the land of their forefathers.” Introducing the image of increasing light, Stone observed that “The question is no longer now, as thirty years ago—Is the slavery of the Africans right or wrong?” In Stone’s view, the nation had answered that it was wrong, “both politically and morally.” As evidence of his conclusion, he pointed to the federal government’s use of armed vessels to suppress the slave trade. “Shall we as a nation—shall we as Christians,” he asked, “approve this

course of protecting. . . the liberty of Africa, and not regard her children among us at home?"<sup>22</sup>

The June issue of the *Messenger* for 1830 carried news of the organization April 21, 1830, of a Colonization Society at Georgetown, Kentucky, with Stone as president.<sup>23</sup> In the first issue of the *Messenger* for 1831, Stone appealed to Christians to manumit their slaves and deliver them to the Colonization Society. In response to the objection that the Colonization Society would not be able to receive all of the free people of color, he replied "Then let us endeavor to enable them, by becoming members of the society, and by pecuniary assistance." Moreover, he asserted, "The general and state governments will doubtless aid the good work in freeing America from this foul blot on the escutcheon of the nation. The state and federal governments smile on the mighty project, and wink approbation." "Let us," he encouraged, "make the glorious offer; none have yet been rejected."<sup>24</sup>

In April of 1832, Stone published a specific proposal for government support of the colonization effort. The author of the proposal was Alexander Campbell, who had included it in the February issue of his *Millennial Harbinger*. Noting that the national debt was "as good as paid," Campbell recommended that the ten million dollars of federal revenue formerly needed annually to amortize the national debt be applied to the colonization of people of color. Three groups were covered in his plan: "those already free, slaves whom their masters might be induced to emancipate," and "female slaves of certain ages" who would be *purchased* "at certain prices" from slaveholders who would not emancipate. Campbell projected that an appropriation of ten million dollars a year for fifteen or twenty years would rid America of slavery.<sup>25</sup>

Stone expressed confidence in the success of the Colonization Society as late as September of 1833. Responding, once again, to the objection that the Society did not have funds sufficient to remove all of the slaves who might be manumitted, he recommended that every Christian should "hire his slaves for one or two years, and let their hire be given for their removal." In conclusion, he hailed "in anticipation" the day "when our general government shall take up the subject."<sup>26</sup>

### **Growing Disillusionment**

Stone's hopes for the colonization scheme, of course, were not fulfilled. His disillusionment with the response of his fellow citizens, and especially his fellow Christians, to the efforts of the Society was evident by 1834. His last reference to the Colonization Society, published in March of 1834, was in response to a letter from Daniel Travis of Illinois. Travis reported to Stone that among the immigrants to Illinois were individuals "well recommended as christians by churches in the slaves states" who had "sold all their slaves, and now buy farms, and live on the gains of their oppressed fellow creatures." Stone replied, "The conduct of such professors cannot be too highly censured, and reprobated." "Some excuse," he allowed, "might be plead, if there were not a Colonization Society in our land, which would gladly receive the slaves, and send them to Liberia where they can be happy and free." He suggested that if the slaves were unwilling to go to Liberia, "other ways could be devised, by which their situation might be meliorated." Neither the federal nor state

governments nor his own Christians had lived up to his high expectations of their support of the Colonization Society. He advised Travis to “endeavor to suffer patiently this affliction,” adding, “I know of no present remedy.”<sup>27</sup>

Stone had not given up, however, on finding a way to end slavery. In the fall of 1834, he moved from Kentucky to Jacksonville, Illinois. In the April, 1835 issue of the *Messenger*, he wrote that he had “designed” to give his readers “a few numbers” on the subject of slavery from his “own pen,” but had decided, instead, to serialize a tract sent to him by a friend. The tract was an “Address to the People of the United States on Slavery.” It was published by William Lloyd Garrison’s New England Anti-Slavery Society.<sup>28</sup> The “Address” called for the *immediate* abolition of slavery. Noting that it had been said that the slaves were not prepared for liberty, the “Address” asserted that “it is clear that the first step toward civilizing and christianizing the negro is to acknowledge that he is a man, whose confidence we have to gain by confessing that we have wronged him, and endeavoring to repair the injustice by abandoning forever the inhuman principle that man can hold property in man.”<sup>29</sup>

Stone’s hope that the Abolition Movement would end slavery was short-lived. He stopped printing the “Address” after three installments. In its place, he published in the July 1835 issue of the *Messenger* two articles defending immediate abolition as desirable and not to be feared.<sup>30</sup> In the November issue of the *Messenger*, he explained why he had discontinued the “Address of the New England Anti-Slavery Society.” Not long after he had begun publishing the “Address,” he had “heard of the evil effects of the ultra abolitionists in the North” and had “determined to desist from publishing more of the piece, fully persuaded that it would do no good in the present ferment, and might do harm.” The evil effects to which he referred were riots and acts of violence *against* abolitionists. He further noted that “For publishing these few [installments], numbers of my old patrons and friends in the East and South are offended, and have ordered a discontinuance of the *Messenger*.” He declared, “I have in principle and practice been a conscientious opposer of slavery for nearly 40 years; but how to remedy the evil I knew not.” “I am persuaded it will be done; but I am ignorant of the means by which it shall be accomplished.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Renouncing Human Governments**

It was not until 1842 that Stone recommended that Christians not participate in civil government. Behind his adoption of this position were his reactions to two developments. The first was his disappointment with America’s failure to end slavery. The second was his disapproval of the American political system that had emerged since the 1820s.

The drafters of the federal Constitution had not envisioned a party system. The founders believed that parties were formed by self-seeking individuals and were a threat to the order of society and the rights of the citizenry. The first American party, the Jeffersonian Republicans, was organized not as a party, but as a movement to defend the rights of the people against the Federalists, whom Thomas Jefferson charged with having become a party. The Federalists, for their part, accused the Jeffersonians of seeking to form a party. The leaders of the Democrat and Whig parties that emerged in

the 1820s, following the collapse of the Federalists and the dissolution of the Republicans, accepted parties as inevitable and even constructive. Vigorous contests between Democrats and Whigs developed in all sections of the country with members of each party predicting that the election of members of the other party would result in disaster for the nation.<sup>32</sup>

Stone maintained the earlier political ideas of harmony and deference enshrined by the Republic's founders. In August of 1832, he stated in the *Messenger* that he had "long thought that public teachers of christianity should have very little to do with noisy politics."

To see such [a public teacher of Christianity] rise up in the multitude, and make an electioneering speech—with warmth reviling the rulers of the people—speaking reproachfully of prominent men—and extolling their favorites to the skies—to see them very zealous to promote their party—my soul sickens at the sight. See the same preacher in the pulpit—is he equally zealous for religion as for politics! With what face can he teach the people to speak evil of no man?—nor revile the rulers of the people? when just before he had been guilty of these things, and it is yet fresh in the recollection of his audience?

For Stone, such actions were in direct conflict with love for humanity unrestricted by particular "attachments." His instruction to Christians in the election year of 1832 was to "watch and pray lest you be led away from your duty and your God."<sup>33</sup>

Stone was not alone among church leaders in his negative reaction to the emergence of electioneering and political parties. In a letter published in 1819, Presbyterian patriarch David Rice advised his children: "Meddle but little in political matters unless you have a better opportunity for usefulness than seems now to present itself." He added, "Never be a fire-hot republican, nor a fire-hot federalist. As truth ordinarily lies between two extremes, there you are to seek it." Rice stated that candidates who defamed their rivals, boasted of their own intentions or abilities, and bribed the people with spirituous liquors might "imagine" that they were "serving their country" but they were "greatly mistaken." In Rice's view, "the means they use to obtain their election do more injury, by corrupting the morals and political principles of men, than all their services in the legislature do good." In November of 1835, Stone published the report of a committee of the Christians in Illinois advising Christians to "cease. . . to be numbered among the Political aspirants." "While we take sides in the Political contests of this evil day, and suffer ourselves to use the common means, by which to advance the interests of any party," the report declared, "we virtually renounce the laws of our King." "We cannot," the report admonished, "counteract the influence of corruption by partaking of its stream." In 1836, the General Conference of the Methodists declared that "it is highly improper for any member of an annual conference to engage in political strife, and to offer for a seat in the legislative councils, or congress hall. . . ." <sup>34</sup>

Stone proposed that Christians not participate in civil government in a series of four articles, published from 1842 to 1844: a dialogue between two "Christian brethren" regarding "Civil and Military Offices Sought and Held by Christians," "Reflections of Old Age," "Reply to T.P. Ware [a Mississippi

lawyer and Christian who wrote to Stone in response to the first article in the series],” and “An Interview between an Old and Young Preacher.” In these four articles, Stone advanced three arguments for why Christians should not seek or hold offices in government. The first argument was that participation in politics had a negative impact on Christian spirituality. In the dialogue, the “brother” representing Stone’s view asserted that “It is a stubborn fact, that whenever a Christian seeks for, or holds a civil or military office in the governments of this world, he loses the savor of religion, his zeal, and ardent desire to promote the interest of Zion.” The Christian who seeks or holds public office, he continued, “must mingle with the wicked, and conform in some degree with their spirit, and manners. His mind becomes alienated from God and his people, and he loses the spirit of holy contemplation and prayer.” “Instead of devoting himself to the study of the laws of the king of saints, and of regulating his heart and life by them,” he observed, “much of his time is necessarily devoted to the study of Caesar’s laws, especially that part of them which may particularly pertain to his office.”<sup>35</sup> Stone further argued that the negative impact of politics on spirituality was not limited to Christians who actually sought or held civil and military offices but extended to all Christians who participated in politics. In “Reflections of Old Age,” he declared that he had “never seen a man much engaged in politics and religion at the same time.” Must we not conclude, he asked, “that the politics of the day are in opposition to the politics of heaven?”<sup>36</sup>

Stone’s second argument against Christians seeking or holding civil or military offices was that only the government and laws of Jesus have authority. In his dialogue, the brother representing Stone’s position asked, “Did our Lord ever authorize any uninspired man to legislate for his kingdom?” “To do it,” he exclaimed, “is without authority—it is presumption.” Thus it was wrong for Christians to be legislators, or to vote for legislators, as legislators were but representatives of the voters.<sup>37</sup>

Stone’s third argument against Christians seeking or holding civil or military offices was that only the government and laws of Jesus were sufficient to rule the world. In the dialogue, the brother representing Stone’s position observed that human laws, like their makers, were “ever changing and varying as the wind.” They could not, he advised, be made to suit the “cases and interest of all persons, and sections of an empire;” therefore legislators were “always making and unmaking their laws.” The result, he noted, was “continual jars, collision, strife and war. Even our best of human governments, for this very reason, is now tottering and unstable, and must ultimately submit to the divine government, and unchanging laws of our king, before it becomes right.”<sup>38</sup> In his “Reply to T.P. Ware,” Stone contrasted the effect on human behavior of human laws and what he variously referred to as “God’s government,” “the law of God,” “the law of Christ,” and “the Gospel.” Asserting that the design of human laws and government was “to make mankind blest and happy in their social relations,” Stone proposed: “Let facts answer, let the past history of such laws from their introduction speak.—Since then, the world has been a slaughterpen of human victims—hatred, strife, war, contention, division and every evil work have followed; and lamentable [as] it is, crime increases under the accumulation of laws.” The problem, Stone declared, was that “human laws

cannot govern the evil world.” “The carnal mind,” he continued, “is not subject to them.” Indeed, he allowed, “the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God.” However, he proclaimed, the gospel “directs to certain duties, in the performance of which, we receive divine power, or the Spirit of God, by which alone we gain the victory over the carnal mind, and are made new creatures in Christ Jesus.” As new creatures in Christ Jesus, he argued, “God’s law is written on our hearts, and becomes the principle of action, we delight in it, and it is our pleasure to walk in it continually.” Social blessing and happiness could not be produced by human laws, but only by the power of the Holy Spirit received through obedience to the Gospel.<sup>39</sup>

What was the Christian’s duty to civil government? In his “Reply to T.P. Ware,” Stone allowed that Romans 13, which declares that “the powers that be are ordained of God,” presented questions of a “serious nature:” Are “all the governments of the world ordained of God—the tyranny of the Caesars—the autocracy of Russia—the monarchy of England—the democracy of America—the despotism of the Pope? etc.” “Must we,” he asked, “be subject to all these powers, never resist them, but always obey them?” In “An Interview Between an Old and Young Preacher,” the Old Preacher observed,

If it be the duty of christians under one worldly government to uphold and support that government, then it is the duty of christians living in every worldly government to uphold and support that government; those living in N. America must uphold and support the democracy of *all* the U. States [a reference to laws supporting slavery]; those in Britain, must support the monarchy of England; those in Russia, must support the despotism there; those at Rome, must support the government of the pope, the man of sin, the antichrist of our rightful Lord—those in South America must support every petty tyrant that wades through blood to sit in the supreme chair of state.

Referring to Acts 4, Stone indicated that the Apostles had obeyed the “higher power” when they “chose to obey God rather than man.”<sup>40</sup>

An aspect of the question of the Christian’s duty to government was the issue of military service. This issue was a topic of much debate in the 1840s. A peace movement had emerged in the United States following the War of 1812. Most members of the peace movement distinguished between the use of force in aggression and defense, opposing only the former. However, in 1838, “ultraists” within the movement, led by Henry Clark Wright and William Lloyd Garrison, formed a Non-Resistance Society to oppose the use of force even in self-defense. Wright and Garrison argued that the practice of non-resistance would usher in Christ’s millennial reign.<sup>41</sup>

Stone had been open, as late as 1827, to arguments in support of Christians defending themselves against aggression.<sup>42</sup> By July of 1844, he had become an advocate of non-resistance. In a lecture on Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, he stated that nonresistance of “an evil or injurious person” was obviously the meaning of Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 5:39: “But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Stone advised that by observing this teaching, “you may overcome the injurious person, and bring him to submission to the truth.” Christ, he proposed, had “set the example.”

If genuine christianity were to overspread the earth, wars would cease, and the world would be bound together. A nation professing christianity, yet

teaching, learning and practicing the arts of war, cannot be the kingdom of Christ, nor do they live in obedience to the laws of Christ—the government is anti-christian, and must reap the fruits of their infidelity at some future day.<sup>43</sup>

Far from assuming that his fellow Christians would agree with him, Stone knew that there would be opposition in the church to his position that Christians should not participate in civil government. In the 1842 dialogue, the character representing Stone's views indicated that he hesitated to speak, knowing that his views would be classified as "fanaticism or ultraism." As Stone saw it, however, his proposals regarding participation in civil government were only an extension of views long held by the Christians in relation to the church. In his "Reply to T. P. Ware," he stated, "Our brethren have not seen the legitimate issue of what they have been doing, in arguing against human creeds and laws for the government of the church. In doing this they were clearing away the rubbish from the foundation of God's government of the world."<sup>44</sup>

### Christ's Return

Stone, like other millennialists, believed the Christ would return to earth to judge the world. Millennialists were divided, however, over whether the coming of Christ to judge the world would be at the beginning or end of the millennium of Christ's earthly rule. Premillennialists believed that Christ would come in judgment at the beginning of the millennium and personally reign on earth with the saints for a thousand years. Postmillennialists believed that Christ would reign spiritually on earth with the saints for a thousand years prior to his personal coming to judge the world. Stone was a premillennialist, at least from the 1832 onward. In response to a question regarding the coming of Christ, Stone answered in the January 1832 issue of the *Messenger*, "Several events were to take place prior to his coming, which have not yet taken place: as the return and salvation of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in." He added, "Several events will take place *at his coming*, so notorious that it is evident he had not yet come: as *the Millennial Glory*; the resurrection of the dead; and the final judgement, his putting down all the power, rule and authority he had received as Mediator, and delivering up the kingdom to the Father."<sup>45</sup>

Stone's first fully developed statement in the *Messenger* of his view that Christ would return at the beginning of the millennium appeared in October of 1833. Just before the beginning of the millennium, he wrote, the "spurious church of Christ" would be judged and destroyed, leaving the "true church of Christ" prepared for the "marriage supper of the Lamb." Immediately after, at the very beginning of the millennium, Christ would come in his glory and destroy all of the "wicked nations of the earth." At that same time, Satan would be bound for one thousand years, during which time he would not have even one subject alive on earth. The saints who had died would rise from the dead and those who were living would be changed from mortality to immortality and together they would reign with Christ for the thousand years. There would be no resurrection of the wicked. At the close of the thousand years, Satan would be loosed and the wicked would be raised from the dead. Satan would

collect an army composed of the wicked. But, just as they were gathered, the judgement would set upon them and they would be condemned to suffer the “vengeance of eternal fire.”<sup>46</sup>

Key to understanding Stone’s premillennialism was his view that “the return and salvation of the Jews” and “the fulness of the Gentiles brought in,” both of which he believed would precede the return of Christ, depended upon the union of Christians. In February of 1836, four years after having stated his view that Christ would return before the millennium, Stone wrote that it was God’s design to “conquer and save the world” by the “union and joint cooperation” of Christians.<sup>47</sup> To use another image, for Stone, the union of Christians was the hinge on which the door to the millennium turned. This was a position that Stone held in common with many postmillennialists. Stone was confident that the millennium was at hand because he believed that God had been working in the nineteenth century, through the Great Revival and later through his own and similar movements to unite the church.<sup>48</sup>

Since premillennialism is often associated with pessimism, it should be noted that Stone’s premillennialism does not appear to have been a response to his disappointment over America’s failure to end slavery or disillusionment with America’s political system. In September of 1833, more than a year and a half after his having stated that the millennium would come after the return of Christ, he had spoken confidently of his expectation that the Federal government would soon become involved in the Colonization effort.<sup>49</sup> However, Stone’s premillennialism did allow him to continue to believe that the millennium was near when, later, he despaired over not finding a means to end slavery. Slavery, if not already abolished, would be destroyed at the coming of the Lord.

Stone’s premillennialism also allowed him to exhort the church to reform by threat of God’s imminent judgment. In what turned out to be his last appeal to the Christians to support the American Colonization Society by freeing their slaves and giving them the opportunity to go to Liberia, he advised: “Let not the wares of Babylon, among which are slaves, be found among us at the coming of the Lord. Behold, he comes quickly.” Stone applied his premillennial view of Christ’s return, again, in November of 1835. Explaining that he had discontinued the “Address” of the New England Anti-Slavery Society because he believed it “would do not good in the present ferment,” Stone advised his fellow Christians: “The day of righteous Judgment is at hand—prepare for it by cleansing yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit that at the coming of the Lord, we may be found without spot and blameless.”<sup>50</sup> Convinced by 1844 that politics stood in the way of the coming of Christ’s kingdom, Stone urged his readers to either show that his opposition to the participation of Christians in the political process was wrong or “labor to promote the great and needed reformation,” adding, “If we do not, it will be done by others—the millennium approaches.”<sup>51</sup>

### **Stone’s Millennial Odyssey**

Review of Stone’s millennial odyssey shows that Stone’s millennialism was not always wedded to a radical estrangement from the world. As late as 1833 he vigorously participated in a “mainstream” effort to end slavery and

expressed confidence that the “general” government would take up the project. He came to his radical estrangement from the world—his pacifism and renunciation of human governments—only after becoming disillusioned with efforts to end slavery and convinced that the “politics of the day,” which distracted people from religion and God’s laws, were opposed to the “politics of heaven” and would never achieve peace and justice. This is an important corrective to the impression left by Hughes that Stone’s radical estrangement from the world was characteristic of his perspective throughout his ministry. Attention to Stone’s millennial odyssey helps to explain how Stone came to adopt his radical views, how his followers had been able to unite with the optimistic Alexander Campbell, and why following the Civil War aspects of his legacy could be found among both Churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ.

There were, however, two constants in Stone’s millennialism that gave direction to his journey. First, Stone was convinced, from the Great Revival onward, that God’s reign would not abide the institution of slavery. In 1835, having despaired of the effectiveness of both the colonization scheme and the call for the immediate abolition of slavery, Stone declared that slavery would be abolished, though he was “ignorant of the means by which it shall be accomplished.”<sup>52</sup> Second, Stone was convinced, from the Great Revival onward, that Christian unity was the hinge on which the door to the millennium would open. Thus, to cooperate with God in the work of Christian unity was to hasten the coming of Christ’s earthly reign. Although discouraged in the summer of 1844 by the immediate prospects of Christian union, he repeated his long-standing call to action: “We must be co-workers with God; every one should be engaged; and as large bodies move slowly, let each one begin in himself. . .”<sup>53</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>“The Apocalyptic Origins of Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism,” *Religion and American Culture* 2 (Summer 1992): 182.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 182-185. Hughes develops the same thesis in *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 92-113.

<sup>3</sup>Hughes, “The Apocalyptic Origins of Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism,” 188; *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 106-107.

<sup>4</sup>William E. Tucker and Lester G. McAllister, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1975), 194-196.

<sup>5</sup>Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 115; “The Apocalyptic Origins of Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism,” 184.

<sup>6</sup>Hughes, “The Apocalyptic Origins of Churches of Christ and the Triumph of Modernism,” 191; *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 119. For Lipscomb’s views on the African American, see “Editorial: The Negro His Crime and Treatment,” *Gospel Advocate*, 19 (September 1901): 600-601.

<sup>7</sup>Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 99-105.

<sup>8</sup>The role of sectionalism in the Churches of Christ/Disciples of Christ division was first argued by David Edwin Harrell, Jr., “The Sectional Origins

of the Churches of Christ," *Journal of Southern History* 30 (1964): 261-277. Harrell further developed this thesis in *The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ: 1865-1900* (Atlanta: Publishing Systems, 1973).

<sup>9</sup>See Gerald R. McDermott, *One Holy and Happy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 50-60, 77-82.

<sup>10</sup>David Rice, *A Sermon on the Present Revival of Religion, etc. in this country; preached at the opening of the Kentucky Synod* (Lexington, Ky.: Joseph Charles, 1803), 37-40.

<sup>11</sup>Barton W. Stone, *The Biography of Eld. Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself, with additions and reflections by Eld. John Rogers* (Cincinnati: Published for the author by J.S. and U.P. James, 1847; reprinted in *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke S. Dickinson, (n.p., 1972), 44; D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 77.

<sup>12</sup>"Last Will and Testament of Springfield Presbytery," in Stone, *Biography*, 53; Barton W. Stone, *History of the Christian Church in the West* (Lexington, Ky.: College of the Bible, 1956), 39.

<sup>13</sup>"Last Will and Testament," in Stone, *Biography*, p. 55. Italics mine.

<sup>14</sup>*History*, 42-43. See also "Minutes of the Synod of Kentucky," in William Warren Sweet, *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840, vol. 2: The Presbyterians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), 326, 328. Italics mine.

<sup>15</sup> Barton W. Stone, *A Reply to John P. Campbell's Strictures on Atonement* (Lexington, Ky.: Joseph Charles, 1805), 63-64. Italics mine.

<sup>16</sup>*History*, 42.

<sup>17</sup>[Rice Haggard], *An Address to the Different Religious Societies, on the Sacred Import of the Christian Name* (Lexington: Printed by Joseph Charles, 1804), reprinted with a preface by John W. Neth, Jr., *Footnotes to Disciple History*, no. 4, (Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1954), 31-32.

<sup>18</sup>*National Intelligencer*, January 4, 1817, quoted in David C. Roos, "The Social Thought of Barton W. Stone and Its Significance Today for the Disciples of Christ in Western Kentucky" (D.Min. thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1973), 96; George M. Frederickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 11.

<sup>19</sup>*Christian Messenger* (hereafter *CM*) 1 (January 1827), 95-96; (June 1827), 180-181.

<sup>20</sup>*CM* 2 (December 1827), 37.

<sup>21</sup>*CM* 2 (July 1828), 196-198.

<sup>22</sup>*CM* 3 (June 1829), 198-199.

<sup>23</sup>*CM* 4 (June 1830), 163-164.

<sup>24</sup>*CM* 5 (January 1831), 10-11.

<sup>25</sup>*CM* 4 (April 1832), 114. See *Millennial Harbinger* 3 (February 1832), 86-88. For Campbell's views on slavery, see Harold L. Lunger, *The Political Ethics of Alexander Campbell* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1954), 193-232.

<sup>26</sup>*CM* 7 (September 1833), 274.

- <sup>27</sup>CM 8 (March 1834), 94-95.
- <sup>28</sup>CM 9 (April 1835), 82.
- <sup>29</sup>CM 9 (May 1835), 97-98.
- <sup>30</sup>CM 9 (July 1835), 160-163.
- <sup>31</sup>CM 9 (November 1835), 263. Stone's last reference to slavery in the *Messenger* was his publication in May of 1841 of a short notice from the *Journal of Christianity* in which the editor of the *Journal*, Christian Church abolitionist Nathaniel Field, praised "the God of JUSTICE" for "simple justice" in the case of the *Amistad* captives. The captives were Africans who had been seized in Africa and unlawfully sold as slaves. The Supreme Court had declared them free. See CM 11 (May 1841), 324.
- <sup>32</sup>See Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).
- <sup>33</sup>CM 6 (August 1832), 251-252.
- <sup>34</sup>*The Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine* 2 (June 1819), 259-260; CM 9 (October 1835), 250; Nathan Bangs, *A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 4 vols. (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1880), 4:265f.
- <sup>35</sup>CM 12 (May 1842), 202.
- <sup>36</sup>CM 13 (August 1843), 123; Italics mine. See also CM 14 (December 1844), 225-226.
- <sup>37</sup>CM 12 (May 1842), 203.
- <sup>38</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>39</sup>CM 14 (October 1844), 168.
- <sup>40</sup>CM 14 (October 1844), 169-171; 14 (December 1844), 227-228.
- <sup>41</sup>See Peter Brock, *Pacifism in the United States: From the Colonial Era to the First World War* (1968).
- <sup>42</sup>CM 2 (December 1827), 36.
- <sup>43</sup>CM 14 (July 1844), 65-66.
- <sup>44</sup>CM 12 (May 1842), 202; CM 14 (October 1844), 167-170.
- <sup>45</sup>CM 6 (January 1832), 31. Italics mine.
- <sup>46</sup>CM 7 (October, 1833), 313-314. Stone responded to objections to his views in later issues of the *Messenger*. See 7 (December, 1833) 365-366; 8 (April, 1834), 119; (May, 1834), 145-148. It is not possible to date Stone's adoption of premillennialism. David Edwin Harrell's statement that Stone was a postmillennialist as late as 1829 is based upon his misreading of a statement that Stone meant to be a satire of views held by ministers he viewed as his opponents; *Quest for a Christian America*, 39-41.
- <sup>47</sup>CM 10 (February 1836), 17-18.
- <sup>48</sup>Williams, 213-218.
- <sup>49</sup>CM 7 (June 1833), 167-168; CM 7 (September 1833), 274; 4 (December 1830), 276-277.
- <sup>50</sup>CM 7 (September 1833), 274-275; CM 9 (November 1835), 263.
- <sup>51</sup>CM 14 (October 1844), 167-70; See also CM 12 (May 1842), 202.
- <sup>52</sup>CM 9 (November 1835), 263.
- <sup>53</sup>CM 14 (June 1844), 41. See also 9 (January, 1835); 11 (June 1841), 333-334.

## THE LEGACY OF BARTON W. STONE'S MILLENNIALISM IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST

by David Edwin Harrell, Jr.\*

In recent years, Barton W. Stone's contributions to American religion in general and to the American restoration movement in particular have received considerable attention both from denominational historians and American religious historians. In some ways, the most striking reappraisal of Stone's influence has been set forth by a group of historians in the 1990s writing about the Churches of Christ. At the center of this new assessment has been an interest in Stone's millennial views.

During the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, the history of the American restoration movement led by Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell (lately called the Stone-Campbell Movement) was written mostly by historians with roots in the Disciples of Christ, the more liberal and literate wing of the divided movement. In the past decade, a bevy of books have been written about the history of the Churches of Christ, paralleling a similar resurgence of historical interest among scholars from Independent Christian Churches.

A number of factors account for the relative neglect in telling the history of Churches of Christ in the first two-thirds of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the first place, by the time the Churches of Christ were formally separated (in the more or less informal way that the movement divides) in the first decade of the century they constituted little more than ten percent of the movement's membership. Most Disciples considered the loss of these Churches of Christ to be a regrettable, but inevitable, shedding of the most radical and cantankerous fringe of the movement—an extremist minority that would soon shrivel up and die. They were, in the words of historian Winfred Garrison, a "sect of jangling legalists." But like many "sectarian" groups the Churches of Christ grew rapidly. By the end of the twentieth century the group had become the largest of the movement's three separated fellowships, with an estimated membership of between 1.2 and 2 million. While some leaders in Churches of Christ resented the negative stereotyping they received from Disciples historians, most neither knew of the slight nor cared. Furthermore, the full dimensions of the Churches of Christ success story did not become clear until after World War II. Not until the religious boom of the 1950s did the Churches of Christ begin to receive public attention as one of the fastest growing religious groups in the nation. These reports stimulated a booming sense of denominational pride.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the leaders in Churches of Christ were preachers and debaters with little interest in history or in validating their claims to the restoration heritage. The years from 1900 to 1950 were a time of church building, regrouping, and gaining of a sense of separate identity and pride. After World War II, the Churches of Christ

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emerged with a new rambunctious sense of denominational unity and importance which manifested itself in the establishment of a variety of new institutions and programs, including colleges and benevolent institutions, a national television broadcast, and large cooperative programs to support foreign missions.<sup>1</sup> This self-conscious denominational awakening triggered some interest in restoration history, highlighted by the appearance of the first volumes of a series written by Earl Irwin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*.<sup>2</sup> West's books were detailed and meticulous narratives that sought to trace a conservative lineage in the movement reaching from Stone and Campbell to such later figures as Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb.<sup>3</sup>

My early books on the restoration movement in the nineteenth century, including my doctoral dissertation, *Quest for a Christian America*, which was published by the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in 1966, and a subsequent volume published in 1973, *The Social Sources of Division in the Disciples of Christ, 1865-1900*, were more interpretative explorations of the Disciples, emphasizing the sectional and economic tensions within the movement.<sup>4</sup> These books, along with a series of articles published in scholarly publications, were the first efforts to apply sociological models to the nineteenth century divisions in the movement.<sup>5</sup> While not very accessible to popular audiences, and not focused particularly on the Churches of Christ, my 1960s studies suggested that both socially and ideologically each wing of the movement drew sustenance from the ideas of the early nineteenth century restoration pioneers and possessed legitimate claims to the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of the restoration movement.

By the 1990s Churches of Christ historians embraced their heritage and began to probe in creative new ways how they, like the Disciples of Christ, were legitimate heirs of the reforms launched by Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell. These new studies placed a surprising emphasis on the legacy bequeathed to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Churches of Christ by Barton W. Stone.

The time was ripe for reassessing the history of the Churches of Christ at the end of the century. In the first place, a younger generation of professionally-trained scholars interested in publishing had become members of the faculties of such Churches of Christ schools as Pepperdine University and Abilene Christian University, which themselves had newly found aspirations for academic respectability. Perhaps more important, by the 1980s the Churches of Christ were deeply torn by theological and sociological tensions, creating a milieu of self-analysis that cried for historical insight. Out of these tensions came a rash of new books about the restoration movement and the Churches of Christ, including Robert Hooper's *A Distinct People: A History of the Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century*; Douglas A. Foster's *Will the Cycle Be Unbroken?*; Michael Casey's *Saddlebags, City Streets, and Cyberspace: A History of Preaching in the Churches of Christ*; and Leroy Garrett's *The Stone-Campbell Movement: The Story of the American Restoration Movement*.<sup>6</sup> The most sweeping reinterpretations of the intellectual roots of the Churches of Christ were Richard Hughes's, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: the Story of the Churches of Christ in America*, published in 1996,<sup>7</sup> and my *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal*

*Journey of Faith.*<sup>8</sup>

Hughes's book posits a number of interpretations (some of them reflected in other works as well) that, in effect, argue that the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Churches of Christ were the primary inheritors of the restoration legacy, or, at least, they were the heirs of the Barton W. Stone wing of the movement. Hughes traces two parallel, often antagonistic, intellectual strands in the nineteenth century Stone-Campbell Movement—one rooted in the thought and attitudes of Alexander Campbell and the other of Barton W. Stone. In this bipolar context, the new title "the Stone-Campbell Movement" has seemed to many to be the most apt description of the nineteenth century American restoration movement. Ideologically, the Campbell wing of the movement was rationalistic, wedded to Baconian hermeneutical assumptions, and preoccupied with restoring the precise structure of New Testament churches. The Stone heritage, on the other hand, was rooted in the revivalism of the Awakening in the West and thus was more open to emotion, the working of the Holy Spirit, and Biblical notions of grace. It was also less triumphalist about the movement's accomplishments. Politically, the Campbell strain in Disciples thought embraced the optimistic assumptions of Jacksonian democracy, anticipating the triumph of reason and righteousness in the foreseeable future, while Stone was pessimistic about the future, ultimately recommending that Christians withdraw all participation in civil government. These diverging mindsets were most apparent in Campbell's embrace of a nationalistic and rationalistic postmillennialism and Stone's dalliance with premillennialism and a radically separatist view of civil government.

In this bipolar construct, the Disciples of Christ seemed to Hughes to be the heirs of the Campbell tradition, embracing an optimistic and progressive vision of American destiny, becoming advocates of social reform and progress, and remaining engaged with the intellectual life of the nation and in step with the new findings of science. The Churches of Christ, on the other hand, were the heirs of Barton W. Stone, viewing the nation and the future with less bravado, having much less confidence in modern science and the virtues of human reason, and being drawn to an "apocalyptic" worldview that rejected participation in civil government and embraced premillennial theories.

Hughes believed that Stone's ideas on civil government and premillennialism were passed down in Churches of Christ through a genealogy that ran from Stone through Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, J. N. Armstrong, and Robert H. Boll. Thus, the Stone tradition supplied the intellectual nucleus of the Churches of Christ, an "apocalyptic" vision that Hughes believed was dealt a crippling blow by the expulsion of premillennialists from the Churches of Christ in the 1930s. That separation, he argued, "represented a rite of passage from the culturally pessimistic, separatist mentality that had characterized the Stone-Lipscomb tradition in the nineteenth century to the culture-affirming, patriotic mentality that would increasingly characterize the mainstream Churches of Christ in the twentieth century."<sup>9</sup> What remained as the theological basis for Churches of Christ was a distorted version of the "rational progressive primitivism of Alexander Campbell" which had replaced the "apocalyptic primitivism of Barton W.

Stone.” This marked the beginnings of a sociological transition from sect to denomination in Churches of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Like all theoretical constructs, Hughes’s description is too neat to describe the collective chaos of restoration history. The American restoration movement was never a two party, Stone–Campbell movement, divided into tidy intellectual branches. It was much too wildly democratic to fit into such categories and the ideas cataloged by Hughes spread widely across the landscape and existed in differing mixes in individuals throughout the movement.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear that Hughes is on to *something*. There was a quality in the character and thought of Barton W. Stone that surely resonated with the early leaders of the Churches of Christ.

Hughes has set an agenda for future historians of the Churches of Christ by reaching to uncover the central mindset of the early leaders of these separated churches, a task which I did less directly, and with less clarity, in a section entitled, “The Mind of a Movement,” in *Quest for a Christian America*.<sup>12</sup> Hughes labeled the core intellectual motif in the Churches of Christ “apocalyptic.” He carefully noted that he was referring to an “outlook” rather than a prophetic vision, though his writing sometimes seems to link this apocalyptic outlook rather inseparably with the premillennial movement within Churches of Christ. The core outlook that Hughes sought to identify is better described, I think, by another term he uses, a “sojourner” mentality.<sup>13</sup> In the early twentieth century, the leaders of Churches of Christ were radical sectarian separatists, people uncomfortable with a world that had more or less passed them by. Insignificant pilgrims, they gloried in their sufferings for Christ.

In what ways, then, we ask on this occasion, did such ideas hark back to the legacy of Barton Stone? The mindset in Churches of Christ in the first half of the twentieth century reflected little of the Presbyterian spirituality so lucidly described in Newell Williams’s impeccably researched *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography*.<sup>14</sup> Much that Stone believed and taught placed him squarely in the lineage of the more liberal and softer environs of the restoration movement. However, Williams’s final chapters on “Church and Society” introduce themes in the life and thought of an aging Stone that did, indeed, endear him to the early leaders of the Churches of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Richard Hughes highlighted the doctrines of nonsupport of civil government and premillennialism in the thought of both Barton W. Stone and the Churches of Christ, deeming them to be critically important in defining Stone’s contribution to Churches of Christ. I think, rather, that these two themes point toward a more fundamental sojourner mindset that does, indeed, connect Stone to the Churches of Christ.

In the case of both premillennialism and separation from civil government, Stone came to explore the ideas late in life; behind his explorations lay more basic discontents. Stone clearly was interested in the premillennial ideas that became increasingly popular among evangelicals in all denominations in the 1830s and which culminated in the widespread anticipation of the second coming based on William Miller’s prediction that Christ would return between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. Newell Williams has clearly outlined the

evolution of Stone's millennial views and interest, beginning with his first full exposition of a rather standard premillennial theory in 1833.<sup>16</sup> Like other Disciples leaders, most notably Walter Scott, Stone was intrigued by the calculations of William Miller, and by 1841 he had offered what amounted to an endorsement to Joshua V. Himes's *Signs of the Times*, a Christian Connection paper that became the chief journal touting Miller's views. Stone published Miller's calculations in 1842, suggesting that this was a "subject worthy of all attention" though he stopped short of outright endorsement of Miller's setting of the date.<sup>17</sup> In 1843 and 1844 Stone questioned the particulars of Miller's calculations but not the substance; he offered alternative dates by publishing the calculations of S. M. McCorkle, who called himself "the Layman," that set the date for Christ's return between 1847 and 1848. Stone did not endorse "the correctness of every sentiment advanced" by McCorkle, but he believed that God's wrath would soon be poured out on "an unprepared, ungodly world."<sup>18</sup>

Still, it seems clear that Stone's commitment to premillennialism was always secondary, not primary. Responding to McCorkle's articles, Stone and his co-editor D. Pat Henderson noted that "the prophecies of future events to us are very cloudy, and for this reason we have said but little about them."<sup>19</sup> In November 1844, after the Millerite debacle earlier in the year, Stone offered something of a disclaimer, in hindsight, appending an explanation for why Disciples were never in the forefront of millennial speculation: "We have long observed, that when once the mind becomes intensely fixt on this subject, it seems to relax its hold on every other, and is oftener floating in unexplored regions of fancy, than of truth; and loses the spirit of pure devotion, and contracts a zeal for opinions, and inspires too often an unholy opposition against those who differ." He still believed that "mighty revolution" was just ahead but pled "ignorance" in making predictions.<sup>20</sup> In fact, as Newell Williams makes clear, Stone's premillennial interest was always linked to other, more fundamental concerns, particularly his lifelong passion for Christian union. Stone's attraction to premillennialism was tied directly to his disappointment and loss of hope about antislavery movements, the ominous influx of Catholic immigrants that seemed to threaten American Protestant values, and his deepening despair over the failure of all efforts to attain Christian union.<sup>21</sup>

Stone's views on non-participation in civil government did not come center stage until 1842, just two and a half years before his death, and his separatism was clearly related to his interest in premillennialism. Stone had always had reservations about mixing politics and religion. In 1830, he announced that he was "disgusted at the zeal of the clergy in their bold attempts" urging Congress to stop Sunday mails. He also blasted the installation of a Congressional chaplain; he considered the action nothing more than "Congress paying preachers to pray for them out of the public treasury." At the same time, he was "grieved to see in some of the Eastern Journals something like a disposition to destroy the idea of a Sabbath under any name."<sup>22</sup> Stone's first public statements on non-participation in civil government, which he offered fearing "reproach and persecution" because of charges of "fanaticism or ultraism," were couched in millennial language.<sup>23</sup> But they were tied far more to his growing sense of disillusionment than to long-held theological

conclusions. Newell Williams notes that Stone's views on civil government were linked to "his disapproval of the political party system that had emerged since the 1820s" and "his disappointment with America's failure to abolish slavery."<sup>24</sup>

Popular politics disgusted Stone, with good reason. The political campaigns during the rise of Jacksonian Democracy were marked by levels of voter participation unprecedented before or since, partly because the new political parties used tactics that made modern negative campaigning and attack advertisements look like Sunday school literature. Politics was corrupt, crude, vicious, and inane; the rationality and virtue of popular democracy never seemed more questionable. Stone's rejection of civil government was rooted in observation, not theory. He wrote in 1843: "I never yet have seen the man, elected to Congress, . . . that returned home a better man. . . . I have never seen a man much engaged in politics and religion at the same time. As he advanced the spirit of the former, he declined in the spirit of the latter." His conclusion was starkly practical: "Must we conclude from these facts, that our Congress and State legislatures, are schools of corruption and demoralization?— . . . Dreadful conclusion! Yet how can we evade it, with such facts in view?"<sup>25</sup> Asked to provide a doctrinal basis for his newly announced opposition to participation in civil government, Stone admitted that his thinking of the subject was "yet in its incipient state" and offered a modest defense of the priority of "God's government" over that of "earthly government." But he once again revealed that his conclusions were more practical than theological: "I am disgusted with the politicians of the day. The Lord deliver his people from their contagion."<sup>26</sup>

Beneath Stone's writings on civil government and premillennialism lay a more fundamental intellectual mood that resonated with the Churches of Christ leaders in the benighted South of the post Civil War years. As he neared the end of his life, Stone became increasingly disillusioned, discouraged, and alienated—a sojourner disappointed with the world and, to some degree, with his own brethren. In an 1843 article entitled "A Ramble," he bemoaned the hopelessness of political democracy: "There has been recently and yet continues, a great political excitement throughout the country. The minds of the people have been turned from religion to politics. The spirit of religion, and the spirit of noisy politics—or the spirit of God and the spirit of the world, cannot exist at the same time."<sup>27</sup>

Stone's discontent spread far beyond politics by the end of his life. He was deeply frustrated by the religious laxity of the time, and particularly by the loss of religious fervor within the movement he had led for four decades. Speculating about the inability of the great revival to sustain itself, Stone acknowledged that more attention had been paid to converting the lost than to sustaining churches, and he bemoaned the lack of fervor among those who had "restored to us the ancient gospel."<sup>28</sup> In an admonition "to the elders and preachers of the Church of Christ," which he feared might "be the last" opportunity he would have to offer advice to the next generation, Stone listed a litany of shortcomings that had befallen the churches. He had encountered preachers who were "ignorant of the truth," "substituting noise for good sense." Others preached in a "frigid, iceberg style," and some had become starkly

“sectarian” in their opposition to sectarianism.<sup>29</sup> For years he had been disturbed by charges that Christian church preachers had become “worldly minded, inactive in their calling, negligent in study, and therefore uninteresting in their few addresses to the congregations.”<sup>30</sup>

The problem, Stone judged in his old age, was that “extravagance in worldly things” had infiltrated the churches; Christians disgraced themselves by borrowing and going bankrupt.<sup>31</sup> He warned: “Beware of the love of filthy lucre, and the wish to live in the style of pomp of the wealthy.”<sup>32</sup>

In short, as he approached the end of his life, Barton Stone did not become cynical or self-pitying (at least not to the degree that Walter Scott did),<sup>33</sup> but he was pensive and apprehensive about the signs of the times. All had not gone well. One suspects that even his personal life had not met his highest expectations. Compared to his more celebrated and economically successful partner in restoration, Alexander Campbell, Stone’s fame and fortune waned through the years. When he moved to Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1835, he was forced to more or less throw himself on the mercy of his brethren: “The churches well know that I have spent the prime of my life in their service—that I have for the sake of truth suffered much from opposers—that I have for the same cause neglected to lay up worldly stores for my family, and for the support of my declining life—now when old they will not desert me.” He promised not to be “burthensome;” it must have been slightly humiliating to lay bare one’s vulnerability.<sup>34</sup> Little wonder that in his later years the mind of Stone, like that of Walter Scott, turned toward an otherworldly separatism.

These observations about Barton W. Stone’s mindset in his later years bring me back to my lifelong conclusions about the origins of the Churches of Christ in America. The nineteenth century fracturing of the restoration movement was a social, economic, and sectional phenomenon. The Churches of Christ were composed of the poorest, least educated, and most southern segment of the movement. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the U. S. Census of Religious Bodies provided clear documentation of those facts.<sup>35</sup> Standing alone, such statistics have little explanatory value, but they provide an essential setting for understanding the intellectual underpinnings of the Churches of Christ, and explain why the early 20<sup>th</sup> century leaders of the Churches of Christ identified with Barton W. Stone.

Beyond doctrinal debates over instrumental music and missionary societies, and beneath hermeneutical clashes over Biblical authority, lay deep fissures in the worldviews of late nineteenth century Disciples. The prevailing mood among Disciples of Christ in the North at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a rampant optimism mingled with a strident nationalism. On the other hand, somber pessimism and sense of alienation reigned among the poor southerners who made up the Churches of Christ (and poor northerners to some extent). Northerners had every reason to view the future with optimism and pride in the late nineteenth century as the nation boomed in wealth and international prestige. Southerners, on the other hand, had good reason to feel alienated. Defeated in war, traumatized by race prejudice and race conflict, desperately poor, uprooted and migratory, scoffed at by their betters in the North, Southerners turned to God and the establishment of their own civil religion, or they became pilgrims and sojourners in a wicked land. It was this

mentality—the mindset of the alienated sojourner—that formed the core of the mind of the Churches of Christ in the early twentieth century—as it has in other sectarian (sociologically speaking) movements through the centuries.

Behind every doctrinal attack by theological conservatives in the restoration movement—whether on instrumental music, missionary societies, or the pastor system—lay the more fundamental suspicion that their worldly-minded, middle-class brethren in the cities and in the North had succumbed to the allurements of the world. Their warnings at the turn of the century sounded much like those of Barton Stone. A Texas preacher's opposition to the formation of a state missionary society in 1895 summarized the class prejudices of a generation of southern church leaders: "Last week about a hundred preachers and fashionable women assembled in Gainesville, Texas, in a state convention, and wasted enough of the Lord's money and time to have held a hundred protracted meetings, and converted sinners. They also spent enough money for extra fine toggery, to appear in style, to pay the expenses of a half dozen evangelists to preach the gospel in destitute places all summer. What was their business at Gainesville? Principally a good time and a fashionable blow-out, and in addition to this, an effort to push forward the furor for societies and fads in religion, and to supplant the Lord's plan of work and worship in the churches."<sup>36</sup>

Such intellectual terrain was fertile soil for unconventional, counter-cultural ideas. It was in this atmosphere of alienation that David Lipscomb produced his influential pamphlet rejecting voting and holding office, *Civil Government*, a book that built on Stone's observations and on a pacifist tradition that had found practical expression among Middle Tennessee Disciples leaders during the Civil War.<sup>37</sup> Lipscomb's view on civil government was probably never endorsed by most members of Churches of Christ (as Stone's view probably never found wide support), and pacifism was never a majority view among members of southern churches, but both ideas were plausible, and open to serious discussion, in the social environment that nurtured the Churches of Christ

Interest in premillennialism in Churches of Christ at the turn of the century followed a similar pattern. Modern scholars of American millenarianism have made it clear that the premillennialism of the early nineteenth century was a part of the general reform spirit of the age, rather than a pessimistic alternative, and it bore none of the peculiar theological implications of the dispensational premillennialism that appeared in the late nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> It was this sort of a relatively non-doctrinaire, mild premillennialism that seemed to Barton Stone to supply an alternative to the rosy reformism that was the spirit of the age. Such a reading of prophecy had a ready market in the post-Civil War South. Still, general discussions of premillennialism never defined the Churches of Christ; they rather made it clear that all ideas were open to consideration in a church that was thoroughly alienated from its culture.

The debate over dispensational premillennialism in the 1930s raised entirely new and different theological questions, and it sparked a fierce personal battle featuring Robert H. Boll and Foy E. Wallace, Jr. But the premillennial debate in the Churches of Christ, and the division it triggered in the 1930s, pitted protagonists on both sides who were equally alienated from

the world. When it ended, except for their views on dispensational premillennialism, they two parties looked about as much alike as they had before the battle began. In the end, it was the premillennial group that became more engaged with the world and more open to cultural rapprochement (because of their connections with dispensationalists in the wider evangelical world) than were their staunchly sectarian anti-millenarian opponents who remained overwhelmingly separatists until after World War II.<sup>39</sup>

Like Barton Stone in the 1840s, early twentieth century leaders in the Churches of Christ were subdued and chastened. Stone had witnessed the white-hot religious fervor of Cane Ridge cool and coalesce into a group of churches that looked much like the sects he had rejected. He lived to see those churches filled with ambitious, upwardly-mobile westerners fully engaged in the mad chase for wealth and status and the rowdy politics that defined the rambunctious young nation. Similarly, early twentieth century leaders of the Churches of Christ, living in the benighted South, backed away from their more prosperous and educated fellow-Christians in the North, seeing them as worldly betrayers of the spirit of restoration. Stone and the pioneer leaders of the Churches of Christ disengaged from their societies; they toyed with premillennialism and rejection of civil government, and other radical ideas as well. The thing that united them was not theology, however, it was rather the common conviction that Christians were to spend their sojourn on earth as strangers and pilgrims, in the world but not of it.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2000), pp. 151-167.

<sup>2</sup> (2 vols.; Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1953)

<sup>3</sup> Two subsequent volumes have been published by West under the title, *The Search for the Ancient Order* (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1979) and (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1987).

<sup>4</sup> (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966) and (Athens, GA: Publishing Systems, 1973).

<sup>5</sup> See "The Sectional Origins of the Churches of Christ," *Journal of Southern History*, August, 1964, pp. 261-277;

<sup>6</sup> Hooper, *Distinct People* (West Monroe, LA: Howard Publishing, 1993); Foster, *Will the Cycle Be Unbroken?* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1994); Casey, *Saddlebags* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1995); Garrett, *Stone-Campbell Movement* (Nap.: College Press Publishing, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *The Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century: Homer Hailey's Personal Journey of Faith* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2000).

<sup>9</sup> *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, p. 166.

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

<sup>11</sup> The intellectual lineages proposed by Hughes are often fragile and sometimes nonexistent. For instance, Tolbert Fanning in most ways seems much more the disciple of Alexander Campbell than of Barton W. Stone.

- <sup>12</sup> See pp. 26-61.
- <sup>13</sup> *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, pp. 92-113.
- <sup>14</sup> (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000).
- <sup>15</sup> pp. 205-238.
- <sup>16</sup> *Barton Stone*, pp. 223-225; see pp. 223-229.
- <sup>17</sup> "The Second Coming of Christ," *CM*, May, 1842, p. 218. See Williams, *Barton Stone*, pp. 225-226; Harrell, *Quest for a Christian America*, pp. 44-46.
- <sup>18</sup> See Williams, *Barton Stone*, p. 227.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>20</sup> "To Our Patrons," *CM*, November, 1844, p. 216.
- <sup>21</sup> Williams, *Barton Stone*, pp. 224-229.
- <sup>22</sup> "Sunday and Sunday Mails," *CM*, May, 1830, pp. 140-141.
- <sup>23</sup> "Civil and Military Offices Sought and Held by Christians," *CM*, May, 1842, p. 202.
- <sup>24</sup> *Barton Stone*, p. 231.
- <sup>25</sup> "Reflections of Old Age," *CM*, August, 1843, p. 123.
- <sup>26</sup> "Reply to T. P. Ware," *CM*, October, 1843, p. 171; see pp. 166-172.
- <sup>27</sup> *CM*, September, 1843, p. 131.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129-133.
- <sup>29</sup> "To the Elders and Preachers of the Church of Christ," *CM*, June, 1843, p. 33-38.
- <sup>30</sup> "Preachers," *CM*, June, 1836, p. 85.
- <sup>31</sup> "To the Elder and Preachers," p. 34.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> See David Edwin Harrell, Jr., "Walter Scott and the Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Spirit," in Mark G. Toulouse, ed., *Walter Scott* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999), pp. 23-36.
- <sup>34</sup> "Introduction," *CM*, January, 1835, p. 1.
- <sup>35</sup> See Harrell, *Social Sources*, pp. 323-350.
- <sup>36</sup> T. R. Burnett, "Burnett's Budget," *Gospel Advocate*, July 4, 1895, p. 419.
- <sup>37</sup> (Reprint; Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1957).
- <sup>38</sup> See Jonathan A. Butler and Ronald L. Numbers, *The Disappointed: Miller and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. xviii.
- <sup>39</sup> See Harrell, *The Churches of Christ*, pp. 57-71.

## THE LEGACY OF STONE'S MILLENNIALISM IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

by James B. North\*

This topic and its development remind me of an oft-repeated story told of the early days of the North American Christian Convention. It was 1940, and the convention met again in the old Cadle Tabernacle in downtown Indianapolis. It was the seventh convention, and the third held in Indianapolis. In those days the convention normally went from Wednesday to Sunday, and it was common to have two sermons each evening, with the normal amount of music in between. On Friday evening, October 11, W. R. Walker, a high-profile leader of the Christian Churches, spoke at some length on the subject of Christian unity in the first century. This was followed by congregational singing and special music. The president of the convention that year, P. H. Welshimer, had asked S. S. Lappin to introduce the second speaker of the evening, Will Sweeney, then the minister of the Broadway Christian Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Lappin rendered a rather fulsome and lengthy introduction about this true thoroughbred from the Kentucky Bluegrass. The session was already running an hour behind schedule when Lappin concluded by saying, "And now Brother Sweeney will present his address."

By this time people were no longer looking at their watches, they were consulting their calendars. Will Sweeney stepped to the pulpit and stated: "My address is Broadway at North Second in Lexington, Kentucky. My subject tonight is a question: 'Are We Ready to Give Up the Plea?' My answer is 'No.' My time is gone. Good-night." With that he left the stage, ignoring all the pleas of Welshimer to come back and present his sermon. He walked down a side aisle to an exit door and disappeared into the night.

I am thankful that no one has presumed upon my time today, but my answer to the assigned topic could be presented as briefly as the message of Will Sweeney. What is the influence of Stone's millennialism on the Christian Churches?—None. However, in order to justify my appearance here, I want to expand on that for a while.

My assigned topic includes the influence of Stone's millennialism on both the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ as well as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In several of the areas of application the response of these two bodies is slightly different. So with due apologies to the advantage of a brief Sweeneyesque answer, let me give a bit more detail. However, before I go too far in this, let me record a reservation. First of all, for most of our brotherhood history, we have disdained "official positions." "No creed but Christ," is a favorite slogan among us. Therefore it is always risky to discuss what are the positions held by our people; it is quite possible the speaker is speaking for no one except himself. Please keep this in mind in my further comments. Secondly, although I shall try to talk about Stone's influences on both the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ as well as the Disciples of Christ, I am much more confident in being able to represent accurately the

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Christian Churches/Churches of Christ with which I am identified than the Disciples of Christ. So if I have misrepresented the position of either group, I trust that someone will correct me.

Perhaps the first item to be considered in deciding what is the influence of Stone's millennialism is to determine what is Stone's millennialism. Dr. Williams has already developed that point, but let me summarize some items. As I understand Stone's millennialism, these items stand out: (1) premillennialism; (2) pacifism; (3) disenchantment with the American political party system.<sup>1</sup> Let me develop my response in reverse order, and in each instance look at both Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ.

How has Stone's disenchantment with the American political party system influenced the Christian Churches and Disciples of Christ? This is an extremely difficult concept to measure. By and large the members of these two religious bodies have warmly embraced the political situation in the country. There is, of course, the normal amount of grouching against the government. But most complainers would probably immediately also contend that it is the best government on earth. My guess is that within the Christian Church/Churches of Christ there are more Republicans than Democrats, and within the Disciples there are more Democrats than Republicans. But still both groups accept the political status quo. I do not remember World War II, but I do remember the Korean War and the decades-long Cold War. During this period patriotism was just assumed to be part of the Christian ethos in our churches. In most of our churches the front of the sanctuary is still adorned with both the Christian flag as well as the American flag. During Vacation Bible School children daily recite the pledge of allegiance to the American flag, the pledge of allegiance to the Christian flag, and the pledge of allegiance to the Bible—and it is normally in that order, with the American flag coming first. So I would suggest that the influence of Stone's disenchantment with the American political party system has been virtually nil.

Second, how has Stone's pacifism influenced the Christian Churches? Here the answer is more polarized. Within the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ there is indeed very little pure pacifism. My own family situation is probably typical. According to family records, my great-great-grandparents were married at Cane Ridge in 1802, and as far as I can tell my family have been members of this movement since the very beginning. This includes a great-grandfather who served in the Civil War, and my Dad, who served in World War II. Through the decade of the 1950s, my home church publicly recognized every young man who went into military service by calling the young man to the front of the congregation. His mother pinned a white star on a blue banner, public prayer was offered for his safety, and ladies of the church later sewed the star permanently on the blue banner and embroidered his name in red across the middle of the star. In those days of Korea and the containment of communism, pacifism was unheard of. Even today I know of no organized movement within our fellowship of churches that would identify with pacifism. If anything, it is just the opposite. Christian commitment simply presumes that military service is needed to defend our God-given democracy, our religious freedoms, and our constitutional guarantees. I serve on the Chaplaincy

Endorsement Commission of the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, and we currently have twenty-nine chaplains on active duty in the armed forces, plus twenty-eight in the Reserves and National Guard.

With the Disciples of Christ, however, pacifism is a different story. My guess is that the majority of Disciples would resonate with the situation I just described, but there are significant exceptions. They received much of their inspiration, of course, from Alexander Campbell. Campbell did not oppose the war with Mexico, but at its conclusion he regretted that he had not. Then there is his famous 1848 Address on War that firmly stated his pacifism.<sup>2</sup> More sustained, organized efforts emerged during the 1930s, partially reflecting national moods, including disenchantment with the results of World War I and the fervent support of it from American churches. In 1935 the Disciples Peace Fellowship organized. Kirby Page was perhaps the major name in the effort at the time. The Peace Fellowship continued to advise the Disciples on draft registration options, alternatives for conscientious objectors, and served as a conscience for Disciples on world peace.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, resolutions introduced to the General Assembly have consistently reflected a disenchantment with militarism and an increasing orientation to pacifism.

However, having said all this, how significant has been the influence of Stone? Admittedly the influencing shadow of Campbell is longer than that of Stone, and it is quite possible here that these developments for pacifism among the Disciples are more the result of Campbell's influence than that of Stone. Certainly more research needs to be done in this area.

The third question then to be asked is, how has Stone's premillennialism influenced the Christian Churches. The answer here is quite simple. Stone's influence in this area is virtually nonexistent. In spite of the fact that both Stone and Campbell had premillennial views, virtually none of this still existed in the Christian Churches a century later. Our churches have been overwhelmingly amillennial. All the ministers of my home church during my childhood and youth were amillennial, and that was the only position ever enunciated in our congregation. When I went to Bible college, amillennialism was the only view held by any member of the faculty as far as my knowledge went. I had grown up with the impression that there were no intelligent premillennialists. I knew the position was out there, but it was held only by people from mountainous areas of the South, or other areas of equal educational poverty. I actually felt sorry for such people. They were rather in the same category as those who still believed the moon was made of green cheese. We felt their idea was rather quaint and somewhat silly, somewhat like the snake handlers of the Appalachians.

Then in 1972 I went to teach in a Bible college in California where there were two premillennialists on the faculty. One was a historic premillennialist, the other was a dispensational premillennialist. I was stunned. Here were reasonably intelligent people, holding graduate degrees from recognized institutions. And they were premills! Notice I use the qualifying adjective, "they were reasonably intelligent." Obviously there had to be some kind of qualifier on their intelligence because they were, after all, premillennial! They couldn't be completely intelligent!

I believe that the presence of premillennialism in our churches prior to 1970 was very limited indeed. There was A. B. McReynolds of Kiamichi fame, but he was sounding a note echoed by very few others. But 1970 saw the publication of Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth*. Since that time the presentation of dispensational premillennialism by radio and TV evangelists has become a common place, and many people within our congregations listen to such programs. As a result, premillennialism has secured a hearing within many of our churches, mostly among laity. And then there is David R. Reagan with Lion and Lamb Ministries, advertised as "a ministry concerned with Bible prophecy and spiritual renewal."<sup>4</sup> Reagan is a professional full-time evangelist and lecturer who is a staunch defender of the whole dispensational premillennial package. Obviously, the times have changed.

But what of this can be traced back to Stone? I believe there is no direct connection. The premillennialism that exists in our churches today is more the result of Hal Lindsey, Dallas Theological Seminary, radio/TV evangelists, and the modern rediscovery of the Scofield Reference Bible. Even the premillennialism of McReynolds cannot be traced to Stone; the Scofield Reference Bible is again the most likely source.

To get back to my starting illustration, most of my comments have been in the nature of Will Sweeney's one-liner. However, before I conclude, let me mention one situation that stands very tall in the history of B. W. Stone, a situation that I believe does represent a strong influence that comes from our venerable father in the gospel.

Most of you will remember the famous series of meetings in Georgetown and Lexington, Kentucky in 1831 and 1832 between Stone, John T. Johnson, Raccoon John Smith, and John Rogers. The result of those meetings was the union of the followers of Stone and Campbell in the movement that we claim today. Raccoon John spoke first on the nature of Christian union. He emphasized that there is only one faith. There may be ten thousand opinions, but if Christians are to be one, they must be one in faith, not in opinion.<sup>5</sup> B. W. Stone then came to the pulpit and followed Smith's lead. Getting warmed to his topic, Stone said this:

The controversies of the Church sufficiently prove that Christians never can be one in their speculations upon those mysterious and sublime subjects, which, while they interest the Christian philosopher, can not edify the Church. After we had given up all creeds and taken the Bible, and the Bible alone, as our rule of faith and practice, we met with so much opposition, that, by force of circumstances, I was led to deliver some speculative discourses upon those subjects. But I never preached a sermon of that kind that once feasted my heart; I always felt a barrenness of soul afterwards. I perfectly accord with Brother Smith that those speculations should never be taken into the pulpit; but that when compelled to speak of them at all, we should do so in the words of inspiration.<sup>6</sup>

Previously Stone had been involved in controversy over the atonement and the nature of Christ. He now realized these controversies had been counter-productive and barren, and he regretted the nature of the disputes. This has been one of the most significant influences of Stone upon the Christian Churches. Unity in the one faith, but liberty in the area of opinions,

and an avoidance of speculation. Unity in the area of biblical teaching, using the very words of inspiration. All other matters are matters of opinion and speculation, normally avoided from the pulpit. This includes such areas as millennialism, pacifism, and attitudes toward the American political system. I believe this is why Stone's views on millennialism have had so little impact on the Christian Churches. The Christian Churches have seen these issues as unproductive speculation and have avoided them, reminiscent of Paul's comment to Timothy: "Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen."<sup>7</sup> It is here that Stone's influence has had a great impact on the Christian Churches.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), pp. 223-238.

<sup>2</sup> Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1948), p. 422.

<sup>3</sup>Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1975), pp. 396-397.

<sup>4</sup> *1999 Directory of the Ministry: A Yearbook of Christian Churches and Churches of Christ* (Springfield, Illinois: Directory of the Ministry, 1999), p. F-22.

<sup>5</sup>John Augustus Williams, *Life of Elder John Smith* (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll & Co., Publishers, 1870), p. 453.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455.

<sup>7</sup> II Timothy 2:14

The Kirkpatrick Seminar Opening Prayer  
offered by  
President Peter M. Morgan

Let your heart pray by listening.

Let your heart listen to the first sounds of this place, today still heard in the singing of birds....First sounds, bird song.

Let your heart listen and hear the pulsing of the drums--the community heartbeat of the first peoples who passed through this place. Heartbeats animate life even as those drums animated the dance of those peoples....Hear the long-silenced drums.

Let your heart listen to the singing of saws cutting logs for the construction of this meetinghouse in 1791....Hear hope at work.

Let your heart listen to Spirit sounds of this day in 1801: the word preached, Isaac Watts tunes, moans, praise choruses, eerie songs emanating from deep in the breast of the singer....Revival sounds.

Let your heart hear the halting singing of a congregation in tears in a farewell song to old and venerated Barton Stone....

Listen, let your heart hear the soft harmonies emanating from this gallery--"I looked over Jordan and what did I see--comin' for to carry me home."

Listen with your heart, layer upon layer of sounds of the whole creation rising up in this place to praise God.

Now this community, gifted in remembering, comes to this holy place on this holy occasion to add its layer of sound: well-reasoned thoughts expressed in well-crafted sentences added to bird song, saw song, saints' songs in a symphony of praise. Listen with your heart to the silence. Hear the memory of sound and the offering of scholars this day....

O God, receive the praise of those who love you with all of their minds as they add their voices to the ageless chorus of praise. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

# DISCIPLIANA

The Quarterly Historical Journal of the  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THIS ISSUE OF DISCIPLIANA  
IS IN MEMORY OF  
EVA JEAN WRATHER  
FOUNDER  
OF THE  
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## THE THIRD MRS. CAMPBELL

*D. Duane Cummins*

## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: ADVENTURER IN FREEDOM/PROLOGUE

*Eva Jean Wrather*

## PUBLISHED WORKS OF EVA JEAN WRATHER

## BREAKING UP FALLOW GROUND OR SOWING THE SEEDS OF DISCORD?

*Scott D. Seay*



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## — From the Editor's Desk

This issue of *Discipliana* celebrates contributions of Eva Jean Wrather, who died in her home, surrounded by friends and family, September 13, 2001. For nearly seventy years, Wrather worked on a biography of Alexander Campbell. In the last decade, D. Duane Cummins agreed to assist her in finding a publisher, editing the manuscript, and preparing it for publication. In "The Third Mrs. Campbell," Cummins describes their work on this project, offers his assessment of the character of the manuscript, and shares their agreed upon Table of Contents and an excerpt from the first chapter.

If, as Cummins notes, "It has been claimed that Eva Jean so devoted herself to 'Mr. Campbell' that he vicariously became her life's mate," it may also be said that she was the mother of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. She served on the committee that established the Society in 1941. Moreover, she played an essential role in locating the Society in Nashville, adjacent to Vanderbilt University and the Disciples Divinity House.

Vanderbilt Ph.D. candidate Scott D. Seay researched "Breaking Up Fallow Ground or Sowing the Seeds of Discord? Estimating the Populist Influence of Alexander Campbell's *Christian Baptist*" in the Library and Archives of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society. The topic of Seay's article concerns a period of Campbell's life that Wrather believed had been misunderstood and was crucial for a right assessment of Campbell. Seay's findings, though possibly not in line with those of Wrather, will be important to ongoing discussion of this topic.

Whether one ultimately agrees or disagrees with Eva Jean Wrather's estimate of Mr. Campbell, students of the Stone-Campbell Movement will remain in her debt. A list of Wrather's publications appears on pages 110-112.

— D. Newell Williams

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## From the President's Desk

The President of the Historical Society on occasion is called to the high privilege of a priestly/pastoral ministry. Eva Jean Wrather's death and the celebration of her life and faith were such occasions. I share with you a portion of my priestly ministry offered at her memorial service at Vine Street Christian Church on September 19.

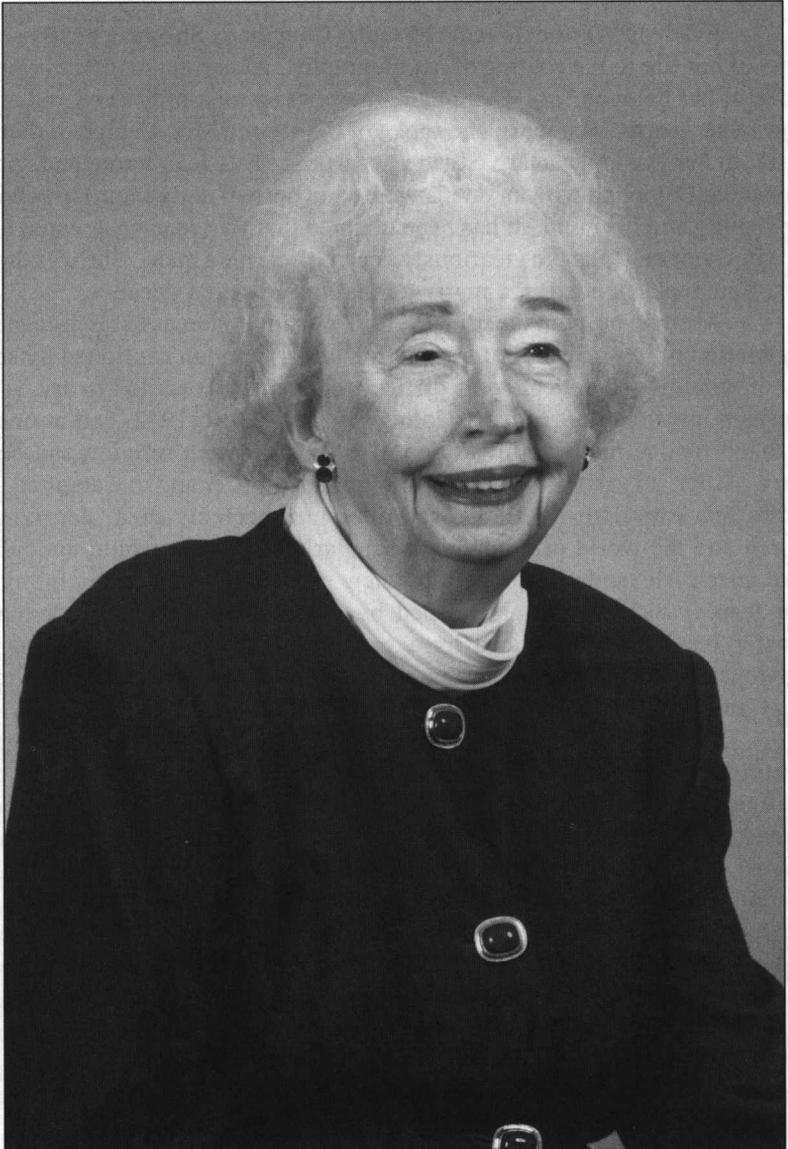
The fertile mind and heart of Eva Jean Wrather bore two children--the biography of Alexander Campbell--the child of her love and joy, and the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, the less well-behaved child, also a child of her love but one who needed constant attention for sixty years. Sometimes the favored child, Campbell, was neglected because of the more needful child, the Society...

Such brilliance, such talent, such grace--this writer and founder of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society--she was royalty to me. And as President of that Society my monthly visits to her were as Disraeli calling on Queen Victoria...she received me with majesty and grace. Eva Jean Wrather--a grandeur of grace...

I paraphrase Robert Richardson's funeral oration for Eva Jean's beloved Alexander Campbell "...now she sleeps. In Christ she soundly and sweetly sleeps...and what then now remains but that each one of us in our appropriate sphere shall labor, like her who has just preceded us, for the glory of God and the good of humanity." ...to labor at significant work, to live a grandeur of grace, to embrace eternity.

We owe much to Eva Jean Wrather. This young writer/scholar became our Society's mother, nurturing us from infancy to our current strength in leadership and responsibility. It was my privilege to speak the Society's farewell and Godspeed.

—Peter M. Morgan



**EVA JEAN WRATHER**

**1908-2001**

## THE THIRD MRS. CAMPBELL

by D. Duane Cummins\*

Eva Jean Wrather loved Alexander Campbell. She gave nearly seventy years of her life to the writing of his biography. At certain moments when she spoke of her beloved "Mr. Campbell" there was a mist in her eye and a warm glow in her words. But when she spoke of the second Mrs. Campbell there was a glint in her eye and a sharp edge to her words. Eva Jean wrote and spoke of Alexander Campbell with an intense affection born of daily familiarity with his personality and his mind. It has been claimed that Eva Jean so devoted herself to "Mr. Campbell" that he vicariously became her life's mate. She was the third Mrs. Campbell, bonded in a marriage that lasted seven decades.

At some point in the mid-1990s, I was invited to assist Eva Jean in the preparation of her manuscript for publication. Although cautioned by several that it would be a delicate and difficult challenge I decided to try. Perry Gresham, president of Bethany College from 1953 to 1972, had at one time arranged for the renowned historian of early American religion and culture, Perry Miller, to write a scholarly biography of Alexander Campbell. Just before his initial trip to Bethany, Miller unexpectedly died, depriving the church and the world of a landmark scholarly study that would undoubtedly have raised Alexander Campbell to a new religious prominence. In my view Eva Jean's work was sorely needed by our church with its predominantly transfer membership serviced by a waning educational program in many congregations and, I concluded, anything that might contribute to the publication of a Campbell biography should be attempted.

Eva Jean met me at her door with the most gracious and elegant of greetings and ushered me into the quaintness of her lovely Victorian home. Twilight, her beloved feline, roamed atop the furniture keeping a skeptical eye trained on my presence while the conversation between Eva Jean and me roamed over the long life and times of Alexander Campbell as she sized up my worthiness to be of any help with her dream. At length, she invited me to lunch. We rode to a Nashville restaurant in her 1967 Pontiac Catalina narrowly missing two automobiles when she turned into the first intersection passing through a red light, and nearly colliding with a concrete wall as we entered the restaurant parking lot. It was one of the most prayerful moments of my life — and the return trip still awaited us! Subsequent trips to Nashville were preceded with arrangements to share lunch at her table in her home, a long and respected Disciples tradition.

It is not known if Twilight ever approved of my presence, but at the end of the day Eva Jean generously agreed to photocopy her 1500-page revised manuscript and mail the copy to me for study. She also agreed that we would meet again. Soon the parcel arrived and I began striding through the endless

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\*D. Duane Cummins is President of Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia.

pages imagining her typing this enormous work on her old Remington noiseless and her slightly newer Olympia upright. Her writing was absolutely eloquent and I found it difficult to stop reading long enough to develop an analysis.

The early chapters of Eva Jean's work showed a pattern of reliance on Robert Richardson's *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, a 19<sup>th</sup> century baseline used by nearly every Campbell researcher. Eva Jean looked to Richardson to provide chronological structure, a basic sequence of events against which she could assure herself that nothing within her purpose was omitted. Often, Eva Jean would exclude much of Richardson's detail when citing the same event but just as frequently inserted information not found in Richardson. At first, I thought a full accounting of sources would be one of the most valuable aspects of her work as well as lending scholarly credibility. Footnotes and bibliography did not accompany the shipment of the copied manuscript although footnote numbering was present throughout the early chapters indicating their existence. Seeking footnotes and bibliography became an early objective.

Following a few telephone conversations on the subject she explained that David McWhirter, DCHS librarian, would prepare a bibliography and index. Although it is doubtful a bibliography existed I believe it was her intent, using her research notes and her memory, to develop a bibliography with David. To the best of my knowledge failing health prevented her from completing this part of the project but it can be constructed using her footnotes. Ultimately, she provided a photocopy of her footnotes for Chapters 5, 6 and 7 with a small note attached, "Looking forward to our next session with A.C."

I have not seen footnotes for the entire manuscript but my review of the 200 footnotes for these three chapters revealed 43 citations from Robert Richardson, 33 from the Millennial Harbinger, 17 from the Christian Baptist and 10 from the Declaration and Address—more than half the total. William Herbert Hanna's 1935 biography of Thomas Campbell was cited 10 times and William Baxter's 1874 biography of Walter Scott five times. The most current references were Dwight Stevenson's 1946 biography of Walter Scott cited three times and Garrison and DeGroot *The Disciples of Christ: A History*, published in 1948, which merited a single entry. Some of Campbell's correspondence located in the Historical Society was also cited but the most influential work, referenced about once per chapter, was Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought* (1926), a model of writing, style and structure much admired by Eva Jean. The sources used by Eva Jean were vintage, reflecting a Richardson framework and the era in which the chapters were initially written.

Trips to Nashville were interspersed among numerous telephone calls and mailings. Our objective was to find common ground on the structure, length, modern scholarship and documentation for the Wrather manuscript with an eye toward publication. Out of these rich conversations grew agreement that the manuscript would be published in two volumes rather than three. The intended audience, in her judgment, was to be "broad based, a broad scholarly community including Disciples." On the question of balance between biography and the evolution of Campbell's thought and theology, Eva Jean was firm in saying, "Biography is the spine on which the work is built." It was agreed that

the early chapters were well balanced in this respect but more personal biography was needed to improve the balance in the remaining chapters, although “the portion on theology and thought,” she advised, “should not be reduced beyond modest condensation.”

We talked at great length about incorporating more contemporary scholarship and historical interpretation of Alexander Campbell and his era into the manuscript. It was Eva Jean’s strong opinion that “writers should not superimpose themselves on Alexander Campbell! Writers should not intrude ‘self’ into the story of Campbell. The story of his life is an unfolding drama, a continuing growth, and writers should not anticipate when he will change.” Her work, she said, was “biography as literature; biography as discovery.” Alexander Campbell, she claimed, “was a perfect example of the wedding of culture, religion and politics in America” (a la Parrington). She did agree, however, that an infrequent endnote containing some contemporary perspective might be acceptable, but only with her approval.

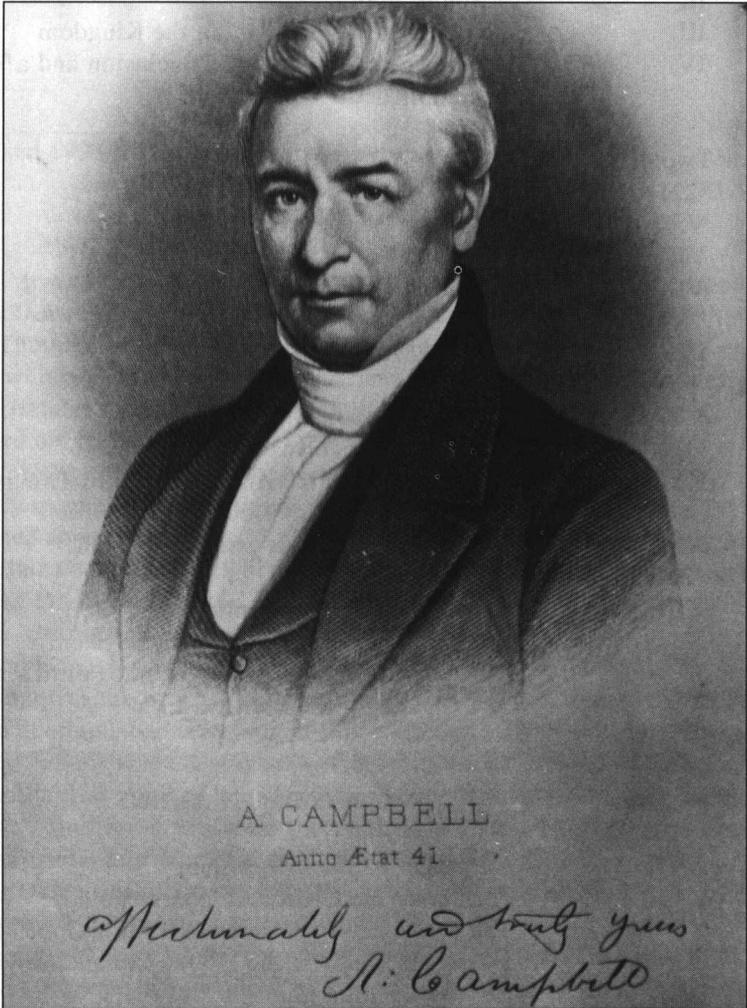
Questions regarding out-of-use words, punctuation and archaic spellings were also discussed. For example should we use the modern spelling of Buffalo in place of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Buffaloe? Eva Jean preferred the archaic spelling but with a sentence in the introduction stating the writer has used the spellings of Alexander Campbell’s day. On the issue of punctuation she was well aware of changing practices but disagreed with some of them because from her point of view they “marred the literary character of the work.” It was agreed, however, that punctuation editing would be guided by her acceptance or rejection of the proposed changes.

It became clear that my role as an editor did not include modifying what Eva Jean had written but was directed rather toward mechanics such as finding a publisher, sanding off a few rough edges in the manuscript, checking punctuation, enhancing a word or phrase here and there, completing the footnotes, helping produce a bibliography and index and preparing a copy of the manuscript for submission to a publisher. This book was not destined to be the scholarly biography Perry Miller might have written. In its pure form, however, it is an extraordinary literary biography of the first order. The work quite properly should be published as she envisioned it and as she crafted it.

Together, we coursed our way through the first seven chapters, readying them for publication. Those days of working with Eva Jean, editing “Mr. Campbell’s Life” paragraph by paragraph, will remain among my most pleasant memories. Alas, we were only allowed to complete seven of the 29 chapters. Our final exchanges were related to her plan for rewriting Chapter 8. She had devoted Chapters 8, 9 and 10 to Campbell’s Christian Baptist years. Eva Jean saw this three-chapter segment as the most important part of the whole manuscript. She believed the Christian Baptist had caused Campbell to be misunderstood and that he was ignored after 1890 because scholars took the side of his detractors and obscured the “real” Alexander Campbell. It was her intent to set the record straight with these three seminal chapters. Illness overtook her and she was never able to complete the rewriting.

But the enormous work she did complete stands as a grand memorial to her superb talents as a writer and literary historian. A tiny sample of her prodigious biography of Campbell is offered here as a loving tribute to Eva Jean

Wrather. This sample includes the final table of contents approved by her and a brief portion of the finely hewn prologue she prepared for her colossal work. As you read it think of Eva Jean's abiding passion for her subject, the unrelenting care with which her words were chosen, and the seventy years of her long life poured into the writing. It is her monument — a towering monument!



# ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: ADVENTURER IN FREEDOM

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Revised 1993/05/28

## PROLOGUE

It was time for evening prayer at the home of Archibald Campbell of County Down. They gathered in the parlor: Archibald, his wife, and their four sons - Thomas, James, Archibald and Enos. Archibald, Sr. would not conduct family worship tonight as was his custom. His rheumatism was bothering him again. Ireland's heavy rainfall might make the shamrocks grow green, but it was hard on aching bones.

Nor was the state of Archibald's health calculated to improve his naturally irascible temper. He might well consider it a shame when a man who had sailed across the seas with General Wolfe and climbed the rocky heights to the plains of Abraham to give the Frenchmen a memorable thrashing at the Battle of Quebec had to be laid up with aches and pains like an ailing old woman. Strong and fearless and free, with a hand ever ready upon the sword to defend his rights and his home and his clan - that was the way for a man to live! That was the way his kinsmen across the channel, fierce Highlanders of western Scotland, had always lived since the Golden Age of thirteenth century Scotland when "Clan Campbel" Clan O'Duibne was the Gaelic name - received its first grant of land from the crown. And Archibald could proudly wear his name for many were the Archibald Campbells, warriors and clan chieftains, who had written their deeds in Scottish history.

If this Archibald Campbell was to teach his sons pride in the great but rather remote house of Argyll, he could teach them pride also in their own lineage through those Ulster Campbells who had left their kinsmen in Scotland to find new homes across the Irish channel. Because of scant or lost family records, Archibald's direct lineage is traced back only to his father, Thomas, said to have been "Born in the County of Down." But according to widely accepted local tradition their family history was connected to that of a Robert Campbell and his three brothers, "of the house of Strachur and family of Sasnach," who had immigrated from Argyllshire to County Down early in the seventeenth century.

But doubtless it was on present pain rather than on ancestral pride that Archibald Campbell, soldier of Quebec and loyal subject of George III, was thinking as his household gathered in the parlor for evening prayer. The eldest son Thomas was to conduct the family worship tonight in his father's stead. Young though he might be, Thomas already possessed great piety, which was as it should be. He also possessed great determination to exercise that piety in the Presbyterian ministry, which was not so fortunate. Archibald was a strict adherent to the Church of England and an equally strict believer in the Fifth Commandment; and he had informed his sons that they, like himself, should "serve God according to Act of Parliament." Thomas, however, simply could not and would not. The ritual of Episcopacy was to him a vain and lifeless ceremony, and its communicants far too proud and worldly for his simple tastes. It was in the meetinghouses of the plain and devout Calvinists - among the Covenanters or, preferably, the Seceders - that Thomas found his God. And though his gray eyes bespoke a nature gentle and peace-loving, one who crossed Thomas in a matter of conscience was likely to be reminded that if gray is a color of the dove, it is also the color of steel.

Moreover, Thomas had been assured of the rightness of his course by an express revelation of Divine will, in the manner best approved by Calvinistic orthodoxy. This assurance had seemed long in coming. He spent many weary months in fear and misgiving, praying, seeking some token of Divine favor, of Divine forgiveness for his sins. The sins were venial, it was true, and God was merciful; but God was also selective, and those God chose were not left in doubt. Finally, one day when Thomas was near despair and ready to sink under the weight of his own unworthiness, he went alone for a walk in the woods. Suddenly, he felt the black cloud of fear and anxiety dispersing. An unearthly peace seemed to flow around him until mystically, wholly, he was at one with God. Thomas's "call" had come. He was of the Elect, especially chosen to labor in the vineyard. The details remained to be worked out, and those details could prove very troublesome. Such matters could be determined only between Thomas and his God.

So, on this evening, Thomas gladly took Archibald's place and, as the household fell to its knees, he reverently started to pray. At first, his thoughts and his words were of mother, father, brothers, and his four sisters who died in infancy. Soon externals were forgotten, and Thomas's spirit began to soar. Perhaps he considered it a good time to bring his soul's dilemma before the Throne of Grace:

O Lord! Shall men seek to do Thee honor with rich robes and elaborate processions, or shall they come to Thee humbly, laying on Thy altar the gifts of pious lives and contrite hearts? Is Thy church to be found where the proud aristocrat rears a stately structure at the command of a king, or is Thy dwelling the gathering-place of those devout ones who nourish without fear or hesitation the stern logic of the man of Geneva?

Whatever the theme, Thomas's prayer flowed on - endlessly. Time was forgotten.

Unfortunately, his father was not so heedless of the fleeting moments. Archibald was a godly man and his intentions were reverent. He was also a

practical man who found no virtue in over-doing things, even praying. The pain in his legs was sharp and long kneeling did them no good. Would the boy never cease his prayer? At length, the pain settled into a dull persistent ache. Archibald doubted if he would ever be able to stand again.

Finally, there came Thomas's reverent Amen! The household rose to its feet. Archibald, with a racking tear in his reluctant muscles, managed to stand. He looked at Thomas - calm, serene, oblivious to his father's pains. It was too much. With face flushed and eyes snapping, Archibald grabbed his walking stick and began to cane Thomas about the shoulders, making his reason clear in quick, angry sentences. Stunned, his family looked on. Once his wrath was vented, Archibald became conscious of his outburst, but apology would not come easily to the quick-tempered, stubborn old soldier.

Sad and aching, Thomas left the room. Life could be very trying to a young man with a call, even though he considered that call to be divine. His father's refusal or inability to understand his antipathy to the Church of England and his sympathy with the Presbyterian Seceders was a great vexation to Thomas. And likely something of an enigma as well.

It was not as if he were wanting to do anything unusual. Since the days of John Knox, Scotland and Presbyterianism had been almost synonymous and, in spite of generations in Ireland, a Campbell was a Scotsman still. Indeed, those very military ancestors of whom his father was so proud had more often tested their valor in wars religious than in wars merely political. Almost without exception, they were found fighting on the side of the dissenting Protestants. Archibald himself could scarcely deny that the Campbells had been among the first to rally to the standard of John Knox, and their chieftain had been one of the original Lords of the congregation who, in 1557, bound itself "to manteane, sett forward and establish the most blessed word of God and his Congregations." In the Civil War, a century later, the chieftain of the Campbells had been so influential a Covenanter that Cromwell could discover in him and his friends "nothing but what becomes Christians and men of honour." His monument in St. Giles bore the proud inscription, "A leader in council and field for the reformed religion." Furthermore, the Scots who had come to settle Ulster at the invitation of James I brought with them their belief in Presbyterian discipline and looked with small favor upon the Irish Reformed Church. When they set up their homes and their pulpits in the new country, the dogma expounded from fireside and pulpit was the dogma of Knox and Calvin.

For this reason, Archibald's religious dictum was likely to seem to Thomas only another evidence of his father's eccentricity and not to be taken seriously by a young man of conscience. Indeed, Archibald Campbell as a youth had professed an ardent faith in the Roman Catholic Church. It was not until after his return from the wars in Canada that he acquired an equally ardent faith in the Church of England. Perhaps he thought a government that had proven so victorious in military matters must also have the right perspective in ecclesiastical matters. Or perhaps a more practical consideration influenced his views. Only members of the Established Church could hold public office and receive preferments. The Protestant Dissenters were scarcely more privileged than the despised and oppressed Roman Catholics.

So both paternal solicitude and expediency may have dictated Archibald's command that his sons "Serve God according to Act of Parliament."

But conscience, not expediency, would always determine Thomas Campbell in his course. Since Archibald loved his sons and his anger was as quickly appeased as it was easily aroused, Thomas had hope that the parental opposition to his wishes would some day be removed.

Meanwhile, he considered it the better part of wisdom to retire from the home scene. Also, the desire was strong within him to be about the Lord's work. As he had completed "an excellent English education" at a nearby military regimental school - which his brothers, as became the sons of a soldier, were also attending - Thomas decided that if he could not yet bring solace to human souls in the role of minister, he could at least carry enlightenment to their minds in the role of teacher. So he set out for a benighted part of western Ireland, the province of Connaught, where he had heard that the people's minds were ill-fed and their souls undernourished. There he established an English academy and began the dispensing of food - intellectual, moral and spiritual. His students grew apace, and their benefactor was well loved. Abruptly, his labors were cut short by a peremptory summons from his father. Unyielding in matters of conscience though he might be, in matters of conduct, Thomas was still the obedient son. As quickly as possible he closed his little academy, bade his sorrowing friends good-by, and turned his face homeward.

~~Johnsonian rhetoric. Those who had come to hear Campbell's first sermon in Kentucky went away surprised, but not disappointed,~~

After <sup>fill</sup> filling his <sup>engagements</sup> appointments at the smaller <sup>congregational</sup> churches, Campbell made his way to Lexington. He was anxious to visit this town in the

beautiful blue-grass country, which <sup>was</sup> proudly known as the "Athens of the West". It was the home of ~~editor~~ <sup>Literary Magazine</sup> William Gibbs Hunt and his

one of the finest literary periodicals edited in the West. It was the home of Transylvania University, perhaps the best school in the ~~west~~ <sup>trans-</sup>

<sup>Appalachian</sup> ~~western~~ <sup>only</sup> country, its medical college being second <sup>only</sup> to that at Philadelphia

and its ~~present~~ <sup>flourishing</sup> condition was said to be due to ~~the~~ its president, Dr. Horace ~~Holly~~ <sup>Holly</sup>, a brilliant man and a fine classical

scholar, who was regarded as a great orator ~~even~~ in Lexington, which considered ~~itself~~ <sup>as</sup> a judge of oratory, Henry Clay being one its citizens

Campbell would be especially interested in the University, for though it was known to him only by reputation, he ~~had had occasion to attend~~ <sup>found himself attending</sup> as

its champion in one <sup>of</sup> his sharp tiffs with Maccalla during their debate.

The school had ~~previously~~ formerly been under the management of the Presbyterian Church, and Maccalla ~~had brought the subject into the~~ <sup>introduced</sup> intro-

duced the subject into the debate by remarking that with Dr. Holly as its president ~~the~~ Transylvania was now "under the influence of infidel

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**EvaJean Wrather**  
**1908-2001**

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**BREAKING UP FALLOW GROUND  
OR SOWING THE SEEDS OF DISCORD?  
Estimating the Populist Influence  
of Alexander Campbell's *Christian Baptist*  
By Scott D. Seay\***

I.

Contemporary historiography of southern evangelicalism between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars generally has followed one of two paths. On the one hand, those who accept the "democratization thesis" generally see the populist denominations of the antebellum south as social and theological pioneers, as the creators and shapers of a new kind of religious culture. Freed from the trammels of religious establishments both in Europe and on the Atlantic seaboard, Baptists, Methodists, and (to a lesser degree) Presbyterians dissolved the hierarchies that characterized those establishments and empowered the "untutored" to take charge of their own spiritual destinies. Religious conflict in this context thus should be understood as a passionate struggle for power and authority between common persons and their social superiors.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, some American religious historians have emphasized the theological and social adaptability of antebellum evangelicalism, understanding its expansion more as a successful cultural and theological exchange with the surprisingly durable hierarchies and values of genteel southern culture. Rather than creating and shaping a new kind of religious culture *ex nihilo*, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians both transformed existing social structures and were themselves transformed by this engagement. In important ways existing traditions tempered the theological radicalism of colonial evangelicalism, especially its abolitionism, its understanding of gender and family issues, and its spiritual egalitarianism. Religious conflict, then, is to be understood as nothing more than this process of accommodation in which the untutored come to be counted among the elite.<sup>2</sup>

The apparent tension between these historiographies of antebellum southern evangelicalism presents a special challenge to those who attempt to make sense of the vocational and theological odyssey of Alexander Campbell (1788-1866).<sup>3</sup> Most American religious historians count Campbell among the populists and leave it at that. But this assessment obscures the fact that, as a Baptist, the early Campbell was what might be called a radical populist within an already populist tradition. Moreover, simply reckoning Campbell among the populists overlooks the accommodations that he made in his later career that brought him ever closer to the very kind of religious establishment that he once so vocally opposed. In this sense, both historiographies are needed properly to locate Campbell within the developmental context of antebellum southern evangelicalism. He was both a radical populist and an accommodating elitist, depending upon the point of his vocational and theological odyssey

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under consideration.<sup>4</sup> With Campbell, as with antebellum southern evangelicalism more generally, neither historiographic path can be trodden without running the risk of oversimplification.

Having recognized this essential caveat, the present essay focuses narrowly on the editorial efforts of the early Campbell (ca. 1823-30), describing the way in which his radical populism became increasingly shrill and eventually unbearable to his “elitist” targets within the Baptist tradition. Moreover, this essay attempts to estimate the populist influence of Campbell’s *Christian Baptist* among his followers on the southern evangelical frontier. The former task is far easier than the latter. Indeed, estimating the influence of any religious leader – that is, the degree to which his or her religious views penetrate the consciousness of his or her followers and encourage them to act accordingly – is always elusive, and the evidence must always remain suggestive, never conclusive. The assumption here is that Campbell’s radical populism and the response of his sovereign audience entered into a kind of synergism that would finally force his expulsion from among the Baptists. Although Campbell would describe this synergism as “breaking up fallow ground,” his elitist contemporaries described it as maliciously “sowing the seeds of discord.”<sup>5</sup>

## II.

What exactly is meant by the terms “populism” and “elitism” in this context? Populism refers to an ideology that values radical voluntarism in matters of religion; populists held that persons were free to choose their religious beliefs and associations without excessive coercion. What little coercion can be found in populism relied on an appeal to the common sense, or good judgment, that all rational persons possess. Geographically, populists in this historical context tended to be located on the trans-Appalachian frontier – the Old Northwest and Upper South – in both rural and urban areas. Populists tended also to be first-generation Americans, recent immigrants of Scots-Irish heritage who saw particular promise in the new nation’s ideal of religious and political freedom.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, elitism refers to an ideology that values establishment in matters of religion; elitists enjoyed a privileged status in which their religious traditions had few if any serious rivals for popular loyalty. While not necessarily coercive, elitists recognized the expertise of a discreet cadre of persons in matters of religion, and often these persons were well-educated. So long as these professionals went unchallenged, by definition their authority was coercive. Geographically, elitists tended to be located in the urban areas of the Atlantic seaboard in the South. Elitists were usually third- or fourth-generation Americans, the descendants of the initial English settlers of the North American colonies.

In the case of the antebellum Baptist churches we can see elements of both populism and elitism, and this phenomenon is not difficult to account for historically. Before the Revolution, Baptists were already divided between the Regulars and the Separates; the former enjoyed long established roots in the colonies, while the latter had arisen, more recently, out of conflicts in New England between the Congregational establishment and the more radical supporters of the First Great Awakening. These existing tensions only grew with the significant expansion of the Separates in the 1750s and 60s as itinerant evangelical missionaries made their way from New England and the Middle

Colonies into Virginia and the Carolinas gaining increasing numbers of followers. To the colonial Anglican establishment especially – who often made no distinction between Separates and Regulars – the Baptists constituted a serious ecclesiastical and political threat. Accordingly, they were the object of scorn and frequent persecution, contributing a martyr's witness to the cause of religious liberty.<sup>7</sup> The Revolution and the resulting political restructuring of the American colonies, however, largely swept away the meager resources of southern Anglicanism, including the very idea of religious establishment. In many cases, Baptist churches (mainly the Regulars, but also some Separates) stepped into the resulting vacuum of political and religious power. Indeed, throughout the opening decades of the nineteenth century, Baptist churches served a number of civil functions that contributed to the social stability of the antebellum South.<sup>8</sup> This newfound cultural and religious status matured among some Baptists on the southeastern seaboard by the 1820s and provoked the hostility of radical populists on the trans-Appalachian frontier like Alexander Campbell.<sup>9</sup>

### III.

Undeniably, conflict between elitists and populists among antebellum Baptists in the South was carried out on the pages of their religious periodicals. No wonder, because this was the trend in the new republic more generally between 1790 and 1830: the number of regularly circulated religious periodicals skyrocketed from 90 to over 400 during this period.<sup>10</sup> More significant than this, however, was a shift in the audience and content of this printed matter. Throughout the eighteenth century, the world of religious print was directed primarily at the elite – mainly the clergy – and its content was learned and circumspect. Beginning in the nineteenth century, populist religious leaders radically reoriented the world of print toward the masses. Religious publications became less and less dominated by refined theological treatises and learned sermons, and more and more dominated by crude oratory, blunt and vulgar language, and sharp ridicule of the mediating elites of society.<sup>11</sup>

Robert Richardson notes that, as early as 1822, the Irish immigrant Alexander Campbell committed himself to the idea of publishing his own religious monthly. Resistance to his reforming efforts among the Baptists in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Old Northwest and a growing despair about ever making an impact beyond the local congregation led him to consider this idea of disseminating his religious views more widely.<sup>12</sup> On July 4, 1823, Campbell launched his *Christian Baptist*, which he published monthly for the next seven years.<sup>13</sup> In the prospectus for the monthly, Campbell highlighted his objective in publishing: “the eviction of truth, and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice.”<sup>14</sup> This general description perhaps conceals the radical populist ideology that dominated Campbell's paper. Certainly not espousing the cause of any religious sect, including the Baptists, the monthly advocated the tenets of religious populism already described.

Any of a number of motifs might be highlighted as evidence for the increasing shrillness of Campbell's populist ideology in the *Christian Baptist*. None was as strong, however, as his rhetoric directed against the clergy. Because this anticlerical rhetoric draws its energy from popular disdain for social distinction, from theological convictions about human relationships,

and a radical interpretation of republican liberty, this motif more than any other probably increased his favor with common people and made his religious views unbearable to his elitist targets, even those within his own denomination.

In a series of articles explaining his views on “the Christian religion,” Campbell began with a five-part diatribe against the clergy. His disdain for the “kingdom of the clergy” was grounded chiefly in what he perceived to be their self-declared monopoly on the normative interpretation of Scripture:

The Christian clergy have exercised, for about fifteen hundred years, a sovereign dominion over the Bible, the consciences, and the religious sentiments of all nations professing Christianity...They have said, and many still say, they have an exclusive right, an *official* right, to affix the proper interpretation to the scriptures; to expound them in public assemblies; insomuch that it would be presumptuous in a layman to attempt to exercise any of the functions which they assume.<sup>15</sup>

But the issue ran even deeper than this for Campbell. The clergy who laid claim to the power for normative interpretation buttressed their position with a blasphemous understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in Christian life. In speaking of the clergy’s “call” to preach the gospel, Campbell growled:

The meaning of this call, then, is “Go and learn the religion, and learn the use and meaning of words, that ye may communicate your knowledge of it; and then I will send you to preach and lay you under a woeful necessity of declaring the religion.” This is the special call of the Holy Spirit contended for. What an abuse of language! nay rather, what an abuse of principle!!<sup>16</sup>

In other words, the clergy’s understanding of their call in terms of education, rhetorical influence, and a self-serving desire to appear learned was, in Campbell’s judgment, a faulty pneumatology.

Moreover, Campbell scorned the clergy for consolidating their ecclesiastical power in associated bodies such as councils, synods, general assemblies, associations and conferences. Such clerical consociations were united by their presumption to divine warrant, authorizing them to have control over the faith, devotional practices, and ultimately the spiritual destinies of the members of their constituent churches. Ecclesiastical consociations thus mimic the worst traits of the civil governments after which they are modeled, namely, monarchies and aristocracies. After claiming that the “holy alliance of kings in Europe” have prescribed Christian faith for their subjects and pledged to defend their right to do so with their very lives, Campbell asked,

Have not the confederated clergy of America done the same? Have not the respective ecclesiastical councils solemnly vowed and subscribed to certain articles of faith, deemed essential to salvation? Have they not pledged themselves to inculcate the same at the risk of their livings and sacred honor?<sup>17</sup>

Campbell proposed another foundation upon which “church government” should rest: the will of the Lord Jesus Christ published in the New Testament, read and understood by each and every member of his church. Indeed, for Campbell, the perspicuity of the divine will on the pages of Scripture rendered unnecessary all ecclesiastical authorities beyond the conscience of the individual believer, guided by his or her common sense and the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup>

Campbell's invective against the clergy quickly brought him into conflict with the Baptist elites on the Atlantic seaboard, and this conflict forced him to clarify his position in a number of subsequent pieces in the *Christian Baptist* in its second year of publication. Indeed, Campbell repeatedly explained that the "kingdom of the clergy" excluded the vast majority of elders and preachers in Baptist and other independent churches. These church leaders, he explained, functioned within the boundaries of scriptural sanction, and extended the influence of the church in ways consistent with its purposes.<sup>19</sup> But Campbell always stopped short of exempting all Baptist and independent preachers from aspiring to the authority of the "clergy" whom he scorned. In response to the claim of his contemporary in the *Sentimental Journal* that the same Spirit inspires all clergy, regardless of denomination and learning, Campbell retorted: "Amongst the Baptists it is to be hoped that there are but few clergy, and would to God there were none!" Although the very principles of the tradition mitigate against such elitism, Campbell admitted that some of his Baptist contemporaries aspired to the "airs and arrogance" of the paidobaptist priestcraft. Although he hoped that "the number of such among the Baptists is small," he had little difficulty coming up with anecdotal evidence for this ecclesiastical corruption among those in his own tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps the best example of anticlericalism in the *Christian Baptist* is Campbell's burlesque "Third Epistle of Peter," appearing in 1825 and reprinted many times in various journals sympathetic to religious populism. Campbell explained wryly that the manuscript had been presented to him by a "miserable wandering monk," which he then translated from French and made available to his readers. In this "pastoral" epistle, the writer encouraged the clergy to eat the best foods, drink the best wines, and clothe themselves in "robes of richest silk and robes of fine linen, of curious device and of costly workmanship."<sup>21</sup> The epistle admonished the clergy to show partiality to the wealthy, allowing them the best seats in worship:

let the first seats in front of the altar be for the rich who pay by the thousands; and the next for the poorer who pay by the hundreds; and the last for those who pay by the tens. And let the poor man sit behind the door.<sup>22</sup>

The epistle further instructed the clergy to choose the most naive youth, "whose hearts know not yet whether they incline to God or Mammon," to groom for the office of minister.<sup>23</sup>

In explaining the clergy's duty in preaching, the epistle encouraged them to go "with your pockets full of papers and divine words; even in your pockets shall your divinity be..." The clergy should preach sermons which "charm the ears of your hearers" while not offending them. Preaching should convince its hearers that the clergy have care for their souls, and that the saving mysteries belong to the clergy for their explaining. The object of such preaching is clear: "in all your gettings, get money!" The epistle charged the clergy, "take ye charge of the flock thereof and of the fleece thereof, even of the golden fleece!" Thus, the clergy would be able to set in motion a reciprocal relationship of flattery and economic gain with the laity: "the more that the people give you, the more they will honor you; for they shall believe that in giving to you they are giving to the Lord..."<sup>24</sup>

All of this begs the questions of why and to what degree Campbell's

anticlericalism would have resonated in the developing popular culture on the trans-Appalachian frontier. I believe that the populist appeal of Campbell's early editorial efforts relates to the political and economic realities of frontier life in antebellum America. To be sure, popular culture on the trans-Appalachian frontier was deeply suspicious of *all* forms of traditional authority. In a series of diplomatic and military triumphs on the frontier, the new federal government gradually exerted greater control over the distribution of land, which the frontier people considered public domain. Moreover, the Panic of 1819 held serious implications for the fledgling agrarian economy in this context. Farmers suffered economically, as well as all tradespeople dependent upon them: blacksmiths, mechanics, lawyers, even teachers and ministers. These factors and innumerable others of similar nature, fanned the flame of anti-authoritarian sentiment nascent in the rugged individualists who migrated to the frontier. It may be that such frustrations in the "secular" world have been taken out on authority figures within the church, the one place where a common person is most likely to have some direct influence. If this is the case, then any rhetoric such as Campbell's, which unabashedly pokes fun at the mediating elites of society, was bound to enjoy a wide hearing in this context.

#### IV.

But can this popular response to Campbell's *Christian Baptist* be quantified more precisely than this? Two types of evidence suggest that it can: 1) subscription and distribution statistics for the monthly; and 2) the counter-offensive mounted by his Baptist contemporaries in an effort to limit the influence of his journal. Though Campbell's stated objectives were those of a "reformer,"<sup>25</sup> the popular response to the *Christian Baptist* indicates that the journal was more of a rallying point for popular religious dissent. Thus, as the paper gained a wider hearing toward the end of the 1820s, traditional religionists increasingly regarded Campbell and his followers as popular heretics.

Reliable circulation statistics for religious periodicals are notoriously difficult to come by prior to 1850, the year in which federal census takers began collecting such information. It is not surprising, then, that estimates of subscription statistics for Campbell's *Christian Baptist* vary widely among scholars of popular religious journalism. One scholar has suggested that Campbell's subscribers numbered 7,000 in the South Atlantic states alone by its final issue,<sup>26</sup> while another has suggested 3,000 total subscribers, regardless of geography.<sup>27</sup> Neither scholar explains how he arrived at his estimate, and one is left with the impression that they were only guesses. Perhaps it is best to admit that satisfying subscription statistics for the *Christian Baptist* are simply unavailable.<sup>28</sup> By way of comparison, it may be instructive to note that in published form, Campbell's debate with John Walker, held in 1820, quickly went through two printings, for a total of 4,000 copies.<sup>29</sup> It is thus reasonable to assume that Campbell's monthly enjoyed a similar base of subscribers, at least in the earliest years of its publication.

Nevertheless, Campbell's subscribers were never numerous enough to make his personal attention to its printing and distribution prohibitive. Indeed, the recollections of one of Campbell's contemporaries preserve for us a glimpse of Campbell's printing operation. William Cooper Howells went to

work for Campbell as a pressman in the summer of 1827, and recalls that the entirety of Campbell's printing operation was housed in a log outbuilding sixteen feet square, located some distance from Campbell's residence. The outbuilding was situated near a stream in which the pressmen wet the paper to receive the presswork and then laid them on stones near the stream to dry. Howells notes in particular that "the little office overflowed" during the summer he was there, though at least three or four printers (besides Campbell himself) worked at a furious pace. Most telling, perhaps, is Howells's recollection that, on a good day, he alone could print some 2,000 sheets, which translates into 500 copies of the sixteen-page journal.<sup>30</sup>

If we turn our attention from subscription numbers to geographical distribution, we find better evidence for the populist influence of the *Christian Baptist*. In the early years, Campbell probably did most of the distribution himself.<sup>31</sup> It must be remembered that, by 1823, Campbell was traveling widely as an itinerant reforming preacher in western Pennsylvania, northwest Ohio, eastern Kentucky, and western Virginia. He always carried with him copies of the latest edition of his paper for distribution. One recollection of Robert Richardson is especially instructive on this point. Anticipating a large audience at his debate with William McCalla in October, 1823, Campbell specifically withheld the circulation of the *Christian Baptist* in Kentucky until he was able personally to distribute copies at the debate. He met with the most influential preachers of the region, gave them copies of the new monthly, and encouraged them to read it at their leisure. Immediately following the debate, a group of Baptist preachers urged Campbell to furnish them with copies of the *Christian Baptist* in order to extend its circulation and invited him to make an immediate tour through the state.<sup>32</sup> The following autumn, in 1824, Campbell would complete that tour, distributing copies of his journal at every stop.

By the autumn of 1826, and probably before, Campbell employed a system of local agents who oversaw the distribution of the *Christian Baptist* in a given locality. These "circulation agents" were, on the whole, Baptist preachers who found themselves in sympathy with Campbell's reforms. Campbell undoubtedly chose these men carefully, both to preserve the continuity of his reforming agenda and to guarantee that the *Christian Baptist* would receive wide circulation in the most strategic centers of the frontier: Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and Nashville. These circulation agents acted as liaisons between Campbell and his readers, distributed copies of the journal to subscribers, endeavored to expand circulation, and collected the modest \$1.00 *per annum* subscription price. Campbell would use this circulation agent system throughout the publication of the *Christian Baptist* and its successor, the *Millennial Harbinger* (1830-1870).

A broad sketch of the circulation of the *Christian Baptist* is presented in pictorial form in the map on page 123.<sup>33</sup> The map suggests some compelling patterns concerning the circulation of Campbell's *Christian Baptist*. First, between 1823 and 1825, Campbell's journal was distributed primarily in three areas: 1) in Richmond, Virginia and the immediate surrounding area; 2) in a wide area around Campbell's home in Brooke County, Virginia;<sup>34</sup> and 3) in rapidly growing towns on the Western frontier, notably Lexington, Cincinnati, Louisville, and Nashville. In general, Campbell's sympathetic readers lived on

the trans-Appalachian frontier. His critical readers lived in and around Richmond.

A second pattern emerges from circulation data between 1826 and 1830. Most strikingly, circulation of the *Christian Baptist* expanded into many of the rural areas of Virginia west of Richmond, where it received a modicum of support from some Baptists. But circulation also continued to expand greatly on the frontier, particularly into central Indiana and the Old Northwest between Campbell's home and Lexington. This pattern of increasing rural sympathy to Campbell's journal in these areas may account for the fact that, between 1826 and 1830, the Baptists of Richmond and other eastern seaboard cities mounted an impressive counter-offensive designed to limit the popular influence of Campbell's journal.

Indeed, vociferous opposition to Campbell's reform sentiments sprang up almost immediately with the appearance of the *Christian Baptist*. In some circles, this opposition was as sharply articulated as Campbell's own criticisms were; in other circles, gentle admonitions for moderation grew only slowly into outright hostility. Nonetheless, increasingly by 1830, anti-Campbell sentiments had reached such a fever pitch among many Baptist leaders that Campbell was expelled from the denomination. This development is due in large part to a strong counteroffensive mounted by the Baptist elites between 1826 and 1830.

Between 1826 and 1830, Regular Baptists opposed Campbell in kind by turning to the printed word as a means of limiting his influence. Baptist newspapers were enlisted against Campbell, especially the *Pittsburgh Recorder*, *The Western Luminary*, and *The Baptist Recorder* (of Kentucky). Issues of *The Columbian Star* during these years are representative of the way in which Regular Baptists turned Campbell's most effective weapon against him. *The Columbian Star* was published in the nation's capital beginning in 1822, and then moved to Philadelphia sometime before 1833. The monthly has been described as "staunchly Baptist," that is, its theological convictions "matched the firm and vibrant Calvinism of most Baptists on the Atlantic seaboard,"<sup>35</sup> the very expressions of Baptist piety from which Campbell and his followers were dissenting. The orientation of *The Columbian Star* toward the mediating elite is expressed best in the prospectus of the paper, which promises to be "a medium for inculcating sound theological doctrines and pure moral precepts." But beyond this the editors promised the following:

We shall also present to our readers a compendious summary of the passing tidings of the times; inform them of the progress of the sciences and all those liberal and useful arts which embellish society...and we shall be pleased if our *Star* shall be able to throw an occasional beam upon the path of classical and elegant literature.<sup>36</sup>

The very purpose of the paper made it a natural place for the opponents of Campbell to turn; sound theological doctrines and pure moral precepts were held in association with all that is culturally advanced, that is, elitist.

But it was the denominational associations that became the most effective weapon in the hand of the Baptists in their opposition to Campbell.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the structure of denominational associations empowered congregations and denominational associations to issue resolutions against his writings, ban him and his followers from preaching in their meetings, and proscribe his

influence in denominational meetings. One example should illustrate this dynamic. In 1830, the largest Baptist Association in Virginia appointed a committee to investigate the “unhappy state of things” among the Baptists created by the reforming efforts of Alexander Campbell. After two years of deliberations and failed attempts to avert division, the Dover Association<sup>38</sup> adopted the committee’s recommendation to purge its ranks of all ministers who maintained Campbell’s views, and to refuse cooperation with churches which “countenance their ministrations.” The Dover Statement particularly blames Campbell’s writings for the discord among Baptists:

the writings of Alexander Campbell and the spirit of those who profess to admire his writings and sentiments, appear to us remarkably destitute of “the mind that was in Christ Jesus”...Wherever these writings and sentiments have, to any extent, been introduced into our churches, the spirit of hypercriticism...[has] chilled the spirit of true devotion and put an end to Christian benevolence and harmony.<sup>39</sup>

Other associations throughout Virginia and Kentucky adopted similar resolutions throughout the early 1830s, also emphasizing the causal connection between Campbell’s writings and a growing spirit of discord among Baptists.

Most notable about this Baptist counteroffensive were the labels used in denouncing Campbell and his followers. In the early 1820s, Campbell was labeled with a pejorative epithet, “the reformer,” one that he heartily embraced. The connotations of this label, of course, depended on which side of the reforming debate one stood. Accusations of heresy were made against Campbell increasingly in the mid-1820s. Many of his Baptist opponents labeled him and his followers “Arians,” “Socinians,” and “Unitarians,” or generally associated them with anti-establishment rabble-rousers throughout history. Finally, by 1829-30, many Baptists were convinced that the Campbellites were bent on dividing the Baptist communion; hence, the labels “schismatics” and “heretics” were often applied to Campbell and his followers.

This Baptist counteroffensive is particularly intriguing because of its contrast with the reforming strategies of Campbell himself. Whereas Campbell utilized crude language to mock the perceived pretensions of the clergy, those same clergy relied on a strategy that aligned Campbell with those figures in the history of the church whose legacies were primarily counted as heresy. Campbell broadened his base of popular support through billingsgate journalism and public debate, while the Baptist clergy focused on institutional censure and organized action through regional ecclesiastical associations. Differing visions of church leadership – one populist, the other elitist – ultimately account for the expulsion of Campbell from among the Baptists.

These five years of this Baptist counteroffensive and Campbell’s unwillingness to compromise his reforming principles exacted a heavy toll on his friendship with influential Baptist preacher Robert Semple (1769-1831).<sup>40</sup> Semple was among those who gently admonished Campbell early on toward moderation, especially in his criticism of the clergy. As early as 1823, Semple warned Campbell not to make the mistake of other reformers, namely that “in hastening out of Babylon they ran past Jerusalem.”<sup>41</sup> During the mid-1820s, Campbell and Semple exchanged increasingly hostile letters, most of which have been preserved in the *Christian Baptist*. By 1827, Semple was writing

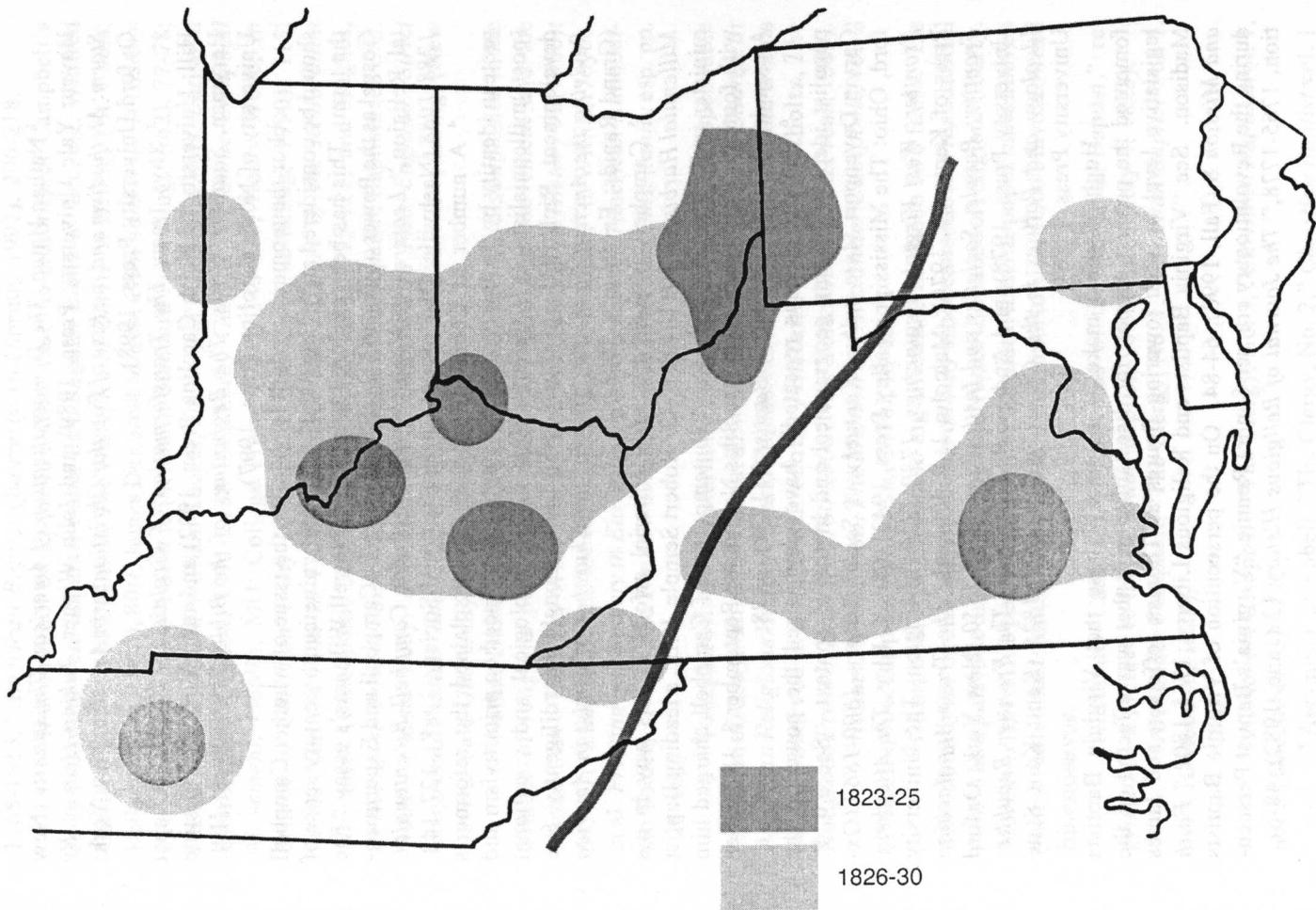
scathing critiques of Campbellism and attacking Campbell *ad hominem* on the pages of *The Columbian Star* and *The Baptist Recorder*. In addition, Semple gave his nod of approval in his capacity as president of the Virginia Baptist Association when regional associations expelled Campbellite preachers and their followers from Virginia Baptist churches in 1829-31.

#### V.

This essay has aimed at describing the way in which Campbell's radical populism became increasingly shrill and eventually unbearable to his elitist targets within the Baptist tradition, and estimating the influence of his populism on the southern evangelical frontier. While not conclusive, these preliminary results encourage us to notice three insights. First, evidence seen from the circulation statistics of Campbell's *Christian Baptist* traced out two interesting patterns of circulation. Taken together, these patterns suggest that the expansion of circulation in the rural areas of Virginia and the trans-Appalachian frontier coincides with an increasing anti-Campbell sentiment among Baptists in the urban centers of the Atlantic seaboard. Second, it was suggested that Campbell's anti-clerical rhetoric found deep resonance within the developing popular culture of the trans-Appalachian frontier because of political, social, and economic factors. Finally, brief suggestions about the Baptist counteroffensive against Campbell between 1826 and 1830 suggested that differing visions of church leadership and governance had as much to do with Campbell's separation from the Baptists as did their differing theologies.

Perhaps this essay has posed more questions than it has answered. Those that would warrant more intensive research revolve generally around the theme of the interplay between popular culture and religious change. The most pressing issue, it seems, is elucidating how political, social, and economic factors on the trans-Appalachian frontier fueled the kind of religious dissent described here. More analysis is needed, for example, of both Campbell enthusiasts and detractors in terms of their social, economic, and political predispositions. Who subscribed to the *Christian Baptist* and affirmed Campbell's indictments of the most reverend doctors of divinity? Who read *The Columbian Star* and nodded in approval as it mocked Campbell as an uneducated, backwoods rube? In other words, can it be demonstrated in specific, quantitative terms that there is a connection between the development of popular culture on the trans-Appalachian frontier and the popularity of the religious journalism of persons like Alexander Campbell? If Campbell genuinely intended his religious journalism to bring about the "eviction of truth, and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice," and that populism was simply the means to that end, then perhaps he *was* breaking up fallow ground in preparation for a restored and unified church, just as he claimed. If, however, Campbell's religious journalism simply baptized existing social, economic, and political populism, then he probably *was* sowing the seeds of discord.

The Circulation of Alexander Campbell's  
Christian Baptist, 1823-30



## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and John Wigger, *Taking Heaven By Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982) and more directly Christine Heryman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> For the moment, we will leave aside the issue of whether Campbell should be considered an "evangelical" in the early nineteenth-century sense of the term. This has been explored helpfully in Newell Williams's essay "The Gospel as the Power of God to Salvation: Alexander Campbell and Experimental Religion," *Lectures in Honor of the Alexander Campbell Bicentennial, 1788-1988* (Nashville: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1988), 127-148.

<sup>4</sup> A number of Campbell scholars have explained the reformer's protean identity by tracing the relative emphasis he placed on primitivism and (post-)millennialism at different points in his theological and vocational development. Richard Hughes pursues this line of thought most diligently. See *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of the Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Campbell assessed his early editorial efforts in this way in his *Millennial Harbinger* 10 (1840), p. 42. Robert Semple, D.D., a leading Baptist minister in Richmond, Virginia and contemporary of Campbell charged him with fomenting discord in a letter to Silas Noel dated September 3, 1827. See Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptist* 5 (1828), p. 78.

<sup>6</sup> Social historians repeatedly have emphasized the power of the populist ideology in this geographical and historical context. See e.g. F. Garvin Davenport, *Ante-bellum Kentucky: A Social History, 1800-1860* (Oxford, Ohio: The Mississippi Valley Press, 1943); Otis K. Rice, *The Allegheny Frontier: West Virginia Beginnings, 1730-1830* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970); Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *The Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies and Institutions, 1775-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Andrew R. L. Clayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1986).

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Wamble makes a persuasive case that Virginia Baptists fomented the popular support for disestablishment that was effected on the legislative level by such towering figures as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. See "Virginia Baptists and Religious Liberty, 1765-1802," *Faith and Mission* 8 (Fall, 1990), 64-84. On the persecution of Virginia Baptists during the Revolutionary era, see Sandra Rennie, "Virginia's Baptist Persecution, 1765-1778," *The Journal of Religious History* 12 (June, 1982), 48-61.

<sup>8</sup> See Monica Najar's prize-winning essay "Citizens of the Church: Baptist Churches and the Construction of Civil Order in the Upper South, 1765-1815," *American Baptist Quarterly* 16 (Spring, 1997), 206-218.

<sup>9</sup> It should not be surprising, then, that the majority of Campbell's early followers were Separate rather than Regular Baptists. See, e.g. Winfred Garrison and Alfred DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1948), 80ff; James DeForest Murch, *Christians Only: A History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1962), 77-78; Lester McAllister and William Tucker, *Journey in Faith* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1975), 136-158; Leroy Garrett, *The Stone Campbell Movement*, (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 143-178; Henry Webb, *In Search of Christian Unity* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1990), 115; James North, *Union in Truth: An Interpretive History of the Restoration Movement* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1994), 115-122; and Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, 97. On the origins of the Separate Baptists see C.C. Goen's classic study, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).

<sup>10</sup> Nathan Hatch repeatedly has drawn attention to this explosion in the number of religious periodicals. See "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," *Journal of American History* 67 (1980): 545-67; "Elias Smith and the Rise of Religious Journalism," in William Joyce, et al. *Printing and Society in Early America* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983); and *The Democratization of American Christianity* esp. pp. 125-161.

<sup>11</sup> To explore these transformations more fully, see the indispensable collection of essays edited by Leonard Sweet, *Communication and Change in American Religious History* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993). Similar trends can be observed in nineteenth-century Britain. See Josef Altholtz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760-1900* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> Robert Richardson, *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Lippencott and Co., 1870), 48-49.

<sup>13</sup> Campbell saw immense significance in these two facts. He intentionally inaugurated the monthly on July 4th because he saw his editorial efforts as a patriotic duty, designed to advance the cause of religious liberty. Moreover, given his penchant for millennialism, that his paper lasted seven years (the biblical number of perfection) was proof to him of God's favor toward his endeavor.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Prospectus of the Christian Baptist," reprinted as a preface to the *Christian Baptist*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July 4, 1823).

<sup>15</sup> Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy, No. 1," *Christian Baptist* vol. 1, no. 3 (October 6, 1823).

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy, No. 3," *Christian Baptist* vol. 1, no. 5 (December 1, 1823).

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Campbell, "The Clergy, No. 2," *Christian Baptist* vol. 1, no. 4 (November 6, 1823).

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Campbell's two-part "Familiar Dialogue Between the Editor and a Clergyman," *Christian Baptist* vol. 1, no. 12 (July 5, 1824) and vol. 2, no. 1 (August 2, 1824).

<sup>20</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Address to the Public," *Christian Baptist* vol. 2, no. 3 (October 4, 1824). Campbell's back-peddling on his operating definition of the "clergy" strikes me as disingenuous, despite Robert Richardson's protest of Campbell's sincerity on this point. See Richardson, vol. 1, pp. 60-62.

<sup>21</sup> It is puzzling to me that, for all of Campbell's respect for the sanctity of scripture, he would choose a parody on scripture as a means of propagandizing.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander Campbell, "The Third Epistle of Peter," *Christian Baptist* vol. 2, no. 12 (July 4, 1825).

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Though Campbell does not designate himself as a "reformer" until about 1824 or 1825 (after some Baptists began calling him this pejoratively), even in the prospectus of the *Christian Baptist* he acknowledges patterning his efforts after the "well-meant remonstrances of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley." See the "Prospectus of the Christian Baptist," reprinted as a preface to the *Christian Baptist* vol. 1, no. 1 (July 4, 1823).

<sup>26</sup> Henry Smith Stroupe, *The Religious Press in the South Atlantic States: 1802-1865* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1956), 26. For Stroupe the South Atlantic states are: Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida and West Virginia (prior to 1861).

<sup>27</sup> Douglas Foster, "Millennial Harbinger," in P. Mark Fackler and Charles H. Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines of the United States* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 341.

<sup>28</sup> John Kloos does just this in his entry, "Millennial Harbinger," in Charles H. Lippy, ed. *Religious Periodicals of the United States* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 365.

<sup>29</sup> Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, p. 136.

<sup>30</sup> Howells would, in 1828, begin his own religious monthly, *The Gleaner*, a ladies' journal of literature and poetry. See William Cooper Howells, *Recollections of Life in Ohio from 1813 to 1840* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co., 1894) 163-165.

<sup>31</sup> Between 1828 and 1830, Campbell even enjoyed franking benefit as county postmaster; mailing the *Christian Baptist* cost him nothing! See Richardson, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 180-81.

<sup>32</sup> Richardson, *Memoirs* vol. 2, p. 89.

<sup>33</sup> This map was created in the following manner. First, I noted that in 1826 Campbell began listing "agents" in various locales whose help had been enlisted in circulating his journal. Assuming that prior to 1826 Campbell himself did most of the circulation while preaching and lecturing on an itinerant basis between 1823 and 1825, I plotted those areas on the map. I also plotted the geographic origin of all letters reprinted in the *Christian Baptist* during those same years. This yielded the darker shaded areas. Second, I collected and plotted the locales in which Campbell employed a circulation

agent as reported in the *Christian Baptist* between 1826 and 1830. This yielded the lighter shaded areas. It should be noted that, by 1830, Campbell also employed circulation agents in isolated areas in Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, New York State, Illinois, South Carolina and Georgia, which are not presented on this map.

<sup>34</sup>Brooke County is located on the sliver of land that separates Pennsylvania and Ohio, in what is now West Virginia.

<sup>35</sup>R. Albert Mohler, "Christian Index," in P. Mark Fackler and Charles H. Lippy, eds., *Popular Religious Magazines of the United States* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1995), 139-140.

<sup>36</sup>*Columbian Star*, vol. 1, no. 1 (February 2, 1822).

<sup>37</sup>In a dated but relevant study, Errett Gates argues that opposition to Campbell in the Baptist associations Virginia and Kentucky, voiced primarily between 1826 and 1832, was the primary impulse for Campbell's being "forced out" of the Baptist ranks. See Errett Gates, *The Early Relation and Separation of the Baptists and Disciples* (Chicago: Christian Century Company, 1904).

<sup>38</sup>In 1810, thirty-seven churches with a combined membership of 9,628 comprised the Dover Association, making it far and away the largest Association of Baptists in Virginia. Reuben E. Alley, *A History of Baptists in Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Baptist General Board, 1973), 161.

<sup>39</sup>The Dover Statement is reprinted in Alley, p. 209-211.

<sup>40</sup>Semple was long-time minister to the Bruington Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia and also taught school there. Semple was deeply committed to mission efforts and denominational service, and even helped organize the Triennial Convention in 1814, the first national meeting of Baptists in America. Semple served as the convention's president from 1820-1831. In addition, Semple was president of the board of Trustees at Columbian College.

<sup>41</sup>*Christian Baptist* vol. 1, no. 5 (December 1, 1823).

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