

## THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

### Int.

1. Aim: To show how the idea developed of returning to 1<sup>st</sup> century Christianity.
2. Jer. 6:16 "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [therein]."
3. The story of the church
  - a. God prepared the perfect plan - Eph. 1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"
  - b. God presented the perfect plan to man - Gal. 4:4 "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"
  - c. Man departed from the perfect plan - the Great Apostasy - "Let no man deceive you by any means: for [that day shall not come], except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." 2 Thes. 2:3-4
4. Man sought to return to the perfect plan
  - a. The reformation - the protestant reformation was the beginning of the return to God's perfect plan
  - b. All of these men in the reformation movement had been reared as Roman Catholics
  - c. They sought to reform and remove the corrupt doctrines and practices of this Roman system

- d. While the reformation did much to clear away the accumulations of the centuries which obscured New Testament practices, it failed to restore the New Testament patterns.
  - e. Each religious group became a denomination with their own creeds and statements of beliefs.
  - f. Their work resulted in the Protestant Reformation & protestant denominationalism - at the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were over 150 different groups
5. The time was ripe for a Restoration movement to be launched.
- a. Men in Europe and American began to ask "Why can't we have Christianity like they did in the first century?"
  - b. Can we not go back to the old paths and follow them?
  - c. Thus they began the process of restoring 1<sup>st</sup> century Christianity to the world!!

## Discussion

### **I. CIRCUMSTANCES OR CAUSES FOR THE RESTORATION**

#### A. Increased circulation of the Bible

- 1. The Bible was now more readily available to everyone
- 2. As men learned more of the word of God they thought less of human creeds
- 3. The question in the minds of many men was: "Why not go back to the Bible and do away with creeds?"

#### B. Dissatisfaction with Human Creeds

- 1. The creeds became the cause of much confusion and discussion
- 2. As the denominations multiplied they published news creed books and confessions of faith.

3. It became evident that the Reformation Movement was failing to restore New Testament Christianity.

#### C. Sin of Division

1. As men studied the New Testament they recognized the sin of religious division
2. They saw that denominationalism was preventing the answer to Christ's prayer for unity among his followers.
3. John 17:20-21 "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."
4. They saw that division was weakening the forces of God

#### D. Calvinistic doctrines

1. The teachings of John Calvin were not readily accepted by all
2. The idea that all men are born totally depraved and that if a baby died it would be punished in an eternal hell was repulsive to logical minds.
  - a. Some reacted by losing all interest in religion
  - b. Others became infidels
  - c. Others wanted to learn more about what the Bible really taught
3. This last group helped restore the church
4. They knew that Calvinism could not be right !!!!

## E. They desired unity

1. They read what Jesus wrote before he died - John 17:20-21
2. The basis for this unity was not possible with creeds, but with the Bible.
3. The method of achieving their unity was restoration - restoring the perfect plan given by God.
4. They did not want man's church they wanted the Lord's church.

**II. THE PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATION**

## A. Christ as Supreme authority

1. He had the right to give orders - Matt. 28:18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Power = authority
2. This would eliminate creeds and human authority.
3. Their plea became: Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.
4. 1 Pet. 4:11a "If any man speak, [let him speak] as the oracles of God;"

## B. Proper division between the O.T. and the N.T.

1. 2 Tim. 2:1 "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2. 2 Tim 2:15 (ASV) " Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth."
3. Rightly Diving - handling aright, expound correctly, explain

- C. Recognize the N.T. pattern of the church
  - 1. The book of Acts tells of the beginning
  - 2. The church in the 1<sup>st</sup> century was planned by God
  - 3. Autonomy of the local church - no authority over another congregation or from another congregation
  - 4. Unity of all Christians

### **III. SOME OF THE LEADERS IN THE RESTORATION**

- A. The early leaders in England
  - 1. Tottlebank, England - In an old church building there is a book that dates in 1600's in which it tells of a "church of Christ". In the building today is a communion table with a pewter cup.
  - 2. Furness District of Lancashire, England - - In 1669 there existed a group of eight churches of Christ. An old minute book has been found of the year 1669 and it shows that they called themselves by the name of church of Christ, practiced baptism by immersion, celebrated the Lord's Supper each Lord's day and had elders and deacons.
  - 3. Scotland - in 1735 a young preacher named John Davis was preaching New Testament Christianity in the Fife district of Scotland. This was 25 years before Thomas Campbell was born.

B. Some of the first leaders in America

1. One of these was James O'Kelley (1735?-1826) who with others of kindred spirit in 1793 formed a confederation known as "Republican Methodists."
  - a. One particular complaint which had led to their revolt was the power of the superintendent to assign preachers to their appointments without right of appeal (by the preachers) to the General Conference.
  - b. The next year the Republican Methodists met in Surry County, Virginia and drew up an agreement, three points of which are particularly noteworthy:
    - (1) to recognize Christ as the only head of the church,
    - (2) to call themselves simply "Christians," and
    - (3) to regard the Bible as their only creed and the sufficient rule of faith and practice.
  - c. Though O'Kelley continued to cling to false religious practices, such as sprinkling, in some respects he was definitely faced in the direction of restoration.
  
2. Abner Jones and Elias Smith
  - a. In Vermont and New Hampshire just after the turn of the century two Baptist preachers, Elias Smith and Abner Jones, followed suit.
  - b. They worked to establish "free" churches in New England, rejecting human creeds and all religious designations except that of "Christian." They endeavored to worship after the New Testament order. They accepted the Bible as their rule of faith and practice.

- c. Jones and Smith had not heard of O'Kelly and his work, but they had their New Testament and were seeking to get back to it.
  - d. Like O'Kelley, they had far to go, but had also gone far.
3. Barton W. Stone
- a. About the time that Smith and Jones established their movement a Presbyterian preacher in Kentucky by the name of Barton W. Stone (1772-1844) began to have misgivings about the doctrines of his church.
    - (1) Stone was a bewildered young man who wanted to be saved but had failed to undergo any "experience" which, as he had been taught, was to be regarded as proof that he was one of the "elect".
    - (2) He was urged to preach by friends in the Presbyterian church although he had received no "Call" to preach and did not accept the Westminster Confession of Faith in full.
    - (3) He was assigned to preach at the Concord and Cane Ridge Churches in Kentucky in 1798.
  - b. Presbyterian doctrine taught that men were totally depraved and unable to believe.
    - (1) If this were true, Stone asked himself, what good did it do to preach and persuade men to believe?
    - (2) He and others of similar sentiment began to preach the universality of the gospel and faith produced by the word of God as a condition of salvation.
    - (3) He preached the Great Commission of Christ as it is revealed in the N.T.

- c. In 1803 he attended the trial of Richard McNemar who was brought before the Presbytery of Ohio for preaching contrary to the Confession of Faith
- (1) He and 5 other preachers knew they were guilty of the same offence.
  - (2) So they withdrew themselves from their Presbyterian presbytery, they formed the Springfield Presbytery in 1804.
  - (3) However, they soon concluded that there was no authority for such an arrangement and announced its self-dissolution in "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery."
  - (4) "We will, that his body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling."
  - (5) In it they also rejected creeds and the title, "Reverend," and supported congregational autonomy.
- d. Some years later Stone became convinced, and began to preach, that baptism was to be administered to the penitent believer for the remission of sins.
- (1) One of the really heart-breaking experiences of Elder Stone was that of deciding for himself the mode of Christian baptism.
  - (2) It was not long after he, and his associates, came to the Bible itself that there was a dissatisfaction with their former belief on the subject.
  - (3) Elder Stone had been a believer in sprinkling, and had taught it, and now to face his old faith and the fact and fervor of his teaching, and then to publicly accept and practice immersion as the only mode of Christian baptism, was not an easy task, even for a man as strong as he.

- (4) Of this experience and event he says: "The brethren, elders and deacons came together on this subject; for we had agreed previously with one another to act in concert, and not to adventure on any thing new without advice from one another. At this meeting we took up the matter in a brotherly spirit, and concluded that every brother and sister should act freely, and according to their conviction of right--and that we should cultivate the long-neglected grace and [17] forbearance toward each other--they who should be immersed should not despise those who were not, and vice versa. Now, the question arose, who will baptize us? The Baptists would not, except we united with them; and there were no elders among us who had been immersed. It was finally concluded among us that if we were authorized to preach, we were also authorized to baptize. The work then commenced, the preachers baptized one another, and crowds came and were also baptized. My congregation very generally submitted to it, and it soon obtained generally, and yet the pulpit was silent on the subject. In brother Marshall's congregation there were many who wished baptism. As brother Marshall had not faith in the ordinance, I was called upon to administer. This displeased him, and a few others.
- (5) "The subject of baptism now engaged the attention of the people very generally, and some, with myself, began to conclude that it was ordained for the remission of sins, and ought to be administered in the name of Jesus to all believing penitents."

(6) Elder Stone's idea of baptism is expressed in the following words, which are found in a letter addressed to Elder David Purviance, his old-time companion in service: "It is no article of my faith that God cannot, and will not, forgive and save the penitent believer without immersion--but if a man knows to do right, and does it not, to him it is sin. Our duty is to teach the good and the right way, and not teach two or more ways to obtain the same end."

4. These men: O'Kelly, Jones, Smith, and Stone were pleading for a return to the New Testament order of things. This was done without the knowledge of what the others were doing.

### C. Thomas Campbell

1. Although his son is a more illustrious figure in Restoration history, Thomas Campbell preceded his son in spearheading the Restoration.
  - a. He came to America May 27, 1807. Shortly after his arrival from Ireland, Campbell found himself in trouble with his Presbyterian superiors over his alleged false teaching.
  - b. He withdrew from the Presbyterian Church and formed the "Christian Association of Washington" (Pennsylvania).
  - c. Campbell had become convinced that human creeds were the cause of religious division and took as his guiding principal: "where the Bible speaks, we speak; where the Bible is silent, we are silent."
  - d. In the light of this principle infant baptism was rejected.

2. In 1809 Campbell wrote his famous "Declaration and Address" which set forth the views and aims of the Association. The main points were:
    - a. The unity of the Church. - - "That the church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, constitutionally one."
    - b. Christian Fellowship - - That, although there must be separate local congregations, yet they should be one with no schisms and discord.
    - c. Terms of Communion - - That nothing be required of Christians as articles of faith but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God.
    - d. That the New Testament is supreme authority for Christians in all matters of faith and practice."
    - e. When Thomas Campbell and his associates renounced their allegiance to a creed and announced their purpose to be guided by the New Testament alone, they were unaware of what had been done by others already mentioned, but they were taking steps in the same direction.
  3. Meanwhile, his family back in Ireland was making plans to join him in America.
- D. Alexander, his son, had broken away from the Presbyterian Church shortly before leaving school in Scotland for reunion with his father.
1. Alexander Campbell came to America on Sept. 29, 1809.
    - a. However, after reading his father's Declaration and Address, he happily found himself in substantial agreement with him.
    - b. On May 4, 1811 they formed an independent congregation called "Brush Run"
      - (1) They started with a membership of 30
      - (2) Most of these had been sprinkled as a baby

- (3) Some of them changed their convictions about baptism and requested immersion.
  - (4) But the Campbells were not convinced that infant baptism was unscriptural.
  - (5) When Alexander Campbell and his wife had their first child they were brought face to face with the question
  - (6) He began studying the Bible very intently to see what it taught. He was soon convinced that only a penitent believer was a subject for baptism and that the word baptism meant immersion.
  - (7) On June 12, 1812 Alexander and Thomas Campbell and several of the family members were immersed in Buffalo Creek.
2. This stand on immersion made for them enemies with the Presbyterians but made friends among the Baptists.
    - a. Thereafter the Campbell's became associated with the Baptists, but the association proved to be too uncomfortable. Later they severed all connection with the Baptists.
    - b. In forthcoming years he achieved wide recognition for his remarkable abilities as a preacher, debater, writer, and college president.
  3. He edited the Christian Baptist and the Millennial Harbinger for many years.
  4. He is recognized as the outstanding figure in the Restoration movement.

## Conclusion

1. The Plea of the Restoration Movement - "Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent."
2. Many left denominationalism as the various groups came together to restore primitive Christianity to the world.
3. Some of the leaders of the restoration movement were: O'Kelly, Smith, Jones, Stone, T. Campbell, and A. Campbell.
  - a. All these and others who were involved in restoring the church were simply men.
  - b. They are only to be followed as they followed Christ and his teachings.
  - c. 1 Cor. 11:1 "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
  - d. We all have the scriptures and are required to speak where they speak and remain silent where they are silent.
4. The churches of Christ are pleading that all the doctrines which divide men may be eliminated by uniting on the word of God.
  - a. The churches of Christ are not following the Campbells or any other man or set of men.
  - b. It is our desire to be undenominational Christians as work for the unity which Christ prayed so earnestly !
5. Is it possible to have 1<sup>st</sup> century Christianity today?
  - a. The same seed will produce the same fruit
  - b. The seed is the word of God - Lk. 8:11 "The seed is the word of God."
  - c. Wheat taken from the tombs in Egypt that is 2,000 years old will still produce wheat, not corn or beans.

- d. The seed, the word of God planted in good and honest hearts will produce the same as it produced in Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago.
  6. Do we need a new religion for a new age? No !!
    - a. God made the sun, air, water, to meet our physical needs. Our physical needs are the same today.
    - b. When God made the church he made it to fit the spiritual needs of man. Man's needs are the same as they were 2,000 years ago.
    - c. We need to follow the old paths that Jesus taught and the early disciples taught!!
  7. Jer. 6:16 "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where [is] the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk [therein]."
  8. Let us restore New Testament Christianity.
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