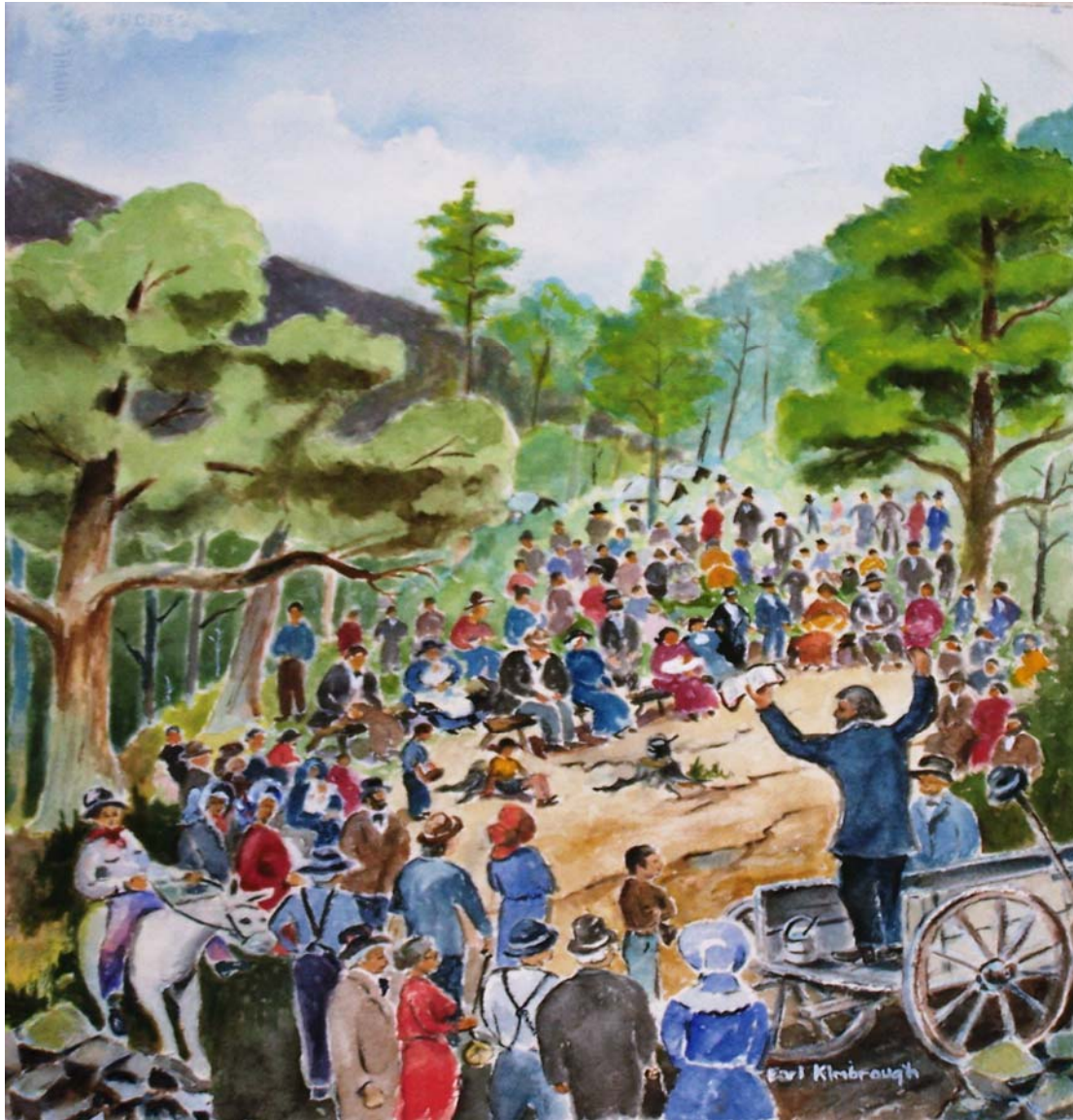


# The Alabama Restoration Journal

An Historical Perspective of  
Churches of Christ In Alabama



*In Memory of*  
**Elisha Randolph & The Lacon Mountain**  
**Camp Meeting ca. 1825**

VOLUME 2

*February 01, 2007*

ISSUE 1

## A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

The object of The Alabama Restoration Journal is to preserve and disseminate an historical record of the Restoration Movement primarily as it functioned in Alabama prior to World War II.

Brotherhood controversies as they unfolded in the years following this period are not included in this history, not because they lack historical validity, but because they do not fall within the frame of our primary time and area of coverage and because our interest is basically in our common roots.

Some articles and items may extend beyond our borders of state and time period, when the editor deems them pertinent to the main objective, when they are reflective of, or connected directly with, earlier history, or when they are purely of a human interest nature.

The Journal is not a "church paper" and is not designed to teach doctrine as such. It will not promote any hobby, controversy, or theological point of view that does not fall within the scope of the Restoration ideal within the time and area of primary interest.

The editor and contributing editors are responsible for keeping the material they submit for publication, whether written by them or selected from other sources, in keeping with the objects of The Journal.

The editor will retain the right to make the final determination of whether an article, or a portion thereof, fits the objective of The Journal.

No editing of material, other than routine editorial work, will be made on any writer's work without his prior knowledge and consent.

All historical material submitted for publication must be verifiable by documentation. Any opinions or conclusions based in part or whole upon supposition, while valid, will be given as such and not as historical facts.

Simple documentation may be supplied within the articles published, but it will be our purpose generally to omit footnotes.

The editors may not agree on all aspects of New Testament Christianity as currently practiced, but they have a common interest in Restoration history that transcends other differences, hold one another as brethren in Christ, and consider each other as committed to and capable of representing the Restoration ideal of speaking where the Bible Speaks and being silent where Bible is silent.

The writing of a particular story or the recording a particular event should be understood as reflecting the editor and associate editors perception of history and not necessarily as reflective of their own personal view.

Every effort will be made by the editor and writers to record history as it is and not to rewrite it as they might like for it to be. Historical revisionism is not the object of The Journal and will be excluded to the extent of our ability.

Source information for all articles will be available for those who request same.

The Editors

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## OUR COVER

Once again, Earl Kimbrough has done another outstanding cover for this issue. This painting, of an early camp meeting in Alabama, is done in memory of Elisha Randolph and other pioneer preachers who led the way in the very early days. If you would care to order a print, you may contact us at (256)668-3135 ..... LEW

# The Alabama Restoration Journal

*An Historical Perspective of churches of Christ in Alabama*

*"Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is," Jer 6:16*



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Volume No. 2 Issue No. 1 Date February 01, 2007

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## YESTERDAY David Smitherman

Yesterday...it exists only in fading memory, worn out photographs, and history books. And yet, it is one of the finest learning centers available to us if we will only allow ourselves to be taught.

However, there is no living space in yesterday, so don't plan to reside there. As pleasant as it was, we cannot recall it, and Solomon warned against trying to live in it (Eccl. 7:10). Although reflections upon its achievements can be encouraging, be careful: yesterday is often larger than life. How we remember things being and how they really were are often two different things. Many, though, would not want to live in yesterday. For them it is a haunted house that is filled with regret, and memories of mistakes and failures they would like to forget (Gal. 1:13).

But as wonderful or as humiliating as it may be, yesterday is not our savior, nor will it necessarily condemn us. It makes little difference how faithful we were (1 Tim. 1:19), what we meant to do (Acts 24:25), or thought we would have done (Matt. 23: 29-36). God's standard for judging is not yesterday, and one's acceptance before God is not described in the past tense. And, regardless of past mistakes, God's grace and mercy are sufficient to forgive and to forget even if we are unable to do so (Ps. 103:12).

And even if the achievements of yesterday were great, remember that the memories of men are short: we, along with our accomplishments, will not likely be immortal. Yesterday will soon be forgotten by tomorrow's generation (Ecc. 2:16; 9:13-18). "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here..." was not true of Lincoln's words but will be of ours.

What yesterday was is but a reflection of what tomorrow will be. Others have said it better: "Straight ahead lies yesterday," and "Those who are ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it." Solomon's conclusion was, "There is nothing new under the sun," (Eccl. 1:9-11). Such statements remind us that looking back can help us to see ahead. Moses encouraged the Jews to, "remember the days of old...ask your father...your elders, and they will tell you," (Deut. 32:7). And because Rehoboam refused this counsel, he led a nation to divide (1 Kings 12:8). Yesterday brethren fought and churches divided,

and the next generation does the same. A careful look at yesterday might have prevented it.

Yesterday reminds us of how short life is (Job 14:1-2). Our rapidly growing collection of yesterdays make us humble. "True, today we are here, but tomorrow may see just a grave in the vale and a mem'ry of me." How easy it is to count our yesterdays. How impossible it is to know of our tomorrows.

Yesterday...our knowledge and memories of it can challenge and give courage, or depress and weaken resolve. What power there is in yesterday! Allow its power to aid in living happier today and in anticipating a better tomorrow.

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Brother Smitherman has hit the proverbial nail on the head. We certainly can learn from yesterday. That is one of the reasons for this journal being published. Many of the problems that the church faces today could be solved by a careful study of yesterday along with prayerful and studious application of the scriptures. The lessons of yesterday have never been more timely than now. The problems we face today have all been faced and dealt with before.

We were visiting with Brother Lloyd Barker recently and he was reminiscing about growing up in Kentucky and his many years of preaching the ancient gospel. He commented that *"these old timers sacrificed so much for us and so many are showing their gratitude by just throwing it all away."* His words ring so true. Many of our current generation have no idea of the hard work and dedication that these old pioneers had for the cause of Christ. Many worked long hours in the fields and then rode a farm wagon or horse or maybe a mule, often many miles, to preach the gospel to a small crowd.

*"Where would the church be today if the sacrificing preachers of past generations had felt sorry enough for themselves to quit preaching? Many of the churches that thrive today and thousands of Christians who now enjoy the blessings of liberty in Christ are the enduring work begun by underpaid and mistreated preachers. These men labored under trying circumstances, but they kept preaching because they labored not for "the meat which*

perisheth" and because they were looking for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

*Earl Kimbrough- Searching The Scriptures Vol 18 1977*

They planted the seeds and the Church experienced possibly its greatest growth, since the days of the Apostles, in the early part of the last century. These men and women had a zeal for the cause that we would be "hard pressed" to find in our day. Lloyd continued, "we have it too easy now to have an appreciation for their sacrifice." We have beautiful, comfortable buildings, cushioned pews and air conditioning. We have the best study aids or "lesson leaves," as the old timers referred to Bible class materials. We have television, Radio and the internet. No generation has ever had the technological advantages that we have. Yet, if those in the know are correct, we are losing members each day., and are not adding members to make up the difference. There are probably many reasons for this but I would suggest that near the top of the list is an entire generation that has been fed "milk toast" instead of the "meat of the word" and as a result have developed an apathetic attitude that has killed their zeal for the cause. They have no appreciation for those of "yesterday." They have no respect for the Biblical authority that was the guiding light for those of yesterday. In fact, the term "Biblical authority" is not even in their vocabulary. Yes, we need to study "yesterday" and learn from it. "Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is," Jer 6:16. There is indeed "so much power in yesterday!".....LEW

### News & Notes    **Historic Marker At Berry**

The "unveiling" of the Historic Marker at the site of Alabama Christian College of Berry was held on October 15, 2006. Many of the descendant's of students of the school were in attendance. We are still amazed at the interest that has been shown in the school and its legacy.

Brother Kimbrough was the principal speaker and gave a splendid address on the history of the school and its impact on the church in Northwest Alabama. (See page 23 for transcript.) He touched on the early history of the Restoration Movement in that area of the State with some background on those involved.

All and all it was a wonderful day and one that those in attendance will remember for the rest of their lives. A special thank you to the brethren at Berry. They are to be commended for their interest and their wonderful hospitality. Special thanks also to brother Norman Berry, the minister at Berry, for the excellent job he did and to Brother Rolf Feltman for his contribution. A very special thanks also to Sister Shirley Franks for the original introductions without which none of this would have happened.

Photos of the marker are included along with Brother Kimbrough's speech. If you are in the area, drive by the site and take a look. We think it is a beautiful reminder of days gone by. We think you will agree.....LEW

### In This Issue

We begin this Issue with a great article by *Bro. Kimbrough* entitled **Alabama Camp Meetings**. This is complemented by his wonderful painting of the Lacon Mountain Camp Meeting that graces our cover. Earl outdid himself on this one. *Bro. Richey* follows with **Memory Of A Forgotten Infant**, a touching account of the death of F.D. Srygley's young daughter and the unusual events that followed. Frank does an excellent job relating the sad story. Earl has two short articles; **Voice Of The Pioneers** followed by "**As Long As Interest Justifies.**" Both make an interesting read. (Note the photo of a "young" Granville Tyler.) *Uncle Issac* holds sway with an interesting letter to the Apostle Paul. As usual, he steps on a toe or two. *Bro. Earl* has another edition of **Restoration Ramblings** from **The Heart Of Dixie**. *Chester Estes* reminisces about his early preaching years in Marion County, in an article titled "**As I Remember.**" Earl has another humorous offering (*One of the Editor's favorites*) which he calls "**Not Like A Hen After A Hawk.**"

We begin a new column which we will run from time to time, which we have decided to call "**Women of The Restoration.**" The first offering is the obituary and other comments about Sister **Estelle Shepherd** of Berry, Alabama. It was written by the lamented *Frank Baker*. **The Poets Corner** this issue. is a delightful two poems by two old antagonist. *Ben Bogard* printed ( it was actually written by T.R. Burnett) the first, and *Brother W. Curtis Porter* writes the sequel. *Larry Whitehead* has an article about the church and cemetery at **New River** and some of the greats that have gone before and are buried there. Our Highways and Hedges offering this issue is a piece by *Earl Kimbrough* titled **Col. Prices Stand**. It highlights the difficulties of travel in the early days. *Bro. Flavil Nichols* has an article, adapted by *Bro. Scott Harp*, on a grand old preacher of days of old, **Charlie Alexander Wheeler**. Many souls came to repentance under the preaching of this old soldier of the cross. *Scott* has another article on a great preacher whose influence was tremendous in Northwest Alabama, **John T. Underwood**. Earl has another offering which he calls **Looking For A Phillip In The Alabama Wilderness**. This is a story about an early proclaimer of the word in the Tennessee Valley and his trials and tribulations. *Frank* has a companion article to *Earl's* Camp Meeting article dealing with **Emotionalism** in the early days. This is very timely today.

We have included *Bro. Kimbrough's* speech at the "unveiling" of the historic marker at Berry. We think it was classic. Continuing our campmeeting theme, *Brother Wayne Kilpatrick* has a thought provoking piece that has a great lesson, titled **You Gave Me The Wrong Book**. *Scott* has a third offering on another old soldier of the cross, **James H. Harden**. Earl also has an article entitled **The "Ideal" Preacher's Wife**. If this doesn't make all you preachers appreciate your wives, nothing will. **The Alabama Restoration Album** has some interesting photos and *Larry* has the final Say. Hope you enjoy.....LEW

## ALABAMA CAMP MEETINGS

Earl Kimbrough

A fascinating aspect of the Restoration movement in which Barton W. Stone became the principal leader was the camp meeting revivals that advanced the movement. Camp meetings became a prominent feature of the American frontier under the preaching of James McGready in about 1800. McGready was a Presbyterian preacher who initiated the Second Awakening in the West, a religious revival that was a reaction to the gross immorality brought on by the Revolutionary War and its irreligious aftermath. McGready's first camp meeting took place in July 1800 at Gasper River Church in southwestern Kentucky. It was followed by one in Logan County, Kentucky, in 1801. This led to other camp meetings in the state, the most famous of which took place at Cane Ridge, in Bourbon County, Kentucky, near Stone's home and one of the churches he served as a Presbyterian pastor.

The camp meeting at Cane Ridge in August 1801, had a major impact on Stone's severing his ties with the Presbyterians and helping to launch a movement to unite Christians on the Bible alone. It has been estimated that between 20,000 and 25,000 people attended the Cane Ridge Revival. At the time, Lexington, the largest city in the state, had a population of 1,795 persons. In describing the camp meeting at Cane Ridge, Stone said: "The meeting commenced on Friday, and continued six or seven days. It was truly a solemn scene to see the multitudes coming together, and the number of wagons and carriages bringing provisions and tents to stay on the ground; for...no neighborhood could entertain and support the multitudes that came together....Long tables were spread with provisions, and all invited to eat. This was the beginning and introduction of camp meetings." (*Christian Messenger*, Feb., 1827.)



*Artist Sketch of Cane Ridge 1801*

Camp meetings were conducted by Methodists and Baptists, as well as Christians. For some forty years, the phenomenon was common on the frontier. Literally hundreds of camp meetings were conducted each year until 1840, when the peak of their popularity had passed. When the first preachers allied with the movement

associated with Stone's name, came to North Alabama in the mid-1820s, it was during the "glory days" of camp meeting revivals. The first Restoration preachers to penetrate the northern counties of the state naturally brought the camp meeting with them. For a period of about fifteen years, camp meetings were conducted annually in Lauderdale, Limestone, Madison, Jackson, Morgan, and Blount Counties.

There were perhaps two basic reasons for the great degree of emotionalism associated with camp meetings before this time. First, there was the nature of conversion in which sinners prayed long and hard to "come through" to salvation. Second, as one writer said: "Because they were dealing with a moving, floating population, the preachers at these Camp Meetings—as they came to be called—had to press for an immediate decision. This led them to emphasize and play to the emotions: compressing what Winthrop Hudson refers to as the cycle of guilt, despair, hope, and assurance into a few days or hours. The resulting conversion would occur in an outburst of shouting, weeping, falling, running, jumping, jerking, and barking." (Terry Matthews, *Religion in the South*, A Wake Forest University Syllabus.)

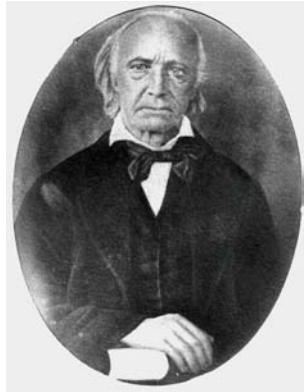
While the camp meetings conducted by Christians in North Alabama retained much of their emotional nature, they were tempered almost from their beginning in the state in the 1820s by the introduction of baptism for the remission of sins by B. F. Hall, at camp meetings in Jackson and Lauderdale Counties. This changed the nature of conversion from the "mourner's bench" and religious experiences as evidence of salvation, to simply hearing, believing, and obeying the gospel, as taught by Luke in Acts 2. From about 1825 until about 1840, camp meetings were probably the most effective means of converting sinners and increasing the membership of churches of Christ in Alabama.

James E. Matthews and Ephraim D. Moore, who lived near Florence, reported no less than five camp meetings in the northern tier of Alabama counties as early as 1827. Moore attended the "annual meeting" at Antioch in Jackson County, which began on a Thursday and continued until about noon the following Tuesday, which seems typical of the duration. He said he had been preaching twenty years and attended many camp meetings during that time, but this one at Antioch "far surpassed any thing of the kind I ever beheld." (*Christian Messenger*, Oct. 1827.)

About a month later, Moore wrote about a camp meeting of the same duration near Florence in Lauderdale County. In September of that year, Matthews made a three week tour through North Alabama. He reported that during this time he attended three camp meetings. There was one each in Limestone, Morgan, and Blount Counties.



While he did not identify them, he also said: "Several other Camp Meetings have been held in this state, where the increase of the church has been considerable." (Ibid.)



**Ephraim D. Moore**

While camp meetings among Methodists and other groups in the nineteenth century differed in some ways from those among churches of Christ, they were all basically the same. The differences consisted mainly in the message of the Christians and some activities growing out of it. However, the aura of the camp meeting was otherwise pretty much indistinguishable among all groups. The people

came from far and near, as transportation permitted. They came in wagons, carriages, carts, on horseback, and on foot. They brought food, quilts, blankets, and other necessities, along with tents in which to camp. Some covered their wagons with canvases as shelter from the elements. Clearings in the woods, or brush arbors, provided places for assembling. The people sat on logs, the ground, or on chairs and stools brought from home. A wagon bed, a stump, or a small platform made an adequate pulpit. Observers considered a camp meeting as a never-to-be-forgotten experience to the campers.

One witness said: "The glare of the blazing campfires falling on a dense assembly...and reflected back from long ranges of tents upon every side; hundreds of candles and lamps suspended among the trees, together with numerous torches flashing to and fro, throwing an uncertain light upon the tremulous foliage, and giving an appearance of dim and indefinite extent to the depth of the forest, [together with the singing, exhortations, prayers, and the shouting and moaning of convicted sinners], all conspired to invest the scene with terrific interest, and to work up the feelings to the highest pitch of excitement." (William Warren Sweet, *The Story of Religion in America*, 229.)

The camp meetings in Alabama seem to have been largely limited to the mountains in the northern tier of counties from Lauderdale to Jackson, dipping south into Morgan and Blount Counties. However, some were held in Fayette and Marion Counties. The cause of their demise was due to the changing conditions of the frontier. One of the attractions of the camp meeting was the opportunity it gave neighbors in a sparsely settled land to speak and share one another's company. It provided a welcomed break from the isolation and drudgery of frontier life. As the land became more heavily populated and settlements grew, there was less the need for such gatherings. Also many of the main leaders in the camp meeting were scattering to the more western states of Mississippi,

Arkansas, and Texas. Some who remained in Alabama migrated to Marion and Fayette Counties where they established strong congregations, but apparently held but few camp meetings. These seem to have been replaced by protracted meetings in communities where there were established congregations or in places where efforts were made to establish new ones.

Clifton E. Olmstead, writing about camp meetings in general, said: "By the 1840s their peak popularity had passed in the trans-Allegheny West and the revivals gradually diminished. One factor in their decline was the frequency with which they were held in contiguous areas. Another was their bad reputation which unfortunately grew worse with the passage of time. The trend from henceforth was toward the indoor revival." (Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States*, 261.) As congregations were established in closer proximity, preachers tended to preach in circuits, often ministering to four or five different congregations. While preachers were still scarce, the more regular preaching lessened the appeal of the camp meeting. Much of the preaching was on fundamentals and so conversions were made in all of these efforts, apparently reducing the "need" for camp meetings.

The passing of the camp meetings must have been lamented by the old timers like Elisha Randolph and James E. Matthews. But times were changing and the camp meeting yielded to other methods of evangelism as the rough and rugged frontier gradually gave way to a more settled way of life. Nevertheless, the gospel that touched the hearts of the early Alabama settlers was not limited to frontier conditions. It could also move sinners to repent and be baptized under more settled conditions. So having served its purpose, the camp meeting faded into history, but the gospel that kindled its fires of revival kept marching on.....



*Elisha Randolph, John Mulkey and others held several camp meetings in Morgan County, Alabama in 1825. These meetings resulted in the following churches being established: Somerville, Brushy and the Old Log Church on Lacon Mountain in then Blount County...Editor*

**Lacon Mountain Camp Meeting ca. 1825**

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## MEMORY OF A FORGOTTEN INFANT

Frank Richey

In May 2005, while walking through the Gresham Cemetery in Florence, Alabama, with restoration historians Wayne Kilpatrick and Earl Kimbrough, I heard from them for the first time the story of an infant buried there. The Gresham Cemetery is named for the family of Philemon Gresham, the father-in-law of Theophilus Brown Larimore, one of the most prominent gospel preachers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The cemetery is the final resting place of many of Larimore's family and friends, including his first wife, Esther, son Toppie (Theophilus Brown Larimore Jr.), and many of his Gresham in-laws. In the northwest corner of the cemetery is the grave of an infant girl, not related to the Larimore's or Gresham's. The grave is that of Mamie Srygley, the infant daughter of Fletcher Douglas Srygley and his wife, Ella Parkhill Srygley.

One needs only to walk through an old cemetery to become aware of the great number of infants and children that died in their youth in years gone by. The death of a child was a common thing before the advent of modern medicine and drugs that could cure childhood illnesses. In days past, the sneeze, wheeze, or cough of a small child was a sounding alarm for young parents. These could signal the onset of an illness that could take the life of an infant or child and devastate a young family. One can only imagine the inconsolable grief of a young family as they buried an innocent child.

Before we relate the story of little Mamie Srygley, let us explore the reason why this little girl was buried in the Gresham cemetery.

In 1868, T. B. Larimore came to North Alabama to the Rock Creek church in the mountains of Franklin County (later to become part of the newly established Colbert County). At this time, Larimore was twenty-six years old, a Civil War veteran (who served as a Confederate spy), and had, since the war, obeyed the gospel and determined to become a gospel preacher. As the young preacher approached the Rock Creek building, he noticed a boy about thirty feet away. Larimore, recalling this occasion, gives the following description of the young boy he met that day:

"... the first time, I approached the door of that old log cabin meetinghouse, a penniless stranger in a strange land, I saw, standing about thirty feet away, to the right and front of me, twenty feet from the door I was approaching, a bright, little black-eyed, bareheaded, barefooted boy; a picture of health, happiness, peace, and contentment; perfectly beautiful to me then as, on memory's page, now. His cheeks were rosy; his eyes were black. Faultless in form and feature, he stood silent, motionless, and erect."  
"He was standing there to see 'the preacher' as he passed, probably not caring to ever be nearer him than then.

Instinctively I turned toward him, went to him, took his little right hand into mine, put my left arm around him, said something I deemed appropriate to him, and led him into the house. From that day to the day when, in the delirium of death, he, suddenly recognizing me, enthusiastically grasped me by both hands and thrilled my soul with an expression I can never forget; he was my devoted friend."

At this impromptu meeting, neither the boy nor Larimore could fathom the significance of the association that would develop between them. If there was ever a Paul—Timothy relationship in modern times, it was the relationship between Larimore and this young boy. The boy's name was Fletcher Douglas Srygley. In the relatively short life of F. D. Srygley (forty-three years), he would become an outstanding gospel preacher, front-page editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, and author of several books. Most of his books were about his mentor, friend and associate, T. B. Larimore.

F. D. Srygley attended Larimore's Mars Hill College in Florence, Alabama. By the time F. D. was seventeen-years-old, Larimore recognized Srygley's writing ability. This ability would serve him well in his life. Srygley admired his mentor, and as the boy grew to manhood, the two men became great friends with mutual admiration for each other's abilities. In the last quarter of the 19th century, Larimore became one of the most popular, if not the most popular, preacher



**Fletcher D. Srygley** in churches of Christ. It was during this time that Srygley, in his own right, became a well-known preacher and author. F. D.'s admiration for T. B. Larimore led him to write *Smiles and Tears, Or Larimore and His Boys*, a story about Larimore and his students at Mars Hill College. Over a hundred years later, the book is still widely read by those with an interest in church history. Srygley's last book, *Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore*, was completed shortly before his death.

F. D. Srygley died on August 2, 1900, just a few months shy of his forty-fourth birthday. He had been sick since his late twenties, suffering from Bright's Disease (an archaic term for kidney disease). In fact, his brother, Filo Bunyon Srygley, said when F. D. married Miss Jennie Scobey (on December 26, 1888), "he was already an invalid and that she added ten years to his life." (Obviously Filo did not use the term invalid as we would use it, since F. D. continued to preach and write during this time and fathered five children by Jennie that survived him.)

Who else but T. B. Larimore could speak at the funeral of Fletcher Douglas Srygley? The oration by Larimore, which appears in the August 30, 1900 issue of the Gospel Advocate (vol. XLII, p. 545), is pure Larimore...pure



**T.B. Larimore**

genius; the work of a wordsmith and scholar. The funeral oration delivered by Larimore capsulated the life of Fletcher Douglas Srygley. Larimore began the funeral oration by saying, "When Stonewall Jackson fell, Lee, immortal hero of the lost cause, said: I have lost my right arm. Some of us, I am one, lost infinitely more than that when F. D. Srygley fell; and the cause that can never be lost, lost much more when our dear brother ceased to write, to talk, to breathe, than the lost

cause lost when Stonewall Jackson said, 'Let us pass over the river and rest in the shade of the trees' and silently passed to the eternal shore."

The oration is replete with expressions such as "beloved friend and brother," "my devoted friend," "faithful friend, than whom no human friend was ever truer," "my bosom friend," "my constant correspondent a quarter of a century". Larimore said of Srygley, "with jealous care, (he) kept watch and ward over me, even as a brave, true husband shields and shelters the wife that he loves ... " Larimore says, "It is probable that no man on earth, even his own father not excepted, knew him more thoroughly or intimately than I."

It is in this funeral oration of Fletcher Douglas Srygley that Larimore recalled the event that took place twenty years before at Mars Hill, when Mamie, the infant daughter of F. D. and Ella Srygley, died. The young couple buried their firstborn in the Gresham Cemetery at Mars Hill, located four miles north of Florence, Alabama. F. D. was only twenty-three years old at the time of the death of his firstborn, and his child bride only eighteen years old. The young mother was overcome with grief and was inconsolable. Larimore relates the following story about this traumatic time in the life of Fletcher Douglas and Ella Parkhill Srygley.

"To him and Ella were born two sweet little girls, Mamie and Jeffie. Before Jeffie was born, Mamie was taken from the cradle to the grave; was buried at Mars Hill, Ala., where the little family then lived."

"Ella, the bereaved child mother, was inconsolable. Sighing and sobbing as if her aching heart would break, she said: 'O, if I had only kept one sweet little curl, one of

the curls I loved so well and have so often kissed, how precious it would be to me now! But my baby is gone, all gone, and how can I live without her?'"

"The sun was sinking in the west, the day on which little Mamie was buried was nearly gone, when the thoughts of that sweet curl gave birth to that heartrending wail of woe. The Mars Hill school and community were a family filled with sympathy, confidence, and love then all glad to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. "

"Brother Srygley, his own heart bleeding and almost breaking, in strictest confidence submitted a strange suggestion to some of us. The mere suggestion was all sufficient. The sun set, the moon rose, the stars appeared, midnight came. The bereaved, childless mother slept. The stillness of death reigned supreme over the community. Little Mamie's grave was emptied; her little white coffin was opened. The sweetest curl that kissed her marble brow was clipped, a precious, tiny treasure for which the mother sighed. The coffin was closed and gently lowered into the grave; the grave was filled. At the proper time and in the proper way the curl was given to the mourning, moaning mother; but she never knew the story I have just revealed."

T. B. Larimore's description of the exhumation of the body of little Mamie Srygley at midnight forges images of several men by the light of an autumn moon and the light of lanterns, using shovels to open the fresh grave of the little girl laid to rest only hours earlier. No doubt this was a task that none wanted, yet compelled by the grieving mother and suggestion of the father, the men accomplished the task before them.

Today, in the quietness of the Gresham Cemetery, the earthly remains of little Mamie Srygley, who was not quite thirteen months old when she died, rests in a small grave and waits the resurrection morning. A broken headstone silently watches over the infant's grave. Carved on the stone are these words:

MAMIE  
Daughter of  
F. D. & Ella P.  
SRYGLEY  
BORN  
Sept. 29, 1879  
DIED  
Oct. 18, 1880  
"Suffer little children  
to come unto Me"



### **The Rest of the Story      *Little Mamie's Grave***

T. B. Larimore said that Ella Parkhill was "a sweet Christian girl, scarcely sixteen years old" when she and Fletcher Douglas Srygley married on December 22, 1878. He also said she made F. D. Srygley "a good, faithful, helpful, happy wife." Less than two years after F. D. and Ella were married, their firstborn child Mamie died. It



seems that Ella was pregnant with their second child at the time, and did not live long after the birth of Jeffie. Earl West said "in a matter of a few months, she (Ella) followed her little girl to the grave" (Search for the Ancient Order, Vol. 3, p. 326). It appears that Ella never recovered from the overwhelming grief of the death of her firstborn. Larimore stated in the funeral sermon for F. D. Srygley that Ella was buried in Savannah, Tennessee. F. D. Srygley suffered a double tragedy with the death of Mamie and Ella, and was left with the responsibility of raising an infant girl, Jeffie. Four years later, while in his mid-twenties, F. D. would become sick with a kidney disease that would affect him for the rest of his short life. At the time of Srygley's death, J. C. McQuiddy said, "his affliction was heart disease, which produced dropsy" (Gospel Advocate, Aug.9, 1900, p. 505). This is probably best described in today's term as congestive heart failure.

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**Debate Review**

It happened during the Freed-Bogard debate. J.D. Tant got up and urged the Baptists who were in attendance to pay Bogard well for his services. Said Tant, "God knows I'd not preach what he is preaching for a million dollars! If you Baptists want this non-sense preached, you ought to pay well any man who is willing to do it for you."

\*\*\*\*\*

**DIAL-A-PRAYER**

Then there was this organization of atheists who decided to copy the "Dial-a-prayer" gimmick some of the churches have been using. So they got things worked out, had a number listed in the phone book, and set themselves up as the '(Atheists Dial-a-prayer" association. The trick? You dial, and dial, and dial .... No answer....*Vanguard*

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**THE VOICE OF THE PIONEERS**

**Earl Kimbrough**

The speech of the typical pioneer gospel preacher on the American frontier was filled with picturesque language. Metaphors were freely drawn from the Bible, the classics, the republican ideals of a robust young nation, and the agrarian society in which he lived. He used graphic, often moving, words to paint verbal scenes and to describe bold concepts. But if they made his diction flowery, they also made it clear.

In depicting slavery in 1832, Alexander Campbell employed a heavy brush and dark colors. He saw the institution as "that largest and blackest blot upon our national escutcheon, that many headed monster, that blighting and bloating curse under which so fair and so large a part of our beloved country groans--- that deadly Upas, whose breath pollutes and poisons everything within its influence." (*Millennial Harbinger*, 1832, p. 86)A reader did not need to know what an escutcheon is, nor to have heard of a "Upas," to perceive that Campbell held slavery to be a corroding blotch upon the nation's moral armor.

"Raccoon" John Smith was a rough-hewn preacher who turned denominationalism upside down in his native state. W. D. Frazee, in describing Smith's impact on sectarian religion, conveyed this facet of his character in one sentence: "Elder Raccoon John Smith went through Kentucky cutting and slashing like a kitchen knife whetted on a brick-bat, rough and deep, with a limited education gained at the rude log schoolhouse of that day." (*Reminiscences and Sermons*, p. 67). Who could miss the point?

It was in a gentler vein that George W. Longan, a contemporary of John Smith, spoke of his children's death. Recalling events that occurred during the fifty years he and his wife shared together, he said: "We lost two children long ago, one three years old, the other a nursing babe. They sleep sweetly, till Christ shall come, in the cemetery at Warsaw (Mo.), on the bank of the beautiful Osage, which, through all these years, has sung their lullaby in nature's loving strains. The Eternal will not forget their resting place." (*The Old Faith Restated*, p. 48.)

Today, when time is measured in fractions of a second and brevity has a premium, we haven't the time for speech like that of the pioneers. Maybe its best we don't: comparing a preacher to a kitchen knife could be too backwoodsy; or thinking a river might sing cradle songs to babes sleeping in unforgotten graves might be too mushy. Well, they might be. Yet we cannot help but feel that something has been lost in the streamlining of speech. The voice of the pioneers is an archaic voice, to be sure, but taking the time to hear it occasionally can be richly rewarding.

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**“SO LONG AS INTEREST JUSTIFIES.”**

**Earl Kimbrough**

Gospel meetings in Northwest Alabama in the earlier half of the twentieth century usually lasted two weeks, which commonly meant “fifteen days,” or through three Sundays. This was the practice with the church at Russellville as late as 1937, when Granville W. Tyler held a “fifteen day” meeting there in June. F. B. Shepherd, J. Ed Nolen, C. L. Wilkerson, Billy Norris, J. N. Armstrong, and perhaps others all held “fifteen-day” meetings at Russellville in the 1930s. Although there were exceptions, it was customary for meetings to begin and end on a Sunday. Furthermore, services were usually held twice daily, except for the day services on Saturdays.

Before World War II, Saturday was town day when “everybody” in the town and for many miles around “dressed up and went to town,” or went without much dressing up, if for no other reason than to watch the people, see the latest western picture show at the theatre, and dodge the ambeer missles



**Granville W. Tyler**

ejected from the skilled mouths of the tobacco chewers and snuff dippers who sat and gossiped on ledges in front of the stores.

H. P. Hooten of Florence, Alabama, held meetings at Russellville in 1903 and 1904. It was the custom of the time to ask a preacher back for one or two meetings, if the brethren were pleased with his work. The latter of Hooten’s two meetings was scheduled without an end date. It was to continue “so long as interest justifies.” We do not know what that actually translated into. It might be added that the sermons were generally delivered without folks watching the time. Preachers had time to really finish their lessons without grumbling from the pew.

What a difference a few decades make! Some changes in the manner of conducting gospel meetings are no doubt justified. Times change and people change with the times. But who can deny that some changes are for the worse? Some brethren now can hardly sit still for a twenty-five minute sermon three or four days in a row. If ole Brother Hooten were around today and announced a meeting to continue “so long as interest justifies,” it might be shorter than three or four days, and he might have to spend some of the time conducting funerals.

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**Truism**

No sin is small. It is against an infinite God, and may have consequences immeasurable. No grain of sand is small in the mechanism of a watch.—J. Hudson Taylor.

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**Simple Truth**

Those who don't believe in Christianity, because there are so many hypocrites in the church, are like the man who would not accept his pay because there is so much counterfeit money in circulation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Uncle Jsaac Sez



History students can determine if the following letter is authentic. If not, it is at least timely ...Like Fox news, we will let our readers decide

CHURCH OF CHRIST  
DRIFTERVILLE BITHYNIA  
A. D. 52

Paul the Apostle  
Antioch, Syria

Dear Paul,

We hasten to express our gratitude to you for recommending Demas to us as Youth Minister to assist the church here in recreation, social functions, athletics, etc. He seems to understand our peculiar problems here at Driftderville since we too have come to "love this present world." He is so dynamic. Everyone loves him and all the ladies just "ooh and aah". Demas seems especially well qualified for work in athletics since he majored in physical education at the University of Alexandria and lettered in three sports every year he was there except his freshman year. By the way, he just received an honorary Doctorate from the Laodaceian School of Preaching. He is so proud and henceforth will be known as Dr. Demas. He will make a fine Pulpit Minister someday.

We were so sorry that you could not be with us for our semi-annual Fish Fry and carnival. The church raised enough money to buy new uniforms for our soccer and basketball teams, new softball equipment, refinish the gymnasium floor and buy new uniforms for our cheerleaders. You should see them in their little outfits. They represent the Lord's church so well. We have named them "Cheerleaders for Christ." Some old fogeys complained that the uniforms were a little skimpy, but we reminded them that it is A.D. 52 and times have changed.

Things went off much smoother this year than last year at our Fall Bazaar, thanks to Dr. Demas. He surely has a knack for getting things organized. The ladies Bible class had a 100% attendance record for the "Pounds Away" weight loss program. We must say the old gals are looking good. Dr. Demas, who has an eye for such, says we've got the best looking women in the brotherhood. The program raised over two hundred farthings to help in the silverware drive for the new fellowship hall, with enough left to pay for the Elders and Preachers retreat in Macedonia in October..

The old folks class had a fortune-telling booth. Sister Demas really is a wizard at reading a crystal ball. The business men's class ran a bingo table and gave away copies of the gospel to the winners. This one scheme brought in thirty shekels. It surely was a lot of fun. We're certain the Lord was glorified and everyone attending was edified. We're looking for an even bigger time next year. We are considering a Spring Festival.

Barnabas was through Driftderville the other day bragging about the church at Paphos winning the Cyprus Invitational Hand-Ball Tournament. Have you heard how the tournament came out at Lystra? We have received no word as yet. The Ephesians were favored to retain their

regional crown. We heard that the church at Thyatira was in the finals but withdrew due to the fact that they had withdrawn fellowship from the coach of the Ephesians when he left for the Youth Minister's job at Ephesus.

The church surely is growing at Ephesus. Do you suppose they would let us in on their secrets? How do they do it? We heard by the grape-vine that a wealthy brother in the church there bought a big supply of tickets to the Olympics, that are due to be held in Ephesus this year, and gives a ticket to each student that does not miss a single "Contemporary Worship Service" over a three-months' period.

Timothy was through Driftderville the day we got the report about the ticket deal and he suggested that it sounded like pure carnality to him. But Timothy just does not seem to realize that we have a youth problem. Something just has to be done to compete with the world if we are going to keep our youth. He also created a stir by informing the congregation that the athletes in the Olympic games performed without benefit of clothing. We reminded him that this was A.D. 52 and that times had changed and that we as Christians had to learn to "blend in" with the world around us. He is so judgmental and negative. You should spend more time with him and teach him the way more perfectly.

Paul, we haven't forgotten your request that we assist young brother Nathan in his efforts at preaching the gospel in India. We just can't seem to fit it into our budget this year. Remind us in a couple of years and we will see if we can work it in. Also we regretfully must advise you that we must cancel the Gospel meeting we had planned with you for November. A conflict in scheduling has arisen as the Olympic trials are scheduled to take place that week and rehearsals for our Christmas pageant begin the following week. (By the way, Dr. Demas has planned a huge New Year's celebration to coincide with the grand opening of our remodeled Gym.) We must support our youth. Next year this time slot is filled also. Dr. Ramses David is coming up from Alexandria to conduct a 3-week seminar on "wise investing and financial responsibility." He is a personal friend of Dr. Demas, and Demas says he can teach us a thing or two about good stewardship. The boo birds are complaining that he is an idolater and thus an infidel. We had to explain once again that this is A.D. 52 and times have changed. We know you will understand.

Broad-mindedly yours,

Elders:

I. M. Worldly  
Comp Romise

R. A.Liberal  
M. I. Modern

P.S. Brother M.I. Modern has recently been appointed an Elder. His wife is not a member of the Lord's church. She is an Idolater, but she attends regularly with him. She has asked to teach the ladies Bible class. Please give us your thoughts. All of the Elders agree that it would be OK. However you know the complainers.....

Isaac wishes to thank Bro. Earnest Finley for the translation..... Til next time..... ISAAC

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## RESTORATION RAMBLINGS

Earl Kimbrough

### “DECORATION DAY” IN ALABAMA

There is an old custom in Alabama that seems to have a greater hold on the people there than in most other places. It is called “Decoration Day.” This is more than “Memorial Day” that is observed as a national holiday the last of May. In the mountains of Northwest Alabama particular cemeteries have different dates in the spring that is called “Decoration Day” for a designated cemetery, such as “Old Burselon” in Franklin County, held the third Sunday in May. While I was writing this item, as if some mysterious hand wanted to verify the point, I receive a copy of *The Seekers of the Past*, published by the Franklin County Archives and Research Center in Russellville, Alabama, which carried a list of fourteen Decoration Days scheduled for different Sundays in May. All of these were in Franklin County except for one: Cedar Tree Cemetery at Hackleburg in Marion County; and all were on a Sunday, except the one for the Pleasant Site Cemetery, which was on “Saturday before Mother’s Day.”

People who have loved ones buried in the various cemeteries among the craggy mountains of that region often feel that it is a sacred duty for them to carry flowers with which to decorate the graves of parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins, and other relatives, near and far. During the spring, variety stores, flower shops, and other retail outlets seem to be inundated with wreaths and sprays of colorful artificial flowers ready for anybody’s “Decoration Day.” The following day finds the decorated cemetery a profusion of color, expressing the people’s hope for a life after death. This practice moved John T. Lewis of Birmingham to observe in 1933 that: “All-day singings and ‘Decoration Day’ on the Lord’s days have become so popular and have proved to be such drawing cards to draw away disciples after them, that the devil had about made them permanent institutions in Alabama.” (*Gospel Advocate*, Mar, 23, 1933.)

### “THE GIANT DEFENDER OF METHODISM”

F. B. Srygley always highly respected James M. Pickens, the man who baptized his parents and helped strengthen the Rock Creek church that was started by John Taylor after the Civil War. Writing of him in 1931, Srygley said: “He was a great man and a great debater. He debated with Dr. [Jacob] Ditzler and published the debate in his paper. When only a child, I read this debate with great interest and profit. Though young, I was able to see that Dr. Ditzler had his hands full.” (*GA*, Nov. 12, 1931.) Ditzler was a great Methodist preacher whom H. Leo Boles called “the giant defender of Methodism.” Pickens debated Ditzler at McKendree Chapel in Morgan County, Alabama, in 1873. The debate appeared in Pickens’ *Southern Christian Weekly* the next year. The “doughty” doctor, whom Jesse T. Woods

described as a “braggard,” not thinking he would find such a man as Pickens in the backwoods of Northwest Alabama, “had expected an easy victory, but was doubtless as badly disappointed as in any debates he ever had, for Pickens picked him all to pieces.” (B. F. Manire, *Reminiscences of Preachers and Churches in Mississippi*, 40.) Ditzler had debated David Lipscomb at Gallatin, Tennessee, in 1871, two years before his debate with Pickens. Ditzler also had debates with Dr. T. W. Brents, L. B. Wilkes, and J. S. Sweeney.

### SINGING DOWN REFORMATION

In about 1836, James A. Butler’s posting address was Bragg’s Store, about fifteen miles east of Carlowsville in Lowndes County, or at Tuscaloosa, where *The Disciple*, a religious journal edited by Butler and Alexander Graham, was published. His work was attended by success, he said, because “the ice of sectarianism and orthodoxy is at last, in this part, broken.” But opposition and persecution continued to follow his preaching. In 1836 he told about an encounter with “a Baptist rural *vocal* musician, with his band of boisterous minstrels, actuated by previous determination to sing down reformation, (which is a new *modus operandi*, in opposition to the good cause).”

The boisterous Baptist band met Butler at one of his appointments, apparently in a public building, “for the sole purpose of discomfiting” his efforts to preach the gospel. Butler said he “awaited on the *gentleman* until 12 o’clock, and then took the pulpit, with a proposition to the musician, that, to prevent *discord*, I would delay until 1 o’clock, provided he would then desist. But ‘No!’ was the stern reply. I was bound by my engagement to preach. I introduced the subject amid the broken intonations of discord. The singing choir left, in a few minutes, the *tranquil* auditory; and I preached the Christian’s gospel.” (*Millennial Harbinger*, Oct. 1837.)

At times in his ministry, Butler was “threatened with brute lectures of *mob* incivilities.” But he took his persecution with grace, saying: “Am I worthy thus to suffer for Messiah’s cause? I am determined, God helping, to act prudently, demean myself as a Christian, give no offence to Jew nor Gentile, nor church of God; and with this life, amid all vituperation, slander, and contempt, to preach the ancient gospel. I know in whom I have trusted.” (*Ibid.*)

Butler simply refused to allow “reformation” to be “sung down” by rowdy enemies of the gospel.

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### *Rock Creek Philosophy*

When people leave the Bible, and allow their minds to wander, there is no end to their ramifications.

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## AS I REMEMBER

Chester Estes

I remember the first religious book, other than the Bible, to fall into my hands. It was "Jacob's Ladder" by brother E.M. Borden. This was in 1921. At that time I had a burning desire to preach the gospel. I read that book through so many times that I was later almost able to preach some of the sermons in it from memory. At that time I was already married, but had not even completed grammar school. I would make a one-horse sharecrop and run the saw mill in between crops. I remember gathering "the hands," as the workmen were called, under the sawmill at the noon hour, while they ate their lunches, and reading to them from the Bible and discussing it with them. The pay was \$1.00 per day. Since I "ran" the mill, I was paid \$1.25 per day. The mill hands listened to my reading and discussion of the Bible. I do not know exactly whether it was because I was impressive in what I was trying to do or because they were paid the \$1.00 per day. The next book I remember reading, other than the Bible, was "Eunice Lloyd" by brother R.N. Moody. These two books had much to do with "flaming" my desire to "make a preacher." Who is able to determine the good that may come from some good book that one has written; One may live on and on by what he has written.

About this time, I had the opportunity to hear J.D. Tant debate Claud Casey and to later hear Tant through out a meeting in the community. Every morning I would drive by the place where Tant was staying and pick him up and carry him in a buggy to the place of the meeting. I was present the time when he asked the question, "which was the older, Adam or Abraham?" Because of the timidity of the people, no one answered. Brother Tant was to return the next year and conduct a one month's Bible school but when he got back to Texas and wrote in the *Firm Foundation* that the brethren at that place were so ignorant that they did not know which was older, Adam or Abraham the brethren there cancelled his return the next year, ( The congregation where this took place was the White House church of Christ in Marion County,,*LEW*). Don't get the wrong idea that I did not know which was the older. I really did know, but like the others, I simply said nothing. I was so disappointed because he did not return. I wanted to attend that Bible school thinking it would help me to "make a preacher."

About the same time, I heard such men as W.R. Wilcutt, A.D. Dies (Dias), W.R. Gurganus, Charlie Nichols (Brother of Gus) and others, some whom were educated and some who were not. Some of them were "Bible college" preachers and some were not. It seemed to me that the "Bible college" preachers were rated somewhat higher in the estimation of the people of the community. I was trying to preach, but I wanted to be

a "Bible college" preacher. The "Bible college" that most of the preachers had attended for a few weeks was the Alabama Christian College at Berry, Alabama, which at that time as I recall, had "gone under."

There were few "regular preachers" and not much "regular preaching" in those days, and when the brethren were through with the "worship"(mostly the Sunday school), I would often call attention to the fact that I wanted to "say a few words," which usually meant an entire hour or more. *The faith that overcomes- Chester Estes*

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### ALSO FROM YESTERDAY

"The most notable event of my life, during the year 1835, was a ten days' meeting, held by Brother John T. Johnson and myself, in the month of September, at Versailles, in Woodford County. During its continuance one hundred and forty persons confessed with 'their mouth the Lord Jesus,' and were 'baptized for the remissions of their sins.' I baptized them in the Kentucky River, at Sublett's Ferry, six miles from Versailles. The day on which the baptism took place was bright and comfortable. The roads were excellent. The river was clear as crystal. The water was warm, and the bottom was covered with sand and gravel. Its banks, up and down for some distance, were lined with deeply interested spectators. The roads leading to it were crowded with wagons, carts, carriages, horsemen, and footmen pressing forward to witness the sublime spectacle."

—(*Life of Jacob Creath, Jr. p. 102*)

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### FIFTEEN MILES FROM HEAVEN

Earl Kimbrough

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## "NOT LIKE A HEN AFTER A HAWK"

Earl Kimbrough

*Jacob Creath, Jr. was not a native Alabamian. He was born in Kentucky and much of his preaching was done in Kentucky and Missouri. His daughter married and moved with her family to Marion in Perry County, Alabama. Creath and his wife visited with her often and he would preach in gospel meetings in South Alabama and Mississippi. He was acquainted with Alexander Campbell and Campbell would stay with the family on his visits to the town of Marion. Creath was considered to be one of the great pioneer gospel preachers*



**Jacob Creath, Jr.**

LEW

On December 7, 1862, the venerable Jacob Creath, Jr., delivered a sermon to his home congregation at Palmyra, Missouri, on proper behavior in worship. It was designed to teach the brethren how to conduct themselves in their religious assemblies. The lesson was based on 1 Timothy 3:14-16, and a line from the Psalms: "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, forever."

After speaking of sacred places, persons, and things mentioned in the Bible, Creath proceeded to give several rules that, in his sage judgment, should be observed at all times by Christian worshipers. Some of these are interesting because of their archaic quaintness, while others simply remind us that some questionable attitudes have been around for a long time. Here are the rules he specified:

"1. All persons who go to a place of worship should religiously and conscientiously endeavor to be in the place before the service begins....

"2. It is expected of all orderly persons that they will approach the place of worship in a becoming manner, seriously and soberly, not laughing nor joking, not boisterously, but sedately, as though they had some knowledge of the Being they are going to worship.

"3. After entering the place of worship, and being seated, there should be no talking or laughing, nor whispering, as though we had come there for chitchat, or to hear and report all the news of the week past, and like we had met in a ballroom or a theater, instead of a place of worship . . . No wonder, then (the worshipers) return as they came, without benefit, full of levity and frolic, as if they had

been to a circus or a horse race.

"4. When the benediction is pronounced, we should retire silently and orderly, not fly up like a hen after a hawk when he has taken off one of her chickens, and thereby shake off every impression made by the sermon as effectively as ducks shake off the rain that falls on them . . . Meeting houses were not built for chit-chat, but for the instruction, devotion, prayer, praise, worship, reading the Scriptures, and preaching . . .

"5. No well bred persons will carry their dogs to places of worship. Even the heathens would not allow dogs to enter their temples . . . No persons of good manners will carry cigars or pipes near a place of worship, much less stand in the door or in the house and puff them. This marks the person a rowdy. No orderly person will whittle sticks or pare his nails with a knife during the hours of worship; nor chew tobacco, nor spit the ambier juice on the floor, or walls, or pulpit . . . nor sleep during preaching." P. Donan, *Memoir of Jacob Creath, Jr.*, pp. 183-187.)

If the citing of these rules by Creath presupposes irreverent behavior on the part of some brethren more than a century ago, then it seems that very little improvement has been made in this department in the intervening years; we still have a lot of irreverent behavior, in my opinion. Of course, a few reforms have come to pass: Most brethren leave their dogs at home these days (or frequently stay there with them, in some cases); there is hardly ever any spitting of ambier juice on the floor, walls, and pulpit any more; and whittling is now almost a lost craft, in or out of the services. But whatever slack has been left by the passing of these old customs has been more than taken up by chewing gum, nail clippers, and uncontrolled children.

Even preachers sometimes help take up the slack. Some have become skilled in preventing the "seriousness and soberness" of the worship from becoming too burdensome on the brethren by keeping them tittering on the brink of hilarity with a procession of stale jokes, or "one-liners" tossed out at stated intervals with the dexterity of a stand-up comic on a TV talk show, and with no apparent redeeming social value other than to keep the audience awake and happy and the speaker popular.

One thing can be said about our brethren: Some of us will simply not be outdone by spiritual refinement.

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### Say It Brother!

If there are Christians "in all the denominations," or in any denomination, they ought not to be there, and the sooner they get out, the better. *F.D. Srygley -The New Testatment Church* (p. 67)

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ESTELLE SHEPHERD'S OBITUARY

*Estelle Shepherd was the wife of Brother J.C. Shepherd, who had been the Chairman of The Board of Trustees of Alabama Christian College of Berry and its principal financial benefactor. The writer of this obituary was Brother Frank Baker. He had been a member of the faculty and a well known Gospel Preacher of his day. At the time of her death, Baker and his family had moved to Florida. He also had served as Mayor of Berry and was close to the family. As his words attest, Estelle Shepherd was a much beloved member of the Church and the community. She is representative of the Godly women who were oft times the backbone of the Church in the various communities. The home Brother Baker refers to, still stands across the street from the Berry church of Christ and is a beautiful example of the finer homes in the old antebellum South....LEW*

Our Dear Sister Estelle Ethel Shepherd was born September 16th, 1885, in Atlanta, Georgia. her maiden name was Savage. She was married to Brother J.C. Shepherd March 12th 1902, to this union was born one son. She obeyed the gospel September 1st, 1907, and remained faithful and true to the day of her departure, which took place October 21st, 1927.

She had been an incessant sufferer from a tumor for many years, which finally sapped her life away. She was operated on but was too weak to stand the shock. I have known Sister Estelle, as we all called her, for more than sixteen years, and to say she was a Christian would be to say it as it was, her constant thought and care was for the church.

She loved her husband and son for whom she made every sacrifice to make the home over which she presided with such queenly grace a new Testament Home. Love and cheer remains in that home but the very soul and sunshine of it is gone. In many ways it is a cheerless place for Brother Shepherd and but for the sweet memories which abide with him, and the promises to which he looks it would be intolerable for him. There never has been a Preacher in the Shepherd home who has not gone away to sing the praises of the Queen who presided there and to tell others of the priestess of the Lord who was devoting herself to the betterment of humanity and the advancement of the Lord's work.

So anxious to know God's will she spent hours and hours, even until the midnight studying His Word. The night was never too dark or cold, neither the rain too hard or wind too fierce for her to go upon a mission to do good. Indeed a great woman has fallen in Israel.

When the end came, Brother Shepherd wired me to come for the funeral as she had requested that in case she passed over the great divide before I did, for me to make the talk as I had known her life better than any other

preacher. We drove from Cross City, Florida, to Berry, Alabama, in less than 24 hours without food or rest, about six hundred miles.

In my physical condition, the long trip, the shock was too much for me, hence, I was unable to comply with her request. Brother C.R. Nichol was there, Brother Shepherd called him for the service.

Brother Nichol had enjoyed the comforts of that good home many times and knew her life quite well and so was able to say the very things befitting the occasion.

The service was held from the home, as the church building would not take care of the large crowd of people from all parts of the country. The casket was placed on the large porch where the great concourse could view the corpse and hear Brother Nichol in his well selected words given to console us. The casket as well as the ground, was covered with the most beautiful and costly flowers I ever beheld.

Her body was laid to rest in the little city of the dead in sight of her home, where she had spent many hours helping to beautify the same and placing tokens of love upon the graves of departed friends. Her going is our loss but heaven's gain.....FRANK BAKER



**Estelle Shepherd's Tomb. Bro. Shepherd commissioned an Italian Sculptor to do the statue of Sister Shepherd.**

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**Rock Creek Philosophy**

Sometimes people who are nearest together in their religious life are bitterest enemies. *F.B. Srygley*

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**Rock Creek Philosophy**

Churches will often get cluttered up with customs and habits that the Bible says nothing about. *F.B. Srygley*

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*(Editor's note: Ben M. Bogard, one of the greatest debaters of the Baptists for many years, printed the following bit of doggerel verse to emphasize immersion. W. Curtis Porter—as was his wont—used the identical argument to reveal the Baptist weakness on another doctrinal battlefield.) The poem was actually written several years before by the lamented T.R. Burnette to show the fallacy of Methodist doctrine. He titled it "Methodist Coffee. Bogard published it in his paper later.*



THE PREACHER'S COFFEE

"I have a pleasant story, which I wish to tell in rhyme, About a circuit preacher who lived in recent time. He was a circuit rider for good John Wesley's brand; And rode the finest circuit in all the blessed land.

**Ben Bogard** At one of his good charges, some members, not a few, Became quite sorely troubled about the word "into." The Good Book says quite plainly, in Acts in chapter eight, "They went down into water," as Baptist people state.

The preacher preached a sermon of extra zeal and might; And to his satisfaction, he set the passage right. "Into" does not mean "into;" but only "at" or "nearby." They went down to the water and Got a small supply.

But near the place of worship, there lived a sister Brown. And for her splendid cooking she'd gained a great renown. Her yellow-legged chickens, her luscious cakes and pies, Had often made that preacher roll up his weeping eyes.

And her delicious coffee! In all the circuit round, The preacher oft admitted, its like could not be found. So when he preached his sermon with extra power and length He loved at the Brown's table to revive his ebbing strength.

But sister Brown was a Baptist, the strongest in the land; She oft reproved the Methodists for changing God's command. She heard the preacher's sermon, and thought the subject o'er. Then asked him home for dinner, as she oft had done before.

She ground her good brown coffee, her kettle steaming hot, And put it "at" or "nearby" the famous coffee pot. She poured her guest a cupful (I think it was no sin). But you forgot, dear sister, to put the coffee in.

"No, no, dear sir, that's coffee; I ground a good supply, And put it 'at' the kettle ('into' is 'at' or 'nearby'). By the logic of your sermon (I thought it rather thin), If 'at' or 'nearby' is 'into', I put the coffee IN."

"So if you will truly promise, no more such stuff to teach, I'll go and make some coffee, in line with Bible speech. And this time I will follow instructions to the dot, And put the coffee INTO, not "at" or "near" the pot?"

SEQUEL (By Porter)



Just then up stepped a preacher, who wears a Bible name, The simple name of "Christian" of apostolic fame. God put into the Bible no human names to wear; And hence he was contented, the inspired mark to wear.

Then Mrs. Brown he questioned, if surely she'd admit Whether "into" had

**W. Curtis Porter** the meaning which she had given it.

She said she would most surely, and who would dare say not. "No coffee's in the vessel, till put into the pot." Then gently spoke the preacher: "Don't censure preacher Jones; You have spoken condemnation, to yourself in strongest tones.

No need to hold tradition; such never has sufficed. The Bible says that baptism puts people INTO Christ." "No, no," replied the hostess. "Such preaching is a sin. Sir, the preacher gives baptism to those already in."

"Well, well," then spoke the preacher, "it surely gives me fun, To see this faithful Baptist throw down her Baptist gun. "If 'into' has the meaning you have given it at last, Your shot at circuit riders, has gone into a blast!

Then Phillip and the eunuch went not 'into' the creek; For they were 'in' already—and had been for a week! "When Christians are invited "into' that heavenly clime, They'll really not go "into'—they were in it all the time!

And when the Lord will banish, the wicked 'into' hell, They'll merely stay 'in' pleasures, on earth they love so well. "You thought the coffee 'into' the coffee pot, But it was 'in' already, and really boiling hot.

Now, Mrs. Brown, please promise, that you'll not have the gall, To hit folks with the Bible, unless you take it all. The Bible says so plainly (to which you have referred), They went down into the water.' I trust its every word.

It tells us that the righteous, go 'into' mansions fair; It tells us that the wicked, go down 'into' despair. "It tells us just as surely, not only once but twice, That that which is called 'baptism,' puts people 'into' Christ.

Now take it all, dear lady; false preachers you can rout. Or else just raise the window, and throw the Bible out!"

*Brother Porter was considered by many, our greatest debater possibly since Alexander Campbell. His wit and ability to turn an opponent's argument, was legendary. He held many debates in his lifetime.. His wit and ability is evident in the above "sequel." LEW*

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**NEW RIVER**  
**Larry Whitehead**

The New River community lies in the Northeast section of Fayette County, Alabama. It is bordered on the Southeast by Ford's Mountain and takes its name from the New River (Sipsey) that flows through it. In days gone by it was a thriving farm community. It was the only "town" on the new road between Russellville and Tuscaloosa. This road was built much later than the famous Byler Road. Today most of the former inhabitants have either gone on to their reward or moved away. There are still two churches that meet in the community, the New River church of Christ and the New River Primitive Baptist Church. Both have played an important role in the establishment of New Testament Christianity in this section of Alabama.

It was to this section of the State that Hugh White McCaleb moved his family from Morgan County in 1828-29. McCaleb had obeyed the ancient gospel, likely under the preaching of Elisha Randolph or one of his associates at one of the camp meetings in Morgan County about 1825. Over the next several years, largely through the efforts of John Taylor, the Randolphs (who had settled nearby), the Logans and McCalebs, the cause grew and prospered. The Old Berea Church was established early on and for many years was the only church meeting according to the New Testament pattern in that section of the State.

Each year during the rainy season, the river would flood the valley and make travel next to impossible. John Tyler McCaleb, grandson of Hugh White McCaleb, lived South of the Berea community some 4 or 5 miles. The decision was made to establish a congregation on his farm in the New River community. The church began meeting in 1878 and quickly grew to become the most prosperous and influential in the area. Over the next 60 years, the New River church over-shadowed the other congregations in the area. The list of men who preached there and held gospel meetings read like a "who's who" of the cause in Alabama. Some of these men are: John Taylor, Green Haley, Jeremiah Randolph, Jesse Turner Wood, Jim Wade, the Srygleys, F.D. & F.B., J.D. Tant, Gus Dunn, Virgil Randolph, Frank Baker, J.B. Nelson, A.D. Dias, Charlie Wheeler, and John T. Lewis. Later O.C. Dobbs, Hal P. McDonald, Gus Nichols, the Blacks, Willett, Plato and V.P. E.C. Fuqua, Chester Estes and others. All of these names were household names in the brotherhood.

Earlier in this article we mentioned that the New River Primitive Baptist Church played a role in the cause. This church was the oldest Baptist church in Fayette County, having its beginnings around 1825. It is believed that John Taylor was a member of this church when he was expelled for preaching baptism for the remission of sins. He went on to become one of the most important

preachers of the ancient gospel ever in this State. James W. "Jim" Wade was the preacher for the New River Baptist when he learned the truth. He left the Baptist and became one of the outstanding preachers in the Lord's church in North Alabama. He was the regular preacher at Berea for many years and later served in the same capacity at New River. These men converted many of the members from the Baptist and this created much rancor and resentment between the two groups for many years to come.

Adjacent to the meetinghouse at New River is a beautiful cemetery. Most of those buried there were members at New River. McCalebs and Hollingsworths are the two most predominant names. Among these graves are the graves of five of the most prominent gospel preachers mentioned above. Jeremiah Randolph is one of them. Randolph began preaching in the mid 1820's, probably in Morgan County. He moved with his father, Elisha, to Walker County, Alabama and in his later life to Fayette County. He was a lifelong friend of John Taylor and they traveled all over North Alabama and Northeast Mississippi preaching and establishing churches. Jeremiah never considered himself a gospel preacher, yet he was a powerful proponent and was one of the most successful. James S. Wood and Jim Wade conducted his funeral service at New River at his death in 1894.

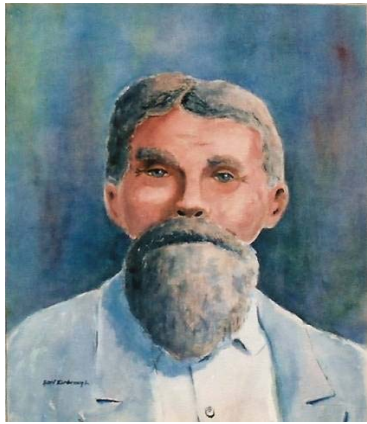


**Virgil Randolph**

Virgil Randolph, son of Jeremiah, is also buried there. Virgil was the regular preacher there for many years. He lived just a few steps from the meetinghouse. He married one of Andrew McCaleb's daughters, Martha. In addition to being a good preacher, Virgil was a great singer. He conducted many singing schools in conjunction with gospel meetings that he held. He was a kind and gentle man and much loved by all. He passed from this life in 1906. His funeral service was conducted by James Wade.

James W. "Jim" Wade is buried nearby the two above. Jim, as noted earlier, was a Baptist preacher who converted to New Testament Christianity. He married another of Andrew McCaleb's daughters, Leah Catherine. Jim was fairly "well off" and maintained one of his old Baptist traditions. He never accepted payment for his preaching. He always rode to his appointments in a one horse buggy. He was for many years the most beloved preacher at Berea and later at New River. Chester Estes would remember him as the "grand old preacher" who sat

in a chair on the old bridge across New River while Estes baptized converts below. Jim died in 1929.



**John Tyler McCaleb**

John Tyler McCaleb, oldest son of Andrew McCaleb, was an Elder at Berea when he decided a congregation was needed at New River. McCaleb was a successful businessman and farmer as well as a noted and respected preacher of the gospel. He donated the

land and most of the lumber for the New River building. He was known throughout the area as a Christian and a very devout man. He served faithfully as an Elder at New River until his death in 1918. He is also buried at New River.

Oliver Cornelius "Neal" Dobbs is buried there also. He married one of John Tyler McCaleb's daughters, Susan. He attended Nashville Bible School studying under the tutelage of David Lipscomb and James A. Harding. Dobbs served on the Board of Trustees of Alabama Christian College of Berry. He later was the regular preacher at New River. He **Oliver Cornelius Dobbs** invented a medical device for men and moved to Birmingham to manufacture the product and became very successful financially. He continued to preach the gospel until his death at age 85 in 1960.



Please indulge this writer for a personal note. When one enters the cemetery at New River, the first marker is the dual marker marking the graves of the writer's beloved maternal grandparents, Lum and Minnie Belle Hollingsworth Ehl. Minnie Belle was a granddaughter of Andrew McCaleb and for most of her adult life was a member of the New River congregation. Three of her uncles are mentioned above, Virgil Randolph, Jim Wade and John Tyler McCaleb. O.C. Dobbs married her 1<sup>st</sup> cousin. She was a serious student of the Word and I never knew anyone who knew anymore of its teachings than she. She converted her husband, whose family were stalwarts in the New River Primitive Baptist Church and three daughters in law, one of whom was the daughter of a prominent Baptist preacher. She passed from this life in 1962 at age 84. Her funeral was held at the New River building before an overflow crowd. Her cousin, Wiley Hollingsworth gave the sermon and

Reginald Ginn spoke words of comfort and offered the prayer at her resting place. Like those great men mentioned above, a true Christian had passed.

Minnie Belle knew all of these great men personally. As has been mentioned, she was related to several of them. In addition she would come to know such men as Gus Nichols, who grew up near her. Her neice, Vera Hollingsworth, married Gus's brother Cary, an excellent gospel preacher himself. Her eldest son, Raymond, was an elder and gospel preacher.



**Minnie Belle Ehl**

Her granddaughter, Maxine, is married to Morris May, a gospel preacher. Her influence had an impact for good on the many lives she touched. She is largely responsible for this writer's interest in Restoration history. "*Her children arise up, and call her blessed*"- Prov 31:28

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*Andrew McCaleb is mentioned several times in the previous article. He was the father of John T. McCaleb and the father in law of Jim Wade and Virgil Randolph as well as the grandfather of Susie Dobbs & Minnie B. Ehl. He served as an Elder at Berea for over 50 years. His influence in that area was enormous.*

*James S. Wood, long time preacher at Berea, wrote the following.*

### **Death of Andrew McCaleb**

*Gospel Advocate - 1899*

On the morning of July 2, 1899, brother Andrew McCaleb died at his house near New River, Alabama. Uncle Andrew (as we all called him) was born on Feb. 3, 1813 in North Carolina, and moved to Fayette County, Alabama with his parents at an early age in which county he spent the remainder of his life. I have not been able to get the date of his baptism, but Uncle Andrew was one of the pioneer reformers in this county. Not more than three weeks before his death he told me that he had been a subscriber to the Gospel Advocate for more than 30 years. He was a man with a strong constitution and much will power, and believed there was a living for every man who would honestly work for it, and he showed his faith by his works. By industry and economy he prospered in life, but he never got too busy to attend church. Of the many meetings which it has been my privilege to attend at Berea church house, I do not remember to have ever attended one (and I have missed but few during the last thirty years) when Uncle Andrew was not there; and he contributed liberally to the support of the Gospel. At the time of his death he was making his home with his son in law, brother James Wade, his children all being married and his devoted wife having preceded him to the great beyond more than 14 years ago.

*James S. Wood - Glen Allen, Al*

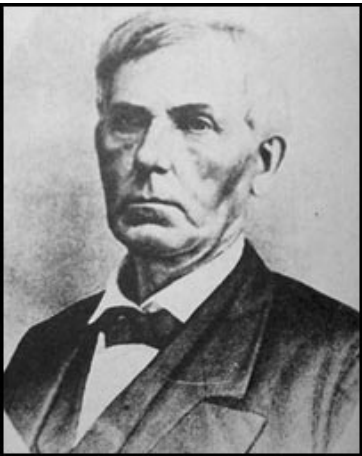
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## COL. PRICE'S STAND

Earl Kimbrough

Living as we do in a time when there are motels, hotels, restaurants, super highways, and businesses catering to the land traveler's needs along most routes, it is hard to imagine the problem that travelers had in pioneer times. Traveling some thirty to forty miles a day on horseback, in a buggy, and, sometimes, in a rollicking stage coach, to places providing rooms and meals often left a lot to be desired, if they were available at all. Private homes sometime supplied lodging and food for traveling strangers, where there were no public quarters available.

Gospel preachers had no trouble finding both beds and meals in places where there were Christians, but that was not always the case. On Tolbert Fanning's six months' tour from Nashville to Columbus, Mississippi, in



**Tolbert Fanning**

the winter of 1842, he generally found a welcome in the homes of brethren. He and his wife, Charlotte, rode in a fine buggy drawn by a magnificent Morgan stallion and they could easily afford to pay for the best rooms and food available. But even the finest of conveyances had to cope with abysmal roads and the finest of people often had to endure poor accommodations. As one historian put it: "Many inns had reputations for poor food and uncomfortable lodgings. Others were praised highly. There was a great difference between the best and the worst." (Charles Grayson Summersell, *Alabama History*, 182.)

There were Christians along the route the Fannings traveled and some of the best homes were opened to them. In Tusculumbia they stayed a week with a Sister Cayce, and at Russellville, it is probable that they stayed with Dr. Samuel Sevier. But upon leaving Russellville, they traveled through country where there were apparently no brethren, at least known to them, to provide a decent place to stay. So they resorted to public accommodations.

Describing the journey from Russellville to Columbus, a distance of about a hundred miles, Fanning wrote: "Tuesday, March 15, we left Russellville for Columbus ... in the State of Mississippi. Seven miles after starting, we ascended pine and poor ridges, and with the exception of breaks by creeks, the land was desperately poor, and the population sparse till within 15 or 20 miles of Columbus. The first day we reached the 'Tollgate,' at Mr. M. A. Price's of Lebanon, Tenn., 33 miles distant

from Russellville. We were most hospitably received and kindly treated by Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Sommerhille, who are employed by Col. Price to superintend the Stand, Post Office, gate, etc., and it would be but justice to the traveling public to say, if you desire good accommodations, be sure to call at the Tollgate. Everything is of the best, and comes at the proper time and place. There are a few other good stands on the road, but oftentimes the accommodations are quite indifferent." (*Journal of Muscle Shoals History*, 8/43.)

Thirty-three miles from Russellville on the road to Columbus took the Fannings to the site of present day Hamilton, Alabama. Fanning said they reached a tavern or inn at that place called the "Tollgate," which apparently gave its name to the place. An 1855 map identifies the place as "Toll Gate." Larry Whitehead says the place was early known as Helvingston's Toll Gate. An east-west road intersected the Military Road on which the Fannings traveled. It may be remembered that in that early date, taverns or inns for travelers were referred to as travelers' rest stands. These were usually located at intervals along major roads. Fanning indicated that there were several along the road they traveled, saying: "There are a few other good stands on the road, but oftentimes the accommodations are quite indifferent."

So in addition to poor roads, pioneer preachers very often found the "travelers' stands" along the routes they traveled were, as Job might describe it, "miserable comforters."

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### Now That's A Sharp Tongue

Then there was that sister in the church whose tongue was so sharp she could have fought with a rattlesnake—and given it the first two bites.

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### Our Youth

Which reminds us of a statement often made by J. D. Tant; he was wont to say that if Moses had lived in our day, he would have had to hang two snakes on poles in the wilderness — one for the whole assembly, and then a special snake for the "young folks"!

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### Rock Creek Philosophy

To my way of thinking, the human family is divided into two classes—men and women; but many seem to think it is divided into three classes—men, women, and preachers. *F.B.Srygley*

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## CHARLIE ALEXANDER WHEELER

1851-1937

Flavil Nichols

Adapted by Scott Harp

Charlie Alexander Wheeler was born near Vernon (in what is now Lamar County), Alabama, January 2, 1851. He was reared on a farm a few miles east of Vernon, near Crossville. His family worshipped at the Bethel Church of

Christ, where a loyal congregation still thrives.

C.A. (Charlie) Wheeler's early years were spent in Lamar County, where he obtained very little formal education. After he

married, Charlie became interested in learning to read the Bible; so at home his wife used the Bible as her textbook to teach him to read. When his own children were old enough to go to school, he enrolled in school with them so he

could improve his reading

skills in order to learn more of God's will so he could better preach it. Although he did learn well to read what was printed, he never learned "script" (or "Handwriting"), and could barely write his own name. Words in the newspaper were not in his vocabulary; but he could read fluently the words in the Bible!

Those with whom I have conferred do not know the religious convictions of his parents. It is known that he was baptized by Joseph H. Holbrook, who studied under T.B. Larimore at Mars Hill Bible School. Studying his Bible at nights by a kerosene (or, "coal oil") lamp, he learned much about it; and at the age of 24 he began to preach what he learned. Being a farmer himself, many of his meetings were only on weekends, or in the summer after his crop was "laid by." He never owned an automobile, but rode the train to almost all his meetings. In later life, brethren who owned cars would 'haul' him to his appointments. His sermons were clear, and well documented with Bible quotations, for he stressed Bible authority for all that we do in religion. He taught many, baptizing 6,000 people -- one of whom was my father (the late Gus Nichols), and started about 100 congregations. As a boy I heard the following story of brother Wheeler's first meeting, which was (I believe) at Mount Pleasant in Lamar County. He went down to preach from Sunday through Friday night. By midweek the interest was so great that the brethren insisted he stay on and continue the meeting another week. He refused, saying that it simply MUST close Friday night. By midweek the interest was so great that the brethren insisted he stay on and continue the meeting another week. He refused, saying that it simply MUST close Friday night. Upon learning that he did not have another engagement for the next week, and knowing

that his crop was already "laid by," they rather pressed him to continue. He insisted that he HAD to go home Saturday! They inquired if his wife, or one of the children, might be sick, -- and were relieved to find this was not the case. He did NEED to get home to pull fodder -- but the brethren told him they would pull him some fodder and give it to him -- if he would stay another week. As Friday night approached, he finally explained to one of the brethren why the meeting MUST close that night: He had only seven sermons -- and he would preach the last one of them that night! But about 33 had been baptized, and others were almost converted! So, he yielded to their pleas that he stay longer! He preached the same sermons again -- and 37 more were baptized! However, he did not carry their fodder home with him -- for he did not have train fare, but had to walk home -- about 60 miles!

**Flavil Nichols** "Sermons Of C.A. Wheeler, Jasper, Alabama."

### A Gospel Veteran

G.C. Brewer

On this page we present a picture of C.A. Wheeler, of Jasper, Alabama. Although this is a recent picture and shows brother Wheeler as he looks now, one might suppose that this picture was made when he was not more than fifty years old. He is now in his eighty-fourth year, and is still preaching the gospel with almost unbelievable vigor. He does not just preach on Lord's days only; he is still doing evangelistic work, and preaches every day and often twice a day during his meetings. He also does his own baptizing when there is no one else available to do it for him. Brother Wheeler is a remarkable man in many respects. Born in Lamar County, Alabama, January 2, 1851, he knew all of the hardships of life in a primitive and rugged country. He, in his own language, was "a considerable chunk of a plowboy" when the Civil War came on, and took the men away to the army and left the country in a practical state of starvation. Under these conditions, he, of course, had no chance to go to school. Schools were almost nonexistent in that country in that day. But in some way brother Wheeler managed to acquire the elements of an education, and he even yet reads and speaks with an accuracy, and an inflection, that would put to shame many preachers who have been to college. He possesses a logical and an analytical mind, and his sermons are models of clear thinking and concise arrangement. He has read and loved God's book all his life, and he preaches it to his fellow men just as he reads it from the sacred page.

Brother Wheeler had a number of debates in his early preaching life, and it was in his debates that he made some of his converts who afterwards became stalwart contenders for the faith. Some of these converts tell of seeing brother Wheeler go into debate with denominational giants, who brought ponderous volumes with them, and who were surrounded by confident and admiring friends; and brother



**C.A. Wheeler**



Wheeler had only a small pocket Bible, and no brethren to encourage and help him. This made the other man's defeat the more full of meaning. The people were ready to listen to the humble man who relied wholly on God's word to refute the other man's claims.

Brother Wheeler has preached in some 8 or 10 states, but the greater part of his labor has been within a radius of a hundred miles of his present home at Jasper, Alabama. He has converted hundreds of people from denominational error, and he often relates that the first man he baptized was a Baptist preacher. More than a dozen men who are now preaching the gospel were baptized by brother Wheeler. He has received practically no financial support for his work. When he began preaching, there were no churches and very few members in his country. He recently remarked that we have more congregations and meetinghouses now than we had members in his early day. He worked on the farm to support himself and his family, and preached the gospel for naught. It was no unusual thing for him to walk twenty-five miles to an appointment and preach Saturday night, Sunday, and Sunday night -- and then walk back home and spend the rest of the week working in the field. Brother Wheeler is now not able to work, and still gets little support for his preaching. If any of the readers of the Gospel Advocate would like to cheer the heart of this veteran of the cross and help to supply his necessities, they could not do anything that would more surely abound to their account than to send a contribution to C.A. Wheeler, Jasper, Alabama. Come, let us give him a shower. – G.C. Brewer *The Gospel Advocate-1935*.

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**HAVING HIS FEET SHOD**

**Earl Kimbrough**

C. A. (Charlie) Wheeler (1851-1937) would rank among the most effective gospel preachers in the history of the churches of Christ in Northwest Alabama. He is one of those men who were largely self-educated, but he learned to read and preach the Bible sufficiently to baptize 6,000 people, including Gus Nichols (who in turn baptized 12,000), and establish near a hundred congregations. Wheeler farmed in his earlier years to provide for his family and in his later years was very poor. He never owned an automobile and depended on brethren or public transportation to meet his preaching appointments. This may account for his being in the Birmingham bus station one day where he happened to be seen by John T. Lewis. Lewis was known for his personal generosity and for urging the churches where he preached to be liberal in benevolence. Upon meeting Wheeler in the bus station, Lewis noticed that the old preacher's shoes had waxed old in his service and that their life had been extended beyond their appointed time by Wheeler's use of an awl to crudely affix soles to supply himself with footwear. Lewis wrote in his journal: "I bought Brother Wheeler a pair of shoes, a shirt and tie, and a bus ticket. I knew what it was like when you had to walk eight or ten miles; shoes; didn't last long. I picked up the old shoes and threw them in the garbage can. Brother Wheeler was very happy."

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**JOHN T. UNDERWOOD**

**Scott Harp**

The strength of North Alabama churches around the turn of the 20th Century is due greatly to the works of T.B. Larimore through Mars Hill College. In the sixteen years of its running, 1871-1887, there was an unleashing of evangelism that swept the Tennessee Valley area and beyond. One of T.B. Larimore's "boys," as the students were called, is the subject of this sketch.

John T. Underwood entered Mars Hill in 1878 and attended through the 1879-80 school session. These two



**John T. Underwood**

years of study set him on a course that helped to make churches in Franklin and Colbert Counties, Alabama some of the strongest, and long lasting churches of Christ in that part of the country. According to the brief sketch in *Larimore and His Boys*, page 163, Brother Underwood worked at Barton, in Colbert County, Alabama. He planted churches around this area for many years. Most of the churches in Franklin and

Colbert Counties were small country churches. Even to this day many of those churches still exist. One of these churches, the Spruce Pine Church of Christ, lower Franklin County, holds the cemetery where John T. Underwood and his wife Ira Emma are buried. His stone bears the inscription that most described his life, "Minister Of The Gospel Of Christ." Many people now in the eternal presence of God, owe much to the teaching of this great old soldier of the cross. Though he died at the end of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only eternity itself will bear proof of the good he has done, and still does for the name of Christ. "He being dead, yet speaks."

*Many of his descendants still live in the area and some were known to the editor in the Birmingham area. His influence lives on.....Editor*

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**A BARGAIN!**

J.D. Tant used to tell about a "progressive" Church in Texas which raised money by a church fair or bazaar every fall. They would sell off canned goods, and various articles which the members had prepared through the year. Then in one booth the good sisters were willing to sell "kisses" (a hasty peck on the cheek) to the brethren for a stipulated fee, as follows: "Single girls, \$1.00; married' sisters, 50 cents; snuff-dipping old maids, three for a dime." *Vanguard*

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## LOOKING FOR A "PHILIP" IN THE ALABAMA WILDERNESS

Earl Kimbrough

R. W. Officer was an ordained Baptist preacher when, from his study of the New Testament, he learned the difference between Baptist doctrine and the teaching of the apostles on the plan of salvation. This was soon



*R.W. Officer*

after the War Between the States and New Testament Christians were few and far between in the North Alabama wilderness where he labored. It, therefore, became a difficult matter for him to find someone to baptize him upon a simple confession of faith in Christ for the remission of sins. At that time the then 25 year old preacher had never heard anyone preach the

gospel as it was proclaimed by the apostles in Acts, and he was unacquainted with the work of Barton W. Stone and the Campbells. He was limited in his search for one to baptize him mainly to Methodist and Baptist preachers. The Methodists wanted to sprinkle him after asking some questions gotten up by men, and the Baptists wanted to approve some "Christian experience" of his before immersing him after the Baptist manner. On one occasion he heard a Methodist preacher deliver a stirring sermon on the resurrection of Christ. At the conclusion, Officer arose and said, "I believe with all my heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and I want to be baptized." The preacher, according to Methodist custom, produced a copy of the Discipline and prepared to ask the questions prescribed therein, but Officer told him he had the wrong book. When asked for an explanation, the young seeker made what he later said was his first effort to preach. He talked several minutes about the cases of conversion in Acts and concluded by saying, "I am in the condition of mind the Ethiopian eunuch was in when Philip preached unto him Jesus. I want to find a man who will be as kind to me as Philip was to the eunuch. Can I find him here tonight?" Several preachers were in the audience, but none of them responded to his request. So he said, "Is there no convert here to the gospel which Philip preached to the eunuch? Then I will have to convert some one." For the next six months he searched without success to find a preacher to baptize him after the example of Philip and the eunuch. Finally, he persuaded a Dr. Barris of Franklin County, Tennessee to meet his desire, and so he was baptized like the man from Ethiopia upon a confession of faith in Christ. This was in about 1870.

After his baptism, not having yet learned the way of the Lord more perfectly, Officer served for six years as a

missionary for the Liberty Baptist Association in Limestone County, Alabama. "He traveled extensively and labored continuously in word and doctrine publicly and from house to house in the mountain region of North Alabama. He quoted scripture readily and copiously from all parts of the Bible, and the people so far exaggerated his familiarity with the Holy Scriptures as to think he could read the whole Bible from memory. The tenacity with which he adhered to the Bible, and the vigor, and even recklessness, with which he assailed everything in the way of religious work or worship not found in the New Testament attracted much attention, drew large audiences, and caused no small stir in the denominations wherever he went. . . His work was disintegrating to all denominational institutions and ecclesiastical organizations, and for that reason the whole machinery of denominationalism was against him." When Officer broke with the Baptists, he united with the brethren dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity, and proclaimed the gospel free of all denominational dogmas and interpretations. He thus became a "Philip" to many wayfaring sinners, preaching to them Jesus and baptizing them upon a confession of faith in Christ for the remission of sins. (Quotations from F. D. Srygley, 'Biographies and Sermons, pp. 309, 311.)

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### *Names for Papers*

Earl Kimbrough

The names of religious papers published by members of the Lord's church have long been a ready source of controversy. It is not always known what it is that motivates and editor or publisher to choose a particular name. Some apparently have very fertile imaginations. But once the baby's christened and displayed before the public, somebody's bound to object to its designation. When the fiery Arthur Carihfield began publishing a new paper in January 1843, he called it "The Orthodox Preacher." Six months later, Alexander Campbell wrote: "I cannot help but think that Brother Carihfield has been unfortunate in the choice of names for his periodical." (*Millennial Harbinger*, June, 1843.)

Several more months passed before Carihfield took public notice of Campbell's stricture. (Some controversies move with the speed of mail-order chess. ) "Some of our brethren," he wrote, "have taken upon themselves to question the propriety of the title *Orthodox Preacher*.... I can come as near getting the word 'orthodoxy' from the Scriptures as any other man can the word 'millennium.'" (*Orthodox Preacher*, January, 1844.) **Checkmate!**

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## EMOTIONALISM IN WORSHIP IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### Frank Richey

Emotionalism as related to worship is much different from emotion. Emotion is a stirred up reaction, such as love, fear, anger, grief, joy, sorrow, etc. Emotionalism is being guided by feeling rather than truth. It is the old “better felt than told” religion, where feelings and emotions many times trump logic and reasoning, and the feeling itself becomes the “evidence.”

#### Cane Ridge Meeting-August 1801

Emotionalism in worship has been around for a long time. We will share two examples of this from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The “Great Awakening” of religious fervor was demonstrated in August 1801, when according to the estimate of Barton W. Stone, twenty to thirty thousand people showed up for a camp meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. From Barton Stone’s autobiography, Stone described the emotionalism that took place at Cane Ridge, and listed some of the “exercises” as he called them.

**Falling down-** He said that often “the subject of this exercise would, generally, with a piercing scream, fall like a log on the floor, earth, or mud, and appear as dead.” Stone said there were thousands of such cases.

**The jerks-** Stone mentioned what he called the jerks, in which the subject would be affected and “jerk backward and forward, or from side to side, so quickly that the features of the face could not be distinguished.” Stone said, “I have seen the person stand in one place, and jerk backward and forward in quick succession, their head nearly touching the floor behind and before.” He said this exercise affected “all classes, saints and sinners, the strong as well as the weak.”

**Dancing-** This “generally began with the jerks, and was peculiar to professors of religion.” “The subject, after jerking awhile, began to dance, and then the jerks would cease.”

**Barking exercise-** Stone said this exercise was given its name by contemptuous opposers. He said it was nothing more than the jerks. He said one with the jerks “would often make a grunt, or bark...from the suddenness of the jerk.”

**Laughing exercise-** Stone said “it was a loud, hearty laughter” but it did not excite laughter in others. He said it excited solemnity in saints and sinners. It is truly indescribable.”

**Running exercise-** Stone said that the running exercise “was nothing more than, that persons feeling something of these bodily agitations, through fear, attempted to run away, and thus escape from them; but it commonly happened that they ran not far, before they fell, or became so greatly agitated that they could proceed no farther.”

**Singing exercise-** “The subject in a very happy state of mind would sing most melodiously, not from the mouth or nose, but entirely in the breast, the sounds issuing thence.” Stone said, “it was most heavenly” and “something surpassing any thing we had known in nature.”

While the logical mind has trouble explaining these “exercises”, the emotional mind will quickly attribute such

things to a direct operation of the Holy Spirit, ushering in a “Great Awakening” of religion in a spiritually starved western frontier. However, Stone concludes this story by saying, “there were many eccentricities, and much fanaticism in this excitement.” Fanaticism is defined as “irrational zeal.” Irrational is the antithesis of the ability to reason, or of being of a sound mind (American Heritage Dictionary).

#### Account of Benjamin Franklin Hall

One of the great preachers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was Dr. B. F. Hall who lived in Lauderdale County, Alabama, where he studied dentistry and married Dorinda Chisholm. Hall began preaching as a Baptist, but learned the truth after reading the Campbell-McCalla debate in the year 1826. Hall, in his unpublished autobiography, tells of the general and accepted preaching style of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was clearly an “emotional based” style of preaching.

“We were very zealous, and frequently spoke at the top of our voice, and sometimes screaming at such a rate as almost to split our throat. We substituted sound for sense, indeed, figuratively speaking, we supposed that the power was in the thunder instead of the lightening; hence we thundered more than we lightened or enlightened, for, in truth, we had not much light to emit.”

“The religion of those days consisted principally of feeling; and those who shouted the loudest and made the greatest ado, were looked upon as the best Christians. Hence our preaching, our prayers, and songs we adapted to excite the emotions. We would clap and rub our hands, stamp with our feet, slain down and tear up the Bible, speak as loud as possible and scream at the top of our voice, to get up an excitement. I often blistered my hands by clapping and rubbing them together; and my feet were made sore by repeated stamping. My voice was clear, and its tones silvery. I could sing for hours without being tired or becoming hoarse. I was excitable, and dealt much in the pathetic. I was considered good at exhortation. Death, the judgment, heaven and hell, were my favorite themes. Here fancy had ample room for play; and on such themes the feelings of the masses could be reached. Knowing my forte, the brethren were want to have me to bring up the rear on occasions when an excitement was desired. I frequently spoke when, on account of the loud shouting of Christians, and the screams of sinners, I could scarcely hear my own voice. Then was the time, after a short pause to call for mourners, and it was seldom they failed to come. I have known them to come in such numbers and crowd so closely around me as I stood before the stand, in the midst of the audience, that, when we were about to pray for them, I had not room to kneel down. Sometimes the excitement would be so great—so many brethren all praying aloud at once, and mourners screaming and begging for mercy, that no single voice could be distinguished from the rest. I have spent whole nights

singing, praying and trying to instruct weeping, broken-hearted sinners how to "get religion," and, now and then rejoicing with one who had Just "got through".

By his own account, Hall states that the purpose of his preaching, and the preaching of others, was to excite the emotions of the listeners. This was accomplished by loud preaching, clapping the hands, stamping the feet, being slain down, and tearing up Bibles. Hall even admitted that his favorite subjects were those where he could play on people's emotions—"Here fancy had ample room for play," he stated. Hall said that he was the "go to man" when "excitement was desired." Hall said all of this was for the purpose of "getting religion" and "getting through", both expressions of the "mourner bench" religion of the day, when one was believed to be saved through a "religious experience."

Exciting the emotions leaves much undone in the realm of logic and reasoning. In fact, as Hall later learned, this was contrary to the Bible. At Thessalonica, Paul "*reasoned with them from the scriptures*" (Acts 17:2); at Athens "*he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there*" (Acts 17:17); at Corinth "*He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks*" (Acts 18:4); at Ephesus, "*he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God*", and he was also "*reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus*" (Acts 19:8-9).

Biblical preaching began as a persuasion through the use of logic and reasoning, moved on to persuasion through emotionalism, switched back to logic and reasoning, and is now manifested in an explosion of emotionalism. Experiences based solely on emotionalism and devoid of Biblical authority have become the norm in protestant churches during our time.

Can you picture the apostle Paul preaching in some churches today with a "rock concert" atmosphere? Can you see Paul trying to excite the crowd by using the techniques of today's preachers—techniques to arouse emotions that would cause people to forget the solemnity of worship to God, and devote himself to the exercise of a feel good religion?

When the validity of Christianity is based on emotionalism rather than knowledge of God's word, we find a system of religion in deep spiritual poverty. One writer said, "Emotion without truth produces empty frenzy and cultivates shallow people who refuse the discipline of rigorous thought."

Emotionalism in preaching reminds me of the preacher that wrote in his notes... "This point weak. Pound hard on podium."

Beware brethren! "We are warming by the devil's campfire."

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## GUS NICHOLS' HOME AT BERRY, ALABAMA

Earl Kimbrough

At the unveiling of an Alabama state marker at Berry, Alabama, October 15, 2006, in memory of the Alabama Christian College that flourished there 1912-1922, I had an extended and pleasant visit with Flavil Nichols, son of the noted Alabama evangelist, Gus Nichols. The elder Nichols was a student at the old college and lived in Berry in the days of the school's existence. Flavil pointed out a lane that ran between the picturesque meeting house of the Berry church of Christ and the stately home of J. C. Shepherd, who had financed the building of the school almost a hundred years ago.

Flavil said down that road a short ways, his father used a horse drawn scoop to level a hill in preparation for the building of a house for Frank Baker, a prominent teacher at the Berry college. Flavil said his father then scooped a level place on a neighboring hill where he built a house for his own family. In building the house, Flavil said his father used rough lumber that came from the sawmill in unplaned style. Someone advised him that creosote would preserve the wood and so the resourceful preacher generously coated his house with creosote, which naturally soaked well into the rough unpainted boards, turning them dark brown.

Creosote is made of distilled coal tar and has an odor that is far from pleasing. Flavil remembered that the odor of the creosote was so bad the family could hardly stand it. I asked him how long the odor remained and he said as long as the family lived there, but he did not say how long that was. I did not ask him if his father covered the house inside and out with creosote, as Noah did the ark with pitch. Nothing is said about the odor of Noah's pitch, but John Wesley thought the pitch coating outside the ark served to shed the water and that inside the ark was "to take away the ill smell of the beasts kept close." If Gus Nichols' creosoted house provided any benefit for his family, other than the "fond" memory of the aromatic ordeal it put the Nichlols' family through, Flavil did not mention it.

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### How About That?

Michael Pearson, Associated Press Writer, says that the Reformed Presbyterians do not use mechanical instrument of music in worship. Jerry O'Neil, a Reformed Presbyterian preacher, explains: "The purpose is to present worship that's pleasing to God, not what's pleasing to us. God doesn't need all the instruments to know there's real praise going on. There's an absolute standard, and it's the Bible." *Firm Foundation*. Would that all of our brethren had the same attitude on the same subject.....LEW

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## ALABAMA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE OF BERRY

Berry, Alabama 1912-1922

Earl Kimbrough

Mayor Dobbs, Brother Berry, and respected brethren and friends. We are remembering today a little country school that may very well have been forgotten as hardly more than a bump in the history of Fayette County had it not been for one very significant fact: that little school had a large and enduring impact on New Testament Christianity in Northwest Alabama and beyond. This came about through the individuals that the school drew to this part of the state as teachers and administrators, and through the men and women of the area who were educated there. Due to the fruitful labors of these good people, the school's influence continues to resonate even today among the rugged hills and winding hollows of this hallowed region that so many of us are pleased to call home.

While the Alabama Christian College of Berry, Alabama, flourished for only a little more than decade in the early years of the twentieth century, its Christian roots reached back almost a hundred years before to pioneer days; to a time when settlers along the Atlantic Seaboard, many first and second generation Americans, were pushing westward in what came to be known as the nation's Manifest Destiny.

Many of these early Americans migrated to Northwest Alabama from Virginia, the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Georgia, about the time the territory was opened for settlement. Some of these stayed only for a short time and then moved on to Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. But many others took root in the rocky soil of Northwest Alabama to carve out for themselves a distinctive lifestyle that was rural in nature and home and family centered. One young couple who came to this region from South Carolina in 1827, was John and Mary (Polly) Taylor, who settled in what was then part of Marion County along the Sipsey River, near Glen Allen. Mary was nineteen and John twenty at the time. He could neither read nor write when they married, but with the New Testament as their text, Mary taught him to read, and to write.

John Taylor showed little interest in religion until he married, but soon after coming to Alabama, Mary urged him to seek salvation in the Calvinist style of that day. But his efforts to get the promised assurance of salvation at the mourners' bench met with utter failure. He despondently concluded that he was among the non-elect with no hope of redemption; and so, like many foolish ones of that day, and since, he sought to drown his inconsolable grief in alcohol. But when revival time came around the next year, Mary again pleaded, with many tears, for him to give up his jug and make another attempt at being saved. He finally agreed to try again and when the revival began in his community, he and Mary were at the meetinghouse early and took a front seat. As the preacher was preaching, he happened to quote Acts 2:38, where Peter told those sinners who had crucified Jesus to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.

In recalling the occasion, Taylor said he reflected on

the passage for a while and it dawned on him that if those Jews who crucified the Lord could be saved by repentance and baptism, then he could be, too. He said this truth became so plain to him that he began to clap his hands and shout, "Glory to God." The preacher, who knew about John's anguished concern for his soul, stopped preaching and said: "Thank God, John Taylor has got religion at last!" Taylor said he was embarrassed by this, and replied: "No, I have not got it; I only see how to get it. I see exactly what to do for the remission of sins." But it was with considerable difficulty that he finally persuaded a neighborhood preacher to baptize him and his wife upon a simple confession of faith in Christ for the remission of sins.

There was no church of Christ in that whole country and, in fact, John Taylor had never heard of one outside of the New Testament. He knew nothing of the Restoration preaching of Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell; nor of the pioneering work of Ephraim D. Moore, James E. Matthews, B. F. Hall, and Elisha Randolph up in Lauderdale and Morgan Counties. So he joined a nearby church and soon began to preach for it. But instead of preaching the creed of that church, he preached only what he found in the New Testament. For that, the church tried him for heresy, turned out of the church, and took away his license to preach. At the time, he had an appointment to preach just over in Fayette County, and although his license had been revoked and he was in a quandary as to whether to keep it, his brother in the flesh, Mark Taylor, encouraged him to do so. He said: "John, if you were able to preach before, you are still able." So he kept the appointment and preached on, "What Must I Do to Be Saved."

Time will not now permit us telling the thrilling story of how that preaching appointment led to the beginning of the first church of Christ in this whole region. This was in 1829-1830. The church he established consisted of about thirty members, all of whom John Taylor had baptized for the remission of sins within a month after his preaching license was revoked.

Thus, John Taylor began, right here in Fayette County, an independent church that was completely unique in that it had no connection whatever with any other undenominational Christians anywhere. However, within a year of the church's beginning, the families of Robert Logan and Hugh White McCaleb, and a little later, Elisha Randolph, moved to the county. These were already Christians when they came here from Morgan County and with their help the church, now known as Old Berea, was established in the faith. This was the beginning of apostolic Christianity in Marion and Fayette Counties.

From that faithful congregation and the able pioneer preachers who were among its membership, literally thousands of people obeyed the gospel just as those sinners did on Pentecost, and simple churches of Christ were soon established in most communities of Northwest Alabama. Among the area preachers before the Civil War were John

Taylor, Elisha Randolph, and his sons Jeremiah, Lorenzo Dow, and Simeon, together with Carroll and Allen Kendrick, William Stringer, and others.

This, in brief, is the background of the churches of Christ in this part of Northwest Alabama. It was from the descendants of these pioneer Christians that the move was made in the early part of the last century to build a school at Berry, Alabama, so their children could receive an education in a Christian environment, free from worldly influences and sectarian biases. Many of these descended from people who, like John Taylor, laboriously learned at home to read and write, and came to appreciate the value of an education. Many of them wanted to make sure that their children not only could read and write, but that they could be educated by Christian teachers in a righteous environment.

T. B. Larimore had operated Mars' Hill Academy on Christian principles near Florence from 1871 to 1887, but he had closed it to give him more time for evangelistic work. J. M. Barnes also operated schools with Christian teachers south of Montgomery, beginning with Strata Academy in 1856, soon after he graduated from Bethany College. It continued as Highland Home Institute until 1916, but that school was of little practical use to the Christians of Northwest Alabama because of the distance and expense involved in sending their children there. So in about 1911, John T. Lewis, O. C. Dobbs, J. C. Shepherd, and others took the lead in establishing a college with emphasis on the Bible to be located in the town of Berry.

Asa M. Plyler, in his *Historical Sketches of Churches of Christ in Alabama*, written in the early 1940s, referred to Berry as "another splendid little town" in Fayette County. Concerning the Berry church, he said: "This congregation has been known through the length and breadth of the land in times past. This was the home of the Alabama Christian College [that] did a fine work in Bible, business training and the literary branches for about ten years. A number of gospel preachers were trained in this school, and much and lasting good was accomplished by this school while it was in progress. I understand that the greater part of the money to build the school was furnished by one man who was a member of the Berry congregation ... J. C. Shepherd. Among those who held meetings for the church there are such men as Joe S. Warlick, J. D. Tant, G. A. Dunn, Foy E. Wallace, Jr., and L. R. Wilson and many other leading evangelists." Plyler concludes by saying: "We have known some very fine people in the church [at Berry], among the number are the Shepherds, Baileys, Shooks, Clements and Dobbs, and a host of others." (Asa M. Plyler, *Historical Sketches*, 7, 8.)

The Alabama Christian College of Berry was founded in June 1912, with J. C. Shepherd, John Tomlin, M. P. Bailey, and O. C. Dobbs as Trustees. Shepherd was a banker and a leading business man in Berry and O. C. Dobbs was a well known gospel preacher throughout Northwest Alabama. G. A. Dunn, Sr., a well known Texas preacher came to Berry to serve as the school's first president. He served the school three years and brought to the community such outstanding preachers as J. B. Nelson and Frank Baker.

The girl's dormitory was a large white two-story

building on the north side of the campus. Boys were boarded in private homes; the cost ranging between eleven and fifteen dollars a month. Tuition ranged from twelve to twenty dollars for each term, depending on the department. A few years ago, Enloe Billingsley, who was reared in Lamar Country, moved to Sun City Center, Florida, and he and his wife, Marie, became identified with the East Bay church, where I preach. In visiting, we often talked about Alabama, and one day I said something about the old college at Berry, and he told me, very proudly, that his mother boarded boys who attended the school. Enloe, who died last March at 94, had deep roots in Northwest Alabama. He was a cousin of Price Billingsley and a great-great-grandson of Elisha Randolph. Randolph had a large family of nine boys and one girl. Enloe's great-grandmother was Elisha's only daughter, Anna Mariah, who married Jephtha Billingsley prior to 1832. If that were not enough preachers in his family, we might add that Enloe's mother was Lucretia Black, a devout Christian in another family of Fayette County preachers, including V. P. Black.

The college building was located where the Berry High School now stands. It was a two-story beige brick building with four classrooms on the first floor and wide cross halls leading to the entrance doors at each end. Two winding staircases led to the large upstairs auditorium. Two more classrooms were located at the rear of the auditorium. Larry Whitehead says: "A unique, sweet tolling bell weighing 2,400 pounds rang daily and could be heard for miles around. The bell was a gift of 'Grandma' Shepherd and was in use until the building burned in 1933." (*Alabama Restoration Journal*, Nov. 2005.)

J. Paul Hanlin of Sheffield served one year as president of the college following Gus Dunn. Writing about the school that year, he spoke of himself and John T. Smithson, of Fort Deposit, Alabama, as working with the school. Both had been students of David Lipscomb at the Nashville Bible School. Hanlin noted that Hal P. McDonald, another Texas preacher, was chosen to serve as president in 1916. McDonald's tenure continued until the school closed in 1922. Whitehead writes of him: "He was known as an excellent teacher although somewhat eccentric. [He] introduced the concept of an annual lectureship after he took the reins in 1916. Each year prominent preachers from over the country were invited to present lessons during the lectureship and the general public was invited. Such men as J. C. McQuiddy, C. M. Pullias, E. A. Elam, John T. Lewis, and J. D. Tant were invited among many others." (Ibid.)

The Alabama Christian College of Berry further influenced the area in that many of those who came to teach regularly and to participate in lectureships, left an impression for good on the region. Gus Dunn returned to Northwest Alabama every year for gospel meetings as long as he lived, baptizing hundreds of people. J. D. Tant frequently preached in the state in the early years of the twentieth century. McDonald himself spent the rest of his life in the area. Other notable preachers also came to the state originally because of the school. L. R. Wilson, who lectured at the school and served for a time as minister of the Berry church, influenced my life for good. I had the privilege of profitably sitting at

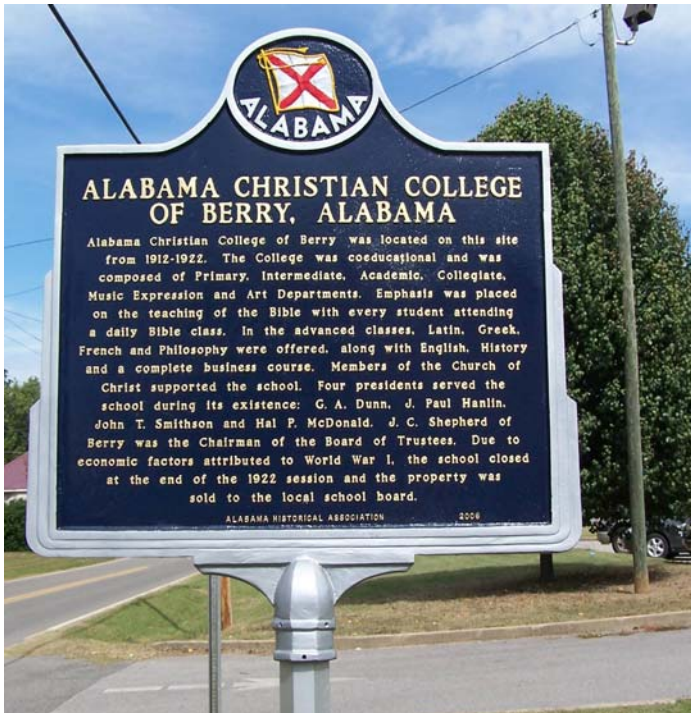
his feet for two years.

Perhaps the greatest influence of the Berry school was that made on the students. Gus Nichols, was without doubt the most successful and influential man who attended the school during its existence. Flavil Nichols, who is with us today, says his father baptized more than 12,000 souls. Angie Logan Thompson from Russellville, whose younger sisters, Lavaga and Hilda Jean Logan are also here today, attended the college in its heyday. Leo and Brody Plyler, sons of Asa M. Plyler, another student at the Berry College, are in the audience, along with forty or fifty others who are related to students of the school. The Logan sisters are descendants of Robert Logan, one of the early members of the Old Berea Church. They also have the honor of being my cousins. So that makes me kin to a family of a student of Alabama Christian College of Berry.

We are pleased today with the beautiful marker that has been erected by the State of Alabama near the street and between the meeting house of the Berry Church of Christ and the property that was the site of the Alabama Christian College, both near the home of the school's benefactor J. C. Shepherd. This grand memorial no doubt will be telling the story of the old Berry College a hundred years from now, when we will be sleeping in the earth. We are grateful for the opportunity to have had a part in the services today celebrating the erection of the monument.

Thank each of you for the interest you have shown in the Alabama Christian College of Berry by your presence today.

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*The Historic marker*



*Larry Whitehead & Earl Kimbrough*



*Mayor Roy Dobbs is presented a painting of the school by Brother Norman Berry, preacher at Berry.....*



*The Meetinghouse of the Berry Church*



## “ YOU GAVE ME THE WRONG BOOK”

C. Wayne Kilpatrick

B.F. Hall gave an account, related by several people, including a brother Rogers, about an Indian, a Methodist preacher and a Bible. This account has been preserved in the Millennial Harbinger, The British Millennial Harbinger and in Hall's autobiography. The time was the Spring of 1825 and the setting was Bellefont, Jackson County, Alabama, on the banks of the Tennessee River.



The Bible Society had sent a Methodist minister to this vicinity to give Bibles to the Cherokee Indians. These Indians were living across the river from Bellefont at the time. The preacher encountered a young and intelligent Indian brave who could read and speak English. He gave a Bible to the young man saying: “ take it, read it, believe it and do what it commands you.” It was taken

with a promise to do as he was instructed.

The next Fall, the Methodists held another camp meeting in the same community. The Indian, upon hearing about the meeting, went to the meeting and found the same preacher resting in the preacher's tent. During their conversation the Indian said that he had read the Bible which the preacher had given to him. He asked the Methodist preacher to go to the river with him. The preacher asked him “why.” The Indian replied: “ I have read the book and have come to get you to go to the river with me and baptize me.” The preacher said, “ I can baptize you without going to the river.” “Where?” asked the Indian. “Why, right here.” Responded the preacher. After hastily looking around the tent for a moment, the Indian asked in a surprised tone, “How can you baptize me here where there is no water?” He was told that water would be brought for that purpose. From the young Indian's actions, the preacher began trying to explain the mode of baptism for him. He said that he would take a tumbler of water and pour it upon his head. The Indian was totally taken aback by this explanation of baptism. He asked , “Is that baptism?” “Yes,” the preacher responded, “That is the way we baptize.”

After this statement, the Indian fixed his eyes upon the preacher. His countenance fell, and gazing into space, he stood speechless for a while. He finally spoke in a tone filled with disappointment and surprise. He said, “If that is baptism, then you gave me the wrong book.” This ended the exchange between the Methodist preacher and the Indian. The disappointed Indian went back across the river to his home.

B.F. Hall added a footnote to this incident and explained that the Indian's idea was similar to another

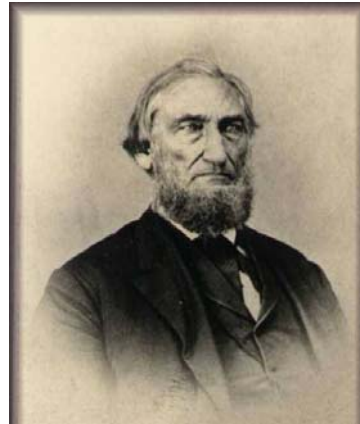
Cherokee Indian's belief. The belief was, that each sect or denomination, or as he called it, company, had its own book or Bible that taught their own peculiar doctrines. In his mind, apparently, the preacher had given the Indian the wrong book, because baptism was different in the book that he had received, than what the preacher believed. The Indian had understood baptism to be immersion, not sprinkling or pouring.

*“So reasoned an unsophisticated child of nature, who read the scriptures as they stand without the aid of any expositor, and without having any system in his eye or any preconceived opinion to support, but to learn what the book required that he might do it” (Hall, B.F. M.H. 1834, p.42)*

Hall ended the Millennial Harbinger version by posing a query:

*“If all read the Bible as the Indian did, would they not come to the conclusion that if any believed baptism to be anything but immersion, they must learn it from some other book?”*

In this account, Hall explains that several persons, who had witnessed the incident, had related this to him. Two of these people had been Pedo-Baptists at the time. They were later led, from the Indian's remarks, to read the Bible the old-fashioned way and they came to the same conclusion, and were afterwards baptized by immersion. One of them



**B.F. Hall**

became a Gospel minister and advocated the restoration of the Lord's church. In his autobiography, Hall says that this man was “one brother Rogers.”

V.E. Howard was heard to say, by this writer several years ago, that “*the Bible is so simple, that people need someone to help them misunderstand it.*” The Indian's experience demonstrated the truthfulness of this statement. The world is full of men helping other men to understand the Bible. Our forefathers recognized that the only Christian unity we will ever have, is when we stop reading into the scriptures what isn't there and stop taking out what is there. The simple mind of an untrained Indian would have, and did, understand this simple fact about God's word.

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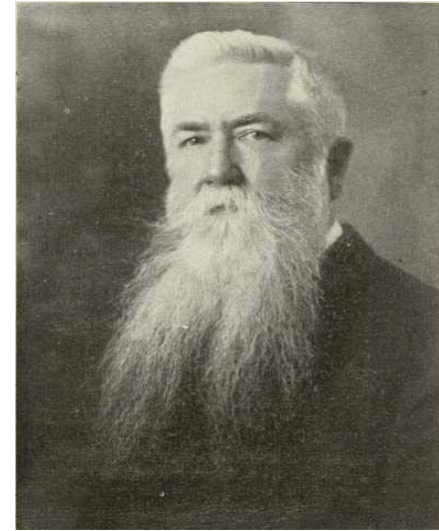
## JAMES H. HARDEN

H. Leo Boles

*adapted by Scott Harp*

The subject of this sketch was born June 27, 1858, at Winnsboro, S. C., and died at Gadsden, Ala., May 29, 1929.

He left surviving him his widow, Leila Varnon Harden, and two children—a son, J. A. Harden, and a daughter, Mrs. Susie Conner. During his young manhood



*James H. Harden*

he became skeptical; but while wandering in the wilderness of doubt and skepticism he had the good fortune to meet the beautiful and talented Miss Leila Varnon at Ocala, Fla., who afterwards became his wife and lifelong partner. Under her influence and the brilliant preaching

of our brother, James

A. Harding, he was led into the straight and narrow way, which he ever after traveled to the end of his days with joy. Having put his hand to the plow, he never looked back, but followed the furrow to the end.

In 1887, soon after his marriage, he moved from Ocala, Fla., to Gadsden, Ala., and became secretary and treasurer of the Elliott Car Company. He at once became an active and enthusiastic leader in all the work of the church. Through his influence many of our ablest preachers were brought to Gadsden and held meetings, and in this way the small congregation here was encouraged and strengthened. He remained in Gadsden some ten or twelve years, and from here went to Nashville, Tenn., where he acquired an interest in the Gospel Advocate Publishing Company and served as its auditor for two years. While living in Nashville he established a congregation at Waverly Place, which is now a large and flourishing church, and no doubt many members of that church still remember his zealous efforts in establishing that congregation.

From Nashville he went to Memphis, Tenn., where he was manager of a plant of the Elliott Car Company operated there. Although he was there only about one year, he found time to establish a congregation in Memphis, which is now the Union Avenue Church of Christ, and the zeal and good work of that congregation is known far and wide.

From Memphis he went to Anniston, Ala., for a time,

and from Anniston he came back to Gadsden in 1906, where he continued to live until his death. He was always engaged in some secular business, but, nevertheless, found time to devote to the advancement of the cause of Christ, and he had remarkable power of leadership in this work.

The church at Gadsden was at the time of his return a small, struggling congregation without a house of worship. He was instrumental in building up and strengthening the church here, and it was through his zeal and enthusiastic leadership that a lot was bought and a place of worship erected. He contributed liberally of his means to the erection of the building and thereafter to the support of the church. For many years he was leader of the congregation without compensation. This church is now a thriving and influential congregation under the able leadership of Brother Carl G. Smith, who preaches for it regularly. Brother Harden always contributed more to the church according to his means than the average man. He not only contributed of his means, but he gave liberally of his time and talents as well. Whatever his hands found to do he did with might and zeal, and he left his impress upon all classes with whom he came in contact. He was kind, courteous, and princely in his intercourse with all classes; yet he was firm and unswerving in his convictions. All who knew him admired and loved him. He had a busy and eventful career and was a remarkable man. His like will not soon be seen again. His influence made a great impression on the writer and her three sons, who came into the church under his guidance. He will always be warmly remembered by the Gadsden congregation. His death was quiet and peaceful, and "let us believe that in the silence of the receding world he heard the great waves breaking on the farther shore and felt already on his brow the breath of the eternal morning."

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### **Both classes represented**

F. B. Srygley, some years before his death, was holding a meeting in a small west Texas town. Lowering clouds in the afternoon seemed pretty threatening. Bro. Srygley eyed the approaching cloud bank for a while, and then remarked, "Looks like we might have some rain." One of the would-be wits present gleefully pounced on the observation. "Brother Srygley," he said, "we have a saying out here in Texas that nobody but a newcomer or a----fool tries to prophesy Texas weather." Srygley turned his one good eye on the brash young man for a long silent moment, then replied with a slow drawl, "Well, son, I classify as a newcomer. I've taken my crack at it; now suppose you try it." *Vanguard*

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## THE "IDEAL" PREACHER'S WIFE

Earl Kimbrough

Preachers' wives, like preachers themselves, come in all shapes, sizes, and kinds. And, as F. B. Srygley used to say of their husbands; "They are all human, and some are very human.1' We do not profess to know exactly how to tally the traits of an ideal preacher's wife. It does seem, though, that it would be beneficial to her husband if she has an outgoing personality, is deeply religious in nature, and manifests an avid interest in his work. It would hardly be a drawback if she could also prepare his sermons and be adept in offering some constructive suggestions occasionally in regard to his preaching. But then, a preacher's wife might be even too "ideal."

David A. Nation was a gospel preacher of sorts when he met and married Carry Amelia Moore Gloyd in Richmond, Texas, in 1877.



**Carry Nation**

Carry was a young widow whose drunkard husband had died some years before, leaving her in poverty with an afflicted child. David was thus Carry's second husband. But in some ways, she appears to have been an "ideal" preacher's wife. She was an outgoing woman (very outgoing); she was deeply religious in

(in her own peculiar way); and she was interested in her new husband's ministry (treating it as an extension of her own purpose in life). Furthermore, Carry could and did write David's sermons for him (in fact, she insisted on it). And she offered timely suggestions for their delivery (even while he was in the act of delivering them).

After disturbing the peace of Richmond for several years, Carry swapped a hotel she owned there for a place in Medicine Lodge, Kansas. David, having tried journalism and law in the Lone Star State, agreed to assume "the ministry" of the First Christian Church in their new home town. In doing so, he launched what a biographer of his wife called one of theology's bleakest chapters since Peter the Hermit.

In writing her husband's sermons, Carry chose the text and filled in the body with wrathful anecdotes, often dealing with alcohol, tobacco, sex, and the Masonic Lodge, each of which she despised in that approximate order. She also threw into her sermonic stew specific applications, by name and address, to persons in the congregation who had the misfortune of falling under her disfavor. Then she would edit and rewrite a sermon two or

three times before allowing David to have it. But she was not through yet. When the hapless man mounted the pulpit to present "her" sermon, she took a seat in the front row and prompted him, in tones audible to the whole audience.

If poor David preached too slowly, Carry would say, "Speed up David, you're dragging."



**David Nation**

(These facts are partly drawn from Robert Lewis Taylor's biography of Carry A. Nation, the infamous saloon-bursting agitator for temperance, entitled, *Vessel of Wrath*.)

Any gospel preacher today who may think his wife is less than ideally suited to his calling can take comfort in knowing he does not share the fate of David A. Nation and find himself unequally yoked to a woman like Carry. No matter how bad you think your lot is, brother, it could be worse. A whole lot worse!

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### Walter Scott and the toad

An anecdote was told that goes to illustrate Walter Scott's blunt way of speaking. Preaching at night after the meeting had been in progress a week, his irreligious audience was almost asleep. He said to the small boys in the front seat: "Boys, I passed by the school-house at noon today, and you were playing sky-ball. You dug a hole in the ground, put one end of a paddle in it, caught a harmless toad, put it on the other end of the paddle, and the poor toad was thrown into the air and mashed. Poor toad! It never harmed you boys. Oh! the poor toad; see it, boys, all mashed." When the boys began to cry, he turned to the men: "Oh, you generation of viper! I have been talking to you for a week about our Lord who was nailed to the cross for you, and you are asleep, while the boys are crying over a worthless toad!"

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### Rock Creek Philosophy

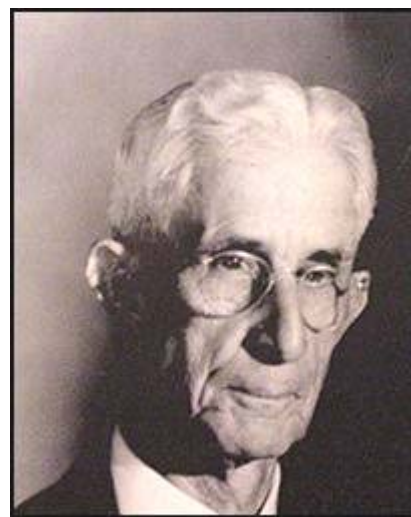
Some preachers give the churches more trouble than their work is worth.

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*The Fairview meeting house,..... B'ham, Al*



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## The Final Say

### Modern Marriage

Two children were talking. One of them said boastfully, "I've got two brothers and one little sister. How many do you have?" The other boy answered, "I don't have any brothers or sisters, but I have three daddies by my first mother, and four mothers by my last daddy."

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### Cold Fear

"A little old lady, objected to her son studying the New Testament so much. Her friend asked her, "Are you afraid he will become a skeptic?" "No," she replied, "much worse than that." "Do you fear for his health?" "No; no; still worse than that." "Are you afraid he will go crazy?" "Oh, no, no, a great deal worse than that." Then sinking into a chair, she gasped, "I - I'm afraid he will become a Campbellite!"

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### The bitter (and cheap) truth

The late Senator Robert Taft used to tell the story of a thrifty widow in his town who wanted the town's leading minister to conduct a memorial service for her dear departed - but was worried about the cost of it. Said the preacher, "For \$200.00 I will deliver a eulogy that will enshrine your noble husband in the hearts of the entire city for ten years." "That's too much," said the widow. "For \$100.00 I can give a pretty good talk," said the preacher reluctantly. "Nothing fancy, you understand, but no one will be able to doubt the solid virtues and endearing qualities of your late spouse." The widow still demurred, "Can't you give me something for about \$15.00?" she asked. "I suppose I can," admitted the parson. "But I warn you that for a fee like that I'll have to tell the truth about the good for- nothing bum." *Vanguard*

### MODERN MUSIC

And, speaking of modern art, we'll Just pass this one on about modern music. "Did you ever hear anything so beautiful in your entire life?" the teen-age girl asked her father, as she put on one of the latest popular records. "Never," said the father resignedly. (The nearest thing I have ever heard to it was once when a truck loaded with empty milk cans went out of control on a cobblestone street and collided with another truck loaded with hogs."

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### "Let's have fellowship"

The brotherhood has been long-suffering under the carping criticism of certain brethren who are somewhat short on doctrine but long on "fellowship." This is not a new problem. More than a century ago, Moses E. Lard wrote of some of his brethren who "for sweet charity's sake" would wink at error. He said, "They may be readily known by their abnormal charity and eccentric affinities. They love everybody but their brethren, forget no one except their former friends, and have an intense affinity for sects, but none for the church of Christ. They talk much of spiritual Christianity, but attempt to check their folly, and they reveal they have the spirit of the devil."

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### Point of view

"When we take a dollar bill down town to buy groceries, it looks about the size of a postage stamp. But when we bring it to church to drop into the collection plate, it has grown to approximately the size of an old fashioned bedspread with a border on it." —*Rufus Clifford*

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### Stormy Night & "3 Prays"

Each Summer for many years, Gus Dunn would "strike his tent" and come to Northwest Alabama for Gospel Meetings in the small rural communities. One such meeting was held in the mid 1940's in a small community between Winfield and Brilliant. In attendance each night was the writer and his parents. On this particular night a Summer storm arose. The wind blew and the rains came down harder with each passing minute. The lightning became severe and finally knocked the power off. Sitting in the dark with the wind howling, the rain pouring and the lightning popping all around, was a terrifying experience for a 4 year old child.

The audience became concerned and Brother Dunn asked the song leader to lead a few songs. I was standing at my mother's knee, wide eyed and scared. Sitting next to her was my grandmother, Ma Minnie. As the song leader launched forth into one spirited song after another, Ma Minnie would keep time with her foot. As the water puddled up around us, each time she would pat her foot and the water and mud would splatter on me and some even hitting me in the face. I was too afraid to move and when the lights came back on, my face and clothes were spotted with mud from the lively singing and time beating. By the way, I learned to pray that night. I told my mother on the way home that "I sent up three prays tonight."  
...LEW

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*Below is a partial listing of some of the great books of The Restoration Movement. Brother Bennie Johns has spent countless hours scanning this material and making it available to the public.*

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