

The Alabama Restoration Journal

An Historical Perspective of
Churches of Christ In Alabama



John Thomas Lewis
1876-1967

VOLUME 2

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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

Earl Kimbrough has done another wonderful job on the cover for this issue. This likeness of John Thomas Lewis would likely be in the mid 1940s. I judge this to be correct as his hair was snow white by the early 1950s. If you would care to order a print, you may contact us at **(256) 668-3135** or write us at

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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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JOHN THOMAS LEWIS

Larry Whitehead

From that first Lord's Day morning in 1907 when John Thomas Lewis climbed the stairs to "the third loft" of the Fox Hall on 4th Ave North in Birmingham, Alabama until Brother A.C. Moore spoke words of comfort to the large audience of grieving Christians assembled to pay tribute to the man at his memorial service in 1967, John T. Lewis and the churches of Christ in Birmingham were synonymous. The outpouring of affection was unparalleled for one who sought so little recognition. He had adopted Birmingham as his town and Birmingham adopted him as its own.

The measure of his accomplishment in the cause of New Testament Christianity is best described by brother Leonard Johnson, President of Alabama Christian College and a long time friend and admirer of Lewis. Johnson reported on a dinner meeting at the home of brother N.B. Hardeman in the late 1930's. In attendance were Hardeman and H. Leo Boles among other notables. The question was raised, "who had, in the opinion of those present, accomplished the most in the brotherhood for the cause of Christ in the 20th century? Johnson reported that the answer was John T. Lewis. Hardeman was reported to also say that of all the places around the country that he visited on behalf of Freed-Hardeman and where he held gospel meetings, there was more spirituality and respect for God's word, manifested among Christians in Birmingham than any other place he traveled. He attributed this to the influence of Lewis.

Brother Lewis' accomplishments were so many and so varied, it is impossible to even begin to cover them in a journal of this limited size. When he arrived in Birmingham, there were only a few, maybe 20-25, Christians in the city, all meeting as one small congregation in the Fox Hall. When he died, some sixty years later, there were some forty or more congregations meeting in the metropolitan area of the city. John T. Lewis cast a large shadow; consequently he had a hand, either directly or indirectly, in the establishment of most of them. In addition, in the earlier years, he worked in the adjacent and nearby counties of Walker, Shelby, Talladega, Chilton, Fayette, Marion and others, holding tent meetings, establishing churches and building up the local work, all the while building a reputation as a tireless and dedicated worker in the vineyard of the Lord. In addition, he held gospel meetings in other states such as Georgia, Tennessee and Texas.

My memories of Brother Lewis were as a child when my family attended the Ensley church in 1950-51. I can see him standing before the audience with his Bible open in his right

hand and the thumb of his left hand hooked in his left trouser pocket as he expounded on some verse of scripture in a bible class. He rarely raised his voice in his sermons, but his commanding presence required one's rapt attention. He was of medium height and when I knew him, his hair was snow white. Of course, being a child, I did not know of his reputation as a giant among men that I later became aware of. To me he was a kindly, grand-fatherly type figure that always was "picking" at me and my young friends. There were two or three of us that he would jokingly refer to as his "little preachers" or something akin to that. Often he would have us sit on the front row and most of the time we would behave, whether out of fear or out of a desire to please him, I can't say. Only later did I come to appreciate his greatness and my respect for him continues to grow until this very day.

Writing about a man of the stature of John T. Lewis is a daunting task, even for an experienced author, as I am sure the late brother Otis Castleberry, his biographer, found to be true. Certainly, this writer makes no claim to be an experienced or a professional writer. I will simply make an effort, with my limited ability, for my contribution to this issue of the Journal, to write about my impression of a great historical figure who was a part of the effort of many thousands of the faithful to restore the New Testament Church in all its glory for the benefit of all mankind. Lewis indeed played a major role in that effort and was a much loved and most respected figure to the many thousands whose lives he affected.

This issue of the journal is not just about John T. Lewis, but is also about the church of Christ in Birmingham. One cannot write historically about one without writing about the other. The two, Lewis and the Church in Birmingham, are inextricably linked together and to write about the one requires more than just a mention of the other. When a person, such as John T. Lewis, builds a lifetime reputation such as he did, it is inevitable that stories about his experiences will be told and retold; will be embellished and myths will be created about the man. We have reported some of these stories in the Journal and will continue to do so as we hear them. Not all are flattering and sadly, not all are true. I recently had a conversation with an older brother who, upon hearing that I was from Birmingham, launched forth in a negative way relating some of the stories he had heard about brother Lewis and some of his views. I answered him by stating that I had always felt Lewis and Daniel Sommer had much in common. They were both accused of many practices and many beliefs that they were not guilty of, nor had ever

taught.

It is the opinion of this writer that brother Lewis and his wonderful wife, sister Della Lewis were almost mirror images of David "Uncle Dave" Lipscomb and sister Margaret "Aunt Mag" Lipscomb. Neither couple had any children. Lewis embraced Lipscomb's views on just about every subject, the war question, a Christian's relations to the civil government, etc. The exception being the "rebaptism" question. Lewis adopted the *Firm Foundation* position in opposition to that of the *Gospel Advocate*. It is my belief that J.M. Barnes, a close friend of Lipscomb, asked Lipscomb to send a young man who would be a tireless worker for the cause in Birmingham. Barnes had worked the area on a limited basis for 15 or 20 years and had very little success. Birmingham was, due to the natural resources in the area, the fastest growing city in the nation. It had been, or would shortly, be called The Magic City because of its rapid growth. It was, in the early 1900s, as someone said, a city with more saloons than schools and churches combined. Barnes recognized that the work needed a strong, dedicated man. Lipscomb clearly chose the right man.

In writing about a person such as Lewis, there is always the fear that one will "glorify" the individual. While reviewing this with sister Hilda Logan, I expressed this concern and she said "you can't glorify brother Lewis because he glorified himself by a lifetime of achievement for the Lord." How very true. Few men, if any, had a body of work in the kingdom to match or exceed the work of this noble man from Almadale, Tennessee.

The Church of Christ In Birmingham

Sister Lewis wrote in 1962, that brother Lewis had a hand in starting 33 congregations in the Birmingham area. He would live another 5 years and would be involved in the start of at least one more, making a total of 34, in his almost 60 years in this city. An unbelievable record of accomplishment. Today, the demographics have changed so drastically and the growth pattern of the metropolitan area as such that it is completely different than the days when the plea for New Testament Christianity was introduced to the area. Many of the early congregations have moved to new locations. A few have merged. New works have been started. It would take much more space than we have in the Journal to attempt to cover them all. We will. Therefore, give short histories of ten. These formed the nucleus for the growth until today whitepages.com lists approximately seventy five congregations that are meeting within a thirty five mile radius of downtown Birmingham.

One writer wrote in the early 1950s that "no place in the country was the church as strong and as sound as in Birmingham." What a compliment! What a testament to the perseverance, determination and leadership of such men as John T. Lewis and hundreds of others, elders, deacons and ordinary members, who sacrificed to bring the old Jerusalem gospel to this area. What a legacy, from those humble few meeting in the Fox Hall on that November Sunday in 1907!

News & Notes

Bound Volumes

NOTE: In the last issue of this journal we stated our intentions to make available bound volumes of the journal. We stated that this issue would contain a card that which would enable you to let us know if you have an interest in the bound volumes. Recently, we have learned that because of Postal regulations, this will not be practical. If you would have an interest in the bound volume, let us know by email: lw3000@bellsouth.net, or drop us a note at P.O. 398, Russellville, AL 35653.

On Schedule

We expect to be back on schedule with each issue being mailed on a quarterly basis next year with the first issue being mailed by March 1st. We appreciate your patience last year as we had promised 5 issues and got our mailings out of rhythm.LEW

In This Issue

The opening article is by *Larry Whitehead* and is entitled **John Thomas Lewis**. *Earl Kimbrough* has an article titled **Getting Along With Jno. T. Lewis** which paints a wonderful picture of this good man. *Larry* has a second offering called **John T. Lewis & His Work**. *Brother Kimbrough* has a second article on the Lewis years which he has titled **Jabe A. McDaniel**. *Earl* has an article entitled **A Lost Letter. The New Testament Plea In Birmingham, Al.** is a reprint from the *Gospel Advocate* by *Brother C.A. Norred*, detailing the early days in the City. **C. M. Pullias In Alabama**, is by *Earl* and highlights this great preacher's efforts at the work in B'ham. Next we have an article (reprint) by *Jno. T. Lewis* titled "**David Lipscomb As I Knew Him**," an excellent article giving us some insight into this great man of God. Next is a humorous piece by *Earl Kimbrough* on an incident that occurred with Bro. Lewis at Bro. Jim Cope's expense called **Kneeling In Prayer**. An article by the sainted *Granville Tyler* titled **Brother Lewis-The Man I Knew**. A reprint from the *Gospel Guardian-1967*. A copy of an article in the *Steel City Star-1947* by *Fred Short* called **40 YEARS IN BIRMINGHAM MINISTRY? IS RECORD OF JOHN T. LEWIS, ENSLEY** followed by *Brother Lewis'* **REMINISCENCES OF FORTY YEARS MINISTRY IN B'HAM** in the same issue of the *Star*. *Larry* follows this with **The Churches Of Christ In B'ham**, a short synopsis of ten of the congregations started by Bro. Lewis and a short update and photos on many others. Two articles by *Earl* entitled **A Piece Of Brown Paper** and "**Boiling It Down**" give us a little more insight into brother Lewis. **In The Heart of Dixie: Restoration Ramblings** by *Bro. Kimbrough* is always interesting and this issue's offering is no exception. *Uncle Isaac's* column follows and he takes his usual shots at everybody. *Earl* has another column in our popular **gathering Home** series. *Larry* has the **Final Say**. We hope you enjoy.....LEW

GETTING ALONG WITH JOHN T. LEWIS

Earl Kimbrough

It is doubtful that any honest Restoration historian would fail to name John Thomas Lewis as among the most influential gospel preachers during the period in which he lived, if not during the whole time of the movement. He was loved and respected by the members of the churches where he preached, but, moreover, he was esteemed by the most outstanding contemporary preachers among the churches of Christ with whom he worked or who were familiar with his ministry. Everyone who knew him, or knew about him, whether friend or foe, was aware of what James W. Adams lovingly called “this old gruff, brusque exterior of his.” Preachers that lived in Birmingham and worked closely with Lewis, yet differed with him on some things that he strongly held to be true, nevertheless had a pleasant relationship with him and always spoke highly of him. Even those brethren, and there were many, with whom he had verbal battles over truth, with perhaps few exceptions, retained Lewis’ friendship.

When Lewis first came to Birmingham in 1907 to work with the congregation meeting at Fox Hall at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Nineteenth Street, he found among them an array of divergent views that could divide a church “seven ways from Sunday.” In describing the situation at that time, Lewis said some members did not believe in “the class system of teaching,” some did not believe in the use of “human helps” of any kind in teaching, some believed it was wrong to “take up collections,” and, Lewis said, “if you had tried to introduce individual cups, you would have torn the congregation to smithereens.” He added: “One good, conscientious sister would absolutely refuse to take the communion if you poured the wine before giving thanks, even in two cups.”

How in the world could a “gruff, brusque” man like Lewis, thrown into the midst of so many hobbies, none of which he accepted, have ever gotten along with them? One might expect that a man with his stem temperament would have had that little group of dissident brethren so divided it would be hard to find two or three to satisfy the minimum the Lord required for an assembly in his name. The church not only did not split, but it grew, prospered, and even multiplied itself, establishing other churches under Lewis’ preaching. But how could that be? There may be several good reasons why brethren with sharply different points of view could get along well with Lewis, but at least two are paramount from what is known about him.

The first is found in the word “respect.” In regard to the situation he found at Fox Hall in 1907, Lewis said: “I respected the convictions of everyone and expected them to respect my convictions.... When I started ‘the class system of teaching,’ I told those who did not believe in it that there was nothing absolutely compulsory about the class, that

they could stay home and come to worship at 11 o’clock, just as they had been doing. I respected their convictions by not insisting on their attending the class, but gave them to understand that they would have to respect my convictions and not try to tell me that I could not teach those who wanted to study the Word of God.” (Otis L. Castleberry, *He Looked For A City*, 2.) Lewis apparently followed this principle of mutual respect for brethren when there were differences among them, so long as they could agree on the essentials of apostolic Christianity as it pertained to the collective work of the church.

The second exceptional characteristic of Lewis that made it possible for people to get along well with him in spite of his “gruff, brusque exterior” is reflected in the word “disposition.” James W. Adams saw beneath Lewis’ stern demeanor “a highly sensitive man—sensitive to the feelings of people—he had a deep love for and a concern and regard for them.” (Ibid., 242.) One could write at length about this important phase of Lewis’ life. He was devoid of those traits that the kind of men he would probably call “peanuts,” seek to effect in an attempt to be “big bulldog preachers.”

Adams said: “Another thing that I thought was outstanding about Brother Lewis—knowing his convictions—knowing the type of man he was—he could disagree most sharply with a man and it was without rancor; it was without bitterness, and it was without human anger.” (Ibid.) There was no arrogance, conceit, or false pride about him. He did not think a man was dishonest because he disagreed with him. Franklin T. Puckett recalled that: “He had no personal ambition to be the chief man, even in Birmingham.” (Ibid., 206.)

Ed Harrell said of Lewis: “He was a man who did not mind direct confrontation.... If anything came up, what he would do is get it out. I’m sure it wasn’t traumatic for him to call somebody down, and once he had done it, I’m sure it was over as far as he was concerned. There wasn’t any personal bitterness or antagonism to drag on, and there wasn’t any anxiety about it.” (Ibid., 223.) He did not carry a grudge even against his staunchest adversaries. He never sought to circumscribe a remnant of “sound” brethren among those who agreed with some of his “peculiar” convictions. I say “peculiar” only in the sense that they were not held by most of the brethren, not to be judgmental. Adams said: “If he erred in drawing lines of fellowship, he erred on the side of judgment.” Gus Nichols, with whom Lewis heatedly clashed at times, said he was “one of the *few* men that I have differed with and yet considered him to be just as honest as myself.... Brother Lewis was an honorable man in all senses of the term.” (Ibid., 219, 221.)

JOHN T. LEWIS & HIS WORK Larry Whitehead

Editors Note: Brother Donald T. Bunting wrote the following as a lead-in to a term paper in 1978. He says it better than this writer could.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. II Timothy 4:1-2

Surely John T. Lewis of Birmingham, Alabama took the passage as his own personal responsibility. Brother Lewis, as a preacher of the pure gospel of Christ, left an impact upon the Birmingham area that is clearly evidenced by the number of churches that exist there today that are adhering to the principles of New Testament Christianity. Countless people have been influenced by the life and work of Brother Lewis. The writings and words of some of these people have created in me a love, appreciation, and admiration for this servant of God. A look at his life should inspire one to a greater devotion to the cause of Christ.....*Donald T. Bunting*

When John Thomas Lewis stepped off the train into the hustle and bustle of the boomtown known as Birmingham in November, 1907, it would have likely been an amazing site for a farm boy from Almaden, Tennessee. Even though he had spent several years in Nashville, it was a staid old antebellum city compared to the seeming chaos of an industrial city with its saloons on almost every corner and places of questionable entertainment that was typical of a city grown up almost overnight with an atmosphere reminiscent of the "wild west" towns of the gold rush days. After all it didn't get its reputation as "the magic city" for its growth magic alone. One can only imagine young Lewis' thoughts as he walked down the streets for the first time.

Lewis had graduated from Nashville Bible School the previous year and was likely chosen for this assignment by none other than David Lipscomb. J.M. Barnes had worked the area for 20-25 years on an occasional trip to the city. He managed to plant a small congregation of between 15 and 25 Christians. It is this writer's view that Barnes, who was close to Lipscomb, probably asked Lipscomb to send a dedicated young single man, who would not be

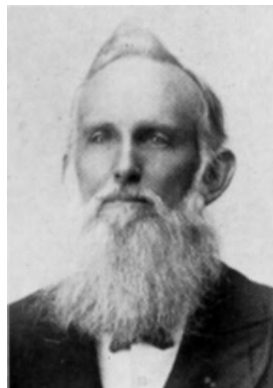


John T. Lewis ca. 1910 burdened with a family to provide for. They had tried that some 10 years previous with newly married Charles M. Pullias. Pullias ran out of funds and left after a few months. John T. Lewis was chosen and arrived with a mandate to firmly plant the seeds

of the kingdom in the magic city. Lewis came with a long range plan. Time would prove Lipscomb's selection to be an outstanding one.

One of the first challenges was to teach the struggling group, meeting in the Fox Hall, about the importance of contributing of their means in support of the work. J.M. Barnes had inadvertently spoiled the congregation. Barnes was a relatively wealthy man and paid his own expenses for the work he did. Consequently the members had never been burdened with supporting the preaching of the gospel. Lewis had to overcome this problem immediately. Also he had to deal with the divergent views of the membership on such issues as Bible classes and the located preacher controversies. He made it clear in the beginning what his views were and informed the membership that they could believe any way they wanted as long as they did not hinder the work nor become divisive. This evidently worked, as over time, and as Lewis taught the truth on the subject, it seems these issues became non-issues. Within a short time the church was contributing to his support, as the scriptures teach, and the work began to grow.

J.M. "Mack" Barnes would come up to B'ham as



often as he could and work with the young preacher. They held several tent meetings together in Pratt City, Tarrant and Woodlawn. They also worked together in meetings in Shelby and Talladega Counties, south of B'ham. Several were converted and slowly but surely the church began to grow. The two men, one an aged and experienced old soldier of the cross, the

Justus M. Barnes the other an energetic, tireless worker, formed a bond and a deep friendship. When Barnes was tragically killed in 1913, in an automobile accident, the loss was felt keenly by Lewis and the brethren in Birmingham. Brother Lewis was a pall-bearer at Barnes funeral in Montgomery.

Within the span of three short years, the congregation meeting at the Fox Hall had grown to near 100 members and they were ready to move into a new building that they had built on Charles Street in the section of Birmingham known as West End. Considerable money was raised from church members outside the area (the largest contributor was David Lipscomb) but the local congregation provided the majority of the funds. This new congregation was to be known as the *West End church of Christ*. More will be told about this church in another narrative.

Lewis was a tireless worker as is shown by the results of his labors. He borrowed a tent from the Attalla church, near Gadsden and began to hold as many meetings as he could. He would hold a one week meeting at one location

and move the next week to another area. This writer was told by more than one individual that he held tent meetings for 99 consecutive weeks during this period, covering the entire area in the process. I was not able to document this, but if accurate, it would be an amazing body of work. This effort occurred in 1909 and may have accounted for brother Lewis' illness during this time. He likely was physically and mentally exhausted from his labors in Birmingham. He took a trip to the state of Maine and helped build up the work there, staying with an old classmate from the Nashville Bible School. He went into Canada and established at least one church in that country. Brother Hans Rollman makes mention of this effort in his writings. Dr. Rollman teaches at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Brother Lewis was back in Birmingham the next year, in much better health and back at work.

It was in this time frame that Brother Lewis became acquainted with Brother J.C. Shepherd of Berry, Alabama, in Fayette County. Brother Shepherd was a leading businessman, some said one of the wealthiest men in the State, and from all accounts a faithful Christian. Shepherd had been one of the leading promoters and investors in the establishment of the city of Birmingham at its beginning. He was in Birmingham on business often and more than likely attended worship services at the Fox Hall and later West End congregations. It is very likely that brother Lewis became acquainted with him as a result. They became friends and this friendship would soon lead to discussions about the need for establishing a school in the area along the lines of the Nashville Bible School. These preliminary discussions culminated with the doors of Alabama Christian College of Berry opening in 1912, with Shepherd as its benefactor.

It has been speculated that John T. Lewis was offered the presidency of the school and that he declined, feeling that his calling was building up the cause in Birmingham. Instead, he recommended Gus A. Dunn for the position. He was, however, a major supporter of the school, promoting the same to prospective students and he appeared often on their lectureship programs during its ten year lifespan. His association with the school led to lifelong relationships with Dunn, first President of the school, Hal P. McDonald, President of the school for several years, Asa Plyler and Gus Nichols who were students. Lewis had been involved in Nichols' decision to attend the school.

By 1913, it was decided that a congregation was needed in the eastern section of B'ham. A building, owned by the Presbyterians, was located. With the West End congregation providing the funds and most of the members, the building was purchased, necessary modifications were completed and the *Woodlawn church of Christ*, meeting on 60th Street, came into existence. Brother Lewis preached for both congregations for the next 3 years. More about this work will be told later.

While engaging in fulltime work for two

congregations, brother Lewis kept a full schedule of tent meetings around the city as well as in adjacent counties, particularly Walker County. The brethren purchased a tent and he used it frequently all over the area. How he maintained such a rigorous schedule is amazing. It was at one of these tent meetings in Childersburg that he baptized the Cliett sisters, both of whom would later marry gospel preachers, B.C. Goodpasture and J.M. Powell. His successes led to calls for gospel meeting work in other areas. For several years, he held meetings in Trenton, Georgia, and was successful in building a strong congregation there.

Brother Lewis was conducting a gospel meeting near Nashville, Tennessee when he met Miss Emily Della Sanders. They fell in love and after a short courtship, they were married on Oct. 14, 1914. They setup housekeeping in the western section of the city and the work continued. Sister Lewis was the perfect helpmate for the young preacher and it was clear to all that she was the love of his life. The



marriage was the perfect antidote for the loneliness he had endured for seven years and seemed to reinvigorate the young preacher, as the next few years would be some of his most productive. Della was his partner in his work. She also was as dedicated as he was to the Lord's work.

In addition to his local work and his meeting schedule, he began to submit an occasional article to the *Gospel Advocate*. His articles were incisive and to the point and their frequency increased until he became a staff writer for the paper. His relationship with the *Advocate* continued for the next 20-30 years. He frequently dealt with controversial issues that faced the church in his day. His columns were clear and definitive. It would be said of him that "he wanted to leave no doubt where he stood on any issue." Over the next decades he would write for other journals including the *Firm Foundation*, *The Bible Banner*, *Sound Doctrine* and *The Gospel Guardian*.

David Lipscomb died in 1917. He was one of Lewis' heroes and evidently Lewis was one of the great teacher's favorites. Brother Lewis was selected as one of the pall bearers at his funeral but was unable to make the service. The fact that he was chosen, showed the esteem that the Lipscomb family held for him.

By 1920, it was decided that a congregation was needed in the northern section of the city. The West End church and the Woodlawn brethren provided the funds and most of the members and the *North Birmingham church* was begun. The building was located on 34th Ave North. The work in Lewisburg, a community just north of the city

had begun about 1913, meeting in the home of brother and sister Parker. Lewis helped in growing this work as much as he had time for. The *Tarrant City church*, located in the North central section of the area, was begun in 1922. The church in *Bessemer*, also a thriving city a few miles west of Birmingham, was started in 1923. Ensley was a thriving suburb of the city and the steel mills were booming. It was decided to start a congregation there. The *Ensley church* opened its doors in 1926, with brother Lewis preaching fulltime for the church and this association would last until his retirement, thirty-eight years later. The long hours and many Bible studies and gospel meetings held over the years in Pratt City, were justified in 1927, when the *Sandusky* congregation opened its doors.

In 1920, Lewis, C.M. Pullias and J. Pettey Ezzell conducted a series of meetings in Morgan County, Alabama, with some success and one result was the establishment of the church at Hartselle, Alabama. He was called to south Alabama, where he held several meetings with the results being the beginnings of churches in the small towns in which he preached. He also spent considerable time in south Georgia. It is difficult to find details of some of these meetings, as Lewis was not one to “toot his own horn,” so to speak, about his work as some were wont to do in the various brotherhood journals, but it is safe to say that most of the efforts met with success.

The decade of the 1920s was one of the most productive of Lewis’ ministry. As noted, many congregations were established under his preaching and leadership. All of these congregations would grow to be powerful voices for the cause of Christ over the next years.

At some point in the 1930s, a few of the brethren in Birmingham, became concerned about the class system of teaching the Bible and also churches using multiple containers for serving the communion. Brother Lewis had dealt with this problem in the Fox Hall days with a small number of brethren, but this time it was a larger issue with the potential to cause serious problems. Brother Lewis, as was his style, met the problem head on and was able to keep the issue in check for a number of years. In spite of his efforts, the problem resurfaced again when Brother Cecil Abercrombie moved to B’ham and added his views on located preachers to the mix. Abercrombie was joined by Brother O.C. Dobbs, an outstanding and popular preacher from Fayette County, whom Lewis knew from the days of Alabama Christian College of Berry. Dobbs had served on the board of the school. These brethren brought W. Carl Ketcherside into town to try and convince Lewis of the need for a public discussion of these issues. (*Missouri Mission Messenger- 1948*). Lewis met with them and when pressed for a public discussion of the issue, informed them that he knew the feelings of the brethren in Birmingham and that there was not enough sympathy for their views among the brethren to warrant a debate and as far as he was concerned that was the end of the matter. It

could be said that Lewis dispatched Ketcherside “forthwith,” although Ketcherside would later say the meeting was cordial. This did not entirely end the matter, however, as there are at least four congregations meeting today (2007) in the Birmingham area that hold one or more of these views. All are small (25 members are less), save one which may have 50-75 members. (It is interesting to note that a few years later Ketcherside went to the other extreme and is generally credited with being one of the “fathers” of the ultra modernistic “unity in diversity” movement in the church). Abercrombie would continue to be a minor thorn in the side of the brethren for a number of years. Lewis and Dobbs, though obviously having major disagreement on the issue, would remain friends until Lewis’ death.

In 1932, it was determined that another congregation was needed in the western section of the city. A building was located above the fairgrounds in a section known as Fairview and was purchased for that purpose. Thus, the *Fairview church* was started. It was located roughly at the mid point between the West End church and the Ensley church.

This same year, Lewis wrote, and the *Gospel Advocate* published his first book. The following excerpt is from the book review as it appeared in *Word and Work*.

The Voice of The Pioneers on Instrumental Music and Societies

An article by M.D. Clubb, Editor of the “*Tennessee Christian*” containing the assertion that “Our brethren have always been committed to organized mission agencies,” and that the position of “our conservative brethren” in “opposition to instrumental music and organized missionary work” does not agree “either with the apostles or the pioneers” —On top of that, M.D. Clubb’s challenge “to any man to prove that this is not true”—led to a series of masterly and powerful articles by John T. Lewis, in which he takes up Clubb’s challenge...

Brother R.H. Boll went on to highly recommend the book which was a compilation of the articles that had appeared in the *Advocate*. The book was successful and became a standard reference tool on the issues discussed.

Meanwhile the work in Birmingham continued and as Lewis reputation grew to the brotherhood, so did calls for gospel meetings. Meetings were held in Winfield, New River, Jasper, Oakman, Parrish, Nashville, Montgomery, Houston, Texas, and many other places. Lewis’ services were in demand. He frequently spoke on lectureship programs at David Lipscomb College and Freed-Hardeman College. He was called on frequently to mediate differences among brethren when they surfaced, such as the trouble in the church at Fayette in the early 1930s and the church at Parrish in Walker County a short time later.

The next few years would see new congregations started in *Acipco* and the *Central church* in downtown Birmingham. The Central church was the first since the Fox Hall congregation to be located in the downtown

section of the city. It grew to become one of the largest in the area.

The Bible Banner Years

Robert H. Boll was a popular writer for the *Gospel Advocate* from 1909 to 1915. He was appointed front page editor but soon began to advance some strange views on the millennium in his writings. The editors became concerned and for a time he was removed from the staff of the paper. A short time later, he promised to cease writing his views on the subject and was restored to the position he previously held, but within a short time returned to his former practices and was dismissed. He associated himself with a paper called *Word and Work* and began to seriously promote his ideas on the thousand year reign of Christ. By the 1930s, it was feared that he was making inroads into churches around the country and churches were being disturbed by this false doctrine. Foy E. Wallace, Jr. introduced a new publication to the brotherhood; *The Gospel Guardian*. This was followed within a short time by *The Bible Banner*, the purpose of which was primarily to challenge Boll and his associates. He solicited Lewis as a writer for the new journal. Lewis agreed and shortly, along with Cled Wallace, Foy's brother, became associate editor. These three became the principal writers against the Boll theories and immediately went on the attack. In issue after issue, they fired the "big guns" against the "Bollites." Wallace had no



Foy E. Wallace, Jr. problem with naming names and "calling out" those he and his staff of writers perceived as being in sympathy with Boll's doctrine of premillennialism.

Lewis' aggressive writing style fit well with the *Banner* and he took on such prominent men as J.N. Armstrong, President of Harding College and Clinton Davidson, publisher of *The Christian Leader*. Like Wallace, Lewis was fearless in his attacks. Also, he agreed with Wallace that the doctrines promoted by Boll and his associates was the most serious departure from the Old Paths since the societies and instrumental music questions of the previous generation. Not all their preaching brethren agreed with their assessment. Consequently, some felt that the hard line taken by the *Banner* was unwarranted. When the attacks by the *Banner* boys continued, some began to resent them. Thus, the continued attacks created enemies for the *Banner* writers, Lewis included. They were accused of engaging in "yellow journalism."

Another issue was developing with the move by some to re-unite with the conservative Christian Church. This unity movement was initiated by Claude Witty, preacher for the church in Detroit, Michigan and James De Forest Murch,

Editor of the *Christian Standard*. The *Banner* took on this battle also and Lewis weighed in with his potent pen. It seemed that the whole idea of such a so called "unity movement" offended him the most and he wrote article after article with no holds barred.

It was in this time frame that Clinton Davidson purchased the once respected journal, *The Christian Leader*. Being perceived as sympathetic to Boll's theories, Davidson came under withering fire from the *Banner* boys. In an apparent attempt to stifle the attacks, he took the unprecedented step of having the articles published in the *Leader*, copyrighted, to keep his critics from quoting from them. Wallace and the writers for the *Banner*, including Lewis, began to derisively refer to Davidson as "copyright Davidson." Many of the "big names" in the brotherhood stayed on the sidelines as the battles raged. Some of these men were criticized in the pages of the *Banner* for their failure to take a stand. "Those sometimes chastised have long memories," as some of the *Banner* boys would discover in years to come. "When the smoke of battle cleared and the war was won, John T. Lewis was well known to the brotherhood, but, he had made some powerful enemies along the way and as noted above, many of these enemies would take their shots in battles to come in later years

His relationship with Foy Wallace also became strained. The trouble between Foy and John T., began in 1939 over what were perceived as Lewis' harsh attacks on C. R. Nichol's book, *God's Woman*. Foy agreed with Lewis' view, but C. R. Nichol was Foy, Sr's., best friend and was like a father to Foy and Cled. The tone of brother Lewis' attack put a strain on their relationship although Wallace published all Lewis wrote on the subject. This was followed in 1942 by another difference that surfaced between the two men. Brother Lewis' position on the Christian's relationship to Civil Government was well known. He had written extensively on the subject and would later publish a book on the same. He was stunned when Wallace published an editorial endorsing a Christian's participation in war, evidently without telling Lewis of his plans. Lewis felt that Wallace had changed his position on the subject, although Wallace had never taken a position publicly. Brother Lewis was hurt and likely felt somewhat betrayed. When he joined the staff of the *Banner*, one must assume that he thought that Wallace shared his views. Lewis promptly resigned from the staff. Wallace wrote to Lewis several times pleading with him to reconsider. Lewis refused and never again wrote for the *Banner*. His potent and powerful pen fell silent and was missed by its readers as he was one of the most popular writers.

Brother Lewis began writing for *Sound Doctrine*, published by some brethren in Montgomery. He took Wallace to task in several articles on the entire subject of the "war question" and "the Christian's relation to the civil

government.” Lewis was an outstanding writer and his stinging points came down hard on Wallace. The two men were never as close as before.

During the height of the controversies discussed above, Lewis’ old friend, the lamented F.B. Srygley passed from the scene in 1940. He was described as “the last of the old guard.” Brother Lewis and brother Srygley had been close friends since the younger Lewis was a student at Nashville Bible School. They had a mutual love and respect for one another. Srygley certainly was not one of those who would stand on the sidelines in any conflict. The two men had much in common. Srygley’s death came at a time when the church could ill afford to lose one of his caliber.

Meanwhile, his work in B’ham was continuing to occupy much of his time. He preached a series of sermons in the small village of Trussville, fifteen miles East of the city in 1943. Soon a building was built and the *Trussville church* was established with the support of, primarily, the Woodlawn congregation. The *Hueytown church* had its beginnings in this time period, with the support of the Bessemer and Ensley congregations. The *Adamsville church* in the Western part of the County was started. The churches in *Berney Points* and in *Belview heights* were begun and in the early 1950’s, the *Midfield* and the *77th Street* congregations were started. By the mid 1950s, the *Huffman* congregation was begun with the support of the *77th Street* church. The *Pinson church* started by the late 1950s with the support of the Trussville church and the Tarrant church.. The *Pleasant Grove* church began with the church at Ensley giving the most support.

Birmingham was an industrial center, consequently most of its citizenry were “blue collar folks” that had moved from the family farms to work in the steel mills and other industries located in the city. John T. Lewis fit this mold himself. He had been raised on a farm in Tennessee. I believe this was one of the reasons he was so beloved and so successful in the Lord’s vineyard. He was a common man’s man. Many of the great leaders in the church had similar backgrounds. Some of the best work had been done by farmer/preachers who would work the fields to provide for their families and preach when they had the opportunity. The vast majority of the church members in B’ham lived in the Western, Northern and eastern sections of the city and would be considered “blue collar” families. Witness the fact that it was almost 40 years after Lewis came to B’ham before a congregation was started over the mountain in the upper class and upper middle class communities. In 1952 a long time dream of his and others including Brother T. F. Gossett and brother T.P. Williams, was realized when brother Lewis made the final payment on the property of the *Homewood* church. Since that time the demographics have shifted and the area south of B’ham has experienced unprecedented growth and there are numerous churches of Christ in these areas, where before 1952 there were none. The *Shades Mountain* congregation

began in 1961 and was supported by the Homewood church. The last congregation that brother Lewis was directly involved in establishing, was *Cahaba Heights*. This congregation was over the mountain also.

As has already been mentioned, brother Lewis did considerable writing in the 40s and 50s for *Sound Doctrine*, a paper published by some brethren associated with Alabama Christian College in Montgomery. Lewis was a supporter of the school and appeared frequently on their lectureship programs. He was close friends with brother Rex Turner and brother Leonard Johnson who were the founders of the school. He was also a close friend of brother Joe Greer who was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He supported the school financially. Lewis was keenly aware of the importance of young people having available to them, a school administered by Christians, free from the secular theories and liberal ideas of so many of the schools across the land. He knew what the Nashville Bible School had meant to him as a young man, learning at the feet of such great teachers as David Lipscomb and James A. Harding and others.

Such Was The Man!

Brother Lewis had a unique quality that would allow him to strongly disagree with someone and yet maintain a cordial relationship, even to the point of friendship. Rancor and bitterness was not a part of his personality. He would let you know where he stood, state his case based on what he believed the Bible taught, and that was the end of the matter as far as he was concerned. Once, during his hard exchanges with Foy Wallace, a young preacher asked Lewis what he thought of Wallace as a preacher. Lewis said he was a man of great ability. The young preacher responded, “ I thought you and Wallace were enemies.” Lewis responded, “ you asked me about his ability as a preacher. What do you think I am, a peanut?” To have the ability to disagree strongly with someone publicly and still maintain a cordial relationship was a rare quality indeed. He did not have an ego problem. Even though he was considered the most influential preacher in Birmingham and probably in the state, he did not consider himself so. It could truly be said of him that he was a great man and didn’t know it. He believed that as long as an individual was honest and was fair, he could and would respect their point of view. Sadly, as stated earlier, he was not given the same treatment many times. Because of his views on such things as the proper posture for public prayer, the teachings of I Cor. 11 on the covering question and the issues that troubled the churches in the 1950s, he was often misrepresented and his views distorted. His views were well known on these issues by any who cared to be accurate. He wrote about the cooperation issues long before they became a source of trouble in the 1950s. He was not a “ Johnny come lately” as some would accuse him of. Brethren who knew him and loved him, would

continue to do so whether they agreed with his position or not.

Brother Earnest Clevenger, Jr. would write of Brother Lewis. "After 1952 and the internal difficulties which arose in the churches of Birmingham some of the preachers became so bitter that they would not attend services where their personal views were not in vogue. John T. Lewis, who became the minister at Ensley in 1926 and worked there until his death, continued to visit meetings and leading prayer when called upon, at congregations which he helped establish and support during his nearly sixty years in Birmingham even though they were not in agreement with his position regarding the issues. Such was the man! *Then And Now...Earnest Clevenger, Jr.*

Brother Rex Turner wrote of brother Lewis, "He was a great character. Just about as great a character as I've ever known. He could battle you down one day, and you would be his brother tomorrow. Now if he were writing, and you were taking one side and he were taking the other, he would write in a caustic way. If you saw him the next day, you wouldn't find that spirit in him...Later, Turner would say, "As a boy I feared him; as a beginning preacher I respected him; and as a co-worker I loved him.

Brother Roy Cogdill wrote of brother Lewis, " he was a man that could disagree with you agreeably." He would give you the privilege of teaching and preaching what you believed from a passage of scripture if you would give him the same privilege...*Gospel Guardian. 1967*

Brother Kimbrough has already quoted brother Gus Nichols on his feelings about brother Lewis. They had been co-workers and friends for close to fifty years. Despite their public disagreements on the cooperation issues, they maintained a cordial relationship until Lewis' death in 1967. Some years after Lewis' death brother and sister Nichols paid tribute to Lewis in his biography.

Foy Wallace would say, after the death of brother Lewis, "He was good man. The churches of Birmingham are a testament to his work ethic and devotion to God."

"Heaven...I Spent My Life Trying To Get There"

Sister Lewis' health began to fail in the early 1960s. She passed from this life in 1966. Brother Lewis, who was not given to showing his emotions in public, wept unashamably as he bade farewell to his love and partner of 52 years. He would live another year. The church members in Birmingham, that he had meant so much to over the years, lovingly cared for him and saw to his every need. He too, passed from this life quietly in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and was laid to rest next to his beloved Della to await the Savior's call.

Thus, a glorious chapter in Restoration history came to an end. The story, however, did not end, only a chapter. The work that John Thomas Lewis accomplished, lives on. The church in Birmingham, Alabama, is as strong and viable as any place in the nation. Hundreds of dedicated Christians are blessed by the legacy left to them by brother

Lewis.

The Restoration movement produced many great men and women. Their struggles to restore New Testament Christianity, is a thrilling story to those who love history. Men such as Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, Tolbert Fanning, Walter Scott and others, were household names to the brotherhood that stretched across the new land called America. The second generation, to which Earl West referred to some members of that group such as David Lipscomb, James A. Harding and the Srygleys, as the "young Lions," carried on the work begun before, however many faltered in the great digression that swept across the church in the last half of the 1800s. The third generation picked up the torch from the ashes of the digression and carried on the tradition of the greats before them. Such men as the Dunn brothers, T,B, Larimore, H. Leo Boles and John T. Lewis would fit in this group. They had the drive, commitment, determination and deep and abiding love for God's word and the souls of their fellow man, to succeed and they did. The church experienced its greatest growth from 1906 until the mid 1930s under the preaching of these and hundreds more with the same spirit and determination to preach the word to the lost souls.

Brother A.C. Moore told of traveling to B'ham from Tennessee in the late afternoon and topping a Tennessee hill and seeing the setting sun in all its radiant beauty and being moved to start singing "How beautiful heaven must be." He asked brother Lewis for his thoughts on heaven. A rather pensive Lewis sat quietly for a while and finally said " I've never thought much about it. I've spent all my life trying to get there." As to his wonderful life, this writer believes that he can say without reservation, that there will not be another his equal or one who will accomplish more in the kingdom of the Lord in my lifetime nor probably in the lifetime of any one else. He was truly a once in a lifetime character.

We end this article with another quote from Brother Bunting which we think is most appropriate.

The last message Brother Moore received from John Lewis was sent by his niece, Judy Simpson. He said, "Tell him I am just fighting it out ... and that I hope to see him when I get 'home. " This reminds me of Paul's attitude as he says,

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only; but unto all them also that love his appearing. II Timothy 4:7-8

Just A Grain

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.

JABE A. MCDANIEL

EARL KIMBROUGH

C. M. Pullias came to Birmingham, Alabama, in 1897 to preach the gospel, remaining only one year because of finances. He had been preaching less than three years at the time, but his preaching convinced the wife of Jabe A. McDaniel that she should be baptized, but she was hindered from doing so by her husband. Some time after leaving Birmingham, Pullias held a meeting in Antioch, Tennessee, near Nashville. McDaniel's wife, Eva, happened to be visiting a friend in the area at the time. She attended the meeting and was baptized by Pullias. Her husband was greatly displeased when he learned of his wife's baptism. He did not behave unbecomingly toward her, but tried to convince her that she was wrong. However, she knew her Bible and stood her



ground. A daughter said when he tried to show his wife that she was wrong, she "always knock the props out from under him." Then, at long last he, too, was baptized. "She had led her husband to the Lord." (*Gospel Advocate*, Nov. 25, 1948.)

A few years later, Justus M. Barnes, who had been preaching in Birmingham for ten years at this own expense, encouraged the brethren to secure the services of John Thomas Lewis, a

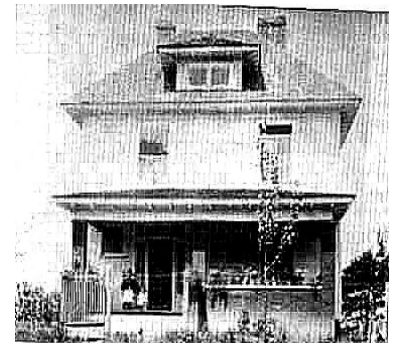
Jabe & Eva McDaniel young preacher just graduated from the Nashville Bible School. The struggling Fox Hall congregation then consisted of about thirty members meeting in a room on the third floor of a building at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Nineteenth Street. It was while Barnes and Lewis were conducting a tent meeting in Pratt City near Birmingham in 1907 that the Fox Hall brethren invited Lewis to work with them. However, his financial support was scant and some of the members soon "began to tell Brother Lewis that they could not support him, and that Birmingham was so hard a field as to make any success impossible." With such discouragement, many men would have packed their grips for a more hopeful field of labor. And Lewis might have done so, had providence not taken a hand.

Writing of this period in Lewis' life, C. A. Norred said: "At this juncture a blacksmith in the church, Jabe, McDaniel, went to Brother Lewis and assured him that he would be welcome to come and live in his home entirely free of charge. In this way Brother Lewis was able to

persevere in his work in Birmingham." (*Gospel Advocate*, Nov. 25, 1948.) This was the same Jabe McDaniel who a few years before had strenuously objected to his wife being baptized. He was employed by the Continental Gin Company, with a steady income that enabled him to provide Lewis with a place to shelter his head and sustain his life while he began what would become, perhaps, the greatest evangelistic work ever affected by the influence of one man in so limited an area in modern times.

This contemporary Aquila and Priscilla, fulfilling the words of Christ concerning his faithful followers in Mark 10:29-30, became Lewis' "fellow workers in Christ." They not only provided him with a home, but even a plot of land on which he helped them raise their garden. And, according to a McDaniel's grandson, his "shirts and everything else went in with the family wash." The grandson added: "My mother and grandmother washed them on a scrub board with homemade soap." (Otis L. Castleberry, *He Looked For A City*, 31.) They made it possible for the preacher to always be neat and orderly in his appearance.

How greatly young Lewis depended on the McDaniels is evident from what is known of his finances at the time. A niece of the McDaniels recalled that he often walked from place to place when he could not afford streetcar fare, which at the time was only a nickel to any part of Birmingham. Eva was often concerned about him and occasionally gave him carfare to keep him from having to walk so far. If she suspected that



The Jabe McDaniel Home he was out of money or was trying to conserve the little he had, she would follow him out into the yard and press an extra dollar into his hand." (Ibid.)

Lewis remained a part of Jabe and Eva McDaniel's household for six years, living with them until he married in 1914. Lewis' biographer writes: "Precisely why he decided to remain in Alabama rather than going back to Tennessee is not entirely clear. It was certainly not because he was offered a secure position in a well established church or the incentive of a comfortable preacher's home. If there were a single deciding factor, it must have been his impression of the caliber of the few Christians that he found when he came to Birmingham for his first meeting." (Ibid.)

Whatever may have been the reason for John T. Lewis making Birmingham his city for the rest of his natural life,


We have no doubt but that God had a greater reason for his staying there than even Lewis had; and that in his divine providence God made a way for him to stay when it seemed that even the brethren thought he should leave. It was then that Jabe and Eva McDaniel became the instruments in the hand of God that made it possible for Lewis to remain and to make Birmingham a bastion for truth.

How often it is in the history of God's people that great effects turn on what, at the time, seem trivial matters. And how often are the noble men of God helped on their way by the kindness of people, like the couple at Shunem who made a place in their home for the prophet Elisha. Some of the brightest stars in heaven may be those who were less well known on earth.

Brother Earl's Restoration Trivia


Alabama
RESTORATION TRIVIA by Earl Kimbrough

CHRISTIANS FIRST MET IN BIRMINGHAM IN THE 1870S. THE CHURCH GREW SLOWLY UNTIL 1895 WHEN 22 MEMBERS BEGAN MEETING ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF THE CITY'S FOX HALL.




Fox Hall

JOHN T. LEWIS BEGAN WORKING WITH THE FOX HALL CHURCH IN 1907. HE SAW IT GROW FROM 30 TO 100 SOULS BY 1910, WHEN IT MOVED TO A NEW FRAME BUILDING IN WEST END.



West End

WITHIN THREE DECADES THERE WERE MORE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN "THE MAGIC CITY" AREA THAN THERE WERE CHRISTIANS AT FOX HALL WHEN LEWIS FIRST CAME.



John T. Lewis 1910

FK

The Good Old Days

Some years ago I was riding my motorcycle across a back road in East Texas, when I came upon a little white house complete with picket fence and porch swing. In the swing sat a little white-haired lady reading her Bible. I stopped and ask if I might take a photograph. She invited me to the porch and insisted on getting me a glass of ice tea. In conversation I mentioned how crisp and nice her dress looked. She replied, "I always put on my best before I sit down with the Lord." White picket fences are a thing of the past here and so is her attitude. Both a loss to those of us who are left.

Bill Sherrill

A LOST LETTER

Earl Kimbrough

Much information that would be of *great historical value* has been *lost* through death, accidents, carelessness, indifference, ignorance, and even willful destruction. One such item that was in the possession of F. B. Srygley many years ago may have been lost by him through too much devotion to it. We refer to an account of John Taylor's conversion and first preaching, which took place in Marion and Fayette Counties in 1828-1830, written down in the old pioneer preacher's own hand shortly before his death in 1885. His conversion near what is now Glen Allen, Alabama, led to the establishment of the first church of Christ in that part of the state in 1829-1830, before he or the congregation he established, consisting of more than forty members, all of whom he converted, knew of any other such church in all the world. It was during a six to eight week's preaching journey through the mountains of Marion and Fayette counties in 1882 that Srygley learned much about Taylor's life that was then drawing to a close.

Recalling the loss of the letter, Srygley wrote: "During that trip he gave me a history of how he learned the truth and the difficulties he had in rendering obedience to it. I asked him to write it out and send it to me, which he did with his own trembling hand. While I lost that letter, I still feel that I can give it in substance to the readers of the *Gospel Advocate*. I kept this letter a long time and read and reread it many times. I wish I had it yet. I tried to carry it in my pocket, which accounts for its being lost. Maybe we can talk it over in the future. John Taylor was a great man, and he was exactly suited for his day and generation." (*Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 3, 1936.)

It would be a joy to join Srygley in talking this over with Taylor "in the future," but that does not help with our present pursuit of history. It is a wonderful thing that Srygley read and reread the beloved letter until he, by memory, could give it in substance to his readers. But would it not be far more wonderful, if we could read the story in Taylor's conversion written out in his "own trembling hand."

The moral of this story is this: If you have any information that relates to Christians or churches of Christ in Alabama, especially concerning things that occurred before the end of World War II, which you think may be of historical value—letters, papers, pictures, brochures, tracts, personal remembrances, etc.—that you would like to share with readers of the *Alabama Restoration Journal* and see preserved for generations to come, please contact Larry Whitehead, editor. **e-mail lw3000@bellsouth.net**

Mailing Address --5559 Roberts Drive
 Pinson, Alabama 35126

The New Testament Plea in Birmingham, Ala.

C.A. Norred

A study of the plea in Alabama for the apostolic order in religion will naturally call for some attention to Birmingham. But an understanding of the work in Birmingham will necessitate some



C.A. Norred

attention to the history of the city itself. The present city of Birmingham had its earliest beginnings with the settlers who came into this section in the wake of the armies of Andrew Jackson about 1813. The first settlement sprang up around the big spring, near the present juncture of Princeton Avenue and Center Street. This settlement bore the name of Elyton. Some years later there was planted just two miles east a little station, which was given the name Birmingham. With the development of the industries of coal and steel, Birmingham has spread until it has not only largely covered Jefferson County, but has swallowed up seventeen towns and municipalities and amassed within its metropolitan area a population of half a million.

The general pattern of growth in the early settlements here was about the same observed in any small town in a pioneer time. Particularly noticeable, though, were the "churches." Close by the big spring the Methodists erected their meetinghouse. A little to the south the Presbyterians built their structure. A little to the southeast the Episcopalians and the Baptists erected their edifices.

Nor is this all. When the village of Birmingham sprang up, the process was repeated. Thus in its earliest beginnings our city received a double installment of denominational bodies. Then as the smaller towns were swallowed up, the process went on. Thus our city has come to be well denominationalized and known for its "churches."

But what about these denominational groups called "churches"? What shall we say about the "churches"?

First, there is what we might call their ubiquity, for wherever we look at any time, the "churches" are there. We are, therefore, compelled to recognize their presence.

And when we look at these groups in fair appraisal, we are compelled to acknowledge that the persons embraced are the best people in the community. Generally these people are the builders

of the community; and, barring the ever-present exceptions, they constitute the moral force of the community. But our history is that we have always opposed these groups. Why? How can we justify our action in taking a position against the recognized body of the good citizenship of the community? Why?

The exact truth is that we have not taken up a position of opposition to these people or the good citizenship they represent. Our opposition is solely to the unfortunate error they have come to embody. And what error?

To begin with, there is the sinful violation of the admonition: "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Cor. 1: 10.)

The word "divisions" in this passage translates a word whose meaning is dissensions. Originally the term was employed to designate a tear in a garment. Then it came to designate a schismatic rupture of harmony. When Paul employed the expression, "perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment," he was using an expression currently employed to designate a community free from dissension.

This dissension which is inherently a part of denominationalism is sinful.

And shall we pause to take notice of the practical ramifications of this evil? Among whom, let us inquire, is this dissension made to exist? Among the very people to whom the community must turn for leadership! And what of the effect on the people? The condition repels. (John 17: 21.) And yet these are the people who need help most!

And how are we to explain the existence of such an evil among such people? Clearly it goes to the basic thing that each group is following its creed rather than the inspired Word.

In the face of such conditions, those who see the evil of such a procedure are compelled to cast their influence against the error embraced and to plead for a complete return to the New Testament way.

And it is encouraging to know that the plea for the church without denominationalism came to Birmingham in our early years. Among the early settlers were Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Franklin Hood and family. This family came from Andalusia, Ala., and settled just north of town. Mr. Hood was a Baptist. Mrs. Hood, though, was committed to the New Testament order. One day when her two little girls, Rena and Julia, came home from school and related that their teacher had explained to them that they

were Christians and ought to join the Methodists in the revival then in progress in the community, Mrs. Hood resolved to send for J. M. Barnes of Strata. And Brother Barnes came. Soon afterward there appeared in the Gospel Advocate (1876) the following report:

Wednesday night I preached at the "Old Carder," as it has been known in Jones Valley Thursday morning a large crowd gathered on the banks of Five Mile Creek, just above the "Old Carder," and nine persons were buried by baptism, and I trust into death, to rise to walk in a new life. Three also came from the Baptists to take the Bible in preference to the Philadelphia or New Hampshire Confession of Faith.

When word of this reached inside the town of Birmingham, the one lone family here then who stood committed to the New Testament order sent for Brother Barnes; and Brother Barnes came! Just how long Brother Barnes remained is not clear from now available information. We do know, though, that the services were held in the courthouse. We know, too, that a church of something like eight members was left here. And it might be said in this connection that it is conceded by all concerned that this congregation marked the beginning of the churches in Birmingham avowing the New Testament order. And it should be stated that Brother Barnes continued through the years to give his support and encouragement to the work here. In fact, a few days before his death, he preached at West End. And it is well known that Brother Barnes did give his help to the work here, for the church here, as could be said of the churches everywhere then, was passing through the troubles incident to the coming of progressionism.

It should be stated that now there are in the Birmingham area at least twenty-five churches avowing the New Testament order. There are four churches classified as Christian Churches. Along with the congregations just named should be added a few colored churches. And let it be repeated that all concerned concede that all these groups go back for their beginning to the labors of J. M. Barnes in 1876.

ANOTHER FOOL

Once when riding to Nashville with Foy Wallace, who was known to drive a little fast at times, John T. Lewis said, "Foy, slow this thing down. You're bound to meet another fool on one of these turns."



John T. and Della Sanders Lewis

Brother Earl's Restoration Trivia



Rock Creek Philosophy

I found out some time ago that the chief difference between the big man and the common people is that the big men sign the bills and expect the common people to pay them..... *F.B. Srygley*

C. M. PULLIAS IN ALABAMA

Earl Kimbrough



Charles M. Pullias with his living the Christian life.

C. A. Norred writes: "In 1897, C. M. Pullias moved to Birmingham to give himself to preaching. He was the first man to give his full time to laboring with those who stood here for the New Testament way. When he came, he brought with him one hundred dollars, which he had saved to take care of himself and his young wife. Within a year, though, his funds were exhausted and he was compelled to move away." (*Gospel Advocate*, Nov. 25, 1948.) It was another ten years before John T. Lewis began full time work in Birmingham.

In 1917, Pullias returned to Birmingham and spent four years working the West End church, the congregation that was formerly the Fox Hall church. By 1913, the West End church had grown sufficiently to provide money and members to begin a church in Woodlawn. The new congregation began meeting in 1914 and Lewis divided his time between West End and Woodlawn, preaching at each place on alternate Sundays. This continued until Pullias came and then Lewis devoted his full time to the Woodlawn church for the next ten years.

Pullias' coming to Birmingham brought about a close relationship with the two preachers and a common interest in the cause of Christ in Alabama. Pullias had recently become associated with the *Gospel Advocate*, for which Lewis at the time was a regular contributor. Pullias was living in Tennessee and wrote from Nashville. He spoke highly of Lewis' work, but not so approvingly of some things that were going on in Middle Tennessee. He said: "Glad to be hooked up with you on the *Gospel Advocate* in the Lord's work. I think you are hitting the bull's eye every crack.... Just want you to know I fear no uneasiness of a compromise when Jno. T. Lewis is at the helm. Brother Lewis, there is more trashy preaching in this section than you could imagine. Some of them don't like me because I won't fall for it. Ask Paul Slayden some-

time what kind of preaching is being done in this neck of the woods." (Otis L. Castleberry, *He Looked for a City*, 151.) Pullias also spent one year in Huntsville.

While many faithful gospel preachers largely devoted their ministry to Alabama, many others labored there for only a few years, but these also left their mark on the state and should not be forgotten. C.M. Pullias belongs to that galaxy of men in the earlier years of the twentieth century that stood forthrightly for apostolic Christianity at a critical time in the history of the churches of Christ. While he yet lived, it was said of him that he "never compromised one principle of Truth. His love for it causes him to abhor a wresting or twisting of the Holy Scriptures in any effort by man to support a peculiar tenet, or practice. He despises and denounces sin and any attempt to pervert the gospel of Christ, both in and out of the church. He oft has said privately and from the pulpit: 'I want to have friends, but not at the sacrifice of Truth. I'd rather be friendless and a pauper, if such is necessary, and be loyal to the Word of God.'" (M. Kurfees Pullias, *The Life and Works of Charles Mitchell Pullias*, 18.)

It had been truthfully said that: "It surpasses the ability of man to estimate the extent of the influence for good of the godly life of this man, or of others who have lived by the precepts of the Lord. Wherever the churches of Christ exist, the name of C. M. Pullias is known. In the Southland his name is a household word in Christian homes, but the glory is God's." (Ibid.) This may not be true today, more nearly sixty years after these words were written. Those that forget the things a man stood for in his lifetime are not likely maintain very long a genuine interest in the man himself after he has departed this life.

One reason men like Charles Mitchell Pullias should not be forgotten was stated by his biographer in 1948. He said: "Today there is a crying need for men of his caliber and loyalty in the world; men who will proclaim from the housetops the 'un-searchable riches of Christ' without fear or favor; teaching 'the pattern of sound words' unmoved by popular pressure." (Ibid.)

False Impressions

Brother V.P. Black would tell of his first gospel meeting in Birmingham. Having heard the stories about brother Lewis, he prayed that Lewis would not attend the meeting. Lewis was there for every service, morning and evening. Brother Black said that he never had more encouragement than he received from brother Lewis.

“David Lipscomb As I Knew Him”

JOHN T. LEWIS

On September 28, 1898 I entered the Nashville Bible School, then located on South Spruce Street, Nashville, Tennessee. That was the opening of the seventh session of the school, it was then that I saw Brother Lipscomb for the first time. His old horse and buggy hitched to a fence post on the old campus was a familiar sight every school day for the following five years. In 1903 the school was moved to the present location of the David Lipscomb College. The first year I was there I had two classes under him, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament, the next four years I had only his Old Testament class. During those five years, he drove the five miles from his home every day, hot or cold, rain or shine, and if he was ever late or ever missed a class I do not remember it. Brother Lipscomb taught only the Bible in the school, and he taught only two classes a day, one in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament. This he did from the beginning of the school until the infirmities of old age forced him to relinquish his teaching.

The end of his earthly pilgrimage came in 1917; but I do not know what year he had to give up his teaching. I finished my schooling there on May 24, 1906, and he was still teaching his classes with interest and vigor that he was the day I entered the school. During all those years of teaching he never received one penny for his services. During those years Brother Daniel Sommer was going over the country teaching what he called Bible readings” and charging so much per. In 1905 I was in Medford Ont., Canada, and while there I read a long article in the Octographic Review, from Daniel Sommer, Lambasting the Bible School. I wrote and asked him what he would advise a young man to do that had to work his way through school. If he would advise him to go to a school where, while getting his literary training, he could get his Bible free under teachers like David Lipscomb or, would he advise him to first get his literary education, then take Bible readings for so much per? He replied that David Lipscomb did not know as much about the Bible as some people thought he knew, that if I had read his article on “Horrible Revelations”; he was talking about David Lipscomb. Brother Lipscomb had written an article saying that the Great Commission gave Christians the right to teach the Bible anywhere. Brother Sommer said that was a “Horrible Revelation.” We had quite a correspondence but never could get Brother Sommer to give me a clear cut answer to any questions. He would say answer privately and be careful. However, soon after our correspondence Brother Sommer was advertising his Bible readings free. So, whatever Brother Sommer may have thought of Brother Lipscomb’s teaching, his example in teaching the Bible Free must have had its influence on Brother Sommer.

I have heard Brother Lipscomb say many times

that he did not want a college, that it took money to run a college, he wanted a school where boys and girls, whose parents were not able to send them to college, could come and be taught the word of God daily to make better citizens out of them. His classes were always orderly, each student would read a verse then Brother Lipscomb would ask questions or comment on the same, and any student could ask a question; but the students could not discuss anything among themselves in his class. Brother Lipscomb was an elder of the South College Street Church for many years. In teaching on the church’s responsibility of caring for its needy, he said the College Street church once had an elderly Sister that was destitute, the church cared for her a while and then sent her off to the county farm or poor house. His comment was: “The church has never been what it was before.” His idea was when ever a local congregation turns its responsibilities over to others, it loses its power.

Dr. W.A. Bryan told me that he heard Brother Lipscomb preach on the blood of Christ, he said it was the greatest sermon he had ever heard, he went up to compliment Brother Lipscomb? He said Brother Lipscomb



David Lipscomb

just sorter grunted, turned and walked off. That insulted the doctor’s dignity; but that was Brother Lipscomb, he cared but little for the praise of men. Nobody ever heard or read of David Lipscomb telling about what he had done. I never heard Brother Lipscomb make a statement about anything he had ever done that even sounded like he was bragging about it, not even in a jocular vein. I heard Brother Lipscomb say that after the close of the Civil War, Bishop McFerrin, of the Northern Methodist Church, told him that he knew the Lord was on the side of the North because they whipped the South. Brother Lipscomb said he replied, “We get our comfort from Heb. 12:6, ‘For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth’.”

If any one had gone out shooting preachers he would have never shot Brother Lipscomb. Brother Lipscomb was not only a gospel preacher and mighty with the pen; but he was also a successful farmer, and he always looked more like a farmer than he did a preacher. When I was in school the Lipscomb debating society wanted to get his picture to hang in the hall. I went to talk to Sister Lipscomb about it, she said, “Brother Lewis, let me handle that; I think I can

get Mr. Lipscomb to sit for the picture.” She did, and when it was finished I went to town and got it, and carried it by to let Sister Lipscomb see it. She looked at it, and then said, “Brother Lewis it may be interesting to you to know that everything Mr. Lipscomb has on I made, except his shoes and suspenders.” He said the padding in tailored clothes hurt his shoulders. That did not mean that he was slouchy in his dress, he was for comfort, and wore the same kind of clothes that his forefathers wore – home made, if not home spun. In many respects they lived as

their forefathers lived. I was in Nashville after I left school and went out to see Brother and Sister Lipscomb, they would have me to stay for dinner. Sister Lipscomb had a small hand mill, she ground the wheat and made bread out of the whole wheat. Their idea was that the strength was taken out of bolted wheat or flour. That was their home life.

David Lipscomb stood as a giant oak in the wilderness when the wolves of digression were almost sweeping the church back into the swamps of denominationalism, from which the early pioneers had rescued it. J.B. Briney, in those days, cartooned Brother Lipscomb as an old woman, in a Mother Hubbard dress with broom, trying to sweep back the tide of the sea, and I suspect that Briney, deep down in his heart, knew that the old sister had turned the tide. I have heard Brother Lipscomb say that the smallest departure from God’s word would open the flood gate to digression. He said that when preachers and elders got to calling meetings to discuss plans for carrying out the work of the church there was always the danger of some one suggesting an unscriptural plan. Any one that knows anything about the digressive movement, knows that every missionary society that has ever been organized, in the Restoration Movement, had its beginning that way. In 1910 the church in Henderson, Tennessee called a meeting of the preachers and elders of that area to discuss plans for putting a preacher in that field. Their plan called for the congregations, in that area, to send their contributions to the Henderson church and the elders of that congregation would hire the preacher and put him in the field. The only responsibility that the contributing churches had in the matter was to send their contributions to the Henderson church. When Brother Lipscomb heard of the plan he wrote an article pointing out the danger and the unscripturalness of the plan. His article caused quite a furor among some brethren. In June of that year, on my way to Canada, I stopped off in Cincinnati, Ohio and spent the night with Brother Fred Rowe, editor of the Christian Leader. He was fuming about Brother Lipscomb’s article. He said David Lipscomb went about with a chip on his shoulder, criticizing everything brethren wanted to do that was not started in Nashville. The Henderson plan miscarried; it was never put in operation. Maybe Brother Lipscomb was wrong(?), the Henderson plan had been operating among

the digressives for more than sixty years, at that time, and it would go over with a bang among the “loyal” brethren of today.

The last time I saw Brother Lipscomb his mind was almost a blank, he was sitting in his large arm chair with his Bible open in his lap. Sister Lipscomb talked before him about his going as though he was going off on a vacation. She said, Brother Lewis, Mr. Lipscomb is just waiting for the end to come.” She said, “I have already selected his Pallbearers.” At this time I can only recall four that she named: John E. Dunn, John T. Lewis, S.H. Hall and H. Leo Boles. Her wishes was not carried out in this respect. Brother Lipscomb was dead and buried before I heard of his passing. Brother Boles told me that when the end came, Sister Lipscomb came in, and kneeling by his bed said, “Lord receive his spirit.” Got up and went on out of the room. She knew that his suffering was over, and that her going would soon follow. There fore, instead of weeping and wondering what would become of her, she was rejoicing in the “precious and exceeding great promises” of the God they had faithfully served.

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KNEELING IN PRAYER

Earl Kimbrough

John T. Lewis grew up in a time when the leaders in the Lord's church, especially gospel preachers, knelt to pray in public and perhaps in the "closet" as well. He said he was probably thirty years old before he ever saw a gospel preacher pray in public without kneeling. I can appreciate that, for I remember in the early years of my life that the preachers knelt during prayer in the congregation where I was "reared" and several of the men would step out into the aisle and kneel during prayer.

Customs have a strong impact on one's thinking and action. But perhaps the greatest influence, other than the Bible, on Lewis was David Lipscomb and James A. Harding. One can hardly imagine these devout men of God standing or sitting during prayer in an assembly. The practice of kneeling for prayer was common from pioneer times. F. B. Srygley said of John Taylor that when they traveled together near the end of Taylor's life, they would stop beside the road and the old man would carefully set his hat in front of him, stroke his bald head meditatively, and then deliberately kneel, regardless of dust or mud, for prayer.

Lewis did not, as some critics implied, believe that one's prayer would go unheard unless offered while he was on his knees. He simply, yet strongly, believed that this was the teaching of Christ and that the attitude of the body reflected in kneeling is indicates a humble heart that should characterize one in time of prayer.



John T. Lewis

From his study of the Bible, he saw that as the universal practice of the early Christians. So he taught that in public prayer, if possible, all should kneel. He said: "I believe a Christian can breathe a prayer as he works on his job, as he drives on the highways, or as he lies upon his bed at night; but when he takes a position to pray in public meetings, or before the public, I believe he should kneel before God." He cited an occasion at the Nashville Bible School when Dr. T. W. Brents, who weighed over three hundred pounds, was present. A presiding brother asked the audience to stand for prayer in deference to Brents. James A. Harding was on his feet in a flash, saying: "If Brother Brents cannot kneel, let him stand: those who can, let them kneel before God." (Otis Castleberry, *He Looked for a City*, 161-162.)

I was present at Florida Christian College on February

17, 1953, when Lewis spoke on the annual lecture program. His topic was, "The Relation of Christians to Civil Government." He was the first speaker of the day and so prayer was in order. Before introducing the speaker, President James R. Cope, Jr., obviously out of respect for Lewis, pointedly asked the audience to "kneel" for the prayer. He then fittingly led the way by kneeling on the platform beside the beloved Birmingham evangelist. The audience was no doubt in sympathy with Cope's request and many knelt for the prayer as requested. That should have ended the matter, but Lewis was not a man given to ignoring a situation that had even a shade of affectation about it, especially in regard to himself: nor was he apt to pass up an opportunity to make a point regarding what he believed to be truth.

Lewis did not want brethren to change their customs



James R. Cope

out of respect for him, or due to his presence. He would likely have made no reference to the matter if Cope had asked the audience to stand for the prayer, although he himself would have quietly knelt to pray. But in view of the fact that Cope had obviously, although indirectly, drawn attention to Lewis' well known belief about Christians kneeling in public prayer, he could not remain silent. When he was introduced and arose to begin his lecture, Lewis began with a comment, somewhat as an aside, which left the impression that he thought Cope's having the audience to kneel for prayer was the common practice in the public services at the college, even though he knew better. While I do not recall his precise words, Lewis commended Cope for teaching the students at the college to kneel in prayer. Cope, seated on the platform during Lewis' speech, looked on with a slightly sheepish expression that was amusing to some of us. It was obvious that Lewis had, in one simple statement, scored a point for his side as effectively as if kneeling in prayer had been the subject of his lecture.

Reverence

Once sister Lewis and some of the ladies were waiting on a city bus to take them to the place for a Bible study. The bus was late and it was obvious that sister Lewis was getting tired. One of the ladies suggested that she place the bible on the curb and sit on it to rest. Sister Lewis immediately responded. "Oh no, I couldn't sit on God's Word."

BROTHER LEWIS – THE MAN I KNEW

Granville W. Tyler

From childhood I heard the name John T. Lewis. While but a young man I read his articles and heard him preach and lecture a few times. His clear, direct and pointed manner of teaching led me at first, as it did other casual observers to feel that he was abrupt and somewhat dogmatic. Those who knew him slightly spoke of his sharpness and bluntness, while those who knew him intimately spoke warmly of his knowledge, faith and devotion to truth. From the first, I was impressed by his decorum in the pulpit. He stood erect, often with the Bible in one hand and the thumb of the other hand in his pocket by his side. He quoted the scripture accurately and spoke in a conversational tone, never shouting, rarely raising his voice. He seemed always to speak as if he knew the subject with which he was dealing.



Granville W. Tyler

I came to really know brother Lewis shortly before moving to Birmingham and during the years I lived in that city. I visited with him when he was hale and healthy and when he was sick and in sorrow. We talked of the problems in the church and of some of the people involved in them. His careful consideration, sensible advice and encouragement were helpful. He demonstrated his true greatness in many ways. I call attention to some of the qualities of greatness prominent in his life.

A man of integrity. With brother Lewis, his word was his bond. Nothing incensed him more, in a personal way, than that of having his honesty called in question. Honor was built into his character. So ingrained in his nature was this principle that he seemed to take for granted that it was a part of others also. He was tolerant in dealing with those with whom he disagreed as long as he believed them sincere, but for those who demonstrated dishonesty he had little time or patience. Brother Lewis knew but one way to deal with friend or foe, and that was honestly – straight from the shoulder.

A man of genuine faith. brother Lewis believed God. He never cherished a doubt as to the inspiration of the scriptures nor as to their place in God's scheme of things. His entire life was an actual demonstration of faith in God and his word. Some questioned his word. Some questioned his understanding and explanation of matters, but none who knew him could question his faith and utter

dependence upon the word of God.

Following serious surgery when the doctors doubted he would be well again at an age of near eighty, I had a long conversation with him. He spoke as calmly and with as much confidence about his future as if he were carrying out well made plans to go to another city. He expressed concern about "Mrs. Lewis." "I wish," he said, "they had not told her everything. But she will be provided for." He lived – until after sister Lewis was buried – for twelve or more years after this illness.

A man who recognized and appreciated greatness in others. Brother Lewis referred often to his associates of the past. His great admiration for such men as J.A. Harding, David Lipscomb, the Srygleys and others was well known. He resented deeply any statement or quotation which misrepresented them. Of H. Leo Boles, brother Lewis wrote in 1946, "I know some preachers who did not agree with him on some positions, but I know of none that did not love and respect him, and that goes for me." I may add that this expresses my sentiment concerning both brother Boles and brother Lewis. He expressed many times his respect for the ability and nobility of men with whom he disagreed. Discussing with a few preachers, I was present, the death of a well known aged preacher, brother Lewis said, "A worthy man who did much good." A young man sitting nearby said with a smile, "What do you think of his son, brother... as a preacher?" After a moment he responded, "I think he is one of the greatest pulpit preachers I ever heard." The young man said, "Why, I thought you two were at odds since you had such a long and bitter discussion." Brother Lewis cleared his throat and with that characteristic twinkle in his eye said, "Sir, you asked me what I thought of the man as a preacher and I told you. What do you think I am, a peanut?"

Brother Lewis was a man, a big man in the truest sense.

Quick Thinking.....

Anthony Emmons, the first preacher at Central, recalled a call he received from brother Lewis. "Emmons, I have some appointments for you and me to call on today." Emmons responded, "I can't go today, brother Lewis, I plan on playing golf with another preacher friend. Lewis, visibly irritated, responded that "you young preachers need to place the Lord at the head of your priority list. Emmons, remembering those famous squirrel hunts on the Lewis' farm in Tennessee, responded. "Brother Lewis, a man needs some relaxation, whether squirrel hunting or playing golf." Golfing was never mentioned again...

**40 YEARS IN BIRMINGHAM MINISTRY?
IS RECORD OF JOHN T. LEWIS, ENSLEY
By FRED SHORT**

Monday, November 17, 1947 saw the completion of forty years ministry in the Birmingham area for John T. Lewis, loved throughout the Southland by followers of apostolic teaching for his courageous and unflagging devotion to building up and defending the teaching of Christ and his apostles against man-made doctrines and disunity in the church.

Mr. Lewis came to Birmingham to preach for a very small congregation meeting in the third loft of a grocery store at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Nineteenth Street, In Birmingham forty years ago this week. He says of that time as follows, "When I first came to this town, sectarian congregations already dotted the whole of the county, but only here with a handful of less than twenty members did I find a group Interested in simply following the teaching of the new Testament in its purity and simplicity, it has been my pleasure to work with all such faithful folk for all these years and to see the cause spread throughout the city until today there are some fourteen or fifteen congregations carrying on the work of the church In Jefferson County." Perhaps the most remarkable part of this work in helping to establish so many churches, to an outsider, has been his steadfast refusal if he knows it to accept contributions from sinners or persons other than members of the church. In a day when many ministers solicit funds from any and all sources until the people have come to look on them as just "begging institutions", Mr. Lewis has this to say, "I have never felt that. The devil was interested in building up the cause of Christ. Why then ask him to donate to a cause he is busy fighting day and night? I feel that any cause to which the devil contributes his money he has a voice in the operation of It. And to "give the devil his due", he should have. "Christ said, 'he who is not for me, Is against me', therefore there are but two classes of people in the world; those who are working for Christ and those who work for the devil. It is the business of the church to look after itself, and when It begins to solicit and beg money from the devil, you can just bet that the devil Is going to be on its board of directors pretty soon, and when that happens it is no longer Christ's but the devil's church, for the devil is a wise financier who Is not a board member of any firm he cannot and does not control".

Mr. Lewis' views about church debts are just as positive, and his' insistence that the church "pay as you go", probably explains why despite peaks and depressions, no congregation with which be has worked has ever lost its meeting house' ,nor been embarrassed in way about money matters.

Mr. Lewis, who has held meetings throughout this county and in many other states and Canada during his ministry, is the author of numerous books, tracts, newspaper articles, an accomplished radio speaker, before pressure of sectarian preachers curtailed his work in this field in Birmingham, has been a rallying point for those who follow his teaching on New Testament worship. Likewise, at' he has been a storm center for attracting the thunder of his opposition, to which his many debates testify. And because of all these things, many in all the walks of life in this city and over the state have sent him vell-wishes this week as he begins his "second forty" as it is termed of labors in the cause to which his life is dedicated.

This week the Steel City Star, learning of this important milestone in this well-known figure's career, asked that he pen a few lines of reminiscence on those early years down to the present. Very briefly, concisely, and with altogether too great modesty to reveal the real extent of his part in the establishing and building up of those 14 or more congregations In the county, he has done so, and we proudly present his account written below, somewhat as the leaves of a diary might have told the story of his anniversary. It is a great story of a great man and a great work, The greatest story of a life's work of any individual with whom this writer has ever come in personal contact. A man completely fearless In defense of the New Testament, order of worship. A man whose every waking hour is devoted to a self-less task of teaching the gospel, and has been every day for forty years in Birmingham. Mr. Lewis' account follows:

**REMINISCENCES OF FORTY
YEARS MINISTRY IN B'HAM.
By John T. Lewis, Minister
Ensley Church of Christ**

Monday morning. November 17, 1947: I was in town this morning and walked down to Fourth Avenue and Nineteenth Street and looked at the old three-story building on the northwest corner, and walked Up the first flight of steps, the very steps that I walked up. On my way to the third loft, forty years ago this morning to worship with, and preach to, the few disciples that met there to break bread.

That was the beginning of my work in this great city. Brother J. M. Barnes, and I held a tent meeting in Pratt City during August and September of the same year. I received a unanimous Invitation from the few brethren worshipping in "Fox Hall" to come and labor with them. The small crowd that met in that hall that morning, moved

into a small frame building, in March, 1910, on the lot where the present commodious West End meeting house stands, and it has multiplied itself several times during the forty years that have come and gone since that Sunday morning. As I stood on that corner, this morning I tried to visualize that Sunday morning of forty years ago, with the battles fought, the victories won, or lost, the ups and downs, the pleasures, and heartaches that have come my way during those swift passing, yet busy years.

For forty years, In this great city, I have waged a relentless warfare against the inventions and devices of man, in religions matters, against wickedness in high places, and corruption and immorality in the church. To say that I have had the backing of all the members of the church in Birmingham, in contending for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, or In my fight against ungodly church members, who would by their immoral acts bring the church into disrepute, would be to state an untruth; but many who love the church, and know what. It is all about, have stood like a stonewall behind me.

I have had my teaching challenged by religious teachers a few times, I have accepted their challenge and met them in open discussion. I have never been accused by an opponent of hitting below the belt, or being unfair, neither have I ever been asked for a return battle by any of my opponents, and I have never met one that I would not meet again if he challenged my teaching. But to say that my efforts along his line have been satisfactory to those brethren who believe in knock-down, drag-out, methods in debates, would be to state an untruth.

As to my evangelistic efforts in Birmingham during these forty years, I have held tent meetings in the suburbs,



and several meetings in some of the suburbs, before we ever had a congregation in them. I have held tent meetings in West End, Southside, Rosedale, Woodlawn, East Lake, East Birmingham. North Birmingham. Fairview, Ensley. Wylam, Pratt City. Dolomite, Brighton. Wilks Station, and Bessemer, besides I have preached in halls in different parts of the city. I have also held meetings in most of the meeting houses we built or bought, before we were financially able to get others to come and help. I have I taught Bible classes, and had other meetings during the winter months, in meeting houses, private homes, and in halls, in almost every part of the city from East Lake to Bessemer, and some classes every night in the week and some ladies' classes in the week days.

For thirty three of those forty years, Mrs. Lewis has attended most of my meetings and Bible classes in the city. And next to the Lord, she has been my greatest help, and stay, during the last third of a century.

The days of my years have passed threescore and ten, and if by reason of strength they should be fourscore years or more, I hope to be able to carry on the good fight to the end of my earthly pilgrimage. If I had my forty years in this city, to live over, my fight for the oneness, and purity of the church would not he lessened but more vigorous if possible.

The physiognomy of Nineteenth Street and Fourth Avenue, has not changed much in these forty years. The outward appearance of the old three-story building has not been changed. The Hillman Hotel stands across Fourth Avenue, and looks as it looked forty years ago. The city hall stands diagonally across the street minus its crown, the fourth story that was burned off several years ago. The old water trough located on the Northeast corner, where the draymen, and those who came to town in buggies, and other vehicles, watered their horses, has long since disappeared. And some of the shacks that disgraced the Northeast corner, have been replaced by small, but more modern buildings. These are some of the reminiscences of the things that have happened since that Lord's Day morning, November 17, 1907.

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Earl Kimbrough**

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THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN BIRMINGHAM

Larry Whitehead

The Fox Hall

The first congregation of the church of Christ in the young city of Birmingham was organized in late 1800s. It was meeting in the Fox Hall in down town. Uncle Mack Barnes, as he was called, was the first preacher to work with the small group of Christians living in Birmingham in the late 1800s. Barnes was living in Montgomery and would come to Birmingham as regularly as he could. He held a series of tent meetings in the summer of 1897. As a result, Barnes and others were able to form a congregation which rented a third floor hall at the corner of what is now 4th Avenue and 19th Street, North above a grocery store. The size of the congregation varied from 15 to 22 members. C.M. Pullias came to work with this group in 1897, but could not garner enough support to stay but one year. The small congregation was without a regular preacher for the next ten years. John T. Lewis arrived in 1907 and stayed in the city for sixty years.

Earnest Clevenger, Jr. would write of this beginning work in 1972; "In August of the year 1907, John Thomas Lewis came to Birmingham and preached in a tent meeting. The tent was pitched in Pratt City. In telling about the beginning of his work in Birmingham, Lewis said: 'While in that meeting the brethren meeting in Fox's Hall asked me to come to Birmingham and labor with them. I told them I would not make any promises; but if the invitation was unanimous I would consider the matter; they assured me it was. So, on November 16, 1907, I came and began work with them. In the Fox's Hall congregation there were some of as fine people as ever graced God's earth. I think.'" *Then and Now-Earnest Clevenger, Jr.-1972.*

The West End Church

Within two years, the Fox Hall church numbered almost one hundred and were able to purchase a lot on Charles Street in the West End section. With contributions from interested brethren elsewhere, they were able to build a fine new building and began worshipping in their new home in 1910. The church experienced excellent growth during this period and were able to properly support the preaching of the gospel. Brother Lewis borrowed a large tent from the church in Attalla and held meetings all over the greater Birmingham Area.

By 1913 the church in West End was well on its way to being a successful congregation and decided to aid in the establishment of a church in the Eastern section of the city.



The Woodlawn Church

The West End church purchased the old Presbyterian church building on 60th Street in Woodlawn in late 1913. In addition to helping financially, they also supplied some of the members to the new work. After a few months of renovation work, the new congregation began meeting in 1914. Brother Lewis preached for both congregations for the next three years. He also kept up his steady work holding tent meetings around the area. The Woodlawn church prospered and developed a reputation as being very evangelistic over the years. Within three years of their beginning, they joined with the West End brethren in acquiring a lot in the North Birmingham section of the city for the North Birmingham church. They were involved a few years later in establishing the church in Ensley and later the Trussville and 77th Street congregations among others.



The North Birmingham Church

By 1921 the North Birmingham church began meeting in a fine new meetinghouse on 34th Avenue North. This congregation was located in a nice working class neighborhood. Many of its original members had moved to the area from Northwest Alabama and were mature members of the church when they arrived. The Woodlawn church also supplied some of the members. This congregation grew rapidly within a very short time was self supporting with a strong program of work. This congregation would later lend its support to the establishment of the Tarrant church, the Sandusky church and the Acipco church and still later to the Central church.



The Tarrant City Church

By 1922, it was evident that there was a need for a congregation in the Tarrant area, as it was growing rapidly. The brethren at North Birmingham, assisted by both the Woodlawn and West End member ships, began the Tarrant church of Christ. This work grew steadily as the industrial community became more successful and over the next few



years reached numbers exceeding one hundred members. Some years later, this congregation assisted in the starting of the Inglenook church, supplying most of the members and also assisting in the 1950s, the new congregation in Pinson in extreme East Jefferson County. They also supplied help, both financially and some members in 1927 to the new Sandusky church in Northwest Jefferson County.

The Ensley Church

By the mid 1920s the brethren felt the time was right for a church to be started in Ensley. Property was purchased and after meeting in a dwelling for a short time, a building was built. This church began meeting in 1926 with the largest contingent of members from the Woodlawn church. Brother Lewis would become the fulltime preacher for this work. Brother and sister Lewis purchased a home in Ensley and lived there the rest of their lives. The Ensley church would support the beginnings of several congregations in the future, including Fairview, Belview Heights, Hueytown, Berney Points and Pleasant Grove, among others.



The Sandusky Church

From the beginning of his ministry, brother Lewis had preached many meetings in the Pratt City area of Birmingham with some success. However, no congregation was ever started there. When the Ensley church was started, many of the members from the Pratt City area attended there. As the area grew even farther westward, it was decided to start a congregation nearby in the Sandusky community. The Tarrant, Ensley and North Birmingham members assisted in this effort and supplied many of the members. This congregation began meeting in 1927.



The Fairview Church

By 1932, the growth of the churches in the western section of the city, called for a congregation in the Fairpark section. A building was found for sale across from the Fairgrounds that was at a midpoint between the West End church and the Ensley church. The building was purchased in 1932 and within a short time a thriving congregation was meeting. The



Fairview church would later lend its support to the start of the Belview Heights and the Midfield congregations as well as Berney Points in later years.

The Central Church

In the late 1930s, as Birmingham and the nation were recovering from the great depression, a building was located in the central section of the city near the court house where J.M. Barnes had held services in the late 1800s. The building was purchased and the Central church of Christ came into existence. The North Birmingham and the West End congregations supported this work heavily and it soon became a viable and strong congregation. Because of its central location, for sometime, the Central church was one of, if not, the largest congregations in Birmingham.



The Homewood Church

1952 saw a long time dream of brother Lewis and others fulfilled with the opening of the Homewood church. This was the first congregation to be started "over the mountain." This congregation would prosper over the next years and at one time lay claim to being the largest church of Christ in the state with 1500 members. The building of this congregation "broke the ice," so to speak, and opened the way for several other congregations to be started south of Birmingham. The growth of the southern section was one of the fastest in the state and there are 10 or 12 congregations in that area today.



The 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s & Beyond

The 40s and 50s were some of the most productive years as to the growth of the cause in the Birmingham area. The 40s saw churches started in Belview Heights, Hueytown, Trussville, Leeds, Adamsville, Acipco, 4th Ave. Berney Points and Mt. Olive. These congregations would follow the examples set earlier and contribute to starting other new works as opportunities presented themselves.

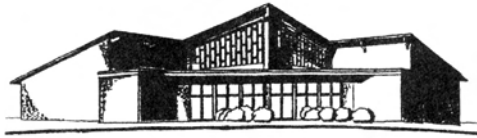
The 1950s saw churches begun such as Inglenook, 77th Street, Fairfield Highlands, Midfield, Pinson, Sun Valley, Center Point, Huffman & Gardendale, Pleasant Grove, Hillview, Shannon and Westwood. These too would aid in starting new works in needed areas. This trend would continue in the 60s and 70s and beyond, as new works were started in Cahaba Heights (the last congregation Bro. Lewis was involved in the beginning of), Hoover, Riverchase, Vestavia, Alabaster, Calera, Pelham, Oak Mountain, Columbiana, Minor, Flint Hill, Black Creek, No. Gardendale and Clay. The work continues.

SOME OF THE MEETING HOUSES IN THE BIRMINGHAM

Dick Adams

Some of the buildings are over 50 years old, some are the result of congregations merging and some are newer buildings for older congregations that moved to different neighborhoods and some are newer congregations. These are but a few of the 75 or more congregations in metro Birmingham. Following are photos of 35 of the churches of Christ in the metro Birmingham area.

Editors Note: *We wish to thank the late brother Dick Adams, beloved Elder of the Vestavia church for taking the photos. Would that Dick was still with us to enjoy his handiwork....LEW*



Adamsville



Alabaster



Bush Hills



Cahaba Heights



Clay



Edwards Lake Road (Formerly 77th Street)



Elliotsville



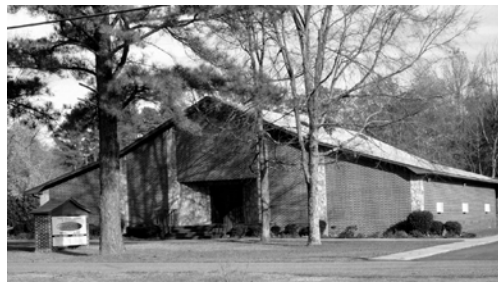
Fairfield Highlands



Fair Park (Formerly Fairview)



Flint Hill



Fultondale



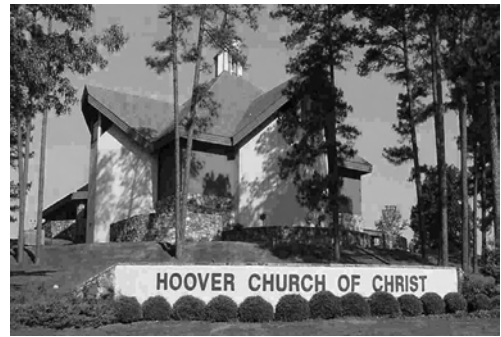
Gardendale



Graysville



Helena



Hoover



Hueytown



Huffman



Inglenook



Morris



Mt. Olive



North Gardendale



North Shelby County



Palisades (Formerly Central & West End)



Oak Mountain



Pine Lane (Formerly Belview Heights & Midfield)



Pinson



Pleasant Grove



Riverchase



Roebuck Parkway (Formerly Woodlawn)



Shades Mountain



Shannon



Sun Valley



Trussville



Vestavia (Formerly Berney Points)



Westwood

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A PIECE OF BROWN WRAPPER

Earl Kimbrough

The electric streetcar was in its glory days during the time of John T. Lewis' early preaching in Birmingham. As the streetcar lines helped develop suburbs and spread out the Magic City, so Lewis took advantage of them to evangelize the outlying communities. Before he had his own transportation, he usually walked or took the streetcars wherever he went. He began the work in Pratt City while he was living with the Jabe McDaniel family. Marshall Bowers, an early member of the church in Birmingham, recalled that: "Brother Lewis would walk from the McDaniels to Pratt City," adding, "It was a long way." His daughter, Regina Bowers, said: "While Brother Lewis was at Woodlawn, he preached in Platt City ... [he] would come out to Pratt City one night a week and teach a Bible class. When he came on the streetcar from Wood-lawn to Pratt City, he would always carry his Bible wrapped up in a piece of brown paper." Knowing what we do about Lewis' distaste for drawing undue attention to himself, she is probably right in saying: "Maybe he thought that it would look like he was putting on sanctimonious airs if he went about carrying his Bible. He would wrap that Bible up so carefully. I always thought it was the same piece of paper. It had the same folds in it, and he would wrap it up and go down and wait for the streetcar. This was in the wintertime. In the summer he was busy preaching in meetings, and the class had to be stopped." (Ottis L. Castleberry, *He Looked for a City*, 215.)

I can identify with Lewis' feelings. When I was in college, I began preaching at Largo, Florida, which is across Tampa Bay from Temple Terrace where I lived. I had no car, but caught a ride each Sunday to Sulfur Springs, and then took a city bus to the Greyhound Bus Station in downtown Tampa. From there I took an intercity bus that traveled a long way around Upper Tampa Bay through Oldsmar to the bus station in Clearwater. There I was picked up by a member of the church. I repeated the journey in reverse Sunday night, taking a taxi four miles from Sulfur Springs back to Temple Terrace. Openly carrying my Bible on this "excursion" came to mind when I first read about John T. Lewis riding on the Birmingham streetcars. Carrying my Bible openly looked too much like the Pharisees' broad phylacteries to suit me. So I carried my Bible concealed in my coat. I wish I had thought about Lewis' plain brown wrapper.

John T. Lewis was not the least ashamed of the gospel, as his work in Birmingham testifies, but he knew that true piety is not the same as parading one's religion. There is also a difference between shining one's light and in letting the light shine. The church today might be far better off if more of its members understood the principle behind Lewis' piece of brown paper.

"BOILING IT DOWN"

Earl Kimbrough

Many, if not most, preachers who are very knowledgeable in the Scriptures tend to be interminable speakers. They simply use too many words in their sermons, or at least more words than is necessary to get the job done. Some preachers far less equipped with spiritual knowledge, also tend to be verbose speakers, thinking that long sermons are an evidence of knowledge.

John T. Lewis of Birmingham was acknowledged by his contemporaries as in one of the most knowledgeable men in the Scriptures. Yet, according to those who heard him often, when he preached a sermon, he commonly limited himself to thirty minutes. He had a habit of ending his sermons with the words: "My time is up. The lesson is yours." He felt that he was able to say all that needed to be said in one sermon in half an hour. He apparently accomplished this by excluding all superfluous material.

Brother Lewis made a practice of conducting men's training classes where he preached, believing that all men should be active in the work of the church from the beginning of their spiritual life. He not only impressed upon them the importance of knowing the word of God and in giving book, chapter and verse, but also to limit their speeches to the time allotted. He would limit them in the class to ten minutes and expect them to stop on time.

Both by teaching in his men's training classes and by his example in the pulpit, he taught his brethren wisdom in the economy of time, especially God's time. He knew that wasting time in the pulpit, telling jokes or "chasing rabbits," was not just a misuse of his time, but that of the congregation as well. This, with him, was part of doing all things in the service of God "decently and in order." It was showing respect to God and man.

In stressing the importance of finishing a sermon on time, he told them precisely how to avoid being longwinded. He succinctly said: "Don't repeat, don't ramble, and don't talk about things that you don't know to be facts yourself." He called this "boiling it down." To boil down means to omit irrelevant matter. The figure comes from reducing the volume of a liquid by heating it rapidly until much of it turns to steam and the substance is made thicker.

Moreover, in teaching brethren to "boil down" their sermons, Brother Lewis was also showing them how to make their sermons richer in substance and more effective on their hearers. That this was a studied and conscious principle with him is evident from his teaching and practice. He was aware of it also in others. He once wrote in his diary about hearing a brother preach and noted that he "preached a sermon, and a long one. He preached till 9:15." (Ottis Castleberry, *He Looked for A City*, 137, 156-157.)

RESTORATION RAMBLINGS

Earl Kimbrough

SITTING WHERE THEY SAT

In the December 16, 1937, issue of the *Gospel Advocate*, G. C. Brewer reflected on some things he found in the 1915 volume of the *Advocate*, in an article called, "I Sat Where They Sat." Through this old volume, Brewer claimed a ringside seat to the controversy in which R. H. Boll was removed from the paper because of his speculative writings. He claimed to sit where the principals of the controversy sat, and in so doing, passed his judgment upon the matter.

John T. Lewis, of Birmingham, Alabama, felt that Brewer misrepresented David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, E. A. Elam, M. C. Kurfess, J. C. McQuiddy, and A. B. Lipscomb, all editors of the *Advocate* at the time. Lewis was probably right in drawing the conclusion he did. But aside from the right or wrong in Brewer's view of the matter from his "seat at the table," Lewis spoke some words that those who write on Restoration history might do well to heed. To write about good men of the past is an honor, but it also carries a grave responsibility.

Lewis said: "It is a great privilege to sit at the feet of one who 'sat where they sat' and have the presence of those whose bodies are molding amid the dust of the dead. But he who would thus disturb the dead, who can no longer speak for themselves, should correctly represent them before the living." (*Gospel Advocate*, Jan. 27, 1938.)

THE WHITE HORSE OF REVELATION

Inexperienced preachers should try to keep out of deep water, or they may find themselves in "over their heads." When F. D. Srygley first began preaching, he went on an evangelistic tour with the old pioneer preacher, John Taylor, through the mountains of Northwest Alabama. He preached at various places along the way, but wisely tried to avoid "deep water." F. B. Srygley said that at some point a man asked his brother to preach a sermon on "the white horse" of Revelation. Another older preacher of that country, J. H. Halbrook, was present and heard the man ask the young preacher to give a lesson on that subject. He said he felt sorry for him, knowing that he knew next to nothing about "the white horse," and yet he felt sure that he would dislike saying that he did not understand it. But Halbrook said: "To my surprise, the boy said: 'My friend, do you understand everything in the Bible that might influence your conduct up to the *white horse*?' 'Well said the gentleman, 'I could not say that I do.'

'Then,' said the preacher, 'let's learn all we can about our duty to God up to the *white horse*; and if we get all straightened out in our minds, we will be better able to tackle him.'" (*Gospel Advocate*, May 8, 1939.) It is no wonder that the young man became one of the best preachers of his day.

COMMENTING ON THE SCRIPTURES

F. B. Srygley tells about the practice of T. B. Larimore in training young preachers at Mars' Hill College. He would, at times, have each one to study a chapter in the Bible and comment on it before the class. Srygley told of one boy who commented on Matthew 5. "He opened his Bible to the chapter and began with great dignity to comment: "'And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain.'" This means that seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain.' That impressed me as being correct. Then he looked at his book again and read: "'And when he was set, his disciples came unto him.'" This means that when he was set his disciples came unto him.' That was evidently true also. He then proceeded to comment on the second verse [in the same manner]. Thus he went through the entire chapter. He would read a sentence and say that 'this means,' and read it again. This was a strange way to comment on the Scriptures. We all agreed that he taught no untruth in his comment."

Srygley then observed: "God's word has never needed as much explanation as some people think it does. If all preachers and commentators would read what God said and comment upon it as the young man did, there would be more truth taught than there now is and no error at all." (*Gospel Advocate*, April 18, 1935.)

Dead On Target

Brother Lewis' biographer, Otis Castleberry, relates the following...Brother Lewis was in a gospel meeting in a rural congregation. As the invitation song was being sung and no one responded, an old hound dog wandered into the building and slowly came down the aisle. No one seemed to know what to do until one elderly sister, realizing the potential embarrassment to the preacher, seized the moment, stepped into the aisle in front of the dog, pursed her lips and planted a blob of snuff juice in the hounds eye. Dead on target, the problem was solved.

Uncle Isaac Sez



Rumor has it that some of our more "spiritually promotionally" minded brethren are pushing the idea of 'marrying' the church of our Lord to the Boy Scouts of America. Must be a buck to be made by someone. I'm all for the Boy Scouts...It's a great organization ..Please, pray tell, what business has the church

getting involved with scouting?..There hasn't been an old-time campmeeting, that I know about amongst our brethren in over a hundred years. Besides we have Coleman camp stoves today, don't need to learn how to build a fire without matches. What about the Girl Scouts. My granddaughter was just awarded one of scouting's highest honors. What do these brethren propose to do for these young ladies. Must have equal rights you know. May be some "Christian" cooking schools can be arranged, or an old fashioned church of Christ quilting bee could be managed....

Saw an article in the Associated Baptist Press the other day where the Baptist writer was all hepped up about the churches of Christ and the Christian churches getting together in a great unity meeting. Thought it was wonderful, all after a hundred years, as he put it, of division. He was so overjoyed at some of our brethren's new found "ecumenical spirit, that he reminded his Baptist readers that both groups were off spring of the old Baptist some 200 years ago. If that's the case, some of our rootin' tootin' unitin' country clubbin' brethren might as well go all the way back and reunite with the Baptist. That would be the ultimate ecumenical experience, it seems to me. Seems some of them want to be Baptist in all but the name anyway...Some have long since passed the Baptist in their social gospel and modernistic foolishness anyways...This Baptist writer seems so excited about this unity business, I have no doubt they would welcome our folks into the fold...no strings attached... Then we can move on to the Methodist just as soon as some of our "new hermeneutic whizzes" can figure a way around this immersion vs. sprinkling business....Of course if baptism isn't necessary ...hmm!

Seems more and more of our brethren are using the term "accapella" church of Christ to define those of us who are "anti" instrumental music in the worship or to put it another way, believers in the absolute authority of God's holy word. Seems to me, their purpose is to isolate us and set us apart from what they consider the progressive and modern church. Some of our well meaning brethren have fallen into the trap of using the term..Ignorance is a sad thing...it's becoming a joke, folks..Wake up! Many preachers need to quit spending so much time worryin about getting their honorary Doctors awards and start preaching the hard truths of the old Jerusalem gospel and elders need to insist on the truth being preached instead of spending their time worryin about how to pay for the next banquet for the local high school football team or the next Friday night fish-ry...Makes one want to cry out "Lord, come quickly!"

I was reading an article the other day on "words fitly spoken." Got me to thinking about some of the brethren nowadays using denominational language to describe the Lord's church, its work, worship, etc..It's common place now to hear brethren, when referring to membership in the Lord's church as "we're Church of Christ," or referring to "our church." Sometimes you'll hear one refer to a "Church of Christ congregation" or a "Church of Christ college." We have done a lousy job in the last 25-50 years of educating members of the Lord's church on the proper use of words and terms that Christians should use. The problem is not just with the average members. Heard of an Elder who always described Jesus as "our personal Savior" in his prayers. How about the brother that extended the invitation and referred to it as an "alter call," or the one who prayed "thy kingdom come." ...Oh me!.....Seems I recall the Lord being mighty upset with the Sons of Israel marrying the Daughters of Ashdod and adopting their language and customs. ...Remember, times they are a changing. How long will it be before we hear such statements from our brethren as "we are church of Christ Christians," like Baptist Christians or Catholic Christians or Methodist Christians, etc?....

The latest buzz among our "new wave" members is the idea that the Lord's Supper is to be a complete meal. A sumptous feast if you will. Makes one wonder what they will think of next. When I think we've heard it all, something goofier is dreamed up. Will they serve neck bones and greens along with some good ole cracklin cornbread? Will it be a fellowship meal with banana pudding for dessert and all the trimming? Maybe some peach cobbler. Some brethren are fond of wisecracking that "when we meet, we eat," but this is ridiculous. Is nothing sacred to these folks anymore? Apparently not. It seems as if they live to destroy everything we hold dear. May the Lord help us to persevere.

We went to services at Berea in Fayette County recently. Heard a good lesson from God's holy word. Took the Lord's supper, gave of our means and sang a few of the "old hymns." Came away edified and feeling good about having been there. The service was simple, just the way the Lord planned it. Some of our modern day reformers would call it old fashioned or quaint or old fogley. No praise teams to lead the song service (entertain). No hand waving or applause. No solos in the song service. The "new wavers" would say "Berea needs to get with the program and bring itself into the 21st century. I believe the good folks at Berea would say "no thanks" We'll just follow the Old Paths.

Got a bulletin the other day that advertised the fact that this particular congregation was a "Christ Centered Church." Begs the question, If a church wears the name of Christ, doesn't it stand to reason Christ is the reason for its being. Another bulletin proclaimed proudly, that "this Church is a "spirit filled church." Well hallelujah! More and more we read such qualifiers as, this is a "loving" church or this is a "praying" church or this is a "caring church." How about just saying "this is the Lord's church." Enough said. Til next time.....ISAAC

“For Man Goes to His Eternal Home,
And Mourners Go about the Street.”

GATHERING HOME

Earl Kimbrough

God takes notice when each child of his passes from this life. Angels are sent to attend their crossing the dark river. (Luke 16: 22). Christians also are interested in the death of God’s saints whether great or small in the eyes of the world. We visit their graves and we read their obituaries even many years after their death. The obituaries of many Christians, aside from their general interest, also carry historical value. That is our primary interest in this column. The value may or may not be apparent to the reader, but we think there is some historical value in those included here. From time to time some of this will be discussed.

Lloyd [Jeff] Aldridge. “On December 2 [1939] Marion Davis and I went to Glen Allen, Ala., where I had been called to preach the funeral of Lloyd Aldridge. He was the son of Billy Aldridge, and he was the first death in their family of ten children. His father is a capable song leader, and formerly has spent much time in protracted-meeting work. Lloyd was twenty-four years old, and, from all things I have been able to learn, a fine specimen of manhood, physically, morally, and spiritually. He was employed by a highway construction company, and several times it became necessary for him to be away from home on Sunday with no clothes except the ones in which he had been working. Nevertheless, when the hour for worship come he would be found assembled with the saints.” J. R. Hackworth. (*Gospel Advocate*, Dec. 14, 1939.)

Harriette Young Prickett. “Mrs. Harriette Young-Prickett was born August 23, 1894, and was suddenly called away June 3, 1933. She is survived by her husband, U. H. Prickett, one daughter, two sons, and three sisters. She lived and worshiped at Ashville, Ala., until September 1932, when they moved to Birmingham. The funeral was held at the Ashville church house, and was attended by twice as many people as the house would seat. She was laid to rest in the Ashville cemetery. She was baptized into Christ twenty-five years ago by Brother G. A. Dunn. Her most absorbing interest in life was to live for Christ, and to train her children in his service. Brother Prickett was led to obey the gospel several years by her teaching and godly example and the faithful preaching of John T. Lewis. By her encouragement he became the leader of the Ashville congregation and a useful member wherever he lives. Two of her children are also faithful Christians. Sister Prickett was still a young woman, but the manner in which she spent her life and the high and holy ideals for which she stood and lived counted for much, and the fruits of her

righteousness were abundant.” Gardner S. Hall. (*Gospel Advocate*, July 20, 1933.)

Mary Dreghorn. “Yesterday (May 22) [1939] John T. Lewis, Gus Nichols, Lindsay Allen, and John T. Smithson, Jr., assisted me in conducting the funeral of ‘Aunt Mary Dreghorn. Born in Ireland, reared a Catholic, she married Brother Dreghorn fifty-five years ago. He and she obeyed the gospel under the preaching of Brother Lewis here in Vinemont years ago. For years ‘Aunt Mary’ and ‘Uncle John,’ as they were known and loved far and wide, visited different cities and attended gospel meetings, making friends of all they met and enjoying the proclamation of the sacred story by most of the leading evangelists. They were always scattering sunshine and were ever ready to help support the gospel with their means. We mourn her passing, but expect to see her in the resurrection.” James M. Benson, Vinemont, Ala. (*Gospel Advocate*, June 15, 1939.)

A young single man, a young mother, and an aged saint: all with one thing in common—they were faithful Christians. We see here the fruit of men like Gus Dunn and John T. Lewis, the faith of a young man attending services in his work clothes when necessity called for it, of godly women who lead her husband to the Lord, and old Irish mother who forsook the Pope for Christ and who considered it a “duty” to attend gospel meetings. Remember when that was a regular practice of faithful Christians?



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The Final Say

The Baptist Said It!

The following was written by A.W. Tozer and endorsed by President Mohler of the Southern Baptist Convention: "It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend the meeting where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God's professed children are bored with Him for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments." To this Mohler added: "This has influenced the whole pattern of church life and even brought into being a new type of church architecture designed to house the golden calf.....The striped candy technique has so fully integrated into our present religious thinking that it is simply taken for granted. Its victims never dream that it is not a part of the teachings of Christ and His apostles."

MANLINESS IN BOYS

A boy who is ashamed of his mother, even if she does wear a homespun dress and a sunbonnet, will never make a man. He may make something that at a distance will *look* like a man, but he will never be a *man*.

—*T. B. Larimore.*

How About It, ACLU?

Calvin Coolidge, our 30th President of the United States wrote, "The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country."

Subtle Difference

John T. Lewis had said that the difference between J. N. Armstrong and R. H. Boll (an avowed premillennialist) was the difference "between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee"

Truly

"The reason a lot of people cannot find opportunity is it goes about disguised as Hard Work."

A Hint to Christian Parents

If Christian fathers would read the scriptures twice a day in their families, i. e. morning and evening, and interrogate their children on the contents of each chapter, sing and pray with them, there would be less for the proclaimers to do. How many readers of the *Christian Messenger* follow this old fashioned practice? If we had a greater number of christian mothers and grand mothers, who would act the pious part that Lois and Eunice acted we should have more Timothies in the Lord's harvest. O Lord, be pleased to revive the knowledge and practice of the Holy Scriptures in every family, in every town, village, hamlet, county, state and nation, until, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas? How many parents are raising their children for the Lord, as Hannah did little Samuel from two years old. How many are preparing their children for war by their training. How many for the law? how many for medicine, how many for the world, for riches? For fame? for politics? Many have painted flags in politics, but have never raised a flag of peace and salvation in their families. We have many ardent and bold politicians male and female, all over the country, who are too timid and bashful to play in their families or in the congregation. They are too unworthy to take up the cross. All that such can do, is to ask a preacher to pray at night when he happens to call on them.

J. CREATH, Jr.

Long Sermon

Then there was the brother who walked out near the end of a sermon of 2 hours duration. "Where are you going" the preacher enquired from the pulpit. "To get a haircut," responded the brother. "Why didn't you get one before you came" asked the long winded preacher. "I didn't need one" was the response....

BOOKS ON CD

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.

*We have ordered several of these works and have no reservation about recommending them to you. This is a way to build a tremendous library without the cost. Many of, if not all of these wonderful works, are out of print...
..LEW*

AN OUTSTANDING COLLECTION OF "RESTORATION" WRITINGS ON CD (PDF FORMAT). Space does not permit a full listing of all materials on the CDs. If you would like further information, contact Bennie Johns at bjohns@hiwaay.net, or phone at 256-796-2680. He will be happy to provide any needed information.

1. **Classic Christian Reading Material #1** – Contains a number of writings of A. Campbell, J. W. McGarvey, 8 Vols of History of Christian Church, Commentaries on whole Bible, as well as more than thirty other books, etc. from the Restoration period. – \$7.00.
2. **Classic Christian Reading Material #2** – Contains 32 outstanding books from the Restoration Period. J. W. Shepherd's "Handbook on Baptism" is worth many times the price of the CD. – \$19.95.
3. **21 Old Religious Debates** – Covers a number of subjects of vital interest in the late 1800s and early 1900s. – \$19.95.
4. **Life and Works of Benjamin Franklin** -- Contains 7 full length Debates – 3 Biographies – 2 Volumes of "Gospel Preacher" – "Gems" , a 500 page book of short articles on a number of subjects, as well as a few more shorter works of Franklin. – \$24.95.
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6. **Life and Works of Ashley Johnson** – Contains 16 works of this outstanding writer from the Christian Church \$14.95
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8. **Life and Works of T. B. Larimore:** Contains: "Letters and Sermons" by Mrs T.B. Larimore; "Larimore and His Boys" by F.D. Srygley; "Letters and Sermons", Vol. 1, by F.D. Srygley; "Letters and Sermons", Vols. 2 & 3, by Emma Page; "Our Corner Book", by Emma Page Larimore; "At The Feet Of Jesus", by R.P. Meeks (brother-in-law of Larimore); "Hearthstone Echoes", by Mrs R.P. Meeks (sister of Larimore) -- \$14.95

9. **Life and Works of Alexander Campbell:** Contains: Seven of Campbell's Debates, Christian Baptist (7 Vols), Biographies (9 of these), "The Christian System", "Christianity Restored", "Family Culture", "Christian Baptism -- Its Antecedents & Consequents", "Lectures on the Pentateuch", "Popular Lectures and Discourses", as well as some other works ... **A total of 34** works by and about Campbell on this CD. -- \$29.95

10. **Life and Works of Barton W. Stone:** Contains: "Cane Ridge Reader" (Auto Biography - Stone), "Cane Ridge Meeting House", "Disciples In Kentucky", "The Kentucky Revival", "Works of Elder B.W. Stone", "Barton Warren Stone", "Auto Biography of Samuel Rogers", "The Disciples of Christ - An Interpretation", **Fourteen Volumes of the Christian Messenger**-- \$19.95

11. **Life and Works of Walter Scott:** Contains: LIFE OF ELDER WALTER SCOTT (A good resource for Restoration Reading.) WALTER SCOTT, VOICE OF THE GOLDEN ORACLE, The Biography of Elder J. T. Johnson, History of the Christian Church at Maysville, KY, Disciples of Christ at Mays Lick, KY, as well as the following works by Scott: The Messiahship, or Great Demonstration, Commentary on the Revelation, The Gospel Restored THE EVANGELIST — A monthly publication Devoted to Original Christianity -- 11 (years) Volumes -- \$14.95.

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NOTE: In the last issue of this journal we stated our intentions to make available bound volumes of the journal. We stated that this issue would contain a card that which would enable you to let us know if you have an interest in the bound volumes. Recently, we have learned that because of Postal regulations, this will not be practical. If you would have an interest in the bound volume, let us know by email: lw3000@bellsouth.net

**Announcement of special interest to Readers of Alabama Restoration Journal
During the week of the Faulkner University Lectureship on March 3, 2008
Friends of the Restoration will sponsor the following program:**

Friends of the Restoration Lectures
Great Men of the Restoration Movement in Alabama"

2:00 PM	Carl Cheatham	"J. M. Barnes"
HP112		
3:00 PM	Earl Kimbrough	"F. B. Syrgley"
HP112		
4:00 PM	Panel	OPEN FORUM
HP112		
5:00 PM	DINNER- FRIENDS OF THE RESTORATION	
ROT	Paul Tarence	"Gus Nichols"

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