

# The Alabama Restoration Journal

An Historical Perspective of  
Churches of Christ In Alabama

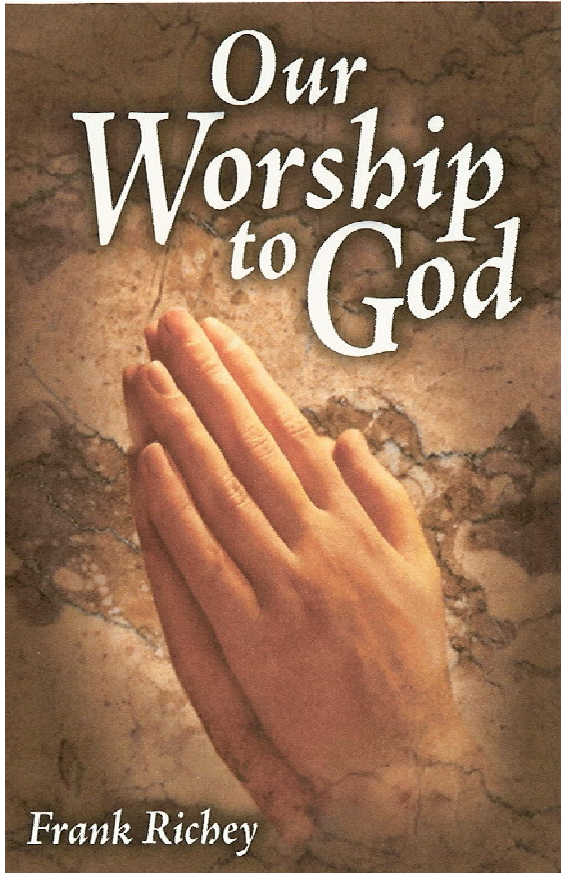


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**1871- 1887**

VOLUME 4

ISSUE 2

*April 01, 2010*



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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 splendid job on this cover. We are not aware of another painting of the school. The photo on the backcover was made by Frank Richey. Thanks to both. If you would care to order a print, you may contact 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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### Great Preachers

Larry Whitehead

Several years ago, I had a conversation with Jim Cope about the greatest gospel preachers of modern times. Jim said that he believed the greatest pulpit preachers of the last hundred years, were T.B. Larimore and N.B. Hardeman, followed by Foy E. Wallace and Roy Cogdill. Jim should have been able to judge great preachers. He was no slouch himself. I have been fortunate to have heard three of these men on tape or live, Hardeman, Wallace and Cogdill. They were truly great preachers. Hardeman's lessons were simple, yet profound and were designed to provoke the mind. After all, he was a teacher. His sermon's in the first two volumes of the Tabernacle Sermons are classics and have been memorized by generations of young preachers. Wallace, on the other hand, dealt in the lessons I heard, with scholarly issues, such as the operation of the Holy Spirit. He explained his view in such a way as, to persuade the most ardent opponent to his way of thinking. His knowledge of the scriptures was astounding. Cogdill may have been the best speaker of the three. Like Hardeman, his command of the "King's English" was almost perfect. He sometimes would roll his Rs when speaking and he spoke faster than most preachers. Like Wallace and Hardeman, one would be struck by his knowledge of the scriptures, but it was his amazing voice and speaking ability that captivated his audience. His pulpit presence was unbelievable. None of the three probably ever delivered a boring sermon in their lives.

From most accounts, T.B. Larimore was the greatest of them all. Larimore's oratorical skills were such that he could hold an audience spellbound for two hours or more. He was aware of the great ability that was his and worried that his success may have been because of his great speaking ability rather than the message he was bringing to his audience. Larimore evidently had it all. Great speaking ability, vast knowledge of the scriptures and the ability to present his lessons so that all in his audience could understand and appreciate, whether farmers, housewives or college professors. His funeral sermon for his dear friend, F.D. Srygley, is the most moving speech that this writer has ever read. Never have I heard or read

any to equal it. It is too long to publish in the Journal, but if you can find a copy, I almost guarantee you will feel the same. His life was exemplary. He manifested a spirit of humbleness that most could only wish for. He was a great teacher. His students loved him and one gets the impression that they would do almost anything for him and go to great lengths to do nothing that would displease him. Even Oscar P. Spiegel, one of only two students at Mars Hill to go with the progressives, showed tremendous respect for him even though they would cross swords in later years.

Larimore was not given to controversy. It was clear that he did not like controversy. He was criticized for his failure to take a stronger stand on the great issues that swept through the brotherhood in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He suffered the criticism by such men as J.D. Tant and James A. Harding. Oscar Spiegel chided him in the pages of the *Christian Standard*, the main organ for the progressives. Years later, in letters to Tant, he admitted that he made a mistake by not taking a firmer stand on these issues.

There are those among us today, that try and exploit what they perceive as a weakness of Larimore's and they try and use him as an example of the way we should accommodate error in the church today. Their motives are shameless and are rooted in revisionist history. They seek to prove their untenable positions in light of scripture, by twisting Larimore's humble spirit and mis-interperate this for a weakness on his part, when in reality Larimore simply refused to engage in the petty personalities, brotherhood politics and back bitings of lesser men. He was determined to preach the New Testament Gospel to as many people as he possibly could while he had the time, health and opportunity.

Frank and Earl have articles about this great man in this issue. The impact he had on the church in Alabama and particularly north west Alabama, is unparalleled in this State. The Mars Hill school turned out many sound and excellent gospel preachers that accomplished great things for the cause of Christ in later years.....

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## News & Views

Recently, Juanita and I drove to Florence to hear bro. Hugh Fulford who was in a gospel meeting at the Old Mars Hill church. Brother Hugh delivered a marvelous sermon on the distinctiveness of the church of Christ. It was the kind of lesson reminiscent of the ones I heard as a youngster from some of the great preachers of that day. As I listened, my mind kept drifting back to a time when the great T.B. Larimore preached for this church which is located just a short distance from the site of the Larimore home and Mars Hill College. Many fine gospel preachers attended this school and the legacy they left for us is still being felt, even today. Brother Fulford himself is a graduate of the modern school as it is today.

After the service, Frank Richey, along with Hilda and Lavaga Logan, and Juanita and I, joined brother Hugh at a local restaurant for coffee and a good visit. A pleasant time was had by all.

If you have the chance, visit the Larimore home and be sure and drive down to the Old Mars Hill meeting house and look around. It is in a beautiful setting, near a stream where many baptisms took place. It is truly "history come alive."

On our drive home, as Juanita and I discussed the events of the evening, a note of sadness crept into our conversation as to what might've been, what could've been and what should have been, but that is a discussion for another time and another place and is clearly beyond the purpose of the *Alabama Restoration Journal*.

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### Subscription Drive Continued.....

We are continuing our subscription drive with our goal of doubling our subscribers this year....If you haven't shared your copy of the Journal with a friend, please do....Also, mention the Journal to your elders or your minister....We can offer attractive bundle rates for 10 or more copies....

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### Congregational Histories

We solicit your help in providing congregational histories. Since very few of these have been published and few are circulated outside of the local area, they are difficult to obtain. If you have one that you are willing to share, please let us know. We will scan or copy it and return it to you ASAP. Also we are constantly seeking photos of restoration preachers, buildings and family photos that would be of interest to our readers.....

## In This Issue

*Larry* opens with his thoughts and those of Jim Cope, on **Great Preachers** of the last hundred years. *Frank Richey* has a wonderful feature article on **T.B. Larimore-The Preacher**. *Frank* has studied Larimore for years and probably knows as much about the great man as anyone. *Earl* has a moving piece he calls **A Little Black-eyed Boy** chronicling Larimore's introduction to Fletcher Douglas Srygley and the beginning of a lifelong friendship. *Hugh Fulford* returns to our pages and shares some of his **Mars Hill Memories**, about his days at the school. *Bobby Graham* has the second of a continuing series on the travails of our brethren in the early days entitled **Baptist Opposition To The Restoration Plea In Alabama**. *Earl* reports on the only debate that Larimore ever had; **The Blackburn-Larimore Debate**. *Ken Randolph* has an excellent offering that is so timely today, which he has titled **Alexander Campbell And The Missionary Society**. It is one of the best we have read on the subject. *Uncle Isaac* once again takes out the ole muzzle loader and takes dead aim at the brethren in **Uncle Isaac Sez**. *Earl* has one of the most touching articles he has written as he tells of the sad parting of Larimore's dear friend, F.D. Srygley. He calls this piece **A Time To Meet And A time To Part**. *Larry* has an article on the life of **O.P. Spiegel- The Maverick From Morgan County**. Oscar Pendleton Spiegel was one of only two of "Larimore's boys" to defect to the progressives. He became one of Larimore's severest critics. *Brother Earl* has an interesting piece he has titled **The Detachable Shirt Collar** that takes us back a few years. A re-print from the GA by *F.B. Srygley* titled **My Recollections of T. B. Larimore** follows. Srygley knew Larimore as few men did. *Earl* writes of Larimore's first visit to Rock Creek in a piece called **THE STRANGER AT ROCK CREEK**. He follows with his regular column **In The Heart Of Dixie-Restoration Ramblings**. He deals with the beauty of Alabama. Few men love their home State more than Earl Kimbrough. We have two **Nostalgia** pages in this issue, featuring scenes from T.B. Larimore's life. *Larry*, as usual has the **Final Say**. Hope you enjoy this issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Next Issue

Our next issue will feature James Madison Pickens of Lawrence County, Alabama. Pickens' story is a fascinating one and one most people are not familiar with. We believe this will be one of our best.....

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## T. B. LARIMORE—The Preacher

Frank Richey

When Theophilus Brown Larimore departed this life at the age of eighty-five, on March 18, 1929, at 9:30 A.M., the church of our Lord lost a great soldier. So honored and respected was he that the May 16<sup>th</sup> issue of The Gospel Advocate could not contain all the accolades sent to the paper. And while his photograph graced the cover of the May 16<sup>th</sup> issue, the accolades would continue in the May 23<sup>rd</sup> issue of The Gospel Advocate.

Words of praise for the great gospel preacher poured forth from all parts of the country, extolling the kindness, simplicity, gentleness, love, and faith of the great man. Many articles graced the pages of the Advocate telling of the great talent of Larimore as a preacher, even comparing him to Alexander Campbell, Jesse B.



Ferguson and John T. Johnson. There is no doubt that had these things been said of brother Larimore in his presence, he would have blushed exceedingly. Larimore was a simple man. But his sermons, though simple and easily understood by the masses, were the work of a wordsmith of great genius. Even today, when reading his sermons, the question comes forth, "How could a simple man be so eloquent?"

**Theophilus Brown Larimore** Born July 10, 1843, T. B. Larimore became a Christian after the Civil War. He had served as a Confederate scout and after being captured, gave his oath of allegiance to the Federal Government, took his mother and sister, and moved from Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee, to Kentucky. It was in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, on his twenty-first birthday, July 10, 1864, that Larimore obeyed the gospel. He began preaching almost immediately. He attended Franklin College in Nashville under Tolbert Fanning, and in 1868 came to Alabama as a school teacher in the Mountain Home School operated by brother James Madison Pickens of Lawrence County. While drumming up students for Mountain Home School, Larimore found his way to the Rock Creek Church in what was then Franklin County, Alabama. On his way to Rock Creek, Larimore, so destitute he was thought to be a tramp, was accosted by some ruffians at Tuscomb, Alabama, and with the help of a local barber, they shaved his head. This young, slender, tall, bald preacher, made his way to Rock Creek to preach the gospel. His appearance was less than impressive.

From Rock Creek, he went to the Hopewell Church of Christ in Lauderdale, County, about four miles north of Florence, on the Jackson Military Road near the

present day intersection of Cox Creek Parkway and Jackson Highway. The man, who was to become the greatest preacher in the brotherhood by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was considered inadequate for the work at the Hopewell Church. F. D. Srygley quotes Larimore in his book, Larimore and His Boys, by saying, "I came to Hopewell to hold a protracted meeting. They let me try to preach once, and they were so well pleased with that 'sarmint' that they let me off—suddenly! The meeting closed with a jerk and a bang. It was not wound up much, hence required but little time to run down; or, perhaps it ran down so very fast is why it struck down so quick. It was wound up for eight days and it ran down in an hour." Larimore said that the brethren at Hopewell reasoned "if we let him try to preach here, it is good bye to our prospects. Better have no preaching than his sort."

Since the brethren at Hopewell didn't want him preaching there, they were in a dilemma as to what to do with the young preacher. Finally, Brother Andrew Jackson Gresham (who would soon become Larimore's brother-in-law) loaded Larimore in his buggy and carried him to another church some fourteen miles out in the country. They reasoned that "good preachers rarely go there; they will appreciate any kind of preaching." There was a group of "Hard Shell Baptists" meeting in that area of Lauderdale, County. Larimore went to this group and began a work that continues to this day. Originally known as the Bethel Bara church of Christ, southern slang reduced the name to Bethel Berry church of Christ.

### The Mars Hill Years

On August 30, 1868, T. B. Larimore married Julia Esther Gresham. Esther had inherited some land, a part of the Gresham farm, from her father, Philemon Gresham. On that land, T. B. and Esther built their home. In 1871, the Larimore home became the centerpiece of what would become Mars Hill College. The college continued from 1871 to 1887. For seventeen years, the college would be a major chapter in the life of T. B. Larimore.

Beginning as Mars Hill Academy, the co-ed institution provided education for young men and women who would serve in leadership roles in the home, community and the church in the twentieth century, as the nineteenth century grew to a close. Larimore served as President of the College and taught classes daily. There was little time for rest as his days began early and lasted until late at night.

When Larimore began training boys to preach, he was only twenty-eight years old. He had much to learn about that which he was teaching. F. D. Srygley said the boys at Mars Hill were taught that "earnestness was one of their chief elements of success in preaching. They believed all they preached, and preached all they

believed. They preached it because they believed it, and preached it exactly as they believed it. No playing at preaching or mere pulpit performances were encouraged at Mars' Hill. Sensational themes and studied formality in preaching were never mentioned but to be condemned."

In a letter to one of his boys on "how to preach," Larimore said: "Fortunately, I have never been drilled in elocution, oratory, gesture, etc. I escaped all that in my boyhood days, and providentially was spared that ruinous torture after I grew up. The way to preach is to preach. Just get full of spirit and truth and turn yourself loose. As a good old brother once expressed it, 'just fill the barrel full, knock the bung out, and let 'er come.' That's the way to preach."

Emma Page, in Volume II of Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, tells that a young preacher wrote Larimore asking for advice as to the kind of preaching needed in a protracted meeting. Larimore replied, "Gospel preaching." He went on to say, "Study, work and pray, always doing your very best. No gospel preacher should ever be satisfied to do less than his very best—no one, of course, can do more." In the same volume, Mrs. Larimore writes, "It may be said that "preach the word" is T. B. Larimore's motto, so often does he use the expression, in both letters and sermons. He says: 'My position is: Preach the word wheresoever and whensoever Providence directs or duty demands, Always hew to the line, but never hack toes or chop fingers intentionally.'"

Srygley said that "they stuck to the Book. They preached neither less nor more than the Bible, and in the very words of the Bible. They looked upon all divisions among professed Christians as not only grave errors, but grievous sins."

Not only did Larimore serve as President and Professor at Mars Hill, he continued to preach and in doing so continued to develop his skills as an orator and as one who could touch the hearts of the common man. Time and time again, his contemporaries spoke of his "pathos" in describing his preaching. A term no longer generally used, "pathos" is the emotion of sympathetic pity. T. W. Caskey, in speaking of Larimore, said, "Often his pathos calls forth tears; but he rarely cries himself. He is not a driveling, crying preacher. He is never sensational in the pulpit; he resorts to no clerical claptrap for effect. He is always deeply in earnest. In social life, he never falls below the dignity of a Christian gentleman; in the pulpit he never falls below the dignity of his sublime theme. His style is simple, dignified and prepossessing; his gestures are easy, graceful and natural. His pronunciation, enunciation and emphasis are perfect."

One of the stories about the sympathetic nature of Larimore is told about a man that had been to hundreds of services and meetings and had never responded to the gospel until hearing Larimore speak. When asked why he had not responded to a gospel invitation before,

the man replied, "From other preachers I'd learned I was going to hell,' he said,' but they seemed pleased that I was. From Larimore I learned I was going to hell, but I could tell it broke his heart to have to tell me so!"

While at Mars Hill, Larimore usually preached every Sunday. During vacation, Larimore traveled extensively and devoted his time to the field of evangelism. The results of his labors and those of his boys were that many churches were established and thousands were brought to Christ.

As Larimore's skill and ability as a preacher grew, so did the number of requests to hold meetings. Larimore became more and more interested in full time evangelism and less and less inclined to continue the college at Mars Hill that had regulated his life for the past eighteen years. Srygley said, "The school declined in interest and patronage, it is true; but only because the immense pressure upon him in pleading letters by every mail to preach the gospel, diverted his attention from the details of college work. More than once have I seen him shed



**T.B. Larimore** tears over piles of letters begging for preaching when he was confined by college duties at Mars Hill. He would say he had no heart to be there teaching children English Grammar when a perishing world was pleading with him to tell them of Jesus and his love. Those of us who knew his feelings and understood the situation, advised the suspension of the college."

Perhaps the turning point in Larimore's thinking about being a full time evangelist was the success he experienced in the Nashville meeting of 1885. Srygley said of this meeting: "His success at Nashville in 1885 demonstrated his ability to move great cities as an evangelist." Never before had Larimore preached in a large city, and after giving a commitment to preach in Nashville, tried earnestly to get out of the commitment. He spoke to David Lipscomb about getting out of his agreement to preach in Nashville, claiming he was inadequate for such an undertaking. Lipscomb refused. "The meeting began in November and continued about thirty days, resulting in about seventy-five additions to the church. This opened to him a wider field of usefulness, and furnished an additional argument against the expediency of longer continuing Mars' Hill College. Following close upon this enlarged usefulness as an evangelist, the attendance at College in 1886 was small, and in 1887 discouragingly smaller. In the earlier part of 1887, he had a long letter from a friend and life-long correspondent whom he greatly loved and in whose judgment he had implicit confidence, strongly urging him to give up the College and devote all of his time to preaching." Larimore finally gave in to the desire of brethren across the nation and to his own desire to

preach the gospel full time.

Srygley said, "Piles of letters came by every mail pleading for meetings in every part of the country. Later in the year he estimated that the calls for meetings in 1888 would certainly amount in the aggregate to over 360 and probably to 500."

Closing Mars Hill was a bitter sweet time for Larimore, who had devoted such a large part of his life to the college. In summarizing Larimore's work at Mars Hill, Srygley said, "Did ever such a man train such a band of blessed boys for such a grand work with such meager facilities—he and they all alike from the cornfield in the backwoods—without money, without fame, without a support, without a library, encyclopedia, commentary—with no books but God's eternal book of truth? Mars' Hill is a mystery, and her blessed boys a wonder! The wisdom and power of God."

### National Evangelist

When Mars Hill closed in 1887, T. B. Larimore was forty-four years old. Though his family was established at the home at Mars Hill, Larimore went everywhere preaching the gospel of Christ—from "Maine to Mexico, from the Carolinas to California" often being away from home for months at a time. The twenty years after Mars Hill were years of constantly leaving his home at Mars Hill and traveling throughout the land to preach the gospel. This must have posed many hardships on his wife, Esther, and their six children, described as "His four sons and two daughters, all baptized by their father in childhood, are intelligent, industrious, exemplary Christians, worthy of the father and mother who have taught them "the good and the right way."

The T. B. Larimore at the turn of the twentieth century was a different man than the one turned down by Hopewell church of Christ in 1868, because it was thought he might run off prospects. He had, at the turn of the century, become the most in-demand preacher in the brotherhood, with more meeting invitations than he could possibly accept.

When John T. Brown's, Churches of Christ, appeared in 1904, a chapter in the book was titled, "National Evangelists." The first biography to appear under this heading was that of Theophilus Brown Larimore. The article, written by Selina Holman, describes Larimore as "Never abusive, rough, or unkind, he is earnest, eloquent, forcible, and always so plain, simple and gentle that little children understand him perfectly and love him devotedly. He has a vivid imagination, loves the beautiful, the innocent and the pure, and possesses an unrivaled gift of language. He avoids all slang, pulpit profanity, affectation and ecclesiastical titles. He speaks evil of none, is envious of none, and considers himself no better than the humblest of his brethren. He is marvelously magnetic. To know him is to love him. To call him brother is a pleasure. He has hosts of friends, loyal and true. He is loved by men, women, and children, as few have ever been loved. He

is never willing to preach less than twice every day and three times on Sunday, and prefers to preach three times every day. While he goes home as often as he can, he tries to never deliver less than 700 discourses a year. He adapts himself to all sorts of circumstances—becomes "all things to all men"—but he is averse to short meetings, because he believes the longer they are the better they are."

Brown's book mentions, in particular, the meeting at Sherman, Texas, Larimore's longest meeting. This meeting began on January 3, 1894 and closed on June 7, lasting five months and four days. During this meeting, he preached three hundred and thirty-three sermons, preaching twice every day and three times every Sunday; and there were 331 additions to the church during the meeting.

While Larimore was engaged in this protracted meeting, his friend and confidant, F. D. Srygley wrote to him asking about the progress of the meeting, its probable length— it had then been in progress nine weeks— how the preacher could stand such long continued work, and how and where he found material for sermons. Larimore wrote back that the interest was increasing daily and that he was holding up well. He said, "Nothing can be better for me than to preach twice every day and three times on Sunday, unless it is to preach three times every day and Sunday too. He stated that his voice was holding up and that no mortal knew when the meeting would end. He told F. D. that subjects and material for sermons was inexhaustible. The Bible, he said, is full of themes and thoughts and truths. He said he would exhaust Bible themes "when swallows drink the ocean dry."

When asked what books he consulted, he replied, "The Bible, Webster's Dictionary and the Bible— these three, and no more." When questioned how long his fight would last in Sherman, he replied, "Till mustered out of service."

T. B. Larimore established for himself rules to live by, and these rules certainly became a part of his preaching. On December 31, 1895, Larimore wrote a letter to F. D. Srygley from Columbia, Tennessee. He said, "Instead of writing you a new-year letter, as I have so often done, I write you, as follows, a few of my life rules, as they occur to me in the light of the last day of 1895— rules which I hope to strictly observe, both in letter and spirit, till God shall call me home:"(1) Be kind; (2) be meek; (3) be true; (4) be humble; (5) be gentle; (6) be polite; (7) be patient; (8) be earnest; (9) be careful; (10) be hopeful; (11) be faithful; (12) be cheerful; (13) be grateful; (14) be generous; (15) be prayerful; (16) be courteous; (17) be unselfish; (18) be thoughtful; (19) be industrious; (20) be consecrated; (21) be conscientious; (22) always 'do the right;' (23) do as much good as possible; (24) do as little evil as possible; (25) eat to live, not live to eat; (26) if possible, be perfectly pure; (27) if not, be pure as possible; (28) always make the best of the situation; (29) be clean—



body, soul, and spirit— clean in thought, in word, in deed— always clean; (30) conscientiously consecrate all to Christ— head, hand, heart— body, soul, spirit— time, tongue, talent— mind, muscle, money— consecrate all to Him who gave his very life to ransom a recreant, lost, and ruined race."

One of the things that characterized T. B. Larimore was his aversion to conflict. His non-combative nature was recognized in his refusal to debate and take positions on issues over which churches of Christ were fighting over at the time. He refused to take sides on the instrumental music in worship issue and the church sponsored society issue. Though he had opinions, he believed he did not have the right to impose them on others. This caused Larimore problems with the liberals and conservatives of the day—the liberals accusing him of being too conservative and the conservatives accusing him of not having backbone to stand firmly on the issues dividing the church. J. M. Powell, in his book, The Man From Mars Hill, quotes from a personal letter from S. P. Pitman that told of Larimore preaching in a meeting in Hickman County, Tennessee. He said, "Before closing the service, brother Larimore asked whether anyone had something to say. This preacher arose and began to argue. He said, 'Brother Larimore said so and so, but my Bible says otherwise.' When there was a lull, brother Larimore said, 'Is that all?' 'Yes," the man replied. Then Larimore said calmly, 'Let us stand and be dismissed.'"

### **The Later Years**

By the year 1910, brother Larimore's life had undergone a number of changes. The children had grown up. Toppie, (T. B., Jr.) a doctor, had died in 1903 at the age of thirty-one. In 1907, his wife, Esther, died and was laid to rest next to Toppie in the Gresham Cemetery across the road from the Larimore home and a couple of hundred feet from the baptizing hole near the newly constructed church at Mars Hill. As family ties were unraveling and demands for preaching were greater than ever, T. B. spent even less time at Mars Hill than he had for the past twenty years of full-time evangelism. On January 1, 1911, he married Miss Emma Page, a godly Christian woman, well educated by Charlotte Fanning (the wife of T. B.'s old professor, Tolbert Fanning). Emma was a writer and a stenographer. By the time of their marriage, Emma Page had already edited two volumes of Larimore's sermons. For years, people had asked brother Larimore to tell them again what he had said in his sermons, and he could never do it. Emma Page could record the sermons as Larimore spoke and transcribe so that the entire world could read the sermons of T. B. Larimore, recorded in three volumes. The first volume was Life, Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, by F. D. Srygley. Volumes two and three were Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore, by Emma Page. These volumes are rich with the poetic qualities of the master wordsmith. This

writer would like to share two samples of Larimore's ability to paint pictures with words.

**The Church of Christ-** "Kingdoms may be founded, may flourish and may fall; but the church of Christ can never fall, can never fail. Atheism may assail, infidelity may sneer, skepticism may smile and anxious hearts may fear for the safety of Zion, but Zion stands secure, backed by the promise of the great I Am that it shall never be destroyed, the literal, living, abiding fulfillment of the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ: 'Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' The sun may be blotted out, the moon cease to reflect light, the stars may fall from the withering vault of night, and the heavens be rolled up like a scroll, and the wreck of matter and the crash of the worlds may come and the judgment day be set; but, when the angel of the Lord shall descend on pinions dipped in the love light enveloping the throne of God and, planting one foot upon the sea and rides upon the storm that time was, time is, but time shall be no more—even then the church of Christ shall stand, secure as the throne of God itself: for our Savior promised long ago, 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;' and Jehovah hath declared 'it shall never be destroyed;' and the Holy Spirit by the pen of Isaiah, the prophet, says: 'The word of our God shall stand forever': so then, whether we stand or fall, whether we do right or wrong, whether we are saved or lost, the church of Christ shall stand, having been built upon this immovable foundation."

**The Rock-** "Cesarea was founded upon a mass of imperishable rock. It was built of stone, from hovel to palace, from foundation to roof, hence might well have been called the "Rock City," or the "City of Rocks." It was surrounded by a stone wall—high, massive, strong—an effective means of protection for a town in that far-away-age of the world. It was situated in one of the roughest, rockiest, most romantic, picturesque and rugged spots on earth, at the foot of Mount Hermon, that cast its dense, dark shadow upon the town for hours at the beginning of every bright day, and near the head of the rolling Jordan, that leaped from the bosom of the earth and flashed and sparkled as it swept on its course to the depths of the mysterious Dead Sea. Just about one mile toward the golden gates of the morning from Cesarea Philippi, resting upon one of the rocky spurs of Mount Hermon, was a rock fortress considered absolutely impregnable in that age of the world antedating the use of nitroglycerin,

gunpowder, dynamite, guncotton and other explosives that are used in the modern science of human slaughter, that provision being made that, in the event an enemy should break down the walls around the city, the inhabitants might flee to that rock fortress and be safe.

It was in the coasts or immediate presence of this rock founded, rock-built, rock-bounded, rock-surrounded, rock protected, rock-shadowed city that Jesus, the Rock of Ages, the Rock for sinners cleft, said to Peter, the "rock"-Cephas, the "stone"-in reference to that spiritual institution that had been represented by Daniel, in the then long ago, as a little rock cut out of the mountain without hands and subsequently filling the whole earth; that spiritual institution every member of which is called in the Bible a "lively stone" or a "living stone:" "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

There is nothing accidental about the phraseology of the Bible, nothing any more accidental about the framing of any picture we find hanging upon the walls of the temple of truth than there is about the painting of that picture by the hand of Omnipotence itself. So we should rejoice that this wonderful picture is presented to us in framework rendered sublimely attractive, and we should appreciate not only the picture, but the very framing of that picture, shaded by towering mountains seeming to pierce the heavens bending in blue beauty above them, in which the hand of Jehovah has hung the picture upon the walls of his temple of truth divine."

After Mars Hill, T. B. Larimore was not only recognized as a great preacher, but as a great educator. He was offered the Presidency of several colleges, which he refused. His love was in evangelism. He had given twenty years of his life to education. The rest of his days would be spent preaching the gospel of Christ. T. B. and Emma traveled and transversed the continent. Hundreds of meetings were held and no doubt thousands obeyed the gospel as a result of his labors. He and Emma finally decided to settle in California. They moved to Berkeley, California, before moving to Santa Ana, California. Larimore remained there until his death in 1929.

The May 16, 1929 issue of The Gospel Advocate contained testimonials by N. B. Hardeman, Mrs. T. B. Larimore, T. Q. Martin, G. W. Riggs, M. C. Kurfees, A. G. Freed, E. N. Glenn, A. M. Burton, James H. Sewell, J. G. Allen, Mrs. A. N. Killebrew, J. Pettey Ezell, H. Leo Boles, S. H. Hall, F. W. Smith, F. B. Srygley, Andy T. Ritchie, Sr., Foy E. Wallace, Jr., W. S. Long, G.H.P. Showalter, F. L. Rowe, Wayne W. Burton, and J.

Madison Wright.

The May 23<sup>rd</sup> issue of The Gospel Advocate contained testimonials by G. C. Brewer, E. N. Glenn, E. C. Fuqua, Gentry Reynolds, Earnest Beam, Thomas E. Milholland, Robert S. King, L. C. Wilkerson, F. C. Sowell, and J. D. Clemons.

The thirty-three articles contained in these two issues of The Gospel Advocate provide great insight as to how T. B. Larimore touched the lives of so many. Several writers contemporary with brother Larimore mentioned that Larimore had a special way with little children—that they absolutely adored him. It is interesting that Mrs. Larimore's article was titled, Mr. Larimore and His Little Friends. In this article she mentions that "Mr. Larimore's life and works would not be complete without mention of his friends among children. He loved children, always and everywhere, and in the various places where he lived even a brief time there are children and young people who were devoted to him and whom he loved very tenderly. He appreciated a baby's being named for him, and appreciated especially his voluntary namesakes—children who voluntarily added 'Larimore' to the name already bestowed by parents."

In the May 16, 1929 issue of The Gospel Advocate, a story entitled, "Noted Divine Answers Call" (a reprint of a Nashville Banner article), extolled the accomplishments of T. B. Larimore, saying:

"That he was personally known to more people than any other man in the brotherhood from this long period of service and that he had preached more sermons than any other men living was the claim frequently made by religious authors, some of whom also advanced the claim that he had probably baptized more people than any minister of the church of Christ for nearly one hundred years."

The article mentioned the accomplishments of men like William Hayden, Walter Scott, Benjamin Franklin (who had baptized more than 10,000), and John Allen Gano (who had baptized approximately 10,000). The article made it plain that it was believed that T. B. Larimore had surpassed the accomplishments of these great men.

T. B. Larimore had become a household name in families of Christians throughout the nation. His ability to preach was second to none. He was an orator—a wordsmith of the highest order. One of the great compliments paid to brother Larimore in the May 16<sup>th</sup> issue of The Gospel Advocate, was made by T. Q. Martin, when he said, "T. B. Larimore was both grand and eloquent. He was an orator of the rare type, truly an eloquent man. To my mind, one of the greatest things in the life of this man of God is the fact that later in life he suppressed his oratorical powers, lest people might be moved by his oratory rather than the word of God."

Such was the preacher, T. B. Larimore.

## A LITTLE BLACK-EYED BOY Earl Kimbrough

Friendships and impressions made in youth can have a marvelous influence on a person's life, and even on the flow of history. This is true of the indestructible friendship that developed between F.D. Srygley and T.B. Larimore, beginning soon after the Civil War. Writing of Srygley's close relationship with Larimore, H. Leo Boles said: "There sprang up a genuine love for Brother Larimore early in his life. He loved him as he loved no other man, save his father; and his love was reciprocated by Brother Larimore. Their love for each other was like that of Jonathan and David and Damon and Pythias. They were in each other's company at every moment possible, and when separated they frequently wrote long letters to each other. Their love for each other helped both of them to be good and useful men." (H. Leo Boles, *Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers.*)

The wonderful friendship between Srygley and Larimore began when Larimore first went to Rock Creek, Alabama, in the summer of 1868 to hold a gospel meeting that had been arranged by John Taylor. Larimore was a recent graduate of Tolbert Fanning's Franklin College and had become an associate of James M. Pickens in the school Pickens was operating at Mountain Home in Lawrence County. It was upon his first approach to the old Rock Creek meeting house, where the meeting was held, that Larimore, then twenty-five years old, first met F.D. Srygley, then a boy of twelve. Larimore described their first meeting in a letter to Srygley many years later.

Larimore said: "A little black-eyed boy had taken his stand a few feet from the narrow path leading to the door of the meeting house, and was standing there barefooted, his hands in pockets, eyes and mouth open, to get a glimpse of the big preacher he had 'hearn tell of.' The preacher turned aside to speak to the little fellow, and to take him by the hand, and thus began a friendship that nothing but death can ever destroy." (F.D. Srygley, *Smiles and Tears.*)

All that Boles says of Larimore's ancestry is that: "Little is known of his parents." Larimore himself was reticent to talk about his childhood and early life, in part no doubt because of the extreme hardship and suffering it brought him. Writing of the time between Larimore's birth in East Tennessee, July 10, 1843, and his preaching tour with John Taylor in 1868, Srygley says: "It would be difficult to give a connected chain of events in his obscure life between these two points even if the reader were interested in the subject.... Besides it is difficult to learn much about

his childhood. He talks but little about himself, and has always been peculiarly reticent in regard to his early life. In an intimate acquaintance and confidential friendship extending over twenty years, I have seldom heard him speak of his childhood."



**Fletcher D. Srygley** said: "Once I told him everybody was anxious to know something about his childhood, and asked him to tell me some of the most striking incidents of his early life. He looked troubled, there were tears in his eyes, and he heaved a great sigh. Then he said, and his voice trembled with emotion as he said it: 'Those days were all so dark and gloomy, one incident was scarcely more striking than another.'" In another letter, Larimore wrote: "I have often thought that I would unbosom myself to you some time of all my trials in life, but may never do so." (Ibid.) So far as we know, he never did.

What little is known of Larimore's boyhood, his innermost emotions in later life, and intimate glimpses into his work at Mars' Hill and in early evangelism, have been preserved for posterity by F.D. Srygley. But even this very likely would never have seen the light of day, but for the intimate relationship between the two. In Larimore's long private letters to Srygley, he spoke from the heart about things that only the closest of friends convey to one another. Yet, as intimate and personal as he and Srygley were, Larimore kept the story of his childhood and youth largely to himself.

In his first book about Larimore, *Smiles and Tears*, Srygley made some of these things known about Larimore's beginning years, but not without Larimore's consent, which he seems to have given only reluctantly. We are also able to see in Larimore's private correspondence with his intimate friend a humorous facet of his life that is not apparent in his preaching and writings for the public. Much that we know about the private life of T.B. Larimore is known because of the inefaceable friendship that Larimore made with "a little black-eyed boy" that he first saw beside the narrow path leading to the old Rock Creek meetinghouse nearly a hundred and forty years ago.

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## MARS HILL MEMORIES

Hugh Fulford

Mars Hill and T. B. Larimore! T. B. Larimore and Mars Hill! Forever in the history of the Lord's church will these two names be linked. Forever in the history of the Restoration Movement in north Alabama will these two names be intertwined.

T. B. Larimore was born July 10, 1843, in east Tennessee. He was baptized into Christ on his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, July 10, 1864, in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. He came to north Alabama (Florence) around 1867/68 and opened Mars Hill Academy/College on January 1, 1871. The school remained in operation for seventeen years, closing in 1887. The school closed because of the demands upon brother Larimore's time for his preaching in evangelistic meetings. After the school closed, brother Larimore spent the rest of his life in evangelizing until his death in Santa Ana, California on March 18, 1929.

According to records of the Mars Hill Church of Christ, the congregation was established the same year as Mars Hill Academy—1871. Brother Larimore was intimately associated with this congregation, and for almost forty years conducted an annual meeting at the church every August. Hundreds were baptized into Christ as a result of these meetings.

April 12-15 of this year, I was privileged to preach in a meeting with the Mars Hill church. (I also conducted a meeting with the church in 1987). The congregation numbers about 150 members and is strong in the faith. My most recent meeting was well attended by the members, and a number of gospel preachers in the Florence area also attended. Larry Whitehead, editor of this journal, and his wife, drove up from Birmingham one evening to attend the meeting. After the services, Larry, his wife, and I, along with some others, met at a local restaurant for a snack and a nice period of fellowship.

During the meeting, I visited the small cemetery located behind a private residence not far from the Mars Hill church building, and saw again the grave of Julia Esther Gresham Larimore, the first wife of T. B. Larimore, and the grave of T. B. (Toppie) Larimore, Jr. I took several pictures, but whether I can include them in this article remains to be seen. Each evening as I drove to the meeting house of the Mars Hill church, I crossed the creek where Larimore had baptized so many people.

In 1947, through the leadership of a number of interested Christian businessmen and others in the Florence area, Mars Hill Bible School was established on the site of the original Mars Hill Academy. The Larimore home was the main classroom building of the school.

In 1953, my mother, father, sister, brother, and I moved from north Florida to Florence so that we three children could attend Mars Hill Bible School. This move was made due to the influence of the late Paul Simon, who at the time was serving as the president of Mars Hill. Brother Simon had baptized my father in 1948, and our family had remained in close contact with brother Simon.

My last two years of high school were spent at Mars Hill Bible School. During those two years I came under the influence of some of the finest Christian teachers I have ever known and made friendships that last until this day. It was during my Mars Hill years that I began preaching every Sunday for a rural church near Florence. What a joy it was for a van-load of members of the Center Hill Church of Christ to attend one night of my recent Mars Hill meeting!

Following my graduation from Mars Hill, due to extenuating circumstances, my parents, brother, and sister moved back to Florida. I was preaching every Sunday at Center Hill, working on Fridays and Saturdays in a Florence shoe store, and was scheduled to enter Freed-Hardeman College in the fall of 1955. I really did not want to return to Florida. Virgil Larimore, youngest son of T. B. Larimore, invited me to live with him at his house next to the campus of Mars Hill. I jumped at this opportunity, and my parents agreed to the arrangement. Virgil had outlived two wives and later would outlive a third. So, for some two months during the summer of 1955, I lived in the home of Virgil Larimore, and read T. B. Larimore's books of sermons, G. C. Brewer's *Forty Years on the Firing Line*, as well as other works. Virgil and I became "buddies," he in at least his early seventies, me a seventeen year old lad. We painted a barn on his property, bred a milk cow, took corn to the grist mill at Saint Florian, etc. I kept the grass and weeds cut around the house and barn—all while working two days a week in the shoe store and preaching every Sunday at Center Hill. What a great summer! What wonderful Mars Hill memories!



*This is where Hugh attended classes*

## BAPTIST OPPOSITION TO THE RESTORATION CAUSE IN ALABAMA

Bobby Graham

**Author's Note:** *I have retained the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation found in the excerpts taken from the very old articles and minutes used here.*

The minutes preserved by Baptist associations in North Alabama constitute a treasure trove for mining the events and attitudes which were part of the opposition leveled against the preaching and progress of the Restoration Cause. While the author cannot say for sure, he thinks that some other associations in other sections of this country where Restoration preaching was being done might serve as sources for interested researchers in those areas.

Examination of those minutes in North Alabama reveals two primary reactions to the Bible preaching done by men like Elisha and Jeremiah (Jerry) Randolph, Nicodemus Hackworth, B.F. Hall, Tolbert Fanning, Ephraim D. Moore, James E. Matthews, John Taylor, John Favor, (Raccoon) John Smith, and other men: first, there was opposition to the plea to return to the New Testament foundation for all teaching and practice, because of the agitation and the disruption being experienced; and second, there was an admission that the state of many Baptist churches was one of idleness and indifference and the condition of the Baptist ministry was one of unpreparedness for such attacks as were being sent their way. From their very words such reactions come forth, so that no one can charge that such articles as this are misconstruing the events of that time almost two hundred years ago. While this article does not try to include all such statements from their minutes, some will be given and others can easily be located by interested persons willing to look to the sources here identified, which sources are usually found in local libraries and county archives.

Hosea Holcombe wrote *The Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Alabama* in 1840. I was able to consult the facsimile reproduction of that 1840 edition and there found numerous references to associations of Baptist churches in Alabama, their meetings, and minutes. Holcombe reports selected minutes of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association, which then covered more than the three counties now comprising the Muscle Shoals area of Northwest Alabama, by reaching into Lawrence and even part of Morgan County.

Referring to the Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church in Morgan County on page 179, he reported, "Afterwards they ordained Mr. Nicodemus Hackworth, who was of no advantage to them, rather an injury, as he went off with the Campbellites." Obviously suffering hurt from this loss, Holcombe made this astonishing evaluation of Hackworth. Earlier references to the same man had

reported his numerous baptisms, church beginnings, and local pastorates.

This is the same association mentioned in an earlier article along this line. In its eleventh session in 1830, Campbellism was said to be making "great inroads among Baptist churches," with whole churches taken over and other congregation split by this teaching. The work of Baptist churches in this association was admittedly retarded by this teaching ("progressively slow for several years," is the way they reported it), leading to this resolution (25-26):

Through Campbellism we see the divine operation of the Holy Spirit either disavowed, or so obscurely avowed, as to amount to a disavowal. We see experimental religion (that which Baptists ever cling to) ridiculed and reprobated. We see the apostolic mode of ordaining ministers, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, ridiculed and condemned. We therein see baptism presented as producing a change of heart and the pardon of sins, when the Holy Spirit can alone produce and bring about such a change, while baptism shows our faith, satisfies our conscience, adopts us into His Church, and makes us one with him, by thus fulfilling all righteousness, a change of heart by being previously effected by the Holy Spirit. We therein see, as we awfully fear, an effort made by man to pull down the old order of faith and practice taught by the Lord and His apostles, and establish on their ruins a new order and a new name, styled Campbellism.

During the September 1831 session of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association, when letters were read from 22 member churches, it became clear that "the revival in some of the churches had considerably subsided. The number baptized this year was but little more than one third of the number the previous year."

The fifteenth session of the association in September 1834, meeting at Mt. Pisgah in Morgan County (the church which had ordained Nicodemus Hackworth only to see him depart "for the Campbellites," as they put it), heard letters from 25 churches, showing the churches to be in a "cold, torpid state, and difficulties were pressing in upon them on every hand." It appointed a committee to investigate irregularities creeping into the churches and then to report their findings, reflecting the hard times then experienced from "this new teaching," as some called it (30), which was "preying on their intellect as a canker." Their resolution reflects some of the same concerns of earlier resolutions, but it also refined and focused more narrowly their developing perception of the teaching they were facing:

“In conclusion we would exhort you to look to the day in which we live, a period so prolific for embracing false doctrines, when almost every thing, save the simplicity and purity of the Gospel is practiced, when faith in the Lord Jesus is represented only as an historical belief of facts stated in the Bible, and not the gift of God. When the change of heart produced by the Spirit is denied, and an experience of the same (called the operation of grace) in the creature is derided, when the agency of the Spirit in procuring the new birth, or regenerating the creature (mechanically by the mere act of immersion) is born again, at the same time degrading this sacred ordinance of divine origin, or insulting the Holy Spirit. When the religion of the Redeemer is stripped of its spirituality, presented as a mere record of facts, which when believed as any other history will save the soul; when the false teachers are among us, who are propagating from the pamphlets of Alexander Campbell, and slandering in the pulpit, and preaching from his Testament, whilst they affect to preach the word of God, when they slyly entered our churches – proselyted some members – deluded others – and then boast of their work of destruction, arrogantly publishing in their pamphlets, that they have *upset* this Baptist church, and confused the others. Should not we, the united Baptists, cleave to our union, repel invasion, put down this hideous error, and drive away this *monster* of evil origin from the purity of the sanctuary? As your advisory council, we exhort you to your duty, but yet, we beseech you to do it with meekness and mildness if you *can*, but forcibly if you *must*; mark such as walk disorderly, reclaim them if you can, but when you cannot, put such away from you. They profess not to be born of the Spirit, then they must be of the world, and there can be union of Christ and Baal.”

B.F. Riley wrote of these times and conditions in his work, *A Memorial History of the Baptists of Alabama* (56):

“Another consideration weighing on the spirits of these unschooled but forward-looking men of the time was that, with the advance of thought, there would come the menace of evil with seducing words or with views antagonistic to true religion, to combat which, a capable ministry should be in readiness. This was abundantly and deplorably illustrated by the incursion made by Alexander Campbell into the South, where he found a ministry unprepared to combat, with any degree of success, his views, a fact of which Mr. Campbell took full advantage.”

Of another condition then prevailing among his Baptist brothers – apathy – Riley again wrote (60), “Old-time enthusiasm has subsided, and there was ease throughout the Baptist Zion. It was just this condition

that made possible the venture of Alexander Campbell, who caught all the evangelical denominations of the South off their guard.” Holcombe’s 1840 *Rise and Progress* also speaks some of the Flint River Association, which covers Madison County, Alabama and parts of Southern Middle Tennessee generally below the Elk River. Somewhat the same conditions found among Baptists elsewhere also appeared in this association (107). “Campbellism (as popularly called), Antinomianism, and Two Seedism, have infected the churches more or less in this region; and their blighting influences are still very obvious.”

In chapter 11 Holcombe devotes space to the Tuscaloosa Association, farther south than any other association thus far mentioned. He mentions Mr. Philip May on page 183 as first pastor of Big Creek Baptist Church, but he was “afterwards excluded for heresy, at least for what is denominated Campbellism.” When considering Friendship Baptist Church on page 187, he spoke of its being “somewhat affected” by Nathan Roberts, “when he turned aside to Campbellism.” A later summary (197) mentioned that Roberts, May, and Richard Holly, another Baptist preacher, were excommunicants who had kept their preaching credentials, prompting the association to warn churches to beware of the impositions of these men on the churches. The warning goes ahead to say that the association believed these men had embraced Campbellism, but was unsure whether they had all turned to the Reformers or not. A later reference to the Reformers raises another question regarding their name (301-302):

“The last named, we do not know what to call them, whether Reformers, Christians, Disciples, Brethren, Christian Disciples, Disciples of Christ, Campbellites, or by some other name. Our readers must not think strange that we do not know what name we should give to these people; because they do not know their own name; at least they have not as yet, agreed about their name, although much has been said, and published on the subject, in the Millennial Harbinger, and other prints. They have established several churches, and have several ministers, but we cannot tell how many.”

### Some Baptist Problems

Earlier reference to two reactions to the preaching by men of the Restoration Cause indicated problems developing in Baptist churches. It proves enlightening to explore the problems further, as we gain more insight into the progress gained by the preaching of simple New Testament truth and the effect it had on denominational teaching and practice.

*The History of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association* is our source for this section. From 1825 to 1835 the following seven problems plagued the Baptists:

(1) active missionary work, even using organization outside the churches (this problem involved the doctrine of their concept of election, as much as the problem of a missionary organization, and produced both pro-society and anti-society groups among Baptists); (2) how to treat members influenced by Campbellism; (3) close communion; (4) election (whether Calvinistic or Arminian); (5) Baptist preachers baptizing people who did not want to become Baptists (like some influenced by truth to seek baptism by Baptist preachers); (6) communing with Pedo-Baptist churches (Methodists or Presbyterians, who were describes as “unbaptized”); and (7) coldness and apathy in Baptist churches. A discerning reader can easily understand that some of these problems were the result of such teaching as was moving through North Alabama in those years (24-31). One who has observed several Primitive Baptist congregations currently using the designation “Primitive Baptist Church of Christ” in North Alabama also wonders whether this practice might also have resulted from this interaction of truth with the adherents of Baptist doctrine.

It is interesting to see the explanation of this history for this resolution. Brief explanation is given to Campbell’s change from a Presbyterian to a Baptist, as well as his teaching of new doctrines, “which were antagonistic to the generally received doctrines of Baptists.” Then he was charged with ascribing to “the ordinance of baptism a virtue or efficacy which Baptists repudiated. He rejected the doctrine of regeneration and the work of the Holy Spirit in producing it, as Baptists understood it.” To invoke God’s blessings and help in achieving its purposes and goals, the association also set aside the first Saturday of November in 1830 as a day of fasting and prayer, when all association churches were urged to assemble for these purposes.

Foremost in its deliberations was the resolution against Campbellism earlier cited, but there were other matters of business. The association protested “Mr. Campbell’s new translation of the New Testament,” which really was not Alexander Campbell’s work. *The Living Oracles* was the work of George Campbell, James MacKnight, and Philip Doddridge in 1818 in Scotland; but in 1826 Alexander Campbell did edit, publish, and print the New Testament in the United States. Most established denominations then favored the King James Version, but reformers often used *The Living Oracles*.

The treatment of those influenced by Campbellism and the question of whether their preachers could baptize persons not intending to become Baptists were other matters considered and acted upon:

“First, as regards the duty of churches which may have in their communion persons who are tinctured with the doctrines of Campbellism, that the church labor, in a gospel way, first by a committee of brethren, then by

the church in the aggregate. If this course does not reclaim the member, then cast him off from their fellowship.

Second, in relation to Baptist ministers in our fellowship baptizing persons, without a view upon being baptized of becoming members in the fellowship of our churches, is of very doubtful authority, and in reference to the practice, we feel no hesitation in saying that it is inexpedient, and we would, as an association, and you should, as churches, in the spirit of meekness and love, pray your brethren, in the ministry for the future, to desist from such a course in the administration of that ordinance.”

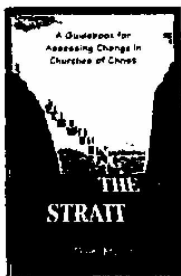
We do not here reproduce the rest of the resolution, because it deals with other matters mentioned above but not directly bearing on our focus in this article.

These were the times and conditions of the early decades of the 1800’s, when the friction between preachers of the unaltered new Testament message and those of the standard denominational message of salvation waxed hot. The histories and resolutions here cited were the settled results of men able to reflect after sober deliberation, They truly must conceal, to some extent, the immediate reactions and off-the-cuff reflexes of these denominational leaders. Who would deny, however, that these were thrilling times for the gospel and the spread of New Testament congregations across North Alabama?

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**THE BLACKBURN-LARIMORE DEBATE**  
**Earl Kimbrough**

T.B. Larimore was much criticized in his day and by many since his death because, as F.B. Srygley said: "He was timid, and did not speak up as quickly as some" did against instrumental music in Christian worship. Those who know this characteristic of Larimore would not associate his name with a religious debate, but the good man did have at least one. This was at Rock Creek, Alabama, in 1869, when Larimore was about twenty-six years old and had just begun preaching. John Taylor had arranged for him to preach a few days at Rock Creek in July 1868.

Although only nine years old, F.B. Srygley well remembered Larimore's first meeting at Rock Creek. He said: "We never heard such preaching as he did. He was naturally timid, but eloquent and persuasive in his manner, and we felt like he came from a 'different world' from the one he was then in." Just before the close of that meeting, someone handed him a slip of paper in the dark, which he put in his pocket to carefully read later when he got to the place he was staying.

"The paper contained forty questions on the subjects of infant baptism and sprinkling and pouring for baptism." The paper was unsigned, but Srygley's father knew the questions were written by Mr. Blackburn, a superannuated Methodist preacher who lived in that area. The Rock Creek brethren were afraid for Larimore to try to answer the questions without time to study them closely. So they advised him to make a statement that he had received the questions, but that he would not try to answer them until he learned who wrote them.

Larimore left the next day and the Methodist preacher claimed a great victory because Larimore left without even trying to answer his questions. The brethren at Rock Creek announced publicly that Larimore would be back next year, and if Mr. Blackburn would answer his own questions first, Larimore would review his answers. This set the stage for a discussion between Larimore and the Methodist preacher the following year.

Srygley says: "The time was set and the place secured, which was Popular Springs, a Baptist community, where they had a meetinghouse and an arbor. They had an all-day meeting, with dinner on the ground. Everybody and his dog was there before the time appointed for the discussion. As I remember, Mr. Blackburn spoke one hour and forty minutes, and we had dinner. Soon after dinner Larimore began his speech. He stood facing the audience, while Mr. Blackburn sat behind him. Larimore never looked

around at him or called his name, as I remember it. He spoke two hours, and Mr. Blackburn arose and said: 'I move we adjourn. These are my neighbors, and they want to go home.' My father said: 'They are my neighbors also, and they know they can go home if they want to do so.' Mr. Blackburn said: 'I will allow him fifteen minutes longer.' Some brother said to Larimore: 'Can you finish in fifteen minutes?' Larimore said: 'I reckon so.' He spoke seventeen minutes longer, and Blackburn called time on him again, and he quit." (*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 29, 1938.)

That young Larimore more than held his own against the experienced Methodist minister may be gathered from Srygley's reaction to it and the attendant meeting, for Larimore made a lasting impression on him. He writes: "We were the happiest bunch that ever left a meeting in that country, so far as I know. Perhaps this man Larimore and this meeting had more to do with the shaping of the work of my life than anything that happened to me in boyhood days." (*Ibid.*)

While Larimore by nature was not combative, when the truth was challenged, he arose to the occasion with happy results. Thousands of souls were led to Christ through his faithful preaching.

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## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY

Kenneth L. Randolph

The American Christian Missionary Society was formed October 23, 1849 in Cincinnati, Ohio. As far as can be determined the Society was born of the purest of motives. The brethren had a vision of sending the ancient gospel to the remote areas of the world; the fields were white and they were willing to respond. But they felt they must concentrate their efforts into a brotherhood organization in order to be effective; hence, the Missionary Society. Alexander Campbell did not attend the initial meetings but was elected President. Campbell opened the pages of the Millennial Harbinger for a free discussion of the Society. The first note of apprehension was expressed in 1850 by James Inglis, a Baptist. He suggested that the "Disciples" were at the crossroads: "they have advanced through a severe conflict to their present prosperity, and now is the time when a denominational spirit will be apt to spring up." Inglis warned that the procedure of allowing brethren to contribute as individual, buy life memberships and life-directorships was dangerous. He made the following points: (1) it infringed on the rights of the churches; (2) it gave the rich man more recognition and authority than the poor; (3) it appealed to vanity and pride; (4) it gave an assumption of power over the society to the rich regardless of their character; and (5) that it lent a worldly spirit and led toward complete digression. He illustrated this last point by relating how the British and Foreign Bible Society had become so dominated by worldly men that they no longer had Scripture reading or prayer at their meetings. Perhaps it is not strange that the first in print in Campbell's paper to perceive the dangers that lay ahead was a denominationalist himself.

The second objection in the Harbinger was raised by the church in Detroit through six resolutions signed by Alexander Linn, Colin Campbell and John E. Dixon. They did not approve because the society was an organization

"distinct from and, in some respects, independent of the church, which we believe to be contrary to the teachings of God's Holy Word, and also to the example of the churches under the guidance of the apostles; a return to these being the express object and intention of those calling themselves disciples of Christ in these latter days. . ." However, though disagreeing, they did say they would support the society (M.H., 1850, pp. 239,240).

The first clear-cut disavowal in the Harbinger came from the elders of the church in Connelsville,

Pennsylvania in the form of ten resolutions. They said

"that conscientiously, we can neither aid nor sanction any society, for this or other purposes, apart from the church; much less one which would exclude from its membership many of our brethren, and all the apostles, if now upon the earth, because silver and gold they had not.. .That we consider the introduction of all such societies a dangerous precedent—a departure from the principles for which we have always contended as sanctioning the chapter of expediency—the evil and pernicious effects of which the past history of the church fully approves...; That we also consider them necessarily heretical and schismatical, as much as human creeds and confessions of faith, when made the bonds of union and communion" (M.H. 1850, pp. 281, 282).

They affirmed that the arguments for the existence of the Society were the same advanced for the existence of Odd Fellows, Free Masons and Temperance societies. They objected to money as the qualification for voters, officers, etc. They stated that the formation of the Society was a departure from the safe rule of a "thus saith the Lord," and that opponents of the church had already begun to use that weapon against them. These resolutions were signed by A. Shallenberger, L.L. Norton and E. Holiday.

Jacob Creath, Jr. boldly challenged the wisdom of Campbell and claimed the brethren had left their standard of the Bible atone. He insisted that the Society was a "clerical convention" and that the evils that have befallen men in other conventions were the same to which his brethren were subject. Creath said:

"In the Methodist Conference, held in St. Louis, in May, 1850, a proposition was warmly debated... to have a legislature—an upper and lower house; one for the laity, the upper one for the clergy—to finish the imperfect laws of Jesus Christ. They were as humble and as modest in their first conventions as we are; but ambition makes ladders, with rounds in it to go up higher. Tall oaks from little acorns grow" (M.H. 1850, p. 616).

Perhaps Creath's most telling argument was his imputation of inconsistency to Campbell in now favoring

what he had earlier opposed.

If you were right in the Christian Baptist, you are wrong now. If you are right now, you were wrong then. If you were right in the Christian Baptist, we are right now, in opposing conventions. We follow the first lessons you gave us on this subject now, in opposing conventions. If we are wrong, Bro. Campbell taught us the wrong. Instead of denying this fact, and endeavoring to conceal it, and to throw the blame upon us, we believe it would be more just and Christian to confess to the charge, and to acknowledge that the arguments that you offered in the Christian Baptist, against conventions, are much more unanswerable than any that have been offered for them since that time. It is the desire of many brethren, who sincerely love and admire you, that you will reconcile the arguments in the Christian Baptist, offered against conventions, with those you now offer for them" (M.H., 1850, p. 637).

That Campbell was in sympathy with the movement is evident from his first statement in 1849 in the Millennial Harbinger following an article by W.K. Pendleton in which the Constitution and Officers were given. Campbell said, "Our expectations from the Convention have more than been realized. We are much pleased with the result, and regard it a very happy pledge of good things to come" (M.H., 1849, p. 694).

In Campbell's reply to the Baptist, James Inglis, he affirmed that the Society was but an expedient and effectual means of accomplishing the work of the church. White not in agreement with the setting of life memberships and life directorships, his apology was "that our infant society, when entering into life, took hold of Esau's heel, not so much for supplanting him as for ushering itself into life." Campbell's general view was, "I confess that I felt great pleasure in the results of the first meeting \_\_\_\_\_" (M.H., 1850, pp. 208, 209).

In his replies to Jacob Creath, Jr.'s articles, Campbell made the following defenses of the Society:

(1) The abuse of a thing is no argument against it, in fact, "abuse" suggests a "use."

(2) If conventions, per se, are wrong, then it would do away with both church and state for both are conventional.

(3) Conventions do not always err; in fact there is ordinarily more wisdom in a convention than in an individual

(4) The Scriptures give approval of conventions in Acts 15.

(5) The Society is neither legislative nor judicial, but economical and executive.

(6) The co-operation of churches are necessary to accomplish some of the objects of Christianity.

(7) The Millennial Harbinger and Christian Baptist are not in conflict. What the Christian Baptist opposed was legislative conventions while what the Millennial Harbinger supports is a society to dispense the Word to the world.

That Campbell supported the forming of the Missionary Society is not in question; the question is, "Why did he support it?" His support of it has proved enigmatic over the one hundred sixty years since its beginning. Campbell's relation to the Society is probably best explained in one or more of the following ways.

(1) Campbell was not mentally as competent as he had been in the past. This view, which was held by some of his contemporaries, and such a view was observed in as late an issue as the 1890 Gospel Advocate. Those who held this to be the case believed that his journey to Europe and the imprisonment there took something from Campbell. To this was added the burden of the death of his son, young Wycliff, of which he teared as soon as he returned. Campbell also was getting on in years, beyond 60 by the time the society was formed. Campbell stated on one occasion (I believe at the death of his father) that he did not expect to live as long as his father Thomas Campbell, because his own life had been much more strenuous because of all his labors, conflicts and travels.

Doubtless all these things had some degree of effect on Campbell, but it is difficult to find only "a shell of the man" in his writings in 1850. He replies to Dr. Humphrey in the spirit, power and logic of a Campbell past, though perhaps mellowed. In December, 1849, he addressed the Young Men's Mercantile Library Association in Cincinnati on the subject of "The Anglo-Saxon Language—Its History, Character and Destiny." The Cincinnati Daily Dispatch reported. "With ail who knew anything of the distinguished lecturer—his profound learning, his wondrous powers of reasoning, and perfect mastery of language—this lecture was a rare and unequalled mental treat." The speech was later printed in the Harbinger and displays power as welt as length. His address to the Bethany graduating class in 1850 shows no lack of mental prowess. His replies to the objectors of the Society display precisely reasoned logic as well as persona) conviction.

(2) Others say that Campbell simply changed his views over the years and supported what he once denounced. This Creath and others believed, while Campbell maintained that such was not the case. He affirmed that the conventions that he condemned earlier

were different from the Societies he then favored: "This objection, and all this alleged antagonism between the Christian Baptist and the Millennial Harbinger are disposed of, or, rather annihilated by one remark, vis: "convention' indicates merely a coming together for any purpose. Such is the established meaning. Hence, a convention may be scriptural or unscriptural.. ." (1850, p. 638). It would seem only fair to Campbell to say that what he states is what he believes, although it appears that he does not see the Society as others saw it, nor does he seem to anticipate the inherent dangers that some of his brethren saw. Perhaps his confidence in some of the leaders in the movement was misplaced and he trusted in "the arm of flesh" which failed him.

(3) A third alternative is that Campbell's prevailing influence was not as strong as in the past and he saw that the Society movement was beyond his power. Campbell had earlier questioned the establishment of the Bible Society on grounds of expediency, but D. S. Burnett spearheaded the effort that overran his objection and it was established. The fact that Campbell did not attend the initial convention for the Missionary Society in 1849, and that D.S. Burnett presided may have indicated a shift in power. Campbell may have had certain misgivings but rather than attempt to thwart what he definitely felt was a good work, he did not oppose it. One of the temptations and dangers that all good men in positions of leadership face is whether to go along with something that one questions in order to accomplish the "greater good." Very clearly the great and good Alexander Campbell came down on the wrong side of the Society issue.

While unable to know the minds and motives of any, particularly those who are separated from us by many years, we can with certainty read the lessons of history and those who ignore these mistakes tend to repeat them.

(1) Men of great influence do not always know the safe course to follow and the majority do not always have the best policy.

(2) Great men of God, for good reasons to them, can take the wrong road and tend their influence to an unscriptural course.

(3) A small church and a few obscure elders can, with the Bible and good judgment, perceive what is right as easily as a Campbell, Burnett or Pendleton. Those three men from Connelsville, whose descendants must yet appreciate their action, saw the danger and immediately went on record as opposing the Society.

(4) Men can "outgrow" the church and become dissatisfied with the simplicity of the New Testament order, and chart a course of eventual ruin.

(5) One misstep in the wrong direction in one

generation may bring complete apostasy in the generations to follow. The Missionary Society was wrong in its inception because it established a society to do what the church is to do. It was more than a co-operation of brethren or churches and was an unscriptural organization from the start. What Creath and others perceived at the outset has been proven true by time: the Society was divisive, it appealed to pride and vanity, it opened the door for numerous errors, it was ineffective and was a sure step toward denominationalism.

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—♦—AT—♦—

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*Hand bill from the famous gospel meeting in Sherman, Texas*



*Old Mars Hill meeting house.....*

## Uncle Isaac Sez



A friend, who is a contractor, was telling of contracting some work at a new denominational church "cathedral" near where I live. As he described it, when one walks in he is in the food court. This is set up similarly to a typical fast food restaurant. One can order snacks, drinks, sandwiches, or cookies

or doughnuts, etc. If you come for the early service, you may order breakfast. You have the option of eating in the food court or they will serve you in the pew. Not surprisingly our brethren have now jumped on this deal. A typical ad on some websites of some of the more "progressive" churches of Christ may read, "*Just off the foyer, the Coffee Shop provides a selection of hot and cold drinks, snacks and fellowship.*" Folks, Have we reached the point in our Christian growth where we simply can't leave the world's conveniences for a few moments to spend in the Lord's house? Have we become so addicted to the pleasures of this world that we can't part with them for a moment? Are we really that selfish? If you can't take an hour out of your life to worship the Lord without having to have a sandwich and a cup of coffee and a cookie or a doughnut, then you best stay at home. You may have a serious eating disorder and you likely have a serious spiritual disorder. If the worship service is that boring, at least find another place to worship. Talk about being over the top. Where will it end? If you find yourself in one of these "Churches of Christ," you need to order bro. Richey's new book "Our Worship To God." Read it 2 or 3 times and then run, don't walk to find another place to worship.

I see where one of "our" church directory services has elected to exclude those congregations that have accepted instrumental music in the worship services. Some are howling about it and saying how unfair and mean spirited it is. Why tip toe around the issue? The simplest solution would be for those publications that stand for the old paths to issue this statement: "The following churches no longer are worthy of wearing the name of Christ and are not deserving of a listing among the people of God." Then just list the congregations that have left the way. That would do the trick and more importantly the cause

of Christ would be advanced. Of course it would take courage to do such, and courage is in short supply amongst our brethren these days, so like Nero of old, we'll just fiddle while Rome burns and more and more churches are taken over by the modernist among us that have about as much respect for God's word and his laws as they do for the story of Goldilocks and the three Bears.

Sometime ago, our editor had an editorial titled "Tell Me Why." He asked the question, why had the church, its worship and its work and our attitudes changed so much in the last 40 or 50 years. Judging from the response, the question he raised, touched a chord. Brethren are beginning to realize that something is terribly wrong in many of our churches. Many have deserted the "old paths" for the denominational practices and ideas that were condemned a few years ago from our pulpits. Some have forgotten how it used to be, but like the proverbial frog in the pan of boiling water, they have "gone along to get along" and now, in many places, they have "crossed the Rubicon" and there is no turning back and the trend has turned into a rushing tide.

Recently a preaching friend of ours, told of an elderly lady who attended worship service where he preaches at one of the conservative churches in our area. She visited from one of the progressive churches. After the service, she spoke to him and said, "I haven't seen or heard such a simple service in years. It was beautiful." We need to be reminded from time to time about how "beautiful" it used to be and sadly, how it now is in many places. The old paths are still where the good way is. There are still many among us that have refused to "bow the knee to Baal."

One of our pet peeves is the preacher that so wants to be a standup comedian. He goes into the pulpit and launches into a couple of stale jokes usually accompanied by embarrassed laughter from the audience. Next he brings forth the sermon which could easily be used as filler for the Readers Digest. Then he walks to the vestibule and smilingly waits for the accolades from a grateful membership. Try and imagine T.B. Larimore or Granville Tyler or Gus Nichols or John T. Lewis showing this kind of disrespect for the solemnity of the worship service. So it is in our day when many of these boys are in it only for the paycheck and some wonder why the Lord's church is losing members and is in danger of being swallowed up in denominationalism. Lord, please come quickly....Til next time...ISAAC

## A TIME TO MEET AND A TIME TO PART Earl Kimbrough

The close friendship that developed and flourished for thirty years between T.B. Larimore and F.D. Srygley is proverbial among New Testament Christians in modern times. There were and yet are many friendships that might well equal theirs, but surely few have been as well known. Larimore do doubt referred to their personal friendship when he wrote: "As a FRIEND, neither Damon nor Pythias, David nor Jonathan, was ever truer than he.... The last argument with a friend was to make that friend take money that each believed the other ought to have." (F.B. Srygley, ed, *The New Testament Church*.)

Larimore spoke of money the publisher promised Srygley for the writing his last book, *Letters and Sermons of T. B. Larimore*. While Srygley was working on the book, which he finished in three months, he called Larimore by telephone and said: "I called you up to talk to you about a little matter of business that is troubling me all the time. They have promised to pay me for my work on this book. I feel all the time like I am robbing you or writing your obituary for pay. You agree to let me give you that money. Then I can work. As it is, I can scarcely work at all." Larimore said: "Not till I had earnestly argued the question with him and positively assured him that I would never accept a penny of it, did he yield the point; and when he did yield, he did it reluctantly and regretfully, I am sure. This is simply a sample of some of the proofs of his sublime unselfishness."

But we started out to tell about the first and last meeting of these devoted friends. In telling about their first meeting, Larimore said: "More than thirty years ago I went from Nashville, Tenn.—my native State—to Alabama, to Rock Creek, to the now historic Rock Creek Meetinghouse. My mission was to 'preach the word.' The church there then numbered seven souls. As, the first time, I approached the door of that old log cabin 'meetinghouse'—a penniless stranger in a strange land—I saw, standing about thirty feet away, to the right and front of me, twenty feet from the door I was approaching, a bright, little black-eyed, bareheaded, bare-footed boy; a picture of health, happiness, peace, and contentment; perfectly beautiful—to me—then as, on memory's page, now. His cheeks were rosy; his eyes were black. Faultless in form and feature, he stood silent, motionless, and erect. He was standing there to see 'the preacher' as he passed, probably not caring to ever be nearer him than then. Instinctively I turned toward him, went to him, took his little right hand into mine, put my left arm around him, said something I deemed appropriate to him, and led him into the house. From that day to the

day when, in the delirium of death, he, suddenly recognizing me, enthusiastically grasped me by both hands and thrilled my soul with an expression I can never forget, he was my devoted friend."

That was their first meeting. The last meeting between the bosom friends, thirty years later, took place as Srygley lay dying in his home at Donnellson, Tennessee. Larimore said: "I thank my God that his providence permitted me to spend the last week of our dear brother's painful pilgrimage through this world with him and his sorrowing family. I started home once. He did not protest. Had he done so, I would not have started. A few moments before I started, he said to me: 'We have parted many a time, parted to meet again: but when we part this time, I think we part to meet no more.' I started, but returned. I could not go. I am sorry I started. I knew not what to do. I thought I had to go. It was so sad to see him suffer, so hard to see him die. I thought we could not give him up. We all did for him all we could; we tried to do the right." So Larimore stayed with his friend.

He continued: "A few hours before his death—after he had been unconscious several hours—Brother [James E.] Scobey said to him: 'Brother Srygley, Brother Larimore has come; here is Brother Larimore.' He opened his eyes wide. At first he looked startled. The next moment he looked surprised—astonished. The look that immediately supplanted that—his last conscious look—was a radiant expression of rapturous delight that swept me back to the joyous days of his innocent childhood. He was in a gently reclining position; he could not lie prostrate. Grasping me enthusiastically by both hands, he looked steadily into my eyes with an expression of tenderness that almost talked. I said: 'Do you know me, Brother Srygley?' He said: 'Yes.' I said: 'How do you feel?' He said: 'I feel good.' Then he closed his eyes and relapsed into an unconscious state that lasted till, without a struggle, he simply ceased to breathe." (*Gospel Advocate*, Aug. 30, 1900.)



**T.B. & EMMA PAIGE LARIMORE**  
*THE LAST PHOTO MADE OF THE TWO*

## O. P. SPIEGEL ..*The Maverick from Morgan County*

Larry Whitehead

O.P. Spiegel was the most recognized name among “progressive” preachers in Alabama from 1890 until his death in 1947. His roots, as he would say in 1937, “went back 125 years.” His parents were baptized by J.M. Pickens and O.P. was baptized by Dr. A.C. Henry. He had two brothers who were ministers, James E. and Samuel Pickens Spiegel.

Oscar Pendleton Spiegel was born in the Piney Grove community of Morgan County, Alabama on May 11, 1866. He was the second son of Samuel and Mary



Eliza Tapscott Spiegel. Samuel and Mary were the parents of nine children, Oscar being the third. They were members of the Piney Grove church for which Samuel served as an elder for over 50 years. The family migrated to Morgan County from an area along the Walker- Fayette County line where they had been members of the Wolf Creek congregation which was

started under the preaching of

**O.P. Spiegel** Jeremiah Randolph in the late 1840's. After settling in the Piney Grove Community, they united with the Piney Grove Church. It would likely have been there that he heard Dr. A.C. Henry proclaim the Old Jerusalem Gospel and where he obeyed his Lord in baptism.

T.B. Larimore held several gospel meetings at Piney Grove and it was probably at one of these meetings that he persuaded young Spiegel to enroll in Mars Hill Bible School in Florence. *Earl Kimbrough*, in an earlier article, states that “*Spiegel preached his first sermon at age 18 while at Mars Hill.*” Larimore would say of him, “*He is one of the very best and most promising of the Mars' Hill boys—young, fine looking and destined to make his mark in the world.*” He was to definitely make his mark in the world. *Kimbrough* continues; “*other influences besides Larimore had a hand in directing Spiegel's ministry. He was for many years what some would call a “professional student.” After Mars' Hill, he spent nearly seven years in Kentucky University and the College of the Bible, where he studied under J. W. McGarvey, Robert Graham, and I. B. Grubbs. He also did postgraduate work at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. In 1932, he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Bob Jones College, then located at College Point, north of Panama City, Florida.*” There is no doubt that his association with the liberal professors

had a major impact on his thinking and his attitude about the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

While at The College of The Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, he preached for a time for the church in Franklin, Kentucky, one of the largest in the area. This was “heady stuff” for a young man from the hill country around Piney Grove, Alabama. After a period at The University of Chicago, he returned to Alabama and preached for the church in Anniston. Then it was back to Kentucky for a short stint with the church in Mayfield, Kentucky. In 1894, he was appointed State Evangelist for the Missionary society in Alabama where he served three years. He married Annie Widener of Franklin, Kentucky in 1893 and took the job as minister of the First Christian Church in Birmingham, Alabama and served in that capacity until 1901 when he took the minister's job with the church in New Orleans.

While with the church in Birmingham, he began to write more articles for the *Christian Standard*, the paper of record for the “progressive” movement in the church. Thus began a relationship that would endure for the rest of his life.

Watson's *The History of Christian Churches In Alabama*, describes Spiegel as “*being possessed of considerable ego and thoroughly enjoyed being in the limelight.*” (page 73) M.F. Harmon would write of him, “*His strong points: good clear language, strong and well formed gospel messages, practical and unquestionable methods, an untiring personal worker, foresight to keep plans well laid, a loveable and congenial character, ability to reach more old people than anyone I have ever seen, appeals to the thinking class, wears well and can always return for an even greater work.*”(page 76)

By 1890 the battle was raging over the Missionary Society and the instrument, In fact the lines had been drawn in most instances, although it would not be recognized by the religious census until 1906, when David Lipscomb notified the agency that two separate groups existed. It appears that the first few years of Spiegel's ministry were marked by his “trying to keep a foot in “both camps.” However by 1897 when he wrote an “open letter” in the *Standard* (7/10/1897-Page 1891), with the view of “drawing out T,B, Larimore” on the society and instrumental music, his views were made known to anyone who had an interest. While Spiegel's letter was sharp and demanding, Larimore's response in the *Gospel Advocate*, was characteristically mild and some felt noncommittal. Larimore suffered some criticism for not taking a more definite stand, mainly from the *Firm Foundation* and in particular J.D. Tant. The Srygleys, F.D. and F.B., were not happy about Spiegel attacking their old mentor and though F.D. died

in 1900, F.B. would use every opportunity he had for the rest of his life, to expose Spiegel as a digressive to the conservative brotherhood.

In 1886, the Alabama Missionary Cooperative was organized in Selma, Alabama. Justus McDuffie Barnes attended that meeting and spoke out against the organization. While Barnes was the most influential preacher in central Alabama, his pleadings fell on deaf and determined ears. The society was formed and immediately began an aggressive campaign to draw churches into it. With the exception of Morgan County in the North, their greatest successes were from Montgomery Southward. Many churches in this part of the state went with the digressive movement, such as Greenville, Plantersville, Mount Willing, Marion, Greensboro, Oxmore and Selma, among others. Their success at "turning" the churches to the "digressives" was not as successful as it could have been. Watson states that of the 157 churches affiliated with the restoration plea, only 55 went with the digressives and two of them came back to the old paths. (Watson-pages 69,70) The "progressive" movement came late to Alabama. The American Christian Missionary Society was 37 years old when it was officially organized in Selma in 1886. Spiegel was well familiar with the tactics to use as he had spent those years in Lexington, Kentucky and Chicago. He had first hand knowledge of what to do and how to do it. He began to put these lessons to use when he returned to his home State. Spiegel was an excellent preacher. He was obviously well educated and thus very articulate. He had a charismatic personality and fine appearance. There is no doubt that he was a popular preacher. After the death of Jesse Turner Wood, long time preacher at Cedar Plains in Morgan County, Spiegel had managed to "flip" that congregation to the digressives. Using that as his local base of operations and utilizing the talents of his brother, Samuel Pickens Spiegel, he managed to "flip" other congregations in the area until most of the older and larger churches in Morgan County embraced his views. Filled with the power of success, he decided to move on to other areas of the State. He held a meeting for the Herron Street (later moved to Catoma Street) in Montgomery in 1895. This meeting served to introduce him to the brethren in the capitol city and opened the



**Oscar Pendleton Spiegel** at Cedar Plains in Morgan County, Spiegel had managed to "flip" that congregation to the digressives. Using that as his local base of operations and utilizing the talents of his brother, Samuel Pickens Spiegel, he managed to "flip" other congregations in the area until most of the older and larger churches in Morgan County embraced his views. Filled with the power of success, he decided to move on to other areas of the State. He held a meeting for the Herron Street (later moved to Catoma Street) in Montgomery in 1895. This meeting served to introduce him to the brethren in the capitol city and opened the

door for a long struggle to follow. Spiegel would later boast that until after the turn of the century, he could speak at churches on either side of the issue. He also would say that many of the churches in Alabama that chose to identify with the "progressive" agenda, more or less drifted into the "progressive" camp rather than open division, thus avoiding the bitterness and the rancor that ensued in other parts of the country, such as Texas. In the churches where open division did occur over these issues, the bitterness became more pronounced. An example of this bitterness is manifested by an 1885 article by J.M. Barnes in the *American Christian Review*. Barnes stated, "there will grow out of the church of Christ, in the United States, a sectarian party. They will be composed of the progressive and organ element. Let them go; the sooner, the better. They are a curse to the cause we plead." (History of Catoma Street-pages 22,23) These were strong words from the mild mannered Barnes. For some twenty or twenty-five years after the lines of fellowship were drawn in 1886 the division continued. Congregations divided, churches split, and in nearly every case with bitter feelings. The division would even be felt in families. Brother N. L. Walker, a much beloved elder at Catoma Street, said that his father, who was sympathetic to the "progressives," fussed at him and called him an "anti" for not going with the digressives. (History of Catoma Street, page 23)

In the spring of 1899 an event took place in the city of Montgomery, that was of utmost concern to the leaders of the church, and that was a conference attended by many of the preachers and leaders of the Disciples of Christ, which espoused the missionary society and advocated the use of instrumental music in the worship. We know them today as the Christian church. The church in Montgomery had not been seriously disturbed by these issues. Oscar Spiegel was well known to the churches, having held a meeting at Catoma Street in 1895. Things had changed in the intervening three years. Spiegel was now openly and actively pushing the liberal agenda and he was the principal reason the conference was being held in Montgomery. He was acquainted with many of the members of the church and it was felt that his influence might disrupt the peace and oneness of the congregation if a determined effort was put forth in the city to establish a digressive church there. The leaders asked for a meeting with Spiegel and his associates and pleaded with him to cancel the conference, all to no avail. E.R. Barnes, at one point said to Spiegel; ". . . Your activities in other cities Brother Spiegel, always have aroused discord and brought about division. In the blessed name of Jesus, our teacher, our Master, I appeal to you: Do not inaugurate a campaign in Montgomery; cease to do what already you are doing;

transfer your activities to an uncultivated field." I got nowhere." (History of The Catoma Street Church-page 26.)

Several years passed before the Disciples of Christ established a permanent congregation in the city. In preparing for this article, I corresponded with Dr. Richard David Ramsey, Professor at Southeastern Louisiana University, about some facts of Spiegel's ministry. Dr. Ramsey writes about the beginnings of the Christian church in Montgomery; "In 1911 Spiegel held a tent meeting in Montgomery, clearly with a pitch toward splitting away members from the Catoma Street church where he had preached a meeting in 1895 and continued to be well liked. Spiegel undertook his meeting over the objections not only of the local congregations but also Spiegel's 1911 meeting failed to get the blessing of the Home Mission Board, which refused to provide funds. The Catoma Street congregation retaliated by holding a competing meeting. While Spiegel's wife was playing the piano and Spiegel was preaching to a large but comparatively empty tent, the folks at Catoma Street were taking the roof off with their unaccompanied singing. They had called in Elmer Leon Jorgenson (later compiler of the GREAT SONGS OF THE CHURCH) to lead the singing and S.H. Hall (a seasoned debater on the instrument question) to preach."

Spiegel became the minister of the newly established Central Christian Church ( Now 1<sup>st</sup> Christian) of Montgomery in 1911. (History of Catoma Street-page 38) He served this church until 1925, all the while continuing his efforts at beginning churches and serving in various offices of the Missionary Society. He next moved to Valdosta, Georgia for a few years then back to Montgomery where he organized the Cloverdale Christian Church. He preached there until his retirement in the mid 1940s.

Spiegel would serve two terms as State Evangelist for the Alabama Christian Missionary Co-operative. In 1915 he became editor of *The Alabama Christian*, which he had helped to start in 1903, using this venue to further his views.

He continued to maintain an interest in the affairs of his "anti" brethren over the next years. For a time he flirted with "premillennialism" or attempted to inject himself into the debate that was raging over the issue in churches of Christ at the time. He sent the following letter to J.N. Armstrong, published in R. H. Boll's paper, *Word and Work*. "This I know, brother David Lipscomb, E.G. Sewell, F.D. Srygley and our ministers too numerous to mention, regarded old Dr. T.W. Brents as one of our greatest preachers, and his Gospel Plan Of Salvation as one of the deepest and best books of a generation. ' Well now in that book ( in his book of "Gospel Sermons," rather ) he has a sermon on the Millennium. I revamped that sermon and preached it all

over The United States, Canada and Old Mexico-in every state but four-and no one did ever come tearing me to pieces because I was a premillennialist."-(*Word And Work* 1/4/1936). He continued his writing and was one of the most popular preachers among "The Disciples" until the infirmities of old age forced his retirement.

Spiegel continued his "crusade" against the conservatives well into the seventh decade of his life. He visited often in North Alabama after the death of his wife in 1934. He lived, shortly before his death, with family in Cullman County. The writer has in his possession personal letters Spiegel wrote to family members in Moulton, trying to convince them to leave the church of Christ and join the progressives. In one letter he criticizes the conservatives as being legalistic and divisive. He offers a \$100 bill to anyone that can show him the passage of scripture that authorizes a building to meet in or a passage that condemns instrumental music. He still has the self confidence that characterized his preaching life in asking them to "just come and hear me preach," giving the idea that if they did he would change them over to his way of thinking.

Dr. Ramsey wrote me about the following and upon further research, I came across this statement: "When I was 12, I was baptized into Christ. My Baptismal Certificate said: 'James Bales in humble submission to the Divine Command and as evidence of his faith in the teaching and example of our Savior Jesus Christ was buried with his Lord in Christian baptism at Central Christian Church this 15<sup>th</sup> day of Sept., 1928, Fitzgerald, Georgia.'" It was signed by Bruce Nay, Pastor, and O.P. Spiegel, Evangelist from Montgomery, Alabama. *Bales family website-2006*. Of course, this was the noted James D. Bales who taught at Harding for many years.

Spiegel was a great spokesman for his cause. He was a man of enormous ability and charisma. His persuasive powers were tremendous. It was difficult to know which side he was on at times. Some of his articles, especially those on the church and its organizational structure, read as if they were written by David Lipscomb or F.D. Srygley. At other times, his progressive sympathies were more apparent. As an example, in 1937, while visiting in Morgan County, he attended a service at the church of Christ, likely in Vinemont, which was near Piney Grove where he was staying. He heard a sermon against the missionary society and instrumental music in the worship. He was so incensed by what he heard that he wrote an eight column article in the *Alabama Christian*, (July-1937) assailing the views that he heard. In the article, he named several gospel preachers, among whom were T.B. Larimore, J.M. Pickens, Jesse Turner Wood and others, and left the impression that they too, were in



favor of both the society and the instrument. He obviously was wrong on this count. The preacher that so incensed Spiegel, was likely John T. Lewis as Lewis held gospel meetings at Vinemont regularly in the 30s and 40s and Lewis was noted for his plain speech which some would call blunt. It is likely that Spiegel and Lewis crossed swords often in Birmingham as they were contemporaries and their paths would cross in other parts of the state in later years.

There is no doubt that Oscar Pendleton Spiegel was one of, if not the most, influential leaders in the denomination known as The Christian Church in his lifetime. That he had a major impact on the Lord's church in Alabama is clear. One has only to drive through the State and especially Morgan County and areas of south Alabama and find the several Christian churches that once stood for the "old paths and see the influence the man wielded. As we cover the history of the restoration movement through the pages of the ARJ, I am confident that Oscar Spiegel will appear often. It is said that he started or "flipped" 34 congregations in his life. It should be noted, however that he had a more difficult time in Alabama than others had in the surrounding states, with the exception of Tennessee. More accurate stats today show that only about 18-20% of the churches of Christ in this state, joined the digressive effort as opposed to 75 or 80% in Florida, Georgia and Mississippi.

I recently visited the headquarters of "The Disciples" in Birmingham and their archives are a virtual monument to .O.P. Spiegel. They have a complete set of the *Alabama Christian*, the publication that he began in 1903 and edited for many years. It was through this medium that he debated with F.B. Srygley and others whom he felt were "legalists" and were hindering his desire to liberalize the church in Alabama. He was very determined and refused to be dissuaded from this goal. Once, in the early 1900s, he was invited to conduct a gospel meeting for the church in Gadsden. The invitation was not unanimous. As he arrived at the building, one of the dissenting members asked him if he believed in the use of the organ in the worship. Spiegel responded, "why do you ask?" The dissenting brother said, "because if you do, you are not fit to be called a gospel preacher." Spiegel, unfazed, continued the meeting, apparently never mentioning the organ.

He was still crusading at the end. He died in Cullman on Feb. 6, 1947 a few months shy of his 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Thus ended the interesting and colorful life of one of only two students of Larimore's who defected to the "progressives" ( the other being R.P. Meeks, Larimore's brother-in-law) and one of whom it could truly be said that he was ***The Maverick of Morgan County.***

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## THE DETACHABLE SHIRT COLLAR Earl Kimbrough

As a young man, T.B. Larimore went the first time for a meeting at Rock Creek, Alabama. He traveled to Tusculumbia by train and from there caught a ride with a man in a buggy going his way. But their ways parted at sunset and he was put out at a desolate spot with no human habitation in sight and surrounded by towering mountains, steep cliffs, and deep ravines. He walked the rest of the way at night over an unfamiliar mountain road until he found the cabin of old Brother John Taylor on Lost Creek. Fortunately, he carried little luggage: a cheap Bible, one extra shirt, and a detachable paper shirt collar.

This was soon after the Civil War. At the time, twenty-four year old Larimore had only one collar for his extra shirt, both of which had to last several days. Gospel preachers never wore the garb of clergymen so as to be recognized by the public as "men of God." Many of them commonly dressed in the run of the mill styles of the day, or perhaps in many cases, the styles of the immediate past, for not all preachers then kept up with the latest fashion. Few could afford to. The clothing of many was homemade.

Reading about Larimore's paper collar reminds us of a practice that continued well into the twentieth century. Pictures of gospel preachers in the early part of the century regularly were photographed with suit, tie, and the ubiquitous detachable collar. Removable shirt collars were invented in 1827 in Troy, New York. Through the years they variously were made of cotton, linen, paper, and laminated paper and cloth called "Linene." Celluloid was patented in 1870 and was used both for collars and detachable cuffs. These were common in the 1880s. Detachable collars were high fashion in the time of the Civil War, but at that time paper collars were already out of style. Showing that Larimore was a little behind the times.

The detachable collar came in different styles, principally, with variations of "Stand Up," "Lay Down," and "Wing Tip." All of these can be seen in pictures of preachers during the glory days of the buttoned on collar. In the last half of the nineteenth century collarless shirts became common for a while. There were often worn without collar or tie. This may explain why pictures of some preachers of that era look as if they were not fully or "properly" dressed for a photo session. A picture of Larimore in 1928, a year before his death, shows him with a bow tie wrapped around a stand up collar. Earlier pictures reveal him wearing a stand up collar that resembles priestly garb. A picture of H. Leo Boles in 1924 shows him wearing a tall lay down collar. John T. Lewis in his wedding photo in 1914 sprouts what appears to be a standup

collar with the tie band exposed around the neck. A picture of him with his eight brothers in 1911 shows a variety of collars.

Some preachers continued to wear detachable collars until after World War II. I know, for I was one of them; a thing none now living knows about and I ought to have more sense than to tell. Somehow I got the idea, I do not know when or where, that preachers should wear shirts with detachable collars. In my first two or three years of preaching, I wore such attire, but only when preaching. I bought mine at Blach's Society Brand Clothes on Third Avenue in Birmingham, the only place I found that still sold them in 1947. However, mine were cloth, not paper. They were expensive, for me, but I guess I thought that was worth the price if it made me a preacher.

I remember one time I nearly got run out of the house where I was staying in Frostproof, Florida, when I turned my collar backward, giving me the appearance of a Roman Catholic priest. This was all in jest, of course, even the threat of being expelled from the good home. After my detachable collar fever cooled, I tried to dress like sane people, keeping a little closer to the norm, but perhaps always running a little behind the times. Not too strange for one who makes a pretense at being an amateur historian.

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### Porter vs. Bogard

I met Mr. Ben M. Bogard in debate in Hubbard, Oklahoma in 1940, and you know who Mr. Bogard was. During the course of our debate he made this quibble regarding baptism. In comparing it with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, he said, "Christ was the son of God before his burial. The Lord was not buried to make him a son of God, he was already a son of God before he was buried. Therefore we are sons of God before we are buried in baptism." I responded, "Yes, Mr. Bogard, Christ was the Son of God before he was buried. But he was also the Son of God before he was crucified. **Were you?** *Quibbles That Backfired – Page 5*

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## My Recollections of T. B. Larimore

F. B. Srygley

Gospel Advocate, Vol. 71, No. 20 (May 16, 1929): 470-471.

I suspect I knew Brother Larimore longer than any one who will write for this issue of the Gospel Advocate. The first time I ever say him was the second Sunday in July, 1867. I was then eight years old he was twenty-four. Brother Larimore came to old Frankfort, Ala., to get students to attend a school which had been founded by J. M. Pickens at Mountain Home, Ala. He was to be associated with Pickens in that school, and he was out to get students for it. He first came to old Frankfort; but there were only a few members of the church there, and they were not very aggressive, and so he was invited by old Brother John Taylor with seven members—my grandmother, my father and mother, Uncle Jim Quillen and Aunt Martha, and Brother Silas Flake and wife.

I remember how Brother Larimore looked the first time I ever saw him in the pulpit. He was tall and as straight as an Indian, and I thought as eloquent as Cicero (if I had ever heard of Cicero at that time). We had never heard much eloquence in the pulpit or out of it. The preaching that I had heard up until that time had been of the primitive kind, with very little argument and less of the word of God in it. The preaching was largely sympathetic, with deathbed stories and impassioned exhortations. It seemed strange to me to see a preacher stand up and reason with an audience about the matter of salvation from sin. In my childish heart I could not understand how any one could learn so much about the Bible and other literature as he seemed to know in the short space of twenty-four years. I looked upon his attainments as I did the moon—something to be admired, but entirely out of my reach.

While Brother Larimore was looking for students for Mountain Home Academy, God in his providence may have had a very different reason for his trip through that poor, mountainous country. I give God the glory for the fact that I came in contact with that good and great man at that time in my life. The whole course of my life was changed by the contact with him. He was so good and great in my estimation that I did not feel easy in his presence. While I loved him, yet through all the years I never got over that uncomfortable feeling when in his presence.

He held his only debate with William Blackburn in the hills of North Alabama, only about two miles from where we first met. He preached five sermons at

Rock Creek on that trip, and I think that I have never heard such preaching in all my life. Some one in the darkness in the churchyard handed him a list of forty questions to which he demanded an answer, but there was no name signed to them. When we reached home that night, Brother Larimore took my father into the room and showed him the questions and asked his advice. My father said, "Mr. Blackburn, the Methodist preacher of the neighborhood, is the author of these questions;" and he advised Brother Larimore to publicly state that he had received some questions which demanded an answer, but there was no name signed to them, and before he could afford to publicly read the questions and answer them, he should have the name of the querist. This was the last meeting of the series, and the incident was closed then. But after Brother Larimore left the neighborhood Mr. Blackburn came to my father and admitted that he was the author of the forty questions. Arrangements were then made for Brother Larimore to return in 1868 and for Mr. Blackburn to answer his own questions and give Brother Larimore an opportunity to reply to him. A large crowd heard that discussion, which lasted all day. While Brother Larimore was not of an aggressive disposition, he answered Mr. Blackburn according to the teaching of the word of God, and more was done that day to plant the principles of primitive Christianity in the hearts of those mountain people than could have been done in any other way. While Brother Larimore never sought a discussion, and, so far as I know, never had another, yet he had one debate that I have never forgotten. When I hear people say that Brother Larimore was opposed to honorable controversy, I feel like I want them to know that they are mistaken. He did believe in it, and he engaged in it successfully one time. When I was in his school, we studied the Bible, and he encouraged honorable controversy. If we disagreed about any passage of Scripture, he allowed each one to take the side he believed was right, and he was the moderator, while we discussed in the open before the class. I think I can safely say that he believed in fair, open discussion of Bible questions. I was three years in Mars' Hill Academy, from 1880 to 1882, inclusive, and I knew him.

During the time the Mormons began to preach at a schoolhouse called "Blackburn's Precinct," a place where the students had been preaching. A Brother Wade came to the school to get some one to go and discuss the question of Mormonism with the Mormon

preacher. Brother Larimore assisted the students in selecting the man to do that work. This I know, because I was the one selected, and I know I went with his approval. No one had more discussions through the columns of the Gospel Advocate from 1889 to 1900 than my brother, F. D. Srygley, and I know that Brother Larimore approved his course. No two men stood closer together than did T. B. Larimore and F. D. Srygley. Their love for each other was often likened to the love that existed between Jonathan and David. In view of what I know of his life in the last sixty-two years, I dislike to hear any soft-soaper try to use the influence of that good and great man against honorable discussion. The school at Mars' Hill lasted seventeen years, and it failed for lack of patronage; but when it ended, there was no institution left to vex the brethren and to go digressive, as such things usually do. While the matter of innovations in the work and worship of the church was not discussed in that school, for these things had not struck our country then, yet, in my opinion, fewer students of Mars' Hill went digressive than of any other school. This was not because a fight was made against these things but because T. B. Larimore taught a respect for the authority of the word of God which held the students to the word of God alone.

Brother Larimore taught his students, when trying to preach, either to read the Bible to the audience just as it is or quote it word for word. We were not allowed to say, "The Bible reads 'like,' " but, "This is exactly what the Bible says." He believed every word of God, and he taught others to believe it and not something like it...

Next to my father and mother, I owe more to T. B. Larimore than any other person that my life ever touched. If I shall ever reach the shining portals of glory, I shall expect to see my old teacher and my devoted friend and brother in that glad city.

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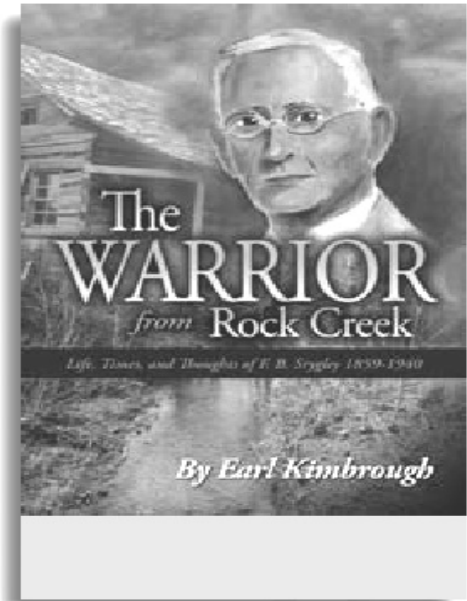
### **Looking Back**

Jake Hamilton, Alabama City, Ala., July 6: "Gardner Hall has just closed a good meeting with this congregation. There were eleven additions-ten by baptism. The attendance and interest were good throughout the meeting."

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## THE STRANGER AT ROCK CREEK

Earl Kimbrough

As a young man in the early part of 1868, T.B. Larimore traveled with the aged pioneer preacher John Taylor on preaching tour in Northwest Alabama. Taylor arranged for him to preach a few days at Rock Creek later that year. Larimore, recently graduated from Tolbert Fanning's Franklin College in Tennessee, was a stranger to that county. Referring to the occasion of Larimore's first preaching at Rock Creek, F.D. Srygley said: "Old brother John Taylor had, announced beforehand that the stranger was a young man just out of college, an eloquent speaker, a learned man and a mighty preacher. Now it was something unusual for a college preacher to visit Rock Creek and many of the congregation had perhaps never seen a genuine graduate from college. It is possible that many people in that audience felt no other interest in the occasion than a mere idle curiosity to see and hear a man who had really been to college." (F.D. Srygley, *Smiles and Tears*.)

F.B. Srygley, F.D. Srygley's brother, also recalled Larimore's preaching at Rock Creek on that occasion. He said: "It was in July, 1868. I remember this preaching very well myself, though I was less than nine years old at the time. I remember how strange the preacher looked at the time. His head was closely shaven, and I thought that he had white hair, if he ever had any. He went into a barber shop in Tuscumbia to have his hair cut, and the barber, as he thought, played a prank on him by shaving his head. He sat and allowed him to do this, and said not a word, though he was a stranger. He seemed to feel that it was his duty to submit to this, and he did it without a word of complaint." (*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 29, 1938.)

"The first impression of the entire congregation after 'sizing him up,'" F.D. Srygley wrote in 1889, "was unconcealed disappointment. There was nothing in his dress or outward appearance to distinguish him from common preachers of that country. I shall not attempt any further description of him than to say he looked both green and awkward." Larimore had come by train to Tuscumbia. In describing his hair cut in that town, Larimore said the barber took him for a tramp and, encouraged by some ruffians, shaved his head as a sort of practical joke. With his head freshly shaved, he left Tuscumbia on foot, but he soon caught a ride in a buggy with a man going in the direction he wished to go.

Srygley continued: "About nightfall, however, their ways parted, and he was set out of the buggy at the forks of the road alone in a strange country. It was a desolate spot, no signs of human habitation in sight; but towering mountains, rugged cliffs and dark deep

ravines all around him. Fortunately his baggage was not cumbersome, consisting only of a plain cheap Bible, an extra shirt and a paper collar! He walked on till he came to the humble home of good old brother Taylor, who received him with joy and gave him genuine Christian entertainment for the night in the very best style his poor home could afford. The next day he met the anxious and curious congregation at Rock Creek and began his first meeting of much importance." (Srygley, *Smiles and Tears*.)

Larimore's preaching at Rock Creek contradicted his rumpled appearance. Describing the occasion, F.B. Srygley said: "We had never heard such preaching as he did. He was naturally timid, but eloquent and persuasive in his manner, and we felt like he came from 'a different world.' from the one he was in then.... We were the happiest bunch that ever left a meeting in that country, so far as I know. Perhaps this man Larimore and this meeting had more to do with the shaping of the work of my life than anything that happened to me in boyhood days. Larimore came to that country in 1868 to get pupils for the J.M. Pickens school at Mountain Home.... While Larimore came for that purpose, who could say that God did not have a greater motive for his coming than Larimore himself had? So far as its influence upon me is concerned, I prefer to believe that it was providential. The course of my life was changed, I am sure, for the better. I give God the praise for that visit of that servant of his." (*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 29, 1938.)

Larimore's coming as a stranger to the remote and rugged community of Rock Creek soon after the Civil War, in a land still bearing on land and people the devastating scars of the fraternal struggle, made a deep and lasting impression on two little boys, twelve year old Fletcher Srygley, and his nearly nine year old brother Filo. Each loved the young East Tennessee preacher dearly from the first and bonds of affection formed, especially between F.D. Srygley and Larimore, that only grew in time. These little mountain boys of Rock Creek, Alabama, became two of the most noble soldiers of the cross in the battles for New Testament Christianity that raged during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although F.D. Srygley died in 1900. Each gave credit for the course of their lives to that stranger with a shaved head and the appearance of a tramp who preached a few days at Rock Creek in the summer of 1868. Like Abraham and Lot of old, the Srygley family embraced an "angel" unawares and were eternally blessed because of it.

## RESTORATION RAMBLINGS

Earl Kimbrough

**The Beauty of Alabama.** In writing about Alabama Restoration history, we naturally consider the land and social environment where the things we write about occurred. This includes the state itself. Being from Franklin County, I appreciate what the late attorney William H. Key, Jr., whom I knew, wrote about Alabama many years ago.

Bill Key wrote: "I have always lived in Franklin County and have always been glad that I have. I have always been glad that Franklin County is a part of Alabama, for Alabama is a great state. I think that when the Creator made the world, He was especially proud of that part of it that is Alabama; that He smiled upon it, and blessed it lavishly. He gave it wide prairies, mighty rivers, and majestic mountains, bulging with treasures for man to appropriate and enjoy. He spread across Alabama's brow the mighty Tennessee River, as if He had crowned her with a band of silver. He adorned her breast with precious stones of coal, iron ore, and limestone. Around her waist he placed a girdle of shining steel. Her skirts are woven from the pure white cotton from the fields of the Black Belt, fringed at the hem with the green of the Wire Grass. And thus she sits in queenly splendor, her feet laved in the Gulf. Yes, God has been good to Alabama, and may she and her people be forever grateful, and deserving of, the manifold blessings that He has so lavishly bestowed upon her." (Carl Elliot, *Annals of North-west Alabama*, Vol. 2)

**The New River Post Office.** The community of New River in Fayette County, Alabama, now Hubbertville, had a post office beginning in 1853 that continued until the Civil War in 1861. We are told that at one time, it was the only post office between Russellville and Tuscaloosa. The first post master was Hugh White McCaleb, a Christian and a member of the Old Berea church of Christ. McCaleb served about two years at a salary of \$5.83 a year. The post office closed during the Civil War. It reopened in 1869 and ran until discontinued in 1911. What is of interest here is that the three men who ran the post office from 1869 till 1911 were also Christians and two, the first and third, were gospel preachers. Simeon Randolph, a son of Elisha Randolph, was the first post master after the war. He was followed by Andrew McCaleb, Larry Whitehead's great-great grandfather, who served a little over twenty-eight years, and then his son John Tyler McCaleb, who served from 1899 until it the post office was finally closed in 1911.

**Just Enough, Maybe.** One writer on the *Alabama*

*Restoration Journal* is never really satisfied with his writing. He feels toward it about like it was said of Old George Longmire, a bygone Fayette County politician. Someone said of Old George: "He's like some race horses, just fast enough to bet on, but not quite fast enough to win."

### **Gleanings From The Past**

The first church of Christ in Fayette County was established in 1830 by John Taylor in the home of David Thornton. An interesting aside: "The first watermill was built in Fayette County by David Thornton. It was located some twelve to fourteen miles northeast of Fayette." Brother Taylor may gotten his meal ground while he went there to preach.

*One joy in reading old books and papers is finding little gems worth collecting. Our main interest is Restoration history, but some tenuously related historical items are also collectable. The following paragraphs are adapted from Annals of North-west Alabama, Vol. 2, by the late Carl Elliot.*

Reminiscing about life in Northwest Alabama after eighty years, Florence Sizemore said: "I have seen many changes wrought before my very eyes as the years have rolled by. Although most of the changes have been for the better, *I still believe that the old way of centering life in the home and the church is the best way.* I believe that most of the gallivanting on the streets and highways is like a dog chasing its tail."

Recalling evenings spent hearing her father recount Civil War experiences, Florence Sizemore said: "Once the 'Tories' stole my father's razor. He never again shaved, but grew a long beard which he had scissor-trimmed." From the pictures we see of old pioneer preachers, there must have been a lot of them in the nineteenth century that had their razors stolen.

The same lady boasted: "Our family always went to church every time the doors opened." Then, without a pause, she said, "At first we only had services once a month."

We speak of some preachers of the past as "self-made" men. "Once when [William Jennings Bryan] was introduced as a 'self-made man' his reply was something like this, 'A so-called self-made man can credit himself at most with only one-third of his success. The other two-thirds must be credited to his heredity and his environment.



**SCHOOL DAYS ca. 1880s**



**Nancy Larimore** – Mother of T.B. Larimore

Few men loved and respected their mother more than Theophilis Brown Larimore.....

*“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.**

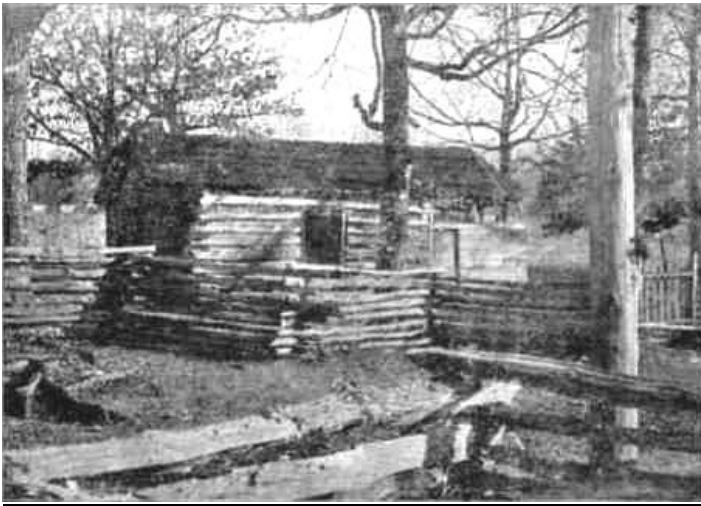


**T.B. & Esther Gresham Larimore**  
1845-1907

The first Mrs. T.B. Larimore was Esther Gresham Larimore. She and T.B. were married 38 years. She is buried in Florence, Alabama in the old Gresham Cemetery across from the Larimore Mansion. It is located in the western part of Florence off Cox Blvd



***Baptizing In Coxs' Creek ca. 1890***



***The Larimore Home in East Tennessee***

*These photos are from Scott Harp's website – <http://therestorationmovement.com>*



***The First Meetinghouse Larimore ever saw....***

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## The Final Say

### Talk About Civility

We notice that our friend of other years, the Rev. Thomas Caskey, pastor of the Christian Church in Bonham, Tex., is out on a somewhat novel but entirely characteristic Crusade. He is preaching *Jeff Davis and him crucified and he bluntly states that he proposes to devote the remainder of his life to proving that Jeff Davis was the greatest character in human history next to Jesus Christ and was the legitimate successor on the earth of the divine master*" The writer of this knows old man Caskey well and has been saturated with the drippings from his sanctuary time and again., and being thus well qualified to talk about him we have no hesitation in saying that he is an irreverent, Godless, shallow-pated old hum-bug. He looks like a venerable billy goat strutting through the world on his hind legs, and his Intellectual limitations are so narrow that he is not able to instruct any man of ordinary good sense. Mr. Davis was one of the extraordinary men of modern times, and the world is pretty well divided in opinion as to the true interpretation of his great career; but when a Christian minister deliberately pronounces him the legitimate successor of Jesus Christ on earth we have no hesitation in characterizing that minister not only as a false teacher, but an unmitigated, . . . and unprecedented ass. *Las Vegas Optic-Las Vegas, New Mexico-January 1890-Col. 3*

### F.D. Srygley & The Census

"Several years ago I started out in all good faith to be a Christian and obey all the commandments of God without joining any denomination, championing any party, or becoming a sectarian in religion. It is a pretty hard thing to do, I admit; but I could get along reasonably well on that line if it were not for this everlasting United States census "round up" every ten years. These census fellows never can get the idea into their wooden heads that a man can be a Christian and yet not belong to any denomination. They seem determined to pen up the Lord's people in little denominational stalls, so that they may be counted, marked, branded, labeled, and waybilled for heaven and immortal glory in "original packages." They are after me now to get me into the pen with "us as a people," and they will put a party yoke on every man who will wear it. I am going to keep out of the party pen of "us as a people," if I can; but if they force me into it, by the blessings of God I will butt the cross fences all down if I can and get all those little denominational herds mixed up so that there will be but one flock, with Jesus as the Shepherd.

## Old Fashioned

Michael Pickford

Isn't it a shame that many godly virtues are often preceeded in speech and writing by the word "Old-fashioned?" We hear of old-fashioned honesty, old-fashioned marriages, old-fashioned hospitality, and old-fashioned love, etc.. The term "old-fashioned" is defined as a fashion that is no longer in style, having the ways or tastes current in former times. Sadly, the reason these things are deemed old-fashioned is because they are so rarely seen anymore in modern day society. We live in a nation which is corrupted with deceit, selfishness, divorce, and lovelessness. Situation ethics has taken a stronghold in the minds of otherwise decent citizens. Folks will justify lying, cheating, and stealing if the situation calls for it. Even the Bible, God's word, has been called old-fashioned and many people are trying to amend it so it will be up to date with current trends and beliefs. Listen; people, styles, and trends change, but God, His principles, and His word never changes! (Heb. 13:8). Beloved, "do not be conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2). Be Old-Fashioned!

## Money

Men can buy their way into society and they can buy their way into prominence, but no man can buy his way to heaven. Money is given to man to use while in this world, but some are not good stewards and do not use the money in the right way. Money is a blessing if used in the right way, and it is a curse if it is used in the wrong way.— *E. M. Borden.*

## Changing Values

From the L.A. Times....Richard Poncher's eternal sleep will soon be disrupted. The onetime Beverly Hills resident, who died 23 years ago at the age of 81, will be moving out of the crypt above Marilyn Monroe's resting spot at the Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park cemetery. Poncher's wife intends to sell the crypt, said to have once been owned by Monroe's former husband, Yankee great Joe DiMaggio. (Snip) Elsie Poncher plans to start the bidding at \$500,000.... Wouldn't be surprised to see the bidding hit \$1,000,000... *lew*

**PLEASE CHECK YOUR RENEWAL DATE**

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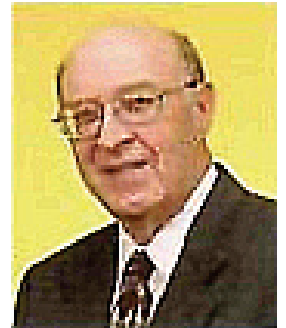
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Fulford has preached in gospel meetings, spoken in lecture ships, preached by appointment, and worked with congregations on an interim, or part-time, basis. He continues his active work of writing.

Fulford was educated at Freed-Hardeman University, the University of Tennessee, and Austin Peay State University. He has written numerous articles over the years, and he continues to write regularly for the Gospel Advocate and The Spiritual Sword. He has published three books: *Christianity Pure and Simple* (2005), *The Kind of Preaching Needed Today* (2006), and *The Lord Has Been Mindful Me* (2007), all of which may be ordered online from [hesterpublications.com](http://hesterpublications.com).

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