# RESTORATION JOURNALS

# AND THE CHURCH

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**Introduction.** The restoration of the ancient order did not take place overnight. It came about through a gradual development as the organization, work, and worship of the New Testament church came into clearer view of the restorers. As the movement drew closer to the apostolic pattern, it gradually discarded the vestiges of denominationalism: human names, creeds, organizations, and traditions. The original goal of the movement, as expressed by Thomas Campbell in *Declaration and Address*, was the unity of Christians to be effected by a restoration of the First Century order. Its aim was not to restore the church itself for the restorers did not believe the church had ceased to exist, nor that it could cease (Dan. 2:44; Eph. 3:20-21), but only that it had been obscured by beliefs and practices unknown in the New Testament. The restorers’ aimed to remove the centuries of human debris in the form of additions, alterations, and revisions in order to return to the teaching, faith, and practice of the apostolic church.

1. As the movement matured, certain appendages attached themselves to the church so as to become an integral part of the movement. The most significant of these were cooperative meetings, Bible schools, and religious journals. Each of these adjuncts was elementary in the beginning and offered little danger to the churches. But in time, each became a force of considerable influence. The simple cooperation meetings evolved into missionary societies, lowly Bible schools became universities, and unobtrusive religious journals grew into instruments of such power that W.T. Moore compared nineteenth century editors to prelates in a denominational hierarchy. He said: “The Disciples of Christ do not have bishops, they have editors!”
2. The primary point of this study is the third of these appendages to the church: the Restoration journals. We do not intend to give a history of religious journalism (this was done in another lecture), although history necessarily inheres in the study. But we will center our attention on the relation of Restoration journals to the church—to congregations and Christians. But regardless of what we think or say about these journals, they are a fact of life that cannot be ignored. No definitive history of the Restoration Movement has ever been written that did not rely heavily on religious periodicals as original sources. Their influence has been tremendous, both for good and bad. While the present-day journals do not seem to have the power their counterparts had in the nineteenth century, or in the early part of the twentieth century, they remain effective at least within the range of their circulation. Restoration journals have generally been published as private enterprises and are no part of the New Testament system itself. Nor do their owners, editors, publishers, and contributors, as such, occupy any divinely given office in the church, either local or universal.
3. In pursuing a study of Restoration journalism and the church, we will consider: (1) the nature of Restoration journals; (2) their relation to the church; (3) their Scriptural justification; (4) their contributions to the church; (5) their danger to the church; and (6) the means, if any, by which they can be controlled by the church. We are limiting this study largely to Restoration journalism as it flourished in the nineteenth century.

**The Nature of Restoration Journalism.**

1. Except for periodicals published by churches, or by societies or institutions controlled by representatives of churches, the nineteenth century Restoration Movement had no journals that could be properly called “church papers.” The journals to which we are primarily referring were nearly all independent of the church in origin, control, mission, and financing. They operated as private businesses and fall into three broad categories.
2. There were personal operations, where an individual was usually the owner, editor, publisher, writer, and distributor. He often relied on the cooperation of others for material, advice, and support, but the operation was his alone. Alexander Campbell, whose journals were solely his, said in regard to the *Christian Baptist*: “Having obtained a few friends, of general information, to co-operate with him, who are devoted to the pure and undefiled religion of the gospel of Christ, the editor flatters himself that this publication will be highly interesting and useful to those into whose hands it may fall.”1 Campbell’s papers were so much his own that they failed to continue after his death. When Benjamin Franklin started the *American Christian Review*, he said: “This work is fully under our own control, and if it does not proceed with regularity, firmness and stability, the responsibility is *ours*.”
3. There were partnerships, where two or more brethren formed a loose organi-zation, often with divisions of duty, but as a rule with a co-editor-ownership. This was the nature of the *Christian Panaplist* co-edited by B.F. Hall and John T. Johnson in 1837, and many other papers published in the nineteenth century. In the 1850s, Benjamin Franklin and D.S. Burnet formed a partnership in which they published the *Christian Age* and the *Proclamation and Reformer* from the same office. “Mr. Burnet and Mr. Franklin were not only joint proprietors, but joint editors of both papers.” 3
4. Another kind of periodical was the corporate or collective publication of a committee, a society, or a stock company under a board that appointed the officers, set the policy, and controlled the publication. The paper was sometimes connected with another business, generally related to printing, publishing, and merchandising, or one that was used by the owner for secular advertising. There were three basic kinds of corporate periodicals.

a. Some were operated by a committee. The *Bible Index* was started by James and Robert Beaty in Toronto, Canada, in 1873. “In 1875 Hugh McDiarmid came from Bethany College to evangelize in Ontario. He was a fine scholar in the classics and a keen writer. In time it was worked out that he should be editor of a new journal. An arrangement with the Beatys was then secured by which a committee should control the *Bible Index*, as an experiment, with Hugh McDiarmid as editor. This lasted until 1880 when the Beatys resumed publication of the *Bible Index*. Then the *Christian Sentinel* was begun by a committee, edited by H. McDiarmid.”4

1. There were privately owned stock companies, like the one originally formed to publish the *Christian Standard*. However, this arrangement lasted only a few years before the operation was turned over to Isaac Errett and continued by him as a family business. James H. Garrison organized a stock company in 1874 called the Christian Publication Company to publish *The Christian*, which was merged with B.W. Johnson’s *Evangelist* in 1882 to form the *Christian-Evangelist*.
2. There were also cooperatives constituted like a missionary society, such as the American Christian Publication Society that came into existence in the middle of the nineteenth century. “There was mild agitation for ‘one [publication] society at large.’ Benjamin Franklin led the movement. The Cincinnati Christian Tract Society, created in 1846, was the first step toward the goal. In 1851 it became the American Christian Publication Society, and in 1853 purchased the *Christian Age* with the intention of making it the one great voice of the movement.”5

The *Christian Age* had originally been published by T.J. Mellish and others but was purchased by Benjamin Franklin and D.S. Burnet in the early 1850s. “Alexander Campbell’s *Millennial Harbinger*, the unquestioned leader in the publications field, turned its guns on the *Age*. The dangers of the American Christian Publication Society to the freedom of the churches was masterfully presented by W.K. Pendleton, associate editor of the *Harbinger*, and the proposal died.”6 The publication society dissolved in 1856 and the *Age* was turned over to private ownership. Later, a similar publishing society had a short life in Canada, but it did not succeed. It was not until the twentieth century that brethren established a successful brotherhood publishing society.

B. One of the most apparent aspects of nineteenth century Restoration journalism was its fierce independence.

1. Journalism was characteristic of the nineteenth century Restoration, but another cherished characteristic of the movement, closely allied with the journalism, was the freedom of any brother so disposed to edit and publish a paper of his own. And many claimed that right. “Freedom of publication was, from the beginning, as conspicuous among the Disciples as freedom of speech. Anyone who could get subscribers could edit and publish a periodical, just as anyone who could get an audience could preach.”7
2. Campbell’s papers were intensely independent. “In order that he might not be under obligation even to a printer who might influence his work or under certain circumstances halt publication, he purchased a complete printing establishment and set it up at Bethany, Virginia, where he was residing…. (And) he soon became an expert proof-reader, printer, editor, and publisher.”8 Most preachers were not as well off financially as Campbell, but they were just as independent in regard to preaching, writing, and publishing. Nearly all the papers published in the Restoration Movement prior to the Civil War were independently owned and operated like the *Christian Baptist*, *Millennial Harbinger*, *Christian Messenger*, and *Evangelist*. Campbell’s independence is stressed in the preface to the first issue of the *Christian Baptist*. “We expect to prove whether a paper perfectly independent, free from any controlling jurisdiction except the Bible, will be read, or whether it will be blasted by the poisonous breath of sectarian zeal and of an aspiring priesthood.”9
3. Congregational independence, apart from any controlling central authority, was a cardinal feature of each branch of the Restoration in the beginning. This contributed to the movement’s journalistic independence. There were no denomi-national organizations to exercise control over the journals. The few extra-congre-gational organizations that existed were loosely constructed and possessed little power to do much of anything. Even so, they were viewed with suspicion by many brethren and any attempt by them to control churches, preachers, or papers would have been quickly squelched.

C. Another characteristic of nineteenth century Restoration journalism was the great number of journals that appeared during this time.

1. The denominations generally channeled their journals into a few controlled and limited outlets. But among such a freedom loving and evangelistically zealous people as the disciples of Christ, a multiplication of papers was inevitable. One reason for this was that: “Restoration journalism began in a period when personal initiative was high. By the 1840s many preachers had surrendered to the compulsion to write and publish. It was a do it yourself age”10 Printers’ ink flowed in the veins of many of the pioneer gospel preachers.
2. Restoration preachers who were largely self-supporting and limited in their work also very early saw the practicality of the printed page in extending their individual ministry. In print, they could preach the gospel to many whom they could not reach in person. Many seemed to have been as motivated to publish a paper as they were to preach the gospel orally. Almost all of the outstanding preachers of the nineteenth century were closely associated with Restoration periodicals, either as editors or contributors.

3. Many brethren felt, as Benjamin Franklin did, that there could hardly be too many papers. He said: “There is not the least danger of our circulating too many publications, any more than of our sending out too many preachers: the more preachers and papers the better, if they are the *right kind*.”11

1. The reasons that prompted the pioneers to publish periodicals also naturally contributed to their proliferation.
2. Most of the pioneer publishers and editors simply had a burning desire to spread the ancient gospel as far as possible by whatever means were available. But some papers were started specifically to combat errors, real or imagined, in and out of the church. In spite of the view that some revisionists would project, that brethren in the “golden age of the Restoration” were all of one mind on the salient features of New Testament Christianity, this was not the case. David Lipscomb, in answering some complaints about too much conflict among brethren in the papers, said: “They are led to believe that the Church of Christ is a calm, placid lake, with an unruffled surface, over which men with indolent ease float to the promised haven of rest. But this never was, nor ever will be the true character of the Church of Christ. Through conflicts and strife, through watchfulness and ceaseless vigilance, the crown is to be won. He who imagines that it can be gained without these will miss the heaven of safety.”12
3. Some papers were started expressly to neutralize, to counterbalance, or, in some cases, to destroy, the influence of another journal that was considered to be moving too much in the wrong direction. This was true more especially after the first generation of restorers. Of course, the promotion of a preacher or a group of preachers cannot be discounted among the motivations for starting papers, although this is not easy to prove, is rarely admitted, and involves a realm of judgment we are unprepared and unwilling to enter.
4. In some instances, papers were started to promote a hobby or faction. And there were those who simply felt that there was a gap in the teaching of existing journals regarding some particular teaching that the editor thought needed addressing. The *Firm Foundation* was started in 1884 by Austin McGary for such a purpose. Bill Humble says: “As McGary made it clear from the beginning, the *Foundation* would ‘assume a stern air’ in dealing with innovations in the church; and McGary went at the task with the courage of a frontier sheriff. The most urgent issue, in McGary’s judgment, was the ‘rebaptism question.’ The issue was whether it was proper to accept those who had been immersed, but not specifically for the remission of sins, into the membership of the churches. McGary took a strong stand against this practice which he termed ‘shaking in the Baptists.’ McGary was clearly in the minority in that day. The most influential journal in the South was the *Gospel Advocate*. Its editor, David Lipscomb, did not believe it was necessary for Baptists to be rebaptized, and he and McGary debated the issue for years.”13 Leroy Garrett, perhaps with some acerbity, calls this “the Tennessee-Texas Feud,” but that is about what it was. It was certainly an often-caustic journal-istic war with repercussions that reached well into the twentieth century.
5. The multiplicity of nineteenth century Restoration papers has been viewed in different lights.
6. No less than seventy-five papers were being distributed among the disciples in the decades of the 1830s and 1840s. Some of these had a very short life, but several continued many years. Campbell’s papers were published by him for more than forty years and Stone’s *Christian Messenger* lasted through nearly fourteen volumes over eighteen years under his editing. The *American Christian Review* ran from 1856-1887 and was continued under other names and owners until near the middle of the twentieth century. The *Gospel Advocate*, *Firm Foundation*, and *Christian Standard* have been published for well over a century, but, as with all papers that undergo changes of editors, owners, and character, their principle link to their founders is largely in their name, or a connecting lineage under other names.
7. After Restoration journals multiplied like rabbits in the 1830s, W.W. Eaton proposed a merger of several papers, or all of them, into one large work. He thought that such a journal would be well supported. He suggested that the various editors be given departments, perhaps to pacify their reluctance to sacrifice their own papers. On the other hand, some, like A.P. Jones, encouraged more papers. He said: “We now need four times as many periodicals as we have issued.” He felt that the papers should do different things. Using farming metaphors, he said: “Some should be clearing the ground of trash, some breaking up, some cultivating the fruit.” He thought it was disorderly to have all this done in a single paper. Jones saw no danger in having too many papers, that is, he said, “if the editors are governed by the love of the truth, instead of rival jealousies.”14
8. In the Prospectus for the *Christian Preacher*, D.S. Burnet hinted at some problems with multiple publications. His was to have a different purpose (to publish sermons, devoting the whole issue, if necessary, to one sermon). He said while the *Preacher* would “accord with other publications in general sentiment,” because of its nature, “it cannot interfere with any of them…. The re-publishing propensity of editors will be no fault of the *Preacher*.” He was evidently referring to the same material appearing in several papers.15
9. Another characteristic of Restoration journals in their relation to the church was the papers’ propensity for controversy. There were several reasons for this.
10. The Restoration Movement was born in the midst of controversy and necessarily carried on a running dispute with the denominational clergy, creeds, organi-ations, doctrines, and practices
11. To a large extent, preachers who became successful editors, especially those who were entrenched in the work of editing, were aggressive and defensive by nature.
12. Furthermore, controversy was a selling point with many brethren. Any paper that did not measure up to this demand was not widely circulated. Some issues may have been deliberately crafted by editors, or given a greater importance than they merited, simply to prove a paper’s “soundness,” in defending the faith. Although many controversial issues needed a full airing, often the bold defense made by a paper was only a militant defense of the editor’s concept of the faith. The position of a religious journal on some cherished points and the truth of God’s word were not always identical.
13. Restoration journals with an irenic spirit did not generally fare as well as those with a fighting spirit. T.B. Larimore published a paper in 1775-1776 called the *Angel of Mercy, Love, Peace and Truth*, but it was so lacking in the combative spirit of the day that it failed after about one volume. Stones’ *Christian Messenger* was not free of controversy, but it manifested a more pacifist spirit than most papers in the early years of the movement and contributed a more tolerant tone to the movement than any major journal of its day. Walter Scott’s *Evangelist*, it is said, never wielded much influence because of its more gentle spirit.

E. The names brethren gave their papers often reflected the character of the works, although these were sometimes misleading or imprecise. It was natural, with so many papers being published, that naming them would tax the imagination of publishers.

1. It is ironic that the first paper to advocate non-sectarian Christianity should be called the *Christian Baptist*. Baptist was a party designation, yet, the paper aimed to be non-partisan. The name was suggested by Walter Scott to allay religious prejudice from the Baptists, with whom the Campbell movement at the time was loosely associated. Campbell had originally intended to call the paper *The Christian*. It was his final break with the Baptists that motivated him to change the paper’s name to the *Millennial Harbinger.*
2. The word “Christian” was frequently used in journalistic names, sometimes as a noun but usually as an adjective. The use of the name no doubt grew out of the restorers aim to be nothing more than New Testament Christians. Of about three hundred Restoration journals known to have appeared in the nineteenth century, almost half of them had the appellative “Christian” in their name.
3. Other choices of names were associated with upholding, proclaiming, defending, and otherwise advancing the truth of God. Many synonyms for the word of God, or nouns and adjectives that pertain to it, were used: Gospel, Apostolic, Truth, Bible, Primitive, Kingdom, Ancient Landmarks, Old Path, and Foundation, to name a few. Every synonym for a preacher was employed: Messenger, Harbinger, Teacher, Voice, Herald, Watchman, Evangelist, Preacher, Advocate, Reformer, Disciple, Publisher, Sentinel, Sower, Commentator, Visitor, Pulpit, Worker, Missionary, Mentor, Pilot, Vindicator, Guide, Witness, and Helper. The wide use of such names shows that, at least in the beginning, the papers were regarded as extensions of the preacher’s work. All sorts of words associated with study and enlightenment were included: Luminary, Evidences, Inquirer, Review, Intelli-gence, Investigator, Berean, Palladium (safe-guard), Testimony, Light, Procla-mation, Echo, Examiner, Way, Oracle, Leader, and Star. And words for repositories or pillars of truth are found: Banner, Casket, Record, Mirror, Index, Repository, Standard, and Budget. Words peculiar to or associated with publishing were commonly employed: Journal, Publisher, Magazine, Almanac, Times, Age, World, News, and Intelligencer. A few wore the name of the editor, such as, *Challen’s Illustrated Monthy*, *Lard’s Quarterly,* *Willard’s Microcosm*, and *Burnett’s Budget*. Some names included the part of the country and nation in which the journals were published: Western, American, Northwestern, Illinois, Carolina, Pacific, Southern, Atlantic, and Canadian. Weekly, Monthly, and Quarterly, as well as Almanac (annual), were also used in the name.
4. Some peculiar names show a special emphasis the editor wanted to convey: Warning Voice, Equator, Israelite, Israelite Indeed, Practical Christian, Unionist, Siege, Olive Branch, Heretic Detector, Evangelist at Work, Christian Telescope, Octograph, and Lookout. The names often were as colorful as their editors.
5. Although they had many things in common, the Restoration journals were about as variegated as a crazy quilt, and trying to arrange them in any orderly pattern about as useless. However, as varied and sometimes eccentric as the names of the journals were, they are significant in that the show the interest of the editors and publishers in the advancement of the New Testament Christianity and its defense against all error, which they regarded as their mission. The names also show that the papers were viewed as having a direct relationship with the churches among which they circulated.
6. The names themselves were sometimes controversial. One might well suppose the results if Alexander Campbell had tried to name a paper the *Christian Baptist* in 1850 instead of 1823. A sharply worded exchange was passed between Campbell and Arthur Crihfield in the 1830s when Campbell criticized Crihfield’s choice of a name and Crihfield responded with an equally critical objection to the name of Campbell’s paper.
7. Alexander Campbell set the standard for editorial excellence that probably has never been surpassed. But Barton W. Stone also contributed to the excellence in journalism, as did Benjamin Franklin, Moses E. Lard, J.W. McGarvey, and Isaac Errett.
8. One of Campbell’s contributions to Restoration journalism was his attitude toward the pursuit of truth. “It was Campbell’s basic assumption held throughout the long years of his editorship of the *Millennial Harbinger* that truth was not something to be dogmatically proclaimed but rather to be sought by diligent search and especially by free and open discussion. To Campbell, the search for truth was a never-ending quest. He was led constantly to the correction and enlargement of his own views.”16
9. Robert Richardson said of Campbell: “As he sought for truth alone, he felt that he had nothing to lose in giving his opponent equal space with himself, publishing all he had to say against the views he taught. This liberality afforded a standing contrast with the narrow course pursued by the sectarian editors, who, while they allowed him to be grossly misrepresented in the various periodicals, denied to him the opportunity to correct the false impressions made upon the readers.”17
10. As noticed before, Stone’s *Christian Messenger* contributed a more gentle and deferential spirit to the Restoration movement. Cartwright says of the *Messenger*: “The temper of the journal was irenic and conciliatory. Like Campbell, Stone attacked the divisive tendencies in man-made creeds and was equally insistent upon the sufficiency of the scriptures and the restoration of primitive Christianity, but he was no iconoclast. He wrote: ‘Would it not be better, and would not the cause of Christianity be more gloriously advanced, if all would cultivate brotherly affections toward each other, and bear with each other’s weakness and errors, which affect not their pious and holy life? Forbearance would more speedily affect a reformation of those errors, than an intemperate zeal, and a rigid course.”18

**The Relation of Restoration Journals to the Church.**

1. Since the Restoration journals were mostly independently owned, their relation to the church must be considered as such. Brethren usually regarded them as personal businesses. When T.R. Burnett’s *Budget* was listed in the *Apostolic Review* among papers opposed to Bible colleges, Burnett objected, saying: “The Apostolic Review made a mistake when it placed the BUDGET in the list of journals that oppose Bible colleges. The BUDGET does not oppose Bible colleges when properly conducted, but places them in the catalogue with religious papers—private business enterprises.”19
2. Except where religious papers took on a life of their own, operating as institu-tional adjuncts to the church, they must be regarded pretty much as businesses operated by individual Christians.
3. What relation did a secular newspaper that was operated by Christians have to the church? (A number of nineteenth century newspapers in the United States and Canada were operated by Christians.) What relation did a flourmill, or any other private business, operated by a Christian have to the church? They had none at all in any organic sense. Private journals, as T.R. Burnett says, were “private business enterprises.” They had no more relation to the church than any other business.
4. The only relation the Christian owner of a religious paper had to the church, in a practical sense, was that of an individual member. He was accountable to the local church for behavior in conducting his business that was not in harmony with what is demanded for Christian fellowship, but the church had no relationship with his paper as such, any more than it had with any other private business of a Christian.
5. Individually, in regard to the church universal, an editor is answerable only to Christ for there is no organization larger than the local church to which he should be subject.
6. However, there is one major difference between religious journals and most businesses operated by Christians: their purpose and nature set them apart.
7. From the beginning, Restoration papers were primarily and peculiarly religious in nature (although some carried secular news, articles, and advertising). Their purpose primarily was to influence people religiously. They sought to sway the behavior of their readers doctrinally, morally, and spiritually. Most of them especially aimed to shape the conduct of preachers, elders, and other members of the church, and through them to direct the teaching, faith, and practice of local congregations.
8. While there are other church-related businesses, such as educational institutions, the religious journals, by virtue of their nature and purpose, sustain a kinship to the church that other businesses do not have. They are probably more wholly dependent on the church for their existence than any other enterprise operated by Christians. But their nature and purpose do not give them an organic relationship to the church that is not sustained by any other member’s business. Any relationship of a paper to the church, in the thinking of brethren, that is more than this, must be derived from a traditional view of papers that perceives of editors as occupying a unique place in the church for which there is no precedent in the New Testament.
9. When Restoration journals take advantage of this traditional bias to make themselves anything more in the eyes of the brethren than independent business enterprises, albeit with a recognized religious purpose, they are moving into a religious no-man’s land. They make themselves into a human institution that undertakes, in effect, to be a brotherhood or church paper. G.C. Brewer, who did not make as clear a distinction between institutions and the church as others, said: “We cannot scripturally have any organization that rivals the church, or usurps the functions of the church, or assumes control of the church.”20
10. Beside schools, colleges, and universities operated by Christians, there are other enterprises that occupy a unique relation to the church. These include publishing houses, music companies, and bookstores whose primary function is to supply religious literature and related materials or supplies to churches and Christians. There are also private foundations set up by Christian to provide some kind of special service to the cause of Christ. But perhaps none of these have had the impact on the church that the papers have had.
11. While the relation of papers to the church is similar to that of Christian schools, they are different in that the schools are primarily in the business of selling secular education in a Christian environment. And while through the teaching of the Bible, the training of preachers, the conducting of lectureships, and the publication of religious literature, they influence the church, that is not the primary purpose of their existence. Neither entity should be regarded as a divine appendage to the church nor as having a special place in the church because of the particular service it performs. One does not have to attend a Christian school to be saved, nor does any have to subscribe to a Christian paper to retain his salvation.
12. No human institution (whether school, society, or paper) has the right to be supported by contributions from the church, however noble its work. None has the right to do the work of the church as such, although there is a recognized overlapping in some instances. None has the right to exercise control over churches, members, or resources. Nor does any have the right to act as representatives of the churches, or as official spokesmen for them.
13. Yet, churches may purchase or receive some services from these institutions to the extent that this does not violate any New Testament principle governing the organization, work, and worship of the church.
14. But just as emphatically, as the church should be free from the control of the religious journal, so also the religious journal should be free from the control of the church.
15. The owners, editors, publishers, and writers of a religious journal are answerable to the church only to the extent that as individuals they are answerable to the congregation of which they are members. But not even the elders of a local church have the right to tell these men how to conduct their paper or connecting business, if any, any more than they have the right to tell Farmer Brown how to run his farm, or Dr. Smith how to carry on his medical practice.
16. Elders in their role as elders certainly have the right to warn members about any publication they regard as teaching error, riding a hobby, behaving in a manner that is unbecoming of Christians, or otherwise being subversive of sound doctrine. But they have no right to tell the members what paper they can or cannot read.
17. We strongly favor religious papers keeping their proper place in relation to the church, but we equally favor papers maintaining independence from the churches.
18. We must not allow the fact that papers are primarily in the business of teaching God’s word, nor the fact that they are edited and written by faithful men, nor the fact that Christians and congregations greatly benefit from reading them, to blur the lines of separation between the two in any organizational sense. In response to a Christian Church preacher about the church losing control of “the medium of publicity,” W.E. Brightwell, said: “Surely he had no reference to the church of Christ, for it never did control a publication, and I do not see how it ever can do so without organizing something … foreign to its nature.”21
19. We should neither elevate editors to a place in the church for which there is no Scriptural justification, nor should we seek to make them subservient to the oversight of the church, either local or universal. We may not agree with Daniel Sommer’s opposition to schools operated by Christians, but we believe he had the right to teach what he believed to be the truth about it, just as others had the right to take issue with him in the matter. We may not agree with T.R. Burnett’s opposition to located preachers, but we believe he had the right to teach what he believed to be the truth about it and others had the right to answer him. We may not agree with David Lipscomb’s view of the Christian’s relation to civil government, but we believe he had the right to teach his view.
20. Truth is never served by any man or set of men trying to squelch one’s freedom to preach and publish what he believes to be the truth. We are speaking of right, not in the sense that anyone has the right before God to teach anything that is wrong, but we mean right in the sense that there is no ecclesiastical body, school, foundation, journal, and other society, larger than the local church, with the power to stop any brother from preaching or writing whatever he pleases. The minute we reach the place where we seek to destroy a brother in Christ by denying him the right to speak the truth as he sees it, we set in motion that which will eventually destroy our own freedom of speech and pave the way for some sort of ecclesiastical control.
21. Do not misunderstand what we are saying. The freedom of brethren to speak what they believe to be the truth, in the context in which we are discussing it here, does not have a bearing on marking one whom we believe to be a false teacher or of withdrawing our fellowship from such a person if he persists in teaching error. These are related issues but they are different issues.
22. We cannot consider the relation of Restoration journalism to the church without considering the impact, either for good or ill, that it has had on the church. This also reflects the relation of journalism to the church. However, we prefer to treat this relationship under a separate heading. But before taking up those matters, because this also pertains to the relation of religious journalism to the church, we want to look at the scriptural justification for Restoration journals.

**The Scriptural Justification of Restoration Journals.**

1. The gospel was taught in the first century, under apostolic supervision, by “word” and by “epistle” (letter). Paul said: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thes. 2:15).
2. The Gospel of Luke was written originally for one who some scholars think was not a Christian at the time of the writing (Luke 1:1-3). But since the gospel was intended for teaching among all nations and to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16), it is obvious that it may be taught to all people both by word and letter.
3. Most of the New Testament was written to Christians (churches and individuals). The writings were intended to be circulated beyond the personal presence of those who wrote them and thus they became an extension of the writers’ own evangelism (James 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1). Furthermore, the writings of inspired men were circulated beyond the persons to whom they were originally sent (Acts 16:4;1 Cor. 1:2; Col. 4:16; 1 Thes. 5:27; Rev. 1:11). The message of the early disciples of Christ was the same whether spoken or written (Acts 15:23-27). Inasmuch as preachers are authorized to reprove, rebuke, and exhort from the Scriptures, these implied rules apply to uninspired men (1 Tim. 4:1-5). In other words, whatever any preacher may do in the pulpit, he may also do with pen and ink. W.E. Brightwell said: “A paper is nothing but a preacher with a larger audience.”22
4. From these precedents, we learn these elementary principles. (1) Preachers, and other Christians, by use of writing, may extend their work beyond their immediate presence. (2) They may write for the benefit of both Christians and non-Christians. (3) Both unbelievers and brethren have the right to read and benefit from their writings. (4) The writings may be circulated to individuals and churches by others. (5) The writers do not have to be inspired to write, any more than preachers must be inspired to preach.
5. There are, obviously, no Bible examples of brethren editing, publishing, and distributing religious journals. Nor of their conducting radio or television programs. But this within itself is no argument against them, if they are conducted in a manner that conforms to the principles of the New Testament.
6. While we may draw some principles that pertain to some aspects of publishing the word from the examples of first century preachers, as noticed, we cannot justify religious periodicals on the basis of what Thomas Campbell called “express terms,” by which we understand him to mean, and as we believe the Scriptures teach, by a direct command, or a statement of truth that implies a command.
7. Neither can we justify them by “approved scripture precedent,” that is, by apostolic example or inference.
8. However, within the realm of each of these, we believe that religious journals may be justified on the ground of expediency, so long as their publication does not violate some other principle of truth regarding the organization, work, and worship of the church.
9. The expedience of publishing periodicals (or other written works) rests in the Lord’s arrangement for Christians to function in two ways: individually and as congregations.
10. The collective work of the church is limited to the local church under the oversight of its elders (Acts 14:23; 1 Pet. 5:1-4). No other organization is provided for by the apostles. In the nature of divine authority, therefore, any other organization to do the work of the church is forbidden (2 John 9, 10; Jude 3; John 16:13; Col. 3:17). If a congregation, in keeping with its mission to uphold the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), wants to publish a religious journal and circulate it as far as its own resources permit, it has the right to do so, as long as it is its own work, under its own oversight, and provided for by its own resources.
11. Individual Christians have the right to act on their own, in addition to their responsibility to the local church, in carrying out any duty that Christ places upon them and they may use expedient means to do so.
12. Most activities required of or permitted to the church may be done by individuals. In this, the Christian simply has a dual obligation or license. Both the church and the individual Christian may evangelize, support gospel preachers, edify Christians, pray with others, provide for those in need, sing praises to the Lord, oppose error, mark false teachers (Rom. 16:17), provide a place for the church to meet (Rom. 16:5), and fellowship (or disfellowship) brethren according to the teaching of God’s word.
13. But individuals cannot substitute independent action for acts that the Lord requires the church to do collectively, as the church (Acts 20:7; Col. 3:16 1 Cor. 16:1-4).
14. Nor can individuals assume responsibilities that alone belong to divinely designated persons: apostles, prophets, elders, evangelists, or congregations. The editor of a religious journal has no authority in the church as an editor that he does not have as a gospel preacher or as an individual Christian. Being an editor does not give him “apostolic” oversight (or any other kind of supervision) over the churches. Nor does it give him any authority in relation to local churches that one does not have as a gospel preacher or as an individual Christian. In other words, being an editor establishes no special office or voice in the brotherhood.
15. Individual Christians may also act together with others in doing anything that an individual Christian may do alone. A family, acting independently of the church, may work together to teach others the word of God (Acts 18:24-26). Two or more Christians, also independent of the church, may band together to teach the truth. Barnabas and Mark together undertook a missionary journey to Cyprus (Acts 15:39). If any church supported this work, or even encouraged it, as Antioch may have done in the case of Paul and Silas, it is not mentioned by Luke. A group of brethren worked with Paul in planting churches: Silas, Timothy, and Luke worked with him Macedonia.
16. While gospel papers may be justified on the grounds of expediency, the creation of publishing institutions, or publishing societies to function for the church, are objectionable on the same ground as missionary societies, or other cooperative arrangements that centralize the work of churches.
17. As noticed earlier, a move was made in the late 1840s to set up a publication society for “the brotherhood at large.” The aim was to establish an “official brotherhood publishing house.” The Cincinnati Christian Tract Society, set up in 1846, was the first step toward this goal. It changed its name to the American Christian Publication Society in 1851 and purchased the *Christian Age* (1845-1853) in 1853 with the view to making it the voice of the brotherhood. The *Millennial Harbinger* turned its guns on the project and wrote about the dangers of such an organization to the freedom of the church. W.E. Garrison said: “The sharp opposition of W.K. Pendleton, associate editor of the *Millennial Harbinger*, was a heavy factor in prejudicing the brotherhood against support of such a cooperative enterprise … The *Age* labored to give life to the new idea, but obviously the idea of cooperation was not developed to the point of cooperation in publishing, especially when Mr. Campbell’s private enterprise at Bethany was so well established and when so many brethren were eager to enter the field of publishing as independents. The plan of a ‘brotherhood publishing house’ had to wait until the Twentieth Century.”23
18. Campbell’s defense of the missionary society, contending that the church universal had a right to act through a central agency, would have justified a publication society and a brotherhood journal, but there is no justification for either. It is likely that the *Harbinger’s* inconsistent opposition to the publication society was motivated more by personal interest than its danger to the freedom of the church. But regardless of his motive, Pendleton’s opposition and warning were valid. There is no authority for such organizations.

3. But close akin to the publication society operated by representatives of “the brotherhood,” was the private corporation that published a religious journal that had a powerful influence on the church. The *Christian Standard* was such an organization in the beginning. It was organized in 1866 with a board of six men that included James A. Garfield and T.W. Phillips. Isaac Errett was appointed editor and served as such twenty-two years. The paper was well received in the beginning, but financial conditions following the Civil War led to financial difficulties for the Christian Publication Association. At a meeting of the executive committee in 1868, ownership was transferred to Errett and he was the sole owner until his death in 1888. It afterward was the property of Errett’s heirs.

# 4. The danger of such organizations to the church is evident. James D. Murch is perhaps right in saying: “In a religious movement which acknowledges no official overhead controls, the power of the press is as dangerous to freedom as the power of bishops. As long as the journals which serve a single publishing house is acknowledged as having some quasi-official status in the life of the movement, the concept of ministerial and congregation freedom is in endanger.”24 This will be discussed more fully under abuses of the religious journal.

**The Contribution of Restoration Journals to the Church.**

1. A few editors and papers have had such a tremendous influence on the Restoration as to tower like mountain peaks above the numerous periodicals that are identified with the movement. The influence of religious journalism has been constant and persistent throughout the history of the movement, but its most significant influence occurred in the formative years (1823-1860), and in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the divisions occurred over the interpretation and emphasis of the movement. The most influential papers during the early part of the nineteenth century were those of Campbell and Stone.
2. The most significant of these was undoubtedly the *Christian Baptist*. In this small journal, Alexander Campbell advanced every salient feature that characterized the Restoration Movement in the first generation and throughout the nineteenth century. Both directly and indirectly, the *Christian Baptist* has had a strong impact on the thinking and action of the conservative element of the church even down to the present time.
3. A.S. Hayden said: “Early in August, 1823, was issued from Buffalo Creek, Va., (now Bethany), the first number of the ‘Christian Baptist.’ It was edited by Alex. Campbell. It was a monthly, devoted to the promulgation, exposition and defense of the Christian religion as it is expressly revealed in the New Testament. Its bold exposition of prevailing errors, and uncompromising defense of the ‘faith once delivered to the saints,’ will be at once perceived by the Scripture motto which stood at the head of every monthly number for the whole seven years it continued to be published’ (Matt. 23:8,9).” Each issue carried the slogan: “Prove all things: hold fast that which is good. *Paul the Apostle.*” Hayden also said:“The sentiments and positions of the ‘Christian Baptist’ were so fresh, so free from the shackles of doctrinal form peculiar to any sect, so rational, manifestly so scriptural, and enforced by abilities so varied and commanding, that the work increased its circulation every year. It paid no deference to reigning customs. Following its motto, it owned no master, no leader, but Christ. Its editor was unsparing in his denunciations of the clergy, who, as he averred, had usurped the thrones of the Holy Twelve…. It was the peculiar feature of the ‘Christian Baptist’ that it put forth no doctrinal basis on which to unite the disciples of Christ, except that which the apostles proclaimed in the beginning.”25
4. The *Christian Baptist* “went forth monthly to advocate definitely and distinctly the restoration of apostolic teaching and practice in all things; in faith, conversion, church order, and summarily, every thing authorized by Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of the Christian religion.”26
5. The prospectus sets forth the nature and aims of the publication. “*The Christian Baptist* shall espouse the cause of no religious sect, excepting that ancient sect ‘called Christians first at Antioch.’ Its sole object shall be the eviction of truth, and the exposure of error in doctrine and practice. The editor acknowledging no standard of religious faith or works, other than the Old and New Testaments, and the latter as the only standard of the religion of Jesus Christ, will, intentionally at least, oppose nothing which it contains and recommend nothing which it does not enjoin. Having no worldly interest at stake from the adoption or reprobation of any article of faith or religious practice—having no gift nor religious emolument to blind his eyes or to pervert his judgment, he hopes to manifest that he is an impartial advocate of truth.”27
6. The things Campbell advocated in the *Christian Baptist* include a series of thirty-two articles on, “The Restora-tion of the Ancient Order of Things.” In these, he set forth in great detail the nature and work of the church of the New Testament so as to complete the fixed definition and essential elements of primitive Christianity as he understood it. “He then urged the abandonment of everything not in use among early Christians, such as creeds, unscriptural words and phrases, theological theories; and the adoption of everything sanctioned by primitive practice, as the weekly breaking of the loaf, the fellowship, the simple order of public worship, and the independence of each church under a plurality of bishops (elders) and deacons.”28
7. “In overthrowing clerical and ecclesiastical power, however, Campbell sought to make it clear that ‘all things be done to edification’ and ‘in decency and in order.’”29
8. In dealing extensively with unscriptural organizations: “Campbell included Bible societies, missionary societies, Sunday schools, synods, presbyteries, conferences, and general assemblies that claimed adminis-trative and legislative control of local congregations. He included Baptist associations which assumed such prerogatives. He allowed that no function which the Scriptures ascribe to the local church should be usurped by organizations not mentioned or described in Holy Writ.”30
9. “At the time most Baptist associations on the frontier were voluntary associations of churches for mutual aid, edification, and fellowship. In some cases, associations were beginning to assume legislative and judicial functions and this trend came under the *Christian Baptist’s* strong condemnation.”31
10. “The influence of the *Christian Baptist* during the seven short years of its publication can hardly be overestimated. It has been said that very few basic ideas have appeared among the Disciples since that were not first advocated, either explicitly or implicitly, within the pages of the *Christian Baptist* during its turbulent existence from 1823-1830. True, Campbell later changed his spirit and many of his viewpoints. In some cases he reversed himself in his later writings in the *Millennial Harbinger*, still the core of his contentions, whether valid or not, contains to this day the major determining concepts around which the movement revolves.”32
11. In his attacks on the clergy, Campbell exerted a lasting influence. “More than any other influence Campbell here determined the future of the Disciple ministry in its basic aspects to the present hour.”33
12. “Here Campbell made ‘restoration’ the primary pre-requisite of any possible program of Christian unity and primarily doctrinal at that.”34
13. “It was in the *Christian Baptist* that Campbell began the advocacy of the centrality of the Lord’s Supper in Christian worship.”35
14. “It was the influence of the *Christian Baptist*, published while Campbell was still within the fold of the Baptist Church, which ultimately drove the wedge between the followers of Campbell and the rank and file of the Baptist communion and set the Disciples apart as a separate and distinct communion.”36

f. With the publication of the *Christian Baptist*, the emphasis of the Campbell movement shifted from unity, the aim of the *Declaration and Address*, to restoration. “The thing that strikes the reader most forcefully in the new program of action [the publishing of the *Christian Baptist*] is the complete absence of all reference to Christian union. No mention of the original purpose is found. The emphasis now rested upon the principle of scriptural authority and primitive precept and example.”37

1. Thomas Campbell was not an editor, although in *Declaration and Address*, he advocated the launching of “a periodical publication” to expose “the various anti-Christian enormities, innovations and corruptions which affect the Christian Church … and oppose the benign and gracious tendencies of the gospel.”38
2. In the 1830s, D.S. Burnet edited a one-volume edition of the *Christian Baptist*, which he regarded as Campbell’s best work. This edition of that important journal helped keep the views of Campbell’s earliest and best teaching regarding Restoration ideals alive for generations after it ceased publication and after Campbell’s death.
3. The *Millennial Harbinger* replaced the *Christian Baptist* in 1830. According to reliable historians, there were three important reasons for the change. Campbell wanted to enlarge the scope of his paper, he wanted to modify his iconoclastic spirit, and he wanted to change the name for fear that it might become associated with the movement.
4. The *Harbinger* contained more than six hundred pages per year. “It was a journal of dignity showing unusual editorial competence. It commanded the thoughtful attention of the more intelligent and influential of his own followers and of other religious leaders of his time.”39
5. “It was through the pages of this journal that Campbell’s principal works appeared such as *The Christian System, Christian Baptism*, and his volumes of sermons and addresses. The *Millennial Harbinger* came to be considered by his followers as the basis of tests of orthodoxy.”40
6. “However, with the change in publications came also a definite change in the spirit and disposition of Campbell. He still held to the basic essentials of his contentions expressed in the *Christian Baptist*, but the *Millennial Harbinger* manifested a more irenic and conciliatory approach to the problems it discussed. His language was less vituperative and caustic. The fields of his concern were larger and more comprehensive.”41
7. The *Harbinger* was the leading journal of the movement during the first generation. Its forty-one volumes are a rich source of primary information about the movement during this time. Irvin Himmel writes: “The *Harbinger* was clearly the backbone of Restoration journalism until advanced age brought a decline in Campbell’s influence and weekly periodicals entered the field. W.K. Pendle-ton and others continued the *Harbinger* until the close of 1870…. [It] houses a heritage of history.”42
8. By the artful use of his journalistic pen, Campbell saved the church from premillennialism in the 1830s. Postmillennialism had been the dominant view of the restorers before that troubled decade, but fueled by the work of William Miller, a Baptist preacher who preached the imminent coming of Christ and by evangelical Protestantism’s crusade to Christianize American, premillen-nialism swiftly spread. During this time, a number of leading Restoration preachers became ardent premillennialists, including such editors as Stone, Scott, Crihfield, and John R. Howard. There was considerable agitation and much writing and speaking on the subject. For a time, the doctrine threatened to engulf the whole church and derail the Restoration Movement. “But by 1834 Campbell began to lead a counterattack against the premillennial enthusiasm. The question was handled delicately by the editor but Campbell’s postmillennialist position was meticulously outlined in a long series of articles signed, ‘A Reformed Clergyman.’ Campbell urged the brethren to ‘hear both sides’ before they decided on the merits of pre- and postmillennialism. According to one early historian of the movement [W.T. Moore], the Bethany reformer’s articles were decisive and ‘in the course of a few years the excitement subsided.’”43
9. The *Harbinger* held a place among the disciples that was never equaled by any other journal. “No Disciples paper would ever again command the patronage of the entire brotherhood as had the *Millennial Harbinger* into the 1850’s. The circulation of every major Disciples periodical of the postwar period had geographic limitations.”44 The *Harbinger* contributed to the spread of the Restoration by putting Campbell, the movement’s foremost spokesman, before the public and led to his acceptance in his travels and extended his influence to all parts of the nation and to Britain, Australia, and Canada.
10. Campbell set the standard for editorial excellence that became the hallmark for the Restoration editors who came after him. “It was Campbell’s basic assumption held through the long years of his editorship of the *Millennial Harbinger* that religious truth was not something to be dogmatically proclaimed but rather to be sought by diligent search and especially by free and open discussion. To Campbell the search for truth was a never-ending quest. He was led constantly to the correction and enlargement of his own views.”45

h. “Unquestionably the influence of Alexander Campbell on the early history of the Disciples of Christ was enormous. But to attempt to understand the broad scope of the movement simply on the basis of material in the *Christian Baptist* and the *Millennial Harbinger* is absurd. There was tremendous diversity in the body from the beginning, and a meaningful explanation of the tensions which developed in the church in the latter half of the nineteenth century without an understanding of these diversities is impossible. If Alexander Campbell was the uncrowned monarch of the church before 1860, he reigned over a turbulent and unruly kingdom.”46

1. The *Christian Messenger* of Barton W. Stone began in 1826 before the merging of the two movements. It was the leading voice of the Christians associated with the Stone reformation. The monthly was published, with a few interruptions, for eighteen years (in fourteen volumes, 1826-1837, 1839-1845) until a about year after his death in 1844. Like Campbell’s papers, it is a rich source of primary material for Restoration history. It was filled with Stone’s editorials, articles from others, news of brethren and churches, and much of Stone’s correspondence. The *Messenger* is generally regarded as third in importance, after the works of Campbell, in the first generation of the Restoration. Aside from its historical value, it also contributed to the movement as a whole, setting forth Stone’s views.
2. Stone and Campbell were different and their difference is reflected in their respective journals. “Campbell was easily the more sophisticated writer, expressing himself far more prolifically than Stone and in full, well-rounded periods. His style was polished and sometimes grandiloquent. Stone wrote, as one opponent stated, ‘as though he meant to be understood,’ in a style direct and usually unadorned. The simple prose of the frontier and the plain logic of a backwoodsman were reflected in most of his writing. Campbell’s writing betrayed a markedly bitter spirit toward the established clergy and churches, especially in his early years…. Stone, however, despite the fact that he lived in a day of bitter religious controversies, remained remarkably free from the spirit of antagonism. Finally, Campbell exulted in religious debates; Stone distrusted the ill will as frequently manifested in these exhibitions.”47
3. Stone’s deep humility was also a contrast to Campbell’s self-assurance. While Campbell could easily fill his paper from his own pen, Stone depended, as he said in the first issue of the *Messenger*, on the help of others. He wrote: “That these exertions may be better calculated to effect the object contemplated, we invite and solicit the aid of qualified brethren, who feel as we do, an ardent desire for the restoration and glory of the ancient religion of Christ—the religion of love, peace, and union on earth.”48
4. The *Messenger* was also published at greater personal sacrifice on the part of its editor than Campbell’s publications. “Stone’s tribulations as an editor were great in comparison to Campbell’s. Stone’s agents frequently neglected to make collections; many subscribers never paid; the postal system broke down; good paper was difficult to secure, and sometimes the staff was forced to finance the *Christian Messenger* out of personal incomes. Stone frequently said that this enterprise had worked a great hardship on his family. In contrast, Alexander Campbell had few comparable difficulties.”49
5. Stone gave greater emphasis to the practical unity of Christians than Campbell. The motto of his paper was: “Let the unity of Christians be our polar star.” He lent the influence of the *Messenger* in this direction. He was one of the four leading men who in the beginning of the unity between the Christians and Reformers, and he used his paper to encourage others to this end, whereas Campbell accepted the union with reservations because of some differences between the two. However, it is a mistake to think that Stone advocated unity apart from restoration of the ancient order of things.
6. Through his journal, Stone contributed a gentle and conciliatory temper to the Restoration brotherhood at a time when it was greatly needed.
7. “Like Campbell, Stone attacked the divisive tendencies in man-made creeds and was equally insistent upon the sufficiency of the scriptures and the restoration of primitive Christianity, but he was no iconoclast. He wrote: ‘Forbearance would more speedily affect a reformation of those errors, than an intemperate zeal, and a rigid course.”50
8. “The irenic spirit of Stone characterizes *The Christian Messenger*. His pleas for unity are not the impassion-ed strictures of an Alexander Campbell nor the logical oratory of a Walter Scott. Instead they represent the loving warmth which only a Barton Stone could reflect.”51
9. In 1831, Stone made John T. Johnson, a Campbell Reformer who took part in the union meetings at Lexington, Associate Editor of the *Christian Messenger*. The relationship continued until 1834 when Stone moved to Illinois.
10. The influence of Stone was great in his day. “One historian speaks of him in is role of editor as ‘the most influential personality among the Christians in the West.’”52 His influence continues. Through the pages of the *Christian Messenger* he yet speaks. And through it, his humble and conciliatory spirit was passed on to other leaders in the movement.
11. “The value of having one’s thoughts preserved in print carries with it an inherent danger, however. One may make mistakes; he may later change his mind; he may express himself ambiguously.”53 This is true, but very often liberal historians attribute such difficulties to the writings of Stone when the difficulties they see in his writings are not Stone’s but their own. They would like to change some of his thoughts to fit their own revisionist views of the Restoration work of Stoned.
12. Referring to some among the Disciples of Christ in the twentieth century who abuse the writings of Stone, Sam E. Stone, Cincinnati Bible Seminary, writes: “Seizing upon certain fragments of Stone’s thought they attempt to justify their modernistic ecumenical positions. But the fact that Stone failed to understand all the implications of the Biblical Restoration movement which he helped promote, impugns neither his honesty nor his devotion to the Bible. Stone believed quite differently from liberal Disciples of today, that the Bible was the inspired Word of God, a sufficient rule of faith and practice in the church.”53
13. Walter Scott also published a paper, *The Evangelist*, through about nine volumes, 1832-1836 and 1838-1842. He was also editor of the *Protestant Unionist* in 1844 and he and John T. Johnson published *The Christian* for one year. But Scott’s editorial work was not as influential as that of Stone and Campbell. “The spirit and tenor of [*The Christian*] was too irenic and wholesome to be successful. Sad to relate, there was just not enough in the paper of a controversial and sensational nature to make it appeal to a wide group of readers … so fine was the spirit of the *Christian* that it can be truly said that it lived by its name and died because of it.”54 Scott wrote in the *Christian Baptist*, under the pen name “Philip.”
14. Some notice should be given to the *Christian Review* because it was Tolbert Fan-

ning’s prelude to the *Gospel Advocate*, because of the influence it had on the churches in the South, and because of what happened to the paper after Fanning turned it over to Jesse B. Ferguson. The last had a direct influence on Fanning’s later controversy with Robert Richardson and Alexander Campbell that altered his attitude toward papers and colleges.

a. Fanning began the *Christian Review* in 1844 when he was in his mid thirties and continued the publication for four years. It began with W.H. Wharton and H.T. Anderson as co-editors. Contributors included Jacob Creath, Jr. of Missouri, W. Winans of Ohio, W.W. Stevenson of Arkansas, John R. Howard of West Tennessee, and W.D. Carnes of East Tennessee. The *Review* thus attracted a wide range of able preachers and writers in different parts of the country. However, the paper belonged to Fanning and he wrote the greater part of the material that appeared in its pages.

1. The paper was not started in opposition to other papers, as Fanning assured John R. Howard, editor of the *Bible Advocate* at Paris, Tennessee (1842-1849), but from the desire of brethren in Middle Tennessee for a paper in their own area.
2. More specifically, the first issue gave four reasons for the publication: to correct distorted views of what the churches of Christ taught; to lead people to the perfect pattern of the church, which the editors believed that no party fully practiced; to encourage “the churches of Christ” that were not “as a whole, as intelligent, spiritual, and zealous” as they should be”; and through its corresponding editors, to provide better reporting of religious news from every section.
3. Leroy Garrett says of Fanning: “He started the *Christian Review* in hopes of clarifying in the mind of the public what the Movement really stood for, convinced as he was that the dozen papers or more that then existed were confusing the issue in their opposition to each other. Too, he was in search of ‘the perfect pattern’ for the church, believing that no party had yet attained it.”55
4. It was in the *Review* that Fanning began an editorial policy, in the tenor of Alexander Campbell, that continued through his more than thirty years of religious journalism, of granting to others the right to be heard. In the first issue, he wrote: “We seek and invite investigation on every topic connected with man’s salvation and therefore, we say to Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and the world, our pages will always be open for discussion.” He announced this policy “provided that all articles be written in respectful manner, are short, and bear the author’s real name.” He concluded: “We are for fair sailing.”56
5. The *Review* was highly successful from the beginning. “After two years, Fanning moved it to Franklin College since he had been able to secure his own press and type and was anxious to provide his students with opportunities to work in the print shop. He also wanted to give the paper closer attention.”57
6. “Franklin (College) may well have been the most influential of the earlier colleges, and its effect upon the southern church cannot be questioned…. But it was as an editor that Franklin had his greatest influence upon the *thinking* of the Movement, especially in the South, and this was the heart of his life’s work, spanning thirty years of his ministry, while the time given to Franklin College was only half that.”58
7. By the end of the second year of the *Review*, Fanning apologized for lacking space to include more of what brethren sent to him for publication. He said, “it has been my misfortune to not to be able to publish one half the communications which should be before the public.”

4) It should be noticed in passing that the name of this paper was revived by Benjamin Franklin. “He had once admired Fanning’s journal of a decade earlier, the *Christian Review*, and now with the term, ‘American Christian’ riding the crest of popularity—American Christian Missionary Society, American Christian Bible Society, American Christian Publication Society … he would be completely up to date if he called his new paper the *American Christian Review*. So it became.”59

1. Needing help with his many activities, in 1845 Fanning made Jesse Ferguson his associate editor. Three years later, he turned the paper over to Ferguson. The following year, Ferguson became the regular preacher for the Nashville church over Fanning’s protest. Fanning felt that the rapid growth of the church in the city was due to its Bible-centered and elder-directed ministry, without the aid of a regular preacher. So when the elders decided to hire Ferguson, Fanning sought to dissuade them, but when they persisted, he worked with him. His objection to the hiring of Ferguson was not personal but arose from his belief that professionalism in the pulpit was detrimental to the church.
2. Fanning’s confidence in the young man is shown not only by his enlisting his aid in editing the *Review*, but also in his selecting him to serve on the board of Franklin College when he was only thirty-one years of age. Fanning apparently failed to see any tendencies in Ferguson that would portend the reckless course that would follow.
3. “Passing unnoticed that year, 1845, was an article by Ferguson in which he indicated his belief in a second chance after death for those not hearing the gospel of Christ in this life.”60 Ferguson became speculative in regard to what one called “bizarre heresies.” He promptly changed the name of the *Christian Review* to the *Christian Magazine* and continued to publish it until 1853.
4. There were many periodicals published by Christians before the Civil War. One compiler lists over 130. Very few of these can be regarded as successful in terms of scope and longevity. All no doubt had some measure of influence on churches where they circulated, but none were as effective and enduring in influence during this period as those of Campbell and Stone. Other men who stood out as editors during the first generation of the Restoration include David S. Burnet, John R. Howard, and Arthur Crihfield
5. Stone died in 1844 and Campbell in 1866. But Campbell had less impact on the church the last decade of his life than before and other men who would wield an influence on the church during the post-Civil War period were already training for the role of editor. Tolbert Fanning, Benjamin Franklin, Moses E. Lard, and Isaac Errett, all of whom became prominent editors after the war, gained editorial experience during Campbell’s lifetime. Other noteable men associated with second-generation journalism were David Lipscomb, E.G. Sewell, J.W. McGarvey, Daniel Sommer, John F. Rowe, B.W. Johnson, and J.H. Garrison. All of these were leading editors in the last half of the nineteenth century. This was the period of division among the Restoration churches and the journals of the period reflect those divisions. More than a hundred and fifty periodicals were published by Christians in those years (1865-1900). Of these, less than a dozen were particularly significant in their influence on the churches. Most were conservative in the early part of the period, but liberal papers grew in number and influence as the century drew to a close.
6. The *Gospel Advocate* began in 1855 under the editorial guidance of Tolbert Fanning and William Lipscomb, David Lipscomb’s older brother. Fanning was in the prime of life and experienced as a preacher, farmer, educator, businessman, and editor.

a.“The immediate cause for publishing another paper was the injury Fanning felt

Jesse Ferguson had inflicted upon the church in Tennessee and throughout the South. In 1847 he had given the *Christian Review* to Ferguson; in 1855 he voiced regret for having done so. The knowledge of Ferguson’s apostasy and differences arising within the Restoration Movement caused Fanning and [William] Lipscomb to write in the first issue: we ‘are convinced that the sources of spiritual light are exclusively confined to the Scriptures of truth …’ Continuing, they said: ‘Since the ‘beloved John’ closed his earthly career, no item of moral instruction has been added to the store of man’s spiritual light.’”61

1. Items of special apprehension at the time of its beginning, aside from the crisis in the Nashville church that warranted several articles, was Fanning’s concern over churches hiring professional preachers. Before Ferguson was hired by the Nashville church, he objected on this ground and Ferguson’s defection reinforced his concern. He thought the chief cause of apostasy in the churches was the failure of congregations to function without professional preachers.
2. In addition to the concern over the “hireling preacher” and insisting that the Bible is the only source of divine truth, the editors of the *Advocate* in the 1850s also raised questions about, and began their opposition to, missionary societies in the work of the church. “One of the announced objects was to aid in checking and correcting innovations that were growing on the apostolic church.”62
3. William Lipscomb’s editorial relationship continued until the *Advocate* ceased publication during the Civil War. Against almost impossible odds, the journal resumed publication after the war, in 1866, with volume eight. It now appeared weekly with “T. Fanning and D. Lipscomb, Editors.” Fanning is also listed as one of the editors in 1867, but it does not appear after that. Editorial and publishing responsibilities were turned over to David Lipscomb and the paper became his. Many years later, Lipscomb was surprised, not only that the paper survived, but also that it lived to influence the church far beyond his expectations.
4. In 1872, Fanning began another paper, a monthly called *The Religious Historian*, in which he discussed many phases of church government. The *Historian* continued until Fanning’s death on May 3, 1874.
5. But after 1866, it was Lipscomb who made the *Advocate* the single most important journal for apostolic Christianity, free of innovations, in the South. This influence continued for the 46 years that he edited the paper.
6. One reason for resuming the *Advocate* after the war was Lipscomb’s feeling, no doubt shared by Fanning, that the Southern churches had been unjustly denounced by the War Resolutions of the Missionary Society. Further, the churches in the South continued to be treated with bias in the northern papers. “[T]he main reason he got the *Advocate* going again was to give southerners something to read that would not hurt their feelings.”63
7. The spirit of Tolbert Fanning lived in the *Advocate* through David Lipscomb and others connected with the paper who had been students at Franklin College. Few men had such complete influence on their students as Fanning. Through them and the *Advocate*, he continued to influence the church in the South, probably for almost a century. But while the influence of Fanning in the *Advocate* was great,it was Lipscomb more than any other who gradually led most of the churches in the South into the exclusivistic position that characterize them during the greater part of the twentieth century.
8. He led them gradually because it was only gradually that Lipcomb himself came to accept the exclusivistic posture. He was slower in adopting this stance both in regard to instrumental music and the society than Daniel Sommer, and slower than many of his colleagues in the South, but it was his influence ultimately that led the churches to acknowledge a separation from the “Christian Church.”
9. In Tennessee’s Bicentennial year, the Tennessee Historical Society listed David Lipscomb as the fourteenth most important man in the state’s history. Leroy Garrett, who calls Lipscomb “a son and sire of the Movement,” writes: “Lipscomb would easily qualify as the ‘Editor Bishop’ of the Movement in the South in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.”64 While Lipscomb strongly opposed both the instrument and the society, it was not until near the end of the century that he became exclusivistic. In 1890, he was sufficiently tolerate of society brethren to hire F.D. Srygley, who had opposed his views on the society, to write for the *Advocate,* making him the front-page editor.
10. “In the ‘Salutatory’ of the *Gospel Advocate* for January 1, 1866, Lipscomb says: ‘We earnestly desire to cultivate the most kindly feelings toward all men; and should we consider it incumbent upon us to oppose the views and practices of any of our race, we hope to be able to do so in the spirit of love and meekness. Yet we desire to act independently; and when called by duty to oppose error and to forewarn the deluded, we trust that we may be able to do so in the fear of God.”65
11. H. Leo Boles said of Fanning: “He opposed everything for which he could not find authority in the Book of God. He had no confidence in human plans and human organizations for doing the work of the church, and opposed with all the power of his intense nature denominationalism and the organization of the missionary society for doing the work of the Lord. No one was able to meet his arguments, and all were afraid of his powerful, logical, Scriptural opposition to such things.”66
12. The re-issuing of the *Advocate* after the war was due in part to Fanning and Lipscomb’s understanding of the condition of the church in the South. The paper was reborn with opposition from some northern brethren because of its rejection of the missionary society before the war and because they felt that it gave forth a sectional ring.
13. During 1868 and 1869, Lipscomb was the sole editor of the *Advocate* and he and his wife made great personal sacrifices to keep it alive. In 1868, in spite of financial losses, he increased the paper 24 pages and began publishing it weekly. But E.G. Sewell became co-editor in 1870, forming an editorial partnership that continued for nearly fifty years.
14. The *American Christian Review* was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1856. But Franklin began his editorial work in 1845 with the publication of the *Reformer*, which he edited and published under several names: *Reformer*, *Western Reformer*, *Proclamation and Reformer*, and *Christian Age*. The *American Christian Review* started as a monthly, but in 1858, it became a weekly paper dedicated to seeking after “the ancient order.” It is generally regarded as “the most influential periodical in the restoration movement” during the 1860s and 1870s.”
15. “Benjamin Franklin … was a splendid type of man for the work he undertook to do. His character was above reproach; he was indefatigable in his labors and willing to make great sacrifice for the cause he loved. For a time he expressed a generous spirit toward those with whom he disagreed, but later violently opposed all those who disagreed with his ultraconservative views.”67
16. The *American Christian Review* began when Franklin merged the new paper with the *Christian Age* to form the new weekly publication. The paper remained under his control until near the time of his death in 1878. “The enlarged *Review* was entirely under Mr. Franklin’s control. He was the entire owner for some years; but it was a rapidly increasing business and soon grew so large that he was compelled to entrust the business to other hands. George W. Rice came into the office as an assistant, and after acquiring a complete knowledge of the affairs of the *Review*, took a partnership interest of one-half the concern. From this time the business was done in the name of ‘Franklin and Rice,’ and included not only the publication of the periodical, but also of sundry books, tracts, etc., and especially those of which Mr. Franklin was the author.”68
17. “Here he assumed a more literal and legalistic attitude toward restoration, continuing the spirit and approach as expressed by Alexander Campbell in his earlier writings in the Christian Baptist.”69 “Unity was to be by absorption; the movement was to hold itself aloof from all cooperation with other religious bodies. Organization of missionary societies or conventions were frowned upon as not in accordance with the patterns of New Testament Christianity. By 1866 the American Christian Review had gained considerable influence among the churches and seemed to be gaining.”70
18. Writing about the *Review* in 1858, Alexander Campbell said: “Brother Franklin is an eminently *practical* man. He discards all metaphysical speculation in matters of religion: and pleads ably and earnestly for the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice among all Christians.”71
19. “During the first year, 4,000 copies of each number were printed. By 1860, the circulation was over 8,000. In the decade of the Civil War and up to the time of Franklin’s death, the *Review* was the leading journal in Restoration ranks…. The editor’s penetrating style, coupled with his personal power as a preacher, helped put the *Review* ahead of the *Harbinger* in influence. After the death of Alexander Campbell in 1866, Franklin was unquestionably the most influential man in the brotherhood.”72
20. Franklin had an important influence in keeping many churches in the North free from the digressive movement that swept many away from the original Restoration plea. When he died, David Lipscomb wrote: “The cause loses its most able and indefatigable defender since the days of Alexander Campbell, and his loss is simply irreparable.”73
21. Franklin’s great influence is apparent in a story told by Daniel Sommer in 1875. Sommer discussed Franklin with an aged elder in the church where he was preaching in Clark County, Kentucky. “The old elder said he was with Ben like Pat Caldwell was with the North Star at Newbern, North Carolina in 1833. That year, there was a meteor shower, and stars were falling everywhere. Many thought the world had come to an end, and crowds of people were terror-stricken. But Pat Caldwell was calm. He cried out, ‘Be aisy, boys. I’ve got my eye on the North Star, and if that don’t fall, we are safe.’ The elder had his eye on Ben Franklin, and to him the cause of restoration was not lost as long as Franklin lived.”74
22. *Lard’s Quarterly* was short lived, lasting from September 1863 to April 1868. It began during the war and was partially edited in Canada where Lard went during the last year of the war to escape governmental persecution. Lard was held in such high regard by Alexander Campbell that he was chosen by him to write the definitive answer to Jeremiah B. Jeter’s book, “*Campbellism Examined*,” which attacked the teaching of Campbell. Lard’s response was called, *A Review of Rev. J. B. Jeter’s Book Entitled, “Campbellism Examined.”* In lasting value and influence, *Lard’s Quarterly*, is far greater than its brief life indicates.
23. “Such a high estimate is placed on his writings that his articles were used in one of the colleges in Canada as the best specimens of clear, distinct, and correct thinking…. Much that he wrote in this period of time is well worth preserving and should be studied today by all lovers of the truth.”75
24. The *Quarterly* “expressed extreme conservative views. In his personality and his contentions [Lard] presented a complete contradiction. He was cordial and gracious … But when it came to maintaining the ground that Campbell held in his *Christian Baptist* days, he was adamant.”76 “Moses E. Lard was of the school that viewed any change of ‘apostolic practice’ as a dangerous and disloyal ‘innovation.’”77
25. But Lard was an “editor supreme.” It is highly doubtful that any religious journal has ever been better edited than *Lard’s Quarterly* and the *Apostolic Times*. Moses Lard served as editor of both of these publications from 1863 until 1872.”78 W.D. Frazee is probably right in saying: “I doubt if Moses E. Lard has his equal in this country…. Moses E. Lard surpassed either Barton W. Stone or Alexander Campbell in passionate and pathetic appeals to the mass, and was the peer of either in logical eloquence and the power of concentration.”79 Lard was not only an able writer and editor himself, but during the life of the *Quarterly*, he “had the most talented writers in the brotherhood submitting articles for his publication.”80
26. The *New York Ledger* discovered Lard’s ability as an essayist and invited him to submit work on a prescribed basis at the very attractive sum of $5,000 a year. “He could certainly have used the money, and the public exposure would have greatly enhanced his reputation as a writer; but after thoughtful consideration he declined the New York journal’s offer. He believed the responsibility of meeting a deadline could, on occasion, force him to put his evangelistic responsibilities second; and he was unwilling to risk that…. [The *Ledger*] did, however, purchase some of his work from time to time, as did other publications. There seems to have been little doubt that Moses Lard would have been eminently successful as a professional journalist, but the church is indeed fortunate that Lard decided as he did.”81
27. The death of *Lard’s Quarterly* is attributed to finances. It was never self-supporting due to an insufficient number of subscribers. This in turn was due at least partially to it being a quarterly. Most people did not want to wait so long between issues and often lost interest during the gaps, causing many not to renew subscriptions. The *Quarterly* also took a middle-of-the road stance on some issues confronting the churches during the 1860s, and there was little sympathy for that position. It accepted the society, but opposed the organ in worship, whereas most brethren who opposed one opposed the other. Also, Lard’s pacifism during the war did not enhance his popularity with the brotherhood, most of whom were politically partisan.
28. The *Christian Standard* was started in April 1866 to provide a voice for the views of brethren in the North, that were not being articulated in the *American Christian Review*, *Lard’s Quarterly,* and the *Gospel Advocate*, the leading Restoration periodicals at the time. It began as a weekly, with Isaac Errett as editor.
29. Irvin Himmel gives three reasons for the Standard’s beginning: “(1) There was dissatisfaction with the *American Christian Review* due to Franklin’s attitude toward the North-South conflict…. (2) There was a feeling that the *Review* lacked literary merit. (3) There was a desire for taking a broader view than that expressed by the editors of the *Review*, *Lard’s Quarterly*, and the *Gospel Advocate*. A paper was envisioned which ‘would emphasize the spirit and not the letter of the law.’”82 The *Standard* began to fit that supposed need.
30. In 1892, David Lipscomb told about a conversation he had with Isaac Errett about the origin of the *Standard*. “He told me that the *Standard* was started because Franklin refused to let the loyal brethren express themselves in the Review on the duty of Christians to support the government in its war upon the rebellion, its duty to punish traitors, and to express themselves on the infamy of slavery.”83
31. In 1905, J.W. McGarvey wrote: “After the death of Mr. Campbell and the subsequent suspension of the *Harbinger*, there arose a strong feeling among the leading brethren in the northern States, in favor of a weekly paper of higher literary merit than the *American Christian Review* then conducted by Benjamin Franklin and exerting a powerful influence throughout the brother-hood, and one which would be more ‘loyal’ as the phrase went, to the Federal Government.”84
32. After reviewing the state of Restoration journalism in the 1860s when Franklin, Lard, and Lipscomb were the leading editors, Lin Cartwright describes the founding of the *Christian Standard*. “Consequently a group of fourteen forward-looking leaders—including among others James A. Gar-field—met in the home of Thomas W. Phillips near New Castle, Pennsylvania to launch a new journal which they decided to call the *Christian Standard*. They did this because they felt ‘that a religious journal should be published which should truly and honestly state the scriptural views held by our people, and in a kind way, with good literary taste, be so conducted that it should be welcome in the homes of all.’

“They called to the editorship one of the most brilliant leaders of the brotherhood, Isaac Errett, already well-known and respected. He had been co-editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* following 1860 and during the declining years of Campbell’s editorship…. The journal was to be devoted to the cause of combating the legalistic and narrow influence of many of the journals of the time and defend the cause of missionary organizations to which Campbell and others had been committed.”85 The name was chosen by Errett

1. The influence of the *Christian Standard* was for “conservative liberalism.” It came out in favor of the Missionary Society and in favor of instrumental music in the worship of the church. However, in the early years it recommended caution in regard to the instrument. David Lipscomb said of the *Standard* a year after its beginning: “The Standard is edited with ability, and in a fair and liberal spirit. It is the only weekly that is an advocate of the organization of human societies in religion. Whether from a refusal upon the part of the conductors or not, articles upon but one side of the question ever appear in the Standard.”86
2. Franklin and Headington in 1879 wrote: “Mr. Errett was a man of executive ability and persistency of character fairly equal to the editor of the *Review*. His literary attainments were competent to the undertaking, he was a graceful and fluent writer, and had shrewdness enough to combine all the elements of opposition to the *Review*, and thus constitute a following which has elevated the *Standard* into a formable establishment.”87
3. Progressive Restoration historians look on Errett as the savior of the movement. W.E. Garrison says: “He was the most important influence in promoting more liberal attitudes among the Disciples during their middle period and in preventing them from going the way of innumerable groups which had arisen to ‘restore primitive Christianity’ in all its details and had ended by tithing ecclesiastical mint, anise, and cummin.”88 Murch writes: “The *Standard* restored the Restoration Movement to its pristine dignity and rescued its living principles from perversion.”89

i. When Errett died in 1888, the *Standard* remained in the Errett family, operating under the wise management of Russell Errett, son of Isaac. It was edited by Hugh Mc-Diamid (1888-1897) and James A. Lord (1897-1909) through the rest of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. Under their successive editorship, the *Standard* became known as “the guardian of the faith.” “It was free and independent of the conventions and agencies, through at this time in substantial agreement with their policies. J.W. McGarvey’s department of Biblical criticism was one of the strong features of the journal and had a tremendous influence in keeping the movement true to its original principles.”90

1. The *Apostolic Times* (1869-1885) was another journal that contributed to religious thought during the middle period of the Restoration Movement. H. Leo Boles says it was started and published chiefly by Moses E. Lard, who was its chief editor until 1872, although five men were listed in its first announcement as editors: Lard, Robert Graham, W.H. Hopson, L.B. Wilkes, and J.W. McGarvey. “Possibly no paper represented such an array of talent as did the *Apostolic Times*.”91
2. The first issue stated the editors’ purpose: “To the primitive faith and the primitive practice, without enlargement or diminution, without innovation or modification, the editors here and now commit their paper and themselves with a will and purpose inflexible as the cause in whose interest they propose to write.”92
3. Murch gives a more practical reason for the paper’s beginning. “In 1869 the *Apostolic Times* appeared to counteract the growing popularity of the [*Christian*] *Standard*.” Regarding its editors, he said: “This was truly a formidable array of talent. There was not a stain upon the reputation of any of them. Their alliance in common agreement about the controversial issues, took almost the nature of a *Quinqueviri* with the force and authority of divine law. So certain were they of their ability to slay the Cincinnati dragon that they so announced on many occasions.”93 The paper never had a large circulation and ceased publication in 1885.
4. One reason for the *Apostolic Times*’ limited influence, in spite of its array of illustrious writers, was its middle of the road position on instrumental music, which it opposed, and the missionary society, which it accepted. Alfred T. DeGroot says the editors’ purpose “was to solve the problem of innovation by taking what they assumed was a safe, middle-of-the-road position, accepting the missionary society but rejecting the organ.” McGarvey’s explanation of this position is given in an article against the instrument in worship in 1864: “Let it be observed that we here confine ourselves to *acts of worship*. All that has been said by advocates of musical instruments about the silence of the Scriptures in reference to Colleges, Missionary Societies, etc., is wide of the mark. We might be excusable for adopting means not mentioned in the Scriptures, for spreading a knowledge of the gospel, and still inexcusable for introducing in our *worship* of God, an element which he has not authorized.” Further explaining this position, DeGroot says: “But the times were not propitious for halfway measures…. But there was only a diminishing constituency for those who tried to employ the spirit of literalism in Christian worship but allowed freedom in Christian work.”94 DeGroot further says that the “half-way measures of the *Apostolic Times* only added to the burden of any paper” (such as the *Advocate* and the *Review*) who advocated what he calls “the spirit of literalism in Bible interpretation and directing its shafts at every type of “innovation.”
5. “By 1880, the year Moses Lard died, it was one of the most influential papers among the brethren; but within a short time its influence waned. Without Lard’s pen and personal presence, the *Times* no longer could command its previous following and loyalty. It soon would be no more.”95
6. In 1885, the *Times* was united with the *Old Path Guide*, which F.G. Allen began in 1879, to form the *Apostolic Guide*. The middle-of-the road position faded away as its adherents began to see that the instrument and the society stood on the same principle. “McGarvey himself was the last of the die-hards of the position. In his later years he moved from one congregation to another as the instrument was introduced, refusing to worship with one.”96
7. The *Apostolic Guide* continued until 1893. “As time went on, the numbers of those who advocated middle ground steadily decreased…. [The editors of the *Times*] were opposed to innovations but held varying views as to what constituted innovations. They believed that all the brethren could stay together in advocacy of a common faith and not make matters of opinion a test of fellowship. The *Apostolic Times* best expressed this view … When it died, F.G. Allen carried on with a similar policy in the *Old Path Guide*, persuading McGarvey and M.C. Kurfees to join him.”97
8. “In 1889, McGarvey joined the [*Christian*] *Standard’s* staff of contri-buting editors, still retaining his views on instrumental music in worship and holding his church membership in a non-instrument congregation until his death in 1911. Fred L. Rowe, of the *Christian Leader*, held his membership in a church using the instrument in worship, although he for many years personally opposed the practice. In this ‘no man’s land,’ brethren were under constant crossfire from opposing camps until finally their kind completely disappeared.”98
9. “The *Apostolic Times* was born at a critical time. Digression was setting in, and churches were flinging themselves in line with the newer pattern. J.S. Lamar perhaps best expressed the times. Addressing a letter to the editor of the *Times* in 1876 [I. B. Grubbs became editor that year], he said: ‘You enter upon the work, too, at an highly important period, just when our great cause is passing, normally and naturally, into its second phase. Thoughtful consider-ation, broad and comprehensive views, and wise counsels are needed. The life of this new generation must be formed upon the old principles, but it cannot be cast into the old molds. The leaders in these times, or any times, must be up with the age. The man that remains behind will be left behind.’”99
10. Lamar, Errett’s biographer, expresses the attitude of the *Standard*, which was adopted by a majority of the brethren and led to the churches of Christ-Christian Church division. “Keep up with the age,” “broad and comprehensive views,” and, “The man that remains behind will be left behind.” These were the battle cries of digression, which the *Apostolic Times* sought to staunch with its middle-of-the–road approach. But not many were willing to buy into it. “Its subscription list was never very large. No amount of readjusting editors seemed to help, and so the *Apostolic Times* died in 1885.”100
11. “Some of the finest literature to be produced in the whole Restoration Movement is to be found in the *Times*.”101
12. After the death of Benjamin Franklin in 1878, the *American Christian Review* was edited for a time by John F. Rowe.
13. Edwin Alden had become the owner of the paper several years before Franklin’s death. Daniel Sommer, who had written for the paper and had made a favorable impression on the editor, hoped to succeed Franklin. He felt that he had an inside track, but Franklin had made no arrangement for a replacement. John F. Rowe and Joel A. Headington were the assistant editors at the time of Franklin’s death. The choice of a successor had been left to George W. Rice who had been co-owner of the paper and its publisher for many years. Alden had bought the paper as an advertising medium and left the editing and publishing to Franklin and Rice. So while Alden owned the paper, the choice of replacement fell to Rice and he chose Rowe, after which Headington withdrew from the paper.
14. Rice and Rowe invited Daniel Sommer to continue writing for the *Review* to help it overcome the shock of Franklin’s departure. This continued until 1880 when a disagreement between Rowe and Sommer caused Sommer to cease writing for the paper. In 1883, Sommer and B.F. Little, also a former writer for the *Review*, began a semi-monthly paper called *The Octograph* (from Greek “octo” meaning eight and “grapho” I write). The idea, it is said, came from the eight men who wrote the New Testament.
15. In 1886 the *Review*, having fallen on hard times financially, was offered for sale and Sommer bought it. The next year he combined it with the *Octograph* and called it the *Octographic Review.* The paper continued under that name until 1913, when Sommer began publishing it as the *Apostolic Review.*
16. Sommer’s influence among churches of Christ in the North during the last quarter of the nineteenth century is comparable to that of David Lipscomb in the South. While much of Sommer’s influence is beyond the scope of this study, into the twentieth century, he made it his aim to save the churches from innovations wherever he could. He swayed the churches under his influence toward exclusivism similar to that which Lipscomb affected in the South.
17. Sommer is especially remembered for a sermon he preached to a gathering of six thousand Christians at Sand Creek, Illinois, August 18, 1889, and “An Address and Declaration” that he had Peter P. Warren write, which drew the line of fellowship against all innovators in the church. Sommer preached against innovations and Warren read his document that condemned choirs, missionaries societies, and preacher-pastors, but for some reason made no mention of instrumental music, except within the general phrase “and other objectionable and unauthorized things.”
18. Russell Errett was outraged by the Sand Creek treatise and denounced it. He also called upon John F. Rowe of the *Christian Leader* and David Lipscomb of the *Gospel Advocate* to denounce it. There were poor relations between Lipscomb and Sommer. J.C. McQuiddy, managing editor of the *Advocate* did denounce it, but Lipscomb said little about it. Leroy Garrett says of Lipscomb: “While he at first resisted any move to separate from the Disciples, he eventually did in the South what Sommer did in the North.”102 Within eighteen years of the “Sand Creek Declaration,” the churches of Christ (North and South) were listed separately from the “Christian Church” or “Disciples of Christ,” with 159,658 members and 2,649 churches. The separation received the blessing of David Lipscomb and the *Gospel Advocate*.
19. “The *Christian-Evangelist* came into being with a merger of B.W. Johnson’s *Evangelist* and J.H. Garrison’s *Christian* in 1882, with both men as co-editors until Johnson’s death in 1894. After the death of Isaac Errett in 1888, the *Standard* and the *Evangelist* began to manifest different points of view representing the two growingly distinct scrolls of thought in the mainstream of the movement.”103
20. The *Christian Standard* became more conservative and the *Christian-Evangelist* (after the death of Johnson) became more liberal and represented views that eventually divided the Christian Church and Disciples of Christ.
21. A.T. DeGroot says: “The *Christian-Evangelist* is the oldest continuously published journal among the multitude of papers of the Disciples (or of their conservative cousins, the Churches of Christ)…. It enjoyed a succession of editors which makes it a direct descendant of Barton W. Stone and the *Christian Messenger* (1826-45)—though it cannot be shown that mergers of publishing houses carry the line officially to that early journal.”104 DeGroot gives a tortured ancestry to make this point that he regards as questionable.
22. The *Christian Evangelist* became one of the most liberal Restoration papers after B.W. Johnson’s death. It was: “The steed that [J.H. Garrison] rode in his leadership of a new era in the life of the Disciples of Christ.”105 However, prior to his death in 1894, while the paper’s co-editor, Johnson put a damper on Garrison’s liberalism. Johnson was of the mold of J.W. McGarvey and was so regarded by him. But after Johnson’s death, Garrison made the *Christian Evangelist* an instrument to promote liberalism. “From 1894-1899 the stockholders behind the *Christian-Evangelist* showed increasing dissatis-faction with his policy and threatened a revolt. The trouble was finally settled when Garrison managed to buy out their interests.”106
23. There were other papers during the nineteenth century that had a significant influence on the church, but not to the extent these did. We might mention: *The Christian Pioneer*, edited by John R. Howard (1861-1870), the *Firm Foundation* of Austin McGary beginning in 1884, and the *Christian Leader* with John F. Rowe as editor. Murch regards the *Christian Standard* as occupying the center of the road in the latter years of the nineteenth century: “On the right fringe of the movement were two widely read periodicals—The *Christian Leader and The Way*, edited by John F. Rowe, and the *Gospel Advocate*, edited by David Lipscomb. Others in the conservative category were the *Octographic Review*, the *Firm Foundation,* the *Christian Messenger*, the *Christian Preacher,* the *Primitive Christian*, and the *Gospel Echo*.”107

C. The value of these and other Restoration periodicals to the church during the first century of the movement was immeasurable.

1. Campbell’s estimation of the value of a good religious journal may be over-drawn, but it nevertheless shows the importance of the Restoration press, especially in the first century of the movement. “One good periodical, ably and piously conducted, and well patronized, is worth ten of the best Evangelists in the field…. It may, indeed, contain the best essays of ten correspondents every month. But that is not all. It may travel over more ground in one moon than one hundred Evangelists. I know this is more than true of the Harbinger. It is ever on the wing—on the sea, over the continent, and in most of the islands where our language is spoken. Again it is heard in many places where no living preacher could gain a hearing. It has found its way into a hundred pulpits, whence its Editor would be debarred. Many have been converted by it that never could have been approached by the living voice of any preacher in the land. I speak advisedly when I avow my conviction that one good periodical, free from acrimony, partyism, rivalry, and ambition, is worth many Evangelists in the cause, the general cause of reformation.”108
2. “An amazing number of first-generation converts to the Restoration were reached initially through the printed page. The scarcity of preachers combined with men’s hunger for religious truth made journalism an ideal medium of evangelism.”109 There were few men of note among the disciples of Christ during this period who did not owe their place in the movement to the writings of Stone, Campbell, and their contemporary journalists.
3. Some of the most important first generation leaders came into the movement through the influence of the printed page. These include W.K. Pendleton, Phillip S. Fall, Jacob Creath, Jr., and “Racoon” John Smith. In Ontario, James Black and Joseph H. Ash, Jr., leading pioneers of Canada, were brought into the movement through the writings of Stone and Campbell. Preachers, often poor, isolated, and with few reference works, depended on gospel papers for material needed in teaching, preaching, and debating.
4. Scattered churches, most with no regular preaching and few with qualified elders, relied on the spiritual feast they received from the writings of the best men of the brotherhood. The periodicals enabled the editors and writers to reach people across distances that were difficult, if not impossible, for them in person, consid-ering the methods of transportation in that time. Thousands were converted to Christ, adopted the ideals of the Restoration, and were grounded in the fundamentals of the apostolic faith by the teaching of men through Restoration journals. Few, if any, preachers were not influenced by these journals.
5. The nineteenth century journals contributed to the numerical growth of the church through conversions and to the spiritual and moral strength of the church through edification. News of brethren in other places early became a feature of most papers and was relied upon for such intelligence. Brethren were encouraged in things that are right and warned of mistakes by the experiences of others.
6. In short, the Restoration movement would very likely have been far more limited in its scope without the periodicals that crisscrossed the land and reached into foreign fields. W.T. Moore in his history of the movement notes that Thomas Campbell’s *Declaration and Address* had little effect on society until its principles were proclaimed by Alexander Campbell in the *Christian Baptist*, fourteen years after the *Declaration’s* publication.
7. In keeping with our theme, the Restoration achieved a degree of success that would have been impossible without religious journals. Campbell said: “I have felt that my power to do good in all places that I have visited, has been, without exception, so far as remembered, usually in the ratio of my readers. Where there were few or no readers, little or nothing can be done…. The press has, in the reformation, pioneered the way. Before there was an evangelist in the field at all, the press had broken up fallow ground and prepared the soil over a great surface, on which the labor of our first evangelists told so well, and made so favorable an impression.”110
8. But not all papers were orthodox. From the beginning, there were dissenting voices. Brethren bent on teaching error used the press to expound error. Dr. John Thomas, for example, began the *Apostolic Advocate* soon after his conversion and used it to teach a multiplicity of errors on the nature of the soul, the state of the dead, and the destiny of the wicked. His aim in departing from the Restoration ideal was, according to Campbell, to form a new party. The teachings of Dr. Thomas culminated in the creation of the sect known as the Christadelphians.
9. The character of Restoration journals in the second generation differed considerably from those of Stone and Campbell. “The popular remark that ‘Disciples do not have bishops; they have editors,’ had its element of truth, especially in the early period of the movement. Alluding to the ever-growing and increasingly powerful Disciples’ hierarchy, Garrison and DeGroot remark that this statement ‘is more descriptive of their century than of the succeeding decades when state and national cooperative organizations had created a leadership.’”111
10. The value of nineteenth century Restoration journals as primary sources of the move-ment’s history is immense. Our history would be weak and inconclusive, with large gaps in the record, without the early Restoration journals. No definitive history of the movement has ever been written without relying heavily on these periodicals.
11. Much that is known about the unity meetings at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1831 and 1832 is derived from the *Millennial Harbinger* and the *Christian Messenger*. It was often the practice of brethren in the early years of the movement to burn the minutes of their meetings after reading them and so the minutes of the Lexington unity meetings were burned. The practice sprang from a common fear that retaining records might be understood as a return to formalism, legalism, and ecclesiastical form from which the reformers had so recently emerged.
12. Autobiographies, another rich original source of Restoration history, largely depended on the author’s sometimes faulty memory, which the contemporary journals can correct or enlarge upon. The religious journals had the advantage historically of being current, spontaneous, and free from the tendency of later histories of revisions to suit a point of view or to justify a particular bias.
13. Whether on balance the good that Restoration journals outweighed their damage is a matter of judgment. We believe the good exceeded the bad, but that sufficient harm was done to color the evaluation. Most of us probably would have preferred them with all their faults than to have had none at all. We certainly find more that is favorable than unfavorable. Still we sometimes wonder what the nineteenth century Restoration Movement would have been like without the attendant gospel papers.

**The Dangers of Restoration Journals to the Church.**

1. Nearly all Restoration journals of consequence in the nineteenth century began with the worthy aim to simply teach the word of God. While we do not doubt that they accomplished that goal to a remarkable degree, not everything they taught could be supported with book, chapter, and verse. Editors sometimes projected and defended unsound ideas. There was always within nineteenth century Restoration journalism an element of error. Just as no preacher was correct in everything he taught, so no paper was free of doctrinal imperfections.
2. There may be exceptions, but in spite of the noble aims and careful practices of the editors, they sometimes allowed things into print that were no more than the opinions or biases of the writers. In some cases, they reflect the writer’s misunderstanding of Scripture, or his erroneous conclus-ions based on faulty reasoning. This is more apparent in reviewing issues that are no longer a particular problem among Christians, but that were hot issues in their day, such as the rebaptism controversy of the late nineteenth century.
3. Very naturally, we may be more objective in our review of outmoded issues than of issues that we ourselves are directly involved in.
4. In the heat of a religious controversy over a lively question of the hour, there are nearly always things said, positions taken, and behavior exhibited that might not have seen the light of day in calmer times. Some things were more confusing than enlightening, and more geared to create enmity that to promote unity on the Bible. The controversy over located preachers and their pay that raged in the later years of the nineteenth century often created more heat than light. Located preachers were called “one-man pastors” by opponents of the practice, whether or not the charge was true, and those who received wages from churches were called “hirelings,” while they often received less and sacrificed more than some of their severest editor-critics. Some apparently did not consider the fact that a preacher might locate with a church without being its “pastor,” and receive support for his work without being a “hireling.”
5. Most controversies that raged in the papers in the past exposed the weaknesses of men and arguments on all sides. The *Gospel Advocate* in time adopted the primary views promoted in “The Sand Creek Declaration,” and endorsed the division between the churches of Christ and the Disciples of Christ that the document precipitated: “With John F. Rowe, the conservative *Christian Leader* editor, shrinking from an open confrontation with the liberals, and David Lipscomb hesitating, with no effective alternative to offer, [Daniel] Sommer seized the initiative, forcing the [*Christian*] *Standard* partisans to a defensive counter-attack. He provided resolute leadership for his own people, and thereby bound together the Northern and Southern Churches of Christ who were ideologically committed to a strict restoration of apostolic worship and organization.”112 Yet, soon after the “Declaration” appeared in print, J.C. McQuiddy wrote: “The Sand Creek manifesto was manifest folly, and the *Advocate* emphatically denies any sympathy with Sommerism … or any other partyism in religion.”113
6. James Young wrote to Alexander Campbell in 1854 protesting the existence of “a church paper.” He evidently referred to religious journals published by the brethren that were looked upon as “church papers.” In listing his objections, he said: “The opinion of its editor often goes to the world as the doctrine and discipline of the whole church, as did J.B. Ferguson’s, in the *Christian Magazine*.”114
7. Young also objected to the power of such papers. “I consider a church paper a monopoly of principles and practice, similar to the Methodist book of discipline: for if an individual member or a church should speak against the discipline, or neglect or refuse to conform to all its rules, such individual or church would be turned out of society. Thus destroying the independence of individual churches and the right of private judgment; for no member, or a single church, could successfully oppose their whole consolidated body, in doctrine and discipline. They must think with their church periodical issue or not think at all.”115 While Young’s fear may have been be exaggerated, some papers, by design or default, were set forth as “the voice of the brotherhood,” the thing Young found opposed.
8. While error in a religious paper is always a danger to the Christians and congregations where the paper circulates, it is unfair and unrealistic to condemn a religious journal because it may be in error on some point of teaching. A paper must be weighed in the light of its overall good, not by its flaws, unless they are of major proportions. We should not reject the *Millennial Harbinger* because of Campbell’s Lunenburg Letter, nor the *Gospel Advocate* because of its teaching on civil government, nor the *Apostolic Times* because of its support of the missionary society, nor *Burnett’s Budget* because of its opposition to located preachers. Nor should we reject the *Octographic Review* because of its opposition to Bible colleges. Some things it said about colleges needed to be said.

a. Restoration journals are somewhat like individuals. The best are not without faults. As no preacher is perfect, so no paper is perfect. There was not a single nineteenth century editor of any degree of scholarship and skill as a writer and editor who did not miss the mark on something so as to teach that which is not true. James A. Harding regarded J.W. McGarvey as “one of the greatest Bible teachers of post-apostolic times.” “The more intimately I knew him, the more I loved and admired him. He was very great, very gentle, very unostenta-tious.” But Harding saw flaws in McGarvey’s teaching and practice. “There are few of the great and good whose lives have not been marked by some serious blemish, some dark spot, a spot that seems all the darker because of the brightness and beauty that shines all around it. It seems to me, our beloved brother, although so wise and great and good, did not escape the common lot of frail humanity”116

1. It is this reality that made editors and writers, especially those with wide influence, more dangerous when they erred in teaching, disposition, and judg-ment. By the magnifying their voice though the printed page, the extent of the errors were also greatly increased and far more harm was done than such men could have done as preachers without the increased range of the press.
2. The missionary society may not have developed as early as it did without the support and encouragement of Alexander Campbell through the *Millennial Harbinger*. Harding said: “If Lard, McGarvey, Graham, Grubbs, and men of like faith had resolutely marked and turned away from those that were causing divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine they had learned … we would have a very different story to tell.”117 These men worked together in editing the *Apostolic Times*, a journal deliberately designed to take a middle road between conservatives and liberals in the church.
3. We cite flaws in the editors and writers of nineteenth century Restoration journals, not to condemn them, but merely as a flag of caution. This is one of the dangers of Restoration journals to the church, especially when one becomes a powerful institution among brethren.
4. The early religious periodicals generally carried on an open warfare. “The religious journal arose in the midst of the great masses of the unchurched on the western frontier. These multitudes marching westward in the conquest of the wilderness, had loosed their moorings in the east and were open to evangelism of whatever means. The religious journal became the voice of the warring sects and in the struggle often became savagely contentious and belligerent.”118
5. Alexander Campbell’s response to the sectarian bitterness in the early part of the nineteenth century was to fight fire with fire. “In fact, Campbell was at once a product of the religious bitterness of his times and a vigorous protest against the causes as he saw them. He sought to find a way out of the impasse. Like the Irishman, he would have peace if he had to fight for it.”119
6. While Campbell modified his combative style in the 1830s, the fighting spirit of the *Christian Baptist* was acclaimed by many of his brethren throughout the nineteenth century. The difference, however, lay in Campbell’s ability to balance his iconoclastic spirit with a positive and scholarly advocacy of New Testament principles that many of his “contentious and belligerent” imitators could not manage. Consequently, there arose in the movement an antagonistic spirit that often characterized its journalism. While Campbell modified his tone, it is a mistake to think he abandoned it all together. Traces of the old fire are evident through the 1830s and 1840s, but they were greatly subdued.
7. Campbell is without doubt the Restoration editor by which all who came after him were measured. Yet, the iconoclastic style he employed in the *Christian Baptist* became the main gauge by which many editors in later times measured their editorial behavior, but, with few exceptions, without the depth of wisdom and fairness that characterized Campbell. While he altered his tone and manner, some preferred his earlier style, adopting it apart from the finer aspects of his editorial excellence. Few conservative or moderate Restoration historians are critical of Campbell’s *Christian Baptist* style, justifying it by the tenor of the times. Given the conditions of frontier America, it is doubtful that the Restoration Movement could have succeeded without it, but the manner of clearing new ground is different from the manner of cultivating a cleared field. Campbell saw this difference, while some who came after him did not.
8. “One [journal], called the *Calvinistic Magazine*, for example, was established primarily to refute the ‘slanders and disabuse of the Methodists.’ This brought on the establishment of the *Armenian Magazine* ‘for the purpose of hurling back the assaults of the notorious C*alvinistic Magazine*…. It was within this atmosphere that Disciple journalism was born and developed. It brought out both the best and the worst in our editors.”119
9. It may be said of Campbell regarding the combative nature of his writing in the *Christian Baptist*, and to a lesser degree in the early *Millennial Harbinger*, that he possessed the rare ability of knowing when to hammer and when to cease hammering. One of the abuses of the journals in later times was the inability of editors to make this distinction. All some knew how to do was to hammer.
10. After starting the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell refused to publish some articles sent to him for publication because they were “too personal” or “too much in the spirit of opposition.” One he said had “too much fire in it.” He also felt that some of this sort of writing might have been in order a few years before, but that the time for such writing had past. This shows that he understood that the movement, so far as his part in it is concerned, was passing into a more irenic phase.
11. Campbell said: “Let us, brethren, reform as the reformation progresses; and if there be any flagellating and scalping to do, let it be reserved for capital offences”121 Not all editors were willing to heed Campbell’s sage advice and the warring spirit of the *Christian Baptist* heritage continued expeditiously in most of the journals throughout the nineteenth century.
12. While there is always danger of harm to the church in an abusive journal, at the same time, there is also danger in the journal that seeks to be too conciliatory. It is impossible to know when a paper is too pacific on one hand or too combative on the other to accomplish the purpose of God. This is one reason that there was a need for a variety of papers. If some, like Scott’s *Evangelist*, may have been too conciliatory, others, like Arthur Crihfield’s *Heretic Detector*, tended to balance the scales. The Restoration Movement has always needed preachers, and probably religious journals, that were strongly combative against error without and within the fold of God and also those of a more gentle spirit to help keep the balance.
13. It is our opinion that this is one reason the “non-progressive” brethren were defensive of T.B. Larimore, who found it difficult to criticize anything his “progressive” brethren did. Aside from their deep devotion to a man whose life was so noble and pure, they saw a need for one of his spirit among them. But whether they recognized this or not, the need was there. The church in every age needs strong and resolute men like Paul, but it also needs gentle and moderate men like Barnabas. If they each had edited a religious journal, the first century church could well have benefited from both. The church is better when all of its journalistic eggs are not put into one basket.
14. The golden age of the *Gospel Advocate*, from about 1880 to about 1840, was at a time when its editors or department heads reflected a spectrum of sentiments and personalities within the conservative (anti-missionary, anti-instrumental music) framework. Near the end of the nineteenth century, Lipscomb and McQuiddy put together a staff of writers who possessed a chemistry balance among them that few operating with a cadre of associate editors were ever able to achieve. All too often, editors drew associates like themselves. Earl West, writing of the paper of the 1890s, says: “The Gospel Advocate in those years had a well balanced editorial force.”122 This was also true of the paper for more than a third of the twentieth century, but the death of F.B. Srygley in 1940 removed from its staff the last of “the old guard.”
15. The division that resulted from the strict and loose constructionists sentiments harmed both sides to some extent. It harmed the more militant side by removing from them much of its moderating element, tending to make the editors and writers appear harsher in their tone. It harmed the loose-constructionists by removing from among them the firmer element that might otherwise have kept them from drifting too far from the shore, as B.W. Johnson did with J.H. Garrison in co-editing the *Christian-Evangelist*.
16. Another danger in religious journals in their relation to the church is found in defectionsfrom “the once-delivered faith.” Assuming that a paper’s original purpose and stance were correct, defections could be especially harmful to the churches among whom they circulate.
17. Such defections or changes in teaching or direction might occur when the paper changed hands. This happened after 1848 when Tolbert Fanning turned his highly successful and influential *Christian Review* over to Jesse B. Ferguson, one of the most gifted writers of his day. The result was disastrous for the paper, for the church in Nashville, and no doubt for many souls among the paper’s readers who were misled by the false and speculative views it advanced. As with a church split so it is with a defecting journal, there are always some who will stay with the building or the paper regardless of the merits of the issues involved.
18. Defections can also come when the editor himself changes his position, as Alexander Campbell did on missionary societies. The change is all the more dangerous to the church when the editor, like Campbell, had become well respected by his readers. People can become so trusting of an editor that they fail to see subtle, or even less than subtle, changes by which he may deftly lead his readers away from a “thus saith the Lord.”
19. If an editor does not actually change his general direction, he may write something that, because of his influence, becomes a stone of stumbling to many brethren. After Campbell’s well-known response to the Lunenberg Letter, he spent the rest of his life trying to explain or defend the views expressed in it. The letter’s influence has been so far reaching that liberal Restoration historians and others used it to bolster their efforts to justify open membership in the church.
20. The change in a paper’s direction also occurred when it was inherited by family members who continued it into succeeding generations, as with the *Christian Standard* after the death of Isaac Errett. A religious journal did not usually fair well when it was inherited by an able editor’s family. However, in case of the *Standard*, the shift was in a more conservative direction, although not far enough to count much scripturally.
21. It is inevitable that any gospel paper will change in time, if it continues very long. For this reason, the trust that a faithful editor and his staff of writers build up in one generation sometimes becomes an albatross around the necks of brethren in another generation. The fact that a paper may be “sound” today does not necessarily mean it will be “sound” tomorrow. Papers change, although the change may not always be bad. While Alexander Campbell moved from opposing societies to encouraging them, Benjamin Franklin, Jacob Creath, Jr., and others, went in the opposite direction. But the point here is that the trust and confidence that people put into a paper itself because of the trust and confidence they have in its editor and staff of writers, can lead many astray because of their misplaced confidence, if the paper changes in the wrong direction.
22. Of course, this is not altogether the paper’s fault. Individuals are accountable for what they accept or reject, but it is natural for some who trust the paper to make it their guide instead of the word of God. If Christians follow the teaching of a religious paper that is teaching truth because of their trust in the paper, their trust surely rests on a sandy foundation to begin with.
23. There was something about editing a religious journal, especially one that achieved a wide and strong influence, that was somewhat like getting behind the wheel of a high powered automobile. Otherwise sensible persons in control of such a vehicle at times become reckless, especially with the spiritual safety of others, when they occupied the editorial chair. There are repeated stories told about people who, upon meeting a well-known editor for the first time, were surprised that he was the same man. It was hard for them to feature such a kind, thoughtful, and mild mannered person being the same man who tears up the journalistic highway at ninety miles an hour, weaving in and out of traffic, and scaring the living daylights out of harmless people, especially if some sleek sport model tries to cut him off and get the best of him in playing “king of the road.”
24. Another danger of religious journals to the church can be seen in the increased power, in some instances, that it gave to editors. Editorial influence developed among the churches of the Restoration as it did no place else. Cartwright says: “As perhaps in no other communion the editorship of religious journals among Disciples came to have the status of a separate calling, distinct from all others.” Murch says of the nineteenth century Christians: “From their beginning their thinking and works were pretty largely determined by what they read in the columns of their periodicals.”123 This was especially true of the leading journals, but there were so many journals published that the influence of the leaders among them was somewhat muted. The danger of such organizations to the church is evident. “In a religious movement which acknowledges no official overhead controls, the power of the press is as dangerous to freedom as the power of bishops. As long as the journals which serve a single publishing house is acknowledged as having some quasi-official status in the life of the movement, the concept of ministerial and congregation freedom is endangered.”124

1. Campbell recognized the special status of editors in the brotherhood. He spoke of them as a class in the church and described what he conceived to be their particular qualifications, resembling the qualifications of elders.125

1. Brethren looked on editorial power as favorable when it was used to uphold truth and expose and oppose error, but it was another story when that same power was used to suppress truth, to engage in character assassination, or to defend and advance error.
2. We applaud Campbell for using his editorial stance and the position of leadership it gave him in the brotherhood to squelch the premillennialism that endangered the movement in the 1830s and the use of his power, as one historian put it, “to drive (Jesse B.) Ferguson from the editorial field.”
3. If we assume as true the principle that “the roles of the writer and editor” are stronger among “Christians free of the extra-congregational control and pressure,” then the power of editors and papers was stronger among independent churches than among those more heavily influenced by institutionalism. This assumes that independent Christians were likely to seek some kind of extra-congregational leadership, if it was not supplied by institutional leaders (in schools and societies). By default, this would go to the editors of the most influential journals. This may be right in reference to a certain type of “independent Christians,” but it would not be true of churches that are truly independent in the New Testament sense.
4. With rare exceptions, men with power will use it to further their own views and to squelch any opposition to it. Where papers are perpetuated through changing editorships, that power if not misused by one editor or owner will be misused by another. The *Gospel Advocate* is an example. It was a giant step from what the paper was under Lipscomb and Sewell to what it became two generations later under B. C. Goodpasture.
5. It may have been the arrogance of editorial power that led W.T. Moore to say the disciples do not have bishops but editors. Moore also said: “Of course any paper is dangerous if it has influence. Influence is always dangerous, though it is the only thing that is helpful, and when legitimately used it should be honored rather than condemned.”126
6. Robert Richardson wrote: “The press is indeed a mighty engine, and stands pre-eminent among the means by which the Truth has been disseminated…. But the bee has its sting and the rose its thorn, and while we rejoice in the influence of the Press we must not forget that whatever has ability to benefit has equal power to injure, and that the Press may be so poorly managed and its influence so misdirected that it will displease where it should delight, and wound where it should defend. That this has, in some measure, been the case with some of our periodicals during the past year, is unhappily true. A great degree of carelessness has been betrayed, unbecoming expressions admitted, unjust charges made, and unscriptural questions—subjects of debate and strife have been too often substi-tuted for those things which promote peace on earth and good will among men. Nor are the pride of opinion and the love of speculation less evident or less to be deplored…. Oh! That each editor of a paper would leave his speculations and pay regard to that which the Lord has spoken—that he would abandon subjects of strife, political disquisitions, endeavor to spread the gospel, and teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Oh! That the Press … may be more than ever devoted to the service of Religion, and may fully repair the injury it has done.”127

Richardson wrote these words in the 1830s, near the beginning of religious journalism among the restorers. He felt so strongly about the “plainness of speech” he used in this article that he dropped his pen name so that “without a veil upon my face” he might sign his own name to it.

1. James A. Harding, who edited *The Way* (1898-l903), was asked why he wanted to start another struggling paper. He replied: “As a rule the poor and struggling are the best advocates of the cause of Christ…. If *The Way* or the *Advocate* ever became rich and strong, he feared their power for good would diminish.”128
2. The missionary society was feared and opposed in part because of its potential power, although prior to 1882 (when the Foreign Missionary Society was created) it possessed little power and offered little danger to the church from that stand point. It was when it became a power in the brotherhood that many who supported it in principle turned against it in practice, as did Moses E. Lard and the *Christian Standard* in the hands of Russell Errett.
3. Brethren knew from experience what power and abuse could be wielded in the hands of a few. Nearly all movements to restore the ancient order had their beginning with a rebellion against some sort of concentrated power. It was this that caused many of the early restorers to object to simple consultation meetings that, of themselves, offered no threat to the participating churches. But each appendage that brethren attached to the church in the early nine-teenth century was capable of power and abuse of power, whether a Bible school, a regional cooperative, or a religious journal.
4. A religious journal in some ways parallels the missionary society in its potential for an abusive use of power, especially when it is operated as an institution. Of course, neither a missionary society nor a gospel paper is much of a threat to brethren if it has no power. We are here talking about those journals that gained considerable strength among the churches. The purpose of both institutions was to advance the cause of Christ while operating in the realm where there is no room for any organization for the collective work of the church larger than the local congregation. Both are organizations separate and apart from the church. Both can be and often are organizations larger than the local church. Both attempt to influence elders, preachers and churches. Both possessed power greater than that which resides in any local eldership, the highest office God provided for the organization of the church on earth. Neither can lay just claim to being purely individual actions. There is admittedly a gray area where it is difficult to know when individual influence becomes corporate power and when corporate power reaches the stage where it is a danger to the church.
5. God’s arrangement for the church limits the power of elders, churches, and preachers. We should move with caution in building anything, however expedient, that exceeds that power. Moses E. Lard’s objection to the missionary society, insofar as it touches on the matter of power, as nearly as anything I can find, expresses our thinking regarding religious journals that became powerful institutions. Lard said: “Missionary Societies are dangerous institutions. Not in themselves, of course, or when doing right, or acting within their own proper bounds; but dangerous because of their extreme liability to usurp power which does not belong to them, and to perform acts hurtful and oppressive to the feelings of God’s children which they can not lawfully perform. No man living can say that the danger here does not exist, or that it is imaginary. The tendency of all human institutions, especially all moneyed and chartered institutions, is to augment continually their power, that thereby they may become more effective in their operations. This is perfectly natural; nor can it be pronounced absolutely wrong. But just here the danger appears. Let now any one, no matter who he may be, or from what motives he may act, rise up to oppose these institutions, and not more naturally does the wild beast defend to the death her young than do they seek to maim or crush the interfering party. But their most dangerous features lie, not in their efforts to preserve themselves, but in their usurpation and use of unwarrantable power.”129
6. Closing of the pages of a paper to a fair discussion of “both sides” of an issue, together with its refusal to permit those whom it attacked to fairly answer for themselves, was one of the first signs of journalistic power gone to seed. James A. Harding believed in absolute fairness in journalism, as in all other activities. He was repeatedly attacked by journals owned by brethren who refused to publish his replies or any of the material they were attacking. He never criticized another man’s article without printing it in full in his own paper along with the criticism.130 But Harding’s was often a lone voice. Others paid lip service to this principle, but the practice of it was far from universal. Even Campbell, who initiated an open door policy, in his later years closed the door in his controversy with Tolbert Fanning. He allowed the noble Tennessee editor to be grossly misrepresented in the *Millennial Harbinger*, but refused to print Fanning’s relies, an error he never corrected or apologized for, to one who had been his friend for many years.
7. Closely allied with the power-danger of religious journalism to the church was the rivalry and attendant strife that arose among editors, papers, and their allies, which often exceeded any significant difference in doctrine or in opinion.
8. Behavior that was unbecoming of Christians often obtained in the editorial chairs of the nineteenth century brotherhood. This sometimes affected the best of people. There seems to have been built into religious journals a self-interest that increased tensions between fellow-editors and magnified their differences. This might not have been so bad if innocent brethren and churches had not been dragged into it leading to factions within the brotherhood.
9. When Tolbert Fanning began the *Christian Review* in 1844, John R. Howard of Paris, Tenn., was invited to be a corresponding editor. At first Howard was offended when he received the prospectus for the *Christian Review.* He had been editing a paper since 1836, first called the *Christian Reformer*, and later the *Bible Advocate.* He was having serious financial difficulties and did not look favorably on Fanning’s new publication. He was afraid that it would cut into the subscription list of his own ailing journal. It was only Fanning’s kind letter to Howard that mollified the offence and included him in the project. If Fanning had responded with an arrogant defense of his right to publish a paper, as some editors might have, the papers would soon have been at war over nearly any sort of an issue that might be raised between them, whether real or imagined.
10. Leroy Garrett observed, correctly we think, that there were “two devices, the paper and the college, which have played a strategic role throughout the Movement’s history.” He described as “an Achilles’ heel to the progress of the Movement” what he called “an apparent inability of editors and founders of colleges to get along with each other.”131 There were sometimes very good reasons why these did not get along. However, what he says is no doubt true.
11. “In 1856 Robert Richardson … began a series of articles [in the *Millennial Harbinger*] designed to show that the Restoration Movement needed to go on to higher enlightenment through direct intuitive knowledge from the Holy Spirit. At first, though registering his disagreement, Fanning said he would wait to see how Richardson was going to develop his idea. He also wanted to hear what Alexander Campbell might have to say on the subject. As the articles were developed, he became convinced that Richardson was completely astray, and, to his dismay, the elderly Campbell remained silent.”132
12. Richardson was teaching that spiritual light can come from sources other than the Bible. He and some other scholarly Reformers with a philosophical turn of mind, “ventured upon a speculation as to an ‘inner consciousness,’ a ‘divinity within,’ or a mystic ‘indwelling of the Holy Spirit,’” as Franklin and Head-ington described it. Richardson’s purpose was to show that what he consid-ered “the evils of [John] Locke’s philosophy that ‘the mind knows not things immediately, but only by the intervention of the ideas it has of them.’”133
13. It is not our purpose to review of the controversy, but to show the effect it had on two influential religious journals of the time. Fanning, no doubt motivated in part by the earlier defection of Jesse B. Ferguson, thought that: “Richardson had been influenced by some of the same type of philosophical reaction which had been so appealing to Ferguson. Since most men use past experience to interpret present events, Fanning might have assumed that a transcendental philosophy would lead, as it had with Ferguson, to a complete rejection of Christianity’s uniqueness and possibly even to some macabre type of spirit-communication like that which finally made Ferguson the pitiful spectacle that he was in the end.”134
14. Before speaking out against Richardson’s articles, Fanning did an almost unheard of thing. He made a long and difficult journey to Bethany to see Alexander Campbell. Campbell had used the power of his pen and personal influence to destroy Jesse Ferguson, but he remained silent toward his son-in-law’s speculations. “Why was his pen silent? Fanning had to find out. When he went to Bethany he did not let anyone know that he was coming. Instead, he went directly to Campbell’s home unannounced and was shocked to discover that the aged giant was no longer the clear thinker which he remembered from his youth. Campbell’s wife would not even let Fanning talk to him unless she too was present to prompt her husband. Fanning concluded that the younger men of Bethany were influencing Campbell in his senility and using his prestige for their own designs.”135
15. The ensuing controversy raged on for a year or so, with H.T. Anderson attempting to explain Richardson’s work, saying he was misunderstood. Benjamin Franklin also entered the fray. Summarizing, Franklin and Headington say: “If the masses failed to understand the metaphysics of the advocates of ‘inner consciousness,’ they did not fail to understand the editor of the [American Christian] Review, and they so generally accepted his conclusions that the advocates of the new philosophy were compelled to abandon the discussion.”136
16. In answering Fanning: “Richardson defended what he termed ‘Natural Theology’ and spoke of God’s Spirit revealing spiritual truth directly to man as it dwells in him. He defended his position by saying that Campbell himself was teaching ‘Natural Theology’ at Bethany. Fanning, who remembered the devastating debates and writings in which Campbell had earlier bludgeoned ‘natural theology’: replied [in the June 1857 *Advocate*]: ‘Shall the Philistines take our greatest and best man, bind him with fetters of brass, put out his eyes, and make him grind in the prison house of Natural Theology!!!.... We have but little in the goods of this world, and less of its honors, and we say, in sincerity of our soul, that we would greatly prefer becoming a beggar in the street, than to be satisified that Alexander Campbell is teaching Natural Theology.’”137
17. “With this note from Fanning, Campbell finally broke his silence to say that while a course which he taught at Bethany was called ‘Natural Religion,’ it was really only a class in biblical evidences and apologetics. As a ‘solid, substantive fact,’ he admitted, there was no such thing as ‘Natural Theology.” After this acknowledgment, Campbell stopped Richardson from publishing his ideas on enlightenment in the *Millennial Harbinger* although he offered no apology to Fanning.”138

g. At this point, “Campbell was somehow led to attack Fanning also, and the picture which was drawn before the readers of … the *Millennial Harbinger*, portrayed Fanning as guided by evil motives of ambition and faction. He was ‘soured’ against them and had a nature which drove him continually to find fault. He simply wanted to build Franklin College and the *Gospel Advocate* and was jealous of Bethany and the *Millennial Harbinger*.”139 Richardson himself described Fanning’s teaching as “an arrogant, pretentious adulation, a blind, unreasoning partiality, which, in reality, degrades the Bible.”140

1. “The only time that Fanning approached a discussion of Richardson personally was in his statement that most men who hold these views ‘affect a haughtiness that is insufferable,’ while insisting that other men simply cannot understand the deeper things of the spirit.”141 Campbell, in questioning Fanning’s motives, concluded: “It is a controversy between Bethany and Franklin College, the *Millennial Harbinger* and the *Gospel Advocate*.”142 But Fanning also called the teachers of the new doctrine “infidels,” moving Benjamin Franklin to denounce the behavior of both parties. Franklin said: “We respect several of the men who have fallen into this error, and regret the course pursued by brother Fanning as much as we do that pursued by the most ultra among those whom he opposes.”143
2. Here were some of the leading lights of the Restoration behaving in a manner unbecoming of any Christian in what may have been little more than a rivalry over turf. However, it may be said in Fanning’s behalf that he carried in the *Gospel Advocate* all that Richardson and Campbell wrote on the subject, while they did not carry his articles in the *Millennial Harbinger*. The readers of the *Harbinger* were not permitted to hear Fanning’s side of the story and many of them believed Richardson’s perverted description of Fanning’s character and motives. “Perhaps this was one reason that J.W. McGarvey, when he later met Fanning for the first time, was so surprised to find him such a courteous gentleman.”144 Fanning himself was so distressed by Campbell and Richard-son’s treatment of him that “he confessed sorrow that he had ever *seen* a paper or *heard* of a college.”145
3. Controversies between papers were often malicious, but there were also lighter moments. T.R. Burnett took Daniel Sommer’s *Octographic Review*. Given as he was to putting his thoughts into rhyme, in 1909, he wrote these lines about Sommer and his paper.

The Review Octographic

Is burdened with a name,

And with a hefty editor,

But gets there just the same.

Dan writes like Jeremiah,

In lamentatious style,

# Not all the wits in Witdom

Could make him crack a smile!

He thinks the earth is crooked,

And going to the bad,

Good man, but sore afflicted,

He needs a liver-pad!

He’d be a benefactor,

A blessing to his race,

# If he would get religion

# And straighten up his face!146

1. Religious journals have a tendency to attract segments of the brotherhood, which within itself is not bad. Brethren have the right to read papers that interest them, or that, in their judgment, benefit them most; or to read none at all, if that is their desire. But when factions begin to form around a gospel paper, the paper itself becomes a divisive element. To paraphrase Paul, we can almost hear some in the past saying: “‘I am of the *Heretic Detector*,’ or ‘I of the *Angel of Mercy, Love, Peace and Truth*,’ or ‘I am of the *Plow and Hammer*,’ or ‘I am of the *Equator*.’” However, this is not so much the fault of the papers as it is brethren who become unduly attached to them.
2. In dissolving the Springfield Presbytery, Barton W. Stone and his fellow rebels wrote: “We *will*, that our weak brethren, who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and wot not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the Rock of Ages, and follow Jesus for the future.”147 This is sage advice for brethren, weak or not, who would make a religious journal their “king.”
3. Papers in the nineteenth century often became rallying points around which churches and preachers that held particular views and manifested particular attitudes tended to group themselves. Whether by design or by accident, a paper nearly always reflected a faction of some kind in a wider brotherhood. Ed Harrell said: “In the absence of extra-congregational organizations, the factions [in the music-society controversy] developed a nebulous sort of group-consciousness by identifying with outstanding institutions supporting their positions. Thus the ‘antis’ became ‘*Advocate* men’ while the ‘progressives’ were ‘society men’ or ‘*Standard* men.’”148

**The Control of Restoration Journalism by the Church.**

1. We like to think that religious papers in the nineteenth century were a far greater benefit to the church than they were harmful to it. But undoubtedly, much harm was done the cause of Christ, to both the church and to individual Christians, due to the abuses by the press.
2. If a man like Tolbert Fanning could become so abused that he reached the place where he wished he had never seen a gospel paper or heard of a Christian college, we cannot help but wonder what God thinks about these things.
3. We are caused to wonder what the church can do to protect itself from or to control the abuses of the religious press. Then our sanity returns and we realize that there is little that can be done, either by churches or individuals, since hanging editors is frowned upon.
4. When we reflect on the question of church control of papers, we frankly see no way in which it could have been done, in light of the church’s congregationally independent structure.
5. There was also no way in which this could have been done for the very simple reason that brethren were dealing with a situation for which there is no Scriptural precedent.
6. Campbell recognized the abuse of the religious periodicals among the reformers in the first generation. He wrote: “That the Press in the hands of reformers has been abused, it were a reproach upon oneself to deny; and, that a machine of such tremendous power for good or for evil … is not greatly liable to abuse, he is neither a saint nor a philosopher who should presume to doubt. Still no one will say that its use ought to ceasebecause of the abuse. But all will say that its abuse ought to cease every where, and especially amongst those who profess to be reformers and disciples of Christ.”149 But Campbell offered no solution for stopping the abuse.
7. However, a paper of great influence, which Campbell calls “a machine of … tremendous power,” is always dangerous and some control is needed. But few would accept the idea that they should cease because of the abuse, no more so than that preachers should quit preaching because some abuse the pulpit, or that debates should cease because some debaters have behaved unseemly on the polemic platform.
8. But even if we should agree that a particular religious journal should cease because it is abusive, who has the power to make it cease? Neither the Lord’s church, as organically constituted, nor the democratic freedoms we enjoy as a nation, provide any means to stopping one, no matter how spiritually and morally perverse it may be.
9. Brethren generally might rise up in unison to stop such a journal, but this is actually impossible. First, our belief in religious freedom would preclude any unified effort to force a paper to cease publication. Second, any organization created to accomplish such a purpose would itself have to be abusive to do it. Third, there is no vehicle in the brotherhood for such an organization. And fourth, it would be ineffectual because if someone decided to teach that dousing a person with a garden hose were baptism, he could get a following before nightfall.
10. One who personally ceased to read or support an abusive paper, would likely support the paper’s right to exists. As F. B. Srygley said about R. H. Boll’s teaching premillen-nialism in *Work and Work*: “He has a right to teach that worthless stuff if it wants to.” Although Srygley reserved for himself the right to oppose and expose it.
11. There is simply no practical, scriptural, or civil way to put a paper out of existence regardless of how much error it teaches or how abusive it may be.
12. Some have suggested, not without a measure of wisdom, that a paper should not live beyond the life of its founding editor. Perhaps a paper can do more good in its own time and for many years thereafter, if it serves a generation or less and then ceases to function, as with *Lard’s Quarterly* and the *Christian Baptist*. While this may very well prevent some of the abuses that have occurred in the press, this is a matter of judgement and it means nothing unless the editor and publisher (or owner) is willing to make such a sacrifice.
13. Church discipline is congregational and the religious journal is no part of such. So a congregation is helpless to do anything about an abusive paper.
14. While the editor should be under the oversight of the elders of the church in which he holds membership and be subject to congregational discipline, how can the elders discipline the paper itself? The church has no power to discipline a person’s private business.
15. If a church should feel it necessary to disfellowship an editor, what effect would it have on him or the paper? He would very likely find another congregation more favorable disposed to his positions and continue his business.
16. Nor can a local church control a publication by the elders forbidding its members to read it. Elders have no authority to censure what brethren read unless it leads to some sinful behavior that is subject to congregational discipline. Then it is the persons behavior, not what he reads, that is subject to discipline. Any elders who attempted to control a religious paper by forbidding the members to read it would themselves be abusing their power as elders and should be removed from office.
17. The whole matter of seeking to control a wayward, extremist, or mean-spirited religious journal operated by Christians must remain entirely personal.
18. An individual can simply exercise his option not to subscribe to, write for, or encourage brethren to read an abusive paper, and use his influence to warn brethren of its danger.

2. The nearest brethren can come to stopping a paper they find offensive is to start another paper in order to counteract its influence.

**CONCLUSION.** We’ve tried in this paper give a brief discussion of the relation of Restoration journalism to the church. In this we have considered: (1) the nature of Restoration journalism; (2) the relation of Restoration journalism to the church; (3) the scriptural justification for Restoration journalism; (4) the contribution of Restoration journalism to the church; (5) the dangers and abuses of Restoration journalism to the church; and (6) the control of Restoration journalism by the church.

While we understand that Restoration journals in many cases have harmed the church, we believe the good they have done far outweighs the bad. However, their power for good or ill is not innate, but is determined by the character of the individuals who produce them and the purpose of those who read them. They are neither better nor worse than the than the use that is made of them. They are a fact of life and have been since the beginning of the Restoration Movement.

Perhaps F.B. Srygley put the whole matter of Restoration journalism and the church in perspective when he said: “Let the schools be schools and papers be papers, but let the body of Christ be the church.”150

Earl Kimbrough, 1998

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