

WRITINGS OF J F BURNETT

by J.F. Burnett

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by J.F. Burnett, compiled for study and devotional reading.

20 Chapters

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01.00. ABNER JONES

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BOOKLET--THREE

By J. F. BURNETT, D. D.

Minister in the Christian Church

Foreword This is one of a series of booklets prepared and issued under the direction of the Secretary for Department of Publishing of The American Christian Convention, that the members of our churches and Sunday-schools may be well informed as to the history and distinctive principles of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH which accepts and proclaims:

The Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the church.

Christian our only name.

The Bible our rule of faith and practice.

Individual interpretation of the Scriptures, the right and duty of all.

Christian character the test of fellowship.

The union of all the followers of Christ, to the end that the world may believe.

Several of the booklets are from the pen of John Franklin Burnett, D.D., who has given many years of his life to research and investigation of the subjects he presents. Others are by men of outstanding ability who have given many years of service in the Christian Church. They will present the distinctive principles of the Christian church as essentials in Christian life and the basis for church unity.

While the booklets have not been prepared especially for study books, yet the subject matter presented can be studied with profit by the individual, students, Christian Endeavor societies, Sunday-school classes, etc., particularly as a part of programs for stated week-day meetings. It is the hope of the Secretary for the Department of Publishing that they will be given by pastors to all new members as they are accepted into church. They are also intended for general distribution, by pastors and religious workers in our churches, to those who may be interested in the church and principles of the Christians.

No. 1 is The Origin and Principles of the Christians with an account of the co-ordinating of the bodies of different sections.

No. 2 is a historical and biographical sketch of Rev. James O'Kelly, who courageously stood for individual liberty in religious thought and worship.

No. 3 sketches the life of Rev. Abner Jones, a pioneer in the thought that character and life are the true test of religious fellowship as over against dogma.

No. 4 is a sketch of the life of Rev. Barton W. Stone, a scholar and religious teacher who advocated that the Bible is the book of life, and the only rule of faith and practice necessary for a Christian, as over against any formulated creed.

No. 5 combines sketches of Elias Smith, publisher, and Horace Mann, educator.

No. 6 gives sketches of the pioneer women workers of the Christian Church. That all who use these booklets judiciously may be supplied, they will be sent free on request and payment of postage, 15c. for one dozen, 40c. for fifty, 75c. for one hundred. Order them from The American Christian Convention, or The Christian Publishing Association. Both are in the Christian Publishing Association Building, Dayton, Ohio.

If the hopes and wishes of the Department of Publishing are even in a measure realized, the effort and expense of the publication of the series will be justified.

O. W. WHITELOCK, Secretary for Publishing.

01.01. REV. ABNER JONES

REV. ABNER JONES The Man Who Believed and Served

Creeds and confessions? High Church or the low?

I cannot say; but you would vastly please us If with some pointed Scripture you could show To which of these belonged the Savior, Jesus.

I think to all, or none. Not curious creeds Or ordered forms of churchly rule be taught, But soul of love that blossomed into deeds, With human good and human blessing fraught. On me no priest nor presbyter nor pope, Bishop nor dean, may stamp a party name; But Jesus, with his largely human scope, The service of my human life may claim.

Let prideful priests do battle about creeds, The church is mine that does most Christ-like deeds.

--John Stewart Blackie.

Abner Jones was four years old when the Declaration of Independence was signed. He was born amid the birth throes of a nation, and his first breath was that of political liberty. The first sounds that fell upon his youthful ears were the screams of the American Eagle, as it proudly beat the air in celebration of the great victory of the Revolutionary war.

He belonged to nature's noblemen, whose high-born spirit refused the low servilities of political and ecclesiastical courts, but who proudly stood erect in the presence of both king and pope, and declared that of right all men are free. To that generation liberty was the simple birthright of all human beings; they claimed it as such; they revered and held it fast as the inalienable gift of God, which was not to be surrendered to power, nor sold for gold. It was theirs as men; without it they did not esteem themselves as men; it was essential to their happiness, a thing to be prized above wealth, ease, honor, country, or life itself. They claimed for each person a perfect individual freedom in matters of conscience. No one was authorized to be master over thought, or commissioned from on high to tell men what to believe. No man, nor group of men, could sit in judgment in the realm of thought. God had given to man the boundless element of truth, the shoreless and fathomless ocean of love, and who should direct his path. We now know that there was manliness in the words of Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty, or give me death." The spirit of liberty and equality was in the air, and many thousand hearts echoed every sound that went forth in hope of its realization. The farmer's cottage, the pioneer's cabin, and the well-to-do trader's mansion, all gleamed in radiant light as the word went forth that the yoke was to break, and the bondage end. Amid such surroundings Abner Jones first saw the light of day, and had grown to young manhood e'er the spirit had subsided, or the tumult ceased. He was born a freeman in principle, a freeman in thought, a freeman in action, and when grown he came to his inheritance, and in the consciousness of that high born right he refused allegiance to all kings, except the King of kings, and confessed to no bishop, except the Bishop of his soul. But while he was so well favored in the spirit of his early years, he was nevertheless greatly handicapped by the severe

limitations of his material surroundings.

He was born in Royalton, Massachusetts, April 28, 1772. Eight years afterward his father moved to Bridgewater, Vermont. At that early day the state was yet a wilderness, and his father the first settler in that part of it. In his Memoirs he says: "Our house (though to the popular part of mankind may seem strange) was erected without either plank, joist, boards, shingles, stone, brick, nails or glass, but was built wholly of logs, bark, boughs and wooden pins, instead of nails. The snow was four feet deep, and the weather extremely cold, and many trees within reach of the house, and two miles from neighbors. We were favored, however, with warm clothing and solid provision, and enough of it. The great plenty of wood which was so nigh was easily collected into large heaps before one end of the house (the greater part of which was open) and set on fire, thus it was kept day and night until the weather grew warm. What little household furniture we then had was drawn two miles on hand sleds, by men on snow shoes, which made a path sufficiently hard for my mother, and such of the children as were not able to assist in drawing the hand sleds, to follow after." And this was not the only limitation. Vermont was a wilderness, dense, dreary, melancholy. Poisonous serpents were in the grass, wild beasts were in the forest, skulking Indians were in the shadows, and treacherous white men were by no means unknown. Fifty miles back from the Atlantic Coast the country was an unbroken jungle. Dense forests and impassable morasses added to the difficulty of travel, and in places made it impossible. Travel was on foot, or horseback; schools were few, and poorly equipped; the entire population of the United States would not exceed three and a quarter million, when young Jones cast his first vote, and yet, with all these limitations, and more of like character besetting his path, he marched steadily on, until his name and his fame have been entwined in the hearts of all who know and love the Christian Church. None of us have ever seen this great pioneer of religious liberty in the flesh, but we have breathed his spirit, we have felt his presence, we have known his power, and we have been aided by the strength of his faith and the character of his courage. He is a force never to be forgotten; he made his contribution to the cause of Christian freedom, and though dead, he yet speaketh. When he was but eight years old, he was deeply concerned about his soul, and went through all the soul-racking experiences common to those early days. He says of such experience: "I know not a better similitude than the wilderness in which I then dwelt; uncultivated, and inhabited by wild beasts of prey, dreary and melancholy." But from out the gloom his soul emerged into the light, and from that time begins the life about which we write. That the reader may know something of his religious experience, we repeat it as he tells it in his Memoirs:

"A dreadful event occurred just at this time, in which a man was accidentally shot by his intimate friend, while hunting deer. As may well be supposed, in a population so sparse, a tremendous excitement was created which ended in a 'revival of religion so general, that it seemed there was not a person come to years of reflection, who did not share in it, and many were brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light.

"I remember of having my attention more than usually called up to the concerns of my soul, in the above mentioned reformation, by hearing Mr. Benjamin Burch speak about death, judgment and eternity. Although I was only nine years old, the pride of my heart was so great that I was ashamed to let any one know that I felt concerned about my soul, neither could I bear to have any one see me weeping. I now felt the need of religion more than ever I had done before. I was fully convinced that I must be born again or be damned. I used frequently to resort to secret prayer. The place

which I chose for this purpose was at the foot of a rock, where it seemed there was a place carved out on purpose for me to kneel down in.

"About this time there came a man by the name of Snow, into these parts, who was a Baptist preacher, or rather an exhorter. He had a meeting appointed one evening about a quarter of a mile from my father's, which I attended. As I was going, I remember of trying to pray that God would have mercy on me. I felt particularly desirous that I might get some good that evening. I do not remember ever to have had such a desire before. When I arrived every thing seemed overspread with gloominess and darkness, and every thing of a religious nature appeared melancholy, and I do not remember that the thought ever passed my mind that religion yielded any joy, or peace. All the advantage I thought of, was that it would save my soul from eternal misery, and on that account I felt desirous to obtain it, feeling fully satisfied of my lost, undone condition. It appeared to me as though for a moment I was lost, and then every thing appeared new. I really thought that the preacher had entirely altered his subject from something that was melancholy, to something joyful and happy. The following thoughts passed through my mind in swift succession: What is this? It is something entirely new; it makes me completely happy; I wish to enjoy it forever. After the speaker had done, my father rose and gave a word of exhortation, as I had often heard him before, and which always until that time seemed to fill my mind with gloom. But I really thought my father spoke as he never had before, for it appeared to be glorious. I did not at that time think the alteration was in me, but thought it was in my father. The unspeakable joy and peace which I then felt, I cannot describe. I was completely happy, and wished for nothing more. The fear of being miserable was entirely gone from my mind, and the dreary gloom that before rested on my mind had vanished away. All this time I had no idea what it was that caused this change in my mind. From whence it came, and whither it went, I could not tell. I had no thought that I was converted. My mind remained in this situation for a number of days, not knowing what these things meant.

"At length one day, as I was passing from the house to the barn, these words came to me with great force: 'For this my Son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found.' Luke 15:24. This was the first passage of Scripture that was ever sent home to my heart. It seemed to open, and explain to my understanding, how I had been dead in sin, and made alive in Christ; and also how I had been lost, but was now found of Christ as a Savior. From that moment a hope sprang up in my soul of eternal life." This experience was not unbroken. He had seasons of doubt and despair. At one time, while working in the field, he felt so depressed that it appeared to him that he was eternally deprived of hope. He really felt that he had begun his eternal, endless, despairing misery; he believed that he heard the voice of God saying to him, "Depart from me ye cursed." In his despair he dropped his work, and ran with wild, reckless speed to his mother, who was able to comfort him. For some years his experiences were contradictory; at times the most exhilarating joy would overflow his soul, and all would be light and peace; at other times the most indescribable gloom would settle down upon him, and he would walk in darkness and in doubt. But at last he was firmly anchored in the faith of the gospel, and was assured of his acceptance, and on the 9th of June, 1793, he was baptized by Elder Elisha Ransom, of Woodstock, Vermont, and received to membership in the Baptist Church. When twenty-one years of age he was deeply impressed that he must preach the gospel, and the question came to him, "If I must preach, what shall I preach?" He was far from being satisfied with the views, or creed, of his brethren; he determined to give the whole matter a careful and serious investigation. He accordingly took the Bible, and without note

or comment, and without consulting any individual, or receiving sympathy from any living being, he commenced a prayerful and careful examination of the Book itself. He was led to conclude that the name Baptist was not the authorized name for the followers of Jesus Christ, and that the polity of the Baptist Church could not be supported by the Scriptures, and yet for a while he continued in fellowship and in service with the church. The story of his call to the ministry, and his courage in the matter of his ordination, is told by his son, A. D. Jones, in the following language:

"Elder Jones commenced preaching in September, 1801, and from that time to the day of his death he gave himself with great fidelity to the good work. From the first, he announced his determination to stand alone, and acknowledge the authority of no church or set of men. He and about a dozen others, laymen, and residents of Lyndon, covenanted together in church form, and called themselves CHRISTIANS--rejecting all party and sectional names, and leaving each other free to cherish such speculative views of theology as the Scriptures might plainly seem to teach them. This was probably the first FREE CHRISTIAN Church ever established in New England.

"He immediately became an itinerant, and went wherever and whenever he was invited; and soon found large congregations in all the neighboring towns. He presently extended his sphere of labor into the adjoining States, and in the course of two or three years swept nearly the whole extent of New England.

"When Elder Jones commenced preaching, he had great doubts about his being called of God to this work. He therefore made a vow, that he would preach one year, unless convinced before its expiration that he was doing wrong. He had property enough to support his family for that length of time, and he supposed that if God had called him to the ministry He would provide bread for his family. The year went round, and plenty crowned his board. He had not touched the little he had accumulated in his medical practice. So his fears were somewhat abated, and he more fully believed that the hand of the Lord was in it, and that he must now consecrate himself entirely to the work of the ministry.

"He accordingly looked around him for the means of ordination. Now it happened about this time that he was invited to attend a quarterly meeting among the Free-will Baptists. He was pleased with the zeal and piety of the brethren, and his heart was strongly drawn towards them. He preached among them, and to much acceptance. They were desirous that he should become one of their number, and solicited him to do so. I will let him give his own account of the conference that passed between them:

"I attended the Elders' conference, and gave them my views of being nothing but a Christian; and that I could not be a Free-will Baptist; yet that I heartily fellowshiped them as Christians, and so far was happy to unite with them in the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I further observed that I should be glad to receive from them the right hand of fellowship as a Christian, but not as a Free-will Baptist; for the Lord had taught me that I must be a Christian only. Although their fellowship was very desirable, as I was entirely alone, yet I determined that it should be known what kind of fellowship was meant.

"I said to them, "You came out free, but the devil sent the name of Freewillers after you, and you have picked it up."

"Elder Randall observed, "We glory in the name of Freewillers."

"I answered, "I will not acknowledge any of the devil's impositions. Understand me perfectly, brethren, I do not wish to join the Free-will Baptists. I wish Christian fellowship. If hereafter it should be asked, 'Have you joined the Free-will Baptists?' the answer will always be, 'No.' It shall not be said thereafter, 'Brother Jones, you belong with us, and our rules are thus and so.' I will never be subject to one of your rules; but if you will give me the right hand as a brother, and let me remain a free man, just as I am, I should be glad."

"On these grounds, the right hand of fellowship was cheerfully given. A number of months after this they voluntarily appointed an ecclesiastical council, and ordained me a free man.

"Elder Jones received ordination on the last day of November, 1802. Elders Aaron Buzzell, Nathaniel King and Nathaniel Brown were the officiating clergymen." From childhood he had been taught the Scriptures according to the Calvinistic formula. The doctrine of the trinity, original sin, vicarious atonement, literal punishment for sin in a literal lake of fire, had been his daily mental and moral diet, from his earliest recollection. When he came to know for himself the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, he felt his intellect outraged and his moral sense at war with the system of doctrine, and hence there was nothing for him to do but to count the cost, pay the price, and meet the issue, and this, he did bravely, courteously, and courageously. When James O'Kelly went out from the Methodist Conference, no doctrine was involved, but when Abner Jones went out from the Baptist Church nothing but doctrine was involved. Immediately the brand of a heretic was upon him, and he was religiously ostracized, and his doctrine denounced as of the devil and dangerous. Always in such separations love is put to shame, and the truth suffers. But like all men of vision he was willing to suffer for conscience' sake. He had faith in what he believed; he had faith in the future; he believed that no man, or group of men, had the right to say to honest seekers after truth, this is true, and this is false, but that every man must find the truth for himself, and finding it for himself it is his alone. No great man has ever been inspired through his memory, nor by the ideals of the past. Abner Jones was a truly great man, and he was not afraid of the future, and, like the Master, he set his face steadfastly to go to his Jerusalem. He was not unmindful of his obligation to those who had first taught him the way of life; his friends were now doubly dear to him, seeing that he must be separated from them, but cost what it would in friendship, and in fellowship, his duty was imperative, and his way clear, and like the hero that he was, he walked out alone to dare and to do for the right. Nor was he ignorant of what he would have to suffer in the untrodden path he had chosen for his feet. He knew that he would have to run the theological gauntlet, and that doctrinal sticks and stones of enormous size would be hurled at him by minds of gigantic strength, and hearts of conscientious conviction; he saw the wall, grim and dark, that was to separate him from those he loved; he saw the fiery red tongue of envy and hatred protruding from every pulpit he had hitherto occupied; he knew that everything would be done within the possibility of human strength to crush him, and silence his teaching; he knew that he would be looked upon as a disturber of society, and a preacher of strange doctrine; he knew that the firesides at which he had sat and held sweet communion with his brethren would be his to enjoy no more; he knew that the tables at which he had eaten would be given to another; he knew that he would be spoken of among his old friends as "one that is not of us" and that upon his head would fall the anathemas of the whole church, but what could he do? That old sweet spirit of freedom that he had breathed through all his early years now surged through his soul and permeated his whole being and, like a mighty power moving toward, a glorious hope, he went out into that truth which makes all men free.

While Abner Jones was not college trained, he yet merited and held a creditable place among the educated of his day. He was a teacher in the common schools, of recognized ability; he studied medicine, and was a successful and popular practitioner for several years; he acquired a creditable mastery of the Greek, Latin and Hebrew grammars, and could read with tolerable readiness in each of these languages; he accumulated considerable property while practicing medicine, all of which he used in maintaining his family while preaching the gospel to the poor. These facts are recited that the reader may know something of the man whose contribution to the Kingdom of God has met the approval of the church for more than a hundred years, and which grows in favor with men as the years go by. What was his special contribution?

01.02. That Character is a sufficient test of Christian Fellowship.

That Character is a sufficient test of Christian Fellowship.

He taught that it was not so much what a man believed, as it was what he was in life and conduct. It was more than incidental that this pronouncement came from Abner Jones. His character was an embodiment of his teaching. James O'Kelly, the sturdy personality, that towering individual, stood for the right of the one man; he could not be absorbed; his individuality was impressive and convincing, and it was fitting, indeed it was inevitable, that he should speak for the individual. But Abner Jones possessed no such impressive personality. His strength was in his character. He was a brother among brethren; a physician in the sick room; a nurse at the bedside; a pastor in the home; a preacher in the pulpit; a laborer in the field and at his trade; and when he spoke it was with his character, as well as with his tongue. It is indeed significant that the distinctive principles of the Christians had for their expression distinctive types of men. O'Kelly, with a strong, convincing personality, stood for the right of the individual; Jones, the man of character, stood for character as the sufficient test; and Stone, the man of the schools--the book man--for the Bible as a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

Abner Jones never taught, as some would have us think, that there could be Christian character in the absence of the fundamental principles of Christian faith. He did not admit that one could accept or reject Christ, and still have Christian character; neither did he admit that one could accept or reject the doctrines of repentance, faith, prayer, or any other fundamental doctrine of the Bible, and still have Christian character; he never taught that one could believe or disbelieve them and one would be as good as the other. Abner Jones knew, as we all know, that we cannot have a Divine command before us, and say to all men, you can treat that command as you like; if you like it, keep it; if you don't like it, don't keep it; it really does not matter; please yourselves, and all will be right in the end. Such teaching never entered the mind of Jones, nor is it to be found anywhere in all his teaching. But in the field of interpretation he maintained a Christian character, he was entitled to fellowship, no matter how widely he might differ from his fellows in intellectual conception of truth. When a man gives proof that his heart is right with God, and his life is right with men, why should there be a divergence that would debar him of fellowship! Rev. Henry Ward Beecher said that he was sensitive in behalf of theologies, but that when theology put its hoof upon a living, palpitating heart, his heart cried out against it. Abner Jones said as much before Mr. Beecher was born, and his followers have been saying it over after him. The fact is that most of the religious controversies are of detail. Christians cannot stand apart, except on matters which do not touch individual Christian character. Individual Christian character, let it be said, is not what a man believes, for devils believed, and remained devils; not what he is on the Sabbath Day, when he is influenced by the sanctuary, the music, the prayers, the sermon, the fellowship and the spirit of worship, but what he is on Sunday, and in the week-days when life is wearing, and working, and weaving for him the garment which he is to wear when he stands to be judged for the deeds done in the body, and it was Jones' contention, and the contention of all his followers, that such a character should have Christian fellowship despite the mental attitudes he may chance to hold.

Not that belief, as elsewhere stated, can be ignored, for what a man believes makes all the difference between life and death, salvation and destruction. A man sincerely believing that there is no precipice before him, when there is one, will not be saved from a broken neck, should he go forward and fall over, but as to the question of that precipice being a thousand feet perpendicular, or sloping after the first five hundred feet, men may dispute about to their hearts' content.

Doctor Jones knew and taught, as we must know and teach, that there are some things about which opinions are not admissible.

Life is not a matter of opinion. Life is real; life is a fact. But accepting life as a fact, we may then express opinions concerning its development. We may differ in our opinions as to the best way to develop life. We may discuss the time that a child should enter school; what books should be studied, and for what length of time. We may discuss the age at which one should join the church, enter society, engage in business, without in any way disagreeing about the fundamental fact.

Law is not a matter of opinion. Law is a fact. I do not mean a law, this or that law, but law as it enforces itself in nature, in life, and indeed in all things. Knowing that without law the sunrise would be irregular, the seasons uncertain, society insecure and progress impossible, then we may proceed to discuss the various methods, and believe in the multiplied ways by which law is enforced, and none of our beliefs, opinions, or arguments would either change the law, or affect our character.

Health is not a matter of opinion. Health is a fact. When once we are agreed that health is a fact, and of supreme importance, then we may discuss whether we should eat much or little, few or many times a day; whether it is better to drink water hot, or cold, or whether we should drink it at all; whether or not we should retire early, and rise early, or retire late and sleep late.

Farming is not a matter of opinion. Farming is a fact. The soil must be cultivated, or life would perish from the earth. Farming must be done according to seed and season. Even though a farmer should believe with all sincerity that seed planted without preparing the ground would be as good as seed sown in well prepared ground, or that one month of the year was just as favorable as another for planting seed, and would act accordingly, he would find himself with barren fields and empty barns. But, having settled that farming is a fact, and is governed by law, he may differ from his neighbor as to whether or not turnips have greater food value than potatoes, or whether white corn is better than yellow, without affecting his harvest, or changing his character. His belief would influence his course as a farmer but would not change his personal virtues. His truthfulness, honesty, uprightness, and indeed all other personal virtues would remain unchanged. His rating as a farmer would be in the fact that he farmed, that his fields produced grain and his orchards fruit, and not upon any belief that he might have about relative values of seed, or the kind of machinery to be used. All these principles hold good in matters of religion, as well as in the ones mentioned. Let it be settled that the Bible is the word of God, that Jesus Christ is God's son, that he came into the world to save men, that sin must be forgiven, or the soul suffer, that repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ puts the life into proper relationship to the Divine government, and other fundamentals about which there is not, and never has been, disagreement, and believers may have opinions ad infinitum. The mischief is that we attach far too much importance to things that are mere matters of opinion, and the result is that we have sectarian and denominational bigotry on all sides; one little bigot trying to slay another little bigot, and to make

out that he holds in his own little head, and carries in his own little heart infinite truth and eternal justice. We have all too long been running up and down the lists of men's opinions, examining their beliefs to see what ones we could adopt, when we should have been inquiring about the central purpose of their life. When Doctor Jones found a man who was fundamentally right in the central purpose of his life, he hastened to invite his fellowship, and he asked, even demanded, fellowship on the same basis, and that has been the fundamental plea of the Christians from his day until now, and may God forbid that it shall ever be otherwise. When men differ in opinion, see truth from different angles, they give evidence of life, a sign of vitality, and the assurance of progress. When a man says there is no God, he puts himself outside the realm of opinion. When a man says there is no such thing as truth, no such thing as honesty, no such thing as virtue, no such thing as the sanctity and purity of the home, he puts himself outside the realm of opinion. With such a man there is no discussion, nor argument; no exchange of thought, for there is nothing to discuss, no point to argue, and no thought to exchange, and with such men neither Jones nor his followers had fellowship. To the end of time men will differ in their thinking. Truth is infinite. All facts break up into countless forms as soon as men begin to investigate them, and men describe, and interpret what they see. Abner Jones contended that it was wrong to impose the duty of seeing all things in the same light, and from the same angle, and that intellectual tests would not answer where truth was infinite and the human mind finite. And why, I ask, denounce two men of equally good character, but who chance to see truth from different angles, and within different limitations. We must know men by their fruits, but their fruitage must be in service, and not in doctrine. Christian character is in life, not in doctrine; in service, not in commandments; in heart, not in intellect; in love, not in syllogisms. Abner Jones, for himself, saw certain forms of obedience, and certain interpretations of truth, so clear and distinct that he could not think, nor speak independent of them, but he never taught that they should be tests of Christian faith for others. They were to him a means to an end, and hence his fellowship was based upon Christian character. He believed and taught that a man is not a man because he thinks aright, but because he acts aright. He contended that a man who repented of his sins and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior possessed the fundamental and necessary elements of Christian faith, and from that point on his attitude toward God, and his conduct toward men, was a sufficient basis for Christian fellowship, no matter how widely he might chance to differ from others in matters of doctrine and commandments. He little cared whether his neighbor went to this church, or to that one, provided he was a true worshipper while there, and afterward he would graciously and effectively wait upon his Lord in loving personal service to His children. To him it was far more important to visit the sick in the name of the Lord, than it was to wait upon Him in proclaiming a doctrine, or yielding obedience to an ordinance. Were Doctor Jones living today, he would not be a stranger to the emphasis we are now laying upon service, for he taught it, and he lived it, through all his years, beginning with his freedom from ecclesiastical domination.

It was urged then, as it is now, that the test was not specific enough for so vital a matter; that by it any one could be admitted to church fellowship, no matter what he believed. But, as explained elsewhere, that was not true, but it is true that no matter what one believes, ones acceptance or rejection is based upon what one is in life and character and not upon what one chances to believe about certain theological doctrines. Goodness is the only orthodoxy that God cares anything about, and every man who lives the Christ life is accepted of him. There were then, and there are now, those who ask questions about facts and feasts, about moons and modes, about days and

doctrines, mechanical scholars, mechanical Christians, technical legalists, who must always go to priest or book to know what they must believe and do. Such ones fast by rule, and go to church by rote, they read their Bibles by measurement, and their prayers by seasons. Jones could not bind himself to fast on certain days, or do any other thing according to code or decree. He believed and taught that the man who determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified was entirely orthodox. Today no man of immoral character would be admitted to church membership, though he believed, accepted and endorsed all the doctrinal requirements of the church. The character test is quite largely the one that holds first place in business, as well as in the church. A great American banker testified before a congressional committee that banks loaned money on character security, rather than on property; that no matter how much property a man might have, if he did not have a good character, he could not borrow money. When asked if that was the way he loaned money he answered, "Yes; I have drawn my check for a million dollars to men who had no property at all." The Vice-President of a large and prosperous Loan and Savings Association said to the writer: "There is a moral value which has a rating: we take a character risk as well as a property risk, but we never take a property risk alone." This principle is the basis of partnerships for trade or manufacture. Men of large estate in committing their affairs to agents or managers are guided by the same principle, for if a man is not truthful, trustworthy, honest and discreet, no matter how much he may know, he has neither part nor lot in a business organization of character and standing. More and more character and not creed is becoming the basis of fellowship in the domain of the church. Within the month (March, 1921) the writer had a letter from a Christian woman, a licentiate member in a Christian Conference, telling him that she had been teaching in the Sunday-school of a strictly orthodox church, and that when the pastor was told that she did not believe all the doctrines of the denomination, he expressed great surprise and disapproval that she had been teaching. The purpose of her letter to the writer was for advice. She was advised to remain true to her conviction of truth, and not to appear in a false light, to pass for something she was not. She was reminded that the test of fellowship in the Christian Church was not doctrinal, but character, and that she had better resign, and be true, than to teach and be false. She prepared her resignation, and handed it to the pastor of the church, reminding him of the situation. He would not accept the resignation. He very frankly said to her, "Your character and your service are both acceptable to me and my church. You keep on teaching the Bible and we will say nothing about the doctrine."

Two things appear to the writer to be true. One is that Christian character is a safe and equitable test, for by it men are accepted at their full value, neither receiving a premium for certain beliefs, nor suffering a discount for others. The second is that a doctrinal test for church membership reduces the standard to the approval of an ecclesiastical court, and no such court is divinely authorized. We are to call no man master, for one is our Master even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Abner Jones, having assured himself of the ground of his faith, started out with great enthusiasm and high hope to preach it to others. It was to him so reasonable, so Biblical, that he never doubted its acceptance by others, but in this he was sadly disappointed. It was not long until he, and his followers, were excluded from the Baptist churches, and having none of their own, they were without places or worship. Henry Wendall, a member of Doctor Stillman's church, hired a hall in Boston, at his own charges, paying for it at the rate of \$150.00 per annum, and a Mr. Cole, of Charlestown, opened the upper story of his dwelling for Conference meetings, seating it at his own

expense, The audiences that gathered in these places for worship were large and orderly, and yet they were disturbed by the rabble, to the extent of storming the house. Especially was this true in Boston, where the interruption became so distressing that the congregation made appeal to the town authorities for protection. The petition was sent to the "Selectmen of the town of Boston." The document is quite elaborate and bears date of September 16, 1804. It recites the disturbance, and the means that had been taken to prevent it. After the usual formula of address common to that day the petition says in part:

"It is now more than four months since we have met in this place, as above mentioned. We had not long occupied, before some young men--by their appearance from 14 to 18 years of age--began to disturb us by talking loud in meeting, stamping and scraping on the floor with their feet, laughing out loud, whistling and caterwauling, running up and down stairs eight or ten at a time, striking on the stair-casing with their staves, and yelling in a most ridiculous manner, with language most obscene and insulting. Ladies have been treated in such an insolent manner by them, that they dare not pass that way, even in the early part of the evening, without protection. We have had our lights frequently blown out, our lamps in the entry knocked down and broken, every evening on which we meet, unless we watch them. We have several times had our door locked, in order to prevent our coming out when we wished. Segars have been smoked in time of meeting repeatedly. It is common to have our house stoned in time of worship. We believe in one instance that as many as about twenty stones or brickbats have been thrown against the house in time of one meeting, together with a number of loud, tumultuous huzzas. Loud, do we say? Yes, so loud that they have been heard on Charlestown Training Field. The gate at the entrance of our yard has been torn down repeatedly while we have been worshipping. When people go out of worship, they cannot walk peaceably, but have often been insulted in the most shameful manner. Firing squibs at the house and into the yard, has of late become common. As near as we can judge, not far from twenty were blown off in one evening. Fire, flying in such a manner around a house, at such a dry season as this, is truly alarming. Many more things might be named by us, but we forbear. And now, gentlemen, as you stand in the characters of fathers and guardians of the town, we request that you would in some manner, as you in your wisdom shall think best, use your influence to stop such tumultuous and disgraceful conduct. We feel firmly attached to the government of our country, as well as being desirous of our own peace, and in the violation of either gives us pain.

We entreat you, gentlemen, to act by the golden rule, and in this case do as you would wish to be done by. We are very sensible that many unfavorable stories are reported about our manner of worship, and many things which are entirely false. We endeavor to regulate our form of worship as nearly according to the Scripture rule as possible; we will not set ourselves up as being perfect, but liable to err as well as others. We assure you we mean to be governed by the laws of our land, if we conduct otherwise the law is open."

Despite all these interferences, handicaps and discouragements, the man kept on, and the Lord was with him and abundantly blessed his labors. It will be of interest to know that the first church he organized was at Lyndon, Vt., in 1801. This was before his ordination to the ministry. The second church was organized in the autumn of 1802, at Hanover, N. H., and the third during the winter of 1803, at Piermont, in the same state. The first meeting-house erected under his labors was at Salem, Massachusetts. It was situated on English Street, was twenty by forty feet, and bore

the name Christian Tabernacle.

Abner Jones died May 29, 1841.

02.00. BARTON WARREN STONE

REV.

BARTON WARREN STONE The Man Who Studied and Taught

BOOKLET--FOUR

By

J. F. BURNETT Minister in the Christian Church

02.01. Foreword

Foreword This is one of a series of booklets prepared and issued under the direction of the Secretary for Department of Publishing of The American Christian Convention, that the members of our churches and Sunday-schools may be well informed as to the history and distinctive principles of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH which accepts and proclaims:

The Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the church.

Christian our only name.

The Bible our rule of faith and practice.

Individual interpretation of the Scriptures, the right and duty of all.

Christian character the test of fellowship.

The union of all the followers of Christ, to the end that the world may believe.

Several of the booklets are from the pen of John Franklin Burnett, D. D., who has given many years of his life to research and investigation of the subjects he presents. Others are by men of outstanding ability who have given many years of service in the Christian Church. They will present the distinctive principles of the Christian church as essentials in Christian life and the basis for church unity.

While the booklets have not been prepared especially for study books, yet the subject matter presented can be studied with profit by the individual, students, Christian Endeavor societies, Sunday-school classes, etc., particularly as a part of programs for stated week-day meetings. It is the hope of the Secretary for the Department of Publishing that they will be given by pastors to all new members as they are accepted into church. They are also intended for general distribution, by pastors and religious workers in our churches, to those who may be interested in the church and principles of the Christians.

No. 1 is The Origin and Principles of the Christians with an account of the coordinating of the bodies of different sections.

No. 2 is a historical and biographical sketch of Rev. James O'Kelly, who courageously stood for individual liberty in religious thought and worship.

No. 3 sketches the life of Rev. Abner Jones, a pioneer in the thought that character and life are the true test of religious fellowship as over against dogma.

No. 4 is a sketch of the life of Rev. Barton W. Stone, a scholar and religious teacher who advocated that the Bible is the book of life, and the only rule of faith and practice necessary for a Christian, as over against any formulated creed.

No. 5 combines sketches of Elias Smith, publisher, and Horace Mann, educator.

No. 6 gives sketches of the pioneer women workers of the Christian Church. That all who use these booklets judiciously may be supplied, they will be sent free on request and payment of postage, 15c. for one dozen, 40c. for fifty, 75c. for one hundred. Order them from The American Christian Convention, or The Christian Publishing Association. Both are in the Christian Publishing Association Building, Dayton, Ohio.

If the hopes and wishes of the Department of Publishing are even in a measure realized, the effort and expense of the publication of the series will be justified.

O. W. WHITELOCK, Secretary for Publishing.

02.02. Rev. Barton Warren Stone

Rev. Barton Warren Stone The Man Who Studied and Taught

It takes great strength to live where you belong When other people think that you are wrong;

People you love, and who love you, and whose Approval is a pleasure you would choose. To bear this pressure and succeed at length In living your belief--well, it takes strength.

--Charlotte Perkins Gilman. With every great movement is associated great men. Reforms are only accomplished through human agencies. Martin Luther and the Reformation are inseparable. The Wesleys and revivalism are linked together. The American Revolution and Washington, the elimination of American slavery and Abraham Lincoln, Evangelism and Dwight L. Moody, Christian Union and Barton W. Stone, are inseparable--to think of the man in each particular place is to think of the work he wrought.

Great men can only be estimated through the perspective of years. Paul was accounted a criminal, John Bunyan was imprisoned, Washington was defamed, and Lincoln was the victim of vilest slander. It remained for future generations to recognize and appreciate their greatness, and accord to them their true place among the world's worthies. Even now we may be too near the days of Barton W. Stone to estimate properly his true value to the church, and to fully appreciate his real service in helping to clear the way for the great things the church is doing today. But when the history is written, and the final chapters are completed, it will be found that he made a large contribution to its triumphs. He, like Dr. Abner Jones, of New England, was born amid the stirring times of the Revolutionary War. His brothers were revolutionary soldiers, and the eventful scenes of those historic days were not only written upon his young mind, but influenced his whole life for all the years he lived. He drank so deeply of the spirit of political freedom that he could not do less than what he did for religious liberty.

Barton Warren Stone was born near Port Tobacco, Maryland, December 24, 1772. In 1793 he became a candidate for the ministry in the Presbyterian Church, in Orange County, North Carolina. The subject of his trial sermon, as assigned by the Presbytery, was "The Being and Attributes of God and the Trinity." His examination was satisfactory, but he did not accept license at that time. He went to his brother's home in Georgia, and while there was chosen Professor of Languages in the Methodist Academy, near Washington. After a year he returned to North Carolina, and attended the next session of the Orange Presbytery, and received license to preach. When the license was granted a venerable father in Israel gave him a Bible and said, "Go ye into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature." He commenced his public ministry at Cane Ridge and Concord, in Bourbon County, Kentucky. In 1798 these churches extended him a formal call to become their pastor, which call he accepted, and a day was set for his ordination. Of his ordination he says: "I went into Presbytery, and when the question was propounded, 'Do you receive and adopt the Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible?' I answered aloud, 'So far as I see it consistent with the word of God.' No objection being

made, I was ordained."

Elder Stone entered into the Trinitarian Controversy with much zeal and great assurance, and it would be strange if in the heat of controversy he had said, or written, nothing of a speculative character. In his more mature years he ceased all contentions and satisfied himself by speaking of the Son of God only as the Son of God had spoken of himself. He preached for the churches that had called him only for a few years, for he was in the Presbyterian ministry but seven years in all. His labors while pastor at Cane Ridge were excessive; he spared not himself that he might serve others, and indeed this was true of him throughout his whole life, for, like Paul, he was "in labor more abundantly." The Christian Herald (1825) describes him as follows:

"He is rather small in stature, but thickset and well proportioned, light complexion, hair curly, has a pleasant blue eye, expressive of great sensibility, his voice bold and commanding, his gestures natural and easy, his sermons characteristic and instructive. He never leaves any part of his text unexplained, and seldom do his hearers go away uninstructed."

He was, at this time, but a few years past fifty, and was in the prime of his manhood and the perfection of his strength. He was Secretary of the Kentucky Christian Conference, which evidently he had helped to organize in 1804. He was pastor at Cane Ridge during the time of the great revival there. Of this meeting he says:

"This memorable meeting came on Thursday or Friday before the third Lord's day in August, 1801. The roads were literally crowded with wagons, carriages, horsemen, and footmen, moving to the solemn camp. The sight was affecting. It was judged by military men on the ground that there were between twenty and thirty thousand collected. Four or five preachers were frequently speaking at the same time, in different parts of the encampment, without confusion. The Methodist and Baptist preachers aided in the work, and all appeared cordially united in it,--of one mind and one soul, and the salvation of sinners seemed to be the great object of all."¹

It should be stated that the great revival in which Elder Stone participated did not begin at Cane Ridge. Rather, it was carried there. It began with the preaching of Rev. James McGready, on Red River. This man, McGready, was a remarkable man. It was said of him that he would so array hell before the wicked that they would tremble and quake, imagining a lake of fire and brimstone yawning to overwhelm them, and the hand of God thrusting them into the horrible abyss. Also, it was said of him that the fierceness of his invectives derived additional terror from the hideousness of his visage, and the thunder of his tones. And it was said, also, that if you came anywhere upon a group of McGready's older people, you would find them weeping and talking about their souls, and the same was true of young people when found singly, or in groups. While B. W. Stone was yet in school he heard this son of Boanerges preach, and he describes the man, and the effect of his preaching, as follows:

"A crowd of people had assembled--the preacher came--it was James McGready, whom I had never seen before. He arose and looked around on the assembly. His person was not prepossessing, nor his appearance interesting, except his remarkable gravity and small, piercing eyes. His coarse, tremulous voice excited in me the idea of something unearthly. His gestures were sui generis, the perfect reverse of elegance. Everything appeared by him forgotten but the salvation of souls. Such earnestness--such zeal--such powerful persuasion--enforced by the joys

of heaven and miseries of hell, I had never witnessed before. My mind was chained by him, and followed him closely in his rounds of heaven, earth, and hell, with feelings indescribable. His concluding remarks were addressed to the sinner to flee the wrath to come without delay. Never before had I comparatively felt the force of truth. Such was my excitement that, had I been standing, I should have probably sunk to the floor under the impression."

Rev. McGready had charge of Presbyterian churches on Red River, Gasper River, and Muddy River, in Kentucky. Peter Cartwright says that when his father settled in that country, in 1793, it was called Rogues Harbor, and for the reason that the majority of the citizens were murderers, horse thieves, highwaymen, counterfeits, fugitives, bond-servants and absconding debtors who fled there from the clutches of the law. It was in this society that McGready, with his terrible countenance and thunderous voice, found the environment for which he was fitted, for no sooner did he begin his work there than a transformation began. It was here, in this modern Sodom, that the great revival had its beginning. Elder Stone was at the time pastor of the Presbyterian churches at Cane Ridge and Concord, in Bourbon County, Kentucky, and went over to attend the wonderful meeting of which he had heard. It was all, and more, than had been reported, and he carried back the fire to the Cane Ridge country, where it blazed with greater force than in any other section.

Elder Stone's interest in this great awakening was intense from the opening day, and none among them all labored with greater zeal, more conquering faith, nor triumphant hope than did he. When the revival closed he, unexpectedly and without desire, found himself the central figure in a large group of converts who had not faced the question of church membership, nor given the subject any consideration at all. They had been converted, and that was enough for them. They were in the kingdom, and were satisfied. But they were as sheep having no shepherd. Many of them belonged to families, parts of which had been brought up in some one of the churches engaged in the revival. Sectarianism did not die with the birth of souls into the kingdom. Indeed, it seemed to be stimulated, for each of the sects laid claim to a large number of the converts, and set about to secure them. Religious energy was consumed in denouncing the creed of each other. Party spirit ran high, and sectarianism grew bold and aggressive. Elder Stone's heart was broken over the wrangling of preachers, whose only aim seemed to be to add members to their church lists, and prove the correctness of their doctrine. It was not an easy task for him to decide his duty. He had been ordained a Presbyterian minister, had taken churches under his care, and was at that time pastor of the Cane Ridge Church, that was then in good standing and full fellowship in the Presbyterian Synod. He was harassed with misgivings at facing his old time co-laborers, and the doctrines which he himself had preached, and yet down deep in his heart he was conscious of the fact that creeds were divisive and believed that, when all human creeds and traditions should be set aside, Christians would find a simple, yet sufficient, rule of faith and practice in the Word of God. The processes by which he reached a conclusion disentangling himself from his former associates, and crossing the boundaries of sectarianism into the liberty of the children of God, were slow and painful. He was greatly misunderstood, and grossly misrepresented, but he remained unmoved in the course he meant to pursue. He was aided, no doubt, in reaching a decision by the sticklers for Calvinism complaining that he, and others, were preaching anti-Calvinistic doctrines, and finally the matter was brought before the Synod of Lexington, Ky., in 1803. Finding that the Synod would likely decide against them, the following persons withdrew: B.

W. Stone, Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar and John Thompson. The Synod proceeded to pass upon the sentence of "suspension," for the crime of departing from the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. Stone had never promised to accept the doctrine. He promised only to "receive it so far as he found it consistent with the word of God."

Elder Stone now saw that his connection with the Presbyterian Church must soon terminate, and accordingly he called his congregation together and informed them of the situation. He told them that he could no longer sustain to them the relation of pastor, and while he loved them dearly, he must be true to his conviction of truth and duty. He informed them that he expected to continue to preach the gospel among them, but it would be the gospel, and not ism. Immediately he, and his associates, formed what they termed "The Springfield Presbytery," and went on preaching and organizing churches for about one year. They discovered, however, that the Presbytery they had organized was about as sectarian as the one they had left, and so they proceeded to dissolve it, and, discarding all man-made creeds and human names, they took the Bible alone as the rule of their faith and practice, and the name Christian as the only name for believers in Jesus Christ.² Of this event Elder Stone says:

"Having divested ourselves of all party creeds and party names, and trusting alone in God, and the word of His grace, we became a by-word and laughing-stock to the sects around us; all prophesying our speedy annihilation. Yet from this period I date the commencement of that reformation which has progressed to this day. Through much tribulation and opposition we advanced, and churches and preachers were multiplied." The Last Will and Testament appears in the Origin and Principles of the Christians, but being directly connected with the life and work of Elder Stone, who in all probability wrote it, it is reproduced here:

02.03. The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery

The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the testator; for a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall in the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth fruit. Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word yet once more, signifies the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.--Scripture.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT The Presbytery of Springfield, sitting at Cane Ridge, in the county of Bourbon, being, through a gracious Providence, in more than ordinary health, growing in strength and size daily; and in perfect soundness and composure of mind; but knowing it is appointed for all delegated bodies once to die, and considering that the life of every such body is very uncertain, do make and ordain this, our last Will and Testament, in manner and form following, viz.:

Imprimis. We will, that this body be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.

Item. We will, that our name of distinction, with its Reverend title, be forgotten, that there be one Lord over God's heritage, and his name one.

Item. We will, that our power of making laws for the government of the church, and executing them by delegated authority, forever cease; that the people may have free course to the Bible, and adopt the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

Item. We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. And let none henceforth take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

Item. We will, that the church of Christ assume her native right of internal government--try her candidates for the ministry, as to their soundness in the faith, acquaintance with experimental religion, gravity and aptness to teach and admit no other proof of their authority but Christ speaking in them. We will, that the Church of Christ look up to the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers into the harvest; and that she resume her primitive right of trying those who say they are Apostles, and are not.

Item. We will, that each particular church, as a body, actuated by the same spirit, choose her own preacher, and support him by a free-will offering, without written call or subscription--admit members--remove offenses--and never henceforth delegate her right of government to any man or

set of men whatever.

Item. We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life, having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.

Item. We will, that preachers and people cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold signs of the times look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh.

Item. We will, that our weak brethren, who may have been wishing to make the Presbytery of Springfield their king, and wot [know] not what is now become of it, betake themselves to the Rock of Ages, and follow Jesus for the future.

Item. We will, that the Synod of Kentucky examine every member who may be suspected of having departed from the Confession of Faith, and suspend every such suspected heretic, immediately in order that the oppressed may go free, and taste the sweets of gospel liberty.

Item. We will, that Ja-----, the author of two letters lately published in Lexington, be encouraged in his zeal to destroy partyism--we will, moreover, that our past conduct be examined into by all who may have correct information; but let foreigners beware of speaking evil things which they know not.

Item. Finally, we will, that our sister bodies read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.

Springfield Presbytery.

June 28, 1804.

(L. S.) Robert Marshall,

John Dunlevy, Richard McNemar,

B. W. Stone,

John Thompson, David Purviance,

Witnesses.

02.04. On Baptism

On Baptism

One of the really heart-breaking experiences of Elder Stone was that of deciding for himself the mode of Christian baptism. It was not long after he, and his associates, came to the Bible itself that there was a dissatisfaction with their former belief on the subject. Elder Stone had been a believer in sprinkling, and had taught it, and now to face his old faith and the fact and fervor of his teaching, and then to publicly accept and practice immersion as the only mode of Christian baptism, was not an easy task, even for a man as strong as he. Of this experience and event he says:

"The brethren, elders and deacons came together on this subject; for we had agreed previously with one another to act in concert, and not to adventure on anything new without advice from one another. At this meeting we took up the matter in a brotherly spirit, and concluded that every brother and sister should act freely, and according to their conviction of right--and that we should cultivate the long-neglected grace and forbearance toward each other--they who should be immersed should not despise those who were not, and vice versa. Now, the question arose, who will baptize us? The Baptists would not, except we united with them; and there were no elders among us who had been immersed. It was finally concluded among us that if we were authorized to preach, we were also authorized to baptize. The work then commenced, the preachers baptized one another, and crowds came and were also baptized. My congregations very generally submitted to it, and it soon obtained generally, and yet the pulpit was silent on the subject. In brother Marshall's congregation there were many who wished baptism. As brother Marshall had not faith in the ordinance, I was called upon to administer. This displeased him, and a few others.

"The subject of baptism now engaged the attention of the people very generally, and some, with myself, began to conclude that it was ordained for the remission of sins, and ought to be administered in the name of Jesus to all believing penitents."

Elder Stone's idea of baptism is expressed in the following words, which are found in a letter addressed to Elder David Purviance, his old-time companion in service:

"It is no article of my faith that God cannot, and will not, forgive and save the penitent believer without immersion--but if a man knows to do right, and does it not, to him it is sin. Our duty is to teach the good and the right way, and not teach two or more ways to obtain the same end."

02.05. Christian Union

Christian Union In 1824 Elder Alexander Campbell visited Kentucky, preaching "Immersion in Water for the Remission of Sins." This was the first meeting between the two men, and they found that they had much common ground in gospel labor. Elder Stone was pleased with much of Campbell's teaching, and yet says, "That the doctrines had long been taught by the Christians--his co-laborers and himself."

There are three good reasons for the fellowship of these two great leaders. The first is the one given above, that they found common ground in gospel teaching. The second is that both were scholarly men. Stone had been a student from his early years, and had reached a fine degree of scholarship, but had spent the most of his life with men of the field and forest, to whom educational opportunities had been denied, and he hungered for companionship in intellectuality, and when he found it in Elder Campbell, he welcomed it with great heartiness. Elder Campbell was a teacher of great ability, a man of impressive personality, and Stone was a student, willing and anxious to learn, and he found in Mr. Campbell a teacher worthy of his confidence and respect. The third reason is, they were both reformers--Campbell from choice, Stone from force of circumstances. Each man was leading a movement away from sectarianism, and toward Christian unity. Mr. Campbell had a well-defined plan; a sure system of salvation; he knew a path already beaten hard by oft repeated travel. Mr. Stone was open to conviction; a man seeking a sure way to a definite goal. He wanted a safe path and a solid foundation, and with an open-mindedness that characterized his whole life, he gave attention to Elder Campbell's doctrine, and undertook to co-operate with him in propagating the truth in the interest of Christian Union. As early as 1827 the question of union was being considered, but nowhere is it shown that the union then in mind meant more than co-operation, and when the union, so called, was consummated, neither party abandoned its position--neither party went over to the other. Stone and his party, and Campbell and his party, were still in existence as distinctly as they were before they met and formed the union. They were undertaking to co-operate for the building up of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Of this union for the purpose of co-operation between the two men and their associates., Morrill, in the History of the Christian Denomination, says:

"The 'union' itself was consummated on New Year's day, 1832, in Hill Street Christian Church, at Lexington, Kentucky, where representatives of both parties pledged themselves 'to one another before God, to abandon all speculation, especially on the Trinity, and kindred subjects, and to be content with the plain declaration of Scripture on those subjects on which there had been so much worse than useless controversy.' The plain meaning is that they found common ground to occupy, threw away their divisive teachings and opinions, and acted as one. The men who at Lexington pledged themselves, there and then gave one another the hand of fellowship, speaking for themselves, and the churches they came from, but not for all the churches or the denominations in Kentucky or the United States. There was no voting, and no attempt at formal union, but merely a 'flowing together' of those like-minded. In token of that union Elder John Smith, of the Disciples of Christ, and Elder John Rogers, of the Christians, 'were appointed evangelists by the churches' to

promote that simple unsectarian Christian work, which was adhered to by thousands; and Stone took Elder J. T. Johnson, a Disciple, as co-editor of The Christian Messenger."

It is an obvious fact that in this union there was no joining one body to the other, in the sense that one body was lost in the other. The Disciples of Christ joined the Christians as certainly as the Christians joined the Disciples of Christ, and Alexander Campbell became a member of the Christian Church, as certainly as B. W. Stone became a member of the Disciples of Christ. It is evident that it was not Stone's desire, nor intention, to join the Disciples of Christ as an individual would join a church, but to make effective the union spirit, and reach the ideal so deeply seated and fervently cherished by the signers of the Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery, and their co-laborers, in the gospel. This "union" did not change the status of any name or church or minister or piece of property.

It is very evident that Elder Stone did not regard his union with the Disciples of Christ as leaving the Christian Church, nor was it ever so considered by the church as such. It was Stone's individual right to believe, and to teach as he believed, a privilege recognized by the Christian Church as belonging to each and every member of God's family.

Indeed, it is an open question whether or not Mr. Campbell did not oppose the union. There were well-known uncompromisable disagreements between Mr. Campbell and Mr. Stone, on the subject of baptism, and the name that should designate the believers in Jesus Christ. Campbell insisted on immersion in water before believers were received to membership in their churches, to which Stone strenuously objected, saying: "We cannot, with our present views, unite in the opinion that unimmersed persons cannot receive remission of sins." Upon the question of the name, Stone remained unmoved; he would not surrender the name Christian as a denominational title, and did all he could to get Mr. Campbell and his party to accept it. And, in addition to this, Elder Campbell clearly indicated his objection to the union in an editorial in the Millennial Harbinger, as follows: "Or does he (Stone) think that one or two individuals, of and for themselves, should propose and effect a formal union among the hundreds of congregations scattered over this continent, called Christians or Disciples, without calling upon the different congregations to express an opinion or a wish upon the subject? We discover, or think we discover, a squinting at some sort of precedency or priority in the claims of the writer of the above article." It is quite evident that the article referred to had been written by Elder Stone, in the interest of union, and defense of the name. In 1826 Elder Stone began the publication of a monthly periodical, which he named "The Christian Messenger," and which he continued to publish until 1844, though during the last two years of the time he was sorely afflicted, and greatly incapacitated. Part of the time he had for a co-laborer in this work, Rev. J. T. Johnson., but after his removal to Illinois, Elder D. P. Henderson served in the same capacity. In 1834 Elder Stone removed, with his family, to Jacksonville, Illinois. Here he found two congregations, one Christian, the other Disciple, or Reformers, as they were then known. He succeeded in having these unite, when he became their pastor. Immediately following the union of these two churches there was a great wave of Campbellism, which lost to the Christians not fewer than eight thousand members, and increased the membership of the Disciples of Christ as many. Christian Churches in Southern Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee were caught in the current of the oft repeated "Where the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent we are silent," and ere they knew it they had become churches of the Disciples of Christ, and many of them remain so until now. The writer personally knows of four churches in the Southern

Ohio Christian Conference, of which he is a member, where the above is true. They are the churches at Lawshe, Liberty Chapel, Georgetown and Bethel. As stated elsewhere, Stone was a stickler for the name Christian. His knowledge of the Greek language enabled him to understand that the name was given by divine appointment, and when the union was effected the name Christian was continued. In all probability this was the beginning of the use of the name by the followers of Campbell, for this church, and many others, became Disciples of Christ, that had been organized by Christian ministers.

Morrill, in closing the sketch of Elder Stone's life in "History of the Christian Denomination," says: "He was first and last a scholar, a successful educator and minister of the gospel; by force of circumstances, a religious reformer, an apologist of ability, and a journalist. Friends testify to the humility of his bearing, his perfect frankness and honesty, his intense piety, his great firmness and perseverance." He died in Missouri, November 9, 1844.

Barton W. Stone was a Christian in faith and character, and honestly believed that he was Christian, denominationally. That he affiliated with the Disciples of Christ, that he was pastor of their churches, that he used their church phraseology, that he believed and taught much of their doctrine, that he was buried by their ministers, is true, but all the while he believed that he was only exercising the right that had been accorded to Christian ministers since the dissolution of the Springfield Presbytery. However, it should be borne in mind that such affiliation did not exist until the beginning of 1832, and, as he died in 1844, could not have been more than about ten years of his active ministry, and that at a time when his strength was well-nigh spent, and his vigor greatly reduced.

02.06. Christian

Christian

Elder Stone, with heroic faith, clung to the name Christian, and worked with untiring energy and increasing zeal for the oneness of all God's children, with the Bible as the only creed. His idea of a true church was that it was a company of Christian people, united to one another in the service of God by voluntary covenant, and under the spiritual Lordship of Jesus Christ, with the Bible as the creed, and Christian the name. On the question of the name he says, in "Address to the Churches:"

"We have taken the name Christian, not because we considered ourselves more pure than others--but because we knew it was the name first given to the disciples of Jesus by Divine authority. It better agreed with our spirit, which is to unite with all Christians, without regard to names or distinctions. There are party names too many already in the world, without our assuming another. But our brethren, unwilling for us to bear that name, have given us others we will not own--as New-lights and Schismatics. The name New-lights is not novel. It was long ago given to Whitefield, to Wesley, to the former Methodists, to the new-side Presbyterians, or New-Brunswick Presbytery, to the first Baptists in Virginia, and indeed to every sect of living Christians in my remembrance for years past. To be called by the name of such worthies we need not blush. But this name, the least of all others, agrees with our profession. We have professed no new light--but that old, unsullied light which shines in the Bible.

"Did we profess, as others, that we must be enlightened by some supernatural power, a power extraneous from the Word, before we could believe the Word, then, with propriety, we might be called New-lights. Or did we profess a great many doctrines as true, which we could not prove by the Word of God, then we might be called so; but these professions we have never made; therefore, the name does not apply to us."

02.07. On the Bible as Authoritative

On the Bible as Authoritative On the subject of Christian Union, and the Bible as a sufficient rule for faith and practice, many pages could be taken from his writings, all of which would be pleasing and profitable reading, but the following must suffice:

"As man-made creeds have always divided Christians, and stood in the way of union, these must all be abandoned, and the Bible alone received as the only foundation and rule of faith and practice. On no other platform can all Christians meet. Here the Church rested in her best days. Here she would have rested, and remained in sweet union, had not human creeds been introduced and established as authoritative. From this period we may date the apostasy of the church. From this period Christians were divided, and many inspired with the fury of hell, persecuted each other to death, fighting under their great leader, the devil, 'transformed into an angel of light.' From this period the reign of darkness and ignorance commenced, called the age of darkness; for as the attention of the people were drawn to the creeds of the councils, it was of course drawn away from the Bible. They might believe the Bible, but must believe the creed. They might believe the Bible, but if their belief differed from the creed, anathemas and death were their doom. Happy for the people, in a worldly point of view, that they were soon after prohibited entirely from reading the Bible! There was then no more danger of losing their lives; for they now believed the creed alone, because this alone they knew, or could know. All Protestants with one voice condemn this conduct of our fathers, and highly extol the reformers of the sixteenth century for restoring to the people the Bible, and the divine right of reading and judging for themselves. But does not every Protestant see that the creed-making business is but the recommencement of the same tragic drama? Shall they plead for that which divides Christians, promotes strife, engenders hatred, impels to persecution, war, blood and death, and set up their own devices in the place of the Bible to judge and condemn a fellow Christian? Is not this like setting up the man of sin in God's judgment seat? Will any Christian plead for the life of his creed, when he must know that others cannot unite on it without hypocrisy? No! no! Let it die the death. Will any plead for the retention of his creed, because it has never promoted war, bloodshed and death? We may thank our God and our happy government for this. The lion is chained, but it lives, and secretly, raves and thirsts for blood. The Bible, the BIBLE ALONE, is the only religion in which Christians can all unite. Not on the opinions formed by man of the truths and facts stated in the Bible, but upon the facts themselves.

"If every one would read the Scriptures for himself, as by them he will be judged at last; if all would act up to their conviction of truth, independently, the great obstacle to Christian union would be removed. All would soon flow together in one body. If every humble Christian, the life of whose religion is divine, whose heart sighs for union, and whose lips speak the meaning of his heart in humble prayer to God, that all those who believe in Jesus according to the Scriptures might be one as the Father and Son are one--if every humble Christian of every sect, wearing this character, were to exert himself, not in wishing and praying only, but also in acting, the work would, like an overflowing flood, sweep off all refuges of lies, and the good of every name would flow together

into one glorious body."

02.08. Controversy and Creedalism

Controversy and Creedalism

There were times when he was forced into controversy, but he seems never to have lost his good and persuasive spirit, nor to have swerved from his line or argument for the name Christian, nor his insistence that the Book was an all-sufficient guide. No doubt at times he was carried too far by the heat of argument, but he was always true to his high moral and intellectual standards, and was instrumental in bringing many out of the ranks of human traditions, and putting into their hands the Book of Books; and had he done no more, his contribution to the kingdom of God would have been a worthy one. The testimony of the centuries is that Christians will not unite on a man-made creed, and as all Christians desire the unity of the church, we are forced to conclude that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the only platform upon which all may stand. The first Christians used no written creed. The earliest pastors of the church drew their conclusions from the Scripture itself, and they were contented to express their belief in the language of that Scripture, which they believed to be spoken of God. They were not curious to know that which was not clearly revealed; but they adhered faithfully to that which they knew to be true, and their variations were without schism and their differences without acrimony. But such was not true when Stone and his associates departed from the doctrines and forms of their churches.

It is difficult for us, in this day of modified creedal life, either to understand or appreciate the tenacity with which each denomination at that time enforced its doctrine, and insisted upon its creed as the only biblically correct one of them all. With strong vehemence they declared each other's creed to be wrong, and stood ready to prove it by the Scripture, and did prove it to their own satisfaction. Persistently each of them proved themselves to be right and all others wrong. Each denomination moved together as a flock of sheep moves through a valley, drinking the same water, nipping the same grass, and finding them to their taste. And, as is always the case, the constant discussion of some dogma, and the disproof of some dogma, inevitably begets in certain order of mind the temper to discuss and distrust all dogmas, and it may be that this had something to do with Stone's decision to leave the church of his youth. He suddenly found his old religious peace greatly disturbed; he was thrust into the thick of the wars of dogmatic theology, which were impassioned and rancorous to a degree beyond our ability to comprehend. Theology was not only rending the churches, but personal opinion was rending theology. We can little understand Stone's feelings when he found himself brought from the peaceful fields of pastoral service into the wrangling, sarcastic, envious creeds of that day, and especially so when his own honest opinions would either be dispensed with vitriolic criticism, or dismissed with a blast of scorn which would strike his face like a hot wind. Stone lived at a time when religious intolerance prevailed, when sect warred against sect, when the greatest preacher was he who had slain the most opponents, when it was the glory of one church to prove all others wrong. Soon after Stone's withdrawal from the church in which he had spent his life, up to that time, a law of the Synod, or Presbytery, forbade their people to associate with him and his party under pain of censure or exclusion from their communion. Aggressive hostilities against Stone and his co-laborers were declared from every

pulpit of the churches that had lost members by his movement, and the thunders of their denunciations and wrath were ceaseless and bitter. There was at that time a sort of blind devotion to denominations which led men to say: "My church, may she always be right, but right or wrong, my church," or "Other churches may be right, but we know that ours cannot be wrong." Amid all his bitter experiences, the unjust criticism, the warring of sects, and the loss of those who had gone out with him, he remained true to his faith and conviction of duty, and gave to the Christian world a declaration in which all man-made creeds are set aside, and the Bible given its rightful place--"A basis of Christian Union upon the Bible alone as the rule of faith and practice for the people of God." And be it said to the honor of the people who wear the name Christian, that never yet has any man who bore the "image and superscription" of the Lord Jesus Christ been denied fellowship among them. Today, as in the days of the illustrious Stone, they put the Bible, without note, comment, or interpretation, into the hands of those who would join them, and thus seat around one communion table John Wesley, Roger Williams and William Penn, and their fellowship for the one is the same as their fellowship for the others. And why should it not be so? Who are we that we should reject "one of these little ones" for whom Christ died?

Barton Warren Stone lived his life, he did his work, he fought his fight, and he won his crown, and though dead, he yet speaketh. Men die, MAN lives. The individual passes away by development or death, but there is a sort of groundline that runs through all human history, and Stone was such a groundline, and he moves among the churches today as a living personality, and his influence is as enduring as time.

1 NOTE:--Quite a full description of this meeting may be found beginning on page 29, "Origin and Principles of the Christians."

2 Note:--See Origin and Principles of the Christians, pages 19 to 28.

03.01. JAMES O'KELLY

REV. JAMES O'KELLY A Champion of Religious

===== Liberty =====

BOOKLET--TWO

1921 By

J. F. BURNETT

Minister in the Christian Church

03.02. FOREWORD

FOREWORD This is one of a series of booklets prepared and issued under the direction of the Secretary for Department of Publishing of The American Christian Convention, that the members of our churches and Sunday-schools may be well informed as to the history and distinctive principles of THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH which accepts and proclaims: The Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the church.

Christian our only name.

The Bible our rule of faith and practice.

Individual interpretation of the Scriptures, the right and duty of all.

Christian character the test of fellowship.

The union of all the followers of Christ, to the end that the world may believe.

Several of the booklets are from the pen of John Franklin Burnett, D. D., who has given many years of his life to research and investigation of the subjects he presents. Others are by men of outstanding ability who have given many years of service in the Christian Church. They will present the distinctive principles of the Christian church as essentials in Christian life and the basis for church unity.

While the booklets have not been prepared especially for study books, yet the subject matter presented can be studied with profit by the individual, students, Christian Endeavor societies, Sunday-school classes, etc., particularly as a part of programs for stated week-day meetings. It is the hope of the Secretary for the Department of Publishing that they will be given by pastors to all new members as they are accepted into church. They are also intended for general distribution, by pastors and religious workers in our churches, to those who may be interested in the church and principles of the Christians.

No. 1 is The Origin and Principles of the Christians with an account of the coordinating of the bodies of different sections.

No. 2 is a historical and biographical sketch of Rev. James O'Kelly, who courageously stood for individual liberty in religious thought and worship.

No. 3 sketches the life of Rev. Abner Jones, a pioneer in the thought that character and life are the true test of religious fellowship as over against dogma.

No. 4 is a sketch of the life of Rev. Barton W. Stone, a scholar and religious teacher who advocated that the Bible is the book of life, and the only rule of faith and practice necessary for a Christian, as over against any formulated creed.

No. 5 combines sketches of Elias Smith, publisher; Horace Mann, educator; and the pioneer women workers of the Christian Church. That all who use these booklets judiciously may be supplied, they will be sent free on request and payment of postage, 15c. for one dozen, 40c. for fifty, 75c. for one hundred. Order them from The American Christian Convention, or The Christian Publishing Association. Both are in the Christian Publishing Association Building, Dayton, Ohio.

If the hopes and wishes of the Department of Publishing are even in a measure realized, the effort and expense of the publication of the series will be justified.

O. W. WHITELOCK,

Secretary for Publishing.

Formatted in PDF/eBook format and made available by www.GravelHillChurchofChrist.com, 2013
The historical statements contained in this booklet were gleaned from many and varied sources, but mainly from the Life of James O'Kelly, by W. E. MacClenny, and Porter's Compendium of Methodism. The quotations from James O'Kelly are as quoted in the Life of James O'Kelly, by Mr. MacClenny.

Mr. MacClenny has produced a rare book which should be extensively read. The author of this booklet hereby acknowledges his obligation to the book, and expresses his thanks to its author.

03.03. REV. JAMES O'KELLY

REV. JAMES O'KELLY

A Champion of Religious

===== Liberty =====

The man is thought a knave or fool, or bigot plotting crime,

Who for the advancement of his kind, is wiser than his time.

For him the hemlock shall distill; for him the ax be bared;

For him the gibbet shall be built; for him the stake prepared.

Him shall the scorn and wrath of man pursue with deadly aim,

And malice, envy, spite, and lies shall desecrate his name.

But truth shall triumph at the last, for round and round we run,

And ever the right comes uppermost, and ever is justice done.

--Mackay.

Neither the place nor the time of James O'Kelly's birth can be determined with absolute certainty. Virginia and North Carolina each lay claim to the distinction, and there is good reason for believing that he was a native of Ireland. Mr. W. E. MacClenny has written a full and reliable history of James O'Kelly, in which he recites the evidence concerning the birth place of the great man, and says: "In view of the above facts and the early traditions of the Christians, we come to the conclusions: James O'Kelly was born and educated in Ireland, came to America in early life, seems to have settled near Moring's Post-office, in Surry County, Virginia, and lived there for some time before he moved to North Carolina." Be this as it may, he had the faith and the courage of an Irish patriot, and the courtesy and bearing of a Southern gentleman. There is not as much uncertainty as to the, date of his birth as to the name of the place. Appleton's Encyclopedia of American Biography names October as the month, and 1735 as the year of his birth. This date has support in the fact that he died October 16, 1826, in the ninety-second year of his age.

However, it may be stated that wherever and whenever born, he was well born, and probably knew the Scriptures from his youth up, for on one side his ancestors were priests, or preachers, as we now call them, and church builders on the other. Indeed, the blood of many high-born generations coursed through his veins, and found expression in his thought and conduct, and it may be reasonably concluded that he was creditably educated and in all probability had a fair knowledge of Greek and Latin. Be this as it may, he spoke the language of Canaan, and was a framer of phrases, and a master of subjects, with utterances so clear that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. His conversion from sin was of the clearest type, and true to

the law of God and the need of the individual. He was converted; and had an experience with God, and it changed his whole life; he knew Him in whom he had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which he had entrusted to Him. The fact of this experience he himself sets forth in the following language:

"My first mental alarm was not through the blessed means of preaching; but by the kind illuminations of the invisible Holy Spirit. I saw by this Divine light that I was without God and destitute of any reasonable hope in my present state.

"Now being moved by faith through fear, I attempted to flee the wrath to come, and seek a place of refuge!

"But, O, what violent opposition did I meet with! After many sorrowful months I formed one resolution, with a low cadence of voice, and fearful apprehension, I ventured like Queen Esther who approached the king's presence, at the risk of her life, so I ventured in a way of prayer, to speak to the Almighty! With the Bible in my hand, I besought the Lord to help me, and declaring that during life that sacred Book should be my guide, and at the close, if I sunk to perdition, said I, Just, O God! yet dreadful! but if thy clemency and divine goodness should at last rescue me from the jaws of a burning hell, this miracle of grace shall be gratefully remembered by me, a moment of mercy!

"The things which followed, which were such things as belong to my peace, the inexpressible change, the instantaneous cure, I am incapable of speaking; but O, my soul was lodged in Immanuel's breast, the city of refuge; the ark of my rest." His conversion was definitely announced, and strongly emphasized in the most forceful way, for immediately he consigned his fiddle to the flame, and forever turned his back upon worldliness. It would not be possible for a mind and soul like his to remain satisfied with even such a glowing experience, and it is not surprising that he promptly entered the public ministry of the Church.

He was not far from forty years of age at the time of his conversion, and he immediately united with the Wesleyan Societies, and was sent out as a lay preacher, but he was not ordained until 1784, when he was a lay preacher to what is known in Methodist history as the "Christmas Conference of the Episcopal Church." Here he was ordained severally, a deacon and elder, by the Rev. Thomas Coke. From the first he became more and more a preacher of power, and a man of influence--the people flocking to hear him much as they did when all Judea and Jerusalem went out to hear the wilderness preacher of their day. Not only did he increase in power and popularity, but each succeeding year marked the divergence between the autocratic spirit of the Church, and the democratic spirit of the man. The question as to whether or not preachers should be allowed to administer the communion, baptize candidates, marry people, and bury the dead, always found Mr. O'Kelly on one side, and the rule of the Church on the other. Bishop Asbury's insistence that the laymen were to "pay, pray, and obey" was always objectionable to Mr. O'Kelly, and the divergence increased, and the chasm widened, and the point of cleavage became more prominent, so that by the time the General Conference met in 1792 a crisis was inevitable. By this time, too, Mr. O'Kelly had reached a high place in the favor of the church. He had presided over some of the largest and most important districts within the territory then occupied by the Methodist Church, and only two men out-ranked him in authority. He had, in all probability, accumulated means sufficient to put him above the necessity of salary, and most certainly he had reached a

well-established leadership among his brethren. But it was not these that gave him prestige in the conference. It was his devotion to the right, his indomitable will, and his Christian courage. He would have been impressive had he been clothed in rags, and walking barefoot. The craven had no place in his makeup, either as a man or a preacher. In that memorable Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, November 1, 1792, the forces lined up for final decision. The storm did not burst suddenly, nor unexpectedly. Men felt that something was impending, and stood ready for the shock. For several days prior to the opening of the Conference, Mr. Asbury had been holding meetings with the preachers whom he knew to be true to his bidding, and with them planned the sessions. Nor had Mr. O'Kelly been indifferent to the issue, for his forces were well marshaled, and stood ready for action. One of the bitterest disappointments of his life came when Dr. Coke, contrary to all he had promised him, and all he had lead him to expect, took sides with Asbury, and announced the findings of a committee that had been previously appointed, in the following words:

"The members of this Conference represent the people; and we are to all intents the legislature of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the government is autocratical. You may call me a weather-cock." On the second day of the session James O'Kelly offered the following resolution:

"After the bishop appoints the preachers at Conference to their several circuits, if anyone thinks himself injured by the appointment, he shall have the liberty to appeal to the Conference, and state his objection, and if the Conference approve his objection, the Bishop shall appoint him to another circuit." This motion was discussed by the strongest minds, and ablest debaters, in the most masterly way, and was carried on at times with all the heat, passion and prejudice of the human heart, for three days. At one time it looked as though the motion would carry by a large majority, for the preachers in America had heard that the England Methodists had inaugurated the "Stationing Committee," which included the right of appeal. Finally the motion was divided into two parts, as follows: 1. Shall the Bishop appoint the preachers to the circuits? 2. Shall a preacher be allowed to appeal? The first part was put, and carried unanimously, and with great enthusiasm. When the second part came to be considered, the question was raised as to whether or not it was a new rule, or an amendment to an old one. A new rule would require a two-thirds vote, while an amendment would require but a majority. It was after much wrangling that it was decided to be an amendment to an old rule. At one time during the debate, Mr. O'Kelly stood with a copy of the New Testament in his hand, and said: "Brethren, hearken unto me, put away all other books, and forms, and let this be the criterion, and that will satisfy me." He says, "I thought the ministers of Christ would unanimously agree to such a proposal, but alas, they opposed the motion." The Rev. John Dickens declared that the Scriptures were by no means a sufficient form of government; that the Lord had left that business to his ministers. O'Kelly says that he withstood him for a season, but in vain. "I now saw, " said he, "that moderate Episcopacy was rising to its wonted and intended dignity. I discovered also that the districts had lost their suffrages." A Sunday intervened during the debate. The Rev. Dr. Coke preached in the forenoon, and James O'Kelly in the afternoon. All day Monday, and far into the night, was spent in debating the subject, when the vote was taken, and lost by a large majority. It is safe to assert that the debate was carried on at such length for the purpose of causing a feeling of disgust with the oft repeated question, and oft reproduced argument, and that if the vote had been taken earlier, it would not have been seriously defeated, had it been lost at all. Three things should be kept in mind: One. James O'Kelly did not withdraw

from the Methodist Church, but from the Methodist Conference. He did all that conscience and honor would allow to remain in the Church of his first years, and left it only when compelled so to do. Two. His withdrawal was on the question of government, and not on that of doctrine. Three. He was not alone in his withdrawal, neither was he alone in his opinions and decisions. Some of the best men of the Church stood with him in the debate, and followed him when he went out. When the conclusion was announced, James O'Kelly, and nineteen other ministers, withdrew from the Conference, to be followed by the churches they served. Mr. O'Kelly, and those associated with him in the withdrawal, held a conference at Piney Grove, Virginia, more to comfort each other than for any other reason. They had not withdrawn from the Methodist Church, nor did they desire so to do. While together they formulated an address to Bishop Asbury, asking that the whole matter be reopened and reviewed, and sent it to him by the hand of chosen men. They then adjourned to meet at Manakintown, Virginia, to hear the report from the Bishop. They met on the 25th day of December, 1793, and received from the Bishop the following reply:

"I have no power to call such a meeting as you wish; therefore, if five hundred preachers should come on their knees before me, I would not do it."

After hearing this reply, there was nothing left for them to do but separate themselves from the Methodist Church, or slavishly submit to an ecclesiasticism which they had determined to resist, and they unanimously chose the former. They formed their ministers on an equality, gave the lay members a balance of power in the legislation, and left the executive business to the Church collectively. On the fourth day of August, 1794, they met at Lebanon Church, in Surry County, Virginia, and held their session with open doors, which was wholly different from the method of closed doors, and secret sessions, as was the custom of the Bishop. Efforts were made to form a plan of government, but to no purpose. A committee of seven chosen men were appointed to draft the form. The committee could not agree, and the finality was that all else was set aside, and the "Word of God as revealed in the Scriptures" taken instead. Very prominent among the things they had to do at that Conference was the selection of a suitable name for the new organization. For the time since they withdrew they had been known as Republican Methodists. Whether or not this name had been formally chosen, or incidentally applied, the writer does not know. After much discussion and earnest prayer, the Rev. Rice Haggard, standing with a copy of the New Testament Scriptures in his hand, said:

"Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice, and by it we are told that the disciples were called Christians, and I move that henceforth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply." The motion was enthusiastically and unanimously adopted, since which time they have had no other. The Rev. Mr. Hafferty moved to take the Bible itself as the only creed, and this motion also was enthusiastically adopted. No interpretation of the public life and service of James O'Kelly can be even approximately correct, except it be made in the light of his private character, and the time in which he lived and wrought. It is not difficult to deduce from even his meager writings, and that which has been written about him, sufficient evidence to prove that his personal character was beyond reproach. He must have been tender-hearted and deeply sympathetic; evidently he was manly, brave and generous; from what is revealed to us, it is safe to conclude that in him were the rugged, stalwart virtues of the man, joined with the softness and gentleness of disposition of the woman; he must have been incapable of guile, and liberal in his estimate of men, and was at times too little suspicious of the guilefulness of others, though he was

no mean judge of human character. Quick in his conception, rapid in his processes, he was sometimes hasty in his judgments, but always held them subject to evidence and argument, and with singular absence of personal pride, he would change them upon conviction. He had an instinctive horror of injustice, and a genuine contempt for meanness, and yet his hatred of the one, and his contempt for the other, were often modified by his abounding charity for all men. One must be impressed in reading of this noted man that, after he had strongly denounced a wrong, he would seek some palliation for the wrong doer, and try to find some mitigation for an offense which he could not overlook. He must have been firm in his friendships, and it seems that nothing could tempt him to an act which his conscience did not approve; no sophistry, no personal appeal, no promise of betterment, could move him from his fixed idea of the right. We know him to have been a man of profound religious conviction, holding unyieldingly to the truths of revealed religion. At times his faith seems almost superstitious, while his love for his home, and his own, was as deep and pure as the fountain of life. His big-heartedness, his unflinching honesty in faith and practice, his frank and open manner, his independent thinking, his unswerving devotion to God and country, his lifelong service for the Church, together with the other personal virtues which have been named, and many more which might be mentioned, makes the Rev. James O'Kelly a leader whose following would honor the greatest and the best. And now, having had a hasty and imperfect glance at his personal and public life, attention should be given to the time in which it was spent. It was a time when the passions of men were stirred to their depth; when the sky of the future was darkened by clouds of approaching conflict. It was the time of the birth-throes of a nation, and the beginning of a sect. Methodism was being born, as well as American civilization, and political and religious tyranny was asserting itself to the limit of its power. England's heavy heel was on the neck of the colonists, and religious liberty was threatened with the domination of sectarian bigotry, and ecclesiastic intolerance. Asbury, the leading man of the new movement under Wesley, had declared, "That he came to teach the people, and not to be taught by them." The Church itself was not free from censure for its laxness in morals and devotion to truth, for sinful indulgence was as common among the clergy as neglect of duty in the laity. Drinking was a common habit of the Episcopal clergy, many of whom would drink to excess, and be hailed before the magistrate for disturbing the peace of the community, even at the dead hours of the night. A clergyman of that early day was known to officiate at the morning worship, go home with a parishioner, and drink so much brandy that he would have to be tied to his gig, and a servant sent to lead his horse home, lest he lose his way and miss his house. Many of the people of that day were very poor, and some were quite rich, and there were constant clashings between squalor and luxury. The priests were proud, selfish, ignorant, and the laity openly wicked. And worst of all, it was a time of religious persecution, and that child of hell, now full-grown and wrathful stalked abroad, seeking victims for his wrath, and occupants for whipping post and jail; and be it said to the shame of the clergy, that they furnished their full share of information, and did their full duty in persecuting the saints for righteousness' sake. And in addition to all this, and much more of like character, the American Revolution was on, and honest men were so much at variance with each other on matters of government, that the Tory and the Whig, though they knelt at the same altar, oftentimes throttled each other for political reasons, and fought until friendships died, fellowship perished, and in many cases the body fell bleeding at the feet of a hitherto friend. There was a religious frenzy, and a political volcano, into which men were plunged, whether they would or not. The war clouds were scudding across the sky, the war dogs had been unleashed, and all men

were standing at arms, both in the state and in the Church, and no man dared to speak who was not ready to die. Into this seething, sizzling, boiling, turbulent condition of human society, James O'Kelly threw himself with an indomitable courage and heroic faith, and gave to the cause he had espoused all the vigor of his strength, all the force of his character, and all the means with which he had been blessed. My interpretation of James O'Kelly leads me to present him as a Christian Democrat, a Moral Hero, and a Pioneer of Christian Liberty.

03.04. A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT.

A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT.

He had from his childhood breathed the spirit of liberty. The mountain path was free to all; the wilderness road had no barriers; the homes of the pioneers were open to all comers; the fish in the sea, and the bird in the air, were not freer than the man of the wilderness, and this very freedom influenced his character and made it impossible for him to submit to rule or endure restraint. Then, too, American liberty was being born, and by the time he reached his manhood, it was a strong, healthy, robust spirit which the pioneer breathed to the full, even as he did the fresh mountain air of the morning. Of course it is understood that I use the word democrat with reference to its philosophic, and not its political sense. Real democracy is more than the mere framework of government. It reaches into the life and thought of the individual citizen, and proposes to secure to him all the right and privileges of his kind. It affords every citizen the greatest possible development of his powers, and the greatest and freest use of his rights, consistent with his duties to his neighbor, his country and his God. Self-will is not supreme in a real democracy; indeed there can be no democracy in a community where the people are self-centered, or self-seeking. A Christian democrat must assist his neighbor when in need, console the sorrowing, speak thoughtful words of encouragement, and fully share the joys of those about him. The sacrifice of self for the good of others is the only foundation upon which a Christian Democracy can be builded, and I submit that the Rev. James O'Kelly fully met the demands of such democracy. In the days of James O'Kelly there were at least two great aspiring leaders, both of whom were self-centered, and self-seeking--Asbury and Coke--which made it all the more difficult for O'Kelly to live his life, and make effective his plan, but he neither swerved from the path, nor faltered in the march. He was a man of peace, but was forced to fight. He was a dissenter for conscience sake. No controversy embittered him; no ecclesiastical opposition involved him in personal enmity; no contention ever called forth from his lips sneering allusions to an inferior. He contended with his brethren, but it was in the interest of the oppressed. He replied to those in authority with sharp rhetoric, but his rejoinders were full of love and truth. There were two forces which made his greatness possible, and his democratic spirit effective. One was a sublime self-trust. He leaned upon no man's arm. He walked a path untrodden by others, except they followed. He walked erect in every path of duty to which he was called to pursue. He accepted responsibility, and advanced with firm and steady step. His march centered on the consciousness of rectitude and duty. The other was that there was no royal road to place and power. That the best a man could do under the circumstances was his duty, and with rare singleness of purpose, and deep consecration, he devoted himself to the work he had to do. To him the daily obligation was "thus saith the Lord."

Very early in the history of Methodism the ecclesiastical form began to take shape, and show assertion, and immediately O'Kelly, with characteristic devotion, began his plans for defense, for to him Ecclesiastical Rule was unbearable. It was the desire and the plan of Asbury, and others, to Episcopalize the Church. O'Kelly and his followers were willing for a Presbyterian form of government, and for that they pleaded, though O'Kelly was a staunch advocate of the republican,

or congregational, form of church government. Voting by the preachers and people was a thing to be feared and dreaded by Asbury, and his immediate successors in office, but voting was the one thing O'Kelly believed to be Biblically right and wholly just to the people. The leaders made an effort to create a Central Council for the government of the new-born church, in which O'Kelly saw the development of an unbending ecclesiasticism, which he fought with a vigor characteristic of his strength and interest, and so well did he succeed that in the district over which he presided the Central Council was not recognized, nor enforced, for human rights, and human liberty, were well entrenched in the hearts of his followers. His vigorous and decided opposition to this Central Council was the entering wedge which finally separated him from the Methodist Conference. Of the plan, and his interpretation of it, he writes:

"I confess that on one side it discovers weakness, and on the other hand policy. But as we were men under authority, we feared to offend our superior. We often prayed that God would deliver the preachers from the curse of suspicion. This prayer had the desired effect on some of us. Francis proposed that no preaching house should be built for some time to come, by the people, without first obtaining liberty of the conference. I cogently opposed the motion, because I loved the people, and conceived it to be an invasion of their civil as well as their religious liberties. I contended on till I discovered Francis to be much displeased, and he answered and said unto me: 'I can stay in Baltimore as long as you, and if I do not carry this I will never sit in another council.'

"However, I obtained a small amendment, and so gave over contending, and the business went on. In the evening I unbosomed myself to my brother, Philip Bruce, but from what I afterwards heard, I found that Solomon's bird had carried the news to the great man. However, I told Francis that instead of councilors, we were his tools, and that I disliked to be a tool for any man. The business was finished, and the whole collected, and I suppose prepared and sent to the press. I saw them no more until the resolves came out in print." The conditions were a source of great mental, and soul, anxiety, and for a time sleep was denied him. He felt himself deceived, and imposed upon, for in the matters of government, as provided by the Council, neither preacher nor layman were recognized. Of this he wrote Mr. Asbury, calling his attention to the infant church, and asking for one year in which to consider the matter. The request was promptly denied, and the writer given to understand that neither he, nor the people, had rights that the Episcopacy was called upon to respect. O'Kelly says of Asbury's reply, "I now began to discover the rapid five years' growth of a 'moderate Episcopacy.' Whereunto shall I liken it? It is like a dwarf whose head grows too fast for its body." Not only in the matter of government did this champion of human rights and liberties take the part of the common preacher, but in the matter of ordination and administering ordinances. In the contention over the ordinances of the church, there was for a while a visible separation between the church in the north, and the church in the south, but O'Kelly, with a bleeding heart over the situation, stood firmly by his conception of right. He believed that all men were equal before God, and that broad phylacteries, bordered garments, and mitred caps called for no more respect from men, than home-spun garments, coon-skin caps, and Indian moccasins. Mr. Asbury had demanded that he be addressed as Bishop, but O'Kelly felt that in the land of liberty and freedom, though yet wrapped in the swaddling clothes of its infancy, there was no place for an ecclesiastical head, and set his face steadfastly against it. He saw in that early day, what we have all come to see in these, that a Christian Democracy would profoundly impress not only the people of America, but the people of the whole world.

James O'Kelly, though a man of the wilderness, was a man of culture, refinement and justice, and to him to be just was greater than to be generous. He was a big man, with a big gospel, and he preached it in a big way. He was a firm believer in the capacity of every man to receive, enjoy and express that abundant gospel of life. To him every man was a child of God, and all things his, richly to enjoy, whether they were temporal or spiritual in character. The greatest asset a nation, or a church, can have is not found in fertile soil, and large endowments; not in great rivers, and eloquent preachers; not in mines of coal and iron, of silver and precious metals; not in the largeness of college buildings, and the architecture of temples; not in the transportation of great cargoes of merchandise across the seas; not in the organizations of forces according to the latest scheme for expert work, but in giving to the world such heroic spirits as the man, who for conscience' sake dares to stand alone. The greatest asset that any nation, or church, can have, is a robust, self-respecting, intelligent, law-abiding, high-minded citizenship, and a membership of consecrated men and women, whose lives are given to the unselfish service of one another.

03.05. A MORAL HERO.

A MORAL HERO. The outstanding type of hero in history is the popular type, but the Rev. James O'Kelly is the true type. The statues that stand in the center squares of cities are mostly of battle fields. They are armored bronze, representing a bloody field in the midst of writhing agony, and ghastly death. It will not always be so. "Peace hath higher tests of manhood than battle ever knew," as much higher as a wounded spirit is harder to bear than a wounded body. I have even dared to think that if the eleventh chapter of Hebrews were written now, that the name of James O'Kelly would appear with those of Abraham, Moses, and the other heroes of faith, who, for the joy that was set before them, endured the cross and despised the shame. I cannot forbear thinking of the heroism of the days that have been, in contrast with the days that now are. Our forefathers worshipped winter-long in frosty houses. Now the gentlest rain keeps home on Sunday many a member of an orthodox church. The reformers struggle to purge a city government of rascality, but fail because cowardly Christians fear for social and business interests. Great evils cry out for correction, and yet they remain, for lack of moral courage in the life of those who profess to believe. Every Christian needs to ask: What is my religion costing me? Not merely in money, but in life, in comfort and in service. When we come to estimate its cost to James O'Kelly, we find that it cost all that he had. The strongest tie that binds human hearts together is the tie of fellowship. Companionship is stronger than kinship, else Jonathan would not have forsaken his father, and given up his kingdom, for the companionship of David. James O'Kelly was a man of strong friendship, and had a passion for companionship. He loved with all his heart, or he loved not at all. The circumstances under which James O'Kelly lived were inevitably producing a separation between himself and the church he loved. The Church could not change, neither could the man, and when the eventful hour came he broke the tie that had bound him to many a life, for many a year, and went out to suffer, and to die if needs be, for the sake of the right as he understood it. At the time of the separation, as stated elsewhere, James O'Kelly was a preacher of uncommon popularity and strength. He had been appointed to the Southern District of Virginia for ten consecutive years as presiding elder, and such was his standing in the district, and among his brethren, that he had nothing to fear as to a desirable appointment. There was nothing personally for him to gain by his position on the question of appeal, but everything to lose, as men count loss and gain. It was charged that he was ambitious, and sought the office of bishop. When this was charged, the man arose and said:

"I can appeal to the Lord, and am now ready to be qualified, that the man hath belied me to my face."

Only two men stood above him in authority, and none in popularity and influence as a preacher, and had he been passive, it is not unreasonable to assert that he would have been exalted and given authority over his brethren. The Rev. Mills Barrett, then of Norfolk, Virginia, said in 1839, "That James O'Kelly as absolutely ruled one branch of the Christian Church by his influence as ever Bishop Asbury ruled the Methodist Church by his episcopal authority." He had lived through many severe trials, and had about conquered the last of them all, and had he spoken peace to his

conscience, and compromised with injustice, he would have been a leader in Methodism, and a hero in its history. But he had opinions, he believed, and hence came the separation. As I write of this heroic man, I am reminded of the time when a great king of the East set up his image, and then sent to the princes, the governors and the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, to come to the dedication, and when he sent for them, they came. The princes, the governors and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counselors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Of course it must be right, for there are the great men of the nation, and the king himself, in favor of it.

"Then the herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up. " But some did not fall down. No cringing, cravenly spirit in them.

"Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Then they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar answered and said unto them, Is it of purpose, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that ye serve not my gods, nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer thee in this matter. If it be so our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Even so answered James O'Kelly, and that, too, with the same spirit of devotion, heroism and holy courage that characterized the three Hebrew worthies.

03.06. A PIONEER OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

A PIONEER OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

It was an unknown and an untrodden path on which James O'Kelly set his foot in that eventful hour when he withdrew, for he went out not knowing whither he went, but grandly, nobly, sublimely, he met the test, and patiently, but perseveringly, he pressed forward in the great task that lay before him, and through all the years he wrought right mightily for his king. He was no whimperer; not an hour was lost in sulking; not an instant spent in criticism; not an instant wasted in mourning over his defeat; not a thought given to predicting the ruin of the Church he sought to save; not a glance backward to the place and things that had been his, but setting his face steadfastly toward the goal of a better service, he pressed on to the end. It would be a profitable pleasure to follow the road over which he traveled; to share with him the anxious hours; to keep him company on the burdened journey; to hear the groaning of his soul over the problems he was forced to solve; to see him on his knees before God at the midnight hour, as was his custom; to rejoice with him in the victories he won, and the progress he made; to walk with him as he blazed the way through the theological underbrush of an ecclesiastical forest, that it might be both safe and easy for his followers, but time and space combine against the pleasure. Suffice it to say that he reached the goal, and gave the world the slogan of the Church that has arrived, and which should be the slogan of the Church which is to come--It is "Individual Liberty in Christ."

03.07. INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY IN JESUS CHRIST.

INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY IN JESUS CHRIST. When James O'Kelly withdrew from the Conference, it was no part of his thought to do more than he had done--stand for the right of the preacher to appeal--but having done so much he had to do more. One step called for another, and so step after step was taken, until the path broadened from the right of the preacher to appeal from human authority, to the right of the individual to interpret the Divine Word for himself. Just when this came about is not known. It was pioneer work that James O'Kelly was called to do; the theological forests in which he did his work were overgrown with tall, strong trees of unbending fiber. It had come over from England, prior to the Revolution, and while Wesley was more yielding those to whom he committed the care of the new-born church were as unbending as the oak of mature growth. But James O'Kelly knew the truth, and the truth had made him free, and in that is found the primal fact of religious liberty. Out of his experience of inner connection and communion with God came the self-respect and exaltation, the supremacy of conscience, and the purpose to realize his own place and destiny. When he realized this high prerogative he could admit no more lordship. It was to God alone that he bowed in reverent and loving submission, and humbly said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." With this self-respect and devotion to righteousness came courage and endurance, in the face of persecution and suffering; this secret of liberty and earnest, patient effort has been the common possession of all prophets and martyrs since liberty was first born. It inspired, directed and upheld the Pilgrim fathers, the Puritans, and the Friends, both in the Old World and in the New. It was the guiding star of Roger Williams, of George Fox, of William Penn, and others, as certainly as it was of James O'Kelly, and it may be said that the need of the Church today is leaders filled with the Spirit of God, rather than ones familiar with the plans of modern experts in Church government. But what did he do? What path did he open? What contribution did he make? Wherein is the profit of it all? The answer to all these, and other inquiries of like character is, In what he did for the individual.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that the desire for a united church existed in the hearts of many long years before the days of James O'Kelly and his co-adjutors, and many very earnest efforts were made to meet the desire, but the union sought for was based upon a system of theology. It mattered nothing that a man was right in life, if wrong in theology. The effort was to have all men think alike, no matter how diversely they might act. It is now a well-known fact that all such efforts at union only created new divisions, until there were divisions innumerable, and theologies ad infinitum. In that early day men who felt woe is me if I preach not the gospel, soon came to feel woe is me if I preach not the doctrines of my church, and churches, so called, were multiplied, until the land was over-run with sectarian mills, grinding out Christians after the fashion of making pins--all the same length of body and size of head. Indeed the church has not yet learned that creeds are the product of intellectual thinking, and often influenced by personal or sectarian prejudice. The church has yet to learn that by searching, the creature cannot discover its creator. God is not found as the astronomer finds the stars, and fellowship is a finer thing than that which is legislated into being. About the time of James O'Kelly the weeping prophets began to

cry--Is there no balm in Gilead: Is there no physician there? Unconsciously it may have been, unintentional it certainly was, that James O'Kelly, and his fellow-laborers, responded to this appeal with the unhushable voice: "Yes, there is balm in Gilead, and there is a physician there," and this is his prescription for the cure of division, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if he have love one for another." It was a dark path on which James O'Kelly made his first footprint, but the path of the just shines brighter and brighter, even unto the perfect day, and it has shone so brilliantly through all the years, that in the light of the present day, creeds, which at one time seemed as eternally fixed as the star in the sky, are rapidly losing their hold upon the heart and life of the church.

Under the ever spreading influence of the tree that has grown up from the planting that day in Baltimore, Maryland, the walls of sectarian churches, once so high that they could not be preached over, seen over, prayed over, sung over, nor thrown over, are now toppling to their fall, and the believers in Jesus Christ are soon to be seated around one common communion table, where they will dwell together in the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of peace. It is a long, rough road over which we have come, but the goal is in sight. Patience, hope and faith of all progressive minds insure and justify perseverance, while they confidently await the fulfillment of our Lord's own prayer: "That they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us." The antiquated lines of cleavage which disrupt Christian fellowship are fading out. The Apostle Paul, on divine authority and with fine enthusiasm, proclaimed that in Christ the old dislikes and aversions, or distinctions, would disappear. In Christ Jesus there are neither Jews nor Greeks. Beyond the smoke of doubt and disaffection, scruples and squabbles, the chronic disorder of jealousy and prejudice and all ecclesiastical ambitions, the horizon shows our certain road to the promised land. And withal James O'Kelly was a disturber, a fact to be appreciated, for men who disturb the smooth surface of human society are often sent of God, as was John the Baptist, whose words stirred all Jerusalem. Some men bless the world by aiding in its harmonious development. Others help the world by challenging its social customs, and its religious beliefs. James O'Kelly opened questions which the church had long considered settled, but she has not yet given a satisfactory answer to some of them. He had his weakness, as all men have, but they were as spots on the sun. His life and teaching can never be outgrown. He is still the Christian statesman of the future, and there is no voice from out the past of our church which speaks with greater force and inspiration than that of the man who proclaimed that in all matters of right and privilege, the man in the pew was equal to the man in the pulpit. We acclaim him, and the Christian world will someday acclaim him, A CHAMPION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

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