

The Search for Truth  
A History of the Restoration Movement  
“A New Century Begins”  
February 11, 2018

INTRODUCTION:

Up to this point, we have focused on a few things in this study. We have focused on men’s desire to go back to the Bible and to “speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent.” That is a commendable goal but it has some serious implications to it. Early on in the history, the most serious implication was that infant baptism would no longer be practiced because it was found to be without biblical authority and outside of the scope of NT teaching. Religious papers have been a strong part of the “search for truth” as have debates. Gospel revivals or gospel meetings are a big part of the spread of truth as has been the establishment of Christian colleges and schools. The *practice* of the truth has also been a part of our discussion, specifically as it relates to the spreading of the gospel and the missionary society as an effort to do that.

At this point, we have not said much about the practice of James 1:27 and other passages which teach Christians to provide for the needs of orphans and widows. To that point, we will now turn...

ORPHAN HOMES:

Up to this point, I have only mentioned, I think, two orphan homes operated by Christians who have been trying to restore NT Christianity: Fanning Orphan Home, established by Tolbert Fanning’s wife, Charlotte. You remember Tolbert also established Franklin College and the *Gospel Advocate*. After Tolbert died, Charlotte began the Fanning Orphan Home on 160 acres of land in 1884. Potter Orphan Home, which grew out of the Potter Bible College in Bowling Green, KY after the school closed.

But just as there were schools popping up all over the country, there were also orphan homes that were sprouting up all over the country. I don’t have time to go into these in detail but simply to give you a summary of what brethren have been doing.

A Christian woman, by the name of Jeannie Clark, had it in her heart to help orphans. She once said that there was no better domestic mission work than to care for homeless and dependent orphans and you could hardly disagree with her. So, she purchased sixteen acres outside of Luling, TX and established Belle Have Home.

In 1909-1910, Christians in Columbia, TN rented a three-story house, appealed for funds from concerned brethren, and started the Tennessee Orphan Home. As with most institutions, World War I, the Great War, brought financial difficulties but it came through and survives to this day.

In 1923, Mrs. W. F. Boles and her husband, who was not yet a member of the church, gave a tract of land to use for an orphanage, since they had both been reared in an orphanage. They gave 436 1/2 acres of land south of Greenville, TX for the establishment of Boles Orphan Home and it opened in 1924.

In 1922, S. T. Tipton of Tipton, OK gave 70 acres for the establishment of an orphan home, the Tipton Orphan Home. Sunny Glen Home was established in 1936, supported by the Rio Grande valley congregations.

As with colleges, there were many orphanages that were started, many of them closed for whatever reason, largely for financial reasons: Maude Carpenter Children's Home in Protection, KS, the Christian Home for the Aged in Nashville, in 1926. The Schultz-Lewis Children's Home was begun by Elmer Lewis and his wife of Porter County, IN, in 1948, near Valparaiso, IN.

#### WORLD WAR I:

Let's take a look at the Great War for just a moment. The start of the Civil War had only been 56 years before America joined the Great War. That is scarcely more than a generation. The Civil War had contributed significantly to the pacifism that was strong for those decades. But World War I would start to soften that position. Additionally, a *world* war would contribute significantly to the spread of the doctrine called *premillennialism*.

Relative to pacifism and the entrance of America into the Great War, the question of being a conscientious objector was raised. Just how close to battle can a Christian get without condoning the taking of another human life? That was a question that was debated during the 19-teens. Cordell Christian College in OK was officially pacifist and they eventually had to close their doors. In fact, two students from Cordell were sent to Leavenworth, blind-folded and placed in front of a firing squad. Only at the last second did the military back down. The churches of Christ, since we have no creed and no authoritative body that speaks for us, and no hierarchy were at a disadvantage when it comes to facing military service. People who were pacifists found the going very difficult.

The government ordered the publisher of the *Gospel Advocate*, J. C. McQuiddy and the editor at that time, A. B. Lipscomb to stop publishing pacifist views or be forced to close up shop. So much for the 1st Amendment, huh? So, the focus became, "What can churches of Christ do to help America win the war, short of picking up firearms?" So, the *Gospel Advocate* started appealing to Christians to donate food for the war effort. One significant decision the GA made was that they would not make military service a test of fellowship. America entered WWI in April of 1917 and David Lipscomb will die in November of that year.

At army camps, where soldiers stayed, were in need of supplies and chaplains. Churches of Christ were at the forefront of that effort. Christians served in hospitals and even lived among the soldiers. ACU began the Student's Army Training Corps, the SATC. Christians were doing all they could to alleviate the suffering of those injured in battle or the families of those killed in battle.

#### PREMILLENNIALISM:

The *Great War*, a *world* war, a war in which many nations of the world bore arms against each other, made many people start asking, "Is this the end of the world? Is this the great apocalypse? Is the anti-Christ on his way?" Fundamentalism is a term that came into vogue during this period of time. It began, as most things do, among the denominations, especially the Presbyterians and the Baptists. Fundamentalists view the Bible literally, accepting the inspiration of the Scriptures but they also accept prophecy literally.

Because of that tendency, *premillennialism* came to the forefront of denominational teaching in the 1920s. When Britain occupied Palestine in 1918, a belief started that the Jews would return to Palestine in the fulfillment of prophecies from the OT. When they return to Palestine, they would rebuild the temple, following the pattern found in Ezekiel 40-48, and they will restore OT worship. The Roman Empire, the beast of the book of Revelation, will be revived and there will be a new king over evil forces - the anti-Christ- and the great tribulation will begin as believers in Palestine flee to the mountains. Christ will appear and begin His reign with the saints over the whole world. Jerusalem will be renewed and Christ will rule on David's throne

for 1,000 years, making Jerusalem the center of His world government. The entire Jewish nation will be saved and then the final judgment.

Sure enough, if something is taught or practiced in denominational churches long enough, someone in the church of Christ is going to drink the kook-aid and start teaching the same thing in the Lord's church. In the case of premillennialism, it was Robert Henry Boll, R. H. Boll. From what I have read, he was an attractive man and a very good speaker, very popular.

R. H. Boll was born in Badenweiler, Germany in June of 1875. In 1890, he emigrated to America and ended up in TN as a migrant farm-worker. He came in contact with Christians who pointed him to the Bible and he was baptized into Christ. In the fields, Boll would plow a round with his horses and then rest his team, sit under a tree and read his Bible. His employer, a Christian named Gooch, Mrs. Gooch, encouraged Boll to go to school at the Nashville Bible School, which he did. Boll apparently spoke with little or no German accent.

He spent most of his years preaching for the Portland Avenue church of Christ in Louisville, KY. He edited Joe Warlick's paper *Gospel Guide* for a couple of years before he became the front-page editor of the *Gospel Advocate*. His premillennial views started coming to the surface around 1910 when he began a series of articles on the book of Revelation. His views of Revelation, he said, were as follows:

1. He would interpret Revelation literally wherever possible.
2. He would see nothing as symbolic or figurative without a justifiable reason.
3. The word of God would explain its own symbols.
4. He would surrender his mind to the mind of God.

Boll carried with him, every where he went, material written by Charles T. Russell on prophecy.

However, the more Boll immersed himself in premillennial teaching, the more he started seeing premillennialism in everything, in every parable and every lesson in the NT. Readers of the *Advocate* became disturbed and Boll was dismissed in 1915. Boll took the title of his GA editorial, *Word and Work*, and applied it to his own paper he started. Brethren were comfortable with Boll holding his views about the end of times as private opinions but did not agree with his dogmatic stance on the subject of prophecy.

Between WW I and WW 2, premillennialism will become the predominant subject of controversy in the brotherhood. At one time, premillennialism was strong enough, at least in central KY that brethren there opened a college that taught and defended that belief. There used to be a designation for churches of Christ in the directory of churches that identified churches that subscribed to the premillennial belief but neither our 2006 directory nor the 2015 directory identified any by that designation.

The chief opponent, though certainly not the only opponent, of premillennialism and R. H. Boll during that time was Foy Wallace of Texas. He was born into a Christian family in 1896, his father also being named Foy Wallace. Foy's older brother, Cled, also became a preacher. Foy's wife passed away only in 1987. Earl West writes that Foy's sermons were never less than 1 1/2 hours, yet he was able to hold his audience, apparently without effort, for that length of time. He also wrote for the *Gospel Advocate* for years.

In 1933, Wallace debated a brother Neal in Winchester, KY on the subject of premillennialism. He held another debate in Chattanooga. This controversy captivated the brotherhood until after World War 2. At 37 years old, he debated a Frank Norris in Fort Worth,

TX in 1934. There were audiences of 7,000-8,000 people who were exposed to the discussion. Wallace would begin his own magazine, the *Gospel Guardian* in 1935 and would change its name to *Bible Banner*. In 1950, he had started a paper called *Torch* and he became well known for being a controversialist. H. Leo Boles, president of DLC, debated R. H. Boll, W. L. Oliphant debated John R. Rice but Wallace was the clear leader on the side of truth in the premillennial controversy that raged in the papers and the pulpits from the time of WW I to WW II. Boll's response to most of this was that he was only teaching his opinions and for the brotherhood to react so violently to him teaching his opinions meant that the church of Christ had degenerated into a sect, into a new denomination.

Well, that response is not fair nor accurate. Romans 14 teaches, clearly, that we can have our own opinions but opinions cannot violate clear biblical teaching. You can't twist Scripture in order to make it fit your opinion. Opinions are our thoughts that are outside of Scriptural teaching. You can't say, "It's my opinion that sprinkling is okay for baptism and don't condemn me because I hold that opinion." Biblical words mean what they mean and we don't have the right to twist biblical words to fit our own definitions and we can't take Zechariah 14 and apply it to the second coming of Christ if there is not clear biblical precedent for understanding it that way.

Just recently, a fifth-grade teacher was asking her students to use gender-neutral pronouns in her classroom. The teacher's name was Chloe Bressack who sent the note home to parents, with a note from "Mx. Bressack." She writes that she will be using "they, them, their" instead of the more traditional "he, his, she, or hers." She realizes, she says, that it is something new but believes the students will catch on quickly. Miss (?) Bressack also asks the students to refer to her as "Mx Bressack." Mx is pronounced "mix."

Jim Geraghty, writing for *National Review Online*, laments the fact that this math and science teacher doesn't know the difference between "one" and "many." He writes: "the words ,they, them, and their' already have particular meanings in the English language, and they are used when referring to a group, more than one. ...Using a plural pronoun when referring to a singular noun is grammatically incorrect... You can't decide that in one classroom, the grammatical rules are one way, and in another classroom, they're different. Grammar isn't sexist, patriarchal, hetero-normative, racist, or somehow otherwise sinister; it's just grammar."

We are in the middle of a culture war with the left in a free fall from basic truths. Yet many of our religious neighbors have been doing the same thing for many, many years. You go to one denomination and "salvation" means one thing and at another, it means something different. "Baptism" morphs with the different denominations and their traditional views. "Faith," the same way. "Elders" and "bishops" also are flexible, depending on the denominational superstructure.

But, to use Geraghty's argument... The New Testament is non-denominational. It was written in the Greek language and that language cannot change from one denomination to the next or even from one church of Christ to the next. Those words have specific meanings in the Greek language (for one) and in the context of the New Testament (for another). The New Testament does not belong to a denomination. It transcends all denominations and calls all, everyone, to submit to *its* definitions, practices, beliefs, and church structure.

Our denominational friends have inadvertently and unwillingly contributed to the gender wars by refusing to accept theological truth as much transcendent as biological or grammatical truths. And that means that we can't hold just any belief and hide it behind the cloak of "opinion" and be good with that.

What is going on during the 20s? Of course, you have the burgeoning auto industry as Alfred Sloan and GM surpassed Ford as the leading seller of cars in 1929. 1925 saw the Scopes Trial when a biology teacher was put on trial for teaching evolution in TN when the law forbade such. He was fined \$100, which the ACLU gladly paid but that began the process of turning the tide and making the teaching of creation practically illegal and mandating in many school systems the teaching of evolution. G. C. Brewer, at that time, was at the forefront in teaching against the theory of evolution and he held a meeting in Pontiac, MI in 1928 in a joint effort of thirteen churches of Christ at the Baptist Tabernacle.

The Great Depression, of course, hit in October of 1929. The Great Depression caused many colleges, schools, and orphan homes to close their doors. Those who stayed open struggled financially for years, practically until after World War II when the American economy as a whole came roaring back to life. A. M. Burton, Andrew Mizell Burton, was a Christian and the founder of the A. M. Burton Life and Casualty Insurance Company who came to the financial aid of DLC on more than one occasion and on at least one occasion, Faulkner University, and he helped these schools keep their doors open.

#### RESTORATION AMONG THE BLACK COMMUNITY:

Many black Christians were influenced by David Lipscomb and the *Gospel Advocate*. When the Lea Avenue church of Christ in Nashville began using instruments of music in worship, three families left and began meeting in their own homes - this was in 1900. The restoration plea had already been accepted by many in the black community. A former slave, Peter Lowery, had purchased his own freedom in 1840 and he established a black congregation in Nashville in 1846. Within ten years, it had grown to five hundred members, half white and half black.

But when these black families separated from the Lea Avenue church, strong leadership will be provided for the black brethren. Those three families were: Alexander Cleveland Campbell, George Phillip Bowser (better known as "G. P. Bowser") and S. W. Womack. Womack gets a son-in-law whom many of you will recognize: Marshall Keeble. It was Marshall Keeble's uncle, D. M. Keeble, who baptizes Alexander Cleveland Campbell.

Bowser had been in the Methodist church and attended Walden University in Nashville, a university for blacks. There, he studied Greek, Hebrew, French, German, and Latin. As Bowser began to study the Scriptures, he was excited about his new found knowledge, which did not "jive" with the Methodist church. He asked an elder in the Methodist church some questions and the man said he was familiar with those "Campbellite" views. They suggested he leave the Methodist church and Bowser was baptized in the Christian Church on Gay Street in 1897 but attended the Lea Avenue congregation. But, once the instrument was brought in there, he, with Womack and Campbell, and Keeble, separated and started a congregation faithful to the Scriptures. He will begin a magazine for black Christians in 1903 called *The Christian Echo*.

I need to stop here but next week, I'll pick up here with more about the restoration movement among the black community, give some history of a few colleges in the churches of Christ, including Pepperdine University and then conclude our study the following week on the effort to associate orphan homes with missionary societies. That movement would also split the churches of Christ but not nearly as dramatically and emotionally as the split with the Christian Church.