

DISCIPLEISM ;

Or the Claims of Alexander Campbell to a Restored, Primitive Christianity Examined.

By ELDER J. F. McDOWELL.

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IN entering upon an examination of the question before us we do so recognizing the fact that we are treading upon peculiar ground; peculiar because of an absence of any claim to an authentic standard. A religious organization holding that the Bible alone should be the rule of faith and practice among Christian believers, and yet the ministry of that organization manipulating that alleged rule according to their own theological caprice, presents a condition of affairs strange to behold. Nevertheless, Mr. Campbell having made an attempt at restoring Christianity in ordinance and organization as found in the New Testament, we shall confine both himself and the ministry of the so-called Disciple or Christian Church to the facts in the case as found stated in the New Testament. We believe Christianity as a divine system was perfect in the beginning in doctrine, ordinances, and government; hence as an institution it was constructed according to the divine intention. As a whole, it was designed to remain intact; because it was introduced, not as an experiment, but as an organic structure—fundamental.

Upon the arrival of Thomas Campbell in this country, in the year 1807, and then on the 29th of September, 1809, the advent of Alexander, the eldest son of Thomas Campbell, an observation was had by them of the general status of the religious world.

They "deplored the divided and disturbed condition of the religious community at large, and deeply convinced that its divisions were unnecessary, unscriptural, and most injurious to the interests of religion and society, he [Thomas Campbell] at length formed the resolution to make a public effort for the restoration of the original unity of the church." (*Millennial Harbinger*, series 4, Vol. 4, p. 183.) At this juncture begins this Disciple effort. Thomas Campbell said:—

Nothing was to be received as a matter of faith or duty, for which there could not be produced a "thus saith the Lord," either in express terms, or by approved Scripture precedent.—*Ibid* 185.

Their writers teach that

Christianity, being a divine institution, there can be nothing human in it; consequently it has nothing to do with the doctrines and commandments of men; but simply and solely, with a belief in and obedience to the expressly recorded testimony and will of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures, and enjoined by the authority of the Savior and his holy Apostles upon the Christian community.—*Ibid*. p. 197.

They claim their

Object, however, has been one from the beginning to disinter the edifice of ancient Christianity from the rubbish which so many ages had accumulated upon it; and the beauty of those portions first exposed, only induced greater exertions to bring others into view.—*Ibid*. p. 190.

Thomas Campbell exhorted men everywhere to cooperate for

The restoration of pure, primitive, apostolic Christianity, in letter and spirit; in principle and practice.—P. 188.

How did Mr. Campbell propose to effect the restoration of primitive Christianity as a divine organization without the intervention of divine help? The fact is that no man by "human ingenuity" alone could ever "disinter the edifice of ancient Christianity." Its primary establishment was the work of divine inspiration, and so must be its re-establishment. Humanity cannot unfold divinity; the divine must do its own self-revealing. Alexander Campbell said:—

I cheerfully admit, that every true minister, deacon, evangelist, or officer of the Christian Church, must feel it a duty and privilege to enter upon such services by the teachings of the Holy Spirit in the Sacred Writing; but there is a special impulsion, or operation of the Holy Spirit, which all the apostolic or ambassador class felt, that no man on earth now feels or has felt.—*Ibid.* p. 309.

And yet, on page 377, they write in an article entitled, "Our Mission,"

The attempt to restore to the world the primitive order of things involves something more than a revival of the New Testament faith;

But,

To revive primitive life, devotion, and zeal.

If direct inspiration from heaven did not constitute the "life" and "devotion" of the primitive church, what did?

Again, in speaking of the Christian Church primitive, the writer says:—

Let us preserve this system intact, however far short of its requirements we may fall. Let us not attempt to accommodate it to our practice; but rather, let us labor to conform our practice to the system.—*Ibid.* p. 383.

That is precisely the thing we would desire our "Christian" friends to do; but in what book shall we find the system delineated? If in the New Testament, then let us strictly adhere to the New Testament

announcement of the facts, so far as therein recorded. Wherein could safety be guaranteed by the pursuance of any other course of procedure? If in the New Testament we are apprised that Jesus Christ said: "I will build my church;" and we learn how he entered upon the work of building; namely, the calling of twelve apostles as recorded in Luke 9; and Quorum of Seventy as in Luke 10; prophets and teachers, as found in Acts 13; evangelists and pastors as found in Ephesians 4, and of bishops and deacons as found in 1 Timothy 3; and elders as found in Titus 1; and these form the organic official compact; then if the Christian Church as founded by Christ went into a condition of apostasy, and the organic features of that church are to be restored, it would practically be impossible to recognize its identity unless this form of organic construction was perfectly maintained.

We will now consider the question of ordinances and religious rites as found practiced in the New Testament Christianity. Faith; repentance; baptism, by immersion, for the remission of sins; and laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit; as taught in Matthew 28; as found in Acts 2; Romans 6; Colossians 2; Acts 8:15-17; 9:17; 19:6; 1 Timothy 4:14. Again, we note the rite of the blessing of children as found in Matthew 19:14, 15; Mark 10:13-16; also administering to the sick, as found in James 5:14, 15; Mark 6:13. And as regards the promises of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament, made unto baptized believers, we find the following; Mark 16:15-20; John 14:15-21. The latter verse reading:—

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

"He," anybody, anywhere, at any time, who hath the commandments of Jesus and keepeth them, shall be loved of the Father and of the Son, and Jesus will manifest (reveal) himself by the Holy Spirit to that individual. See also John 16:13-15.

We refer the reader to Acts 2: 37-39. Therein is the promise of the Holy Spirit as a gift by way of being an abiding Comforter and instructor to the baptized believer, without limitation as to time, or age, or place; so that we believe that if we are to adhere to primitive Christianity of the New Testament type we should be found retaining these promises as a part and parcel of the Christian system, and the result be that the body, the church, be

fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.—Eph. 4: 16.

We call attention, in this connection, to 1 Corinthians 12: This chapter is a portion of a letter written to the Christian Church at Corinth, and if the *Bible alone* is to be a rule of faith and practice, and we are asked to accept and stand upon the Bible and the Bible alone for Christian teaching, what is there to hinder the acceptance of the instruction herein contained as necessary for the direction of Christian people to-day? For have not their chief authorities informed us that they were aiming at "the restoration of pure, primitive, apostolic Christianity, in letter and spirit, in principle and in practice?" In "The Disciples of Christ," by J. F. Rowe, page 29, we read that they learned "how to use the rules of Bible interpretation,—how to quote and apply Scriptures." By what rule of Bible interpretation would they dispense with these essential qualities of the primitive Christian system? Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander staunchly averred that a universal apostasy had occurred from original Christianity. They found the entire religious world in possession of the merest "form of godliness, denying the power thereof." This being true, and primitive Christianity having been vested with a divine power found in audible inspiration, how could that same form of a Christian institution be restored in all its parts without being rehabilitated with a similar inspiration of the

Holy Spirit sent down from heaven? Is this what we find in the work of the alleged restoration at the hands of the Messrs. Campbell? Let us now, by way of contrast, bring into parallel columns the original as found in the New Testament and that which Mr. Campbell claims as a restoration of that which is lost:—

NEW TESTAMENT.

OFFICERS.

Apostles,
Prophets,
Seventies,
Elders,
Evangelists,
Bishops,
Pastors or Priests,
Teachers,
Deacons.

ORDINANCES.

Faith,
Repentance,
Baptism,
Laying on of Hands—
For gift of the Holy Spirit,
For ordination,
Healing the Sick,
Blessing of Children,
The Lord's Supper,
Resurrection,
Eternal Judgment.

GIFTS TO BELIEVERS.

Wisdom,
Knowledge,
Faith,
Gifts of Healings,
Working of Miracles,
Prophecy,
Discerning of Spirits,
Diversity of Tongues,
Interpretation of Tongues.

PROMISES.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."—Mark 16: 17, 18.

Let the reader closely inspect the above columns and determine for himself to what degree Alexander Campbell proved successful in his attempt to restore primitive Christianity as found recorded in the New Testament.

In speaking of the Protestant churches Mr. Campbell says:—

They are severally *reformations*, but not the restoration of original Christianity. This is our *beard ideal*; and, however short of our standard, we hold it before us as our steadfast aim and aspi-

"DISCIPLEISM."

OFFICERS.

Evangelists,
Elders,
Deacons.

ORDINANCES.

Faith,
Repentance,
Baptism,
Laying on of Hands—
For ordination only,
The Lord's Supper,
Resurrection,
Eternal Judgment.

GIFTS TO BELIEVERS.

PROMISES.

ration.—*Mill. Har.*, series 4, vol. 5, p. 263.

In speaking of Solomon's Temple and the rebuilding of it after the Babylonish captivity, using these instances as similes of the founding of the primitive Christian Church and the work of Mr. Campbell, they say:—

We have to pattern after the *first* as well as we can. But we can *never equal it*. With all our efforts, that *great disparity* will ever remain. And could the Apostles and primitive Christians be here, they would doubtless weep at beholding it, but as the *second* temple was God's only temple on earth, and acknowledged by him, so is the second or present Church of Christ, His, or God's *only* church on earth.—*Ibid.* p. 40.

Reader, do you not believe the apostles or any of the early Christians in contrasting Mr. Campbell's "restored" church would have occasion to weep at beholding the great disparity between the two? Why have they not "preserved the system intact"? On page 373, series 4, vol. 4, of the *Millennial Harbinger*, they say their every effort "is to restore Original Christianity." Mr. J. F. Rowe says on page 23-4 of his work, quoting the 5th article of the society named "Voluntary Advocates for Church Reformation,"

"That this Society, formed for the sole purpose of promoting simple evangelical Christianity, shall, to the utmost of its power, countenance and support such ministers, and such only, as exhibit a manifest conformity to the original standard in conversation and doctrine, in zeal and diligence; only such as reduced to practice that simple original form of Christianity, expressly exhibited upon the sacred page; without attempting to inculcate anything of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men, as having any place in the constitution, faith, or worship of the Christian Church; or anything as matter of Christian faith or duty, for which there cannot be expressly produced a "Thus saith the Lord," either in express terms or by approved precedent.

That which we have quoted from the New Testament, respecting officers, ordinances, gifts, promises, has a "thus saith the Lord," most assuredly. What Mr. Thomas Campbell meant to imply by "approved

precedent," we are not prepared to say. But when we compare the church named "Christian Church," the product of the Messrs. Campbells' brains, with the general trend of Protestantism, and finding the religious systems thereof as destitute of these specific, prominent, characteristics of the original Christian system as that of their own church, can it be possible that what Mr. Thomas Campbell called "approved precedent" was to be found in Protestant deficiency? What was there in the religious world as Mr. Campbell found it that contained any precedent that could be styled as approved, when he declared the religious world in a condition of apostasy? The Christian system as outlined in the New Testament, has for it a "thus saith the Lord." The Apostle Paul in telling of what God had done, says:—

And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

The word "set" as here used we believe means to *fix firmly; to make fast, permanent*. How else could it be? For it would not be reasonable, neither warranted by the proceedings of the Almighty, that in the establishment of his church one portion of the organization should be accounted as a thing transitory, and another portion a thing of permanency. If so, then part of the Christian system was a mere experiment and another part fundamental. Wherein can any consistency be found in such logic, if logic it may be called?

Elder J. H. Garrison, in the pamphlet entitled, "Our movement; its origin and aim," on page 12 says, in speaking of the work Messrs. Campbell attempted:—

They felt it to be their high privilege to stand "upon the same ground on which the church stood at the beginning," and they believed this to be the only remedy for a divided Christendom.

On page 13:—

Therefore the only permanent remedy is to *return* to the simple faith and practice of the Apostolic church, throwing

overboard whatever corruptions have crept into the church during the succeeding ages. May I not ask you to agree with me that this was a grand aim—a sublime purpose—whatever you may think of the manner in which it was sought to be realized? The restoration of the gospel in its faith, doctrine, and ordinances, just as it was preached and practiced by the inspired Apostles, . . . by discarding all human formulations of faith or doctrine . . . committing themselves, unreservedly, to the guidance of God's word as the only and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

We agree that it was a "grand aim, a sublime purpose; but the idea of "the arm of flesh" attempting a restoration of a divine cause, to be followed by divine effects, without divine guidance, *special help from God*, as God always gave in the ages past in his work of opening up a new dispensation of his, is only to present to the world a spectacle of ridiculous failure. Let the reader reread the columns of contrast and determine for himself if this conclusion is not correct. Boasting as they have and do that they are not bound by any *written* creed originated by man, they nevertheless have a *mental* creed just as dogmatic, seemingly irrepressible, the influence of which they sway over the minds and consciences of men with a persistency strange to behold.

If the Apostle Paul planted Christianity at Corinth, Thessalonica, or elsewhere, he planted a system that embraced in its doctrinal ideas all the offices, ordinances, gifts, and promises as hereinbefore stated. Any other form of Christianity as Christianity proper he knew nothing about. In his letter to the Galatians he clearly affirms,

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached [at Galatia] of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.—Gal. 1: 11, 12.

Why then should an effort be made to palm off upon the people as the original system of Christianity that which is but a mere fragmentary work?

On pages 18 and 19, Mr. Garrison says:—

It remains for me to point out what have been the results thus far of the effort to reproduce the Apostolic Church in its faith and worship, by a strict adherence to the New Testament as the only authentic guide for Christians.

Again we bring to the attention of the reader that this so-called restored Christianity is as faulty respecting spiritual gifts, divine promises, administration of ordinances, in its governmental composition, as any Protestant church preceding or succeeding could *possibly* be found. Wherein then is there to be discovered any superiority of this *would-be* "restored church" over that of any other, seeing that when placed in the gospel balance it is found wanting, from the fact that it compares *unfavorably* with apostolic teaching and usage?

Mr. J. F. Rowe, from whose work we have quoted, says on page 15 of "The Disciples of Christ,"—

Neither Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer, nor John Wesley, ever made an attempt to restore Christianity to its original, apostolic condition.

So far as we are able to discern they restored as much of Christianity as Thomas or Alexander Campbell seemed to have succeeded in doing; so, wherein is the work of the latter any better than the work of the former?

The reader should constantly bear in mind that the Disciple or "Campbellite" Church insists upon the acceptance of the *New Testament alone* as their guide; and we have, and shall continue in this tract, to hold that people and all other religious people to the well-stated facts pertaining to the doctrine of Christ and the apostles as therein set forth uncontaminated by the touch of man, either in proscriptive creedology, written or mental. If Jesus Christ said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe," and the Apostle Paul said, "God hath set in the church" certain divine means to effect a given end, as stated in 1 Corinthians 12 and

Ephesians 4, would it *not* be a human opinion and an invention of men to teach people that these signs referred to *would not now* follow the baptized believer, and that what God had set in the church for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, the edifying of the body of Christ, *were not now* essential unto the consummation of that great work? What we ask, and what everyone might reasonably *demand* of the clergy of to-day is, that they adhere to the teachings of Christianity *as a whole*,

expressly exhibited upon the sacred page; without attempting to inculcate anything of human authority, of private opinion, or inventions of men.

Mr. Rowe says:—

If Martin Luther wrested the Bible out of the hands of the Roman Priesthood and gave it to the people, "Alexander Campbell did a mightier work by wresting from the hands of the Papal and Protestant clergy false keys of Bible interpretation, while at the same time he restored to the people the only correct and approved rules of interpretation, which, without the aid of the private interpretations of specially "called and sent preachers," would enable them to examine and understand the word of God for themselves.—*Ibid.* p. 30-1.

It will be observed, however, that the interpretation placed upon the Scriptures by Mr. Campbell has done just as much injustice to the true spirit and genius of New Testament Christianity as the interpretation of any of his religious predecessors. His interpretations were "private," because originating with himself, and imposed upon the people as a rule to guide them in their religious thought. This *cannot* be successfully denied, as *all the ministry of his church stand tenaciously* by direct or similar interpretation of the word of God. By his process of interpretation, as by theirs also, the gifts and blessings of God are expunged, serving only as a dead letter; as also six grades of offices in the Christian economy have been discarded with some of the most essential ordinances. In all these may be found the injustice of his private interpretations. So that instead of enabling

the people "to examine and understand the word of God for themselves," the Disciple Church places before the people *its* rendition of Scripture thought and teaching.

But what about this restored church? Elder W. T. Moore, a pastor of "the Christian Church" of Cincinnati, Ohio, now editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*, London, England—(see *Christian Evangelist*, May 16, 1895,) in a sermon delivered by him on "Radicalism and Conservatism" said:—

But so far as human instrumentality was concerned, *it cannot be denied* that Campbell was *the man who conceived, organized, and made successful* the present reformation.

We can readily admit this as being true; for while in some respects it is a trifle unlike the conglomerate mass of Protestantism, it is *more fully unlike* the primitive Christian system; hence it bears the trademark of Mr. Campbell. If the religious world was and is in a state of religious apostasy and the features that characterized that apostasy are discernible in an absence of the spiritual endowments that really constituted the glory and power of the early church, with a change of ordinances; and if it is the "stedfast aim and aspiration" of the "Disciple Church" to attain unto the primitive order of things in their entirety, why do they continually refrain from reaching out beyond a prescribed limit, such as all their teachings indicate? By so doing they must inevitably fail in attaining unto their "beau ideal," from the fact that it is "an imperfect conformity to a perfect standard."

Alexander Campbell wrote that it was necessary

that the Christian institutions, both moral and religious, be restored to their proper place in the views, in the affections, and in actions of those who acknowledge one Lord, one God and Father of all, one faith, one baptism, one body, one Spirit, and one hope.—*Mill. Harb.*, series 4, vol. 5, p. 233.

We refer the reader to the parallel columns given heretofore for their inspection as to whether Mr. Campbell or his immediate successors have been fruitful in their efforts so to do.

In *Millennial Harbinger*, series 4, vol. 4, p. 192, in speaking of the admitting of people into the church on the day of Pentecost, the writer says it was done

in exact conformity with the nature and requisitions of the gospel, and that all should be admitted now, upon the same principles, and in the same manner. . . . And this obedience secures the immediate enjoyment of its promised blessings, the pardon of sins, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

One item pertaining to the then admission of members was, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit. We believe this is evidenced by the practice of the Christian ministry at various places. It would hardly be reasonable for one to believe that the apostles initiated people by one method in one locality and by another somewhere else. It was necessary to the maintenance of a divine order that uniformity be very strictly observed. If faith, repentance, and baptism were accounted as prerequisites unto the reception of the Holy Spirit upon the day of Pentecost, and the promise of that Spirit, as a gift, was made unto believers who might appear in succeeding ages as these words imply: "For the promise is unto . . . all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," then these initiatory principles being taught to-day, and if obeyed, being authoritatively administered, should entitle the believer to the "enjoyment of its promised blessings;" these blessings having been enumerated by Christ and the Apostle Paul as hereinbefore related.

When God intends a work among men there is nothing of the accidental about it. The establishment of the primitive Christian Church was not the result of the disappointed ambition of some dissatisfied religious teacher. It was the effect of design upon the part of God. But not so in respect to the church with which Mr. Campbell has had to do; for Mr. Rowe informs us, on pages 29, 30 of his pamphlet that,

It never was in the mind of either Thomas or Alexander Campbell to start a new sect; indeed, they disclaimed and abhorred the very idea;

they simply sought reformation within their own ranks, as did the reformers of the three preceding centuries. . . . These illustrious reformers, with other mighty men of influence and eloquence, from the Protestant denominations, from this time forward began to advocate, not simply Church reformation—which was all that the earlier reformers sought to accomplish—but an entire restoration of the apostolic order of things.

But the gentleman informs us that after these parties had "broken away from all ecclesiastical trammels" these men were under the guidance of a gracious providence; but can it be possible that this providence under which the Messrs. Campbell are said to have been guided had become so entirely forgetful as to attempt through these men the establishment of a system of religious faith and practice of an almost entirely opposite makeup to that which he had introduced eighteen centuries ago, and then have the apparent effrontery to ask people to recognize in this latter-day institution a clearly defined identity with that of eighteen centuries ago? Reader, what kind of a providence would you suppose those men were guided by.—a divine one? It is said that Mr. Campbell

simplified the whole matter by showing that facts are to be *believed*, commands *obeyed*, and promises *enjoyed*; that there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism;" and that "the doctrine of Christ" is a proposition altogether different from the "doctrines of men" and the "doctrines of demons."

If this be true, what is the nature or character of the facts people are asked to believe, of the commands to be obeyed, and the promises to be enjoyed? We simply invite the reader to learn for himself what the New Testament contains as appertaining unto Christianity as *taught*, then contrast those facts, those commands, those promises, with the "facts" to be believed, commands obeyed, promises extended by Mr. Campbell or the Disciple or Christian Church, and decide how far they have succeeded in their boasted work of a restored, original, primitive Christianity.

(Mr. Barton W. Stone, in speaking)

of their effort to organize a church, said:—

There were no elders among us who had been immersed. It was finally concluded among us that if we had authority to preach we had authority to baptize. The work then commenced. The preachers baptized one another, and crowds came and were also baptized.

Thus we discover that this church, said to have been built upon the Bible and the Bible alone, was builded upon that precarious word "if." Reader, did you not know that John the Baptist was sent from "if," therefore if he had authority to preach he had authority to baptize? Rather, do we not read that he was a man sent from God? Did not the Apostle Paul write, in speaking upon the right of men to officiate "in things pertaining to God," that, *no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest.—*Heb. 5: 4.*

Then how could any man or set of men, in the presence of God and the great question of human destiny confronting their vision, and addressing itself as a question of superior importance to their consciences,—how could they *dare* to assume that right to act in things pertaining to God on behalf of humanity without the voice of God commanding, authorizing them to do so? Did the apostles and early ministry of the church go abroad in the world preaching and baptizing upon the flimsy pretext of an "if"? The gravity of the question of the destiny of man resting upon his faith and conduct is of such vital importance that too much concern cannot be bestowed upon the thought of how careful men should be in dealing with human interests, that touch not only upon the shore of mortality but reach far out into the great realm of the unseen.

Upon the question of restoration, a few queries have recently been propounded to some of the leading ministers of this denomination. Query written March 7, 1895, to Elder B. B. Tyler, of New York City:—

Does the Christian Church, as a church, claim to be successors, reformers, or restorers?

To this, answer was written March 12, as follows:—

I am compelled to say that I do not know whether the Christian Church, as a church, claims to be successors, reformers, or restorers. The people who are currently known as Disciples of Christ, desire to return to the Christianity of Christ in its faith, in its ordinances, and in its life.

This Mr. Tyler is Contributing Editor to the *Christian Evangelist*, published in St. Louis, Missouri.

Elder W. W. Hopkins, Assistant Editor of the *Evangelist* at St. Louis, in answer to a question written March 20, 1895:—

Does the Christian Church, as a church, claim to be successors, reformers, or restorers?

To which he replied on the 23d of said month:—

Our mission, as generally stated, is to restore to the world the faith and practice of the apostolic age; hence we would be restorers if one of the three terms must be used.

Elder D. R. Dungan, Chancellor of Cotner University, Nebraska, was asked by letter, February 20, 1895:—

Does the Christian Church, as a church, claim to be successors, reformers, or restorers?

To this he replied:—

Our aim has been and is to return to the teaching and practice of Christ and the apostles. We have never talked of being successors. Some have used the word "reformation" but with the meaning of restoration.

If it is the aim and the mission of this so-called Christian Church to return to the primitive order of things and to restore to the world that which was lost through apostasy, why have they not done it? Why stop at a limit that does not embrace the entire Christian system? If they consider the religious world in a condition of apostasy from the primitive plan, how then could any ordinance administered by an apostate ministry be accepted by a divinely-restored church?

But upon this point we have a few items of recent date to present. In a letter written to Elder J. H. Gar-

Editor of the *Christian Evangelist*, St. Louis, Missouri, February 1, 1895, this question was asked:—

Can persons who have been baptized by immersion into Baptist, Methodist, or Dunkard Churches, and are in good standing, become members of the Christian or Church of Christ without rebaptism?

He replied:—

Most assuredly, I would receive all who have been baptized, whether once or thrice, who are in good standing as Christians. The extra immersions in the case of Dunkards, do not nullify their obedience. Persons are not baptized into religious parties, whatever they may think, but into Christ, if so be that they believe in Christ.

The reader will observe that neither Baptists nor Methodists baptize for remission of sins; and yet this restored church who claim to baptize people "for the remission of sins" would receive into their communion people who had not been so baptized. Is that in keeping with the conduct of Paul towards certain people whom he met at Ephesus, as found in Acts 19? If people are baptized into Christ, by whomsoever that baptism may have been administered, was not an *inspired* man like Paul qualified to determine upon its validity? We think so, and that that is why he rebaptized those Ephesians.

In a letter dated December 26, 1894, the following question was asked of Elder J. H. Garrison:—

If persons have been baptized by immersion into orthodox churches; that is, Baptists, Methodists, United Brethren, Adventists, Dunkards, Greek Catholics, and are in good standing, can they become members of the Church of Christ (or the Christian Church) without rebaptism?

To this B. J. Pinkerton, Assistant Editor of the *Evangelist*, replied:—

As far as my experience and observation extend, it is the universal custom of our preachers to receive such persons without rebaptism, unless they demand it.

By this may be ascertained how closely they observe the apostolic method; for note, Peter upon the day of Pentecost, when speaking to the great multitude, said:—

Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.—Acts 2: 38.

Among these people were Jews of different sects, who undoubtedly had been baptized; nevertheless they were under a broken covenant, as intimated in Isaiah 24: 5. Again, Jesus said:—

Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?—Matt. 15: 3.

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men.—Matt. 15: 8, 9.

Being under these conditions it became necessary that they should "repent, every one of you." Without this action upon their part the apostles could not have received them into the church under the new dispensation without rebaptism; for they were all under a *broken* covenant; and any transaction performed under such circumstances could not, by any means, be accounted as valid. And, so, in these latter times, the religious world is in a condition of apostasy, hence under a broken covenant. How then could God recognize the rightfulness of any administration of religious ordinances? And if the Disciple or Christian Church is *the church restored*, then it has within it the direct authority of God; if so, we have the glaring inconsistency of its ministers doing in this respect what the ministers of the primitive church refused to do. On February 1, 1895, a query was put to Elder W. W. Hopkins, of the *Evangelist*, St. Louis, Missouri, thus:—

If a person has been baptized into the Disciple or Christian Church, by a *laymember*, is the baptism valid?

To which he replied:—

1. We baptize into Christ and not the church. 2. The validity of baptism depends on the faith of the candidate and not the office of the administrator. For the sake of order it would be better for the preacher or elder to baptize; but a baptism is not invalid because done by a laymember.

Such theological evasion as this would fain remove the responsibility as to the claim of direct authority from God for the administration. For the reader will remember that their authority for the existence of administrative right depends fully upon the logical word "if." Primitive Christianity recognized no such pretext as the mere faith of the candidate, but in connection with that faith there was the idea and the fact of authority from God. Jesus said:—

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you.

But Mr. Rowe, whom we have already quoted, says on page 30 of his pamphlet, in speaking of the work of Messrs. Campbell: "Having accepted the Bible as their only infallible guide, and Jesus the Christ as their infallible Lawgiver." This is, apparently, just the reverse of what we have quoted from John 15:16. The question arises, Supposing the apostles had attempted the construction of the church and said they would choose Jesus as their lawgiver, but Jesus had not chosen them nor directly authorized them to institute a church and baptize people into it, though professedly into Christ, how about the likelihood of their work finding acceptance at his hand? And yet we find the people of whom we are writing resting upon the merest presumption, without any direct knowledge that their work is legitimate.

A similar question was propounded to Elder D. R. Dungan, of Bethany, Nebraska, as to persons having been baptized by immersion into the Baptist, Methodist, or Dunkard churches, and in good standing, then becoming members of the Disciple Church without rebaptism; and he answered on February 8, 1895, as follows:—

Persons who have believed in the Christ, repented of sin, and confessed the Savior, and obeyed the Lord in baptism, being buried with Christ, whether by M. E. or Baptist have been scripturally baptized; such is my view.

So far as the *modus operandi* in the form is concerned, it may be

scriptural; but would the act be divinely authoritative? In 2 Chronicles 26:16-19 we read of King Uzziah attempting to burn incense unto the Lord, but Azariah with eighty priests went into the temple and protested that the act was invalid from the fact that God had not authorized him to do even so small a thing as to burn a little incense before the altar. And are we to suppose that the Lord is less concerned about the deed of baptizing people, upon which act is made dependent their entrance into the kingdom of God in which the gift of life is promised? We believe not.

But the leaders of this restored church are entirely silent upon this vital question of divine right, being conscious that neither God, angels, nor yet the Holy Spirit had anything whatsoever to do with the originating of their institution. For if the church as found outlined in the New Testament, endowed with its several offices, ordinances, gifts, and promises, was what *God intended it should be* as an illustration of his design, purpose, and will as to what that church should be like in order to receive his own recognition, and in which his own authority should be resident, then upon an act of restoring that institution, after having been lost to the world through a transgressional departure, it is not within the province of reason nor from a sense of justice and clear propriety to expect that God would present that church to the world in all its primitive compactness of design without himself having something directly to do with such a work of restoration, and should it be restored, and not leave it to be the mere caprice of human wisdom which at best is very faulty.

We have told you that Elder W. T. Moore, of Cincinnati, Ohio, said,

It cannot be denied that Campbell was the man who conceived, organized, and made successful the present reformation.

But Elder Dungan said, "Some have used the word 'reformation,' but with the meaning of restoration."

The reader can readily observe, if

he views the New Testament facts in the light of reason and record, that this "Disciple or Christian Church" is too utterly deficient to be worthy of the high claim of primitive Christianity restored.

We find that as regards the official status of the church they have but three grades of offices, as evangelists, "elders (or bishops), and deacons;" thus leaving out six grades of offices named in the New Testament church. In order to reduce the number of offices in the church they have resorted to a method of confusing titles; for instance, pastor, bishop, elder, as referring to a single office; thus representing the apostolic writer as dealing in tautology, which could have no other tendency but to obscure their meaning; and we are reasonably certain he would not do so. Alexander Campbell said:—

Either there is, or there is not, a Christian system of church organization. If there be no divinely instituted system of church organization, there must be a human system, or there is no system at all. Has the King of the kingdom of heaven himself laid down no system of organization? Then he has no kingdom of heaven—no church on earth. . . . The church is to be perpetuated through all time by the living and perpetual ministry of evangelists, bishops, and deacons.—*Millennial Harbinger*, series 4, vol. 5, pp. 380, 381.

Why would Mr. Campbell say that these three offices were to be perpetual and at the same time ignore the offices of apostle, seventy, prophet, etc? From whence did he receive his information that three grades were to be perpetual and six to be merely transitory? He received it from the same source, as have also his successors, when they divide the seventeenth and eighteenth verses of Mark sixteenth chapter from the fifteenth to the sixteenth verses. And they have no more right to do the one than the other. If these are the "only correct and approved rules of interpretation" that Mr. Campbell has given to enable people, "to examine and understand the word of God for themselves," we believe them to be very unsafe ones for people to follow.

Notwithstanding all this, Mr. Campbell proclaims with great boldness,

We advocate original Christianity.

In 1823,

A restoration of the original gospel and order of things began to be plead in a periodical, edited by Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Virginia, entitled *The Christian Baptist*.—*Ibid.* 207.

It will be observed that a constant repetition of the phrases just quoted appears in nearly all their writings, and yet the Bible student cannot fail to see that a great disparity is ever existing. In 1 Corinthians 12: 28, and in Ephesians 4: 11 Paul names leading offices and says they were

For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

We learn from this that in order to the effecting of the work named in 1 Corinthians 12, there should be a living ministry of apostles and prophets. It would not do merely to have them as the Disciple Church would say, "Embalmed in the living oracles;" for in the early church they might as well have had "embalmed" prophets, and so dispensed with the apparent necessity for living ones. But such was not the purpose of God. The claim made by the ministers of this Christian Church that the religious world had departed from the primitive faith, and its deploring the multiplied forms of religious bodies, would argue in itself that professed Christians had not "all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God;" and that the class of ministry named in the verses quoted were designed to be in the church so long as that church might be found existing, until this desired end should have been accomplished. To restore, therefore, would be to reincorporate the offices of apostle, prophet, seventy, evangelist, elder, bishop, pastor, (or priest,) teacher, deacon; the ordinances, as hereinbefore named, with the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit; and this,

the Campbells and their successors have not done, they themselves being witnesses; hence to present what they have, under the claim they make, is to perpetrate a travesty upon the original Christian plan.

They do not teach a doctrine of "eternal judgment" according to the primitive idea, which provided for the reward or punishment of every individual according to his works. According to Revelation 20: 12, 13, and other passages, Jesus and the Apostle Paul taught degrees of glory, as see John 14: 2; 1 Corinthians 15: 40-1. Neither do they teach the doctrine of future probation for those who have died without the knowledge of Christ and the gospel while in this condition of life, as indicated in 1 Peter 3: 18-20; 4: 5, 6; Romans 14: 11, 12; Philippians 2: 9-11; Romans 10: 13-15.

We have therefore weighed this church in the balance of God's word and found it wanting, rendering the following count of indictments against it:—

1. They have no apostles.
2. They have no prophets.
3. No sevensies.
4. No priests.
5. No bishops.
6. No teachers.
7. The signs or gifts of Mark 16: 17, 18 do not follow them.
8. They do not lay on hands, after baptism, for the gift of the Holy Spirit.
9. They do not call the elders for the sick, as directed in James 5: 14, 15.
10. They do not teach the resurrection of the dead as taught in the Bible.
11. They do not teach the Bible doctrine of eternal judgment.
12. They claim to teach baptism for remission of sins, but contradict themselves by taking people into their fellowship from other churches who have not been so baptized, without rebaptism.
13. They do not lay on hands for the blessing of little children.
14. They teach that the church

existed for the first time on the day of Pentecost.

15. They believe and teach that the gospel was never taught, in fact, until the day of Pentecost.

16. They do not teach the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We will now let the reader decide how far Mr. Campbell and his successors have been successful in restoring primitive, original Christianity. The Bible does teach the probability and possibility of a restoration of the gospel and kingdom of God in the latter days, as foreshadowed in Matthew 24:14; Malachi 3:1-3; Revelation 14:6, 7; and that after the restoration had occurred some would depart from the faith, as note 1 Timothy 4:1. The words "the faith," evidently have reference to the entire gospel scheme, as implied by Paul in Ephesians 4:5. And the apostle knowing of no Christian system aside from that which he so forcibly represented, is very likely to have understood by the revelation of the Holy Spirit that that faith would at some time subsequent to his day be recommitted to earth.

But this could not be done without direct revelation from God through the ministry of an angel to some human instrument whom God might see fit in his own wisdom to choose. Believing this to have taken place, from 1827 to 1830, we respectfully invite the reader to the consideration of the claims of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, whose headquarters and publishing house are located at Lamoni, Decatur county, Iowa, where publications may be had setting forth *their* position upon this all-important question.

Write for a catalogue of their publications, and if you are a believer in the divinity of Christ, or if you are not, and have any idea that there is a burning necessity for the existence of the Christianity of the Christ being upon earth among men, read your New Testament and examine the claims of the church now referred to, and satisfy yourself.