

VOICES IN THE WILDERNESS

A STUDY IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF BENEVOLENCE SOCIETIES
AND THEIR SUPPORT

by

JAMES R. COPE

**HAVE CHURCHES OF CHRIST "ALWAYS" SUPPORTED
ORPHAN HOMES?**

WHEN DID THE OPPOSITION BEGIN?

**IS IT REALLY TRUE THAT PERSONS NOW LIVING RE-
MEMBER THE ORIGIN OF THE FIRST ORPHAN HOME
SUPPORTED BY CHURCHES OF CHRIST?**

DEDICATION

TO MOTHER

“. . . and a sword shall pierce through
thine own soul. . . .”

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A host of brethren who have heard me present much of the material in this booklet have insisted that I put it in print. Their expressions of confidence that it will do good is my only excuse for presenting it in this form. For their encouragement and for the grace of our Father which has made it possible I am grateful.

In this work I have repeatedly indicated that there may be information which I have not seen nor heard. If I am mistaken in evidence presented or in conclusions drawn from it, he will be my friend who points up my error.

James R. Cope
Temple Terrace, Florida
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CHAPTER I

A Slogan Based on Scriptures

"Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." So spoke Thomas Campbell near the beginning of the Nineteenth Century while still a Presbyterian. These words, however, were not only to lead Mr. Campbell out of and away from Presbyterianism but were to become a slogan which would shake the religious world to its foundation. In fact, they were so revolutionary that hardly had they fallen from Campbell's lips until a dear friend and fellow-Presbyterian said, "Mr. Campbell, if we adopt **that** as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism." Not perceiving the full implications of this announcement at the moment, Mr. Campbell, nevertheless, recognized its soundness and straightway replied, "Of course, if infant baptism be not found in Scripture, we can have nothing to do with it." (Richardson's **Memoirs of Alexander Campbell**, Vol. I, pp. 237, 238.) True to the principle proclaimed, Thomas Campbell analyzed his own "sprinkling in infancy" and later, as a believer in Christ, was baptized for remission of sins. He would not allow the tradition of his fathers to keep him from obeying God.

The Slogan's Scriptural Basis

Almost eighteen centuries earlier, the Holy Spirit had announced the same principle which Thomas Campbell announced to a small group of Presbyterians. The Spirit had said, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9.) He had also said that "if any man speaketh" he should speak "as it were oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11), and that men should "learn not to go beyond the things which are written." (1 Cor. 4:6.) Like Jesus who, speaking as "one having authority and not as the scribes," confounded the Jewish teachers and awakened the multitudes because of His appeal to the word of God, so Campbell and other pioneer preachers called the deceived and confused people away from the creed-bound preachers of their day to the simple but living word of the living God. They urged their hearers to forsake traditions of men for the truth of God. "To the law and to the testimony!" they cried. "Nothing else will do," they declared. And they were eminently correct for Jesus had said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48.)

Truth Opposes Tradition

Tradition had said, "Let us sprinkle or pour water upon men and call it 'baptism,'" but truth had said, "We are buried with him in baptism." (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.) Those who loved truth more than tradition forsook tradition for truth. Tradition had said, "Let us baptize babies," but truth had said, "He that believeth and is baptized

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shall be saved." (Mk. 16:16.) Babies could not be baptized at Christ's command because they could not believe. Tradition had said, "We may have our church associations, our intercongregational arrangements, even our presiding elders, archbishops and popes," but truth had revealed nothing larger than a local congregation of saints with its bishops and deacons (Phil. 1:1), none of which exercised themselves to control anything other than the work and souls committed to their charge by the Holy Spirit. (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2-5.) These are but a few of the traditions surrendered in the light of truth newly learned.

Truth Conquers Tradition

The success with which these preachers pushed their anti-tradition plea while they urged their pro-Scripture appeal is evidenced by the tremendous impact they made upon the religious society of that distant day. By the hundreds and by the thousands the multitudes became excited as they became enlightened by the simplicity of the appeal to return to the ancient order of things religious. They laid aside their human creeds, their denominational names, their human organizations, their man-devised governments, and obeyed the gospel of Christ. Onward they marched as a mighty phalanx. Forward they moved as a mighty army. Methodists said, "We must forget Wesley and return to the apostles." Presbyterians said, "We must forsake John Calvin and return to the New Testament." Baptists said, "Let us cast aside our manuals and go back to the Word of God." Catholics said, "Let us forsake Rome for Jerusalem." It was not easy for many of them, but it was safe for all of them. Truth was prevailing over tradition for the first time in centuries!

The spirit characterizing these truth-seekers was one of freshness. They weighed everything in the light of the New Testament. If they could not find where any practice had been commanded by Christ through His apostles they rejected it. With them it was a direct statement or command, an approved apostolic example or a necessary inference for whatever they taught and practiced. If the apostles taught it they practiced it; if not, they repudiated it. Regardless of what they had once felt, thought, or said they now surrendered minds, sentiments and wills to the decrees of the sacred Scriptures. Fleshly ties and blood relations felt the impact. They knew that the peace made possible by the Prince of Peace came only after the sword of the Spirit had cut through the walls of sin which separated men from God, for Jesus had said, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword . . . and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." (Matt. 10:34, 36.) Nevertheless they knew that the very kingdom for whose borders they were battling was a kingdom of "joy and peace," and that they had been promised "the peace of God which passeth understanding" as a result of their relationship with Christ the King. (Rom. 14:17; Phil. 4:7.)

CHAPTER II

Development of Division: 1849 — 1919

But, alas, the movement fell upon stormy seas as winds of division and strife rolled down from the domain of the ruler of the darkness of this world. Brother began to oppose brother. Again, man's foes were they of his own house. Even among some who had shouted the loudest to flee fast and far from Rome came also the suggestions and urgency of forming organizations and introducing innovations upon the ancient order which neither they nor their followers could find commanded by the Christ which they professed to serve. Alexander Campbell, great and good man that he was, led hundreds away from the fundamental principles to which he had formerly directed them. Perhaps more than any other person in Restoration History, Campbell stirred the fires and fanned the flames which eventually brought divisions among the people who were once united upon the simple plea: "We speak where the Scriptures speak; and we are silent where the Scriptures are silent."

A. Campbell's Changed Views: 1823 vs. 1842

In the first issue of *The Christian Baptist*, August 3, 1823, Alexander Campbell expressed his opposition to all organizations of a "religious nature" outside the Lord's "societies called churches" as follows:

"The societies called churches, constituted and set in order by those ministers of the New Testament, were of such as received and acknowledged JESUS as Lord Messiah, the Saviour of the World, and had put themselves under His guidance. The ONLY BOND OF UNION among them was faith in Him and submission to His will. . . . Their churches were not fractured into missionary societies, Bible societies, education societies; nor did they dream of organizing such in the world. The head of a believing household was not in those days a president or manager of a board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society; his eldest son, the recording secretary of some domestic Bible society; his eldest daughter, the corresponding secretary of a mite society; his servant maid, the vice-president of a rag society; and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday school. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times. In their church capacity alone they moved. They neither transformed themselves into any other kind of association, nor did they fracture and sever themselves into divers societies. They viewed the church of Jesus Christ as the scheme of Heaven to ameliorate the world; as members of it, they considered themselves bound to do all they could for the glory of God and the good of men. They dare not transfer to a missionary society, or Bible society, or education society, a cent or a prayer, lest in so doing they should rob the church of its glory, and exalt the inventions of men above the wisdom of God. In their church capacity alone they moved. The church they considered 'the pillar and ground of the truth'; they viewed it as the temple of the

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Holy Spirit; as the house of the living God. They considered if they did all they could in this capacity, they had nothing left for any other object of a religious nature. In this capacity, wide as its sphere extended, they exhibited the truth in word and deed. Their good works, which accompanied salvation, were the labors of love, in ministering to the necessities of saints, to the poor of the brotherhood. They did good to all men, but especially to the household of faith. They practiced that pure and undefiled religion, which, in overt acts, consists in 'taking care of orphans and widows in their affliction, and in keeping one's self unspotted by (the vices of) the world'."

Nineteen years later Campbell reflected an entirely different attitude. He wrote in the **Millennial Harbinger** of 1842, p. 522, as follows:

"... We cannot concentrate the action of the tens of thousands of Israel in any great Christian effort, but by co-operation. . . . We can have no thorough co-operation without a more ample, extensive and thorough church organization."

American Christian Missionary Society Founded: 1849

The evolution of Campbell's thinking was gradual but it was complete. The eventual result was the founding of the American Christian Missionary Society in Cincinnati, Ohio, in October, 1849, with Mr. Campbell himself elected president of the organization whose constitution set forth its purpose as follows:

"The object of this society shall be to promote the preaching of the gospel in destitute places of this and other lands."

The same constitution established an "Executive Board" and, in addition to possessing the usual powers of such an organization, this Board was to act as follows:

"They shall establish such agencies as the interests of the society may require, appoint agents and missionaries, fix their compensation, direct and instruct them concerning their particular fields and labors, make all appropriations to be paid out of the treasury, and present to the society at each annual meeting, a full report of their proceedings during the past year."

It is interesting to observe that Dr. L. L. Pinkerton who formally opened the Kentucky Female Orphan School at Midway, Kentucky, the first week in October, 1849, served as Chairman of the Convention which established the American Christian Missionary Society the third week in October, 1849. From the beginning both of these institutions drew contributions from churches. Pinkerton was also credited with introducing the melodian into the Midway Church just ten years later (1859) and then denied verbal inspiration of the Bible within another ten years (1869).

Society Opposition Gradual but Intense

From the beginning of the American Christian Missionary Society there was serious discussion, though perhaps not at first wide-

spread, regarding its scriptural right to exist. As time passed, the opposition increased. The opponents of the Society stepped up their opposition in direct proportion to the intensity with which the proponents of the society pressed its claims upon local churches. The Society's friends branded its opponents as "radicals," "hobby-riders," "trouble-makers," and "church-splitters." They spoke of such opponents as being "anti-cooperation" and "anti-missionary." Popularly they came to be identified by the society supporters as "antis." "Progressives" and "digressives" were used by the "antis" to describe the "liberals." A few years after the Society controversy began, instrumental music was introduced into the worship of a few churches. This innovation came in 1859 at Midway, Kentucky.

Reflective of the attitude expressed above is the following excerpt from an article, "Love the Brethren," by W. E. Daugherty in the **Christian Standard** (considered by the "antis" as a "digressive" paper) of August 29, 1896, p. 1114:

"I was once what some of your scribes call 'anti.' In those days I could hardly report a meeting, or write a line for any of our papers without 'spatting' at some of the 'Digressive' wanderers, as we 'Antis' called you then — and as you are still called."

"Official" Division: 1906

In time, churches favoring missionary societies and instrumental music came to be distinguished from others by the names of "Christian Churches" and "Disciples of Christ." Between these latter groups there now exists practically no fellowship. For government purposes the 1906 Federal Census set forth "Churches of Christ" and "Disciples of Christ" "officially." The "Disciples" group is now much too liberal for the "Christian Church" since it has gone even to "open membership" in many places and has greatly enlarged the Missionary Society to include widow and orphan benevolences, colleges and universities, and other cooperative activities. The "Disciples" are identified with a much more liberal attitude toward the inspiration of the Scriptures than the "Christian Church" and are identified with the "Federal Council of Churches of Christ." As early as 1907 the **Christian Standard**, a mouthpiece for persons identified with the more conservative element (Christian Church) opposed vigorously the Federal Council. In fact, there is now such a cleavage between the two groups that in 1956 A. T. DeGroot, identified with the "Disciples," wrote a book, **Church of Christ Number Two**, wherein he speaks of these conservatives in the same general class with "Churches of Christ (anti-organ and anti-missionary society)."

"Progressive" Organizations Multiply and Merge

The United Christian Missionary Society was the inevitable development of churches sending funds to numerous self-governing

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institutions. The churches rapidly became little more than pegs upon which these human institutions were hung. With the development of extra church organizations and with these various institutions begging hundreds of churches for places on the "church calendar" and money from the church treasury, the same reasoning that gave rise to one society governmentally independent of but supported by churches ("It is merely an expedient method for a church to do its work," its supporters said) logically demanded a unifying of the multiplicity of extra organizations into one giant body; hence the **United Society** in 1919. Some of these other smaller societies in addition to the American Christian Missionary Society were the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society and various educational, benevolence, health, recreational and cultural organizations.

The United Christian Missionary Society: 1919

The Constitution of the U.C.M.S. sets forth the aims and objects of the Society as follows:

" . . . to preach the gospel at home and abroad; to maintain missionaries, preachers, and teachers in America and other lands; to promote religious education in the churches; to establish and conduct schools, orphanages, hospitals, and homes; to pension and support disabled ministers and missionaries and their dependent families; to assist in the erection of churches and other buildings for religious purposes; to disseminate religious information and encourage a missionary and benevolent spirit in the churches; to solicit, receive, hold in trust, and administer funds for these objects; and to engage in any other form of Christian service that will help to bring in the kingdom of God, in which His will shall be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

Warnings to "Antis" by "Antis" Watching Floodtide

In the *Gospel Advocate* of October 20, 1932, H. Leo Boles wrote on "The 'United Christian Missionary Society'" in which he pointed out the tendency toward consolidation of various organizations in the United Society. After quoting the foregoing objectives of the society, he said:

"It is strange that religious people would organize institutions and form the by-laws of those institutions with the wisdom of men and set aside the New Testament church and still claim to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven! St. Louis, Missouri, was selected as the headquarters of this new society.

"These boards still conduct their own educational and financial campaigns; hence there is still some competition and overlapping of efforts. Many strong men among them opposed the uniting of all their organizations into one big organization; quite a few of them are still opposed to the 'United Christian Missionary Society.'

"There is no end to organization when once a departure is made from the New Testament pattern. It will be well to note

the steps that were taken which resulted in this tremendous organization now known as the 'United Christian Missionary Society.' The steps are as follows: (1) 'Cooperative meetings'; (2) 'Organized cooperation'; (3) 'Bible Society'; (4) 'The American Christian Missionary Society'; (5) many organizations too numerous to list; (6) finally, the 'United Christian Missionary Society.' The steps were taken gradually and carried them over the same road that resulted in the organization of the Roman Catholic Church and all other gigantic denominational organizations. Those who have studied these things and have observed the dangers in them are grieved at the least departure from the New Testament pattern. Occasionally brethren who claim to follow the New Testament and who claim to be loyal to the congregation in its autonomy call for 'preachers' meetings,' 'elders' meetings,' 'cooperative meetings,' 'tabernacle meetings,' 'union meetings of all the churches,' and 'get-together meetings of the leaders' of the churches in a certain city or vicinity. These are steps along the road and are impregnated with great danger."

The very year (1919) that the United Christian Missionary Society was established C. M. Pullias wrote a front page editorial in the July issue of **Tidings of Joy** and among other things said:

"The main principle violated by the missionary society is combining of all the congregations to do what God has assigned to one. There is no work that cannot be done by the power of God. . . . That which the church has not the power to do, then, should not be considered. Besides this, we might say this way of a few getting together and saddling on the church of Christ orphan homes and schools or anything else is a very serious thing, and will in the course of time prove to be a curse to the church. . . . All such combines are wrong and in them the man of sin is working, just as in Paul's day, and in the course of time he will be revealed to the sorrow of the church. (2 Thess. 2:3-10.)"

We mention the writings of H. Leo Boles and C. M. Pullias in this connection to reflect their thinking at the time church centralization of funds and the resulting loss of church oversight of church resources were reaching floodtide among Disciples of Christ. Liberal thinkers formally opened the gate in 1849 when they established the American Christian Missionary Society. They and their spiritual descendants had kept the current running swiftly through all succeeding years. Brethren Pullias, Boles and many others had seen something in the experiences of Disciples' Churches which caused them to sound the warning notes among those who had not gone with the missionary society movement. They knew that the seventy years between 1849 and 1919 composed a period of dissention, strife, division, and heartache produced by the "man of sin." These seven decades revealed his usurping presence first in the field of evangelism and later combined evangelism with benevolence and secular education. They knew that what happened before could happen again, and they did not hesitate to lay the blame for the discord at the feet of those who had promoted the innovations and combines.

CHAPTER III

Benevolence Societies — A Backward Look: 1884 — 1962

Just how far back have churches identified with the "Restoration Movement" made contributions to societies dealing in the care of needy persons, particularly widows and orphans? This question should not be difficult to answer; yet we are wholly dependent upon secular history for that answer, since the New Testament is completely silent concerning these institutions. The apostolic Word mentions none of them and is silent regarding church support of them in exactly the same way it is silent regarding sprinkling, infant baptism, instrumental music in worship and missionary societies in evangelism.

"Gospel Defender" Editor Speaks

Apparently some people, even those in responsible places, think churches of Christ have always supported these institutions. Here, for example, is part of an editorial appearing in the *Gospel Defender*, August, 1960, p. 2:

"Orphan homes have been an established and accepted means of practicing pure religion for many years before the Missionary Society was organized. The brethren who stood so firmly against the Missionary Society digression accepted without hesitation the scriptural principles of establishing such homes. They saw no parallel, dragon of terror, that the modern advocates of Anti-ism shout so loudly about. Were these great men so stupid that they could not see what the modern advocates of Anti-ism of the last ten years say is so plain? Or is it possible that these modern advocates have departed from an established and accepted principle?"

Then follows four quotations from the *Gospel Advocate*. The first two written in 1912, another in 1913, and the last in 1928. Three of these quotations had to do with Tennessee Orphan Home and the other with Belle Haven Orphans' Home, Luling, Texas. Three of the statements reflect congregational donations to these two orphanages. Then the *Defender* editor concludes:

"It is evident from the foregoing that the *Gospel Advocate* and its writers stand today on the same ground and for the same spiritual principles as they did years ago when they so courageously fought against the departures from the truth by those who espoused the Missionary Society digression. Indeed, who has departed?"

Obviously, there are certain points made by this brother which he expects his readers to accept without question. What are some of these? Notice, please, the following: We are expected to believe (1) that orphan homes were established and an accepted means of practicing pure religion many years before the missionary society was organized in 1849; (2) that brethren who rejected the missionary society accepted orphan homes "many years" before the missionary society was established; (3) that older brethren saw no parallel be-

tween orphan homes and missionary societies; (4) that "Anti-ism" was born within the last ten years; (5) that opponents of church donations to orphan homes have departed from the faith. We shall have occasion to consider these points shortly.

"'Always' — All My Life Churches Have Done It!"

Brethren frequently accept a practice because others before them have engaged in the practice and, without measuring the practice by the Scriptures, they measure it by what they have seen others do. Recently a brother said to me, "Churches have 'always' supported orphan homes. All my life the church where I grew up has donated to one. I can't remember when that congregation wasn't sending money to it!" I did not doubt that this man had stated the facts regarding the practice of the church where he "grew up." I did not question his word when he said that church had thus acted "all my life." The man was not sixty years old, yet he **assumed** that what he had **always seen**, churches of the Lord have always done! In this conclusion he was mistaken. Churches have **not** "always" supported these institutions. Both inspired and uninspired church history deny that this conclusion is warranted. To many it is surprising to learn how short-lived is both the benevolence societies among us and the time churches have supported them.

The Record Speaks

What, then, are the facts regarding the benevolence institutions and their support by churches?

At the risk of being tedious I present here a number of quotations which speak for themselves. I trust that the reader will read each of these statements keeping his mind upon two particular points — (1) the peculiar type of institution being discussed and (2) the date identified with its beginning. The first general division of quotations and observations cover the institutions established and supported by Disciples of Christ **after** the establishment of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849 and before the separate listings of "Disciples of Christ" and "Churches of Christ" in the U. S. Census of 1906.

Benevolence Societies Among "The Disciples"

In his **The Disciples in Kentucky**, pp. 303-307, A. W. Fortune declares:

"One of the finest institutions supported by the Christian churches of Kentucky is the Christian Church Widows' and Orphans' Home. This home is in Louisville, and was established by the Christian churches of that city. . . . This Louisville home for widows and orphans was the first to be planned by the Disciples and the first to be put in operation. The first home in Louisville was put in operation six years before the home in St. Louis was

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opened, which was the first of those maintained by the National Benevolent Association. . . .

"On March 28, 1872, a charter was obtained from the legislature of Kentucky for the establishment of the Christian Church Widows' and Orphans' Home in Louisville. . . . The business depression of 1873 and the years following greatly delayed the enterprise. . . . A constitution was adopted January 14, 1879. . . . By-laws were adopted at a meeting, January 27, 1879, and plans were formulated to raise the necessary funds to put the home in operation. For some reason the plan failed and the project was dormant again for about four years. . . . At a meeting, January 2, 1883, a board of control was organized by the members of this church (Floyd and Chestnut Street Christian Church) to establish a widows' and orphans' home in Louisville, which should be under the auspices of the Christian Brotherhood of Kentucky. . . . The first children to be received into the home were Myrtle and Alice Montgomery of Shakertown. The application for these children was approved May 21, 1884."

In Garrison's **Religion Follows the Frontier**, p. 254, we read as follows:

"With the organization of the Board of Ministerial Relief and the National Benevolent Association, in the 'nineties,' the Disciples registered their discovery of certain social responsibilities, for superannuated ministers and for the orphans, the aged and the sick, which had hitherto escaped their attention."

Errett Gates, author of **The Story of the Churches — The Disciples of Christ**, p. 274, declares:

"The National Benevolent Association was organized in 1886, and did work principally in St. Louis, Missouri; it did not become national in its activities until about 1901 when it appointed a general secretary to urge its cause on behalf of the orphaned young and the aged upon the entire denomination. Since then it has rapidly consolidated the local state benevolent enterprises of the Disciples under its auspices, and has increased its income. . . ."

In **The Story of a Century**, published in 1909, pp. 166, 167, J. H. Garrison, long-time editor of **The Christian-Evangelist** which came to be the mouthpiece of the "liberal wing" of the Disciples, ties together in one package schools, missionary societies, and benevolence societies related to churches, and says:

"These organizations have come into existence one by one as the need for them has been felt, and they have grown and prospered just to the extent that they have ministered to the welfare of the cause. . . . It scarcely needs to be said that none of these organizations possesses, or claims, any authority over the churches. On the contrary they are the instruments of the churches for carrying out their desires and purposes in respect to education, missionary work, and benevolence. They are voluntary co-operations seeking to express that unity of faith and purpose which we have, and to more effectively accomplish, by united effort, our common ends and aims."

Throughout the period that the Disciples of Christ were getting their various social welfare institutions under way churches were dividing over missionary societies and instrumental music. We have been unable to find any indication that the anti-missionary society churches ever donated funds to any of the benevolences established and promoted by those who favored the former innovation. It would seem that if there was a clear line of distinction between the benevolence and missionary societies that somewhere there would be an indication of rather widespread church support of the existing benevolence institutions or an effort made to start some by the anti-missionary society brethren back in the 1880's or early 1890's when so many churches were dividing over the preaching societies.

Benevolence Societies Among Churches of Christ

In 1909 the oldest benevolence society (orphan home) now supported by churches opposing missionary societies was established. This was the Tennessee Orphan Home, headquartered at first in Columbia and later moved to Spring Hill.

The following information was given by J. C. McQuiddy in the *Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 15, 1910, pp. 1036, 1037, under the title, "Tennessee Orphan Home":

"This home, located at Columbia, Tenn., was formally opened on Monday, Sept. 5, 1910. . . .

"This beautiful four-story brick building did not have an existence even in thought eighteen months ago. The idea of such an institution had not entered into the heart of man until very recently. . . .

"There were two addresses made, one by Dr. Dinwiddie, preacher for the Methodist Church in Columbia, and the other by R. H. Boll, our associate and front page editor. . . .

"While members of the church of Christ conceived and originated the plans of the home and have given more largely to its support than any other people, still other religious bodies of the county and the county itself have taken a deep interest in the work. It is a poor religion that cannot unite with any one in feeding and clothing the poor. . . . Doing the will of the Lord is neither commending nor condemning the errors of others. May God help us all to rise superior to religious prejudice and bigotry and 'not to know anything . . . save Jesus Christ, and him crucified'!

"The Home is to be controlled by directors who are loyal and true to the Word of God. Only men who have proved their love for the truth will be selected to the sacred trust of looking after the interests of the institution."

In the *Christian Chronicle*, December 2, 1960, p. 13, we read:

"The Tennessee Orphan Home was established in 1909 with three Scotten children, who were left homeless by the death of their father. Their father was a member of West Seventh Street Church of Christ, Columbia, Tennessee."

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On page one the same publication says:

"Other of our older homes are Tipton in Tipton, Okla., founded in 1922; Potter Orphan Home in Bowling Green, Ky., 1915; Boles Home at Quinlan, Tex., 1926; Sunny Glenn Home at San Benito, Tex., 1936; and Southern Christian Home at Morrilton, Ark., 1926."

The same article declares:

"Fifteen hundred children are being cared for through the facilities of Children's Homes in the United States operated by members of the churches of Christ.

"These 1500 children are housed in 27 locations throughout 12 states—mostly in the South and Southwest. Total property owned by these homes nears the \$10 million mark."

The article continues with information about the number of homes in these twelve states. Texas leads with eight; then comes Oklahoma and Tennessee with three each; then California, New Mexico, Arkansas, and Kentucky have two each; and one each is found in Florida, Alabama, Indiana, Kansas, Colorado, and Arizona.

In the thirty-year period following 1909 when Tennessee Orphan Home was founded five other benevolence societies identified by the **Christian Chronicle** as "homes" came into being. (We are under the impression that Ontario Children's Home, Ontario, California, should be added to this list since it was chartered in 1929.)

In the twenty-year period following 1939 twenty-one other benevolence societies were established. (**The Potter Messenger**, Nov. 1961, says that there are now twenty-eight orphan homes.) So far as we have been able to ascertain only one of these, Christian Home at Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, which was completely endowed by its founder, draws no support from churches. Reflective of the "home fever" spread we find only one other home yet in operation which was founded within the decade following the first one, five in the second decade from 1909, and all the rest in the last thirty years, most of which have been started since the end of World War II. The fire was slow to start. It is now a conflagration.

Conclusions from the Record

In view of the foregoing statistics it would appear that any effort to argue church support of orphan homes on the basis of churches having supported them "always" or even since before the missionary society was founded is completely without factual evidence. We are face to face with the **fact** that churches rejecting missionary societies did **not** build and maintain orphan homes or other benevolence societies separate and apart from themselves **prior** to the founding of the missionary society in 1849. Furthermore, **those churches which supported missionary societies and used instrumental music were of that school of thought which produced and promoted**

the first benevolence societies into the treasuries of these churches! Again, for twenty-five years following the opening of the first orphan home by anybody connected with the Restoration Movement (1884-1909) and thirty-seven years from its chartering (1872-1909) there were hundreds of churches which **never** subscribed to missionary societies; yet to date (so far as we have seen) no one has presented any evidence that **any one** of these churches donated its funds to such institutions, much less that such was a **general practice** among the churches. In addition, it should be remembered that the oldest home now supported by churches rejecting missionary societies is barely fifty years old!

I do not claim that my research in the area of church support of benevolence institutions is exhaustive. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that it is thorough enough to draw some conclusions of a general nature — conclusions based on fact, not on tradition, as follows:

(1) Churches of Christ have not “always” supported benevolence societies — “homes” for the fatherless and widows — apart from the churches themselves.

(2) These societies were not established, much less looked upon and supported as “benevolence homes,” “many years prior to” the establishment of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849. Even among Disciples of Christ the first began operation in 1884.

(3) The foregoing being true, those who represent the record otherwise misrepresent the facts. They mislead people when they suggest that pioneers who rejected missionary societies encouraged **churches** to contribute to orphan “homes.”

“Latter Day” Claims

We are now ready to consider another matter which is frequently produced in an effort to convince people that churches were building and maintaining benevolence homes in the early days of the “Restoration Movement.” This, if established, would prove nothing regarding the scriptural authority for the practice. At best it would show that **some** brethren and churches engaged in it, not that it was a universal or even a general practice. At the same time, even from the evidence presented to “make out the case,” it is seen that the use of the term “home” to describe the institution in question was accommodative, not official. But now to the case in point — the Kentucky Female Orphan School, officially opened on October 3, 1849.

Kentucky Female Orphan School: 1849

The current editor of the *Gospel Advocate* apparently feels that he has an unusually strong case in the Kentucky Female Orphan School’s being called “that home of female orphans” by Alexander Campbell in 1856, since twice within recent years he has called at-

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tention to this statement by Campbell in his paper. In the October 13, 1960, issue of the **Advocate** he writes of "Alexander Campbell and the Kentucky Female Orphan School," mentions that John T. Johnson, a pioneer preacher, called upon churches in the heart of Kentucky to support it and then gives a quotation from Campbell in the **Millennial Harbinger** of 1856 after he had visited the School at Midway. The **Advocate** editor says:

"It is worthy of note that Campbell spoke of the Orphan School as 'that home of female orphans.' It was intended that the school, or home, should exist for the purpose of 'clothing, feeding, and educating orphan girls.' (**History of Kentucky Female Orphan Home** [sic], page 29.)"

Observations

The following points are also "worthy of note" in connection with Kentucky Female Orphan School and Alexander Campbell:

(1) Without exception, so far as I am able to ascertain, the Kentucky Female Orphan School has never been identified by Disciples of Christ or their official spokesmen in any of their official "church publications" as anything other than a "school." Though these publications list the Disciples' benevolences (homes, hospitals, etc.) they do not place the Midway school in this category.

(2) None of the historians who have written from the viewpoint of those opposing missionary societies, so far as I have ascertained, have indicated the institution at Midway was designated as anything except a school.

(3) On the very page of Giovannoli's **Kentucky Female Orphan School** from which the **Advocate** editor cites the "three-fold purpose" of the School, is found the following:

"What was in the mind of Pinkerton from the beginning of his 'meditations' on the subject, and that which Parrish and Johnson and their colleagues approved, was not an 'orphanage' or an 'orphan asylum,' but a school for orphan girls equal in dignity and in its prescribed courses of study to 'any seminary of learning or academy within the State.'"

(4) In July, 1922, the question of changing the name of the Kentucky Female Orphan School was before its Board of Directors. In his **Kentucky Female Orphan School**, p. 97, Giovannoli makes the following observations:

"The word 'orphan' was the source of the most emphatic objections. Many of the graduates of the School, according to reports, had found that the social stigma which, to a measurable degree, attached to some of the old-time 'orphan homes,' followed them after they left 'K.F.O.S.' Others complained that their diplomas from the Kentucky Female Orphan School, when submitted with their applications for positions as teachers, had more often than otherwise been an embarrassment, rather than an aid to them, and they were frequently compelled, even in their own

State, to resort to extraordinary means to prove their fitness for teaching.

"Arguments to the contrary were appealing. . . . The most forceful opposition to the proposed change of name, perhaps, was based upon the theory that the principal appeal for the financial support which had come to the school from the beginning . . . had been the fact — fundamental with the founders — that the school was established primarily to educate worthy orphan girls and prepare them for useful lives, and that the elimination of the word 'orphan' would in all probability destroy, in an important and material sense, the most valuable asset in the hands of those who were seeking to extend the field of the School's operations."

Notice, please, that the persons charged with financing the school recognized the "money-getting charm" of the term "orphan," for it was considered "in an important and material sense the most valuable asset" the fund-raisers possessed! They knew that some things can be done "in the name of an orphan child" that cannot be done "in the name of the Lord"!

(5) Later the name of the Kentucky Female Orphan School was changed and today is a thriving institution of learning called "Midway Junior College and Pinkerton High School."

(6) This institution from its beginning till the present has awarded diplomas to those pupils completing its prescribed course of study. Schools, not "homes," award diplomas and degrees.

(7) The same Campbell-commended L. L. Pinkerton who founded this school supported by churches served as the Chairman of the Convention which gave birth to the American Christian Missionary Society which preaching society was supported from its beginning by many of the churches which contributed to the Kentucky Female Orphan School. Pinkerton opened the Missionary Society convention barely two weeks after opening his church-supported school at Midway.

(8) The same Campbell-commended L. L. Pinkerton is credited with introducing instrumental music into church worship. This occurred at the Midway Church in 1859.

(9) The same Campbell-commended Dr. Pinkerton denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible in 1869.

(10) At the time Alexander Campbell referred to Kentucky Female Orphan School as "that home of female orphans" and commended its proprietor in such glowing terms, Campbell himself was serving as president of the American Christian Missionary Society and also Bethany College, both of which were begging and receiving contributions from churches. This was in 1856 — seven years after the Missionary Society was established and sixteen years after Campbell had founded Bethany. The current **Advocate** editor believes it is scriptural for churches to support schools operated by Christians just as Alexander Campbell did in 1856. •

David Lipscomb's Appraisal of A. Campbell's Competency

Interestingly enough, David Lipscomb, worthy predecessor of the current **Advocate** editor, spoke and wrote longer against missionary societies than any other man living at the time the American Christian Missionary Society was formed in 1849. Lipscomb was greatly grieved because the influence which Campbell had once wielded against missionary societies was turned to favor them in Campbell's declining years. In the **Advocate** of April 23, 1884, p. 262, Lipscomb wrote:

"That he afterward worked in Societies we have no disposition to conceal; that in doing it, he violated his own principles, built again the society he destroyed and destroyed that supreme and undivided respect for the word of God, and his appointments which he had vindicated is beyond doubt, true. It represents another case, so pregnant in the history of the church, opposing others, substituting the appointments of the institution of God, yet doing them himself."

Lipscomb did not defend Campbell in his charge, but he sought to explain it. He insisted that Alexander Campbell was never in complete possession of his mental powers as a careful analyst and critical thinker following a trip to Europe in 1847 during which Mr. Campbell's views on slavery had been grossly misrepresented, which event led to his imprisonment and litigation in Scotland only to learn upon setting foot back on American soil that the son of his old age, Wycliffe, described as "the child of his prayers and hopes," had drowned at his father's mill! In his introduction to Campbell's **Familiar Lectures on the Pentateuch**, p. 38, Charles V. Segar, a biographer of Campbell, makes this observation:

"It is said by those who were near him, that Alexander Campbell never was equal to himself after this stroke; but it was long before the admiring world perceived any change."

In the years following 1849 Tolbert Fanning, a former student and ardent admirer of Campbell, became increasingly concerned about the trend of Campbell's thinking on the missionary society question and made a trip to Bethany, Virginia, to discuss the matter with his old teacher. David Lipscomb had studied under Fanning at Franklin College from 1846 to 1849. In the **Advocate** of June 4, 1884, p. 358, Lipscomb wrote of Fanning's report of his trip to see Campbell as follows:

"I remember well, on his return he stated that he was shocked to find his [Campbell's] mind was so shaken that he could, with difficulty, keep it on one subject; that he could converse in general terms on things he had studied in the past, but that all power of close, connected reasoning was gone; that he had to be continually prompted to keep up an ordinary conversation."

It would appear that the current **Advocate** editor is faced with a dilemma in regard to Alexander Campbell as a witness. (1) If he seeks to make capital of Campbell's commendation of L. L. Pinkerton's project on the basis of its being "that home for female orphans" supported by church contributions and therefore the same in nature as the present-day "homes" he is, at the same time, faced with the fact that both Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb, whose editorial chair he now occupies, felt that at the very time Campbell gave his endorsement to the "home" thus operated "all" of Mr. Campbell's "power of close, connected reasoning was gone; that he had to be continually prompted to keep up an ordinary conversation." If he dotes on Campbell as a witness, the editor's predecessors, Tolbert Fanning and David Lipscomb, indict his witness. If Campbell was incompetent, the editor loses his case for the Kentucky Female Orphan School being a "home for female orphans" **based on A. Campbell's testimony!** (2) If Mr. Campbell could not reason correctly on the Missionary Society because of his mental condition, why should any person think he could reason correctly that a "school" is a "home"? If Campbell shall be accepted as good authority on church support of orphan homes because he called a "school" a "home," why not accept his testimony in precept and example regarding church support of the Missionary Society? The truth is that Campbell preached and practiced error in calling upon and taking money from churches for schools and missionary societies just as the **Advocate** editor preaches and practices error when he defends churches which support benevolence homes and schools from their treasuries. There is no scriptural authority for either. D. Lipscomb excused A. Campbell on the basis of mental declivity.

Fanning Orphan School: 1884

Another institution prominent in the memory of many yet living was Fanning Orphan School whose existence was due to the generosity of Tolbert Fanning and his wife Charlotte Fanning. It was located on land five miles south of Nashville, Tennessee, purchased by Tolbert Fanning in 1840 and upon which he built and conducted the affairs of Franklin College from 1845 forward till its suspension in October, 1865, due to a fire which destroyed its main building. It had been temporarily suspended during the Civil War. In an address delivered by H. R. Moore at a reunion of President Fanning's old students on May 25, 1904, and recorded in James E. Scobey's **Franklin College and Its Influences**, p. 128, the following occurs:

"Their long, useful, and eventful lives were subsequently spent at Elm Crag, the name first applied to their farm and school, next Franklin College and Minerva College, then Hope Institute, now Fanning Orphan School. Pardon me for suggesting that the term 'Orphan' should be dropped. 'Fanning School' is better and more appropriate."

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In the book referred to above, pp. 381-384, Miss Emma Page makes the following observations on the "History of the Fanning Orphan School":

" . . . Just before his death, in 1874, Mr. Fanning made a will, giving to his wife all his property and expressing confidence that she would carry out his wishes in regard to it.

"A few years after his death, Mrs. Fanning, acting upon the advice of friends, resolved to set the school in operation before she passed away, that she might witness a portion of the good she believed it was destined to accomplish. She selected, as trustees to carry out her wishes in regard to the school, thirteen brethren of the church of Christ. . . .

"In her deed of gift to the trustees Mrs. Fanning thus states the purpose of the school she wished to establish:

"The purpose of this conveyance is to establish a school under the patronage and management of said corporation, wherein white orphan girls may be instructed in books and trained in habits of industry. I am a communicant of the church of Christ, and I wish every person officially connected with the management of this institution to be a member in good standing in said church. The trustees of said school may admit to the school so many destitute orphan girls as the means at their command will allow. They are vested with authority to adopt all needful rules for the government of the school, but I require that the Bible shall be made a regular text-book and shall form a part of the daily study of all the pupils. The pupils must be instructed in household duties, and be required to perform service as cooks, laundresses, dairymaids, housekeepers, etc., so that they may earn in such employment, if necessary, an independent and honest living. The trustees may admit white girls, not orphans, in destitute circumstances, as pupils, on payment of tuition; but no such pupils are to be admitted if such an arrangement shall in the least interfere with the training of the destitute and orphans, who are the peculiar objects of my solicitude."

"The school was permanently organized February 11, 1884, and opened for pupils the following September."

According to Emma Page (**Franklin College and Its Influences**, p. 383) when Charlotte Fanning deeded to the trustees 160 acres of land "she imposed upon the board of trustees the condition that they should raise a fund equal to the value of the farm and buildings, that the school might be put upon a firm basis. She says that "this the trustees were able to do by the generosity of many who made contributions—some large, some small—to the work."

In the **Advocate** of January 16, 1884, p. 83, David Lipscomb, a trustee of the Fanning Orphan School, wrote as follows regarding the efforts of the trustees as they moved to put the School into operation:

"While doing what they are able with the means at their command, the trustees proposed to furnish a school at which individuals, churches and associations charitably inclined, may be able to educate destitute orphans in most favorable surroundings at a minimum of cost.

“. . . This is a work that ought to commend itself to the conscience of every man and woman that desires to help the innocent helpless, and those exposed to ruin from no fault of their own, as well as of all who desire the moral and material well-being of the human family.”

Lipscomb also said:

“This is a good work. It does not assume the work of the church. It affords means for the church doing its work—the work of educating and training orphan children under the favorable circumstances and at small expense.”

Permanent organization of the School was effected February 11, 1884. As the spring of 1884 turned toward summer Lipscomb wrote in the *Advocate* of May 21, p. 327, that the trustees were seeking a qualified superintendent and matron. Among other things he said:

“The trustees will be glad to have benevolent individuals and churches select orphan children around them and make up their minds to help train and educate them for usefulness. The trustees will put the charges at the lowest rate of actual expenses for all who attend, besides giving what aid is in their power to the children. . . .”

The trustees did not find the superintendent they wanted but with the coming of September the School opened with Miss Emma Page as teacher and Miss Bettie Holiman as matron. Twelve orphan girls were among those enrolled for a five-month term along with about twenty day pupils, according to Miss Page’s account. In the *Advocate* of September 3, 1884, David Lipscomb reflected the fact that the institution was a “school,” not a modern orphan “home,” in these words:

“The trustees . . . propose to take destitute orphans, sent by churches, individuals and associations of any kind, at forty dollars per session of five months. Their aim is to take these exactly at cost. . . .”

“. . . They propose to take children of those able to pay, at fifty dollars per term of five months, charging ten dollars extra for tuition. . . .”

The account of the School’s early years by Miss Page in *Franklin College and Its Influences*, p. 385, confirms the fact that churches were not making donations to this institution but were paying for services rendered in exactly the same manner that parents paid the same school for services rendered. After all, there is a vast difference in “giving to” any institution and “paying for” its services! Emma Page wrote:

“In the summer of 1885 the trustees elected, as superintendent and matron, Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Hammon. The school increased in numbers greatly during the term. More free pupils were admitted; and parents and guardians, realizing the superiority of such a school over ordinary boarding schools, sent their children or wards there, paying for their board and tuition. In some instances congregations of Christians sent, at their expense,

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orphan girls to the school, to be trained to usefulness and independence."

Parents sent children "at their expense" and congregations sent orphan girls "at their expense"!

There were those who had known Tolbert Fanning who felt that even the Fanning Orphan School as it existed and functioned did not conform to Fanning's concepts of what a school should be. In a letter to James E. Scobey, appearing in **Franklin College and Its Influences**, pp. 315, 316, P. W. Harsh of Nashville wrote under date of April 3, 1905, as follows:

"I entered the primary department of Franklin College when I was only eight years of age. Shortly after this the main building was burned. The question, 'Why was this building not replaced?' naturally presents itself. The answer to my mind, is clear. Tolbert Fanning had commenced to doubt the owning of church property and the running of denominational schools. I remember having heard him more than once allude to the troubles of Kentucky University by asking: 'Who is to determine what is the Christian Church?' His idea was that the church is a spiritual body, without visible organic union. He hooted at the thought of such a thing. Years ago W. T. Moore, who was preaching in London, said: 'It is time we were taking on organic union.' Mr. Fanning showed that this was foreign and antagonistic to the attempt to restore the primitive church.

"It is my humble opinion that Tolbert Fanning is misrepresented when it is claimed that the Fanning Orphan School and the Nashville Bible School are the outgrowth of his ideas and purposes. He wanted to see industrial schools, and he would have been glad to have set one in motion if he had known how without helping to build another sect. Is it not significant that he individually owned the house in which he worshipped and in which he taught school?"

P. W. Harsh may or may not have properly appraised Fanning's views. It is possible, however, that he did.

Observations

This, then, is a brief account of the Fanning Orphan School as it was purposed by Charlotte Fanning and began functioning. That it was a school, not an orphan "home," is evidenced by the reflections of those who spoke on this point in the early years of that institution. That churches paid for services rendered orphan girls and that other girls, not orphans, might attend school there at a regular tuition is evident from the "deed of gift" whereby Charlotte Fanning conveyed her property to the trustees of Fanning Orphan School, as well as from the words of David Lipscomb, Emma Page and others. Even if it could be shown that several churches contributed to Fanning Orphan School, there is still lacking any evidence to show that this was a **general** practice of churches, much less a **universal** or **scriptural** practice!

In later years a few churches made outright donations to the School. That any did so while the School was being established and becoming functional, however, I am compelled to deny in view of the evidence available! I have made a rather detailed search through the 1883 and 1884 volumes of the **Gospel Advocate** but find no indication of such contributions by churches. Did churches make donations to widows and their needy children in those days? Yes! There is abundant evidence that churches and individuals supported these objects of charity but none that they supported "homes" or "schools" from their treasuries. The churches had treasuries, but they did not divert their funds to the support of purely private enterprises regardless of their "non-profit" or "good works" implications.

Kentucky Female Orphan School was properly set forth as a "school," not an "orphan home." It graduated girls and awarded diplomas. Fanning Orphan School is properly described as a "school," not an "orphan home." It also awarded diplomas and graduated students. As H. R. Moore pointed out in his "reunion speech," delivered at the 1904 graduation exercises, "the term 'orphan' should be dropped. 'Fanning School' is better and more appropriate."

Summary

To summarize at this point we have discovered the following facts:

1. There is a difference between "orphan schools" and "orphan homes."

2. Orphan schools operated by persons connected with the Restoration Movement date back to 1849.

3. The first "orphan home" officially identified as such by the persons continuing its support became operative in Louisville, Ky., in 1884. It was established by churches identified with the "Disciples of Christ" (Christian Church).

4. The next benevolence organization was the National Benevolence Association founded by the Disciples of Christ and headquartered in St. Louis, Mo., in 1886. It became "national" in actual operation about 1901.

5. The first and oldest orphan "home" currently supported by churches of Christ was Tennessee Orphan Home, chartered in 1909 and formally opened Sept. 5, 1910, approximately fifty years ago.

6. The introduction of missionary societies among the churches brought serious opposition. By the 1880's some churches were dividing and by 1906 there was a separate listing in the Federal Census of "Disciples of Christ" and "Churches of Christ."

7. No churches rejecting missionary societies were making donations to orphan homes of any kind at the time of the 1906 Census, so far as I have been able to ascertain. No orphan homes supported only by churches rejecting missionary societies existed in 1906.

CHAPTER IV

General Conditions: 1906 — 1935

Lipscomb's Observations in 1907

The U. S. Census Bureau conducted a religious census in 1906. Later the Director of the Census wrote David Lipscomb in an effort to clarify certain conflicting reports received in his office regarding listings of preachers and churches. Under date of June 22, 1907, Lipscomb replied and on July 18, 1907, Lipscomb printed his reply on page 457 of the *Gospel Advocate*. He called attention to the "Declaration and Address" of Thomas Campbell in which he had said, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." Among the extracts quoted by Lipscomb are these: "Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the church, or made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament" and that men should follow "after the example of the primitive church as exhibited in the New Testament, without any additions whatsoever of human opinions or the inventions of men." Lipscomb continued as follows:

"These show the keynote of the movement . . . and the Christians or Disciples increased rapidly and the churches multiplied. As they increased in number and wealth, many desired to become popular also, and sought to adopt the very human inventions that in the beginning of the movement had been opposed—a general organization of the churches under a missionary society with a moneyed membership, and the adoption of instrumental music in the worship. This is a subversion of the fundamental principles on which the churches were based.

"Division of sentiment on these and the principle of fidelity to the Scriptures involved in them produce division among the disciples. The policy of the churches being purely congregational, the influences work slowly and the division comes gradually. The parties are distinguished as they call themselves 'conservatives' and 'progressive,' as they call each other 'antis' and 'digressives.'

"In many places the differences have not as yet resulted in separation. There are some in the conservative churches in sympathy with the progressives, who worship and work with the conservatives because they have no other church facilities. The reverse of this is also true. Many of the conservatives are trying to appropriate the name 'churches of Christ' to distinguish themselves from 'Christian or Disciples' Churches.' But the latter in all their publications and the proceedings of their conventions call themselves 'churches of Christ'—moved, possibly, by the desire to head off the effort of the other party to appropriate the name as distinctive.

"The progressives, through their society organizations, gather and publish statistics that make a show. But they claim not over half of the churches—in all about twelve thousand—as working with them. They claim, and it is probably true, that a number who do not object to their methods fail through indif-

ference to work with them. In a number of churches a few members work with the progressives, a larger number refuse to do so. Yet the church in which only a few members act with the society is counted as one of them. So in Tennessee, where the churches generally oppose all innovations upon the primitive order, they report in their statistics about five hundred and fifty churches and fifty thousand members. I have a list of about eight hundred churches in the State, with thirty-five of the ninety-six counties unreported. These thirty-five counties are sparsely populated mountain counties, with not many churches, still there are near nine hundred churches in the State. The number of members would be a guess. Of these churches, about one hundred work with the progressives.

"While the progressives oppose and refuse to have conservative preachers preach in their houses and to their congregations, and seek to divide and break up the churches they cannot control, and gain possession of their property, yet, for the sake of denominational show, they publish in their yearbooks all the members, preachers, and churches of the conservatives as one with themselves. It is just to say, too, that the conservatives discourage the churches having a progressive preacher to preach for them, as calculated to lead them from fidelity to the Word of God and to introduce discord and division among them: but they never publish their preachers or churches as one with them, as the list of preachers you have shows.

"With this statement, much of which you may think needless, I answer:

"1. There is a distinct people taking the Word of God as their only and sufficient rule of faith, calling their churches 'churches of Christ,' or 'churches of God,' distinct and separate in name, work, and rule of faith from all other bodies or peoples.

"2. They are purely congregational and independent in their policy and work, so have no general meetings or organizations of any kind.

"3. Their aim is to unite all professed Christians 'in the sole purpose of promoting simple, evangelical Christianity as God reveals it in the Scriptures, free from all human opinions and inventions of men.'

"4. Owing to these differences still at work among the churches, there is more or less demoralization in many churches as to how they stand and what their numbers are. I know of no way to obtain the statistics desired other than to get the addresses of the different churches and address a circular asking the number of each church."

Observations

Some of the Lipscomb statement does not pertain to the problem before us, but all of it should prove interesting. Among other things it helps explain why so many American churches using instrumental music and supporting missionary societies are called "Churches of Christ." This nomenclature is especially evident in the North and West. From the foregoing observations, particularly the one by Lips-

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comb, we draw the following conclusions as descriptive of conditions among the greater portion of churches identified as "Churches of Christ" in the 1906 Census:

1. There were approximately six thousand churches rejecting missionary societies and instrumental music in 1907.

2. These 6,000 churches were identified as "antis" by the "disservatives."

3. In 1907 Tennessee churches "generally opposed all innovations upon the primitive order."

4. In 1907 out of 900 churches in Tennessee, 800 of them were "opposed to all innovations upon the primitive order."

5. In 1907 in Tennessee these "antis" were "purely congregational and independent in their policy and work" having "no general meetings or organizations of any kind."

6. In 1907, in Tennessee where 800 out of 900 churches were "antis" — "opposed to all innovations upon the primitive order" — not one of these 800 churches was building or maintaining any kind of benevolence "society" or "home" — orphan or old folks — outside its own congregational organization, because these 800 churches were "purely congregational and independent" having "no organization of any kind."

7. In 1907, Tennessee did not have within its borders the Tennessee Orphan Home or any other similar organization independent of church control but dependent upon church support, for Tennessee Orphan Home was not chartered till 1909. None will say that Tennessee Orphan Home is "no organization of any kind," and everybody knows that it has never been controlled by any church which is "purely congregational and independent."

8. If any of the 800 Tennessee churches "opposed to all innovations upon the primitive order" or any of the 6,000 churches scattered abroad which the "progressives . . . claimed not as working with them" were making donations to any "orphan home" or "benevolence society" in 1907, it would appear that somebody would have recorded this practice by at least one of them! Again, I do not affirm that one or more of these Tennessee "anti-missionary society" churches were not thus using their money. I say that I have seen no evidence to this effect, much less anything to indicate such as a "general" practice among the churches "generally opposed to all innovations upon the primitive order."

Tennessee Orphan Home Report: 1911

As pointed out earlier, the Tennessee Orphan Home was chartered in September, 1909, and became operative in October, 1910. In the *Gospel Advocate*, November 9, 1911, pp. 1302-1304, there appears

"Tennessee Orphan's Home Report for Third Quarter" by W. T. Boaz, Superintendent. This report reflects gifts of various kinds and amounts to the institution by individuals and churches. In spite of "help appeals" through the **Advocate** from the Home's beginning, there were only **twenty-six** Tennessee churches supporting the institution at the time of this report.

Using David Lipscomb's figure of 800 "loyal churches" in Tennessee four years previous (1907), this means that only 3¼ per cent of Tennessee churches were involved in this activity in 1911. Twenty-five years later a prominent preacher and **Advocate** writer who urged churches to contribute to both schools and orphanages was to sound a realistic note about the reluctance of churches to support these institutions. In 1935 this man said that churches "everywhere" would not "do the work suggested" until they were "convinced . . . that it is right for churches as such to contribute to these institutions." Please notice how slowly the churches learned what some editors and preachers would have us to believe they have "always" done!

The G. C. Brewer Articles of 1935

In 1933 G. C. Brewer wrote a series of articles on "organizations" in the **Gospel Advocate**. He discussed the right of schools and orphan homes to exist and advocated church support of them. While some interest was observed at that time the movement advocated by Brewer received little enthusiasm or support by churches for either orphan homes or schools.

That relatively few congregations were being motivated to donate the Lord's money to human institutions of any kind and that none felt this more keenly than G. C. Brewer **as late as 1935** is reflected in one of a series of articles on "The Budget System of Finance" which he wrote in that year. In the **Gospel Advocate** of August 1, 1935, pp. 722, 730, Brewer made a strong appeal for churches to adopt this system. He called attention to the practice of churches at Memphis, Tennessee, and at Cleburne and Sherman, Texas, while he had labored with them. He said that both the Texas churches had placed Abilene Christian College in the budget for \$1,000 per year and had also budgeted two orphan homes at his instigation. He continued as follows:

"Just think what the several hundred churches in Middle Tennessee could do for David Lipscomb College if they could get a few of them to systematize their work, to utilize their resources, and to place the school in the budgets for a definite amount. . . . There are enough congregations within a radius of one hundred miles of Nashville to pay David Lipscomb College out of debt, to equip and endow it within ten years if they would only do it. After that it should be self-supporting."

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After concluding his 1935 appeal for D. L. C. to be put in the church budgets, he wrote in the closing paragraph the words which reflect that Tennessee churches which "generally opposed all innovations upon the primitive order" in 1907 were still **"generally opposing all innovations upon the primitive order"** in 1935. They were not "generally" giving from their treasuries to D. L. C., Tennessee Orphan Home, and other human organizations as late as 1935—forty-four years after D. L. C. began, twenty-six years after Tennessee Orphan Home began and nineteen centuries after the church of Christ began—the church which twenty-eight years before "opposed all innovations upon the primitive order." He tells why the Lord's churches were not supporting these human institutions— orphan homes and all—twenty-five years ago!! Observe carefully his reasons. This is what he said:

In the **Gospel Advocate**, August 1, 1935, G. C. Brewer concluded an article as follows:

" . . . Before the churches everywhere will do the work suggested in this article they are going to have to be convinced on the following points: (1) that the budget system is scriptural; (2) that it is right to have Christian colleges and orphan homes; (3) that it is right for churches as such to contribute to these institutions. The members as a whole would very readily take hold of work of this kind with a little instruction from their elders, but there is where the trouble lies. The elders are either not convinced on these things or else they do not know how to set out such a program. The whole trouble lies with the elders. Give the churches proper leadership and they will do a hundred times more than they are doing. . . . When we have found that [the budget system] to be scriptural, then what is placed in the budget will be left entirely with the local eldership. The congregations may work on the budget system and not support either schools or orphan homes unless they so desire. Personally, I think we should support both schools and homes, and I have so expressed myself in the **Gospel Advocate**."

Observations

If G. C. Brewer pictured the situation accurately in 1935—twenty-five years ago when there were only about a half dozen independent "Christian" orphan homes in America supported by church donations—upon whom is the reflection for the elders' not being "convinced"? Upon himself? Had he been preaching this doctrine for the thirty-five years of his preaching career prior to 1935? (Brewer began preaching about 1900.) Was brother Brewer preaching this doctrine of church donations to human institutions when David Lipscomb said in 1907 that the Tennessee churches "generally opposed all innovations upon the primitive order"? Was he preaching it when the first orphan home to be supported by churches of Christ was chartered two years later? Again I ask: upon whom is the unfavorable

reflection for churches or their elders not being "convinced" that it "is right for the churches as such to contribute to these institutions"? Who was to blame? Were the **Gospel Advocate** and the Nashville Bible School pushing church support of schools and orphan homes then as they are now? If so, where is the evidence? Had David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, M. C. Kurfees, F. B. Srygley, F. W. Smith, H. Leo Boles, and other notable preachers in Tennessee where in 1907 the churches "generally opposed all innovations upon the primitive order" failed the elders and churches of their day in teaching them their duty along these lines? Was this what H. Leo Boles, who first became president of D. L. C. in 1912, was saying in **Sermon Outlines**, edited and published in 1949 by B. C. Goodpasture, when he said that the "mission of the church" is "not to raise money for defraying expenses of human institutions"? If all the opposition to church donations to human institutions is born "of the last ten years," where are the evidences that all these stalwarts of the faith were derelict in their duty of "convincing" elders "that it is right for churches as such to contribute to these institutions" prior to 1935? G. C. Brewer said that neither the churches nor their elders were "convinced" that these things should be done in 1935. If so, is it true, can it possibly be true, that churches of Christ "have **always** supported" orphan homes or any other human institutions?

In his series on "Organizations" in 1933 brother Brewer cited various instances where Alexander Campbell solicited and received church donations for Bethany College in 1853 and following years. Campbell was also serving as president of the American Christian Missionary Society while so doing, it should be recalled. In the same series he mentioned that E. A. Elam had carried repeated requests for help for the Nashville Bible School on the **Advocate** front page during 1907, 1908, and 1909 with the School receiving a few church donations which Elam commended and David Lipscomb sanctioned. This I do not deny but **I also remember two remarkable statements of David Lipscomb**—one about Alexander Campbell's support of the missionary society in the face of earlier opposition and the other about Tennessee churches in 1907. About Campbell he had written in 1884 that in working with the Society "he violated his own principles," and about the Tennessee churches in 1907 he had written that they "generally are opposed to all innovations upon the primitive order" and that they have "no organizations of any kind."

If Lipscomb was such an ardent advocate of church donations to schools and orphan homes while he "opposed all innovations upon the ancient order," why were all the older brethren who were serving as elders in the hundreds of Tennessee churches in 1935 so ignorant and "unconvinced" on church donations to schools and orphan homes **while at the same time** so thoroughly "convinced" that churches

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should **not** support missionary societies? **Hundreds** of them had known David Lipscomb personally, **multitudes** had heard him preach since they were children and **other hundreds** had studied Bible under him at the Nashville Bible School in addition to having read regularly his writings in the **Gospel Advocate**. Were the **Advocate** of that day and the school which now wears David Lipscomb's name not instructing their readers and pupils that churches **should** donate funds to schools and orphan homes while they should **not** donate to missionary societies? Again I ask: if elders and churches were not "convinced" by 1935 that churches should support these institutions, who had failed in their responsibility of "preaching the word"? Was this a part of the "primitive order" the "restorationists" sought to "re-store"? **If so, where may we read about it in the primitive gospel found in the New Testament?**

Perhaps the answer to most of the foregoing questions can be found in the answer to another question which we here present: Is opposition to church support of orphan homes and other human institutions of recent origin?

CHAPTER V

The Opposition Speaks: 1897 — 1951

"Behold, How Great a Matter a Little Fire Kindleth!"

Frequently fires kindled with difficulty are ten thousand times more difficult to put out. Once begun they may smoulder and then later burst suddenly into a great conflagration. This has been the story with church support of human institutions of every kind.

Opposition Is Proportionate to Innovation's Intensity

It is also true that any innovation arouses opposition in proportion to the zeal and intensity with which its proponents push it upon the minds and hearts of men. Little push means little holdback. For example, little can be found to indicate widespread opposition to sprinkling or pouring for several hundred years after it was first practiced. (251 A. D.) Likewise, centuries passed before instrumental music, first introduced in Christendom in the Seventh Century, was vigorously and widely opposed.

Isolated Cases Do Not Prove General Practice

The fact that relatively little opposition to church donations to orphanages and schools can be found in the literature of fifty, seventy-five or a hundred years ago does not prove that this practice was either widely or generally accepted by churches. One might as well argue that churches in general went into the missionary society movement from the beginning or that most of them accepted instrumental music as to insist that they generally supported benevolence societies fifty years ago. Here and there voices were heard in opposition to missionary societies and to instrumental music from seventy-five to a hundred years ago, but not until those riding these "hobbies" began to push them to the division of churches was there widespread, outspoken opposition. So also goes the story of church support of benevolence homes and schools. As the fire has spread, the fire-fighters have appeared in growing numbers and with strength of opposition.

Scriptural Authority Does Not Need Historical Approval

It is to be expected that those who promote human institutions into church treasures should appeal to the practice of churches in yesteryears to prove the rightfulness and justice of their cause. If, however, this practice could be sustained by the Scriptures references to later practice would be unnecessary. This even the strongest proponents of this relatively late innovation cannot do, and therefore they resort to human tradition instead of divine truth.

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Voices in the Wilderness

The following quotations speak for themselves. Unmistakably they show the attitude of their authors toward the matters mentioned when they spoke the words presented here. The fact that some of them may have changed their views in later years **does not change the fact of their speaking or writing as they did at the dates indicated.** When any person says that all of the opposition to church donations to human institutions was born within the last ten years he necessarily speaks ignorantly or is deliberately misstating the facts.

The following statements cover a period of fifty-five years. Some of them were made as much as thirteen years before the oldest "home" now supported by churches of Christ was established, while most of them came forth as their authors observed the development and influence of these human institutions among and over the churches.

1897 — S. L. Barker in sermon on "Mission Work":

"... This is an infallible guide, and to depart from this is to presume to be wiser than the apostles. The only exceptions to this rule are those things which may be classed under the heads of means, implements and opportunities, which they did not have, in which are included steam, electricity, printing, etc. It is quite sure that they would have used all these had they been available. But whatever they had, or could have had, and did not use, were rejected, and, consequently, are prohibited. They had, and used, instrumental music elsewhere, but never in the Christian worship. This was one of the radical changes in the worship. It was used in the Jewish worship, but never in the Christian. Here is the strongest example and precedent for us to leave it out of the Christian worship. They could have founded special benevolent, financial and missionary societies besides the church of the living God, but they certainly did not, and would not use them now for the same reason that they did not then. They had only the church which the Lord founded, and nothing more; were in it, and 'complete in Christ. If nothing more was needed then, it cannot be needed now'."

— J. J. Limerick, *Gospel in Chart and Sermon*, pp. 164, 167

1897 — J. J. Limerick in sermon on "Pure Religion":

"A great many people are very particular about visiting the widows, orphans and afflicted ones. Some churches have societies for such work, and some churches permit their poor and needy to go to the country poorhouse, while they make a big to-do about the poor heathen across the ocean. Such work is not the kind nor the way Christ intended His church should do. Men must obey the gospel of Christ in order to become dead to the world and the societies of the world, and they then will be able to keep themselves unspotted from the world and the ways of the world. (Jas. 1:26, 27.)

"... I say, brethren, it is time for the preachers and bishops to cry aloud and spare not, and, if possible, cleanse the church

of Christ of the sin of covetousness. Then will loyal preachers be supported. Then will people obey the gospel of Christ. Then will the church do her duty in caring for the poor, the widows and orphans, and that without the aid of human societies."

— J. J. Limerick, **Gospel in Chart and Sermon**, pp. 248, 249

1916 — C. E. Wooldridge:

"Each congregation should make provision for the relief of the needy and suffering of the congregation and the community.

"All this work should be directed by the overseers of the congregation; nor should any part be burdened with special or separate organization."

— A. B. Lipscomb, **Christian Treasures**, Vol. 11, p. 119

1919 — C. M. Pullias, article on "Combines in the Church":

". . . That which the church has not the power to do, then, should not be considered. Besides this, we might say this way of a few getting together and saddling on the church of Christ orphan homes and schools or anything else is a very serious thing, and will in the course of time prove to be a curse to the church. . . .

"A brotherhood paper, or school, or orphanage, or a brotherhood anything else will prove itself to be a dictator and usurper of the church of Christ, and an octopus that grips the interest and life out of the church.

"If you say they make the church more efficient, I answer that man can, then, improve upon what God has made. This I deny. The Lord had a purpose in making the church. He made it to fill a place and do a work and, therefore, it is adequate to such. He also made the church a small, poverty-stricken, insignificant institution in the eyes of the world so designing men would not want it, but so soon as it gets to be respectable with the world the armistice is signed and peace is near, but not the kind of peace God approves. There is, therefore, great danger in human methods and wisdom. 'The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.' All conventions, associations, societies and even elders' and preachers' meetings may prove to be a curse to the cause they claim to love. There is no combine with the church and human institutions that does not take the life and power from it."

— **Tidings of Joy**, July, 1919, p. 1

1930 — A. B. Barrett, founder of Abilene Christian College:

"There were no 'brotherhood colleges,' 'church papers,' 'church orphanages,' 'old folk's homes,' and the like, among apostolic congregations. . . . The churches established by the apostles did not contribute to any organization other than a sister congregation. All 'church' movements should be kept under the local congregation.

"History repeats itself. Following the restoration of the ancient order of things, launched by Stone, Campbell, and others; men of worldly ambition crept in among us. . . . Individual

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Christians, any number, may scripturally engage in any worthy work, such as running colleges, papers, and orphanages, and other individual Christians may properly assist them in every proper way; but no local congregation should be called upon, as such, to contribute a thing to any enterprises. Such a call would be out of harmony with the word of the living God. And if any congregation so contributes, it transcends its scriptural prerogatives."

— *Gospel Advocate*, March 13, 1930, p. 267

1931 — Foy E. Wallace, Jr., editor of *Gospel Advocate*:

"If it were 'permissible to have a Bible college as an adjunct to the church in the work of education and an orphans' home in the work of benevolence,' we quite agree that it would also be 'permissible' to have 'a missionary society in the work of evangelism.' But the question assumes the point to be proved. Nothing is 'permissible' as an auxiliary of the church which is not scriptural. And it is not scriptural for the church to delegate its work, either missionary or benevolent, to boards and organizations other than the church. Bible colleges and institutional orphans' homes cannot be made adjuncts of the church, scripturally. The only way the church could scripturally run a school or a home would be for the local church to undertake such work through the local organization — elders and deacons — in which case it would be the work of THAT congregation."

— *Gospel Advocate*, July 2, 1931, p. 804

1931 — F. B. Srygley, long-time staff writer and adviser on *Gospel Advocate*:

". . . In the days of the apostles there were needy people, widows and orphans, just as there are today, and the apostles taught the churches to care for them, and there was no organization or institution by which the churches were tied together in supporting them. Paul directed the church to care for the widows that were widows indeed, and there was nothing said about any institution except the church through which it was to be done. There were famine sufferers in Jerusalem, and their needs were supplied without anything in the way of an institution except the church in Jerusalem."

— *Gospel Advocate*, July 9, 1931, p. 828

1934 — F. B. Srygley:

". . . The average denominational preacher seems to think that Christ gave only a few fundamental principles, and allows man to add to it everything in the way of an organization which in his judgment is necessary.

"When men add the things which they think are allowable, they become naturally very much attached to them. They are the creations of man, and man has always loved his own creations. . . . You will get an argument quicker out of some religionists when you condemn something that man has started than you will by condemning that which is divine. . . .

"It seems that some of the brethren think that there must be some extra organization in order for Christians to teach the Bible on Sunday. . . . When one contends for such an extra organization, it seems to me he opens the floodgates to everything that anyone thinks we need. The brother who indorses these extra or outside organizations would fare rather poorly in a debate over the missionary society. I know he might argue the fact that these missionary societies take control of the churches; but suppose his opponent should say that it is an abuse of the missionary society, and should promise to help in reforming it at this point. Is it not the tendency of any extra or outside organization to try to control the church?"

"But the brethren sometimes argue that the church can organize anything it feels that it needs. I don't grant this, but it is my observation that individuals start these things for the church to support. Who is to say how many and what kind of institutions the churches need? I do not think the church as a divine institution needs any of them, but some of them do need the church, or churches, to support them. As was said by another: 'If the organization of institutions continues, the church will be little but a peg on which to hang institutions.' We are told again that any number of churches have the right to do collectively what one church has the right to do, and, therefore, churches can be hung together by institutions other than themselves. On its face this seems to be true, but hanging churches together with a separate institution is lacking in divine authority.

"There are, no doubt, divine reasons for not tying them together with any kind of an institution which is not revealed to us. . . .

"In the early days in the discussion of this matter those in favor of extra organizations argued that there could be no co-operation without organization. But this was not true then, and it is not true now. 'Operate' means to work, and 'co' means together; therefore, when a Christian operates as the Bible directs, he cooperates with every other Christian who operates in the same way. When a church operates as the Head directs, it operates with every other church which operates under the same directions.

". . . Let us spend our time walking in the light of God's truth, and then we will have fellowship with God, with Christ, with apostles, and with all others who walk in the light of the same Word. Let us not get out of step with each other by adding extra organizations to the church, for in so doing we might so far get out of step with God as to be lost."

— Gospel Advocate, Jan. 11, 1934

When F. B. Srygley died in 1940 the present **Advocate** editor said of him:

"Like old John Knox, he never feared the face of man. He was loyal to Christ first, last, and all the time. He would not wink at error in the practice of anyone, not even in his most intimate friends."

— Gospel Advocate, 1940, p. 484

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1946 — Guy N. Woods:

"Paul labored at length in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia. . . . When these brethren heard of the distress that was occasioned in Judea because of a famine in those parts, they determined to send relief. There were many poor saints in Jerusalem at this time. . . . Concerning this contribution, see 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 8:1, and 9:2. For another such contribution for the poor in Jerusalem, see Acts 11:27-30. It should be noted that there was no elaborate organization for the discharge of these charitable functions. The contributions were sent directly to the elders by the churches who raised the offering. This is the New Testament method of functioning. We should be highly suspicious of any scheme that requires the setting up of an organization independent of the church in order to accomplish its work."

— **Annual Lesson Commentary**, 1946, p. 338

"The self-sufficiency of the church in organization, work, and worship and every function required of it by the Lord should be emphasized. This lesson is much needed today. Religious secular organizations are always trying to encroach on the function of the New Testament church, interfere with its obligations, and attempt to discharge some of its functions. The church is the **only** organization authorized to discharge the responsibilities of the Lord's people. When brethren form organizations independently of the church to do the work of the church, however worthy their aims and right their designs, they are engaged in that which is sinful."

— **Idem**.

"In line with the fact that our lesson today deals with the autonomy of the church we point out that the contribution here alluded to was raised wholly without the high pressure organization at all; the churches, in their own capacity, raised the funds, and they were gathered by brethren especially appointed for the purpose. This is the Lord's method of raising money, and it will suffice in any case. There is no place for charitable organizations in the work of the New Testament church. It is the **only** charitable organization that the Lord authorizes or that is needed to do the work the Lord expects His people today to do."

— **Ibid.**, p. 340

"No organization is needed to accomplish the work the Lord has authorized the church to do. When men become dissatisfied with God's arrangement and set up one of their own, they have already crossed the threshold to apostasy. Let us be satisfied with the Lord's manner of doing things."

— **Ibid.**, p. 341

1951 — G. K. Wallace:

"A great deal is being written these days about orphan homes and how they should operate. The appeal has largely been to **tradition**. Catholic priests say that tradition is equal in authority with the Word of God. Many of my brethren today are much like the Catholic priests. The priest tries to prove his point by

tradition without reference to the Word of God. The appeal made by many preachers today is to Larimore, Lipscomb, Harding, and the pioneers. The Catholics appeal to the church fathers, and these preachers appeal to the pioneers.

"That the care of orphan children is a responsibility of the church is not denied, except by a few brethren north of the Mason-Dixon line. They affirm that the care of orphan children is an individual matter. Most of my brethren admit, however, that it is a work of the church. If it is a work of the church, we wonder why the church cannot do this work without forming an organization to take over the work of the elders. . . .

"Elders of the church have a right to hire a superintendent, a matron, a nurse, a cook, a teacher, a dairyman, just as they do to hire a song leader, a preacher, a janitor, or somebody to mow the lawn or fix a window. The New Testament does not contain **officers** such as matrons, nurses, cooks, any more than it contains **officers** called janitors, song leaders, ministers, carpenters, or plumbers; but the elders of the church may hire any or all of these to serve the church.

"The elders of the church may hire someone who is not a member of the church to do a job of work for the church. They may let a contract to some builder to erect a building, and this contractor may use dozens of men, none of whom are members of the church. . . .

"There is no parallel between colleges and orphan homes. There is a parallel between an orphan home that has a board of trustees other than the elders of the church to do the work of the church, and the United Christian Missionary Society.

"Since it is admitted that children may be cared for by New Testament churches, why is it necessary to have anything other than the church to do it? . . .

"Can we still affirm that the church of Christ is scriptural in name, organization, doctrine, and practice?"

— **Gospel Guardian**, May 24, 1951, Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 1, 3

"I am thankful for the effort that is being made to care for widows and orphans. I do wish that brethren would not set up some **organization** that God did not authorize to do the work of the church. If it is the work of the church, let the church do it. The care of orphans and widows is the work of the church, so let the church do it. The church would do it, too, if preachers would not get out and start an organization unknown to the Bible and beg churches to turn their work over to a human organization. There is no discussion today about the church supporting an orphan home out of the church treasury. The discussion is about the **kind** of a home being supported. If it is a work of the church being done by the church and under the direction of God's elders, no one objects to supporting it out of the treasury. If some organization has taken over the work of the church you cannot blame good elders for objecting. **Let the church be the church.**"

— **Ibid.**, August 30, 1951, Vol. III, No. 17, p. 8

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"But," asks one, "have not some of these men changed their views within recent years?" This is certainly true if one may judge by some of the recent activities and teachings of two or three of these men. Only four of those quoted yet live. The others did **not** change before they died. The fact remains, however, and shall stand at the judgment of the Great Day that the words of these men reflect what they understood to be the conditions existing and developing **at the time they wrote the words cited above**. Whatever explanations may be made as to changes in views of any of these men (we grant every man this privilege) their words of record in earlier years speak to intelligent and unprejudiced present-day minds what they thought and felt in view of what they claimed they saw **when they spoke**. The innovations they opposed **then** we oppose **now**. If they were **right then** and have since changed their views they are **wrong now**. If they were wrong then it is conceivable that they could yet be wrong, but of one thing every intelligent person is positive: **they cannot be right then and right now with a change in views between then and now!** Some who once opposed the innovations are in the forefront among the innovators now.

These then are a few of the voices of those who observed the growth of benevolence societies, originally independent of churches in constitution and control but increasingly dependent upon churches for the finances whereby they pursue and promote their declared interests. These men did not like what they saw. They said so and gave their reasons why.

What has been the effect of all that they were opposing? What has it done to churches of Christ?

CHAPTER VI

The Reality of Division: 1962

Restating the Issue

Before we close this treatise I respectfully solicit my reader's attention to a restatement of the problem which has caused so much heartache and division among brethren. The issue is **not** that of the duty of Christians or churches to relieve any person—widow, orphan or otherwise—to whom they have an obligation and are therefore responsible. Every person known to me believes that there are such persons and such obligations. Furthermore, the issue is **not** that of the right of organization— orphan homes, homes for the aged, hospitals or other benevolence societies—to exist independent of church control or support. I know of no person who denies that such institutions have a moral and legal right to exist.

What, then, is the issue? The issue in question form is this: Is there scriptural authority for churches to donate funds to human institutions of any kind?

Those who have witnessed the developments of the last decade know that if such authority were available, it could be produced in one of three ways—by precept, by apostolic example, or by necessary inference. What then has been the effect of churches supporting human institutions?

The answer is found in the **gruesome** and terribly realistic word **division** with whatever goes with it! Physical families, lifelong friendships, and brotherly love and fellowship have been broken. A once united and prosperous people are divided into warring camps. Sad as the situation is it is unmistakably real, and he who would make himself believe otherwise is only deceiving himself. That hundreds, perhaps thousands, will be lost as a result of the false teaching and the unscriptural division which they have caused or aided is as certain as the Bible foretells the doom of those responsible for offenses contrary to the teaching of God's Word.

Who Is Responsible for the Troubles?

Finally, we ask: who must bear the blame for the sordid condition found in Zion at the present hour?

It should be obvious that persons claiming to "speak where the Scriptures speak" are obligated to produce the Scriptures teaching the right or duty of churches to make donations to human institutions. If they cannot produce the passages called for, they cannot escape the rightful blame for whatever division may result from pushing their unscriptural claims upon churches. If this practice falls within the realm of human judgment, they are morally obligated to show two things: (1) that there is a command of Christ

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to a local church to relieve the fatherless and widows and (2) that the **making of a donation to a human institution** specializing in orphan and/or widow care is a "method" whereby the church discharges its duty toward whatever widows and/or orphans Christ has commanded it to relieve. (It is not enough to claim that the human institution is itself a "method of the church," for everybody who thinks twice knows that the institution itself is not a "method" of any kind any more than a local church is a "method" of some kind.) If it **cannot** be shown that **a church's making a donation to a human institution** of some kind is merely a "method" whereby the local church obeys God, it necessarily follows that such procedure is not a matter of judgment at all. Rather, such action, i.e., **a church's making donations to human institutions**, is a positive violation of God's law and is therefore properly described as **disobedience to God!**

A few years ago the promoters of the human institutions insisted that church donations to them was merely an expedient, a mere matter of human judgment, one of several "methods" whereby churches of Christ might discharge their duties in caring for the needy within their ranks. Even then they were willing to divide churches rather than be denied their liberty. More recently some of the chief spokesmen for the human institutions calling upon churches for support are saying that the churches cannot "relieve" the fatherless and widows without a "home" apart from the local church. The practical import of this position is that the local church with which you are identified **must** make such contribution under penalty of disobeying God. In other words, you must either favor church donations to these human societies or you are bound for hell. It matters not how many orphans you may individually feed, clothe and shelter or how many widows you may visit in their affliction. Either you accept the position that churches are acting by God's order when they make donations to benevolence homes operated by members of the church of Christ or you are a rebel against the God of heaven.

As the institutional question has pressed its way to the front within recent years it has become increasingly apparent that among those carrying institutional banners many are more concerned about having their way in what they claim to be a matter of judgment than they are about the peace of God's people and the fellowship of the saints. An actual case with identities of the participants not stated illustrates the point.

Church A was at peace. Fatherless children were fed, clothed, sheltered and otherwise cared for by members of Church A who assumed individual responsibility for them. In spite of this action by various Church A members, several other members felt that entire Church A should make donations to Childcare, Inc., an orphan

home, located in the same state. What did those insisting on church donations to Childcare, Inc., do? Did they send their personal donations to the orphan home and thus permit the church to live in peace and unity? No, they chose to divide the body of Christ instead. They elected to leave Church A and form Church B for the express purpose of being able **as a congregation** to support some orphan "home" — not an orphan, mind you, but an **orphan "home."** They were not supporting Childcare, Inc., even as individuals before leaving Church A and forming Church B, though they could have done this without disturbing or dividing Church A. While a part of Church A some held out what they would have contributed on Lord's day had Church A been donating to Childcare, Inc. Immediately after forming Church B they cast their money into Church B treasury and sent it to Childcare, Inc.

Who believes that these people were really concerned about suffering children? If they were, why did they not send their money **as individuals** to Childcare, Inc., or to the children themselves while still members of Church A? Who believes that they were really as concerned about the welfare of orphans, the peace of Church A and the fellowship of brethren as they were concerned about espousing the "Cause" of **church support of human institutions?** No fellowship now exists between persons composing Church A and Church B. **Church support of Childcare, Inc., was and remains the dividing wedge.**

We insist that those who have pushed these human institutions upon the churches are responsible for the division resulting from the pushing. Apart from churches the institutions have as much right to exist and operate as does any other private business enterprise whether individual or corporate. **Their right to exist, however, is not the issue. The issue is their right to draw support from churches.** The fact that they are operated by Christians does not change the fact that they are of human origin and therefore unworthy of support by the divine body, the church. The fact that they are constituted of a group of Christians, independent of churches in structure and function and who volunteer their services to supervise the activities of others who are paid employees of the voluntary body politic, does not change the fact that they still constitute a body for which Christ did not die, which He did not sanctify with His blood, of which He is not head and over which, therefore, He exercises no control whatever. The fact that they may engage in a work of charity and do good in the realm of relieving human misery does not change the gruesome reality of sorrow, heartache and division they have caused by injecting themselves into the divine body. None of their legitimate claims to respectability according to human standards entitles them to church support and therefore to divine approval according to divine standards.

Peace prevailed before these human institutions began sucking the churches. War prevails not over the institutions' right to exist apart from the churches; but war prevails because, while organically apart from the churches, these institutions attach themselves to the

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churches for succor and support. War will cease and peace will prevail only when the divine body rids itself of these human parasites. Remove the cause of war and war will cease.

Afterword

I have sometimes been asked if I believe that an orphan "home" constituted as a human board to direct activities under it has a right to exist. Certainly I do! Frequently I have been reported as being "anti-orphan home" and in many instances "anti-orphan." As I read the record of the struggle between those who opposed missionary societies related to churches and the society promoters I can well understand that many persons either willfully or ignorantly misrepresent one's true views.

I am not now nor have I ever knowingly spoken one word against the right of any individual or group establishing whatever arrangement of and by themselves might enable that person or group of persons to feed, clothe, shelter and nurse fatherless children **for whom they are responsible**, I do **not** understand that this or any other group has a right to impose what **they** have decided was **their** responsibility upon other individuals, much less upon the church of my Lord, "for each man shall bear his own burden." (Gal. 6:5.) In 1909 five men in Tennessee constituted themselves by law "a body politic and corporate by the name and style of The Tennessee Orphan Home" for "the education and support of orphan children regardless of sect, creed, or denomination." That they had both moral and legal right to do this I believe. When they thus acted, however, they had **no moral or legal right to expect someone else to shoulder the responsibility they had deliberately and afthoughtedly assumed for themselves** any more than I have a right to expect or request somebody else to assume responsibility for **my** three children. Again, "each man shall bear his own burden." (Gal. 6:5.) If these five men, having assumed the responsibility mentioned, had later fallen upon hard times and had themselves become actual objects of charity to the point that they could not "provide for their own" they would have then been proper objects of charity from their brethren in Christ, **not** because of their children but because of their **own** need. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2.) The fact that fifteen men may now be legal successors of the five original incorporators does not change the principle involved. When any group of men assumes the role of a parent they thereby assume the moral responsibility of a parent. Until and unless they personally become objects of charity they have no scriptural right to expect somebody else to do in their stead what they have morally and legally committed themselves to do for the children whose education and support they have assumed.

It was not until this group of men and their successors, calling themselves a "home," and others of like nature began appealing to churches for donations to do what they originally constituted themselves to do that brethren began to be disturbed and churches began to have serious trouble. When these self-appointed parents cease doing the very thing causing the trouble, the trouble will cease. When they cease calling upon churches for funds to educate and support

their own self-selected children and when local churches begin "relieving" whatever objects of charity are theirs through the ministers God has placed in the churches for this very purpose, then and not until then will all strife cease among churches over the benevolence society question.

As enterprises independent of the church, benevolence societies ("homes") have a right to exist. When these or similar enterprises begin looking to and calling upon churches of Christ for support and when churches respond, both "homes" and churches have assumed a role for which there is no divine religious authority.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7.)

ADDENDA

A. N. Trice in article, "Law and Expediency," *Gospel Advocate*, March 19, 1931, pp. 314-317:

"To object to a method of teaching as 'scriptural' when God has not given a method is to set up a rule where God has not established one. We should respect the silence of the Bible; but some of the hair-splitters and objectors seem to delight to pervert the slogan of the Restoration Movement, and, to conform to their views, it should read: 'Where the Bible speaks, I will speak; where the Bible is silent — this is my opportunity to speak my whims, my opinions, and ride any hobby that my fancy may suggest.' . . .

"We are taught to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction but we are not told **how** this is to be done. Here again we must rely upon expediency, for we have no plan set forth as such in the Scriptures. . . . Why may we not build an inn, a hospital, an old woman's home, a school, or establish a paper to teach the truth? And why may we not have any of these conducted under a charter from the Senate by a board of trustees or directors? . . .

"Finally, Scripture authority has been demanded for teaching the Bible in schools; for cooperation of churches; for supporting schools from the treasury of the church; for activities other than through the treasury of the local congregation; for maintaining an orphanage or home for the aged; for arranging for a series of gospel meetings, etc. It is freely granted that the affirmant must support his position with evidence, and my answer to this demand is that God requires us to teach His word, to give of our means, to help the poor and needy, to sing and otherwise worship God. Abundant authority is found in the Scriptures for all this. But if one insists on one plan or method to the exclusion of all others, where God does not specify any plan or method, the obligation rests on him to support his position by Scripture evidence, and he becomes the affirmant on the point at issue. . . . Hobby riding and speculation are responsible for much strife and division, the alienation of brethren, the tearing down of churches, schools, etc.; and when these ripen into dogmatism, the result is the tearing down of primitive Christianity and the establishing of sectarianism. Shall we be responsible for the rending of the body of Christ? God forbid. 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.'"

We cite the foregoing to call attention to the fact that A. N. Trice was making the same pitch in the *Gospel Advocate* more than thirty years ago and using the same worn out appeal to "expediency" that the orphan home and college-in-the-budget brethren have been making more recently and was branding those who opposed his views

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then as "hobby riders," "hairsplitters," and "objectors" (another word for "antis"). This forever settles the question of whether church support of these human institutions was an issue thirty years ago for A. N. Trice wrote a four-page article on the subject at that time.

This, however, is not the end of the story. Two weeks after the Trice article appeared in the **Advocate** F. B. Srygley, who wrote some fifty years for the **Advocate**, used the same title, "Law and Expediency," that Trice had used and presented a withering review of the Trice article. Brother Srygley said exactly what some of the rest of us have been trying to get brethren to see ever since churches have been dividing over the orphan home question. Here are some of the Srygley observations:

"While Brother Trice condemns missionary societies through which to preach the gospel, he defends other things with the same arguments the society brethren use with which to defend missionary societies. The question is not that certain things ought to be done, nor is it the how they should be done, but it is the institution or organization through which they are to be done. There is nothing in the New Testament larger than a local church and smaller than the entire body of Christ. I am seeking to make no law, rule, or regulation when I say this. If Brother Trice's article is not used by the society brethren in defense of their societies, it will be because they do not know a good thing when they see it or do not care for Brother Trice's support. The same arguments that Brother Trice makes have been made for the societies for the last forty years."

When F. B. Srygley died in 1940, H. Leo Boles wrote of him in the **Advocate** of February 15, 1940, p. 148, as follows:

"The last years of his life were given to editorial work of the **Gospel Advocate**. . . . The writer has been closely associated with him for about thirty years. . . . No man living today can claim greater loyalty to the church than F. B. Srygley. He has fought more battles for the truth of God, won more victories over error and false teaching than any man now living. He has engaged in more battles for the truth, in public debate and preaching the gospel, than any other man of modern times. . . . Those who read his editorials can bear testimony that he waged a relentless warfare against every encroachment on the truth of God and against the enemies of the church of our Lord.

". . . The writer cannot recall now a single instance where he was on the wrong side of any question that disturbed the peace and happiness of God's people. . . . He had a clear insight into the intricate problems of the brotherhood. He could analyze with accuracy the problems that disturbed and troubled the churches. He could apply scriptural teaching and solve these problems.

". . . It fell his lot to deal with problems and situations that called for courage. Brother Srygley never faltered, evaded, or compromised any truth or righteous principle. He knew that the truth in many sections is unpopular, yet he did not shrink from declaring in an effective way the truth. Any enemy that he has was made in fighting for the truth."

Again we call attention to the statement of the present **Advocate** editor's comment regarding F. B. Srygley when he died. In the **Gospel Advocate**, 1940, p. 484, he wrote:

"Like old John Knox, he never feared the face of man. He was loyal to Christ first, last, and all the time. He would not wink at error in the practice of anyone, not even in his most intimate friends."