

REV.
BARTON WARREN
STONE

The Man Who Studied
and Taught

BOOKLET--FOUR

By

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Foreword

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

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

which accepts and proclaims:

- The Lord Jesus Christ as the head of the church.
- Christian our only name.
- The Bible our rule of faith and practice.
- Individual interpretation of the Scriptures, the right and duty of all.
- Christian character the test of fellowship.
- The union of all the followers of Christ, to the end that the world may believe.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

No. 6 gives sketches of the pioneer women workers of the Christian Church.

That all who use these booklets judiciously may be supplied, they will be sent free on request and payment of postage, 15c. for one dozen, 40c. for fifty, 75c. for one hundred. Order them from The American Christian Convention, or The Christian Publishing Association. Both are in the Christian Publishing Association Building, Dayton, Ohio.

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

O. W. WHITELOCK,

Secretary for Publishing.

Rev. Barton Warren Stone

The Man Who Studied and Taught

It takes great strength to live where you belong
When other people think that you are wrong;
People you love, and who love you, and whose
Approval is a pleasure you would choose.
To bear this pressure and succeed at length
In living your belief--well, it takes strength.
--Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

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

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

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

Elder Stone entered into the Trinitarian Controversy with much zeal and great assurance, and it would be strange if in the heat of controversy he had said, or written, nothing of a speculative character. In his more mature years he ceased all contentions and satisfied himself by speaking of the Son of God only as the Son of God had spoken of himself. He preached for the churches that had called him only for a few years, for he was in the Presbyterian ministry but seven years in all.

His labors while pastor at Cane Ridge were excessive; he spared not himself that he might serve others, and indeed this was true of him throughout his whole life, for, like Paul, he was "in labor more abundantly." The Christian Herald (1825) describes him as follows:

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

text unexplained, and seldom do his hearers go away uninstructed."

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

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

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

"A crowd of people had assembled--the preacher came--it was James McGready, whom I had never seen before. He arose and looked around on the assembly. His person was not

prepossessing, nor his appearance interesting, except his remarkable gravity and small, piercing eyes. His coarse, tremulous voice excited in me the idea of something unearthly. His gestures were *sui generis*, the perfect reverse of elegance. Everything appeared by him forgotten but the salvation of souls. Such earnestness--such zeal--such powerful persuasion--enforced by the joys of heaven and miseries of hell, I had never witnessed before. My mind was chained by him, and followed him closely in his rounds of heaven, earth, and hell, with feelings indescribable. His concluding remarks were addressed to the sinner to flee the wrath to come without delay. Never before had I comparatively felt the force of truth. Such was my excitement that, had I been standing, I should have probably sunk to the floor under the impression."

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

Elder Stone's interest in this great awakening was intense from the opening day, and none among them all labored with greater zeal, more conquering faith, nor triumphant hope than did he. When the revival closed he, unexpectedly and without desire, found himself the central figure in a large group of converts who had not faced the question of church membership, nor given the subject any consideration at all. They had been converted, and that was enough for them. They were in the kingdom, and were satisfied. But they were as sheep having no

shepherd. Many of them belonged to families, parts of which had been brought up in some one of the churches engaged in the revival. Sectarianism did not die with the birth of souls into the kingdom. Indeed, it seemed to be stimulated, for each of the sects laid claim to a large number of the converts, and set about to secure them. Religious energy was consumed in denouncing the creed of each other. Party spirit ran high, and sectarianism grew bold and aggressive. Elder Stone's heart was broken over the wrangling of preachers, whose only aim seemed to be to add members to their church lists, and prove the correctness of their doctrine. It was not an easy task for him to decide his duty. He had been ordained a Presbyterian minister, had taken churches under his care, and was at that time pastor of the Cane Ridge Church, that was then in good standing and full fellowship in the Presbyterian Synod. He was harassed with misgivings at facing his old time co-laborers, and the doctrines which he himself had preached, and yet down deep in his heart he was conscious of the fact that creeds were divisive and believed that, when all human creeds and traditions should be set aside, Christians would find a simple, yet sufficient, rule of faith and practice in the Word of God. The processes by which he reached a conclusion disentangling himself from his former associates, and crossing the boundaries of sectarianism into the liberty of the children of God, were slow and painful. He was greatly misunderstood, and grossly misrepresented, but he remained unmoved in the course he meant to pursue. He was aided, no doubt, in reaching a decision by the sticklers for Calvinism complaining that he, and others, were preaching anti-Calvinistic doctrines, and finally the matter was brought before the Synod of Lexington, Ky., in 1803. Finding that the Synod would likely decide against them, the following persons withdrew: B. W. Stone, Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard McNemar and John Thompson. The Synod proceeded to pass upon the sentence of "suspension," for the crime of departing from the doctrines of the Confession of Faith. Stone had never promised to accept the doctrine. He promised only to "receive it so far as he found it consistent with the word of God."

Elder Stone now saw that his connection with the Presbyterian Church must soon terminate, and accordingly he called his congregation together and informed them of the situation. He told them that he could no longer sustain to them the relation of pastor, and while he loved them dearly, he must be true to his conviction of truth and duty. He

informed them that he expected to continue to preach the gospel among them, but it would be the gospel, and not ism. Immediately he, and his associates, formed what they termed "The Springfield Presbytery," and went on preaching and organizing churches for about one year. They discovered, however, that the Presbytery they had organized was about as sectarian as the one they had left, and so they proceeded to dissolve it, and, discarding all man-made creeds and human names, they took the Bible alone as the rule of their faith and practice, and the name Christian as the only name for believers in Jesus Christ.² Of this event Elder Stone says:

"Having divested ourselves of all party creeds and party names, and trusting alone in God, and the word of His grace, we became a by-word and laughing-stock to the sects around us; all prophesying our speedy annihilation. Yet from this period I date the commencement of that reformation which has progressed to this day. Through much tribulation and opposition we advanced, and churches and preachers were multiplied."

The Last Will and Testament appears in the Origin and Principles of the Christians, but being directly connected with the life and work of Elder Stone, who in all probability wrote it, it is reproduced here:

The Last Will and Testament of The Springfield Presbytery

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

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

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

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

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

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

Item. We will, that candidates for the Gospel ministry henceforth study the Holy scriptures with fervent prayer, and obtain license from God to preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven,

without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world. And let none henceforth take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Springfield Presbytery.

June 28, 1804.

(L. S.)

Robert Marshall,

John Dunlevy,

Richard McNemar,

B. W. Stone,

John Thompson,

David Purviance,

Witnesses.

On Baptism

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

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

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

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

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

Christian Union

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

There are three good reasons for the fellowship of these two great leaders. The first is the one given above, that they found common ground in gospel teaching.

The second is that both were scholarly men. Stone had been a student from his early years, and had reached a fine degree of scholarship, but had spent the most of his life with men of the field and forest, to whom educational opportunities had been denied, and he hungered for companionship in intellectuality, and when he found it in Elder Campbell, he welcomed it with great heartiness. Elder Campbell was a teacher of great ability, a man of impressive personality, and Stone was a student, willing and anxious to learn, and he found in Mr. Campbell a teacher worthy of his confidence and respect.

The third reason is, they were both reformers--Campbell from choice, Stone from force of circumstances. Each man was leading a movement away from sectarianism, and toward Christian unity. Mr. Campbell had a well-defined plan; a sure system of salvation; he knew a path already beaten hard by oft repeated travel. Mr. Stone was open to conviction; a man seeking a sure way to a definite goal. He wanted a safe path and a solid foundation, and with an open-mindedness that characterized his whole life, he gave attention to Elder Campbell's doctrine, and undertook to co-operate with him in propagating the truth in the interest of Christian Union. As early as 1827 the question of union was being considered, but nowhere is it shown that the union then in mind meant more than co-operation, and when the union, so called, was consummated, neither party abandoned its position--neither party went over to the other. Stone and his party, and Campbell and his party, were still in existence as distinctly as they were before they met and formed the union. They were undertaking to co-operate for the building up of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Of this union for the purpose of co-

operation between the two men and their associates., Morrill, in the History of the Christian Denomination, says:

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

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

This "union" did not change the status of any name or church or minister or piece of property.

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

Indeed, it is an open question whether or not Mr. Campbell did not oppose the union. There were well-known uncompromisable disagreements between Mr. Campbell and Mr. Stone, on the subject of baptism, and the name that should designate the believers in Jesus Christ. Campbell insisted on immersion in water before believers were received to membership in their churches, to which Stone strenuously objected, saying: "We cannot, with our present views, unite in the opinion that unimmersed persons cannot receive remission of sins." Upon the question of the name, Stone remained unmoved; he would not surrender the name Christian as a denominational title, and did all he could to get Mr. Campbell and his party to accept it. And, in addition to this, Elder Campbell clearly indicated his objection to the union in an editorial in the *Millennial Harbinger*, as follows: "Or does he (Stone) think that one or two individuals, of and for themselves, should propose and effect a formal union among the hundreds of congregations scattered over this continent, called Christians or Disciples, without calling upon the different congregations to express an opinion or a wish upon the subject? We discover, or think we discover, a squinting at some sort of precedency or priority in the claims of the writer of the above article." It is quite evident that the article referred to had been written by Elder Stone, in the interest of union, and defense of the name.

In 1826 Elder Stone began the publication of a monthly periodical, which he named "*The Christian Messenger*," and which he continued to publish until 1844, though during the last two years of the time he was sorely afflicted, and greatly incapacitated. Part of the time he had for a co-laborer in this work, Rev. J. T. Johnson., but after his removal to Illinois, Elder D. P. Henderson served in the same capacity. In 1834 Elder Stone removed, with his family, to Jacksonville, Illinois. Here he found two congregations, one Christian, the other Disciple, or Reformers, as they were then known. He succeeded in having these unite, when he became their pastor. Immediately following the union of

these two churches there was a great wave of Campbellism, which lost to the Christians not fewer than eight thousand members, and increased the membership of the Disciples of Christ as many. Christian Churches in Southern Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee were caught in the current of the oft repeated "Where the Bible speaks we speak, and where the Bible is silent we are silent," and ere they knew it they had become churches of the Disciples of Christ, and many of them remain so until now. The writer personally knows of four churches in the Southern Ohio Christian Conference, of which he is a member, where the above is true. They are the churches at Lawshe, Liberty Chapel, Georgetown and Bethel. As stated elsewhere, Stone was a stickler for the name Christian. His knowledge of the Greek language enabled him to understand that the name was given by divine appointment, and when the union was effected the name Christian was continued. In all probability this was the beginning of the use of the name by the followers of Campbell, for this church, and many others, became Disciples of Christ, that had been organized by Christian ministers.

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

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

Christian

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

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

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

On the Bible as Authoritative

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

"As man-made creeds have always divided Christians, and stood in the way of union, these must all be abandoned, and the Bible alone received as the only foundation and rule of faith and practice. On no other platform can all Christians meet. Here the Church rested in her best days. Here she would have rested, and remained in sweet union, had not human creeds been introduced and established as authoritative. From this period we may date the apostasy of the church. From this period Christians were divided, and many inspired with the fury of hell, persecuted each other to death, fighting under their great leader, the devil, 'transformed into an angel of light.' From this period the reign of darkness and ignorance commenced, called the age of darkness; for as the attention of the people were drawn to the creeds of the councils, it was of course drawn away from the Bible. They *might* believe the Bible, but *must* believe the creed. They might believe the Bible, but if their belief differed from the creed, anathemas and death were their doom. Happy for the people, in a worldly point of view, that they were soon after prohibited entirely from reading the Bible! There was then no more danger of losing their lives; for they now believed the creed alone, because this alone they knew, or could know. All Protestants with one voice condemn this conduct of our fathers, and highly extol the reformers of the sixteenth century for restoring to the people the Bible, and the divine right of reading and judging for themselves. But does not every Protestant see that the creed-making business is but the recommencement of the same tragic drama? Shall they plead for that which divides Christians, promotes strife, engenders hatred, impels to persecution, war, blood and death, and set up their own devices in the place of the Bible to judge and condemn a fellow Christian? Is not this like setting up the man of sin in God's judgment seat? Will any Christian plead for the life of his creed, when he must know that others cannot unite on it without hypocrisy? No! no! Let it die

the death. Will any plead for the retention of his creed, because it has never promoted war, bloodshed and death? We may thank our God and our happy government for this. The lion is chained, but it lives, and secretly, raves and thirsts for blood. The Bible, the BIBLE ALONE, is the only religion in which Christians can all unite. Not on the opinions formed by man of the truths and facts stated in the Bible, but upon the facts themselves.

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

Controversy and Creedalism

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

It is difficult for us, in this day of modified creedal life, either to understand or appreciate the tenacity with which each denomination at that time enforced its doctrine, and insisted upon its creed as the only biblically correct one of them all. With strong vehemence they declared each other's creed to be wrong, and stood ready to prove it by the Scripture, and did prove it to their own satisfaction. Persistently each of them proved themselves to be right and all others wrong. Each denomination moved together as a flock of sheep moves through a valley, drinking the same water, nipping the same grass, and finding them to their taste. And, as is always the case, the constant discussion of *some* dogma, and the disproof of *some* dogma, inevitably begets in certain order of mind the temper to discuss and distrust all dogmas, and it may be that this had something to do with Stone's decision to leave the church of his youth. He suddenly found his old religious peace greatly disturbed; he was thrust into the thick of the wars of dogmatic theology, which were impassioned and rancorous to a degree beyond

our ability to comprehend. Theology was not only rending the churches, but personal opinion was rending theology. We can little understand Stone's feelings when he found himself brought from the peaceful fields of pastoral service into the wrangling, sarcastic, envious creeds of that day, and especially so when his own honest opinions would either be dispensed with vitriolic criticism, or dismissed with a blast of scorn which would strike his face like a hot wind. Stone lived at a time when religious intolerance prevailed, when sect warred against sect, when the greatest preacher was he who had slain the most opponents, when it was the glory of one church to prove all others wrong. Soon after Stone's withdrawal from the church in which he had spent his life, up to that time, a law of the Synod, or Presbytery, forbade their people to associate with him and his party under pain of censure or exclusion from their communion. Aggressive hostilities against Stone and his co-laborers were declared from every pulpit of the churches that had lost members by his movement, and the thunders of their denunciations and wrath were ceaseless and bitter. There was at that time a sort of blind devotion to denominations which led men to say: "My church, may she always be right, but right or wrong, my church," or "Other churches may be right, but we know that ours cannot be wrong." Amid all his bitter experiences, the unjust criticism, the warring of sects, and the loss of those who had gone out with him, he remained true to his faith and conviction of duty, and gave to the Christian world a declaration in which all man-made creeds are set aside, and the Bible given its rightful place--"A basis of Christian Union upon the Bible alone as the rule of faith and practice for the people of God." And be it said to the honor of the people who wear the name Christian, that never yet has any man who bore the "image and superscription" of the Lord Jesus Christ been denied fellowship among them. Today, as in the days of the illustrious Stone, they put the Bible, without note, comment, or interpretation, into the hands of those who would join them, and thus seat around one communion table John Wesley, Roger Williams and William Penn, and their fellowship for the one is the same as their fellowship for the others. And why should it not be so? Who are we that we should reject "one of these little ones" for whom Christ died?

Barton Warren Stone lived his life, he did his work, he fought his fight, and he won his crown, and though dead, he yet speaketh. Men die, MAN lives. The individual passes away by development or death, but

there is a sort of groundline that runs through all human history, and Stone was such a groundline, and he moves among the churches today as a living personality, and his influence is as enduring as time.

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

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