

The Reformation In Tennessee



by J.W. Grant

To chronicle the achievements of those who have figured on the stage of life, to recount their deeds, their labors, and their struggles is not an easy task; and when in addition to telling these we are called upon to trace the workings of a principle at first but obscurely comprehended by those who wrought it out, to tell the successive approaches to it by some and the departures from it by others, this is even more difficult and laborious. But such can hardly be claimed as the work of the following pages, although both will be incidentally accomplished to some degree, in the following attempt to collate and preserve the few meagre details of The Reformation in Tennessee, that the writer has been able to rescue from oblivion.

The great revolution in religious thought at the beginning of the present century by which people have been brought to call in question the authority of creeds; and of dogmas, and of the decisions of Synods, and of the decrees of Councils, etc., and by which they have been led to assume, each one for himself the investigation of God's word and an application of it to his own individual case, that revolution was not originated by any one man, not confined to any one locality. Nor is the revolution here spoken of that which gave to every man the privilege of possessing a copy of the Sacred Scriptures; for that end was accomplished by the Reformation of Martin Luther. The great central thought of this later revolution, is the interpretation of scripture teaching independently of preestablished opinion; the study of it to learn what it teaches, and not for the purpose of finding in it something by which to prove an already established theory: and this great thought is one that seemed to rise spontaneously in many minds at once. Thus while the Campbells and their associates were working out this problem in Virginia and Pennsylvania, Stone was developing the same in Kentucky, Dasher in Georgia, and Hopwood, Speer, and others, in Tennessee. Tracing the rise and progress of this thought in the state of Tennessee, and the teaching that grew out of it, will constitute, the greater part of the present work. The purpose of it is to "rescue from oblivion" the history of this reformation as

developed in the state; and while the details of the early part of the work are very meagre, it is hoped that enough that is authentic may be gathered together to make a clear and reliable account worth preserving in the religious history of the state.

One of the singular facts that presents itself in the outset is that it is the history of a party in religion that has tried to be non-partisan, of a people who have claimed from the beginning of their work that partyism and sectism (sic) are wrong, and that under their influence Christianity cannot attain to its highest usefulness and best development. And while this has been one of the leading principles of the reformation of the present (19th) century, those who have advocated its principles, in Tennessee and elsewhere (sic), have, found it exceedingly difficult to avoid the attitude of a party in religion. In truth, to avoid being a party, while they remain harmonious in their teaching, is one of the yet unsolved problems with which they have had to grapple. But while they have not thus succeeded fully in the practical demonstration of this principle, they have given emphasis to the fact that the Bible is a sufficient guide in all matters of religion, and that creeds, decrees, decisions of councils, etc., are not necessary to harmony and unity in carrying out its instructions and obeying its commands

Those in the state of Tennessee who first advocated these principles and others that have been made prominent in the "Current Reformation," do not seem to have derived their principles altogether from foreign sources (sic), or to have looked to other states for leadership. It is true that at an early date in the history of the work in the state messengers came into the state from elsewhere, advocating much of the same doctrine and urging much of the same practice that have been constantly taught wherever the advocates of the original principles have gone: and it is not intended to call in question for a moment the great influence of such men as Campbell and Stone, both of whom labored some in the state, and with great effect. But the point to be emphasized is that men here in the state, and who were in the various religious parties then existing here, learned from the study of "The Book," and advocated in their teaching, the principles pleaded for in the Reformation. It is also a notable fact that they for so teaching, and frequently those that they taught for learning of them, were driven out of the parties with which they were associated, and forced to take a stand for themselves; and they thus had their part in the great religious revolution. Thus it is told that a congregation of worshipers claiming to be simply Christians, and identified with no sect or party was organized at Bethlehem, in Wilson (?) County, as early as 1816 or 1817; that another congregation of the same kind was organized at Wilson Hill, in Marshall County, about the same time, or possibly three or four years later. Also we learn that "a congregation at Liberty, Marshall County was separated from the Richland Association of United Baptists, in 1823, for communing with brethren who were called Christians, and assisting to set apart a deacon in that church. " It is also a well authenticated fact that [Joshua K. Speer](#) was a Baptist preacher for some years, and held in high esteem by that people; but that he preached the Bible so plainly that they excluded him for heresy. This probably took place sometime in the twenties; for he set in order a congregation of Christians at Berea, in Marshall County, in 1828. In the same region

was Willis Hopwood, also a Baptist probably born earlier, and also earlier in advocating independent Christianity, than Speer.

Thus were these men working out in Tennessee the problems that were being worked out by others elsewhere; and when they came to know each other's faith, each other's principles, they found themselves "agreed," and walked "together." [David Lipscomb](#) says in his "Life of [Jesse Sewell](#)," (page 81)

"A movement of this kind (similar to that of the Campbell's) began in Kentucky under the lead of [Barton W. Stone](#), assisted by the Rogers, Johnson, Morton, the Creaths, and others. Starting from different standpoints, the rule laid down (The rule that they would be guided and governed wholly by the Bible) brought them to see alike, and made them one people. Those connected with the Stone movement first came into the mountain districts of Kentucky and Tennessee. Among these were Dr. W. D. Jordan who only recently died at an advanced age in Missouri; Isaac T. Rinau, (sic) the [Mulkeys](#), J. C. Smith, Alvin Hovey, and John Emerson. These started a good distance apart; but following the same rule, they came together as one brotherhood in Christ. "

Thus two influences, one from within the state and the other from without, united in teaching those principles the belief and practice of which has developed that large and influential factor in the present religious condition of the state, consisting of hundreds of public teachers and congregations, and many thousands of faithful and devout worshipers of God who desire to be known simply as Christians, or disciples of Christ; and who disclaim and repudiate other designations than applied to the followers of Jesus with divine approbation in the New Testament. Their principles have been misunderstood and misrepresented from the very beginning of their work; and as a consequence of this they have been objects of persecution, vituperation, and abuse, which are still heaped upon them in some localities. But in imitation of their great leader, Jesus, they have responded with the word of God, and by so doing have won many of their misguided and uninformed opponents to be among the strongest and most ardent advocates of their principles.

Meagre accounts of the early part of this (sic) work are preserved in a few written and printed documents that have been preserved to our time, and in the memories of a few of ones that lived at the time and took interest in the events when they were transpiring, or who got them from parents and others who were thus interested. All that now rember (sic) them are octogenarians, with failing memories as to things of recent occurrence, but upon whose minds are stamped indelibly those thrilling scenes and events of their earlier years. All that has thus been brought together of the events of those earlier days is here presented verbatim, as far as practical, from the documents and statements collected; and it will constitute the contents of most of the succeeding pages.

THE EARLY WORKERS AND PLACES.

Concerning the early workers in the state and their labors the details are very limited, and of some of them nothing is left except the name of worker and the locality of a part of his work. The early workers in Middle Tennessee numbered among them beside Hopwood and Speer, who have already been mentioned, the [Barretts](#), Craig, Wm. Lee, Rees Jones, Wm. Hooten, the [Mulkeys](#), Seth Sparkman, [Tolbert Fanning](#), James Locke, Jesse Hardison and many others, some of whose names will occur later.

There seem to have been two centres of activity in the work in Middle Tennessee at an early date; one in Marshall, Maury, and Giles Counties, and the other in Warren and the counties joining. Work rapidly branched out from these centres, and at an early date the growth was such that they overlapped each other, and fused into one common work. The early workers went from place to place, praching, (sic) and holding meetings where the opportunities were best; and hence they frequently sought out and visited other communities of the same faith. In that early day there was much moving of families from place to place for "better locations, " and thus new communities were prepared for the preaching of the faith, by the moving in of those who had been already instructed in it. Like those who were scattered from Jerusalem by the persecution that martyred Stephen, these early workers "went everywhere preaching the word."

At a very early date a congregation of the faith was established at [Robertson's Fork](#), in Giles County, and soon became strong and flourishing. From this a new congregation was separated for convenience to its members, and began meeting regularly at Lynnville, in 1832. Work was begun in East Tennessee also quite early, as will appear later in the narrative; but at what time it began in West Tennessee has not been ascertained, and only a single allusion, that will be quoted further on, seems to throw any light upon that part of the inquiry.

The following notes, from the pen of a wellknown living evangelist, were taken by him in an interview with Mr. Charles Rogan, of Sumner County.

"[Barton W. Stone](#) preached first in the fifth civil district of Sumner County, in 1811, on the farm of H. P. Jones. From there he went immediately to a place near where the little village of Roganna now stands, and preached on Bledsoe's Creek, at the mouth of Dry Fork Creek. The preaching was done under an Elm and Oak. The Federal soldiers burned the Elm, but the Oak stood until blown down by the cyclone of 1890. Stone was accompanied here by the Brethren Craighead and Dodridge. From this place they went to where Hopewell now stands, and preached under a Beech Tree, covered with a Summer grapevine. Mr. Rogan says there were additions at both places, but he does not know how many. Of course Mr. Rogan was not then born; but having an excellent memory,

he remembers what he heard his father relate concerning this.
[E. A. Elam.](#) "

The following notes were made from interviews with elderly persons in Maury County, one of the persons being a daughter of [Joshua K. Speer](#), and now an old lady of seventy.

"The earliest congregations in Maury County were Cedar Creek and Lasea. The latter has been in existence about sixty-four years, while the former was certainly established earlier, probably by a few years, than the latter. In Marshall County the earliest congregation was Berea, probably dating back to about the same time as Cedar Creek, above mentioned. Some that will be quoted further on, seems to throw any light upon that part of the inquiry."

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Of these were established, and all were built up, by the labors of [J. K. Speer](#). He was assisted by Willis Hopwood, and also by a Bro. Craig. G. A. Trott and Sandy E. Jones likewise shared in the labors in these communities, and [B. W. Stone](#) also once visited this section. Bro. Lee, afterward a preacher, was probably the first man ever baptized "for the remission of sins, " in Maury County. [J. K. Speer](#) was born in 1794, in the month of May, and in early life he was a Baptist preacher. He probably began preaching "the faith" (called by others heresy), as early as early (sic) as 1825, and was independent of both Stone and Campbell. "

The following "In Memoriam" (sic) is taken from the Gospel Advocate of May 1883, and contains such a revelation of the habits of those early days, together with such a fine group of names of the early workers, that it is copied in full.

"IN MEMORIAM. "

"The followers of Christ are called away from the scenes of life as others, but they go to the rich inheritance of the saints in the Beyond. Father and mother Bills, in memory of whom this article is written, were among the first to espouse the cause of the Reformation in Middle Tennessee. David G. Bills was born September 8th, 1790, and died in October, 1862. The war between the States was then raging with all the fury incident to civil strife; and as our brethren were publishing no paper at that time, no public notice of his death was made. His consort, Rachel Bills, was born April 24th, 1793; having died the 9th of March of this year, I have concluded to unite them in the same memorial. In 1820 they embraced the gospel under the preaching of Barton W. Stone, and cast their lots with the brethren of the Reformation. Having never ??? [E. A. Elam.](#) "

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"The earliest congregations in Maury County were Cedar Creek and Lasea. The latter has been in existence about sixty-four years, while the former was certainly established earlier, probably by a few years, than the latter. In Marshall County the earliest congregation was Berea, probably dating back to about the same time as Cedar Creek, above mentioned.

Some been subjected to the influence of human creeds, they were prepared to enter, with intelligence and zeal, upon the Christian life that they afterward so richly adorned. A congregation was formed and set in order one half mile from where the Wilson Hill Church now stands, in Marshall County. They met and worshiped under arbors and tents, for they had no house of worship.

"This was in the days of camp meetings; and under the rude eloquence and fiery zeal of the pioneer preachers, the people were aroused from their sins to a Knowledge of a higher life, clinging still to many of the customs of their fathers, they had their altars and altar exercises. But starting with their Bible for their guide in all things pertaining to life and godliness, and the New Testament in particular, as giving the methods of making and developing Christians, they rejected the institutions of man as their information increased.

"In those early days they had their circuits and circuit riders and stationed preachers; held their camp meetings, and called mourners somewhat after the manner of the Methodists. After they abandoned these things that were prescribed by their religious neighbors, they were called schismatics. When the time set for holding camp meeting arrived, preachers and people came far and near to worship the Lord of Hosts, and to labor to convert souls to Christ. The disciples would lay aside all secular employments to attend these meetings; and when they met there was no cold, formal salutation,

such as we often see now, but a warm, hearty, soul-cheering greeting, something that reminded one of the times of the Apostles and early Christians, when they saluted with a kiss. Those grand scenes became Edens on earth; resting from their labors, the disciples took in all the delights that flow from the solemn and pleasing worship of the Lord Almighty. Not till all who witnessed them will have been called to participate in the blissful joys of the Eden above, will their memories be lost among men. The conversation of these devoted people was of God and Heaven, and how they might best advance the cause of their beloved Master here below. The Bible was the textbook of life. They puzzled not their brains with vain philosophy of man concerning the age of the earth, the descent of man, the authority of the divine record, and such things. What the Bible said was enough for them. Resting securely upon its teachings and promises, they committed themselves, and all that they had, to the keeping of the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They were a praying people. They would meet from house to house for prayer and praise. Nearly every brother engaged in the service, and not a few of the sisters. The sisters were especially devoted in attention to the sick and the poor.

"Doubtless the self-sacrificing spirit and holy zeal of the early teachers had much to do with the zeal and constancy of their converts. It was such men as the Stones, the [Mulkeys](#), Jourdin, Green, [Kendrick](#), the Hootens, Griffin, Anderson, Hopwood, Ephraim A. Smith, and the [Barretts](#), that the people heard in that day. It was men who practiced, as well as taught, the way that disciples should live. The words came burning from the altars of their own hearts, and set on fire the souls of their hearers. "I shall observe that the preachers that came out under the teaching of [Alexander Campbell](#), in this section, were Willis Hopwood, Craig, Ephraim A. Smith, and the [Barretts](#). Those of the Baptists that espoused the teaching of Campbell sent Ephraim A. Smith to a meeting held at or near Wilson Hill, to effect, if possible, a union between the two parties, the followers of Stone, and those of Campbell. It was on Monday, and though a small boy, I well remember that they had no preaching on that day. Smith would talk a while, and then some of the congregation; and thus the day was passed. The point was gained. The two parties were united, agreeing to take the Bible as their rule of faith and practice, dropping everything for which they could not find a "thus saith the Lord. "

"Father and mother Bills were no idle spectators of men and things during these glorious scenes and actions. They, too, loved the Master, and they loved his people. They could be seen wending their way to the assembly of the saints. Their voices were heard in the prayers and ascriptions of praise to the Most High. Their houses were open to worshipers of the Lord. Their hands were ready to minister to those in want. Their purses were not closed against the calls for money to support the gospel and relieve the poor. It seems, however, that their principal mission was to the sick and poor. The last thirty years of father Bills' life were, for the most part, spent with the sick and distressed. Yet, though he rode day and night, he failed not to attend upon the services

of the Lord's house on the first day of the week if it was possible for him to get there. Nor was he absent from prayer meetings.

???? was not eloquent in prayer; his prayers were effectual, fervent prayers, coming, as they did, from the overcharged heart, and addressed directly to the divine ear. I remember a remark made by a very able preaching brother in regard to him. He said, "I would rather listen to Bro. Bills in prayer than to any other man I ever heard."

"The time of his departure drew nigh. Five months before he left us, disease fastened upon him, and he was confined to his bed. He felt the shadows of death closing in around him. Patiently he waited for the final summons. I was with him nearly all the time of his sickness. During the last three months of his lingering, hardly a day passed, in which some of his friends and acquaintances did not call to see him. I do not remember to have seen any one take leave of him without shedding tears. He would take the visitors by the hand, and exhort them to live faithful to the cause he loved, that when they had out-riden the storms of life, they might meet him in the glorious home of the blest in Heaven. His summons came, and our father has gone from us. His voice will nevermore be heard on earth. May the sun of our life set as gloriously as did his.

"Mother Bills, his consort, survived a little over twenty years. She spent about twenty of the last thirty years of her life, for the most part, in visiting the sick and waiting on them. She never spared attention or labor in her ministrations. Few, if any, even of the medical profession, had greater success with disease than she, especially among her own sex. As long as she was able to attend the services of the sanctuary, she was certain to be there, engaging in the worship. A few years before she died she lost her hearing and became nearly helpless. She was no longer to be seen at the house of God, in the service of which she had so great a delight.

"Often would she speak of the sick, talk of their sufferings, and tell how the Lord had blessed her labors in relieving them.

"Worn out with age and service, she passed away on the 9th of March of the present year, (1883) at the home of her son, L. P. Bills, aged eighty-nine years, ten months, and fifteen days.

"Brothers and sisters, Mother has gone to join Father in the Heavenly City. Soon, yes, very soon, we shall be called away. Let us live devoted to Christ till we go. G. W. B. Cane Creek Church, Tenn. "

In 1845 a suggestion was made by a brother O. D. Williams, through the Christian Review, that a canvass of the state be made for the purpose of obtaining statistics of

the churches, when they were established, etc.. This was warmly endorsed by the editor, Bro. Fanning, and after considerable discussion as to how and when, we find that, "Our very highly esteemed brother, Albert G. Branham, of Sumner County, has gained his consent to visit the churches of Tennessee (sic), for the purpose of learning their spiritual condition, and collecting statistics. " The following quotations are culled from Bro. Branham's reports to the Review of "News from the Churches," in the years 1845 and 1846. They are given as being brief histories of some of the older congregations, established in the state in the early days of the reformation. The reports of those of later date are omitted.

"The church at Rutland's Meetinghouse, Wilson County, separated from the Baptist Church at this place, in June, 1832, by laying aside their abstract of principles, and agreeing to be governed by the Bible alone, the Baptists still holding an equal share in the house. Since this time they have met monthly, according to the Baptist custom, to attend on the preaching of their elder, Ed. Sweat. They have also advanced so far as to break bread monthly instead of trimonthly. "" "" On Lord's day, after singing and prayer, usually by the elder, they hear a discourse from him, break bread, and retire. They give no special sum to the spread of the gospel. They are somewhat scattered, but none would have to ride over five miles to meet, which would be a small task, if their souls longed and panted after the tabernacles of the Lord. "

"The church at Bethlehem (Wilson (?) County) has been organized for about thirty years. "That would go back to about 1815. J.W.G.) [Father Stone](#) used to preach at this place. It has not been till within a year past that they have met weekly, to attend to the ordinances. Their previous order was to meet monthly to hear preaching, and even now there are some who doubt whether they are commanded to meet weekly, and some meet but do not break bread. Bro. Warren usually preaches on Lord's day. A few, perhaps five or six, worship in their families. Beside the weekly contribution, they have given Bro. Trott Seventy-five Dollars yearly, for two years, allowing him to preach where he thinks best. "

"The church at Liberty, Jackson County, was organized about twenty years ago (1825) by Bro. [Jno. Mulkey](#). They meet twice a month, and break bread once a month, though this has been neglected for three months past. On Lord's day a discourse is delivered, usually by Bro. Lawson, one of the elders. There are generally about forty present. No weekly contribution, nor any special sum given to evangelists. "

"The church at Smyrna has been planted about fifteen years. They meet twice a month to hear a discourse from one of the elders, and to break bread, though this last is often neglected. John Harris has been set apart by this church as an evangelist, and has some monthly appointments. "

"The church at Talley's Old Field was planted about fourteen years ago. Erasmus Gaw preaches for them monthly, and they break bread twice a year. During the summer a few had occasional meetings for exhortation and worship.

"The church at Berea, Marshall County, was organized in 1828 by Bro. [J. K. Speer](#). Their order on Lord's day is, after singing and prayer to hear a discourse from some one of their teachers, commonly on first principles, but occasionally on Christian duties; then breaking bread, and a few attend to the weekly contribution. For a few months previous to my visit some five or six had met on Thursday nights to read the epistles for the purpose of finding and numbering those commands which are now binding on the disciples. They all took the same portion of Scripture, that what was overlooked by one might be noted by another; and thus each could get a complete list of apostolic precepts."

"The church at Cedar Creek, Marshall County, was organized in June, 1831, and in eight or nine years numbered one hundred members. For the last ten years they have met to attend to the ordinances, and in 1844 they built a new house; but they have somewhat neglected to furnish it with comfortable seats, etc. Their order of worship is, after singing and prayer, to read several portions of the New Testament, then to break bread and contribute. Some two or three take part in the reading and public prayer, and one of the elders exhorts occasionally. They give no specified sum to any evangelist, as some are opposed to any contribution whatever, and argue that there is no need for the evangelists' office at the present day."

"The church at Lewisburg, Marshall County, was organized eight years ago. (1837). They meet once a month, as they have no place which they consider suitable to meet in but the court-house; and they are obliged to divide the time in that with the other denominations. On Lord's-day, after singing and prayer they hear a discourse from Bro. Hopwood or one of their elders, then break bread and contribute to pay the expenses of the congregation. They expect to build a house of worship this summer, (1846) and then to meet weekly."

"The church at Wilson Hill, on Globe Creek, Marshall County, was organized about thirty years ago (1816). They meet monthly, but do not think it necessary to break the loaf more than three or four times a year. No regular contribution for any purpose. They have two days meeting once a month, when they are attended by Bro. Barrett or Bro. McChord. But few attend the meetings on Saturday, but a majority on Lord's-day."

The church at Liberty, Marshall County, was separated from the Richland Association of United Baptists, in 1823, for communing with brethren who were called Christians, and assisting to set apart a deacon in that church. Their number was then 126. They continued to meet monthly till 1839, when they commenced meeting twice a month; and for the last three months they have met weekly unless there was some other meeting in the neighborhood. They have numbered as many as 450, but lately two

churches have been constituted from this. They break bread and contribute whenever they meet. The elders conduct the worship when no preacher is present. About fifty usually attend the weekly meetings. The blacks are particularly faithful in this respect."

Next following the above (and a large quantity more of the same kind, concerning congregations organized later, for only the accounts of the early congregations are copied here) comes an editorial from Bro. Fanning in the Review, which is copied in full. It is from the April number of 1846.

"NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES."

"Quite a contrariety of opinion exists in the minds of the brethren in reference to Bro. Branham's reports; but for the present I will trouble the reader with but two extracts of letters. [Bro. Jacob Creath](#), of St. Louis, says:--

'I am particularly interested in the statistical accounts of Bro. Branham. It is disagreeable to have our faults exposed to men--to the world, but it is worse for God to know them.'

Now look upon this picture:--

'Bro. Fanning, --Dear Sir, --Members of the church here, hearing that Bro. Branham has recently been in this section on his census and censorial tour, request me to forbid the appearance in the Review of any notes or notices of the congregation. I am a member of the church, and it is under my ministerial care, --I, therefore, in the name of the church, interdict the publication of Bro. Branham's reports on this congregation. Yours

"It will be seen, at first glance, that is (sic) utterly impossible for me to please all, -- even if I were disposed to attempt it. Bro. Branham's report came too late for this number, and as it may be of some service to all concerned, I will make a remark or two on the subject. Knowing Bro. Branham to be one of the most devoted and intelligent men of the land, I am certain he has nothing but the promotion of the Master's cause in view. That his reports are, in the main, true, I entertain as little doubt. That they are for the best, I am well assured; but at the same time I am as fully satisfied the brethren have been flattered and puffed till they are generally incapable of bearing them.

"It is possible Bro. Branham is a little melancholy in style, and perhaps the shading is a little too dark; but the body of the work is good. To me, it is mournful to think that these reports are 'interdicted' by the 'authorities that be', when no one has asserted

that they are false. I give it as my sincere opinion that they came nearer stating matters as they really exist than any documents before the public. They show us what is lacking, and afford such information as would enable teachers to labor to the greatest profit. If these papers are, however, to be condemned to the flames, I should be pleased to know it. I doubt more and more whether there are many able to contemplate their true position before God. While I rejoice that we have learned and done much to restore primitive Christianity, I am compelled to bitterly lament that we yet lack a great deal to make us perfect. T.F. "

It is to be regretted that "these papers" were "to be condemned to the flames," but the presumption is that they were; for no more of them appear in the Review after the above editorial. And thus the rich store of information that might have been furnished in regard to the early congregations of the state, had an untimely end before much of it materialized at all. But in lieu of the suppressed history of the other congregations of the state that would have been written by Bro. Branham and published in the Review by [Bro. Fanning](#), I here present a most interesting sketch of those early times, men, and congregations, written by one who remembers well back into those times himself, and who from his rearing, habits of life, and parentage, is eminently fitted to write and print notes on that interesting period. His father has already been mentioned as one of the earlier pioneers, and so heroic was his work that he came to be known as The Old War-horse. Isaac N. Jones is a son of Elder Rees Jones. He has been a preacher and teacher of note, and is spending his sunset years at Manchester Tenn. He is well along in the seventies, but retains a vigorous recollection of early times. So well is his sketch liked, that it is here presented entire, with only a few insignificant changes in punctuation and verbiage. It repeats some of the facts stated in the preceding pages, and also gives expression to some of the same thoughts in regard to the rise of the religious revolution with which it deals; but those facts are, and thoughts should be, common property to the church; and so a few repetitions will probably not be objectionable.

THE REFORMATION IN TENNESSEE.

By
Isaac N. Jones.

He who would properly understand the movement in Tennessee called "The Reformation" must bear in mind that the powerful blows of Luther, Calvin, and others had broken the chains that for centuries had bound both state and church to the car (sic) of the all-conquering, all-crushing Juggernaut, --Rome: that many, rejoicing to be freed from the blighting, blinding influences of the "Mother," had set in operation organizations of their own binding their members to inexorable creeds, thus unwittingly

becoming daughters to "her that sitteth upon many waters:"--that the chains of these were as galling as the other had been; especially to men of thought, who saw the lewdness of these daughters in marrying the church to kings, thereby becoming national churches:--that hence church after church was established, each, while freeing its subjects from the tyarnny (sic) of others, binding them to a Procrustean (sic) bedstead, thus securing uniform length, if not uniform piety:--that these innovations had gone on till the churches numbered a thousand or more, each in its way and degree both prescriptive and proscriptive:--that during the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth this restless and inquiring spirit began to cry for freedom, -- freedom to read God's word and interpret it each for himself, and to practice its precepts without let or proscription; that here and there; both in America and in England men were beginning to cry for that freedom (sic) which the belief of The Truth should produce:--that in Tennessee the movement to secure this freedom began somewhere in the "teens" of the present century.

BASIS OF THE MOVEMENT.

"We will throw away all creeds, confessions of faith, disciplines, and abstracts of principles, and take the word of God alone as our rule of faith and practice; what God, through it, commands, we will do, and what he prohibits, we will let alone." As a corollary to this, they said: "If God commands anything, the reasons for which we do not understand, nevertheless we will obey, and leave consequences with him." As a matter of course, thus suddenly freed from the isms of the day, they were much like the blind man of Bethsaida when only partially restored; they "saw men as trees walking," but they soon learned that James (1:25) told the truth when he said, "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." Many vexatious questions were put to, or rather, many questions were vexatiously (sic) pressed upon, the unlettered masses; but often a question, a "thus saith the Lord, stopped the gainsayer's mouth, and strengthened the "feeble knees." The questions of "Election and Reprobation," the "Final Perseverance of the Saints," "The Trinity," "The Sonship of Christ," "The Influence of the Holy Spirit," "Baptism," in its various phases, etc. , etc. , early engrossed the attention of the people; but perhaps none was more perplexing nor interesting than that of "The Name." Prior to the appearance of A. Campbell among the advocates of "Reform," because a more offensive epithet could not be found, we were called Schismatics. Those who called us by this name argued that we were entitled to it because we caused division among the churches. They could not see that the Bible alone furnishes a basis on which all can stand; and which, if adopted, would be an answer to Christ's prayer (John 17:20), "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

THE NAME.

While enemies were thus calling opprobrious and ugly names, there was a sharp contest in different parts of the United States over the name; some contending for "Disciples," or "Disciples of Christ," others for the name "Christian. In Kentucky and further north the majority seemed to favor "Disciples," while in Tennessee the preference seemed to be for "Christians."

But among these some are found who, while they will tolerate the phrase, "the Church of Christ at Manchester," would throw up hands of holy horror at the expression, "the Christian Church at Manchester." (The strictly scriptural expression would be "the Church of God at Manchester. J. W. G.)

LOCAL ITEMS.

Sometime in the "teens" a brother whose name I am not quite sure of, (I think it was Matthews), a Bro. Hall, (the father of Nathan and William Hall, once of Murfreesboro), and Daniel Travis, all of Rutherford County; Andrew P. Davis and [W. D. Carnes](#), of Warren County; and Corder Stone and a Bro. Murphy, or Murphee, of White County, were pioneers in the reformation in Middle Tennessee. There may have been other preachers in that section also, but if so, they have passed from my memory, as I know only what I learned from my parents and others. Nor must it be understood that these were all of the same age, either in a natural or a gospel sense. (Hereafter I shall give a more comprehensive view of what I have here outlined.) For a time (I can tell neither when nor how long) Daniel Travis, having Andrew P. Davis for his Timothy, preached at the house of Isaac Jones (my grand-father), on or near Charles' Creek, three or four miles north of McMinnville, the county-site of Warren County. Daniel Travis baptized my father and mother before they were married. Many others, among them my grand-mother and others of her children, were also baptized into Christ in obedience to his command, and stood upon the basis heretofore given. In after years, when questioned as to why they were baptized, they replied: "To fulfill all righteousness," as Christ said to John the Baptist. And although many had no clear conception of the design of baptism, yet they said that Christ had said: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father," etc; and again, "He that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them," shall be blessed; and again, "G. . . preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." So they said, "Although we do not know what is meant by the phrase, 'shall be saved,' yet we have unbounded faith that as long as we in faith obey him, he is able to save them to the uttermost who come to God by him; hence as we have faithfully obeyed, he is faithful to perform all he has promised." This reasoning they early reached, although they had never thought of applying Acts 2:38 to baptism. This would be surprising did we not remember the

blinding influence of preconceived opinions, and the difficulty of breaking off and taking on new habits. This is illustrated by the continuance for several years of the customs of praying for mourners, shouting and clapping of hands (chiefly among the ladies), and the telling of experiences as to how the Holy Spirit brought them from death into life, etc. Especially in East Tennessee were many affected by that whirlwind of excitement called "The Jerks." The writer has seen more than a dozen under its influence at the same time. By degrees, however, these all passed away, and people began to do things "decently and in order." If space permits, some anecdotes may be given to illustrate the early labors of the Reformation.

LOCAL ITEMS, CONTINUED

Born in 1822, I could know nothing of events in the preceding age, nor in the subsequent years, for some time, except as learned from my father and other friends, after I had arrived at an observing age; but having heard the matters so often described, the events have almost the vividness of actual observation.

"In about 1826 my father and uncle William Jones moved to McMinn County and located a wool-carding machine on Spring Creek. Here they heard of a man, perhaps from Kentucky, preaching a strange doctrine in a county or two east of McMinn. My father, being the principal carder, requested Uncle William to go and learn what the new doctrine was. On his return he showed how the man had used Acts 2:38 to prove that baptism is for the remission of past sins. The reasoning was so clear, and in such harmony with what they had tried to teach, viz: "Salvation of some sort is connected in some way with baptism, or Christ would not have said (Mark 16:16) 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,'" that they at once went to preaching it, strange as it sounded to others. Many were the hard-fought battles necessary to get the brethren to see the simple teachings of God's word, and to break loose from the doctrine of abstract operations of the Spirit in converting the sinner; and to see that shoutings, swoonings, laughing, barking like dogs, the jerks, etc., etc., were not miraculous influences of the Spirit, but the wonderful magnetic influences of some men, aided by the surroundings.

After several years toiling in trying to preach, they were both regularly ordained to preach the gospel by the Meadow Fork Congregation in 1833. In 1836, at the age of fourteen, I was baptized into Christ, having learned from my father what he had learned from Daniel Travis and others. And as he had joined "The Reformation" seven to ten years before he had ever even heard of A. Campbell, and at least seven years before A. Campbell himself, in 1827 or 1828, became a reformer holding the platform heretofore mentioned, it is evident that neither I nor those described in Middle and East

Tennessee are entitled to the name Campbellite. In fact, this movement occurred while Bro. Campbell was yet with the Presbyterians and Baptists.

When my father and uncle went to East Tennessee, they found workers already there. Among these, John and Philip Mulkey, and Elihu and Randolph, were in lower East Tennessee, and James Miller and a Bro. Dodge, a bell maker, and perhaps others whose names have slipped my memory, in upper East Tennessee. Soon, by immigration, or by what may be called natural growth, McMinn County became a centre of activity and growth. Among the younger preachers, (I refer to age in preaching, not to natural life) were found Isaac Mulkey, William Slaughter, Jacob Johnson, William Brown, Duke Ruble, and others lost to my memory (sic). These were all poor men, (some having no homes of their own) having but little education, but possessing a vast amount of zeal and energy. They lost no opportunity to preach, whether in private houses, the few scattering church-houses, or the big camp-meetings which were common in those days. Indeed it may be laid down as a truth as applicable today as then, that the less the ability the greater the desire to preach.

But it was no holiday job to preach then. Besides going mainly at his own expense, the preacher suffered losses at home, persecution both at home and abroad, and was often traduced personally; besides having to bear the odium attached to the cause itself. "You are Schismatics"; "You deny the Divinity of Christ"; "You deny the operations of the Holy Ghost"; "You deny heart-felt religion," etc. , etc. , were some of the charges hurled at them. But in process of time A. Campbell took the same ground that brethren of Middle and East Tennessee had held for some years before they ever heard of him, and now it is Campbellite, Campbellite, Campbellite! "You are following Campbell," was hurled at them, although many of them were in the "Reformation" years before Bro. Campbell joined the movement in 1827 or 8! This reminds me of a great divine who said of John the Baptist, "And he was a Christian," as though the fore-runner could be a follower.

In those days the opposition was bold, fierce, bitter; and like the Jews in rebuilding their city, our preachers had to carry the sword in one hand, and build with the other. Hence the sermons were usually a mixture of argument, refutation, education, and exhortation. Having large combativeness and conscientiousness, my father and uncle won the title of warriors or fighters.

SOME MISTAKES.

Led by contracted views, the church of Spring Creek, one of the strongest in that region, arraigned one of our ablest preachers, Isaac Mulkey, for joining the Masonic Order, and compelled him to withdraw there from. This preacher left the state, and

became famous in Kentucky and the Northwest. Another mistake was with a new-comer against an old and tried preacher on a question of veracity, and forcing him to appeal to court records for justification; and though the records sustained the old preacher, thus the cause went down.

James Miller, Dodge, and others, though firm in the faith, could only partially revolutionize the upper counties of East Tennessee. As an illustration of the ease with which some men seize hold of new ideas, and of the bitter hatred of others toward all innovations, I narrate the following incident. Bro. Dodge, a bold thinker as well as a skilled workman in his line, had adopted Sam Thompson's theory of medicine, as well as the new theory of the Bible. An unknown poet of his neighborhood perpetrated the following:--

"Against old Dodge we're bound to lodge A heavy accusation;
He clinks the bell that tolls to hell Sad victims of damnation."

This finely illustrates the bitterness of the persecution of that day. Nearer home, this was found on a tree at the forks of the road:--

"Twenty dollars reward for any man or set of men that will whip old John Mulkey and Rees Jones." Often have I seen my mother, when my father was late getting home, wipe the tears from her eyes with her apron, while asking me, "Will your pa ever get home alive?" Let not the young of today doubt the truth of these things. I have many more such incidents to be given when necessary.

THE MOURNER'S BENCH.

Before leaving East Tennessee, allow a brief history of the fight over the mourning-bench, and the custom of praying for mourners. When I was eleven or twelve years old some of the brethren, names now forgotten, had a night meeting in my father's house, and called up near a dozen mourners; singing, praying, and exhorting them after the most approved style. Standing on a bench behind the older persons gathered around the mourners, and looking over their heads, I had been looking on with much interest at the good work, as I supposed, till I began to think seriously of taking a part with the mourners.

Suddenly the question, "Where is Father?" rang in my ears as if uttered by some voice. Looking among those taking an active part in the work, I found him not. Further search found him in that part of the house farthest from the excitement, with his elbows upon

his knees and his face hid in both hands as though in deepest thought. Stepping away and into a darkened corner, I looked first at the crowd and then at my father, and wondered what could be wrong. I consoled myself with the thought, "I'll find out tomorrow."

When tomorrow came, my father's customers (sic) (he was a blacksmith) came also. Bro. A. threw down his plow, B. his axe, C. his hoe, D. his chain, etc. , etc. , (not all at once, but as each came) each giving directions as to the work; "And now I want to know," said each of them, "what you meant by your conduct last night." Explanations were given, and the war commenced, more bitter if possible than outside persecution. A few years showed that Paul's injunctions, "Let speaking be done by turns, one at a time," and, "Let all things be done decently and in order," triumphed over the mourner's-bench, the jerks, shoutings, and all other disorders.

HELP FROM KENTUCKY.

It must be remembered that after this time [W. D. Carnes](#), now of Sequatchie Valley, [Tolbert Fanning](#), Levi Nichols, and W. D. Jordan, of Middle Tennessee, with a great many preachers from Kentucky, visited this region and added much to the struggling cause. But with many of these came innovations which to say the least were of doubtful propriety. New styles and new formalities were introduced. Even in the administration of the Lord's supper changes were made that grated harshly upon the feelings of the brotherhood. It had been the custom for the administrator to kneel at table while offering thanks, the congregation either sitting or kneeling. But Kentucky said stand, we have stood till now; it would be sacriligious (sic) to do otherwise! How peculiar is man! Having spent sixteen years in East Tennessee, we returned to Middle Tennessee to resume the work begun there.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE, AGAIN.

We have already given the leaders in The Reformation, so far as time is concerned, but now we have other names to introduce; and that the reader may the more clearly comprehend the field, we shall name as many as we can in groups, or shoals (to use a fisherman's phrase), remembering that the groups intermingle in such manner as to make a grand army, each of whose individual term of enlistment commences and ends with his preaching career.

FIRST GROUP

[Daniel Travis](#), Hall, Matthews, [Murphee](#), and Corder Stone.

SECOND GROUP

[Tolbert Fanning](#), [W. D. Carnes](#), Levi Nichols, Andrew P. Davis, Rees Jones, and William Jones.

THIRD GROUP

[J. J. Trott](#), [Calvin Curlee](#), [Jesse Sewell](#), [Nix Murphee](#), [David Lipscomb](#) and his brother, John D. Eichbaum, C. McQuiddy, [T. W. Brents](#), C. A. Darnall, Philip S. Fall, and S. E. Jones (the last two coming from Kentucky), etc. , etc. Other groups might be formed, had I the information; others must take up the work, and fill up the gaps, and continue the roll.

UNCLASSIFIED NAMES.

[J. M. Kidwill](#), W. T. Kidwill, [E. G. Sewell](#) and brothers, Aaron Seitz, W. H. Hooker, Tillman Cantrell, George Stroude, Joseph and David Ramsay, Isaac Jones (my father's brother), Wiley B. Huddleston, G. W. Cone, Berry W. White, McDonald, Willis Hopwood, Thacker Griffin, J. R. Collingsworth, John Wooten (Hooten), [John D. Floyd](#), [Joshua K. Speer](#) and sons, Goodloe, John R. Howard, Holmes, Hardison, [Sowell](#), Stubblefield, Denton, S. N. Burger, J. K. P. Wilkerson, Polk, Sims, etc. , etc. For a list of modern preachers the reader is referred to the pages of the Gospel Advocate and the rolls of Mars Hill, Bible School, and Kimberlin Heights.

QUESTIONS MOOTED.

In the earlier years of the Reformation many questions were discussed, such as, "Election and Reprobation," "Final Perseverance of the Saints," etc. The brethren early learned that every man for himself made his "calling and election sure," by "holding fast the form of sound words," and walking "circumspectly," abounding in the Christian graces, which if one does, he "shall never fall."

DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

Though often charged with the denial of Christ's divinity, it was never a true charge. God being divine (that is, Godlike), his son must be divine, inheriting, as Paul says, "a

more excellent name" than the angels. His character, too, proved him divine. The doctrine of the Trinity, which may be termed mystery mystified, figured largely for many years, both in the pulpit and in private circles. Nor can it be said that there is now a unity of sentiment among the brethren concerning it. It is understood that A. Campbell died a Trinitarian. Many thought that if we were not Trinitarians we were Unitarians, and so charged; but this charge was repelled by showing that Christ is called God. "For by inheritance he hath obtained a more excellent name (God) than they" (the angels); for unto none of them was it ever said, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." Hence, while the prophet has said, "Unto us a child is born, a son is given.:' His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor (sic), the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age (or church), and the Prince of Peace, " yet all could not say with the Trinitarian, "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, each very and eternal God, and yet only one God;" for Christ said, "My father is greater than I.

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The question of the Trinity having gradually retired from the public gaze, the personality of the Holy Spirit began in later years to attract attention. Rees Jones, an illiterate blacksmith, for long years had opposed the personality feature. It was reserved for [T. W. Brents](#) to draw the artillery fire of the Lexington (Kentucky) University, while an enfilading crossfire poured in from a Texas college. A few solid shots from "Long Tom," called plain reasoning, accompanied by a little Greek fire, soon silenced both batteries, and forced the "Ajax" of a Tennessee paper to say to Bro. Brents, "You've got 'em on the Greek."

In their great zeal to make a thorough reform, many thought to restore the old Jerusalem method of having all things common,¹⁴ as though the needs of the nineteenth century were the same as in the first years of the church. Let lost money and bitter heart-burnings record the folly of this experiment. Yet some of our best men and preachers went into it.

SPIRITUALISM ETC.

Ambitions and restless spirits are ever seeking innovations. Spiritualism and Free Love tried their powers in Tennessee. While many small stars were obscured for a time, a star of the first magnitude, at that time, was blotted out, never to shine again. (Reference is probably here made to the illustrious Jesse B. Ferguson, who went into Spiritualism, and gave up the church.) Temperance societies of all kinds, secret societies, Christian Endeavor, Leagues, Woman's Rights societies, etc. , all came in for their share of turmoil and confusion. Rivalry between schools, and between men

ambitious to be presidents of colleges; rivalry between editors of periodicals; and, last but not least, missionary and anti-missionary animosities, came in to mar and divide the church of God.

It is remarkable that a want of a clear comprehension of the reformation platform, given on another page, brought about the long controversy between the Gospel Advocate and the Firm Foundation about re-baptism. Our fathers said, "What God, through Jesus and his apostles has commanded, we will do, as Christ said to John to Baptist, 'to fulfill all righteousness.' " Christ said: "Go preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (from past sins). Then we have it in a nutshell. He that is baptized believing in Christ, in order to obey Christ, has the promise of pardon, --has put on Christ, has been buried into Christ that he might walk in a new life; while he who is baptized to get into a church, some church set up by man, and to obey man, has not been baptized into Christ, and has therefore no promise of pardon by such action.

CHANGES.

Times and manners change. In the early years of the Reformation, men and preachers (let not the reader conclude that preachers are not men, for they are, and sometimes very inferior men, at that) were social, often met in numbers to mingle with and learn of one another. At big meetings, and especially at camp-meetings, it was usual to see ten to fifteen preachers, small and great, in attendance, all anxious to learn and willing to communicate knowledge. Usually each traveling preacher, if old and experienced, had his Timothy whom he taught and trained in the holy work. In all those days toil and compensation (the latter, however, was usually small) were proportionately divided. Now, how changed! By degrees it dawned upon the minds of preachers, "If I do all the work, it will show to men that I am a great man; but especially as I do all the work, I shall be entitled to all the hay. " It is amusing to see how cunningly movements are made to this end. A, a big preacher, sends an appointment, or is called for a protracted meeting, beginning on Saturday. Two or three small preachers, strangers, come in to hear the new man. To cut off all chance of dividing work, Bro. A announces at the close of the morning service, "Tonight I will discuss faith; Sunday morning, repentance; Sunday night, baptism; Monday morning, setting up the Kingdom; Monday night, Saul's conversion; etc. , etc. Sunday morning a large concourse assembles. A makes himself agreeable to all the sisters, especially the wealthy. (If you want to know how he found who were rich and who poor, go ask the preacher.) The hour for work arrives. A says, "Brethren, sing another song," and goes into the stand. While the song is being sung, he takes the Bible from the stand and marks his first and second lessons, and then takes the hymn-book and selects the two or three songs to be sung (unless this is left to the choir), and lays it by the side of the Bible. As there is one verse more to be sung, he calmly takes his seat and surveys the crowd. Suddenly he discovers Bro. B, a

preacher, and beckons to him to come upon the stand, and gives him a chair. Then, with how much sincerity, B knows, he blandly says: "I wish you would preach for me today." B knows his duty, and says, "Oh! no; I came to hear you." A urgently insists, and then says: "Well, then, please open the meeting for me." B complies, and prays that our sins may be blotted out, and that each may learn to speak the truth with his neighbor. Soon the visiting preachers have business away, or an appointment to fill elsewhere. Thus A is left alone in his glory, and like Selkirk can exclaim:

"I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute;
From the center all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute."
--William Cowper

Common civilities are often outraged, especially if an old man happens in at an appointment of a stripling undergoing the process of manufacture at one of our preacher-making schools. Very affably the youngster approaches the old preacher sitting back some distance in the rear of the brethren, and says: "I am glad (?) to see you. Are all well at home? How are you getting along?" etc. All questions being answered, he very condescendingly remarks, "Well, Sir, just sit where you please." Of course the old man is thankful for this privilege, in a house where the pews are all free!

ANOTHER CONTRAST.

Early in the Reformation the officers of the congregation, after proof, were regularly "ordained," and disorderly members were admonished, and when found incorrigible, withdrawn from. Now every man who thinks he is smart enough (and the exceptions are few) preaches, officers are appointed by an itinerant without consulting the brethren, or after a little private juggling of the leading members, with the announcement, "I do not believe in ordination, and could not lay hands on anyone, because hands have not been laid on me!" What a change!

I shall not allude to periodicals, their (sic) tone, management, and influence. I leave this field to others, and turn to the description of a few characters that perhaps few in Tennessee know anything about. I shall try to bring their history to a point where the middle-aged may pick up the narrative, and bring it down to the present time.

DANIEL TRAVIS.

Was an old man when he went into the Reformation. Whether he came from some other church I know not. He was described to me as a bold reasoner (sic), a fluent talker, and a warm exhorter. He cared more for practical morality than for theoretic theology. He was popular as a man, and made strong attachments. While I of course never knew him, I have known some of his children and grand-children. His principal field of labor was what is now known as Rutherford, Cannon, and Warren Counties.

ANDREW P. DAVIS

Was especially trained for the ministry, by [Daniel Travis](#). Born in Warren County, of a family possessing strong minds with large combativeness, he early espoused the cause of the Bible, and never tired of fighting the errors of Babylon. Yet he could be pathetic and persuasive, but argumentation was his particular forte. Some years before his death I urged him to attempt a history of the Reformation in Tennessee, but he failed to respond. Like a full ripe sheaf, somewhere in the West, he fell before the great reaper, death. His fields of labor were Tennessee, Alabama, and the West. Incident. I remember (sic) that he was at my father's house, in McMinn County, on the night of the great meteoric shower of 1833.

HALL AND OTHERS.

Of Hall, and others of Rutherford County, and of Murphee and Corder Stone, of White County, the historians of those counties must write; I have not the data.

TOLBERT FANNING.

Of Bro. Fanning when young, I learned that before I was old enough to remember, he and Levi Nichol, both young men, spent some time with my father in East Tennessee. Wishing my father to go with them to a Saturday's appointment, Bro. Fanning helped to plant a small piece of corn before going to preaching. Bro. Fanning was not above work, nor above wearing a coat with a hole in the elbow. I suppose he had not then learned "to preach right, "as afterwards he often said soothingly (?) to those who complained of poor compensation, "You don't preach right, or you would want for nothing." He was a bold thinker, slightly tinged with speculative views, and of a pugnacious disposition that would cause him to die in the last ditch if necessary. Of his college and editorial work his biographer must tell. He had some peculiar views about the church being the only religious society, educational society, benevolent society, etc. , and held that a Christian could not consistently vote, hold office, or serve as a juror under civil government. And while his views were adopted by his editorial successor and

a few brethren, a large and respectable number never could clearly see that they were sustained by Holy Writ. Hence many today are office-holders, and vote and serve as jurors when the occasion demands.

WM. D. JORDAN AND LEVI NICHOLS,

Two promising and sprightly young men, passed from my view before I was able to judge for myself of their peculiar traits as preachers, though I distinctly remember hearing them preach in East Tennessee. What became of them I know not. Phoebe Nichols, a sister of Levi, died only a few years ago in Marshall County, I believe at the home of Bro. Dr. John Cowden, where she had made her home for several years.

THE MULKEYS.

John and Philip Mulkey were brothers, and, as I understand it, came from the Baptists into the Reformation. I have no recollection of ever having seen Philip or any of his family; but I lived for some time within one mile of John, and knew the whole family well during those years. "[Old John Mulkey](#)", as he was then called, was of medium height and slightly corpulent, weighing I suppose, one hundred and eighty to two hundred pounds. He was a graceful horse-back rider, and when I was ten to sixteen years old, he was my beau ideal of a man. Though he was not a rigid logician, his musical voice, aided by ideality, sublimity and an easy flow of language, readily fixed the attention of an audience; and when desirable he could carry away his hearers by a whirl-wind of natural eloquence. These traits were inherited by the whole family.

ISAAC MULKEY,

The oldest son, was a powerful preacher when I first knew him, some time in the early thirties. His life promised a brilliant end; but an untoward act destroyed his usefulness in East Tennessee, and forced him to go, first to Kentucky and then (I think) to Illinois, where he died full of honors, though forgotten in McMinn County. In attempting to obey Christ's command, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations," he joined the masons. This created an uproar in his congregation; and such was the prejudice of his brethren that he was forced (upon a trial in the church) to withdraw from the order. Chagrined, he left the county and the state; and for long years the congregation suffered for their folly.

JONATHAN MULKEY,

The next oldest boy, did not preach when I knew him. He, too, soon went to Kentucky, and there became a strong and useful preacher.

JOHN NEWTON MULKEY

Made his first attempt at preaching in my father's house, a common place for preaching at night, because meeting-houses were few and far between. On these occasions candles were scarce, and glass lamps were unknown but pine-knots were plentiful. Newton soon gave signs of unusual ability, and great usefulness; but the home field was not inviting, so he also went to Kentucky, where he did much good; even to loosening the fetters that bound [Bro. Jesse Sewell](#) and his congregation, and aiding to build them "upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone." It has not been many years since he went to his reward, from a north-western state. Incident. Before he had made himself familiar with the objections brought against the Reformation, a sectarian preacher by permission plied some questions, and soon had the young preacher in trouble, and was exulting over him. My father, who never interfered, in his own house, with any discussion of this kind, was standing by the fire, where he kept the pine-knots blazing, and watching with intense interest the discussion. Finally, to the great relief of the young preacher, the attacking preacher with an air of defiance turned, and pointing to my father, said: "And I demand of Old Rees that he answer my difficulties." The "war-horse," as he was called, took up the gauntlet; and soon the attacking preacher was as sick as he had been bold, and was glad to have the meeting close.

HARLAN MULKEY

The youngest son of "Old John," had just begun to exhort a little before he also went to Kentucky. I learned that he, too, made an acceptable preacher before his death.

NANCY MULKEY

The youngest daughter in this remarkable family, was a shouter, as then called. While the popular style was to shout "Glory Hallelujah," or simply to scream one scream after another, accompanied by violent jerks, jumping up and down, or clapping of hands till exhausted, she would arise with zeal on her countenance and fire in her eyes, and with a pathos that showed the depth of her soul, and would pour forth an exhortation lasting from five to fifteen minutes, which neither father nor brother could equal, and which brought tears from every feeling eye. She was most remarkable in this respect.

THE RANDOLPHS.

Of Elihu, the elder brother, I know but little, except that he was shrewd, and cared a good deal for the things of this life; hence, he did not spend as much time preaching as his brother Robert. Living at some distance from him, I saw and knew but little of his life, habits, and work. From years of intimate acquaintance with

ROBERT RANDOLPH,

I can speak more confidently of him. Possessed of a strong moral sentiment, and fair reasoning powers, with a less worldly turn than many, he devoted much time to preaching, though he and often needed some of the comforts of life; but he usually provided against absolute want. Not being very pugnacious, and possessing large benevolence and veneration, he was especially adapted to the work of building up churches and keeping them in trim. After the Mulkeys left Tennessee he was heard to lament his loneliness in building up, exclaiming: "Rees is a host in himself; he can do the fighting, but I have no one to help build up." While his sermons were plain and didactic, yet when occasion demanded it he could most thoroughly arouse an audience by exhortation. But he was peculiar. In strong excitement he became, as spiritualists would say, in rapport. Then seizing the front edge of the hand-board with hands about two feet apart and gradually raising his voice to a pitch that may be called "stentorian," and with no gesticulation save that of raising his rigid body on his toes and then dropping on his heels at emphatic points, for fifteen minutes he would pour forth a torrent of scripture quotation in exhortatory form, that, like an avalanche, swept everything before him. When done he dropped into his seat exhausted, and limp as a withered leaf. In his old age he left Bradley County for Texas; and thus he passed from my view. Two incidents of his life are worthy of note, from the lessons they teach. In going to an appointment at Post Oak Springs, he had to ferry the Tennessee River. Having no money to pay the ferriage (fifty cents), the ferryman refused to take him over. He then offered a new "bandanna" silk handkerchief that cost him one dollar and twenty-five cents, which was accepted; and thus he got to his appointment. Any sectarian preacher would have been put over free. Upon reflection I think I have already given the other incident, to show how readily old preachers are set aside for newcomers, and that much trouble this arises. So I omit it here.

JAMES MILLER.

Having never seen this man, I can only give his popular estimate. He had giant powers with droll manners that made him almost *sui generis*. [(An)entity or a reality that cannot be included in a wider concept AJ]. With sheer force he coerced objectors, silenced caviling, and exhilarated his friends. That he cared little for formalities, or for the opinions of others, a small incident will show. Being invited by some wealthy

Presbyterians to take dinner, he sat down to a good meal; and after offering thanks, without waiting to be served in style, as was intended, he deliberately stuck his fork into a fritter on a plate near him, and ate it with gusto, biting from its edges as it hung upon his fork.

PHILIP DODGE

Was a natural mechanic, a professional bell-maker. Having large imitative powers, it was said that he could with his voice imitate the tones of any bell. Large wit and mirthfulness made him sometimes almost waggish. Example. A stranger entering into a discussion of his religious views, the following colloquy occurred:-- Stranger. "What do you believe in?" Dodge: "I believe in my bellows." S. "What do you hold to?" D. "I hold to my hammer-handle." S. "What do you call yourself?" D. "Dodge, the devil."

Whether true or false, all agree that this illustrates his character. I saw him once, but did not hear him speak. Doubtless intellectual sparks flew from his texts, as others from his heated metal.

WILLIAM JONES,

My father's oldest brother, did most of his preaching in East Tennessee. He and my father were "ordained", or "licensed", on the same day, at Meadow Fork, in 1833. He was a close reasoner (sic) and a rigid adherent to the Bible and its teaching; and he opposed all distortions and spiritualizing contrary to the clear teaching of scripture. As anecdotes often give character better than the pen, perhaps the following may amuse the reader and illustrate the man. Remember that Rees, William, and Isaac Jones, and Samuel Hand, a brother-in-law of the Joneses, were running a blacksmith--and woodshop in conjunction. Return J. Meigs (afterwards one of the most prominent lawyers of the state), a brilliant young attorney became candidate for delegate to convention to amend the state constitution in 1833. Being zealous in his religion, he spent nearly a whole day at the shop, discussing differences in religion more than state policy. The next day he said to some friends:-- "I was among the Joneses yesterday. Rees put me into the fire, and when at welding heat he laid me on the anvil and he and Bill pounded away on me till Rees got sorry for me, and gave the signal to stop; but Bill kept on pounding with his sledge, and would not stop."

After moving to Missouri my uncle William had a debate of three or four days on baptism. After the debate had closed his opponent said:--"Sir, I have made the best fight I could; I find I am in error, and now I demand baptism of you, that I may walk in a new life." He was baptized, and both went on their way rejoicing. My uncle died soon after "the war."

Returning now to Middle Tennessee again, we must pause in Sequatchie Valley long enough to notice briefly one of its most conspicuous characters,

W. D. CARNES,

Or "Old Pap," as reverently called by his pupils in after years. Born (perhaps) in Warren County, he early settled a few miles from Pikeville, and became both a farmer and a miller, preaching acceptably as occasion offered. When his children numbered some half a dozen, he determined to obtain an education. Accordingly he cut loose from everything, and went to Knoxville University, where he finally graduated, and was at two or three times its president. Space will not permit the giving of his school career; his biographer must do this. His school labors impaired his efficiency as a preacher. At a camp-meeting on Spring Creek in McMinn County, he was recorded among the biggest preachers present. Late in life, being over-reached in a school enterprise, and not being able to reinstate himself, he died, many thought of chagrin; though he was then at a good, ripe old age.

Returning to Middle Tennessee, we shall notice a few more individuals, and then leave the field to other and stronger pens.

J. J. TROTT,

Had long been a Methodist missionary among the Cherokee Indians. It is said that an Indian's criticism of his preaching as compared with the Bible, first set him to thinking. Hence, when he heard a clear Bible sermon, he seized it with avidity. Naturally of a philosophic turn of mind, and for years speaking through an interpreter, he was slow and deliberate, making his propositions "water-tight" and irrefutable. He made few converts; but it was proverbial, of those he did make, "They never waver, nor fall from their faith." Going West, he passed from my view.

TILLMAN CANTRELL.

I first heard Bro. Cantrell in East Tennessee, when he was on a tour. A man of sprightly talents, and something of a phrenologist, he was able to interest an audience on first acquaintance, but could not hold them for a long time. He, too, soon passed from my view, and his later history I do not know.

CALVIN CURLEE,

Was from the Baptists, and a wonderful man before an audience. Small in stature, with a very large and well-balanced brain, he was able with but little education to hold an

audience spell-bound by his clear reasoning, earnest demeanor, and depth of feeling with a spice of chaste humor. His field of labor was mainly in Warren, Cannon and Rutherford Counties.

I have not the time to speak at length of a Bro. Wilks, Aaron Seitz, [Nix Murphy](#), G. W. Cone, and Bros. McDonald, White, Griffin, Hooker, Strand Ramsay, etc. , etc. Moving a little westward we find

WILLIS HOPWOOD

Leading almost the whole of Liberty (Baptist) Church into the Reformation. A man of strong natural powers as well as strong will power, he held his audience as if by a spell almost to do his bidding. It will require a special historian to write up this church and the churches that have sprung from it. In this region

J. R. COLLINGSWORTH

Sprang into view like a meteor, was attracting intense notice, and might have gone to splendid heights of fame but for an inordinate itching for glory, mingled with some craving for money. Expelled from the Lewisburg congregation, he united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and without much solicitation on their part.

C. R. DARNALL.

In this brother we find lovable qualities that endeared him to his brethren, and gave him power to invite attention from outsiders when others failed. Like Bro. Carnes, he obtained an education after several of his children were old enough to go to school, and was running the "Lawrenceburg College," at the time of his death, which occurred in the prime of life.

DR. T. W. BRENTS

Began preaching at about the same time with Bro. Darnall; and being neighbors, they were often together in the pulpit. Having a large brain, well balanced, or rather, large in causality and compassion, aided by full combativeness and destructiveness, he early developed into a debater, whose fame cannot be augmented by my feeble pen. His strong reasoning powers, combined with large firmness, aided the Lewisburg church to resist the cunning machinations of J. R. Collingsworth when he attempted to split the congregation. His writings speak for themselves.

ELDER J. K. SPEER

Though little known to the writer, was well known in Middle Tennessee. Strong in intellect and moral sentiments, he was a pathetic speaker; and having large mirthfulness and wit, he often spiced his sermons so with wit and humor, that he brought the laugh from eyes yet wet with tears. On one occasion at Old Liberty, he was exposing the impropriety of joining in dances, parties, plays, etc. Desiring to touch off picnics too, he exclaimed: "Picnics! Picnics! Well, when I was a boy I used to help my mother pick the geese and ducks, but picking Old Nick is a thing I know but little about."

ELDER JOHN D. FLOYD,

Of Flat Creek, is another of the self-made men. Fair average in intellect, extra large in moral sentiments, and medium in language, ideality, and sublimity, but very large in veneration and benevolence, he makes one feel that he is in the presence of one wholly devoted to the cause of Christianity, and whom no sophistry or outside influence can swerve from the path of rectitude and virtue. Good men love him, evil men respect him."

THE SEWELLS.

Of these well-known preachers I need not speak, but I cannot forbear one incident not published in the life of Jesse Sewell, and which endeared him to me by its simplicity and good sense. I was at Bethlehem, in White County, when he came there first to preach. When he went into the stand, being a stranger to all, the (sic) first thing he did was to read a letter of commendation from his church; then he read his license to preach, and the county clerk's certificate, sealed with the county seal. As he placed these back in his pocket he remarked, "This is my authority for appearing before you;" then picking up his Bible he added: "But this [is] my authority for what I shall say. " Oh! that churches would require this course of all strangers.

DR. SMITH BOWLING,

Was born in such extreme poverty, and surrounded in his boyhood by immorality so debasing, that the thoughtful were wont to ask, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" After years he answered, "Yes!" With little education, but abounding in veneration and benevolence, he turned his attention (sic) first to medicine, and then to teaching Christianity as much as his medical practice would allow. Adopting in each an unpopular theory, --in medicine a "Botanic," in religion, "For the Bible alone, "--it was wonderful to see how an illiterate man, whom his neighbors esteemed as

quite ordinary, gradually arose in influence and power, compelling a recognition in both callings. A stroke of paralysis checked his rising glory, but did not diminish his zeal in the cause of his Master. A non-combatant both in theory and practice, he went among the armies in our late unpleasantness, and, daring in his views, he preached them alike to Federal and Confederate, whenever opportunity offered. He delighted in preaching from Luke 2:14. Having preached this sermon near Bell Buckle, he was reported to the Federals at Murfreesboro as a dangerous man for teaching rebelism. About June, 1862, an officer and a squad of men called on him to arrest and take him to Murfreesboro. Having several very sick patients he begged the officer to allow him to see them, promising that he would then willingly go to answer any charges that might be brought against him. The officer, finding the doctor to be a mason, and being one himself, said: "Upon your own word I permit you to see your patients, and report at Murfreesboro by sun up tomorrow morning. " Having seen all his patients during the night, he rode up to Col. Barne's quarters just as the rays of the sun gilded the eastern horison (sic). On hearing his name Col. Barnes viewed him with rigid scrutiny for some minutes; then relaxing his features he remarked, "Dr. Bowling, you are not the man I expected to see; you are both tired and hungry. " The doctor replied, "I am, and must sleep till breakfast is ready." So spreading his blanket on the ground, he slept till aroused for refreshments. After breakfast the colonel showed him a quiet and comfortable place for another nap, saying that in two hours the whole troop would be called together, and he then must preach the sermon that had caused his arrest. At the appointed time a lively tune by the band aroused him from his sleep. Ascending a pile of boxes, an extemporized pulpit, and calling for the chaplain, he asked for Bible and hymn-book, saying, "Sir, you turn to every place I name, and if I misquote, correct me at once." Would that I could call up the very words he used, and make you see his beaming countenance, and the flashing of his eyes, as he described the appearance of soldiers, officers, and chaplain, and feel the thrill that ran through his bosom as he paraphrased Paul's introduction to King Agrippa. "Now," said he, "as I am accused of preaching 'rebel doctrine,' I take my text, Luke 2:14: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.'" From this, supported by other quotations, he showed the character of Christ and his kingdom, --that his reign was to one of peace, and not of this world. Warming to his subject, he asked all Baptists to stand. A goodly number responded. He then asked all believers in God and Christ to stand up also. Astonished at the great number of religionists in the army, he said: "Now, Soldiers, hear what the great harbinger said to soldiers in his day, (Luke 3:14). 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any man falsely; and be content with your wages.'" After drawing some hints for their conduct as soldiers, he closed with a warm exhortation to all, in which he said that he had never had more freedom in his life; he then turned to Col. Barnes, whose eyes, as well as those of the whole troop, were suffused with tears, and said, "Sir, this is the head and front of my offending," and stepped from the rostrum. Col. Barnes led him to his tent, and by order of Gen. Rouseau sent him home with permit to keep five head of horses, to purchase medicine when needing it, and to practice medicine and preach the gospel whenever he desired. Some weeks after he was to preach to a portion of the same army near Bell Buckle, during which service he baptized about thirty.

But his trials were not yet over. In 1863 he was arrested and carried before Gen. Bragg, at Winchester (or Tullahoma), who turned him over to his chaplain, Bishop Inintard, upon the charge of preaching unionism. "For once," said our brother, "I trembled to go before a man of such fame and erudition as the Bishop. Here again I repeated my sermon on Luke 2:14; not to an army, but to the Bishop alone. The result was a permit to preach without let or hindrance." All honor to a spirit that can run the gauntlet of military despotism, during so cruel a war as cursed our land in that day.

REES JONES

Although specially requested to give a history of my father, I am loth to undertake it; first, because of the partiality I naturally feel; secondly, because those who know neither him nor me may suspect too high a coloring, on account of this love of a father by his son; and thirdly, because, possessed of high moral sentiments and strong combativeness, he was always found where the battle raged fiercest, so that he was often called "hard-hearted," "a fighter," "the war-horse," etc., while in fact he possessed a woman's heart, that always bled for the poor, the sick, the distressed either in body or mind; and like a sympathetic surgeon, while applying the scalpel to the excrescences of sectarianism, he often wept that he must inflict pain to save the benighted.

Often this sympathy would choke his utterance, so that he would stand silent for minutes, till the power of speech should return. Standing on the platform of "The Bible," "The Bible Alone," "What God through his son commands, do, --what he forbids, let alone," "Obey God, and leave the consequences with him," etc. , and being a natural logician (he never studied the science), whenever a new question was proposed, his usual answer was, "To the law and to the testimony; what does the Bible say?" When the Bible answer was found, you might introduce "I think so and so," "Don't you believe?", etc, and pile human authority as high as "Pelion upon Ossa, " and it would have no more effect upon him than wads from a pop-gun upon Gibraltar. Anxious to learn the truth, he grappled with questions of the day as Sampson with the lion, and never rested till the jaws of heresy were torn asunder, and the fangs of the destroyer fully exposed.

THE NAME.

While [Bro. Campbell](#) and others were arguing as to whether the name should be Disciple or Christian, my father took the side of the latter; and he even dared to send an article on the subject to the Harbinger; but like some very liberal papers of today, its editor chose to suppress what was unsavory or unanswerable. Drawing comfort from I Peter, 4:16, he kept up the fight on this line till the day of his death. Nor was he so sensitive that he could not call it the Christian Church as well as "The Church of Christ."

THE TRINITY.

While this question was before the people he often fought it, and often announced, "I will prove that the doctrine of the Trinity as taught in some creeds, is untrue, having the sanction neither of the Scriptures nor of reason."

THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

While our enemies delighted in calling us "Unitarians" because they thought we denied the divinity of Christ, my father took equal delight in repelling the charge, by showing that Christ "had by inheritance a more excellent name (God) than they," the angels. Hence, that as God, his father, is divine, and had owned Jesus as his only begotten son, he must have inherited his divinity as well as his name, God. But that he could not with the creeds say he was equal to God, the Father, when Christ himself had said, "My Father is greater than I."

PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

He early made issue here, for in exposing the doctrine of the Trinity he early saw that the essential attributes of a person were wanting in the Spirit. Not being a scholar, the field was left to [Bro. Brents](#), who in later days exposed the absurdity of the doctrine, as here-to-fore shown.

HEART-FELT RELIGION,

Was an exciting question. It was frequently charged, "You do not believe in heart-felt religion, but simply in "do religion. " It was not hard to refute this charge, but it was hard to get an unwilling people to see it. Lower East Tennessee was his field of labor for about sixteen years, that period in the Reformation most noted for bitter persecution, and during which time the smoke of Babylon hung like a pall over the church, and blinded the eyes of many good people, so that they could not see how to obey the command, "Come out of her, my people, and partake not of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues."

It was during this period, while trying to free the church of shouting, the jerks, mourners-bench experiences, etc. , that he suffered a persecution, more galling to him, because coming from his own brethren, than all persecutions from the sectarian world; though often this ran so high that vile personal abuse was heaped upon him, sticks were shaken over his head, rewards were offered for his lynching, and he was threatened with the law, etc., etc. Often have I seen my mother sit watching the supper she was trying to keep warm for him on his return from a tour. If belated, as he sometimes was, with tears running down her cheeks she would now and then say to

me, "I wonder if your pa will ever get home alive." Boy as I was I could only weep and say, "If he does not, then he will be among the martyrs that cry from under the altar." So prompt was he to come at the appointed time, that when he found his horse and himself almost exhausted he would lie down at the root of a tree, sleep and let his horse rest an hour or more, then mount and arrive at home at midnight or even later. In telling a personal friend of the trials and dangers through which he was passing, that friend, a strong Methodist, replied: "Mr. Jones, your unimpeachable moral character is all that saves you." For several years he "mustered and worked roads, " or paid his fines if absent on a preaching tour. At length the church woke up to this hardship and licensed him to preach, which under the law freed him from military and road service; but nobody thought of refunding to him his fines, the penalty for serving the church.

Though strongly disgusted with the "hireling system," he often urged his congregation to support some other man, while he went at his own charges.

On two occasions, one in Middle Tennessee, he and his family subscribed and paid fifteen dollars out of forty-five subscribed by the congregation; this, too, while devoting his whole time to the work. The reader will not be surprised when told that six times he was forced to abandon the field and go into the blacksmith shop, and work himself out of debt.

THE LICENSE.

In these days when men plant themselves upon the theory that "what you cannot give a precept or example for must not be done," (and yet these same men, upon a false assumption, have set aside both precept and example for the laying on of hands, and have ceased to practice it): it may be of some interest to the young to see a copy of my father's license to preach, given him in 1833.

"This is to certify all whom it may concern that by the request of the Church of Christ convened at the meadow fork of Eastanullee creek, McMinn County, Tennessee Rees Jones was set apart to the ministry of the Gospel and its ordinances by prayer and the imposition of the hands of Robert Randolph and Isaac Mulkey, Elders in the Church of Christ. Aug. 16th, 1833.

Signed by order of the Church Wm. Slaughter, Wm. A. Brown." Randolph and Mulkey were elders in other congregations, while Slaughter and Brown were elders in Meadow Fork Church. While they omit "fasting" in the certificate, I distinctly remember that the church assembled fasting.

HIRELING PREACHERS.

Of this class of preachers my father had utter contempt, yet he often aided the brethren in their spasmodic efforts to systematize the support of preachers. On one occasion there was a wondrous effort to evangelize the state by sending out "ten evangelists" over the state. They had not yet learned the phrases, "Home Missions," "Foreign Missions," "Negro Missions," "Aid Societies," "Children's Day," "Business in Christianity," etc., etc., etc., (Nor have many of this day learned Christianity in Business! I have in my possession now a letter from [Jesse B. Ferguson](#), notifying my father of his selection as one of the ten, by the "Cooperation" (not by the "Board.") The accompanying instructions gave him to understand that he was to "raise" from those to whom he preached his own salary, and pay the Cooperation any surplus there might happen to be. This put him in the role of a beggar for money, a thing he detested. Hence, whatever preaching he did that year was upon his own responsibility, and resulted in his going into the shop to work out his debts.

CONSULTATION MEETINGS.

Learning from experience that Cooperation Meetings were a failure, because of their binding obligation to pay, the brethren then masked their aims under the phrase, "Consultation Meeting." At these meetings many axes were ground, while many, many hopes were blasted. At those meetings, lasting sometimes a week, many interesting topics were discussed; at times very interestingly, at others more like a debating club than like a religious body. On one occasion, after a labored discussion of the various methods of "supporting the ministry," (you see the world does move) my father, who had thus far taken no part in the discussion, was called upon for his views. Rising, he said: "Bro. Moderator, let him that is willing to trust the Lord go and preach, and let him that cannot trust the Lord get security before-hand if he can." A Bro. Day, of Kentucky, arose and moved that "that be spread upon the minutes as the sense of the meeting."

At one of those meetings the contest between two rivals for the presidency of the "Christian University," then under contemplation, became so serious that it nearly ruined the whole enterprise. After a while these meetings ceased, and now it is "Convention" or some other unscriptural term, and no one knows what may come next.

WRITINGS.

Of my father's writings I shall only say that there are many manuscripts that were never published, while a few have had their run, and like their author are almost forgotten by the world. His last tract on the abstract operation of the Holy Spirit was finished in the intervals of the paroxysms of excruciating pain, caused by chronic ulceration of the bowels, of which he died.

ANECDOTE.

Among a number of preachers who were trying to influence my father to accept the doctrine of limited and short sermons, the controversy had been serious, and unavailing as to him; a witty brother who had some knowledge of Phrenology tartly said: "Bro. Jones, I think you have a large mule on top of your head," referring to the organ of firmness. The prompt reply was; "If I have, it is without a rider."

Many anecdotes illustrating both his character and that of the times rise up in my mind; but I suppose enough has been committed to paper for the present purpose, and so I close.

Isaac Newton Jones."

Some other characters deserve more than a passing notice, and some of those already mentioned will be described more in detail, in connection with their special lines of work. Two of these lines (apart from that of preaching, or proclaiming in public) will next be mentioned, viz:--the work of conducting educational institutions, and that of publishing periodicals. It has been found impossible to obtain reliable information about any very early schools and colleges distinctly in the care of the disciples in the state, and it is probable from the nature of the growth of the movement that none such existed at a very early date. Yet as the movement grew a demand for such institutions arose, and we find them being supplied in the thirties and forties. An institution by the name of Irving College was established near McMinnville, in Warren County, at a comparatively early date, and flourished for quite a while, under the management of Brethren Owen and Dill, and others. Near the same time a school for young men and boys was conducted by A. G. Branham and [Carroll Kendrick](#) near Gallatin, in Sumner County. This school was opened in January of 1845. Previously to this time steps had been taken by some leading brethren in and near Nashville, to establish near that city a college for education on a broad basis, including moral and physical, as well as mental culture. This institution was founded and presided over by Tolbert Fanning, and was named Franklin College. Its illustrious founder and president has perhaps had more influence in shaping the sentiments of the disciples in the state than any other man who has lived in it, unless David Lipscomb, his successor in editorial work, is to be excepted. Franklin College, with Bro. Fanning as its inspiring genius, did much toward educating those who were to preach and teach in and out of the state, advocating primitive Christianity. Many of her sons were in the field during and immediately following that terrible social and political revolution, --the Civil war.

After the war, when Franklin and Irving Colleges had waned and fallen into neglect, Burritt College, at Spencer, Tennessee, came to the front under the management of such illustrious men as [W. D. Carnes](#), [Dr. T. W. Brents](#), and A. T. Seitz. It is still a flourishing institution, under the care of [Bro. W. N. Billingsly](#). Twenty years ago Milligan College was founded in East Tennessee, and it has sustained itself under the presidential management of Josephus Hopwood, though just now he is not giving it his personal labors. For about the same time West Tennessee Christian University has been carried forward at Henderson, Tennessee. It has been under the presidential care of G. A. Llewellyn and others. It is now ably presided over by [A. G. Freed](#). The Correspondence Bible College, and the School of the Evangelists, both under the same management at Kimberlin Heights, Knox County, and the Nashville Bible School, in the capital city of the state, are doing much, for young institutions, in the way of sending out young men to preach who are well taught in the Bible and in practical Christianity.

Facilities for female education have not been neglected, as Minerva College was early established near Franklin College, that girls might obtain a liberal education there; and other like institutions have been established. In the building that was formerly used by Minerva College is now conducted the Fanning Orphan School, designed to give girls a liberal and practical education, and to assist orphan girls who have no means of education otherwise. Girls are also admitted to the classes in the Nashville Bible School and West Tennessee Christian University on an equal footing with the young men; and this is true of the other institutions mentioned, or at least of most of those that are now in operation. In addition to the above there has just been organized in the city of Nashville the Southern Christian College, for the higher education of women. Besides these institutions there are many other high schools and seminaries of learning in the state, whose faculties are made up wholly or in part of pious men and women who desire to wear no partisan names in religion, and who call themselves Christians, or disciples of Christ. Many of these teachers are preachers of eminent ability, and in addition to teaching in the schools, preach every Lord's day during session, and spend their vacations evangelizing.

Perhaps the first paper published in the state for the avowed purpose of advocating a return to primitive Christianity was the Bible Advocate, published at Paris, Tennessee, by J. H. Dunn and S. B. Aden, and edited by Jno. R. Howard. The writer has not had access to the earlier volumes of this monthly, but from volumes third and later it seems to have begun about the first of the year 1843. It seems to have been a paper of good circulation, and well edited. Bro. Howard as chief editor was assisted in the work by J. H. Johnson and [Jacob Creath Jr.](#), of Missouri, A. Graham, of Alabama, and J. R. McCall, of Louisiana. It was published for about five years at Paris, and then combined with some other paper, under a different name, and moved to St. Louis. It probably was an ancestor of the Christian Evangelist, now published in that city. The next paper to begin publication in the state in the defense and advocacy of primitive Christianity was only about a year later in its beginning than the Advocate. It was the Christian

Review, published at Nashville, and under the editorial management of [Tolbert Fanning](#). It was in founding and ably conducting this paper, in conjunction with his work in Franklin College, that he exercised so large an influence over the Reformation in and out of the state. He was baptized into Christ at some point in Northern Alabama in the year 1828, and developed into a giant in defense of the principles he had espoused. He preached, debated, edited, and taught, in their defense and propagation, with the most earnest energy and diligence. The columns (sic) of his paper were ever open to a presentation of antagonistic theories, but those theories were usually utterly demolished by his sledge-hammer blows in reply.

The Christian Review was the fore-runner of the Gospel Advocate, also founded by Br. Fanning. After editing the Review for some years, its publication was suspended. There were three or four years during which Bro. Fanning gave up editorial work, and no paper seems to have been published by the brotherhood in the state during that time. At some point of that time [Bro. Benjamin Franklin](#) began editing a pa-paper (sic) at Cincinnati, and he so much admired Bro. Fanning's now suspended paper that he adopted the name, with a slight alteration, for his paper; calling it the American Christian Review. So when [Bro. Fanning](#), with [Bro. Wm. Lipscomb Sr.](#) as assistant, decided to begin again the publication of a paper in Nashville, they had to adopt another name for it, and called it The Gospel Advocate. This was only a few years after the suspension of the Review. This paper, when it had been successfully conducted by these brethren for several years, was forced to suspend by the unsettled condition of matters during the civil war. When Bro. Fanning again began its publication after something near four years suspension, he associated with him in the work David Lipscomb, its present senior editor. Two years later Bro. Fanning retired from the active editorial work of the paper, and [Bro. E. G. Sewell](#) became associate editor with Bro. Lipscomb, an association which remains unbroken at the present.

There is no doubt that these three men, Fanning, Lipscomb, and Sewell, have exerted an almost boundless influence upon the Reformation in Tennessee by their work through these papers. And while they have thus labored faithfully with the pen, all three have continually labored in and out of the state as public speakers in advocacy of the faith of the Bible. Largely through their influence "fads and fancies, things of expediency and not of faith," were kept out of the congregations of the state till long after they had been "bones of contention" and causes of division in the congregations of other states. But some eight or ten years ago a few restless spirits, instigated by teaching that cannot be found in God's word, seduced a few of the congregations and some individual members to organize a missionary society in the state; and through its influence a few congregations have been divided, and others disturbed, over this and other innovations. Those who have thus departed from the teaching of the Bible are making constant and persistent efforts to seduce other members and congregations into their delusions, and the battle for the "old paths" is being hotly waged. It cannot now be predicted (sic) with any degree of certainty whether the next few years will bring greater triumphs for truth, or for error; but the contest will be waged without

cessation in behalf of the truth, and there is no doubt that it will prevail in the end. In the earlier days the battle was against opposing forces from without, and so ably was it conducted that many times the victory was complete. A notable instance of this was that of the Baptist Church in the city of Nashville (with their pastor, a finely educated young Englishman by the name of [Philip S. Fall](#)), giving up their unscriptural name and practices as a body all but four members, and taking a stand with those who were pleading for the Bible alone. The congregation and their pastor afterward became a tower of strength in the good work. Victories like this followed many contests of the truths of "The Book" with the errors of creeds and human doctrines, and a united front on the part of those who condemned false teaching would have carried these triumphs to universal victory. But some in the ranks have "fallen away to the enemy" (error), and so a double warfare is to be waged. But He who holds the destinies of nations in his hand is the guide and shield of those who contend for the truth, and if he be for us, who can be against us? So we need not anxiously anticipate the future; but we should diligently use the present to the glory of His name, and leave the results of the work to His guidance and decision.

Bible School, Nashville Tenn. , March 25th, 1897.