

THE SOUTH'S AND WEST'S THEOLOGIAN



DR. T. W. BRENTS

whose life is herein partially recorded

THE SOUTH'S AND WEST'S LEADING EVANGELISTS



T. B. LARIMORE

The South's and the West's most noted and best loved evangelist, born and reared in poverty in Sequatic Valley, Tenn., educated in Mossy Creek Baptist School and Franklin College, founded and taught in Mars Hill College, Florence, Ala., for sixteen years, evangelized for sixty years throughout the South and West. No one except the recording angel knows how many he baptized. He had and manifested the Spirit of Christ.

**THE SOUTH'S AND WEST'S LEADING
EVANGELISTS**



J. L. HADDOCK

The South's and the West's most convincing and effective evangelist, born and reared in deep poverty in Wayne County, Tenn., called home from Mars Hill College (ministerial) to plant and cultivate the family seven acres in corn and other essential food crops. Beginning in Tenn. he evangelized as state evangelist Tenn., La., Tex., Ark., Okla. His records show that he baptized over 15,000. His life remains to be written. He and his wife rest in their graves, Norman, Okla.

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN TENNESSEE



Wilson Hill Christian Church, Marshall County, Tenn., built in 1811-13 under the preaching of Barton W. Stone while he was living at Goodlettsville, Tenn.; charter members, the Cowdens, the McCords (Elizabeth Cowden), Houstons, et. al., who moved to this state from N. C. No written records until 1844. See Goodspeed's History, 900 page.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my father, Dr. John Cowden, from whom I received much of this history, who was a life-time friend and neighbor, of Dr. Brents.

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DR. T. W. BRENTS

SUPERMAN

and

MASTER BUILDER

of

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

and

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

PROPHET OF GOD

by

JOHN B. COWDEN
205 Ensworth Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee

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JOHN B. COWDEN
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

ANNOUNCEMENT

I have pursued, collected and studied at great expense of time and effort the life and character of Dr. Brents, a superman and "the master builder" of the Christian Church and The Church of Christ. While he was a voluminous writer and an intense worker, he wrote nothing and did nothing about himself so personally the record is incomplete; but he left a full record of his thinking and doing in the early history of these churches, which I have summarized and embodied in this book. Today he is almost forgotten and without honor in his own county. The purpose of this book is to recall and reclaim him for today and the future. I have assumed all costs of research, writing and publication, believing that the churches and individuals would share with me this debt to Dr. Brents. Order all books from The Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tenn., (3.00) and send all contributions to John B. Cowden, Ensworth Ave., Nashville, Tenn.; and in so doing you will help to restore Dr. Brents to his proper place in history and pay a tribute long past due. You should know more of the early history of your church, especially Dr. Brents. This book will be put in all libraries, churches and homes available and reachable.

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THE BOOK IN BRIEF

Shows

1. That Dr. Brents was a superman and the master-builder of the Christian Church and the Church of Christ.
2. That he exposed the errors of Calvinism, the passive system of religion and proclaimed from the Scriptures the active way of salvation.
3. That he established the church after the pattern of Christ in the New Testament.
4. That he preached, wrote and debated in defense of the Christian faith for over fifty years. He was a defender when the cause needed defense.
5. That he was an advocate of Christian unity when the churches were opposed.
6. That though un-educated in the schools, he mastered three languages, English, Latin and Greek and wrote and spoke model Victorian English.
7. That he achieved pre-eminence in three professions and two occupations.
8. That he was a triple-powered Bible Theologian of the Christian Church and the Church of Christ, whom we need to know better and honor more, "where honor is past due."
9. That "he labored and we have entered into his labor of love and great fruitage."
10. Some lessons from Dr. Brents needed by the Church of today and tomorrow.

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Chapter I

FOREWORD

I recently sold my home; and, having no place to store my library, I gave my collection of a lifetime to the Phillips Memorial Library, which I purposed doing later, when I had less need of them. Unloading the books, at the Library from a large truck, I casually and incidentally picked up one of the books, which happened to be one of Dr. Brents' books. I said to the Librarian, "By the way, what have you on him"; and he answered "Nothing that I know of. Who is Dr. Brents?" Looking in the index files, he said, "Yes, we have one of his books." Have you anything on who he was and what he did? He replied, "Not a scratch. What of it?" I explained to him that Dr. Brents was one of two men who were the major reasons or most responsible for building this library. The other was Alexander Campbell. What Alexander Campbell did in the North and East, Dr. Brents did in the South and West. Many others, of course, co-operated and helped; but they were "the master builders" of the Christian Church.

I have waited twenty-five years for a contemporary of Dr. Brents to write his life; but no one has volunteered. I am the nearest to being a contemporary. I was born and reared in the same neighborhood, home and farm, where he lived so long and worked. There was only one ridge and one mile distance between his home and farm and my father's farm and home. While Dr. Brents was older than my father, they grew up together on adjoining farms in Marshall County, Tenn. Neither one ever lived anywhere else. I heard Dr. Brents preach in his old age. I did not know then that I was hearing a celebrity; but I know it now; and I must put on record what I know of him. While it is greatly belated and incomplete for that reason, I am prepared to show that he was "the master builder" of both the Christian Church and the Church of Christ in the South and West. In his lifetime they were one, the division coming one year after his death. Furthermore, I am prepared to show that he was a triple-powered superman

all his life. If you are a member of either church, you need to know the history of this prophet. If you are skeptical, I challenge you to make this investigation; and, if you are sympathetic, you need to know the history of this great man and theologian. In this respect he was the common ancestor of both churches. If you feel that you have outgrown the religious ideology of Alexander Campbell and Dr. Brents you need all the more to re-study their teaching.

If a man ever merited the title of Doctor, it was Dr. Brents. It was conferred on him in three professions, medicine, education and religion, and that too without ever having attended a school. As stated, I have waited for twenty-five years for a contemporary of Dr. Brents to write his life; but no one has volunteered to do so; and in view of his personal greatness, his historical prominence, his great achievements, and his unique personality, this seems to be mandatory. Besides it is unjust to the memory of a great man. Next to the Campbells, he did more than any one else in establishing and defending the Christian Church (then including the Church of Christ). Furthermore the Campbells did little in the South. They had more in their own area than they could do. Dr. Brents' work was largely in the South and West and was prodigious, fifty years of preaching, debating and writing. Two six hundred page books containing an exposition and interpretation of the Christian doctrines, found in the New Testament Scriptures, express the norms of the Christian Church and the Church of Christ. In addition to his religious work he formerly had great careers in medicine and education in the founding days of both.

Notwithstanding all this pioneer work in the South and West, I found that he was about to drop out of history. I consulted all the libraries of Nashville, but they contained nothing except his books, not a line as to who he was and what he did. Even the Phillips Memorial Library, erected at a great cost to preserve the history of the Christian Church and the Church of Christ, contained nothing. This was not the fault of the Library nor its officers but of the members of these churches. They have not valued

and perpetuated the history of these churches, especially the history of its chief builder, Dr. Brents. I was a very young preacher when he was a very old one, and, when he died, I was a mere youth, not knowing his prestige, work and worth as I do now, so I undertake to write his life and work, rendering "tribute and honor where due"; and I solicit your co-operation in this belated debt. Dr. Brents was a superman, "one in ten thousand." After reading this life of Dr. Brents you will agree with me in this estimate. We cannot afford to allow such a man to drop out of history. His books will perpetuate his memory as long as there is a Christian Church or a Church of Christ, or as long as the authority of the Scriptures is held; but it is my duty and your duty to make his life and works known and revered. He was a doctor, educator, preacher, debater and writer but not of history. He was a maker of history in the realm of religion; and the writing of it has fallen to us. If the reader is not interested in Dr. Brents' religion, he will find him an interesting phenomenal specimen of homo sapiens.

Barton W. Stone and the Campbells started this unity Movement for restoration and reformation; but in the beginning their work was directed toward planting and cultivating the desire and need of unity. They were all Calvinists and did not realize the integral errors of the system. The next generation of preachers, of whom Dr. Brents was chief, studied its theological contents and sequences of the Movement. They found fundamental unscriptural errors that had to be corrected to follow the Scriptures. They declared for a Scriptural foundation but found that they themselves were off foundation. They had no clear theological way to their unity ideal. They heeded Isaiah, saying, "Come now, and let us reason together." Dr. Brents was by nature and preparation ready for this specific work. He and others began to preach and write against these inherent errors of Calvinism. This appealed to thinking Christians in all churches. Barton W. Stone and the Campbells conceived the ideal; but it was Dr. Brents that cleared the ground of errors for a Scriptural way to the desired end. His theological reform work overflowed into

all churches, even down to the present. As stated by Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, one of the greatest theologians of all time in a recent T. V. broadcast, stated "The greatest book that I have read is Dr. T. W. Brents' *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*." (Reported by a grandson of Dr. Brents.) Such a man needs and deserves to be better known.

Dr. Brents started from scratch in four great professions and reached pre-eminence in every one of them; but, being without press agents, he missed a seat in history that he should have had.

While it is too late for a full record of his life and character, his contemporaries all being dead, I propose to gather from history, tradition and his writings, whatever remains of his great life and character, and bind it in with his writings. He was a preacher and writer for fifty years; but only his two books, *The Gospel Plan Of Salvation* and his book of sermons, remain. He seemed to have had in mind only his day and generation; and he served them fully. If a creed or a code were permissible in a Christian or a Church of Christ, the *Gospel Plan of Salvation* would, perhaps, be it. A judge of the courts of Middle Tennessee, one of his contemporaries, said to me many years ago, "There were many things that I did not like about the old Dr.; but, when I was in doubt about what I believed, I went and got his book to see what I believed." This was a joke, of course, but a joke that shows his prestige. I propose to restore him to his former standing in the church. He was the mortal enemy of all religious error and sectarianism and a true proclaimer of New Testament Christianity. Dr. Brents, I believe, was a man called of God, who did a certain distinctive work, which I will reveal at the proper place and time. He was a prophet of the nineteenth century, whom we have allowed to drop out of history.

Chapter II

EARLY LIFE

Dr. Brents did not trace his family name back to genealogical origins; but Mr. Chester Horton Brent, of Va., did, tracing the name back to Mr. Hugh Brent, 1642—of England, Virginia-Kentucky-Tennessee. Dr. Brents himself was born in the pioneer wilderness in the Southern part of Marshall County, Tenn., in a dirt-floor shack, Feb. 10th, 1823. His parents, Thomas Brents and Jane McWhorter, were born in Kentucky and were reported as remarkable people far above the mass of pioneers, which they must have been to have such a powerful and wise son. The family was large and had few or none of the necessities and advantages. None of them except Dr. Brents survived their generation in history or tradition. Dr. Brents recorded nothing about his family. This respectful silence, however, expresses their poor and lowly state. He was also silent about his own young life. It seems that he ran wild with the wild life of the woods, which has its compensations. John The Baptizer was such a prophet.

It seems that real life began with Dr. Brents at the time of his first marriage in 1841 at the age of eighteen. How and where he spent the eighteen preceding years we do not know and he does not tell. His father, Thomas Brents, Sr., and his mother, Jane McWhorter, came from Ky., to Tenn., in 1800 according to Goodspeed's History. If so, they were among the first settlers of the State. The deeds to tracts of land in their name bear later dates. I was unable to locate definitely the home tract, the one containing the pioneer home. The calls showed that they were in the section of old New Hope graveyard Southeast of Cornersville, touching the tracts of the McClelland's, Pillows, the McCrory's and other tracts in the Valley of Richland Creek. On one of these tracts was the pioneer home of the Brents', where Thomas Wesley Brents, Jr., the subject of this historical sketch, was born Feb. 10, 1823, and reared. Like the schools the homes were mostly poled shelters that could hardly be called houses; but clearing

and building shelters required a great deal of hard work. All were farmers (there was no other employment then.); but Dr. Brents states that his father, Thomas Brents, Sr., was a man of great intelligence far beyond his neighbors and associates, which accounts for the inherited superiority of the family. A superior family had come to a superior-land. "Man is of the earth"; and the soil enters into the man, making strong or weak as is the soil. The struggle and strain with a strong setting and environment make strong virile men. Both the father and the son were mighty men with great families as you will see as the story unfolds. They were real genuine pioneers.

We can hardly visualize and realize the country into which Dr. Brents was born in 1823,—"a wilderness," and a wilderness it was. The ground was covered with weeds and briars interlaced with dense cane and overspread with towering trees. The only inhabitants were Indians, wild animals and reptiles. The first settlers came in around the beginning of the 19th century. Dr. Brents' family settled Southeast of Cornersville where he was born in 1823, when they were at the peak of building shelters and clearing land. The shelters could hardly be called houses. The school house was a poled affair with a dirt floor and slab seats. Here he learned the three R's; but his neighbors said that his wife taught him after they were married; however his real education began when he received his first English grammar when he was 21 years of age, which was followed by other text books and likewise mastered. Thus with a candle and a wall-wick lamp he pursued night and day his self-education. His studies were interspersed with teaching in the dirt floor school houses to supply the necessities. Thus he worked and studied for years, completing the courses in English, Latin, Greek and mathematics, which were the major themes of the schools of that day. Some of us had trouble with these courses under competent teachers; but Dr. Brents had a mind and will that mastered all subjects that he undertook. Beyond his studies he expressed little interest. There were few recreations. My father, who was ten years younger and reared in the same section, told me that the first time he

remembered seeing Dr. Brents, was when he was a small boy. He met up with him in the woods, Dr. Brents was then a grown man with a fox horn around his neck and with a pack of dogs out fox hunting. Some think that such a recreation recreant and degrading; but many great men have had the weakness. However, it shows his touch with pleasure and people. After this meeting, Dr. Brents and my father continued and remained friends throughout their lives living close neighbors in Marshall County. My father read medicine under Dr. Brents and graduated in medicine from the Macon, Ga., Medical College, of which Dr. Brents was head.

This woods in which my father and Dr. Brents met was in the midst of Richland Creek Valley, one of the richest and most productive sections in the State. It is still rimmed with Chestnut Ridge; but the woods are gone. The valley is fully cleared with broad fertile fields, headed by beautiful homes. Who wrought these changes? The pioneer families such as the Brents', the Cowdens and all the others of the rich valley, who labored to make farms and homes. The present and the future will never be able to pay them for their heroic altruistic work. "They labored and we have entered into their labors." Dr. Brents had especially hard pioneer work, that of a blacksmith in his young days. Everybody cleared land and built houses; but there was but one blacksmith, which was the hardest of all. Every iron thing was made by hand, which required strength and skill. This hard work as a blacksmith supplemented his hard studies, developing his body along with his mind and made a physical giant out of him as well as a mental one. He kept this strong body all his life and impressed everybody as being a powerful man, wherever he went. "The village, smithy, *a* mighty man was he!", was really true of Dr. Brents.

After acquiring sufficient elementary education in reading, writing and mathematics to enable him to pursue his studies, his education was largely a matter of getting text books. A friend gave him an English grammar of the Victorian age with models of speech worked out by Samuel Johnson and other great writers and speakers, which im-

plemented and idealized his writing and speaking in becoming and English scholar and writer himself. Everything that he said and wrote for the public bore the Victorian form and art, and has been the wonder and marvel of his readers. His vocabulary seems to have been unlimited with the exact and precise word for the thought. His style, however, is personal and recognizable in everything that he wrote and spoke. Simplicity and clearness seemed to have been his ideals. One may not agree with the thought; but he will understand it; and, if he chose to argue a point, logic was his specialty.

But English was not the language of scholarship of his day. When his ambition for medicine arose with him, he was confronted with two other languages, Greek and Latin, which were the mediums of what science there was then, which had to be mastered to pursue a course of study in science, art, law or religion. The scholars in all lines spoke and wrote largely in Latin and Greek. He found that the schools of London and Boston could not help him much. Only Rome and Greece could teach the languages of scholarship. There was no trouble about text books. The world was full of these, more than the English; but they had to be learned.

Here is where he went underground to learn these languages. Beginning with his youth there is a blank in his history as silent as the tomb. He says nothing about this period of his life. Also there was another blank in his life, that covering the period of his being a blacksmith. He was a married man with a young family who must eat and be clothed; and there were then no scholarships for able and ambitious students, especially married students. Also not every one was qualified to be a blacksmith, which required two qualities, physical strength and skill. Dr. Brents all of his long life was admired as a physical giant as well as a mental giant. It was his work in the blacksmith shop that perfected his body as a Hercules, striking, hammering, blowing and wrestling with wild horses and mules for shoes. But it opened the door to his studies. They could be carried on together at idle times in the shop and at night "under flambo's flickering flame," which he called a grease light,

the only mention he made of his efforts to obtain an education. He nowhere nor no time accounts for his knowledge of these languages, and much less as a scholar in these languages, which he came to be. Blacksmithing and studying in the idle intervals fill up the blanks in his life and equip him for his careers, in which he was now ready to begin, the first of which was medicine.

There was but one medical school of any standing in the South at that time, Macon, Ga. Education in all lines came into the South by the State of Georgia; and so it was with medicine. He came to the school thoroughly equipped for medical studies, which accounts for his rapid progress. After an early graduation he was appointed to the professorship of anatomy and surgery; and he was soon elected head of the school, where he remained for many years, coming about 1841 and remaining until the War Between the States and building up a large reputation and prestige throughout the South. But to the surprise of all he gave it all up and moved to Spencer, Tenn., to educate his children in Burritt College, which was then the only Christian church school in the State. Except for education of his children, he gave no explanation; but comparing medical science then and now, I think that the reason may be surmised. From the point of view today most everything taught in the Macon school was erroneous. Dr. Brents was a critical student of everything with which he was connected; and I think that he had become skeptical or convinced of much error in the medical teaching of that day, his own teaching; and resignation was the only way out as he had nothing better to offer. He had an intuitive sense for error as well as truth. Convinced of the weakness of medical science, he turned to the maker of Science, Jesus, "the great physician of the body and the soul." He doubtless became convinced that religion was the only answer to it all. This was not a hasty conclusion. He had devoted fifteen or twenty years of his life to the study and teaching of medicine, much of it in vain with death the final victor. He had little sure and firm ground on which to stand in fighting the enemy of the human race, death,—much less than doctors have today; and more is promised

the soul than the body. "Though he die, yet shall he live, ... he shall never die," promised Jesus. He turned to this promise of Jesus and re-dedicated himself to the welfare and cure of the soul. In so doing he was not a deserter of the body but a physician of the soul with a better hope with Jesus as the Author and Captain of our salvation.

But the deciding cause then was the education of his children. Having been himself without the advantages of schools, he was all the more anxious for his children. Prewar schools were scarce or non-existent. Macon had a medical college; but we know nothing of the other schools, if any. Few schools of that day were worth the time to investigate. Whatever they were, they were not what he wanted. We know what he wanted by the school he chose. Burritt College, on the mountain at Spencer, Term., the only Christian College then in the State, and that almost inaccessible. It was three hundred miles, more or less, from Macon, Ga., railroads were few, so much of the distance was passable only on foot, horseback or wagon, with a large family to transport. We have no idea how the trip was accomplished; and we will not tire the reader with imaginary difficulties and hardships. Suffice it to say, that Dr. Brents was the mover; and like everything else that he undertook he accomplished it. In the absence of records with dates, the exact time is not known; but I am inclined to believe that he returned to Marshall County first where he purchased a large farm and home in Liberty Valley (650 acres), where he lived for twenty-eight years. From here he was called to the presidency of Burritt College to educate his own and the children of others.

Burritt College, being the first church, or religious school built by members of the Christian church, had small and limited equipment. Dr. Brents' connection with it calls for a record of it here. It was started by W. D. Carnes, of Sequatchie Valley, Bledsoe County. He was a farmer without any education at all. He sold his farm and moved to Spencer where there was an elementary school and started to school with children, who called him Pap. The students, following their example, began to call him the same. The name stuck; and he was never known by any

other name. After getting the primary elements, he took what money he had and went to Knoxville to the State University; and with the aid of a scholarship he finally graduated and became a teacher in the University; but that was not what he wanted. He was of the mountain people and wanted to help them. He returned to Spencer where the church and friends had started Burritt College; and he was made President of the College. He taught there for eight or ten years to the great good of the Mountain people, where schools hardly existed. Coming from the State University he was largely interested in secular education; but he was deeply religious. The school attempted little more than academic subjects. With the exception of the War period he continued with the school until 1878. During the latter period of this time Dr. Brents had moved to Spencer to educate his children. He was more than twenty years younger than Pap Carnes; but he did not go to school with his children. Though he had never gone to any kind of school, much less a university, he was elected President of Burritt College. He was an able experienced writer and preacher and debater at this time but not an educator.

With the administration of Dr. Brents the school took on new form and progress. The school was a stock company owned mostly by the teachers. He bought control, put up new buildings, greatly enlarged the curriculum to include religious subjects, required every student to take a lesson in the Bible each day, which was the first school to do so that I know of in the State. All this in four years. It was the only church school in the State. Students from all over the State came to this secluded mountain school for their college courses; and a number of preachers got their teaching and training there. But that was not for Dr. Brents. He could and did it better than any one else; but the pulpit and the farm were calling him. He had already achieved fame and fortune in the South; and, the work that he loved and was fully prepared to do, was waiting for him, so he returned with his family to his farm and home in Marshall County, Liberty Valley, from which he had labored in his own chosen field.

Dr. I. N. Jones succeeded Dr. Brents as president of the College, whom doubtless Dr. Brents secured to take his place. His father, Reece Jones, the pioneer Christian preacher of Middle Tennessee, owned and lived on the adjoining farm on the North to Dr. Brents, which is still known as the Jones home. He and his family were of like parts and capacities of Dr. Brents. Reece Jones evangelized all of Middle Tennessee; and I am satisfied that he baptized Dr. Brents. The first recorded mention I found was a report in the *Gospel Advocate* of a meeting being held at Lewisburg by himself and Reece Jones. Among the converts and baptisms were sixteen young men, all of whom were promising preachers. It appears from the report that Dr. Brents was Reece Jones' Timothy. Both men were of like makeup and interests, intellectuals of the philosophic mold, all three Theologians. The whole Jones family, so far as I knew, were teachers or preachers. The son, Dr. I. N. Jones was president of colleges at Spencer, McMinnville and Manchester where he retired and lived the rest of his life. He had one son, Zack Davis, and three daughters, Genevera, Rebeca and Nannie, all highclass teachers. They taught in Tennessee for many years, then they all moved to Texas, where they made distinguished records as teachers, and where they taught until they retired. The citizens of Ferris built a monument to one, Miss Genevera, who was one of the greatest teachers I have known. Both families were big in body and mind, giants, men and women over six feet high and well formed. I think Jesse Jones, who preceded them to Texas, Houston's first millionaire, was one of them. Some one needs to write the life of this family, to whom Dr. Brents and all Middle Tennessee and Texas owe much. I distinctly recall Dr. I. N. Jones after his retirement from teaching. Each year he took a visiting pilgrimage on horseback to Middle Tennessee from Manchester more than fifty miles. He was well known throughout that section and welcomed wherever he stopped. He was old, entirely bald except a narrow fringe of hair above his collar, portly, dignified, standing erect more than six feet, broad-shouldered, well-filled but not corpulent, hands and feet immense. I have seen human beings look-

ing like bears; but Dr. Jones looked like an old golden eagle on his perch; and like the eagle he lived far above the common flock. He was a visiting preacher. Jesus was such a preacher. Luke 10: 38-41. Dr. Jones was one of the greatest conversationalist that I have known, well-educated and full of interesting truth and experiences. After he had talked out or down, which he never did, he preached. He was a conversational preacher, the only one I ever heard. He preached just as he talked sitting down, preceding everything that he said with, "Says he, says I"; and wherever else he could inject that introductory refrain. It was like a musical accompaniment to his speech. Sometimes he would read a whole chapter, too much to teach before bedtime; but usually he would take a story out of the life of Jesus, which he would recite to the delight of all, closing with a prayer. We never knew when to expect him. He wrote when he left; but that was all we heard until he rode up to the front and mounting block. The horse was weary; but he was spry and glad to light. He did not dismount from a cushioned saddle; but he had a large sheep skin with the wool on it thrown over his saddle, which was comfortable. Our home was only about three miles from the old Jones' home whither he was bound; and we had him both coming and going, which was always a season of refreshing. I regret that this type of preacher is extinct, never existed or became extinct with him. His last pilgrimage was in a large coffin on the train; and we laid him to rest in the family grove to await his eternal reward. Billie Dixon, the community's funeral balm, was out of reach so I, a young candidate to be a preacher, had to conduct the services, which I cannot recall, and not worth recalling.

Although Dr. Jones and Dr. Brents were of the wisest of their age, their theology and teaching were simple and similar, so much so that they were judged to be naive. They both drew on the Bible for sermons, which the people liked. So it was with Jesus "The common people heard him gladly." The Bible is full of the easiest religious teaching and the truest theology. It needs only to be taught.

Notwithstanding Dr. Brents' studies and work in medi-

cine and education, he had not found his work and place. He had drained two professions, medicine and education, and found them unsatisfying. From Burritt College he returned to Marshall County where he had purchased a country home and farm near Richmond and built a large house on a ridge bordering Liberty Valley. Over the hill a mile to the South was my father's home, who doubtless influenced him in settling there. He was then in his forties; and still seeking truth and work for himself. He had been toying with another subject, that of religion for several years. I have been unable to determine the time that he became a disciple of Jesus Christ, but not in his youth. His parents were not affiliated with any church but were nominal Methodists, naming him Wesley, after the founder and propagator of the Methodist Church. It seems deeply ironical that the name of the man who did most to destroy or change Methodism was named Wesley. Bishop Ditzler arose to save the church after many debates with Dr. Brents.

Undoubtedly Dr. Brents had been studying religion along with his other subjects. By the time that he was grown the Christian Unity Movement of the Campbells had spread over the South with several established churches in Marshall County, namely, Wilson Hill, Cane Creek, Richmond, Lewisburg, Liberty Valley, etc. He spoke in one of his books that he had done ministerial work for over fifty years. This shows that he entered the church early in his life, either at Wilson Hill or Cane Creek, both in easy reach of him. His old home was midway between the two. He was fifty years of age when he began a full-time ministry; but he had certainly been preaching before this. I feel that he bought the Liberty Valley Farm and home in the country that he might give himself more fully to study and preaching.

Chapter III

HIS RELIGION

All religion has a philosophy of life but is not a mere philosophy. It must be more than a way of life. It must have God in it or something above man as the supreme objective of life. Dr. Brents' God was the Father God of the Bible, revealed in Jesus Christ. He was of the philosophic type of religion, which made a theologian of him. Theology was his major theme always. Theology was the warp and woof of his religion; and it followed the principles and norms of the Bible, so he was not a creator of his philosophy and theology but a discoverer of both. Philosophers are free and independent thinkers, so they have no place for Bible concepts, or they think that they must be original. Dr. Brents claimed no originality nor independence in his religion but sought it in the revelations of the Bible; and in the Bible he found both religion and philosophy. If he had not been a theologian, he would have been a philosopher.

The key to Dr. Brents' mature life was his religion. He had many other minor motives for his unceasing work; but his supreme urge was religion. He toiled as a blacksmith for the necessities of life for himself and his family. He labored for an education; but this proved to be only a means to an end. He liked money but not for its possession alone. Pleasure, dissipation, had no part in his life; nor did he seek fame and honor. His religion is the only explanation of his life as a whole. The first part of his life seemed sane and successful; and the people expected a continuation of his service; but he quit both medicine and education. He was a man of wisdom and purpose, so the people were perplexed and regretful. He had gone to great expense of time, effort and money in his study and trial of life; and his life was now half spent. It is a hazardous thing to change professions at any age but especially so between the ages of forty and fifty. He had changed twice and now proposed a third. He must have been a great enigma to his relatives and friends. Yet he

conferred with neither flesh nor blood; and he seemed to have no doubt whatever as to his future plans. The only explanation that can be given today, in the light of the past, is a religious one, that he had worked out under the guidance of God, which his remaining life shows and I write to reveal. He was now ready to begin his work, for which all the past was preparatory.

To begin, he went back to Marshall County where he was born and reared, notwithstanding the divinely revealed truth that "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country." He was not seeking honor but the will of God. He was now ready to begin his mission.

According to Dr. Brents' own statement, his church ministry covered fifty years. This takes him back to his young manhood and includes the time of his teaching in Macon Medical College and Burritt Christian College, which, of course, was only a part time ministry. He did not begin his full-time ministry until after his College teaching. This shows that his conversion was in his young manhood or youth. The Campbell Movement for unity was twenty-five or thirty years from its beginning; but it had made little progress in the South, because of pioneer conditions; however there were several small churches in Marshall County and other sections. Dr. Brents doubtless had observed the need of teaching and leadership in the churches through the years of his studies and teaching and may have done what he could to help; but without someone to nurture they die. I feel sure that this was the time like Isaiah when he dedicated himself, saying, "Lord, here am I, send me."; and all past years were preparatory for this mission. The remainder of his life shows this to be true and explains his changes in professions.

Dr. Brents was a Disciple of the Campbells but not in the New Testament meaning. He was a disciple of Jesus Christ; but he entered the movement of the Campbells for Christian unity. This plea was preached first in Tennessee by Barton W. Stone while living at Goodlettsville in 1811-13; and he established a church at Wilson Hill, Marshall County, where William Cowden settled and lived, which

church still lives and prospers, the first church of this faith in Tennessee. On the other side on the East of the Brents' home about the same distance, was Old Cane Creek Church, established in 1823, the year Dr. Brents was born. We are reasonably sure, however, that he was not baptized by his Methodist parents, because this would have been spoken of or recorded by someone, inasmuch as Dr. Brents spent much of his life exposing this error. He left no record of his conversion so we do not know when and by whom he was baptized. It is reasonable to suppose that it was Reece Jones, the pioneer preacher of the Disciple movement, who was the same type of preacher as Dr. Brents, large in body and brain. Later Dr. Brents was recorded as a Timothy under Reece Jones in a meeting in Lewisburg. My father informed me before he died that Reece Jones converted and baptized most of the pioneer Disciples in Middle Tennessee. Reece Jones is another pioneer preacher, who has dropped out of history and tradition, who should be restored. His son, Dr. I. N. Jones, succeeded Dr. Brents as president of Burritt College. The whole family were noted teachers and preachers.

Dr. Brents' religion is seen best on the background of ' religious conditions and tenets of that day. As today there were innumerable sects fighting each other by every means possible. The Campbells, tired out by religious warfare, conceived a peace and unity plan, which involved the rejection of decisive creeds and the dissolution of sects, which caught the mind and heart of Dr. Brents. Dr. Brents agreed with the Campbells in everything they taught. The records contain many agreements with no disagreements so far as I could find. There were minor differences, of course, but they did not matter.

But Dr. Brents found much in the creeds and the teaching and practice of the sect to oppose and cast off. These will be treated in the following chapter, His Work.

Also his religion was further seen in the internal troubles of the Disciples, which also will be treated in a following chapter on Denominational Matters.

As to Dr. Brents' essential tenets of his religion, he

wrote out no creed for himself; and it would be foolish in me to undertake to do so; but he had a few items of faith that he insisted on under all circumstances. First of all, the Bible, the spoken and written word of God and Jesus Christ the incarnate word of God and the Son of God, the Saviour of all men, and the church established after the New Testament pattern. He was what some call a strict "stickler" for Bible things but not a dogmatist. He was plain and clear in all teaching but never offensive. In everything he accepted and followed this principle, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where the Scriptures are silent we are silent"; and he is the only one that I have known who consistently followed it. Also, where the Scriptures are silent he granted liberty; but insisted on compliance where they spoke. This in no sense defines Dr. Brents' religion. It is just driving down some stakes to mark his religious boundaries, open on all sides and without religious fences or walls or partition.

Dr. Brents' religion of work and worship was preached and written by Dr. Brents himself. He was his own theologian. This could be said of few of the associates of the Campbells. Alexander Campbell's teaching and preaching had attracted a group of able men such as Barton W. Stone, Jacob Creath, Sr., Racoon John Smith, Walter Scott, John T. Johnson, Aylette Rains, Thomas M. Allen, Phillip H. Fall, John Mulkey, Jacob Creath, Jr., Daniel Burnet, Tolbert Fanning, David Lipscomb, James Harding, Sr., and Jr., Benjamin Franklin, et al, but they were nearly all evangelists. As my information goes, Benjamin Franklin was the only theologian in the group. Alexander Campbell himself was a great theologian; but he was not systematic and distinctive. At this time Dr. Brents came on the scene with a complete system of religion in his mind and heart, part of which was taken from Alexander Campbell and so acknowledged, which is evident from the writings of both.

But I find it difficult if not impossible to make a brief statement of Dr. Brents' religion. His religion is so unique and personal that it can not be abridged. Everything that he spoke, wrote or did was a detailed expression of his religion and bears the marks of the theologian.

Theology

was the distinctive theme of the age. Creeds were numerous and popular. These creeds were the expressions of the various religions, which were devotedly followed. A part of Dr. Brents' religion was to examine the various creeds of Christendom to see to what extent they differed or agreed with the Bible. He himself was a Bible theologian, requiring all items of faith and practice to be in harmony with the Bible and Jesus Christ of the Bible. Thus he determined right and wrong; but all of his speaking and writing, which was voluminous, was an embodiment of his religion and covered fifty years of his life. His religion, therefore, can hardly be summarized. All the chapters of this book is but the elaboration of his religion; and after having read all, the reader will not know all of Dr. Brents' religion; and, if the reader decides to go further and reads all his extant spoken and written publications, he will learn much more of his religion; but, if he is like me, he will frequently find himself in water over his head, which is true of all theologians; but I wish to say personally that Dr. Brents is the clearest, the sanest and the wisest one that I have read. We need such theologians today. For some reason, theologians have been disliked, distrusted and discredited in modern years. We need all the knowledge of God that we can get, which is the objective and work of the theologian.

Dr. Brents was more of a thinking man than an emotional one. Everyone finds it hard to maintain a balance between the intellectual and the emotional; and the balance goes up or down according to an inherited nature. Dr. Brents was by nature inclined to the intellectual. He had more brains than other people; and he was largely influenced by the intellectual; but he did not deny or discredit the emotional. His guiding principle was, "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." This first voice he heard was reason, logic. Some people said that he was cold, unfeeling; but they had to admit that he was right. After Dr. Brents made his plea, there were little grounds left for protests and exceptions.

With Dr. Brents justice came first. Regardless of the emphasis on the intellect or the emotions, let God be found

true and just with Himself; however there were complaints that Dr. Brents was weak on the emotions; but he was so strong emotionally that he was highly moving. That age, however, was a forensic argumentative age. Some people argued for the sport of the argument; but largely they were more intellectually honest than today.

Theologians search for the fundamentals of truth, which are the fundamentals of religion; but some theologians became philosophers instead; and they conclude that their principles are the foundation of a new religion; or they endeavor to plant their concepts in an old religion. While I write of Dr. Brents as a theologian, a noted theologian from Yale, Dr. Niebhur, is lecturing at Vanderbilt University, advocating what amounts to a new religion. He speaks, as reported by the press, of new steps of theology, a new revival, new symbols, a new man, or comprehension of Jesus, a new culture, a new revelation, a new dynamic faith, a new hope, a new future, etc. They (humanists) have no use for the past and traditions. They have no place or use for authority except their own. They hate the word and call Bible religion Authoritarianism. If they have a God at all, He is not the God of the Bible. I wonder in what respects the above concepts are new. What are the old? He does not say; but the necessary inference is those of the Bible. For clarity he should have said "different" instead of new. Unless a philosopher is willing that his principles be judged and tested by the Bible, he is not a Christian philosopher. Dr. Brents was a Bible theologian, purposing to bring everything he taught and practiced into harmony with the word of God in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. The Bible is old; yet it is eternally young, and Jesus Christ is the same today, tomorrow and always. This was Dr. Brents' religion.

The Campbells majored Christian unity from the beginning; but Dr. Brents was not an enthusiast as were the Campbells and Stone. He was a strong local institutionalist. (See his book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* on the Identity and the Establishment of the Church.) He applied most of the Scriptures to the local body, the congregation, and had little to say about the universal church. He was

mostly concerned about the local bodies, their identity, organization, work and worship. This was natural from general conditions of the body of Christ. The Disciples themselves had no sure settled representative body. The whole ecclesiastical world was in great chaos. Since the revolution and division under Luther, the Protestant body had continued to differ and divide for several centuries. The Campbells came to this country looking for some kind of unity of the church at large; but Dr. Brents seemed to have been skeptical of any effort to this end. I found nothing from him in opposition to such efforts and movements. He was silent on any organization outside or beyond the Scriptures, so we do not know whether he was for or against such. He accepted in good faith and practice the slogan, "Where the Scriptures speak; and where the scriptures are silent we are silent"; however, he was the only one that consistently followed this, so far as I know. He was silent on missionary societies and instrumental music. He was also silent on the meaning and application of Christ's silences, that is, do they include or exclude from the church. According to Mrs. Dabney, his daughter, he left all Christ's silences as items of Christian liberty; but I found nothing from him on the subject.

Instead of arguing on untaught questions he confined himself to plainly taught things in the Scriptures. Notwithstanding, the many silences of the Scriptures, he claimed there was plenty given to constitute a full pattern for the church. Paul and the Writer of Hebrews thought the same. In fact, all the inspired speakers and writers affirm that the Scriptures fully equip the church and individual Christians for all religious needs.

After twenty or more years of study and preparation Dr. Brents, laying aside two great professions, medicine and education, gave himself unreservedly to building churches after this New Testament pattern. He found all the denominations off this pattern in many respects in both essentials and non-essentials. He gave himself to the eliminating of all errors in the churches. The first and chief of which was the passive system of salvation, which will be given in the chapter on His Work, which took

many long and bitter years of opposition; but he lived to see the passive system abandoned and the active propagated. In propagating the active plan of salvation he spoke to hundreds of congregations throughout the South, and debated with all the representatives of the denominations, wherever they appeared—seven debates with the giant defender of the denominations, Bishop Jacob Ditzler, (See chapter on His Debates.) This was a part of his religion.

Some today among the Disciples at this late date have arisen saying, "this was all in vain, tearing down towers that we helped to build and having more churches now than to begin with." But an increased evil does not make it right—only the more reason to fight and plead for the right as Dr. Brents and the Campbells did.

Furthermore, some modern Disciples claim that we may have unity with variety. They say, "There is no blue print pattern in the Scriptures for the church. There are many differences in the New Testament churches, so which pattern will you restore?" This a mere begging of the question. Every student of the New Testament knows that there are incidental non-essential differences in the New Testament churches, which do not destroy the identity and unity of the church; but they know also that there are vital essentials that actualize, identify and preserve the church. The writers of the New Testament themselves recognize this truth and make clear these essentials. The Ecumenical Movement has been concerned chiefly with this problem,—a minimum essential deposit, which after all every church must decide for themselves; but it will be found to be more than Jesus is Lord. Dr. Brents was concerned over how much—not how little the deity of Jesus Christ and the authority of the Scriptures are being violated by some Disciples, which errors come not from the Bible but mostly from the University schools of religion.

Neither does ignoring the Scriptures, which some do, remove the difficulty. There is an element of humanists, or culturists today in all churches, which the Greeks found inadequate 2000 years ago. They do not like authority of any kind except that of themselves. Paul met with them

at Athens but accomplished nothing. Each one had to have a religion of his own; but no one was Christianity. So on ad finitum, we come back to Jesus Christ of the Scriptures for a pattern for everything vitally religious, which Dr. Brents and the Campbells advocated. The Christ of the Scriptures was both locally and nationally missionary with a world outlook and purpose; and his disciples must be so.

Like Alexander Campbell, Dr. Brents was a leader and not a follower; but he broke fellowship with none of the Disciples. He was more independent and plain-spoken than Mr. Campbell. Dr. Brents never hesitated to state conclusions on what he regarded as "doctrines of men"; but he never spoke disrespectfully of any; and he was always fair and friendly with all the followers of Christ; however he never stated or defined his fellowship. Mr. Campbell was never fully convinced on the subject of fellowship; but he practically fellowshiped all followers. While Peter and Paul were disfellowshipped by the other apostles over the questions of the salvation of the Gentiles and circumcision, they fellowshiped all of the Christian communion; but I doubt that the Apostles ever fully accepted the broad fellowship of Jesus, who fellowshiped all that met, worked and worshiped in his name. Matt. 18: 20; Mark 9: 38-41. The question of fellowship and church membership has given trouble from the beginning. Dr. Brents doubtless lost the fellowship of many when he declined to speak on church music and organized missions, where the Bible is silent. Jesus made fellowship an essential of the Christian religion; but Dr. Brents did not speak on the subject. In view of the above words of Jesus, I think Dr. Brents never made up his mind on the subject. His theological studies and work were largely to himself; and his fellowship, like John's, was "with the Father and with the Son Jesus Christ." His fellowship will be further treated in the chapter on Denominational Matters.

Chapter IV

HIS WORK

We know little or nothing of his preparatory work in his youth except it was late and without schools or books, and, of course, the harder for this need. The vision of the grease lamp and tallow candle in the late hours of the night is revealing; and the smutty hours of the day spent in quick movements between the anvil and the forge with a blazing torch to be beaten into form with the sweat streaking his face and arms, make a real picture of hard labor. To me workers in iron have always been our hardest laborers. I got this view from the old hot dirty pioneer blacksmith shops, carried over into later day, such as Dr. Brents worked and studied in. But the hard work itself was preparatory. His future held hard tasks in many undertakings of body and mind. After his toiling youth all physical work must have seemed light and his spiritual burdens attractive.

Furthermore, he studied and worked alone, which was discouraging. He had no Timothy, Apollos, or a Mark, no helpers of any kind. There was no one prepared and capable to share in his work. His work was religious study, interpretation and application of the Bible to pioneer people and conditions. Also there arose enemies from without. The churches and their teaching had to be defended. The ablest and shrewdest minds of that day were set to destroy this new religious sect; and this crucial task of defense fell upon Dr. Brents. His debates with the religious leaders of that day saved the movement from defeat. While formerly he had done other things, he did one thing at a time. He had taught medicine and education but after preparing himself for religious work, he did that alone. He was an intensive student and a convincing voice on the public forum that gave respect and stability to the young Movement when it was greatly needed.

When I state that Dr. Brents was a co-worker with Alexander Campbell in founding the Christian Church, I do not mean, of course, that he was in the beginning

work but in the foundation work, which often comes later. There is a preparatory work such as John the Baptist did and a founding work, which Jesus did later. With the Disciples, this came many years after the Campbells did their work, when the fundamental doctrines were being promulgated. The Disciples confronted contradictory systems of salvation and culture in Calvinism. The Campbells were Calvinists themselves, feeling around for a more satisfactory ideology of salvation as were also the Baptists and other churches. The Disciples had an active plan, conceived by the Campbells and proclaimed by Walter Scott; whereas the other churches had a passive system. These two contradictory systems could not live together. The Disciples plan was new and disturbing, inviting antagonism. It was setting the religious world on fire; but it needed permanent foundation work, which could be done only by theologians, who were few among the Disciples. At this time and juncture Dr. Brents came on the arena, prepared and ready for this religious ground work, which it was. He began to preach and write by day and by night. In a few years he began the writing of his two large books, treating these two systems of salvation, the active and the passive. His two books are complete refutation of the passive system that led to the final rejection of Calvinism. This was largely accomplished by Dr. Brents and accounts today for much of our modern progress toward Christian unity and a broader fellowship. You may reject the Campbell-Brents theology as some do; but you must admire the system that they conceived, advocated and established. Many of us still accept and follow and advocate this Scriptural theology. We need another Dr. Brents and A. Campbell to reopen this old way of salvation. But it was Dr. Brents, however, that destroyed the doctrinal giant of Calvinism by his preaching, books and debates.

His first work therefore, was Iconoclastic. The church had to be rid of Calvinism, which was founded on the passive system of salvation, and which most of the churches believed and followed.

The differences between the prevailing sects were wide and strong, most of which stemmed from the two theories

of salvation and ran throughout the creeds. One held that man can do nothing for his salvation; and the other held that there is much that he can and must do. There were Scriptures on both sides of the question with examples in both the old and new testaments, all depending on a reasonable explanation and interpretation. It was a war of interpretations; and the interpretations must be in harmony with the Bible, and the Bible in harmony with itself. If the passive theory is held to, the whole Bible must be interpreted in harmony with it; whereas, if the active theory is held to, there were seeming contradictions that must be removed. There were stock phrases such as, "One can and he can't; he will and he won't, be damned, if he does, and damned if he don't." The creeds were written to substantiate the theory; instead of the theory being made to harmonize with the Bible. This is old straw today; but it was not then. Every item in the creeds were searched for errors, exposed to criticism and defended every step of the way. Practically all the churches stood for the passive theory and practiced it in their worship with all the symbols such as the Mourner's Bench, divine calls, etc.; but the new sect rejected it and opposed it in toto; and proclaimed the active theory in its stead. This was the theological bone of that day; and Dr. Brents was in the thickest of the fight. The Calvinists taught that man can do nothing to save himself; and Dr. Brents with all his associates declared that there are a number of things that man must do to save himself, which the Bible clearly reveals. The issue was clear and intense. The Campbells were Calvinists themselves and sought the unity of all Calvinists; but, when they committed themselves to unity on the Scriptures, they were brought to a new study of the Scriptures and found many barriers to unity. Alexander Campbell made a study of the Bible in its original language, which revealed many difficulties. Dr. Brents with many years' study of the languages, was equipped for this study and work. When he began to preach he found almost every item of the creeds based on the passive theory of salvation. Soon with his superior Greek and Latin he was drawn into the thickest and fiercest of the religious war-

fare, for that it was. In his sermons he dug Calvinism up by the roots, showing from the original errors of the creeds, incorporated in harmony with the passive salvation, which he set forth later in more detail and fullness in his books. His preaching and writing, however, broke the back of Calvinism and led finally to the rejection of the passive theory of salvation. When a more correct translation of the Bible in the American Revised translation came out, giving "Turn" as the translation of "Be converted," all the churches have since done away with the Mourner's Bench and other like passive symbols of salvation. The errors of Calvinism soon largely passed; and today we have a wider and deeper unity than ever before.

However, the persons and history of this fellowship and unity need to be better known. It came through a thirty-year religious war, in which Dr. Brents was the leader. War is sometimes a necessary evil; and religion has not been free of this evil. There have been times when Christians had to engage in spiritual warfare to establish and maintain true religion in the world, and Paul fully equipped the Christian soldier with spiritual armor. Eph. 6: 10-20.

As the war between the two theories of salvation, the passive and the active, grew and spread, the work and prestige of Dr. Brents grew and spread. The Campbells and Stone were Calvinists themselves, still hoping for a plan of reconciliation and the preservation of the old fellowship. Dr. Brents saw clearly that the two theories could not live together in the same areas, that the one or the other must be cast out and the Scriptures must decide which it would be. With his whole soul and body he attacked the passive theory and proclaimed the active. Thus he preached and debated in every congregation he could reach; and in 1874 he put the whole active system in a book of over 600 pages, establishing the active system as the true and Scriptural New Testament plan of salvation. If you doubt this, read this book and you will be convinced.

Slowly the foundations of the passive theory gave way; and preacher by preacher, congregation by congregation,

discontinued the passive theory and practice; and today we have practical unity on this old difference. "This is old straw," say many today. True; but one hundred years ago it was new straw for the mills of the church; and it was Dr. Brents that principally led the fight that retired it as a live issue and gave unity on the subject. Dr. Brents, I believe was chosen of God to lead in this reformation. Many others of Dr. Brents' contemporaries, both preachers and writers, greatly helped in this work of clearing the ground of religious errors that blocked the way to unity, but Dr. Brents was the superman that put it over. At least, let us praise him for what he did.

Dr. Brents' next work was constructive, having to do with the establishment of the Unity Movement, or Christian Church. He was not an evangelist like most of his predecessors and associates mentioned above. No church ever had so able and successful evangelists. No wonder that the Movement grew by leaps and bounds. These converts had to be spiritually provided and cared for; otherwise they would weaken and die. Jesus provided the church for them; but he did not establish it. This was the work of the apostles and ministry. As Dr. Brents saw the hordes of pioneers pressing into the church, he was reminded of his mission to teach and establish the church for them. There was a dormant difference between Dr. Brents and the Campbells at this point. It seems to me that Alexander Campbell never thoroughly made up his mind as to whether it was a movement within the church or was the church itself. If just a movement, it would sooner or later disappear in the body of the universal church. If the local body was a real part of the universal, it was a permanent institution. Dr. Brents held the latter view. The Campbells, obsessed with their dream of universal unity, emphasized the Movement over the local body; Dr. Brents emphasized the local body over the universal, a difference in emphasis. The Campbells built for time, and Dr. Brents for eternity, but it effected their work. Dr. Brents purposed a permanent institution, the Christian Church, and appeared to not care for the universal body; whereas the Campbells purposed a temporary

local body and finally a disappearing Movement. These two views still remain with the Disciples.

Dr. Brents followed the evangelists, teaching the converts the Christian way of life and organizing them into churches. He was not an evangelist nor never tried to be. He never held evangelistic meetings. He was an executive and a theologian, establishing and building churches. He visited the young congregations, teaching the members a few days the nature and the forms of the church. With the material that the evangelists brought in, it was left to him and others to establish the church and to confirm them in their faith and feed the babes spiritual milk. While Dr. Brents was a deep theologian, he knew how to simplify his teaching to the capacities and understanding of all. In all the churches that he thus visited, he endeavored to establish the church after the pattern of the New Testament, but not in the sense and implications of some today. With him and the Campbells this was more of an ideal than a reality. With many today this pattern requires every "i" dotted and every "t" crossed, which he never attempted to do. Such a pattern was given by Moses for the Tabernacle. From these minute types of the Tabernacle he tried only to justify and teach obvious lessons of antitypes (see his sermon on the Tabernacle). Jesus like Moses was a lawgiver; but he gave no such minute laws; and in the Letter to the Hebrews the Apostle, endeavoring to get Jewish Christians to abandon Jewish worship, he retains them only the antitypes, such as the altar of prayer, 13: 10, which also Dr. Brents retains. In modeling the antitype, the church, Dr. Brents sought only the requirements that Jesus and his Apostles made, the plain norms and principles of their teaching. During his long ministry he was urged to make the silences of Jesus and his Apostles exclusive law; but he consistently refused to do so. I have failed to find one instance of his trying to embody a tweedle dee or a tweedle Dum into the foundation of the church; but he has always insisted on the divine pattern of Jesus and his Apostles. Read his sermon on the Establishment of the Church; and you will know the pattern and identities of his church.

Doubtless the greatest achievement and service Dr. Brents did was his exposure and discrediting the denominational creeds. Each denomination conceived and propagated its own distinctive creed, which was written and put into the foundation of the church, which the people believed more than the Bible. They knew their creeds but not the Bible so well. They were supposed to be deduced from the Scriptures; but few or none of them were the same; and in many cases they were contrary to Scriptures in some respects. They were old and revered, and were defended as the essential deposit of their faith and practice. They had become to be divisive issues and causes of division in themselves. They had become to be authoritative within the denomination as rulings of the assembled church. They had been conceived and authorized by the great theologians of the churches such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Wesley, Edwards, et al.; but they were being discredited when the Campbells came to this country. They were skeptical of their authority and use and soon came out in open opposition to their use; but, of course, with a sympathetic background, which kept them from being radical.

When Dr. Brents came on the scene later, he was intensely opposed. He was a mature and thoroughly prepared man for this negative mission. To him, unity on the Scriptures, did away with all such extra-Scriptural statements of faith and were forbidden and excluded. Year after year, writing, preaching and debating, he attacked the validity and use of creeds. This was the battleground of the theologians. Turn to his book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, and see his chapters on Predestination, Election, Reprobation, Depravity, Calvinistic Proofs Examined, etc. These great theological subjects were treated in the creeds with egregious errors, which were live issues of that day. If you think that Dr. Brents was not able to handle these creedal doctrines, read the above chapters; but, if you do not have a good theological foundation, you may get into water over your head as I did; but one thing was clearly established that all current creeds were erroneous and useless, and destructive of the unity of the church. One old

lady remarked, "She liked the Bible. It throws so much light on the creeds."

With the creeds discredited, Dr. Brents turned to the Calvinistic passive system of salvation and the establishment of the active plan of salvation instead, which we noted in the preceding chapter. In both of these objectives Dr. Brents had the help of many other able Disciple preachers. With these two theological bones disposed of, we were ready for the great Disciple march down through the last century, the two churches reaching near 4,000,000 now. Both churches preached the same gospel of salvation, however, Dr. Brents saw little of this growth and progress; but I think the greatest factor in it was the fundamental teaching of Dr. Brents and his associates. Recently in a drive over Highway No. 70 South from Nashville I counted thirteen rural churches of Christ in a distance less than a hundred miles. This did not include town churches. If we can do this divided, what could we do united? We have nothing to fear except division. The answer is clear in the light of history. If we do not walk in the light it will become darkness to us.

Dr. Brents was an indefatigable worker but never in a hurry, whenever religious truth was involved. When we review the great amount and high quality of the work that he did, he must have been a tireless worker. As student without teachers and books, his preparatory work was prodigious; and his work as president of a medical college and a church college were enormous; but his church work was the heaviest of all. He must have been like "Joshua the son of Nun, who never would stop until the work was done." Yet he had time to listen as well as speak. He never appeared to be in a hurry when light was sought. His dedication and loyalty to the Bible made him a trusted exegete and teacher. He also seemed to be open-minded where faith and conviction were at stake. He had no "sealed books" such as John had—only the open Scriptures, which he sought to know and teach. The Disciples of that day were charged with being a people of only one book; but Dr. Brents had many books, purchased at great cost and sacrifice. For his day and means he had a large

and creditable library, where he spent much of his time. What became of these books after his death is not known. It seems that there was no one of the family like-minded and interested to preserve them; and they scattered and disintegrated by being borrowed and never returned.

Dr. Brents had no co-workers in his work, because few or none were prepared to do this type of work, executive and theological; yet he was not a recluse like many students and researchers; but like Jesus he sought to teach the truth to the living and to plant the same in the hearts and minds of the living. If the evangelists had done their work thoroughly, preaching the living plan of salvation and baptizing the believers, they were ready to be confirmed and established in the congregations, which he did.

Dr. Brents was not an idealist but a pragmatist in his work, who approached everything from a practical viewpoint. His pioneer life and environment, which had little or no place for idealism, helped to make him a pragmatist. The practical pioneer needs crowded out ideals and led him to look for and plan practical ends. The South was settled and developed much later than the East and North. Dr. Brents was born during the dirt-floor period and knew its privations and needs; but he never lost his cherished ideals.

The churches today with their palatial buildings and full equipment and elaborate rituals of worship may look with shame on the lowly beginnings of Dr. Brents and associates; but they had in their hearts and lives the beauty of sacrifice, hard work and consecration, the jewel of unity, and the wealth of devotion and dedication and other "riches of Christ," which adorn the Gospel.

But after all is said and done, what better approach and way has been found than the ideal through the practical, which was Dr. Brents' policy. With him it was, Unity on the Scriptures, which offered a practical possible solution. Today there is a tendency among Disciples that where we cannot unite on the Scriptures, unite off of them. The Scriptures may be a hindrance to unity but they are not a preventive when "properly understood." In all of

Dr. Brents' preaching and writing he sought unity on the Scriptures with emphasis on the Scriptures; but today the emphasis is on union.

Dr. Brents was not a miracle worker. He was a creative independent thinker and worker in the fields of desire and need, working with the material and means at hand. He first desired to be a doctor, next a teacher and finally a preacher. In all these endeavors and professions he followed common sense and hard work and the light that he could get from all sources. He was an original thinker and planner. In all his studies and work he conceived a definite plan and programme and focused all his talents and abilities on one thing,—one objective. As a preacher, while he recognized that he was under divine orders, he kept his feet on the ground and worked with rational means and ends. He did not look for visions and dreams but for lost humanity and a divine way of saving man. He was not an independent worker that could not cooperate with all others but an agreeable planner and executive. He was a disciple of the Campbells, agreeing with them in all their essential teaching and work, often expressing his approval of their positions and praising them for their leadership. If they had differences, they did not mention them. However, they did have differences, for instance, on the nature and identity of the church, however, the Campbells never fully made up their minds whether the Christian Church was a temporary Movement or an established church. Dr. Brents strongly believed it to be an established abiding institution for time if not for eternity. (See his chapters on the establishment and the identity of the church.) But their differences never interfered with their fellowship. Both sought to build the church on the Scriptures as a pattern. As a result all through the South and West today wherever Dr. Brents' teaching has gone, you will find this pattern of the church, which accounts for the shame and ridicule of the Bible Belt.

This work and achievement of the Campbells, Dr. Brents and associate Disciples everywhere, constituted a Revolution in the church and not a reformation as it is classed in history. It had to do with changed fundamentals. The

passive and the active plans of salvation changed the whole system evangelically and theologically and required changes in the ritual of worship. Luther and Knox brought about no great changes. The Campbells were reformers in their own mind and work; but Dr. Brents was a revolutionist. Dr. Brents held that the passive system of salvation was fundamentally wrong and had to be rejected and discontinued, which produced the religious war. He fought the passive theory of salvation as a fundamental error that voided and obstructed the whole. Calvinism with its passive inactivity was an opiate to evangelism and all church work. Dr. Brents saw clearly that the two systems of salvation could not live together so he threw his whole being into the issue, writing, preaching and debating until the passive system was discarded and the active system established. Some churches held out for it until the new translation of "be converted" to "turn"; but now we have unity as to this, for which we have Dr. Brents to thank. He preached, wrote and debated against it until it was repealed. He was not an evangelist; but he was no less a preacher and theologian.

Another religious error of Calvinism, which the Campbells opposed from the beginning, was infant baptism. As a Calvinist it was a personal problem with them. They had been sprinkled in their infancy, which their renewed studies of the Scriptures convinced them that there was no justification of sprinkling, so they were all immersed. This settled the matter so far as they were concerned; but it made it a great issue with the sects. It was a big stone in the foundation of the creeds of all the Calvinists, which most of the people then were. It reached back to Adam and Eve in their original sins, holding the innocent guilty jointly by inheritance and thus the sin passed on to all humanity, so babies had to be baptized at once. The Campbells fought this error on all occasions with all righteous means. When Dr. Brents joined them, he was even more destructive of this evil in the innocent. In all his preaching and in his first book under the heading, Who Should Be Baptized? he opposed this error. However, the practice has been continued by a few of the churches but not

to the extent of old. The Disciples were so opposed to the practice that they omitted the dedication of infants as Jesus himself was dedicated, fearing that the two practices would be confused. It is only of recent years that the Disciples revived infant dedication; but it is still rarely practiced.

There were other religious errors such as divine call, apostolic succession, baptist succession, close communion, the religious name, the work of the Holy Spirit, the clergy and the laity, the church ministry, the authority and use of the Scriptures and Jesus of the Scripture, the form and nature of the church, etc., which had to be corrected, all difficult and unending, many of which have not yet been solved, which the "Christians only" tried to correct. This is old straw that was threshed out by Dr. Brents and associates; but space forbids review here.

Dr. Brents was a lone religious "wolf that huffed and puffed and blew religious houses down," that is, those that were not well grounded in the Scriptures and in truth in general, that is, not built according to the divine pattern. He was not an iconoclast, however, nor a dogmatist so far as Christianity was involved but a generous interpreter. He had but one test of religious soundness, and that was, it must be in harmony with the Scriptures. Furthermore, Dr. Brents was not *a* disagreeable trouble maker in anything with which he was connected. He was rather a trouble shooter. He was positive and decisive but not wilful and ugly, rather tolerant. However, he was a religious antagonist whenever challenged in high or low places but not offensive. He did not accept the old Pagan strategy, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." When one is mad, he has not an open mind. But many of Dr. Brents' associate preachers did not follow this attitude and policy. They were known as "fighters." A religious fight was their means of drawing a crowd. It was said of one of our most successful evangelists, "He knocks them out of one church into another." Dr. Brents never used and approved such tactics. In his sermons and debates he was fair, tolerant, courteous; but never compromising or

hypocritical; or, at least, I found no such in his writings and sermons.

Professionally, Dr. Brents lived and worked alone. Medicine, teaching, writing, preaching, and debating, naturally isolated him in a student's life; and he was by nature somewhat of a hermit, which made him appear distant, cold and independent more so than he really was. He had few or no contacts with individuals that inspired and drew him out. Though he was primarily a writer all his life, he wrote the least about himself of anyone that I have known. He wrote few dates and fewer places, which makes it difficult to trace his steps. He wrote little or nothing for the papers. He was continuously importuned to write for the church papers but declined for one reason or another; but he finally gave this reason in a church paper. He explained that he believed that a religious paper should be individually owned and controlled and be representative of the owner himself and embody his views alone. He was opposed to mass representation of groups which often grew into sects. A religious paper should be as representative of the writer as his sermon or book. This explains why you find so few articles from Dr. Brents in the church press, which is to the great loss of the past and present. Besides so many church helpers are mere propaganda for some sect.

Furthermore, as is characteristic of strong individuals, intellectuals are hard to cooperate with. Not because of their stubborn views, for great men do not have such, especially Dr. Brents. He had met and debated with so many great men, he did not dare take a narrow sectarian view.

The ministry of the New Testament church was prescribed and selected and according to need and talent, the most important of which was "the ministry of the word," Acts 6: 1-6, preaching and teaching. The Word was twofold, the written or spoken word of God as expressed in the inspired Scriptures, the Bible, and the incarnate Word in Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. 4: 1-3; 2 Pet. 1: 16-21; John 1: 1-5. Dr. Brents, "full of the Spirit and of wisdom," became a

"minister of the word," preaching and teaching it only; and, unlike many ministers today, he felt no limitation and narrowness of field for sermon material. They add and search also the fields of literature, science, philosophy, Pagan ethics, etc., for hermeneutical treasures, which is all right, provided they are tested by the Bible. Dr. Brents preached and taught only "the unsearchable riches of Christ," an inexhaustible treasure of truth. This was the general belief and practice of that day but not so today. Many preach current subjects with little or no connection with the Bible or Jesus Christ. Such is neither Christian "milk nor meat" but spiritual chaff of little strength and weight. "For this reason many are weak" today. A noted Bishop recently regretfully stated, "If I had my life to live over, I would do more expository (Bible) preaching." Dr. Brents did no other kind. Some declare him to be an anachronism; but his sermons and writings are still interesting and vital. See one of them at close of book.

Dr. Brents was of the theological type of preacher as was Alexander Campbell. He seemed to have been a natural to religion, especially in the philosophy of it. He was by nature a theologian; and he saw all the parts in their relation to the whole which he put together in a religious system. He dealt with the great realities of the soul, the fundamentals of religion; but he drew on the Bible for all the essentials. He was a Bible theologian, which showed in all his preaching. He was not a pastor but a congregational preacher of the great truths revealed by God through Jesus Christ, who was his authority. He visited the churches which the evangelists had planted, deepening and broadening their spiritual knowledge and confirming their faith. He did not come often; but he came with a spiritual load of teaching. He declined to preach less than two hours. He was an exhaustive preacher of both the subject and the people. He preached in the days of long sermons. Preachers were scarce and rarely there was a preacher in the pulpit; but they were out in the evangelistic fields, which was "ripe unto the harvest," so Dr. Brents tried to make up this congregational need with a long sermon on

some great Christian truth. He preached from two to two hours and a half. In his old age he moved to Lewisburg where he often supplied in the absence of the regular preacher, W. H. Sheffer. On one occasion a traveling salesman stopping at the hotel went to hear him. As was his custom his sermon was long and deep. When the salesman returned to the hotel, he said, "That is a smart old man at that church; but he does not know the difference between time and eternity." Dr. Brents usually warned the people that he did not preach sermonettes. He gave full-grown sermons. When I was a small boy I sat through these long sermons; and the people seemed deeply interested and content, because he fed their souls on the meat of the Gospel. He was an expository preacher, taking some great text of the Bible and interpreting and applying it for the people, which is the highest type of preaching.

When a great preacher and a great Bible text meet in the pulpit, there was something worth hearing; and the people stayed to hear. There has been great changes in the preaching of a half century ago and today. A preacher today rarely takes a text or preaches over half an hour. Instead he takes a subject and often without reference to the Bible and preaches the subject. He may quote from the Bible or he may not. The sermon is wholly a human product. It strikes me as a form of human egotism; a part of the humanism of today. The modern ideal pattern in the pulpit today is the highest human education and culture of earth's wisest. What is the use of going to the Bible for a sermon, when one can make one all his own and his own craftsmanship? Old Bro. McGarvey, one of my Bible College teachers, sixty years ago, frequently charged us young preachers, saying, *"Young brethren, when you preach always take a text. If the audience gets nothing but the text, they will have something good."* Men have discovered great truths for themselves and for others; but they have discovered or contrived nothing better to preach than the word of God as contained in the Bible and taught by Jesus Christ.

Dr. Brents was twenty-seven years of age when he began to preach. He had spent many years in studying the

Bible and kindred subjects but he found nothing better to preach. Faith in the Bible as the only faith and practice in religion, was held by most all the followers of Christ then, so this was a popular subject. It was not needed then but taken for granted as the faith of all. But for some reason "the divinely inspired written word" of God has lost much of its authority and use. Dr. Brents declared for the Bible as "it came from the inspiring Spirit of God"; and thus he preached it.

There were but two types of preachers in that day, the evangelistic and the doctrinal. The churches were too small and weak to afford a pastor, though they were greatly needed. Of the other two kinds Middle Tennessee had two great representatives, Dr. Brents and Billie Dixon, who spent their lives together in the same County, Marshall. They were in such opposite extremes that they never fully understood each other, yet they were fully cooperative and successful in their respective lines, salvation and doctrine. They had little or nothing in common. Dr. Brents, though without schools, was highly educated; and Billie Dixon with only two or three grades of before-the-war schools; but as a team they were par-excellent and invincible.

To begin with, Billie Dixon was a dismal failure. He had neither education nor talent. As a young man back from the war in his first three efforts to preach, he was a hopeless failure. Three times he had to take his seat, saying, that he forgot what he had to say; but it did not phase him. He loved Jesus Christ and his Gospel; and this led him to persist, but only by the grace of God he made a preacher. As a supplement to Dr. Brents I include him in this history. He had a pleasing personality, a soft musical voice, and after many efforts, an easy simple speaker. His favorite text was, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that they that believe in him might not perish but have everlasting life." He proclaimed these great facts with great force and appeal. While he was not a great preacher, he was the greatest exhorter I have heard. After a brief simple sermon he came down out of the pulpit aflame with his subject with more fire than light, way-

ing his long arms and pleading with his hands and tongue. I can see him now as he walked up and down the aisles of the church, looking for and pleading with sinners to come forward and confess; with his eyes brimful and running over with tears he begged them to repent. He knew all the ways to touch the emotions. If there were sinners there, they either came forward or were deeply affected. If affected, the next day he went to their homes to confer with them further. There was no escaping him and his simple story of salvation. He did most of the preaching at the home church, Cane Creek congregation, and baptized over two hundred of their members, and held one meeting with over one hundred additions. I never knew him to undertake an argumentative sermon, or one deeply theological; but he was a living example of Paul's declaration of God's use of the simple and humble. A prominent man of the community, a magistrate, never attended church; but Bro. Dixon attended him. Finally he sent for Bro. Dixon to come and baptize him in the creek that ran through his farm, which he did. Cane Creek was only one of many churches served by Bro. Dixon. It was announced at his funeral that he established 28 congregations in the four surrounding Counties. "When the sheaves are gathered in," I wonder whose report will be better than that of this humble servant and evangelist of Jesus Christ.

He recognized his limitations and never undertook work beyond him and seemed to be without personal ambitions. I recall one of his sermons, which was characteristic of his preaching. He announced his subject and text, which I do not recall now; and after preaching for awhile, he hesitated and stopped, saying, "Now, I have wandered so far from my subject, I do not recall where I was; but what difference does it make, it is all good. Preaching is like fishing. In fact, Jesus chose fishermen to be his preachers. That section had two rivers and numerous creeks abounding in fish. In fishing you pick out a likely looking pool, clear and beautiful, and you start fishing. Whether or not you catch any, you soon think some other pool would be better so you follow the stream or go off up a branch of the same; and so you fish, each branch looking better than

where you left. The time passes and soon it is time to close; and you may look around to know where you are. So it is with preaching. Every pool and branch of truth in the Scriptures looks inviting and rewarding; and you may become lost in the wilderness of the Bible."

But that was not the kind of preaching from Dr. Brents. He said, to change the figure to hunting, "Bro. Dixon is so scattering in his preaching that he hits nothing." Dr. Brents chose a text, and that too, a great text, which he defined and followed through its Scriptural ramifications and applications, which took two hours or more; but the people of the congregation were loaded with Gospel teaching, which they carried with them all their days. Dr. Brents was a Bible theologian, indoctrinating the churches in the great principles of Christianity, without which "milk and meat" the churches will die. His attitude was, "Come now, let us reason together"; and his slogan was, "Prove all things; hold to that which is good." Bro. Dixon preached without proof; but was no less sure. I doubt that he would have known the proof if he gave it; but he convinced more people than Dr. Brents. Dr. Brents revealed and confirmed them in their faith and brought them "the unsearchable riches in Christ and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, the eternal weight of glory." Billie Dixon brought men and women to Jesus Christ "making disciples of them"; and Dr. Brents "taught them all things whatsoever Jesus Christ commanded; and he was with them always even unto the end of the world." The two made a perfect Gospel team.

Out of old Cane Creek Church and the Darnell-Randolph Academy came one other great man, whose work and influence in this community is everlasting, Prof. Hiram Leonard. He was left an orphan in the Randolph home, his mother being the sister of Prof. Randolph and the old grandmother Randolph being his foster mother and teacher. About this time the Randolph-Darnell Academy went down to make room for the public schools. By this time Hiram Leonard was of age and stepped in to fill this gap between the Academy and the public schools. He seemed to accept as his mission the education of the children of Southern

Marshall County, of whom I was one. I afterwards went through two Universities; but I learned more from him than from all of my other teachers. He was an educational wonder. He was not only a great teacher during the week but a great preacher on Sunday. I have heard many great preachers; but he preached the two greatest sermons I have heard, one on David as the greatest product of Judaism and the other on Paul as the greatest product of Christianity. Yet he was not known beyond the area of his schools and church. He seemed to have no interest beyond his school and church. I enroll him herein as one of the World's Greatest Un-knowns.

Dr. Brents never lost his interest in preachers. In his preaching, debating and writing he seemed to have them in mind. He was on the outlook for promising young men for the ministry. There were no religious seminaries such as we have today. The academies were mainly for secular education; but they were the only religious centers where religion was cultivated and encouraged. Randolph and Darnell in Marshall County, were supporters of all religious causes and sponsored young preachers. At that time the relation of the school and church was not well defined; but they were sympathetic friends. The Nashville Bible College, headed by David Lipscomb and Jas. A. Harding, Jr., in the nineties was the first effort to meet this need, C. E. W. Dorris, of Nashville, was one of the early students of the school; and he reported to me that "Dr. Brents came to the school yearly for a course of lectures; and he was never happier than when so engaged. This was in his old age, when he was not creating new sermons and lectures but using those of his books. Even then Dr. Brents had a full deep strong melodious voice that carried to the limits of any auditorium; and he was the most impressive preacher and teacher that he had heard; and he was an inspiration to all." Burritt College was still running at that time under Pres. Billingsley; and it was at its greatest heights; but there were few preachers coming from its doors. Pres. Billingsley featured general education and did a great work for the mountain district. David Lipscomb College was ministerial and has grown into a great in-

stitution with hundreds of students and many preachers under the leadership of Dr. Clay Pullias, President. This college was the first to feature religion, requiring daily classroom study of the Bible by all, which rejoiced the heart of Dr. Brents. During his administration at Burritt College he taught the Bible to all the students while he added new buildings and courses. This feature greatly increased the student body and increased the good fruits of the College. The seeds that produced Lipscomb College were sown by Dr. Brents at Burritt College, and cultivated by David Lipscomb and associates.

In contrast with this scene of Dr. Brents in his old age lecturing to students of Lipscomb Bible College, I take you back to the beginning of his ministry as seen in the following report:

Lewisburg, Nov. 1856.

"Brethren Fanning and Lipscomb:

Owing to the well-known embarrassment hanging about the Christian Church at this place I have thought that it would not be uninteresting to you and the brethren generally to know that our venerable brother and much esteemed fellow laborer, Reece Jones, and myself, have recently held a meeting here lasting nine days. We endeavored to preach the unvarnished truth in the love of it, and the result was that fifteen noble young men were buried with their Lord, and were added to the army of the faithful, one more redeemed, and the brethren encouraged. Praise be the name of the Lord!

Your brother in Christ,

T. W. Brents"

The above could be greatly multiplied from all over this section and adjoining States, if records had been made. The "venerable brother and much esteemed fellow laborer, Reece Jones," was one of the pioneer Christian preachers, perhaps among the first in Tennessee according to my father. If Dr. Brents had any equals in Tennessee and the South it was Reece Jones and his son, Dr. I. N. Jones, president of Burritt College, following Dr. Brents. These were

in the days of giants. The history of these men should have been written by a contemporary. They both labored sacrificially in the beginning of the church in Tenn., as no others did. No section of the South known to me had such able and devoted pioneer leaders. Both were theologians by nature and training, capable of knowing and interpreting the New Testament Church.

While Dr. Brents worked largely alone throughout the South, he had many former and contemporary co-workers. He did not accomplish this work by himself; however. He so far surpassed his contemporaries that we are apt to overlook and underestimate his fellow-workers. He was the "master builder"; but he had many able associates in the work, who preceded, worked with and followed him. I found no evidence of overlapping and jealousy, each doing the work in his area, for which he was qualified. Dr. Brents did *a* specialized work, that of indoctrinating and defending the faith and practice. The congregations were small but numerous; and all needed instructions. They had little or no organizations, each doing the work that came his way. There were no conflicts except with the established denominations. The work was largely pioneer; and the field unbroken. Dr. Brents' work was fundamental, doctrinal, congregational instruction, establishing the church as an institution of work and worship after the New Testament pattern. He did this by preaching, writing and debating. He followed the evangelists, who had started the church and confirmed them in the form, faith and work. The congregations were small, and weak and needed teaching. He gave them strong spiritual meat, which they never forgot. He was the only effective theologian in the field, who indoctrinated all the churches that he could reach.

Chapter V

HIS DEBATES

Dr. Brents was naturally and principally a debater. In all his professional and occupational work he found nothing that he liked so much to do and did so well as debating. Debating was one of his ten talents, which he liked and cultivated in every way. Everything else that he did was preparatory for the public forum. He spent much time in many other objectives; but he really never found himself until he faced an opponent on the stage of public discussion. It seemed that his whole life had been spent for the service of proclaiming and defending truth by public discussion. On the stage of the public forum all his magnificent talents shone at their best as if "about his Father's business." Debating was a part of his religion, which he took to the people.

Dr. Brents lived in a forensic age, in which the syllogism was the pattern of thought; and logic and argumentation were intuitive with him, imbibed with the mother's milk; but it was no diet for babes. It was the art of able strong full-grown men; yet Dr. Brents made public discussion interesting and understandable for all thinking people. A debate connotes some thing above and beyond the common people that needs clarification and proclamation. It calls for the highest form of thinking and discussion. The fundamental principles of both the State and the Church have been determined and established by public discussions; and most of our greatest men have been debaters such as Webster, Jefferson, Clay, Calhoun, et al, and Luther, Calvin, Edwards, and our own A. Campbell, who, though personally opposed to debates, often engaged in the same and thereby saved the truth for which he pled and established by public discussion. He declared for full and free discussion, which is still carried at the head of all Disciple publications. But notwithstanding the above, debating today is in disrepute and under the ban of the churches. A militant religion is a relic of the past. This is partly due to the pact that few or none

are prepared to defend and proclaim truth in debate before the public. Debating has always called for the highest form of intelligence and the most thorough preparation. In religion it calls for theologians, which few have the talent and education to carry through. In Dr. Brents' day no one below the level of bishop or an informed specialist was called to debate. The Disciples suffered much from incapable debaters; but Dr. Brents was a wise theologian and a prepared skilled debater, or proved himself to be.

Dr. Brents got a late start in education and religion; but he was ready, prepared, and willing when the call came to "Put on the whole armor of God" and fight. No one knew the word of God better or how to use "the sword of the Spirit" in public discussion. "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good," was just to his taste and ability. Some may have been doubtful at first; but he was soon meeting all comers. All the churches were "on the march to drive out the new Movement. The Disciples had antagonized their system of passive salvation and other errors of Calvinism; so a religious war was on. Their leaders were issuing challenges to defend their faith and practice. Evangelists could not meet the need; but Dr. Brents had seen beforehand this need and prepared himself. There was no escaping these religious battles. Without an answer in kind to these Calvinists, the Disciple plea and message would have been discredited and died aborning.

Paul grants numerous ways and means of preaching the Gospel. "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice." He was strict only as to the content of the Gospel preached. "If an angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel, let him be anathema." One Christ and one Gospel with many ways of proclaiming it, was Paul's rule. Debating has some advantages over other ways preaching. The debate puts a curb on extreme opinions and wild assertions when the speaker knows that they will be brought to account for all his statements. Thus the debaters often find themselves nearer in faith and doctrine than they thought. Truth is rarely if ever extreme. In debates of-

firmations must be proved or defended; and they are not made without good reasons. Also when people are viewed religiously at a distance, they appear to be surrounded by mists and clouds; but viewed in debates face to face with the differences laid side by side, the mists and clouds, or much of it, disappears; and people are surprised to find common ground. But they also find themselves sometimes further apart than they expected. That is usually where there is no common ground to start with. Mark 9: 38-41. Many have come together hating each other and separated feeling better, not agreeing but respecting each other, which is the first step toward fellowship and unity. Also there are some people that love an argument; and an argumentative bait is the only kind of bait that will attract them. "Paul became all things unto all men that he might thereby gain some."

But it is objected that debates are contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and therefore excluded. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ also used some very severe language when the occasion called for it, which is necessary at times, when the need calls for it. Matt. 23. This age is on a wave of broad liberty and liberal morality and has drifted into the broad and corrupt way that ends in destruction. In the days of Dr. Brents the age was concerned with doctrine, the philosophy of religion, theology, all of which called for discussion. The doctrinal errors in the creeds; and debate was found to be the most effective means against these errors.

At that time nearly all the churches were engaged in debating. It was a doctrinal age with each church claiming and striving for orthodoxy, which resulted in debates. Also they had many wide differences, that is, plenty to debate about. On all sides there was, "lo here! and lo there." The Christian Church came into a troubled world. The infant church under the Campbells was hailed with challenges for debate. The debate tested man's wisdom and his strength and called for strong men. Dr. Brents and others were waiting and ready to, "Give an answer to everyone that asked a reason for the hope within them," especially Dr. Brents. Most of the preachers were thus

engaged in defending and propagating the faith in the beginning. The two greatest were Dr. Brents and John Sweeney of Kentucky, who were very much alike in body, personality, mind and method. The foundations trembled when they arose to speak. On the other hand the ablest opponent was found to be Bishop Jacob Ditzler, of the Southern Methodist Church, who perhaps would rank first as theologian and debater. Soon they (Ditzler and Brents) were recognized as the ablest church representatives; and they were invited everywhere there was a controversy. The Lexington and Louisville, Ky., debates were regarded and treated as national affairs, to which the preachers crowded from all directions. The Louisville debate was edited in book form; but I have failed to find a copy. I hope to make a report on it. I think it was confused with the Louisville debate between Wilkes and Ditzler, which is still extant in book form.

After holding debates in the Middle Tennessee Counties Dr. Brents and Bishop Ditzler took the debates to seven other sections of the South. Furthermore, Dr. Brents had many other debates with such men as Dr. Timothy Frogge, Presbyterian; Dr. J. B. Moody, Missionary Baptist; Dr. Herod, Primitive Baptist and many others; but Bishop Ditzler was the ablest of them all. He had a national experience and reputation and knew all the facts and tricks of the game. He knew both individual and mass psychology; but he was fair and faced the issues squarely. Dr. Brents was no amateur in this form of discussion. All his work and studies were preparatory for the religious forum. Both were great theologians as well as debaters. In fact, the one cannot be without the other, having to do with the fundamental principles of religion in all its parts and relationships. It was a battle of the giants. I do not know anything of the appearance and personality of Bishop Ditzler; but I recall Dr. Brents vividly. When I knew him he was old but well preserved in body and mind. He was the most powerful and dominant personality that I have met. In after years I heard numerous attendants on the Brents-Ditzler debates speak of the discussions not so much

as a victory but as a lifetime religious experience. Here religious discussion must have reached a climax.

Bishop Ditzler I never saw, but Dr. Brents made the greatest impression on me of any man that I have known. I record my impression of him herein. While it appears fulsome, I cannot express him in weaker terms. He was old but had lost none of his personality physically or mentally. He was six feet or more tall, large frame, broad shouldered, strongly muscled, having the largest head I ever saw on a man, wearing a high silk hat with a Prince Albert coat, which were the clerical robes of that day. He had a broad open forceful countenance, his face carrying a long heavy flowing beard, radiating virility, in all a handsome imposing, commanding personality with a poise and presence that filled the place. It was often said of him that Dr. Brents had the debate half won when he entered and took his place; and nothing disturbed or frustrated him.

The place and stage were set for a crowd with piles of books and papers. Debates usually ran one to two weeks with two two-hour sessions daily, which held the interest at fever heat. Sometimes the feelings boiled over, bitterness was expressed; but Dr. Brents' strategy was courtesy and fairness always, which for the most part held the discussion on a high plane. Nearly all the debates were on the background of the Scriptures, which all accepted as the word of God, which greatly simplified and magnified the discussions. Dr. Brents' way was to smother the opposition with multiple Scriptures, which he quoted and applied to the point at issue; I have never known a greater expositor and interpreter of the Scriptures. He was a theologian before he was a debater. No Scripture ever caught him without a sane explanation. He was self-educated and spoke the language of the people and not the schools; so he led the people with him to an understanding conviction. If you doubt his theological ability and learning, read his books; and you will be convinced. He sought to be understood rather than admired.

Of course, debates are militaristic in form and spirit; but Jesus and Paul approved of spiritual warfare and

enjoined it. Matt. 10: 34-39; Eph. 6: 10-20. No weapon is used or allowed except "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."—no bullets but words and they must be Christian words, and the only fatalities are errors. The mind is never more majestic than when at combat in spiritual battle to reveal truth and to establish right. In such warfare man reaches his highest stature and his greatest good. Dr. Brents never fired a gun in material secular warfare and bore no wounds on the body; but with the sword of the Spirit he drove religious error out of the church; and with the word of God he fired sin in both high and low places. Also as a defender of the Christian faith in debates and as an establisher of the church as the citadel of Christianity, he was a true and honored Christian soldier. He had the talent and mind to serve, the preparation, knowledge and brilliance to succeed, so his honor and reward should be great. He and Alexander Campbell and many other debaters such as John Sweeney et al. saw us through the time of our need of defense and establishment. "Honor to whom honor is due." Let us not say we will have no more truck with debates; but let us hope, if we do, that we will have another Dr. Brents to serve us. The State has not discarded debates. Why should the church? I fear those that dispense with debates have no faith and convictions to defend and establish. "Fight the good fight of the faith." "Prove all things. Hold fast to that which is good," was the rule of the early Christian Church debaters, especially Dr. Brents.

But the proof of a poet is his song. Likewise, the proof of a debater is his debate. His religious contemporaries are all dead so we have no first-hand auditors and witnesses of his debates. Fifty years ago it was the common knowledge and conversation in church groups. Traditions today is about silent. Fortunately, two of his debates were published; but I have been unable to find but one of them, his debate with Dr. Herrod, supplied by C. E. W. Dorris, Church Of Christ minister, which is not one of his best. Dr. Brents himself kept no records of his debates; and his library, which was large and thorough, has been disintegrated and scattered with no one knowing where. No

one in the family seemed to be interested to preserve it. Phillips Memorial Library came too late to preserve these valuable books and records of the Christian Church. Next to the Campbells, Dr. Brents contributed more than any one else to its content, establishment and history. This record of his life and work is chiefly written for this conservatory, which should have been made earlier by a contemporary of Dr. Brents, and consequently fuller and truer. This publication is an effort to supply this historical and honorary deficiency.

In his two books, Dr. Brents left the written statements of the fundamental principles of the Christian Church, which then included the Church of Christ as one church, which constituted a complete system of work and worship as followed by the Campbells and himself up to the time of his death and the division in 1906. Since then there have been changes on both sides, which has widened the breach; but both churches have made great growth and progress, the two totaling 4,000,000 more or less. This study and record shows that neither side represent fully the positions of Dr. Brents. Both also have internal troubles. Humanists have entered and disturbed the Christian Church with differences that threaten divisions; and the extremists in The Church of Christ cause unending trouble, so between the two it is a case of the skillet calling the pot black. Dr. Brents took no part in church quarrels. His debates were religious discussions.

But debates have ceased, not so much for the lack of differences as the lack of debaters and fundamental differences. Dr. Brents' and Bishop Ditzler's debates settled most of the doctrinal differences. Those that were left are over Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, not worth the religious powder and lead to destroy them. This has changed the attitude and the public toward debates; but even today, if any of the fundamentals of Christianity, were denied, the Dr. Brents and Bishop Ditzlers in the churches would come forth to defend them. Brents and Ditzler would live to fight again. One of their debates was said to have been published which shows the two at their best; but I have been unable to find a copy. Instead I include two

sessions of his debate with Dr. Herrod that the reader may see the old master debater in action, know his methods and style and observe his faultless English. The reader will also note the inferiority of Dr. Herrod as a debater. Dr. Brents met far superior and stronger antagonists, in fact, the greatest disputants of that day. The churches commissioned their ablest men; and in this forensic galaxy Dr. Brents shone as a brilliant star. This firsthand knowledge and observation of him in action, however, will convince you. This debate with Dr. Herrod was held at Franklin, Ky. March 28, 1887 and reported Dr. A. M. Growden, of the Christian Church. Attend the first session of this debate and see for yourself what a religious debate is as recorded in the following pages. The best revelation of anything is the thing itself.

Brents—Herrod Debate

First Proposition

The Scriptures teach that salvation from sin is conditional, the condition or conditions to be performed by the sinner in order to salvation or freedom from sin.

Opening Speech of T. W. Brents

Mr. President:—I am happy in the privilege of meeting my distinguished opponent under circumstances favorable for the examination of the word of God pertaining to the proposition just read in your hearing. It is exceedingly plain, and but few of its terms need to be defined.

Sin is the transgression of the law—God's law (1 John iii: 4). Salvation, or freedom from sin, is a release from the punishment due the sinner for such transgression.

The same thought is substantially expressed in several other forms, as "Remission of sin," "Forgiveness of sin," "Blotting out of sin," "Ceasing to remember sin," "Justification," etc., etc., the difference being merely technical.

About these, I suppose we will have no controversy, as it is the great subject of pardon that concerns us, not the phraseology in which it is expressed. One more term, perhaps, I ought to define.

"A condition is that which must exist as the occasion or concomitant of something else; that which is requisite in order that something else should take effect; stipulation; terms specified."—Webster.

That God alone has power to forgive sins is well understood and admitted by all; but the issue with us is, Does he pardon the sins of men on conditions to be complied with by them? Than this, no more important subject can be considered by the human race, provided I am correct. If, however, my proposition is not true, it may be that the importance of the subject is not very great. If God unconditionally saves men without a single thought, word or deed on the part of the sinner, then he may fold his arms and go to sleep, for nothing that he can do will secure his salvation, or in any way affect his future destiny. If he must even desire his salvation in order that God may save him, then that desire is a condition and my proposition is true. If he must believe anything, or in any person or thing, in order that God may save him, then that belief is a condition and my proposition is true. If he must perform any physical act, as an act of obedience to God, in order that he may be saved, then that act is a condition and my proposition is still true. My proposition does not require me to show what the conditions are—it is simply my duty to show that there are conditions with which the sinner must comply or be lost. I may incidentally do more than this.

King James' Version

At the suggestion of my worthy opponent, King James' version, as it is called, is made the standard of authority in this discussion. I would have preferred this otherwise. While I believe it, on the whole, about as good as any other version, yet I know there are manifest errors in it; and in discussions like this, it should be the great aim of all parties to get at the truth; and where there are errors in the translation, known to be such, we ought to be at liberty to correct them by any light we can get, either from critics or commentators who have given us the benefit of their labors, or by an appeal to the original for our-

selves. But with all its defects in translation, we believe it sufficiently clear to enable us to understand the will of the Lord and be saved. We have agreed to be governed by it in this discussion, and to it we go for proof of our proposition.

Argument

Much may be learned as to what God is doing and proposes to do by an examination of what he has done in ages past, and I insist that the same general principle embodied in my proposition has characterized God's dealings with man from the time of his creation until now; He has blessed and prospered him while he believed and obeyed Him; and He has cursed and punished him when he forsook Him, rebelled against His, refused to obey Him, and violated His law. This has always been, is now, and ever will be true as long as man dwells in a tenement of clay. We find an illustration of this principle in the first law given to

Adam in the Garden of Eden.—Gen. ii: 16, 17.

When God placed him in the garden, he commanded him, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Here is a clearly implied condition—if you eat of it you shall die; if you do not eat of it you may not die, but live. Another illustration we find in the case of

Cain and Abel—Gen. iv. 6, 7.

When they made their offerings, God respected the offering of Abel, but did not respect the offering of Cain; and Cain was angry about it, and the Lord said, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Here is the spirit of my proposition—if you do well, you shall be accepted; but if you do not well, sin is at the very threshold of disobedience. Another example we have recorded in the history of

Noah and the Flood.—Gen. vi. 5-7.

Coming down the stream of time twenty-five hundred years, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." God carried out this determination, and did destroy the wicked by a deluge of water. And why did he destroy them? Was it because God had unconditionally reprobated them, and decreed the wickedness for which he destroyed them? We suppose not, for their sins grieved him at his heart. Then again we ask why this destruction came upon them? Surely it was because they were wicked, even to every imagination of their thoughts. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (verse 8). And why did he find grace in the eyes of the Lord? "For thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation." Thus we find the spirit of my proposition. God blessed and saved Noah and his family because he was righteous in his generation, and he destroyed the residue of the human race for their great wickedness. And be it remembered that these examples are referred to in the New Testament as instructive to us. When God gave the law, in detail, to the Jews, through Moses, at Horeb, he most graphically set forth the importance of obedience and the consequences of disobedience, that the people might well understand the principles upon which he proposed to govern them. In giving

The Law at Horeb—Deut. xxviii, 1, 2.

He says: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth; and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." Then follow, in detail,

the rich blessings he promised them; and to impress them with the necessity of obeying the Lord in order to enjoy his favor, he adds, "And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and do them; and thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or the left, to go after other gods to serve them." Then he gives the other side of the picture in the fearful fruits of disobedience. In verse 15 he says: "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee." Then follows a list of the curses that should come upon them, until the heart sickens in contemplating the wretchedness to which rebellion and sin should reduce them; and then, as if to more forcibly impress the lesson upon them, he adds, "Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee" (ver. 45). Thus we see the principle of my proposition clearly set out in the covenant which God made with Israel at Horeb; and it characterizes God's dealings with man everywhere. He blesses, prospers and saves him when he believes and obeys Him; and fails not to punish him when he rebels and sins against Him. The conditions have been changed in different dispensations; but conditions there always have been, and always will be, until the God of the Bible ceases to rule.

The same principle was reaffirmed in the covenant in the land of Moab; and it was again proclaimed to Solomon at the

Dedication of the Temple.—II Chron. vii. 14-22.

God said to him: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face,

and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land. . . . And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel. But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them; then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a by-word among all nations. And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and unto this house? And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshiped them, and served them; therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them." Therefore, yes, because they forsook the Lord.

Coming down to within sic hundred years of the advent of Christ, we, find God, by the mouth of Ezekiel, affirming the same great principles. (Ezekiel xviii. 20-28.)

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked shall die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live. . . . When a righteous man turneth away from his

righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

Comment on such Scriptures as these is surely unnecessary. They can not be made more plain than God has already made them. If you will not deem it irreverent, I will say that were God here himself this day, seeking to defend my proposition, we can not see how language could be better selected for the purpose than is here recorded.

Please note the fact that temporal blessings are not all that are here promised; for he who obeys the commandments of the Lord, shall save his soul. Is not this conditional salvation? Note the additional fact, too, that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but most earnestly entreats him to cast away his transgressions, make himself a new heart and a new spirit—turn, and live (vers. 31, 32). God compels no man to obey him; but he sets before him motives vast in importance as is the destiny of the human soul to induce him to obedience, and faithfully warns him of the dreadful consequences of disobedience, and allows him to choose for himself. Deut. xi. 26-28: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; a blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God; but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known." Does this not look about as conditional as my proposition? A blessing if you obey; a curse if you disobey.

But again (Deut. xxx. 15-19): "See, I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply; and

the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thy heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you; that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Does this look as if man has nothing to do? The two roads are open before him—life is at the end of one, and death is at the end of the other. Man is perfectly free to choose the road he will travel. God says to the sinner in the road to death, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will you die? I have no pleasure in your death, but rather that you turn, and live."

We come now to the examination of the New Testament, and though the conditions have been changed, we shall find conditional salvation meeting us at every step of our investigation. We will have to abridge and condense every proof we introduce as much as we can, and then we will not be able to present a tithe of the proof available in support of a proposition so universally taught as is the one under consideration at present. We begin our investigation with a very brief examination of

The Mission of John the Baptist

He was to go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke i. 17). As it was John's God-appointed work to make ready a people prepared for the Lord, did he perform the work assigned him? If so, how did he prepare them? He gave them knowledge of salvation. How did he give them knowledge of salvation? "By the remission of their sins" (Luke i. 77). But how did they get knowledge of salvation? We suppose they got it by compliance with the conditions upon which God authorized John to offer it to them.

When were the conditions of salvation preached by

John? "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men, through him might believe" (John 1. 6, 7). Notice, in passing, that the object of John's testimony was that all men, yes, all men, might believe. Then it was necessary that men believe in the days of John the Baptist. But what were they to believe? "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus" (Acts xix. 4). Thus we see they believed on a Christ to come—we believe in a Christ already come; this difference—no more. Christ was the object of their faith, and he is the object of our faith to-day. But what else? "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 1). Then repentance was necessary in the days of John. What else? "And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins" (Mark i. 5). But for what did John baptize the people? He "preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3). What did he preach for the remission of sins? Certainly that baptism that belonged to, or followed, repentance. However important faith may be, there is nothing affirmed of it here; nor is there anything affirmed of repentance, only that it was connected with the baptism preached by John for the remission of sins. Suppose I say, "The coat of my friend kept me warm." What do I say kept me warm? Certainly, the coat that belonged to my friend kept me warm. Again: "The house of my friend gave me shelter for the night." What do I say gave me shelter? Certainly, the house that belonged to my friend gave me shelter. Very well. "The baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." What is for the remission of sins? Certainly, the baptism that belonged to, or followed, repentance, was for the remission of sins. If this is not plain and conclusive, then human language, common sense and Holy Writ can make nothing so.

Then we have found believing, or faith, repentance and baptism preached by John, and when the people submitted to, or performed, these conditions, they had knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins. Then our proposition is clearly sustained in John's ministry. They were pardoned, and had knowledge of it, and were fit material for position in the great spiritual temple to be erected in the near future by divine authority.

We come now to examine the personal teaching of Jesus, and we will begin with an examination of his ever-memorable conversation with Nicodemus, recorded in the third chapter of the gospel of John: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him. How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (vers. 3-5). That the word see is here used in the sense of enjoy, we suppose no one will doubt. The thought is, that without being born again no man can enjoy the kingdom of God. How is he to be born again? "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." The converse of the statement is clearly implied, that if he is born of water and of the Spirit, he does enter the kingdom of God. In this kingdom is a state of salvation; out of it is a state of condemnation. Paul says: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col. i. 12-14). Then outside of the kingdom we are subject to the power of darkness, and under the dominion of Satan; in the kingdom we are delivered from the power of darkness, and have redemption and forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus.

Now we have a few very plain questions for our worthy opponent, to which we invite his very special attention;

and we promise to pay our respects to his answers when he makes them:

1. Can the class of persons for whom the kingdom was established be saved without entering it? If so, how?
2. Does the phrase, born of water, in John iii. 5, refer to water baptism? If not, to what does it refer?
3. Can a man enter into the kingdom without being baptized? If so, how?

Nicodemus did not understand the Saviour, and hence did not believe what he said. Then said Jesus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell ye of heavenly things?" (ver. 11.) He then seeks to impress him with the importance of believing on Him. Not that he intended him to stop at believing on him, but by believing he might be prepared to attend to what he had previously taught him. And he begins with an illustration drawn from Jewish history, with which Nicodemus, as a master in Israel, was presumed to be familiar. He says: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (vers. 14, 15). As the dying Israelite had to look upon the brazen serpent on the pole in the camp, that he might live (Num. xxi. 8, 9), so Jesus must die upon the cross, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. Now, what is the object of, and necessity for, believing? That the believer may not perish, but may have eternal life. What can this mean? Is believing not a condition upon which depends eternal life? Will my worthy opponent say no? Will he say that looking on the brazen serpent was not a condition on which depended the life of the bitten Israelite? Was looking upon the brazen serpent any more a condition of life to the bitten Israelite, than believing on Christ is to the sinner today? We will listen attentively to his explanation of this.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (ver. 16). Whom did God

love? He loved the world. And how much did he love it? He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son. For what did he give his Son? That whosoever of the world he loved, might have everlasting life, on condition that they would believe on him. Is not believing on him here made a condition on which depends the eternal life of the sinner? Will our opponent say no? Surely we are here taught that the world may be saved, if they will accept salvation on the conditions upon which it is offered to them. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved" (ver. 17). Here the mission of Jesus is most beautifully expressed—might be saved, not shall be saved, whether they want to be saved or not. He came to provide a way by which men might be saved if they will believe and obey him, not to force salvation upon them. And the means of salvation are as free to all men as they are to any man. He came to save the world, and tasted death for every man. Though Jesus came not to condemn the world, yet all will be condemned who refuse to believe on him. "He that believeth on him is not condemned." But what of him who does not believe? "He that believeth not, is condemned already." And why is he condemned already? "Because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (ver. 18).

Here we find belief in Jesus to be the condition upon which men may escape condemnation, and unbelief the condition upon which men bring condemnation on themselves. Of course we understand the Lord to be speaking of such belief as takes God at his word, and goes right along in obedience to his commands—a belief perfected as the word of God directs. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." Yes; the obedient believer has everlasting life in promise, but what about the unbeliever? "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 39). And again: "I said, therefore, unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John viii. 24). And still again: "If any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not; for I

came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John vii. 47, 48).

Here we learn that Jesus came to save the world; and we learn that the world he came to save is co-extensive with the judgment of the last day. Will all men be judged? Then Jesus came to save all men. But he who rejects him, and receives not his words, can not be saved by him, however ample the means of salvation provided for him. The words reject and receive both imply the exercise of will in rejecting Christ and in refusing to receive his words.

"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written that he might believe." Yes, these signs are written that ye might believe, not that you shall believe, whether you are interested yourself or not. But that ye might believe what? "That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." These are written as evidence to convince the world of the truth of this grand proposition, that all men might believe it. But what if they do believe this? "And that, believing, ye might have life through his name" (John xx 30, 31). Yes, might believe, and might have life by believing. This expresses the thought most beautifully. Now I want to ask my worthy opponent this question: After all these signs are recorded, if a man refuses to believe the proposition set out here, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, is there a possibility for him to get eternal life through his name? If so, how? And if not, why not? I will not anticipate his answers, but will wait till he makes them.

Peter says: "To him give all the prophets witness that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts x. 43). Here we have the same style, except the phrase remission of sins is substituted for the word life, by which, doubtless, the same thought is intended; and it seems to me that, in the plainest terms possible, remission of sins in the name of Jesus Christ is made to depend upon belief in him as a con-

dition to be complied with by those whose sins are remitted at all. Will he who does not believe on him get remission through his name? If so, how? They are condemned already. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through his name is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts xiii, 38, 39). Here we have forgiveness of sins in place of the phrase remission of sins, which means the same thing; and all that believe are justified, thus plainly making belief a condition of justification. Paul says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. i: 16). But the gospel is God's power to the salvation of no one, whether he be Jew or Greek, who does not believe it. Truly then salvation is conditional, as the power of God to salvation is rejected by the unbeliever.

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto salvation" (Rom. x. 8-10). Here we have confession with the mouth, and belief in the heart, in the plainest terms possible, made conditions of salvation. If this language does not show these to be conditions, then I respectfully submit that human language can show nothing to be a condition of anything. To this passage I solicit the special attention, of my worthy respondent. Will he say that belief and confession are not here shown to be conditions of salvation? If he will say they are not, will he be so good as to construct a sentence that will express the thought without using the very word condition?

On one occasion a young man came to Jesus, and said: "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life" (Matt. xix. 16)? Had my proposition been untrue at that time, it occurs to me that Jesus would have answered something after the following style: "There is nothing that you can do that you may have eternal life;

for eternal life is not dependent on conditions to be complied with by man." Not thus understanding the subject, however, the Master told him what to do that he might have treasures in heaven.

On the day of Pentecost, when Peter convinced the people that God had made that same Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ, "They were cut to the heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Do for what? To obtain pardon, or remission of sins, as the answer plainly shows. "Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38).

Here remission of sins, in the case of these believers, is made to depend on the additional items of repentance and baptism. The preposition for unites repent and be baptized on one side, with remission of sins on the other. Remission of sins is the object for which and to which the actions expressed in both verbs look as the end in view. Connected, as they are, by the conjunction and, they can not be separated. Whatever one is for, the other is for. The relation of one to the remission of sins is the relation of both. Then, if we can find the relation of one we will have found the relation of both. Peter says: "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts iii. 19).

Then, as repentance is required that sins may be blotted out, and as baptism sustains the same relation to remission, expressed by the one preposition occurring but one time, it follows that baptism is to be performed in order that sins may be blotted out. From this conclusion there is no appeal. Then, as the Pentecostians believed before they asked what to do, it follows that faith, repentance and baptism were conditions of pardon then, and are so today.

That repentance is a condition is already plain enough; but to make assurance doubly sure we will present further proof. Jesus said: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 2). And Paul said: "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth

all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). Then without repentance sinners will not be ready for the judgment, but will surely perish.

When the rest of the apostles heard Peter's defense for going in among the uncircumcised, "they held their peace and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18). Then repentance is unto life, looking to life, in order to life, a condition on which life depends. But the people at Pentecost, inquired what they must do. Peter told them what to do for remission of sins. Now we respectfully ask our esteemed opponent if he would answer the same inquiry now as Peter did then? If not, why not?

The Philippian jailer said to Paul and Silas: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved" (Acts xvi. 30)? Now, in this question we have the very issue presented in my proposition. What must I do to be saved? Will my worthy opponent say whether this question does not cover the ground in controversy here? How would he answer such a question if put to him to-day? Something after the following style, I imagine: "What must you do? Do nothing. What can you do to be saved? Just nothing at all; for your salvation is not dependent on conditions to be performed by you; salvation is not of works, lest any man should boast." But did the inspired teachers so treat the question? No, indeed; but they answered it: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Thus all the conditions of salvation were presented and attended to the same hour of the night. When the Lord appeared to Saul and convinced him that he was Jesus, Saul said: "What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said, . . . Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do" (Acts xxii. 10). And a man was sent to him who told him to arise and be baptized, and wash away his sins, calling on the name of the Lord (ver. 16). Now here are four examples recorded, where those competent to an-

swer were asked what the inquirers must do, and in no case were they told that they could do nothing; but in every instance they were told what to do in order to be saved. Now will our esteemed opponent tell us how any man, believing in unconditional salvation, as he does, can ask such a question as, What must I do to be saved? or in faith do anything to be saved? or tell any one else what to do to be saved? We suppose he will give us an explanation of these matters, and we will await his answer. We respectfully ask that it be full and explicit.

In the commission given by Christ to his apostles after he arose from the dead, and before he ascended to heaven, he said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). Here we learn that the salvation promised in the gospel was intended for every creature in all the world who would accept it on the conditions stipulated. In the plainest terms possible, we are told that, of every creature in all the world, he that would believe the gospel and be baptized should be saved. If this language does not establish my proposition, then no proposition can be established by any language that may be employed. It is not necessary that I stop to show that belief and baptism sustain the same relation to the salvation promised, for if either one is a condition necessary to the enjoyment of salvation, then salvation is conditional and my proposition is established.

But suppose I say to a man: "Dig me a cistern, and wall it up with brick, and I will give you one hundred dollars." The specifications are all made, the proposition accepted and reduced to writing. The man makes the excavation according to the specifications, and demands the money for the job—can he get it? Has he complied with the contract? He was to dig the cistern and wall it up with brick; he has dug the cistern, but has not put a brick in it—is he entitled to the pay? Assuredly he is not. Very well, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. The man believes, but has not been baptized—is he saved? Is he not in the same condition of the man who had not put

a brick in the cistern, when, by the contract, he was to wall it up? But what of those who do not believe? He that believeth not shall be damned. But why did not the Lord add, "and is not baptized shall be damned"? Because if he did not believe he would not be baptized, nor would it do him any good if he were to be, "for without faith it is impossible to please God." Baptism without faith would be about like walling up the cistern without digging it. You say that would be impossible: even so is scriptural baptism without faith impossible. The style is, "He that believeth and is baptized." "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." One of those to whom this commission was given said to the disciples scattered abroad: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the day of Noah, while the ark was *a* preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter iii. 20, 21).

Here we are told that baptism saves us, and not only so, but it now saves us. In what sense does baptism save us? Surely it is not the power that saves us, but it is a condition, upon compliance with which God saves us. We have seen that in the commission under which Peter acted, he was charged to preach the gospel, and Jesus promised that he that would believe and be baptized should be saved; and Peter could have meant nothing else than that baptism saves, us as a condition, in harmony with the commission given to him by the Master. And it must save us from the punishment that is due us on account of our sins, as there is nothing else from which it can or does save us. It can not refer to a future salvation, for it now saves us. It does not save us from temporal calamity, as insult, persecution, sickness or death, for the baptized man is still subject to them. Then if it does not save us from the punishment due us on account of our past sins, will our opponent tell us from what it does save us?

Isaiah, through the light of prophetic vision, says: "In

that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek" (Isa. xi. 10). Again: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. iv. 6, 7).

Jesus says: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matt. vii. 7, 8).

Here we learn that we are to seek the Lord, but we must seek after the due order. David said: "Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites! sanctify yourselves, both he and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order" (I Chron. xv. 12, 13). Here we learn that we must seek the Lord's favor after the due order; and the due order is God's order. We must seek in God's appointed way. When we ask, we must ask in harmony with God's revealed will. James says we ask and receive not because we ask amiss. We must ask in faith, too, for "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. xi. 6). Belief is an indispensable condition, without which none can come to God. But we must believe that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Here we have another question for our friend. Does he believe that God will reward a man, however diligently he may seek him, unless he is one of the eternally and unconditionally elect? Will he tell us?

But we will hear Paul on this matter of seeking the Lord. He says: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not

in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts xvii. 24-27).

Here we learn that God made of one blood all the nations of men that dwell on all the face of the earth; and that he intended them to seek the Lord and find him. And every one that seeks him will find him if he seeks him in God's appointed way. But we need not seek him or call on him until we are willing to obey him.

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. v. 8, 9).

The eternal salvation, of which Jesus is the author, is for them, and only them, that obey him. And it is not for some of them only, but it is for all of them. Every one. Obedience to him is the condition upon which all men may attain to eternal salvation, and it is attainable to no one who will not obey him. If there was not another sentence in the Bible bearing upon the subject, this one is enough to establish my proposition beyond even respectable quibble. Will my worth opponent give us a plain, unambiguous exegesis of this passage? It is surely worthy of this most serious attention.

(Time expired.)

Elder Herod's First Reply

BRETHREN MODERATORS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I am equally proud that I have the opportunity and pleasure of addressing so large and respectable an auditory of people as there is now before me. I have listened with patience to every word of my brother; and during the entire talk my mind was ruminating, and, for the life of me, I

have to decide that after the hour's talk he has failed to make a single reference to the written statement in his proposition. When I present myself before you to discuss a question, it will be knowing that anything presented before a jury that is not relevant to the question would be rejected. The judge would reject everything that was not in accordance with the testimony. I am now going to announce to this people that I expect to be here four days, and at the close of the affirmation I expect to prove all I say, and to confine myself to every word that is uttered in my proposition. I shall use no time in calling attention to foreign questions.

It now becomes necessary for me to announce the proposition. He has affirmed that salvation from sin is conditional. The moment we state that, we arrive at the point where it is necessary to stop and ask a question, for I know that you will listen to me. Conditional is to perform conditions. My brother assumes that the sinner is to comply with conditions. What is to be accomplished by compliance with conditions? He says, salvation from sin. I submit what is his duty now, to devote his whole time to show that the salvation of sinners is in their own hands. A large amount of testimony has been read, but not one out of the fifty passages has any relevancy to the proposition. He goes back to the law, and shows what God's promises and blessings and threatenings are. He would impress the idea that when we comply or obey, we have a free passport to heaven. I repeat that not a single word he read contains a single promise for heaven, or a threat of hell. They are saved from the calamities to which they had become obnoxious. Now, why bring that to prove that salvation from sin is to be perfected by the sinner?

Another point—salvation from sin is conditional, the conditions to be performed by the sinner. About six times in his discourse he has gone to a second party—somebody to administer baptism. Does he want half a dozen Saviours? I ask, how many questions am I to understand that he is going to bring before this audience for salvation, depending on three or four acts, and every one to be performed by the sinner? A man can not get an adminis-

trator, and unless he goes into the water he is out. He can not save anybody out of the water.

I call your attention to the testimony that God has given on the subject of salvation. I will reply to every word.

Salvation from sin—who is the sinner? He says you need salvation if you are a sinner. He says you must perform the conditions. Notice the conditions: Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Is belief the cause? or the effect? If belief is the effect, what is the cause? What constitutes belief? I say, legal gentlemen, you are qualified to answer—you are faithful and impartial. What chances have you in that man's case? What control have you in the testimony, if it is to be doubtful? None at all. Do you control the testimony? or does the testimony control you?

Unless he can bring the sinner to God, how can God save him? There must be an influence or cause—belief is an effect—there must be a cause. I appeal to you all, without regard to your religious views, what is the cause? It is testimony. Who gives the testimony? I can answer that fast enough. The sixth chapter of John. The words are the words of Jesus Christ. Now, I remember, he says that "all that the Father giveth me cometh unto me." "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John vi. 44, 45). I got that testimony from God. "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

Proverbs of Solomon xvi.: First, I want to quote a declaration in Romans x. Paul says: "With the heart, man believeth unto righteousness." How can I believe anything without the force of testimony? We want two passages to answer each other. Read the passage. "The preparation"—in the plural—"of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is of the Lord." Just think! God is to prepare the heart—is to furnish the answer for the tongue. With the mouth, confession is made unto salva-

tion. It is plain enough to be seen that it is unconditional. He must show that man is a free agent. He must submit to the proposition that God controls it, or that he does not. The testimony carries your mind to the verdict. The proverbs have said the preparations of the heart in man is from the Lord. Does a man believe before the preparation, or after? He would have you believe after, in order to get into Christ. I will not bring a large amount of evidence on the question, for he will fail in making even an attempt to answer. He said he would not anticipate me. I am not afraid of that. He will not attempt to answer me.

There is an Old Testament Scripture which says: "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I am God: and beside me there is none other." My brother has told you that every man is capable of saving himself if he complies with the conditions. I translate from the Old Testament to the New Testament Scripture. I submit a problem that will not be solved. I said, after he said salvation was conditional, that the sinner controlled the condition, thus buying his salvation. Read how the apostle disputes that idea. You will be startled when you think of the importance to be attached to the Scriptures I am introducing. Acts iv. 11, Peter said: "This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders." How many of you believe the Bible? "The same is become the head of the corner." You will tell me that Jesus is the sinner's Saviour, and then that the sinner saves himself. Let that settle the question on this subject. If this is true, I have no right to stand here and announce salvation in the name of Christ. But I am just reading God's word now. "The same has become the head of the corner, neither is there salvation in any other." He has as many Saviours as sinners. I want you to look at the facts as I read them, as he has brought his testimony into the question. Now, Bro. Herod, I have no right to bring up a sinner unless he has no name. He seemed to make it as plain as could be. It looked nice, but would not save from sin. I want him to make a point, and find a sinner that has no name; then he can save himself. First part of the paragraph, "Neither is there salvation in any other." Do you carry

salvation in your pockets? I did not think there was a man who would deny Jesus Christ in that way. I have quoted a part of the passage. I call attention to the second part, and then you get the reason of my reference. Listen to the apostle (Acts iv. 12): "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved." Didn't he tell you that you could get in without him? No credit reflected on Christ. I am now giving you a plain statement on the subject. I intend to cover the whole ground. You can not get a condition of salvation that shuts the door for everybody. I am going to talk plain, and treat all with due courtesy. I am now going to close the paragraph and shut the door, and if my brother can tell who it is outside of the name of Christ that is a Saviour I shall learn something I never knew before. "For there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved but the name Christ Jesus." Did Paul preach conditions? No sir. I am on the defensive, and I say that the testimony is irrelevant to the statement of his proposition. He has taken them from their proper channel.

Read Acts iv., next I Cor. ii. I want to say to you that I have a Saviour. Let us hear the first verse. Everybody listen to the language: "When I came to you, I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Set down a pin, and make a note. Yes, but you say that is troublesome. I appreciate an argument when I hear it, and he is better able to make it than I am. I give testimony—listen to the facts: "Declaring the testimony of God"; "I determine to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified." Legal gentlemen and intelligent audience, I leave it to you—I want to hear that again. "For I determined not to know anything among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified." Every saint and sinner he gets to heaven will sing awhile to themselves, and then awhile to the Lord. Are you willing to sit here and hear him say that the Bible knows no Saviour but a frail being?

The apostle does not stop, but continues further: "And

I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." That your faith and hope may stand on conditions! I would not preach it—it was not a part of the paragraph at all. It gives room for a third party to glory. "That your faith and hope might be in God." If your faith and hope are in your hands, and depends on what you have done, then the Lord is valueless. The apostle refers back to what the Lord came into the world for. My brother, give Christ the praise.

The first announcement was from the prophet Isaiah, that glad vision of Christ when he made his advent into the world, and the object of this advent. Where did he come from? He came from heaven. What for? My brother will say he came to tell them to save themselves. If that is Bible teaching, I accept it; but if it is not, we ought to reject it.

The first chapter of Matthew, commencing with the New Testament. Not on a telephone or a telegraph but through an angel to these lower grounds of sin. A dispute has come about the name of the stranger—it had to be settled. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall"—redeem his people for original sin! Make a way possible for them to save themselves from their sins! That would be nice. I have offered a 10 Bible to anyone who would show it, but no one has ever got it. I call your attention to the reading. I am coming up to one of the strong points in the Lord's testimony. Will you accept his testimony, or the testimony of my opponent? What is it you determine to believe—him or the Bible? "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." I submit it to the legal gentlemen, if Christ with that announcement, after he made the agreement to save them, should say I did all I could to save them but they would not let me. Now listen, because I am talking about the passage. I remember, "Let God be true, or every man a liar." The angel said that he would have his people from their sins. If he saved them, is he requiring a second payment for the same debt by their saving themselves? Would God re-

ceive satisfaction, and then ask a second payment on the part of the sinner for the same debt, in acts of obedience, in whatsoever way?

The Bible says Christ came to save them. Did the prophet tell them anything about what he was to do? Dan. ix.: Now everybody listen. Daniel is going to prophesy in regard to the coming of Christ, in removing the sacrifice, and hence for a purpose. He says: "Seventy weeks I have determined upon my people," to give them a chance to save themselves! Pretty clever. I give you a chance to make fifteen dollars. Pretty good to give you a chance to make it. What about those seventy weeks? "To finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, and make reconciliation, to bring in everlasting righteousness," and say, Do certain things and I will seal it to you! Belief—God—Preacher—Water! God is the saviour of the family!

Everybody listen, and I will read passages to show. I am well enough posted in the rules of discussion as to the rights of my opponent and my duties. Make an end of sin—seal up the vision of the prophets—bring in everlasting righteousness—and if you have his righteousness it will do; but if you come without it, you are a rag-shop, and the fire will burn it up.

I now call your attention to another passage of the prophecies—Isa. lxxii.: "Surely, they are my people." What! "Children that will not lie—so he was their Saviour; in all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them"; and yet you tell me it depends on us to save ourselves, or else we are subject to and endless fire.

I want my life to be spent in honoring the Lord Jesus. If I have a friend, I want to remember him.

Now I want to consult the apostle Peter, third chapter. He says the sinner is to give up his sins by obedience. What is the language? "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree?" He (Brents) says they are on you, and they will stay on till you get them off. I cannot come two hundred miles, and assemble with you here to listen to these questions. I say there is nothing in that. I call your attention to Peter's language. I submit it to

you. Listen: "Who, in his own body bore our sins on the tree of the cross." How long ago? Almost nineteen hundred years ago. He had the sins of his people on him. You can not get away from the conclusion. How came they there? I am ready to respond on the testimony of the Bible. I am not going to spend my time on a proposition unless I can prove it. How came they to be borne in the Lord's body? Let me give the answer. Isa. liii.6: "All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." What did that say? They were sinners, and needed salvation. What occurred there in the record given? Try God's love on that subject. Remember, I am in the defensive. I read chapter and verse. How did he bear the sins in his body? All we, like sheep, have gone astray; each one had turned to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on each one his sins, and adopted conditions for him to do, to get free from his sins! Now, everybody listen to this. I am giving forcible language. *I* transposed it, now I will give the force of the paragraph. What is it? All we, like sheep, have gone astray, each one turning to his own way; and I said by certain conditions. He has not a particle of the Lord Jesus about it. Suppose he admits it, and says this was original sin, and that when we have actual sins and transgressions—how can you get rid of your own sins? By three or four steps. Don't you know that it would land you in hell just as certain as if you had a mill-stone about your neck? I am willing that the record shall determine the question. I will devote a moment to prove it. I will discuss this point. If your actual transgressions were not included, it would be equal to a mill-stone about your neck. Heb. ix.: "Almost all things in the law were purged from sin." If the blood of Christ is to purge from sin, and he forgives, where is there any relation in what is done to obtain from Christ what he died for—for the actual sins and transgressions—and to say that the accepting or rejecting him decides it all? Has he died in vain? A stub of a sinner dies, and makes his way to an endless hell, when God is trying to save him! I would not worship such a God. In order to put away

sin, a system of conditions has been introduced, and you must obey these conditions; and where is the blood, for there is no remission without it? Is not that a grand idea? I come back to the pin I put down: "And the Lord hath laid upon him." Who will be responsible for the adulterers and liars, and drunkards? If it were a legal question, I would refer you to the law, and let that settle and decide it. "And the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all, and by his stripes we are healed." Is it the stripes, or the obedience, that heals?

Now let me call your attention to another passage. I have now found the Saviour laden with the sins of his people. They are charged to his account; what did he do with them? Now, Paul, I want your testimony. Hebrews ix., what is said about that question? "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Would he not mock the miseries of the sinner if he did it not? The assertion is that he put them away. I return now to the question that I anticipated. What are you going to say? I see men here that have heard me preach for seven years or more, and will bear testimony that I preach Jesus Christ as the Saviour from sin. Christian duties never save from sin. I read in the epistles as to the amount of sin put away. Titus says, in treating of that subject, "Who gave himself for us," that he might offer salvation upon terms and conditions for all who would accept it! If he had said that, there would not have been a discussion here now. In place of that, I give it in the language of the apostle, and hence I must begin where the apostle takes up the question. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." My brother says that he came to all the world, and died to save it. I emphasize the word "world" as well as you do. I have no secrets, religiously. Read that passage again. It is of interest and importance to everyone who would know the Bible facts in denial of the proposition. You will find me there till he has done. I came here to stay four days. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works."

The product of salvation is to bring salvation. I am defending Jesus Christ today. My brother is defending the sinner. I am proving what Christ did for the sinner. I have a passage that says he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. I will settle it before I have done with this discussion. I want the benefit of these passages in the after speeches. I want to see how it was done. I am now going to use water. I hope that when the proper time comes he will talk about the water, because there is a washerwoman or washer-man, and something is to be cleansed. I reckon neither he nor I have had a place in that water yet.

(time expired.)

Dr. Brents' Second Speech

MR. PRESIDENT:—I am now to reply to the speech which was made by my worthy opponent in the forenoon. I will not treat him as he treated me. I made a speech of an hour hi condensed scriptural argument, and I gave chapter and verse for every position taken, and asked his special attention to a number of them; and to not one single one of them did he even allude—not once. He did not take hold of a single passage, and attempt to show that it did not teach what I claimed for it. I asked him a number of plain but respectful questions, to which I had a right to expect his attention in his speech; but to not one of them did he make any reply whatever. Does he call this debating? Near the close of his speech, he said he was going to set up a theory to wipe my speech all out. Now I respectfully submit that this kind of work is better calculated to make infidels than Christians. When I make an argument drawn from unmistakable proofs from Holy Writ, and call on him, in respectful style, to meet and answer it, but in place of answering it he goes off to hunt passages from the same Bible which seem to teach something else, it brings the Bible into conflict with itself. If it be a book of contradictions, it can not be an emanation from God. It must be consistent with itself in all its parts, or it cannot be worthy of its Author and the confidence of men.

I thought debating consisted in the affirmant laying down his premises, and supporting his positions by such proof as he deemed sufficient for the purpose; then the respondent takes up the proofs adduced, and shows that they do not teach what is claimed for them; this done, then it is in order to set up an adverse theory. I respectfully suggest that the course pursued by my worthy opponent is not debating at all.

He says that, according to my theory, a man's salvation is in his own hands; and also that I had no Jesus in my speech. Though I quoted much from the mouth of Jesus, and showed by many passages that there is no salvation without faith in Christ, yet I had no Jesus in my speech --no Jesus in my proposition!

When I first sent my proposition to him, it read, "Salvation from sin by Jesus Christ is conditional." He objected to this, and worded for me the present proposition, leaving out the words Jesus Christ, though he left them in his own. Did he do this in order that he might throw it up to me in debate? I reckon not, surely.

I have showed time and again that there is no salvation out of Christ, in this or in the Jewish dispensation. He died "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix. 15). The efficacy of his blood looked backward and forward. Every offering made under the old testament was made efficacious by the blood of Christ.

But he says there was no promise of heaven or threat of hell "back there." Paul says they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ. Is there no heaven in drinking of Christ? What becomes of the great cloud of witnesses named in Heb. xi., who all died in faith, and of whom the world was not worthy? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were mentioned among them. What became of them? "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11). No heaven for them! Ezek. xviii. 27: God says, he that "doeth

that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." God swore that those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness in unbelief, should not enter into his rest (Heb. iii. 16). What becomes of them?

He scoffs at the idea of the sinner having his salvation in his own hands. I did not say he has his salvation in his own hands; but I do say he must comply with the conditions upon which salvation is offered to him in the gospel, or be lost. Because a sinner avails himself of the means God has provided for his salvation, does he reject God, Jesus Christ, or anything else that has anything to do with salvation? God gives us bread—but does that destroy human agency in the production of bread? God does his part, and requires us to do our part. God gives the soil, warmth, light, moisture, none of which man could do for himself; but man can prepare the soil, plant the seed, cultivate and gather the crop—and thus he gets bread; but if Eld. Herod refuses to do anything to make or get bread—because God gives it to him, I guess—if his friends do not provide for him he will be likely to go to bed hungry. God has provided salvation for man on conditions; "but he that believeth not will be damned." But more of this after a while.

If man has no agency in his own salvation, who is to blame if he is not saved? He is as passive as a block of marble, and certainly had no power to have it otherwise. He says sins were pardoned long ago—will he tell us when? I guess he will go back before the foundation of the world was laid. Then there is no such thing as pardon of sin now at all. Will he tell us whether or not there is any such thing as pardon for sinners today? We will have more to say about this when he takes position on it.

If it was all fixed up before time began, the sinner not having even to accept any means of salvation, then again I ask, Who is to be blamed if a man *is* not saved? Will Jesus Christ say in the judgment, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity"? No, sir; no works of his had anything to do with his destiny, for he never had a chance to be anything else but what he is. God never loved or pro-

vided for him—Jesus never died for him; he has not, nor did he ever have, any interest in the blood of Jesus, and yet God will confine him in the rude flames of an angry hell forever—for what? Just to see his writhings and contortions I suppose! He said he would not worship a God whose purposes could be thwarted by a "stub of a sinner"; but here is a picture of the God he does worship. I wish to vindicate the character of the God I worship against such an imputation. The darkest picture of savage cruelty and the inquisition of Rome sink into pleasantries before it. They would speedily end, but the punishment of the damned never; and all fixed up four thousand years before he was born, and that by a merciful God, without giving him any chance to avoid such a destiny. Is this the God of the Bible? It cannot be.

If man has nothing to do in his own salvation, why did God mock him, saying, "Look unto me all ye ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I am God, and beside me there is none else"? Why did he set life and death before him, and tell him to choose, when he could not choose? Why did Jesus say, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," when there was no chance for him to come? Why did Jesus Christ command his apostles (I reckon there is Christ in this, as he is speaking) to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," when he knew that only the chosen few could be benefitted? Why did he promise salvation to those who would believe and be baptized, when only the elect could be saved? Indeed, even they had been saved from before the world began; hence salvation could not be promised those who were already saved. Why did he threaten with damnation those who refused to believe, when all who are lost had been lost before time began, and were bound to remain lost, believe or not believe.

But the theory of conditional salvation requires the agency of a second party. Well, your theory did not even require the sinner himself, for it was fixed up four thousand years before he was born. If my friend had been away back in the days of the Jews, when a clean person had to officiate for the unclean, he would have said, "Not

so, Lord; we want no second party." When the angel appeared to Cornelius, saying, "Send to Joppa for Peter, who shall tell the words by which you shall be saved," he would have said, "Stop! though you are an angel fresh from the throne of glory, there must be no second parties in this business." When the Lord appeared to Saul, who cried, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" the Lord said, "Go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do," my friend would have objected stoutly, for he would have been alarmed at the introduction of second parties.

He wants to know if belief is a cause or an effect. Well, it is the effect of testimony, but may be the cause of salvation. Effects become causes in thousands of cases. Faith is the belief of testimony. God gives the testimony, but it is man who believes it; hence faith comes by hearing.

But he thinks if man has to do anything, it robs God of the glory. Does my friend think himself robbed of parental glory, when his son trustingly, promptly, and faithfully obeys him?

He went to John vi.: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." But does this say anything about whether they were given conditionally or unconditionally? Not a word. But let us read further: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." That is the way men are taught of God. The gospel is preached to the people; they hear and learn of Jesus; they accept salvation on the terms stipulated, and in God's way come to him.

He scoffs at the idea that man is a free moral agent. Well, I insist if man is not free, he is not responsible. He can not be responsible for that in which he has no agency. God would cease to be a just God if he were to damn a man for not obeying him, when he never had a chance to obey him. If a man is not of the elect, is there any chance

for him to make himself elect? Will my worthy opponent answer? If a man not elected should give all his goods to feed the poor, do everything in his power, even go on his knees three times a day, is there any chance for him to be saved? All, but you tell me he has not the requisite love. Well, who is to blame for that? Is there anything he can do to change himself, or make God love him, when God, before the world began, determined he would not love him or be loved by him?

The very fact that Jesus commanded the gospel to be preached to all, offering salvation to all who would believe and obey, is evidence, high as heaven, that man can accept the salvation offered; and this evidence is made certain by the fact that he is threatened with punishment if he refuses to believe it.

He quotes Acts iv. 12: "For there is none other name under heaven given, among men, whereby we must be saved," that is, no other than the name of Jesus Christ. He insists that if the sinner has to do anything, he is saved in his own name. To make the matter conclusive, he says, "Until I find a man without a name, there is no chance to find a man who can be saved on conditions." Paul, Cornelius, Crispus, Gaius and Lydia all had names, and were saved by believing and obeying the Lord. The name of Christ gives authority to the commission under the New Covenant; the blood of Christ fills its place; Jesus Christ as the Saviour, fills his place. The idea that because a man is saved by the name of Christ, that nothing else has anything to do with it, would annul the blood of Christ, and every other agency connected with man's salvation. The man who thus reasons has a cloud over his eyes, sure enough.

He quotes: "Beside me, there is no Saviour." In a certain sense there is no Saviour but God. God alone has the power to forgive sins. Certainly, but does he forgive sins conditionally or unconditionally. God saves through Jesus Christ, his Son, who died for all men; but when he assumes that he saves unconditionally, he assumes the whole question in debate. He assumes what he ought to

prove. Just a few scintillations of truth from the word of God would be in order along here.

"But there is no other name given among men, whereby we can be saved." But how do we get into the name of Christ? (Acts x. 48). This man had a name, and was. saved through the name of Jesus Christ. Peter said: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix. 5). Thus we come in contact with the name of the Lord Jesus where there is salvation.

But he says man can not save himself. In the sense of pardoning himself, he can not; in the sense of instrumentality, he can. He asks: "How many saviours does he have?" He makes everything connected with salvation a saviour. Had my friend been in the house of Cornelius when they were about to baptize him, he would have said, "No, Peter; there is but one Saviour." And, worse still, had he been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when Peter exhorted the people to save themselves from that untoward generation, he would have brought charges against Peter for talking about men saving themselves. James says: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death" (Jas. v. 19, 20). Take care, James; Eld. Herod will get after you for talking about any one saving a soul.

"We get salvation without the name of Christ." He says I said so. I never said that a man could be saved without the name of Christ in this world, and I have never been in another yet. The gentleman makes inferences for which I would not like to be responsible.

But he goes to I Cor. ii. 1-5: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." The apostle was able to confirm what he preached among the Corinthians by miracles and divers gifts of the Spirit, that

their faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. And now what has all that to do with conditional or unconditional salvation? Had he quoted, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth," it would have been just as appropriate. But he talks about the crucifixion of Christ, and his paying the debt. If all the elect were saved before the foundation of the world, what good did the crucifixion of Jesus do? And if he paid the debt, where does the grace, mercy and forgiveness of God come in? If Jesus paid all, then God forgives nothing; and away goes this much-talked-of grace. He has wiped it all out at one brush.

He says, "When those who accept the terms get to heaven, they will sing a while to their own glory, and then awhile to the glory of God." Well, he will not be able to give glory to anyone for saving him, for he was never lost. He can not give glory to Jesus Christ as his Saviour, for Jesus came to save the lost; and if he were eternally and unconditionally elected to salvation, then Jesus never came to save him.

But he says none will be lost for whom Christ died. Paul says: "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ dies" (Rom. xiv. 15).

And again: "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died" (I Cor. viii. 11).

Now here is a square issue between my friend and the apostle. He says that none can perish for whom Christ died. Paul was of a very different opinion, it seems.

I propose to show that he has gone squarely into universalism. He says none will be lost that Christ came to save, or for whom Christ died. We read: "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (II Cor. v. 15). "That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9). "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John ii. 2). See also I Tim. ii. 4-6; II Pet. iii. 9; Titus ii. 11, and Rom. v. 11-18.

The gentleman says that all for whom Christ died will

be certainly saved. I have shown that he died for all men; therefore all men will be saved, and Universalism is true, according to Mr. Herod. I turn him over to Universalism. This is quite an improvement on the position he has been occupying. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance and live. The only reason why all are not saved, is because they will not obey God, that they may be saved. But if God is not willing that any should perish, why will not all be saved, if there is nothing required.

(Time expired)

Thus Dr. Brents debated, preached and wrote all over the South, indoctrinating all that heard him in the principles and teaching of the Bible. He claimed nothing as truth except what he deducted directly from the Scriptures, which he interpreted in plain simple Victorian English that all could understand and follow. He had no philosophic theories, with which he sought to harmonize the Scriptures. In fact, his debates were his way of preaching the Gospel and indoctrinating Bible theology. His first affirmation in the above debate is an excellent statement and proof of Christian faith, and so with other items of the Gospel of salvation. In his debates he declared the principles of Christian theology and thereby confirmed the worshipper.

Without his debates, furthermore, I would be unable to account for many things in his work. For instance, the conversion and ordination of W. H. Sheffer. In the records Dr. Brents is revealed as being in the mountains of Western Kentucky, the coal mining section, on some religious mission. He was attracted by a sixteen year old boy, who was then a miner. He must have baptized the boy, because he remarked to the Elders, "Keep your eye on this boy and help him. He will make you a preacher." He must have been there in debate. He did not hold evangelistic meetings. The boy did make them a preacher, one of the greatest of the Disciples. When developed, Dr. Brents brought him to Lewisburg as the minister of the Christian Church, where he served for five years, evangelizing and

preaching for the church. He captivated and charmed that whole section with his eloquent and flowery preaching, holding meetings with 100 or more additions, of whom I was one, which put me in the Brents' line of the Christian ministry; and I have never had cause to regret it. In the early days in the Lewisburg Church he wrote of sixteen other young men, who were promising for the ministry. Dr. Brents was a preacher's preacher; and they flocked to hear and follow him.

Besides Dr. Brents' many young Timothy's, he had numerous able contemporary preachers who labored effectively and successfully in their own field; and some covered large areas. In writing the life of a great man such as Dr. Brents, one is apt to overlook these men of God, who toil early and late for the Lord's Kingdom. Space forbids any thing more than calling their names. The generation following the period of Dr. Brents is noted for its great preachers. Public speaking was an art greatly desired and highly cultivated. For the South and West, Dr. Brents' field, I enroll gratefully the following: Reece Jones and his son, Dr. I. N. Jones; Pap Carmes; Wade Barrett; John Mulkey; David Burnett Phillip Fall; Tolbert Fanning; David Lipscomb; Jesse Sewell; E. G. Sewell; James A. Harding; E. A. Elam; T. B. Larimore; J. L. Haddock; W. H. Sheffer; Carey E. Morgan; the Srygley's; F. W. Smith; Linn Cave, who buried him in Lewisburg. We publish the photographs of two, T. B. Larimore and J. L. Haddock, leaders, as a tribute to the whole without comparisons. Their work and influence will live as long as memory and history run. See photographs and their achievements. While Dr. Brents towered above all his contemporaries. I found no complaints or ministerial jealousy.

Chapter VI

HIS BOOKS

Dr. Brents in his preaching was a man of one book, the Bible; but in his reading, study and writing, he was a man of many books. Books alone were his teachers; and they made a scholar of him. His studies came late; but he made up in intensity what he lost in time. Being thus indebted to books, he naturally desired to write a book himself; but knowing books, the good and the bad, he was inhibited to wait until he had something worth writing about. At fifty years of age he still doubted that he was old enough and knew enough to write a good worthwhile book. The subject that he knew, studied most and knew best, was religion. He had been studying and preaching for fifteen or more years. In 1874 when he passed his half century, he decided that he wanted to leave some of his writing and work on record. He had been in the thickest of the fight over Calvinism and had dug up by the roots the errors of the passive system of religion, but he feared that these errors might take root again and hinder the church. He chose to write on the subject of the active plan of salvation, which still was the live issues of that time. He took up these errors one by one as follows: Predestination, Election and Reprobation, Calvinistic proofs, Foreknowledge of God, Heredity and Depravity, devoting a chapter to each. These subjects are all Scriptural concepts; but Calvin, who was committed to the passive theory of salvation, that a man can do nothing for his salvation, interpreted these doctrines to support his theory instead of making the theory fit the Scriptures. The creeds contained many of the errors from the above doctrines.

Dr. Brents shows that there is a divine predestination but not of the individual but of certain classes. Also that there was an election before the foundation of the world but this is also of a definite class, those "in Christ," who were saved, and those in the Devil, who were eternally damned. The righteous Christians are elected to eternal life and the wicked to eternal death; but Jesus Christ never

abandoned any individual as reprobate. Dr. Brents at length and in detail examines the Calvinistic proofs, showing the errors of each and giving the Scriptural teaching. In the chapter on the Foreknowledge of God Dr. Brents declares that God has the power not to know as well as the power to know all things; but some today would demur on this; however he makes out a clear case for this view and harmonizes it with Scriptures on the subject. The strong Calvinistic tenet was Inherited Total Depravity, that everyone inherits from Adam total depravity; and only baptism in infancy can save babies; and only a miracle in conversion can regenerate the adult. Dr. Brents totally refutes this whole set up in the creeds and leaves Calvinists without a Scriptural or reasonable proof to stand on. It is no wonder now that no one today teaches such a doctrine. The passing of the passive theory of salvation took with it all the above errors that supported it. The book is a most thorough refutation, covering in detail the whole subject, requiring 145 pages of clearly stated reasons. Dr. Brents closely followed the admonition, "Prove all things. Hold to that which is good."

With the ground cleared of Calvinistic errors, which were the hindering issues of the day, Dr. Brents proceeds with the exposition of the opposite theory, the active theory of salvation; but before commencing this, he gives a summary of the refutation, on which he proposes to build Christian salvation.

"We have seen that the destiny of each individual was not unalterably fixt in heaven or hell before time began and that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him; and hence everyone may make his calling and election sure—that you did not enter the world laden with hereditary depravity, by reason of which you are wholly opposed to all good, and irresistibly inclined to all evil, and unable to do anything commanded you of God; but on the contrary, you are quite competent to fear God and keep his commandments, and in doing so you will have discharged your whole duty. We have further seen that God has one kingdom, body, or

church, on the earth, and only one; that it was set up on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, by the authority of Jesus Christ, through the agency of the apostles, as guided by the Holy Spirit; and may be as surely known and identified, as men and things may be known by the features peculiar to them. And men must enter it by being born of the water and the Spirit; and thus, as individuals, they may become branches of Christ, the true vine, or members of his body the church of God, but to speak of organizations as branches of the church of God, is nothing less than the confused dialect of Babylon. We have further seen that before we can be born again, we must have been begotten with the word of God, as the incorruptible necessary seed to the accomplishment of the end, and that the Word must be preached, heard, and believed, in order to the production of that change of heart, and reformation of life, which must necessarily precede the new birth."

The above conclusions had back of the above statement years of study, preaching and debating, which broke the back of Calvinism. The Presbyterians and Old Baptists hung on to the passive theory and practice until the American Revised Translation of the Bible came out, translating "be converted" by "turn," after which they discontinued the Mourner's Bench, etc, and revised the creeds and preaching accordingly. I heard a noted Presbyterian minister in a Detroit convention 50 years ago urge all Presbyterians to do so; and they have now done so.

Having finished the negative part of this book, the refutation of theological errors inherent in the passive system of religion, Dr. Brents begins the larger positive part. He was not an iconoclast, tearing down institutions and systems except to clear the way for the better positive structures. With this done he establishes the institution of Christianity, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Following the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, he knew that no religion could be lasting without a concrete institution, which Jesus called the kingdom of God, or the church. Dr. Brents had sure positive views about the church, so his first affirmative item of his positive message was, The Establishment Of The Church. Whether

or not you agree with what he says, you will understand what he says; and, if you disagree, you will have the Scriptures on your hands for explanation. Step by step he follows the Scriptures in tracing the church from the birth of Jesus Christ to the close of the Day of Pentecost and thence with the inspired Apostles to their death. He drew on them for the name, the time, place, identity and nature of the church, showing clearly what the New Testament Church was in the first century; but he was not so sure of the church later. Step by step he follows the Scriptures in tracing the church from the birth of Jesus Christ to the close of the Day of Pentecost; and thence with the inspired Apostles to their deaths. He drew on them for every item of the church.

One of the objectives of the Christian unity Movement was to restore the Apostolic church as a basis of unity. Some today, however doubt the wisdom of the entire New Testament church; others the possibility of it; but the Campbells and Dr. Brents believed the essentials must be restored as the divine pattern. This involved the authority of the Bible and of Jesus Christ, which was largely and generally accepted in that day but not today. Since the authority of the Bible and Jesus Christ is weakened, we have had no sure foundation on which to stand together. There were then few barriers to Christian fellowship; and we had apparent unity. With the church established and identified on Mt. Zion on the day of Pentecost, Dr. Brents was not so sure of the church today. He called it "the church of God, the Christian Church." The name was not a serious barrier except it had to be one that "honored the bridegroom of the church."

Dr. Brents devotes the next chapter of his book to The New Birth; and in so doing he treats first things first. All life begins with generation and birth. Dr. Brents, being both a doctor and a preacher, knew both the physical and the spiritual life better. He had studied both. In fact, he knew spiritual life better than Nicodemus, to whom Jesus explained spiritual birth and life by an analogy with physical birth. Jesus and Paul often used such analogies. Both have their mysteries; but not the same as those of Nico-

demus and the people of Dr. Brents' day. Jesus explained it as far as Nicodemus could understand; but the people of Dr. Brents' day made a miracle and mystery out of it by denying that new Birth is "of water and the Spirit," that is, that water baptism had nothing to do with salvation which is in harmony with the passive theory of salvation. Dr. Brents shows that, when one is born of water, he is born at the same time of the spirit. Read it and see.

The next chapter is on Faith, which is usually treated first in the Disciples programme; but it was not so much a religious battle ground as in Dr. Brents' day. He treated the subject fully but not antagonistically. Except for Faith beginning in a miracle there were few serious differences in this area. His exposition was clear and didactic with everything supported by the Scriptures, which was Dr. Brents' method and conviction. He shows what faith is now and how it is received, it comes by hearing the word of God. All goes well till he comes to the statement that faith is the gift of God, and Christian salvation is by faith alone, or grace alone. Here is the first time in his book that he shows any impatience. He outlines the ordinary faith that saves, distinctive of the faith that removes mountains, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God. Dr. Brents goes into great detail and pains in riding Christian faith of passive errors and showing that it is an active principle of the Gospel.

Repentance is the next subjective act in the active plan of salvation. It is more difficult to define; but it is emphasized by all churches. It is more tragic than the other acts and more changeful and revolutionizing. The people of Dr. Brents' day tried to make it into a passive experience; but the more active it became the more Christian it became.

It was preached by John the Baptist. Jesus and all the Apostles, baptizing people "for the remission of sins." He shows it to be one of the most exacting words in the plan of salvation in making reparations. People who say that they can not repent share in the error of total de-

pravity, which blocked the way to salvation in Dr. Brents' day and confused the people about their God. Repentance is deep psychologically; but the weakest Christian knows the feeling and meaning. It is a vital part of salvation, which glorifies God and saves man.

Confession is another act in man's salvation, which sometimes precedes repentance and sometimes follows it. He points out many forms of confession in the Scriptures; but the most inclusive and important one is, that "Jesus is the Christ the son of God." It must be made "with the mouth and before men." All these acts are acts of worship for Christian salvation and for the remission of sins. The whole New Testament abounds with confessions of faith; but only one is evangelical and centered in Jesus Christ, the Saviour. Matt. 16: 16. While there is no account of confessions on Pentecost, there were out-cries of faith and expressions of repentance. Billie Graham, the greatest preacher today, calls for a "walking down the isle, handshaking" confession which is the equivalent of the Scriptural; but Dr. Brents perhaps would have insisted on a stronger committal.

The last act of obedience, according to Dr. Brents and the Campbells is baptism, which has been the most controversial; but regardless of all that has been spoken and written on the subjects he proposes a full treatment in his book. He devotes over four hundred pages of his book to this subject, more than three times as much as to all other subjects together. Surely this is the last word on baptism. After a lifetime study of the subject and reading all publications available and preaching and debating the subject, he has that right. I have known no theme so thoroughly searched and exhaustively studied as this final theme of Dr. Brents' book. I would not presume to add or subtract a word. He answered three questions on the subject. What is baptism? Who should be baptized? What is it for? The study is from the original into your words, which you will fully understand. All I have to say is, "Read Dr. Brents' book; and you will know New Testament baptism."

There have been many changes in theology since the days of the Campbells and Dr. Brents. With them the Holy Spirit was the chief being in the Godhead, who spoke for God to the people. I recently heard a prominent preacher in a large Christian church, built by Alexander Campbell and Philip Fall, preach that the Holy Spirit is nothing but a good conscience and the good was determined by the person." Shades of the Fathers! Could there be a greater heresy from the teaching of the Bible and the Campbells? Dr. Brents in his last and most important chapter goes into great detail and pains to show the teaching of the Bible on the Holy Spirit. He does not deny the mystery of the subject, because Religion must be larger than man. The Holy Spirit is the revealing agent.

The whole theology of the Bible is based on the faith that God is spirit; and man is flesh and spirit; and there is mystery in the being of each. Dr. Brents and Alexander Campbell endeavored to lift the veil but not to remove the mysteries. The current theology of their day submerged man. Dr. Brents proceeded on the theory that the Holy Spirit can be understood and there is a rational interpretation. Disciples have held from the beginning that Isaiah addressed the universal man, in writing, "Come now; let us reason together." Through John the Baptist the Holy Spirit made ready a people for the Lord; and after the Lord's baptism his Holy Spirit baptism He taught the people. Jehovah God was the Father God and saved the people through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This was Gospel salvation; and from first to last the Holy Spirit brooded over man's redemption. Some representatives of the Jews and Gentiles were granted full measure of the Holy Spirit, which was termed a baptism, showing both Jews and Gentiles were alike acceptable to God; but beyond these three instances there were no baptisms of the Holy-Spirit-inspired revelation and salvation.

Although Dr. Brents wrote *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* for evangelists, he was not an evangelist himself and never tried to be. He held very few evangelistic meetings. He was a theologian, endeavoring to indoctrinate evangelists in the philosophy of Christian salvation and living.

That is why he wrote these books setting forth in detail each item and thoroughly interpreting all. Like Peter, he wanted the evangelists to "Be ready at all times to give answer to him that asks a reason for the hope that was within them." Our evangelists are under a debt of gratitude and have so expressed themselves, as for instance, Jesse Kellems, one of the young successful evangelists. He was holding a meeting for W. H. Sheffer at Huntington, W. Va., who thought, from his sermons, he suspected Dr. Brents' influence, asked him if he had read this book. He answered, "Man, I ate that book up." Dr. Brents was dead then and could not hear these words. He published these books at a great personal sacrifice and expected no remuneration. The least we today can do is, as Jesse Kellems did, acknowledge our debt and be grateful. Dr. Brents was one of the few great theologians of the Disciples of Christ. He sought to reveal the God of the Bible and Jesus Christ as the Son of God and to establish the church of Christ for the work and worship of all Christians. Late editions of these books are for sale by McQuiddy Printing Company, Nashville, Tenn.

For the last half century preachers have discredited theology for social and material science; but the people are asking for the true knowledge of God, theology, Bible theology. Most every preacher has his own little religious system but rarely preaches the theology of Jesus Christ and the Bible. Dr. Brents has but one objective in his book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, to lead the reader to know and understand the Bible theology in Christian salvation.

In his second book, *Gospel Sermons*, he commits himself to the same task, Christian evangelism and Christian theology; but all are more or less theological in form and substance. He sets forth the fundamentals in every subject, treating them theologically in the light of the Scriptures and exposing current errors. Each sermon is on a subject, where help is needed. He has the last word on any subject he treats. There is nothing for me but commend them to the reader, which I urgently do. They are models of expository sermons. The subjects are as follows: The Mission of John the Baptist; Christ the Son

of God; The Commission; The Conversion of The Jailer; Types and Anti-Types; Shadows and substances; The Salvation of Hebrews From Bondage; The Tabernacle; Freedom From Sin; Justification; Regeneration; The Transfiguration; Paul's Charge to Timothy; A Reason For The Christian's Hope; Zeal Without Knowledge; Paul's Natural Man; The Divine Nature in the Christian; Excuses; The Origin, Mission and Destiny of Angels; The Millennium; Church Organization; Conditional Salvation. If You like Bible preaching here it can be found in its purity and power.

In the preceding chapters of his life, I have spoken only of the religious meaning and value of his writings and speeches; but in connection with the meaning of his books I wish to call attention to their literary form. He dates back and belongs to the Victorian age when the King James version of the Bible was the standard of expression, which was the most artistic of all versions. He read and studied the text so much that he absorbed the form and style to such extent that you can hardly tell from the language where the Scriptures end and his comments begin. His expression is exact, his words precise, his meaning clear, his composition smooth and flowing and his style distinctive. His writings are models of Victorian language. It is remarkable how he sustains this high standard of excellence throughout his speaking and writing. While he had a talent for language, he must have toiled, like he did on everything else that he undertook. He was a master of the English language; and he used this talent and skill only for his religion; but he never sacrificed truth to form and style. I fear that the church may never have such another literary advocate.

In his last sermons, which he wrote in his old age on Angels, Heaven, The Millennium, The Golden Altar of God, The Soul, this great literary and intellectual giant was as tender and emotional as a little child. Every syllable and word was to him literally true. He sang with the angels at the birth of Jesus Christ, knelt with the Elders around the Golden Altar, accepted Christ's invitation to the Millennium, and shouted with those that rose first, and joined

the Bridal Procession to Heaven. I never realized before the full meaning of, "A little child shall lead them."

Dr. Brents wrote few books for a church writer; but the two that he wrote embody a complete system of Christian work and worship, which cannot be said of the voluminous writings of the Campbells. They spent their time in trying to fit their ideals into the ecclesiastical framework of their day; whereas Dr. Brents built independently and amenably only to the Scriptures and Jesus Christ of the Scriptures, simply and rationally interpreted. You may disagree with what he wrote. Many did and still do. But you will understand that he wrote; and you will accept or reject it. His followers in the Christian Church and The Church of Christ since his death have been the most numerous and rapid-growing of any church body. He was born, lived, worked and died in one Middle Tennessee county; and he was not a propagandist. Fifty years of his life he was a Christian preacher, and writer, leaving in book form a few of his innumerable sermons. The proof of the preacher is his sermon, so I publish herein one of his great sermons from his book of sermons, that, the reader may know him better as a preacher. The following sermon on *The Sonship of Jesus*, in my opinion, ranks high in any collection of sermons; yet it is just a representative of his other published and unpublished sermons. Read it and see for yourself.

SERMON

The Sonship of Christ

"What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?" Matt. xxii: 42.

The faith of man seems to be like the vibrating pendulum of a clock; when it goes in one direction as far as it can, and turns back, it goes just as far in the other direction; and thus it seems ever swinging from one extreme to another. When the pendulum ceases to move it seeks a perpendicular, midway between the two extremes; but then the clock no longer keeps the time, and becomes worthless. The truth is generally to be found, like the

perpendicular, between the two extremes; but men seem to think that if they stop there they will be as worthless as the clock; and hence they are rarely content until they swing off into one extreme or the other.

These extremes are clearly seen in the faith of men concerning Jesus Christ. *Trinitarians* insist that He is the *very and eternal God*; and if you deny this they set you down as denying the *divinity* of Jesus Christ. The Unitarian believes that He was entirely human—a very good man, but simply, and only man. We think the truth is unquestionably between these extremes. Neither Trinitarianism or Unitarianism is true. No one is commanded to believe either; nor is he promised any thing for believing either; nor is he threatened with any punishment if he fails to believe either. On the contrary, he who fails to believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God will be lost— forever lost. Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John viii: 24.

Men believe this they tell us, but at the same time they believe that "Jesus Christ was, is, and ever will be the only true God." We once debated this proposition, worded just this way. How any one can believe it, is more than we can understand. He was both Father and Son; the sender and the sent; the mediator and one party to the mediation; equal to the Father, and the Father greater than the Son; seated at the right hand of the Father, and was the Father. Lord Bacon said, "A Christian is one who believes three to be one, and one to be three; a father not to be older than his son, a son to be equal to his father, and one proceeding from both to be equal to both; a virgin to be the mother of a son, and that very son to be her maker. The more incredible and absurd a divine mystery is, the more do we honor God in believing it, and so much the nobler is the victory of faith." God is never honored by believing any such incredible and absurd thing, because He is not the author of any such thing; nor did He ever command any one to believe any such thing; and fortunate it is that He did not; for it must have filled the world with infidels if He had required any such faith as this.

When a man reaches the point that the more incredible and absurd a thing is the stronger he believes it; and feels that he is all the more honoring God in believing it, he will reject every thing that is not *incredible and absurd*; and he will reject it *because he can understand it*. He concludes that whatever is not *incomprehensible*, is not in harmony with his ideas of God, and therefore is unworthy of belief. Is it possible that any one can work himself into such condition as this? Don't deceive yourself. Their name is legion. How much better was Lord Bacon's theory? But we are not expecting to benefit such.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD.

This is the grand central truth of the Christian religion. It is that around which revolves every thing connected with the scheme of human redemption; hence there is more and stronger proof establishing it than any one proposition of which the Bible treats. John says: "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." 1 John v: 9-13.

This is the testimony that God has given of His Son; and he that does not believe it makes God a liar. We have not room for all the testimony given us on this subject, but we will examine some of it—enough to show that it is nothing less than a contradiction of God Himself to refuse to believe it.

GOD'S TESTIMONY.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened

unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt, iii: 16, 17. John said: "And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." John i: 31. Thus Jesus was made manifest. God spake from heaven to the assembled multitude, in plain and unmistakable terms, "This is my beloved Son." This testimony came from heaven, when Jesus was coming out of the water. Surely no one will say that the water, out of which Jesus came, was heaven from which the voice came. The Spirit descended—Jesus came up.

Once more: On the mount of transfiguration, "a bright cloud overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Matt. xvii: 5. Peter says: "This is the voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the Holy mount." 2 Pet. i: 18.

To every one who believes the Bible, this testimony is sufficient to show that *Trinitarianism* and *Unitarianism* are both false, if there was not another word in the Bible on the subject. The voice came from God in heaven to where Jesus was on the earth; and He acknowledged Jesus as His Son; hence He was not the very and eternal God; and as He was the Son of God, He was more than man. No man is the Son of God in this sense. Thus we see that when any one denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God he makes God a liar, For God says, "This is my beloved son." This is true, or it is false. This is not very well calculated to prove that He was very and eternal God. Did God mean that Jesus was the son of himself; and the father of himself?

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

"And John bear record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and

bear record that this is the Son of God." John i: 32-34. This is virtually the testimony of God and John together. God told John how he would be able to know the Son, and John gives testimony. John heard the Father say, "this is my beloved Son" at His baptism, hence he was fully competent to testify that Jesus was the Son of God; but he never testified that He was the very and eternal God.

JESUS BORE WITNESS OF HIMSELF.

"I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me." John viii: 18 If Jesus was the only true God, then the Father and the Son were the same witness. He was the Father of Himself, and the Son of Himself; and sent Himself. This is not respectable nonsense.

When Jesus restored the blind man to sight, the enraged Jews cast him out. "Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." John ix. 35-37.

Again: "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me and I in him." John x: 36-38.

Once more: "Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? and Jesus said, I am." Mark xiv: 61, 62. It is said that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God; but this honor was thrust upon Him by His followers. We leave these quotations to speak for themselves. Many others might be added but these are enough, and plain enough. He never claimed to be the very and eternal God; but He did claim to be the Son of God in divers places.

THE APOSTLES' TESTIMONY.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi,

he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Mat. xvi: 13-17.

This question was propounded to all the apostles and answered by Peter in their presence; hence may be regarded as the answer of all of them. And as Peter's answer was made known or revealed to him by the Father it was the testimony of the Father. And as Jesus blessed Peter for making it, He is fully committed to it. So in this quotation we have the combined testimony of the Father, the Son, and all the apostles to the fact that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God.

When Jesus walked upon the water, to the ship in which the apostles were being tossed by the angry waves in a howling storm, after saving the doubting Peter from a watery grave, He went up into the ship and the wind ceased. "They that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Matt, xiv: 33. Thus testify the twelve.

Paul's testimony is in every epistle he wrote. We can only give a few samples with which his letters abound. His salutations in his letters clearly show that the Father and Jesus were a plurality of persons. "Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. i: 6; 1 Cor. i: 3; 2 Cor. i: 2; Gal. i: 3; Ephes. i: 2; Phil, i: 2; Col. i: 2; 1 These. i: 1; 2 These. i: 2; 1 Tim. i: 2; 2 Tim. i: 2; Tit. i: 4. Why make such distinctions between God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ if they were the same person? But he says: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." 1 Cor. i: 9. This shows not only a plurality of persons, but that Jesus Christ our Lord was God's Son.

THE TESTIMONY OF DEVILS.

"And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God." Mark iii: 11. "And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying. Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ." Luke iv: 41.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE WICKED.

"Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God." Matt, xxvii. 54. Thus we have the testimony of God, the Father; John the Baptist; Jesus Christ; all the apostles; devils; and wicked men to the fact that Jesus Christ was, and is the *Son* of God, not one of them testifies that he was the very and eternal God.

THE TESTIMONY OF MIRACLES.

"Then came the Jews round him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." John x: 24, 25.

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake." John xiv: 10, 11.

Jesus here intimates that the works wrought by him were done by the Father through him. These were stronger, or more convincing testimony than even what he had told them, though his words were given him by the Father. They might not believe what he said, but how could they disregard what he did before their eyes. These they saw, and were bound to know that unaided human power could not do them. Who could see him hush to silence the howling storm; calm the surging waves of the sea of Galilee,

and walk upon them as a pavement beneath his feet; open the eyes of those who had been born blind; unstop the ears of the deaf; cure all manner of disease, even the loathsome leprosy; cast out devils by the legion; and raise the dead to life and health, without being convinced as was Nicodemus: "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." John iii: 2. God would not have aided an impostor to do these things, nor could an impostor have done them himself; hence that he was what he claimed to be his miracles abundantly show. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." John xx: 31.

The miracles which Jesus did are recorded to prove that he is the Son of God; so that sinners, in need of salvation, may have an intelligent faith in him; and yield a hearty obedience to him; that they may have eternal life through him. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matt, vii: 21. But suppose a man believes that He is the *very and eternal God*, will that secure the same blessings that were intended for him who believes that He is the Son of God? Why not? If these propositions are the same why not as well believe one as the other?

This is the faith that must be confessed in order that God may dwell in us, and we in him. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." 1 John iv: 15. Surely there can be no more sacred relationship than this. Will it do just as well to confess that Jesus is the only true God as to confess what is required of us—that he is the Son of God?

"That which we have heard and seen declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i: 3. Here are two persons with whom the saints have fellowship—the Father and his Son Jesus

Christ. That they are distinct persons is as clear as language can make anything.

If Jesus Christ was the only true God, then it occurs to us that during the three days in which he was dead the world was without a God. And we insist that the fact that he rose from the dead is conclusive proof that he was not the only true God; for there must have been a living power equal to the task of raising to life that which was dead, otherwise a resurrection never could have been; and He would have remained dead forever.

But the Trinitarian smiles at this difficulty when it is presented; saying: "It was only humanity that died. As God He did not die. As man, He wept, suffered and died; as God, He rose from the dead." Plausible as this theory may appear, it is both contradictory and unreasonable. How could He, as God, rise from the dead, if, as God, He did not die? Only that which died could be raised from the dead. If only humanity died, then only humanity was raised from the dead. It matters not by what power that which was dead, was made alive, only that which was dead could be raised from the dead. If that which was raised did not die, then there was no resurrection of the dead at all. The whole theory of a resurrection of the dead was a sham, a fraud, a deception, and all our hopes of a resurrection of the dead through Christ are delusions. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not; for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." 1 Cor. xv: 14-19.

It was the fact that Jesus Christ was the Son of God that gave efficacy to the blood of the atonement. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ

his Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i: 7. It occurs to us that if nothing more than humanity died when Jesus died, the blood of any other man would have been as efficacious in cleansing from sin as would the blood of Jesus. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John iii: 16, 17. Thus we see that it took richer blood than that of mere humanity to secure the world's redemption. It took nothing less than the blood of God's *own Son* to magnify his law and make it possible for him to be just and pardon those who violated his law.

John says. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I John iv: 9, 10. Now if nothing but humanity suffered, as *Jesus derived all that from his mother*, then there was nothing sent from God that suffered at all. And it looks a little like God sent himself to earth, and placed himself in a human body, made of a woman; and submitted that body to be crucified, while he, the Divinity, suffered not at all, and then claimed to have so loved the world as to give his only Son to suffer and to die for it. This claim was unjust according to this theory; for it was only the Mary part of Jesus that suffered and died, for the divine part was God himself and he never suffered at all. We cannot very well understand such a sending as this. In place of sending any one or any thing, he came himself, and did not suffer any when he came. Mary made all the sacrifice—God made none. Such a theory is a slander upon God and his Son, both.

It really seems to us that there was quite a useless commotion in the material universe when Jesus died if only humanity suffered. The sun, "the bright orb of day," that had never refused to give his light from the time God swung him in the heavens until then, refused

to light up a scene like that, and the earth was mantled in darkness for three long hours. The earth trembled as a leaf, until the rocks about Jerusalem were broken: and the veil of the temple, that had stood for ages, was rent from top to bottom. Why all this? Humanity is suffering on the cross. Humanity had suffered in the death of men every hour of every day for a thousand years; but nothing like these things had ever occurred before. Then again we ask, why all this? The truth is, *the Son of God is dying*: and the heavens and the earth are in commotion. We say, as did those who stood by: "Truly this was the Son of God." Matt, xxvii: 54.

"Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared for me: "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure." Heb. x: 5, 6. If the body of Jesus Christ was *wholly human*, it was an exception to all law known to us. It is a fact well known, even by common observation, to say nothing of any thing else, that physical appearance and general temperament are derived from the father as well as from the mother. Indeed it is within the observation of every man that has given attention to the subject that *complexion* is derived even more from the father than from the mother; so much so that in the course of many generations the color of the mother is lost in that of the father. We predicate nothing of this, however; the idea to which we object is that the body and blood of Jesus Christ is *entirely human*, like his mother, and partook not of the nature of the Father at all. This absurdity is assumed to justify the theory that nothing but *humanity* suffered on the cross. A body that did not partake of the nature of Father and mother both, has never been seen on this earth—never.

It is all a myth too, that the divinity that was in Jesus Christ was the power by which he arose from the dead. Paul says: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. x: 9. We have already quoted him saying: "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have

testified of God that he raised up Christ; whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." 1 Cor. xv: 15.

Peter said: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." Acts ii: 32. "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even *by* him doth this man stand here before you whole." Acts iv: 10. "But God raised him from the dead." Acts xiii: 30. It was by the power of God that Jesus was raised from the dead— not by any inherent quality in Him, either human or divine.

But we must further notice a quotation made some time ago: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." John xiv: 10, 11. We are told that as the Father was in the Son, and the Son in the Father they were necessarily the same person. Well, in the 20th verse of the same chapter He says: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you." Did the Savior intend to teach that the disciples and he were, or ever would be the same persons because they should know that they were in him and he in them? Hardly, we suppose, yet the form of expression is the same, and if it does not prove that Christ and the apostles were one in person, neither does it prove that God and his Son were the same person.

Again: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God." 1 John iv: 15. Are we to understand that those who make this confession and God, himself, are, or ever will be one in person? We suppose not, yet the same style is used with reference to their dwelling in God, and God in them, that is used with reference to the Father being in the Son, and the Son in the Father. If the same language cannot prove one proposition it cannot prove the other. All the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Jesus Christ. The nature, at-

tributes, and purposes of God were in his Son, and hence they were said to be in each other.

But Jesus said: "I and my Father are one." John x: 30. Yes, and he said a man and his wife were one, but he expected them to remain two persons—a man and a woman as before. They were one in purpose and sympathy, (Matt, xix: 5, 6) but not one person, surely.

Jesus prayed: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." John xvii: 11. Verse 22, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one even as we are one." Did Jesus pray that the apostles might become one person? Surely not. But he did pray that the apostles might be one in the same sense that he and his Father were one. Then if the apostles were different persons, and would so remain, it is certain that He and His Father were different persons. From this conclusion there is no escape. Then as God and his Son were one in spirit, object and work, so He prayed that His apostles might be perfectly harmonious in all their labors for the salvation of man. Paul admonished the brethren at Corinth to this unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." 1 Cor. i: 10. Christ prayed for this unity among the apostles and he prayed for them to be one as he and his Father were one.

"For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." John xvi: 27, 28. If this does not show that while Jesus was on the earth he and his Father were, in some sense, in different localities, and were different persons, then we may as well pronounce the New Testament a riddle and beyond human comprehension, on this subject at least.

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice,

because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." John xiv: 28.

Jesus said: "I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman." John xv: 1. This expression was taken from real life. In horticulture there are the vine, the branches, and the husbandman, or dresser of the vine. Then in order that the figure may fit that which is illustrated the husbandman cannot be the vine dressed by Him. Then Jesus Christ, the vine, could not have been the Father, or dresser of the vine.

Jesus prayed to the Father. John xvii. Matt, xxvi: 39-44. Mark i: 35; xiv: 35-39. Luke i: 35; xxii: 41. Prayer suggests two persons—one to pray, and another to pray to. The prayers of Jesus were senseless if Trinitarianism be true. But they tell us it was the humanity praying to the divinity. When did the humanity of Jesus begin? Not until he was conceived by the Virgin Mary. Very well, then, we will hear him pray to his Father: "O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." John 17: 5. Jesus then had a glory with the Father before the world was. As his humanity began at the conception this could not have been the *humanity with the Father* before the world was. This effectually disposes of that quibble—that wherever a plurality of persons are shown, one was the humanity and the other the divinity.

John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." John i: 1, 2. The preposition *with*, twice occurring in this quotation clearly shows companionship, association of *two or more parties*, agreeing with the expression, "The glory I had with thee before the world was," as seen above.

But He was God. Yes, but let us be careful not to add any thing to that which is written. It does not say He was the only God; nor does it say He was the very and eternal God. He was the manifestation of God's power in creation as seen in the next verse; and He was called God because He inherited the name of His Father. "Being

made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. i: 4.

Stephen saw Him at the right hand of God. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Acts vii: 55, 56.

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. Mark xvi: 19. We suppose that it will not be contended that it was the *humanity* which Stephen saw at the *right hand of the Divinity* in heaven.

Jesus is our mediator. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii: 5, 6. The idea of mediation suggests at least three parties, a mediator and two parties between which the mediation is had. God was one party, man another, and Jesus Christ the mediator between God and man. Surely Jesus did not mediate between himself and the people. A mediator, to be competent must be entirely disconnected from both parties, or equally related to both, so that no charge of partiality can be brought against him. Jesus was just such a character. He was divine and he was human. He was Son of God and Son of man. His father was divine, his mother was human. He was as nearly related to man as to God. In him humanity and divinity met—pre-eminently fitting him to be mediator between God and men.

Just to *what extent*, or even *how* humanity and divinity were blended in Jesus Christ we may never perfectly comprehend; but we do know that he was born of a woman, that he hungered, thirsted, wept with those in distress, and sympathized with suffering humanity; that he was tempted—sorely tempted as we are, yet without sin; that he was touched with the feeling of our infirmity; that he took not on him the nature of angels but the seed of

Abraham; hence we know that if we sin we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous; and we gladly trust our cause to the care of such an advocate. He says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." All our approaches to the Father are made through our advocate —our mediator—our high priest. We have no worth or merit in ourselves to commend us to the favor of God. Our confidence is in Jesus, who as our advocate will order our cause aright—in our mediator who will intercede for us—in our high priest who will present all our offerings before the mercy-seat.

"What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Every thing to God in prayer."

That Jesus Christ is the Son of God has already been fully shown. His divine character may be further seen in his sinless life. Never did man pass through such trials, and persecutions as he, and yet remain undefined by sin. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. Such purity was never seen in any one wholly human.

But in nothing is the divinity of Christ more clearly seen than in his own resurrection from the dead. Paul said: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts xvii: 31. The fact that God raised his Son from the dead gives assurance unto all men that he was what he claimed to be; and that he would judge the world in righteousness by him. God would not have raised an impostor, nor could an impostor have raised himself; hence, in his resurrection, we have the strongest assurance of his divine character.

That he did rise from the dead is as certain as it is

that the Bible is true. We have seen a number of passages saying, in the plainest terms possible, that God raised him from the dead. Not that he raised himself by the divinity that was in him, but that God *raised him*. This being true, we have the strongest possible assurance of his divinity that could be given. The testimony is *direct*, and as certainly true as it is that God cannot lie.

What is the probable reliability of the testimony of the apostles? They all say he arose from the dead and that they saw him, and that he was seen by many others—more than five hundred at once. They could not have been mistaken in his identity, for they knew him well before his death. They had associated with him intimately for three years and a half. They ate with him, talked with him, and probably slept with him almost continuously; hence that they knew him is simply certain. They could not have been mistaken. They either saw him alive after his crucifixion or they fabricated a stupendous falsehood. Men generally act from motive—what motive could have induced them to fabricate and tell such a lie as this? They did not do it for money for Jesus told them he was so poor that he had no place to lay his weary head; and as the soldiers were paid to testify falsely it is quite probable that they could have made a fortune by giving up the false testimony and telling the truth if Jesus did not rise. Their testimony to the resurrection was false if Jesus did not rise, hence they could have exchanged the falsehood for the truth and been well paid for it beside. Why did they not do it? What else? They could not have expected to gain popularity by the story of the resurrection, for he told them that they would be persecuted and despised of all men for his sake; and they found this quite true. They were put to death for Jesus' sake, every one of them but John; and tradition tells us that he was thrown into a caldron of boiling oil, and was only saved from a martyr's death by a miracle. Whether this be true or false, one thing is certain: he did not escape the fire of persecution; for he was banished to the isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. This we have from his own pen (Rev. i: 9). Then they did not hatch

up, agree upon, and tell their story for *popularity*. *Why did they tell it?* The persecutions to which they were subjected separated them, and they were martyred in different countries; where, the probabilities are, they did not hear from each other. One could not know that the others had not given up the falsehood so as to make it folly for him to adhere to it; and yet they all stuck to it, and died on account of it; when they could have saved their lives by giving it up and telling the truth. Can any sane man believe that they did it? Is there a parallel to it in the world's history anywhere? We venture to affirm that not one case can be found, where twelve men, or more, agreed upon a falsehood, and told it, and ever one adhered to it, until it brought death upon all of them, when they could have saved their lives by giving up the falsehood and telling the truth; and all without any reward of any kind— with nothing to gain, but everything to lose by it. Is it reasonable? Do you think twelve men could be found on the earth to-day who would be guilty of such stupendous folly? Surely not. The testimony of the apostles was true. Jesus rose from the dead, and they saw, and knew him. They gave up their lives rather than bear false witness against his resurrection. This one fact establishes his divine character forever.

My dear friend, have you pursued and considered the testimony here presented? If so are you not convinced that Jesus was more than human? Nay, are you not convinced that he was, and is none other than the Son of God? If so, we ask you as he asked the Jews: "Why call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" If you believe him to be the Son of God you are under obligations high as heaven, deep as hell, vast as the universe to believe every word that fell from his lips, to trust every promise he made; and obey every command he gave which applies to such as you. Your faith in him will do you no good unless it moves you to love, trust and obey him. Come, then my brother, let us renew our devotions to him—love him more and serve him better; and let us cultivate this determination, and act upon it, to the last moment of life. God help us to do it.

Friendly sinner, have you no place in your heart's deepest affections for love of a Savior like this? Can you look with indifference on the suffering Son of God, as he hangs bleeding and dying on the cross for you? God loves you. Jesus died for you. Angels are concerned for you. The church invites you, begs you, pleads with you. Your mother weeps over you; but you, the one most interested, are still indifferent and unconcerned. The sun refused to shine on the crucifixion of Jesus, but you can look upon it without a blush. The earth trembled when the Son of God died, but you can contemplate it without the tremor of a nerve. The solid rocks were shivered, but your heart remains unbroken.

This is an abnormal condition of the human mind. No one is so, naturally. He has to educate himself up to it. At first he felt deeply when he heard the story of the cross. It cost him a desperate struggle to refuse obedience to the gospel when first he learned the Master's will. But every successful resistance hardened him a little, and enabled him to resist with less effort the next invitation until he reached his present condition. Once he could feel, now he cannot. Once he could weep on account of his sins and in sympathy with the sufferings of Jesus; now the fountain of his tears is dried up, and he can resist the most heart-stirring appeals which human tongues can make with the most perfect indifference. When he reaches this condition he is gone. He has passed beyond all the appliances and means by which God proposes to save men and he *will never return*. Resistance to the devil is right—resistance to God is vain and dangerous. O do not start in that direction. You may soon get so far as to make it difficult to turn back.

Here we remember an incident of the late war, an account of which we read in a paper called "The Children's Quarterly," then published in Lexington, Ky. We did not memorize the report, nor did we preserve the paper, hence we can only give the substance, as we now remember it.

A man, having a wife and three small children, was compelled to go into the army—on which side we do not

know, nor does it matter. The day of rendezvous was authoritatively appointed; and he made all necessary preparation for starting. The day came, and with it his neighbors to bid him farewell, and pray God's protection upon him. First, he bade his neighbors goodbye, then one by one he took up his children, and imprinted a father's kiss upon each. Then came the parting from his wife. The scene beggars description—it was like tearing soul and body asunder. All hearts felt, and all eyes wept. In all probability they would never meet again. From that dreadful war many never returned, hence the parting was severe. Among those present was a boy who was too young to be compelled into military service. He bravely stepped forward and took the man by the hand and said: "Sir, let me go in your place. I have no family to leave. If I fall there will be no widow left; nor orphan children to suffer for a father's care. Let me go and you stay with your family." The proposition was accepted—the boy went and the man stayed at home. It is unnecessary to say that that boy made a brave soldier—that he went under the circumstances assures that fact. On the bloody field of Chickamauga in the van of his host he fell and never breathed again. When the battle was over his friends buried him, as best they could, and placed a board at the head of the grave with his name and place of address inscribed upon it. They wrote to the man in whose place he had gone that the brave boy had fallen, and how his grave could be found. The man made his way to that grave, disinterred the body took it home and buried it with all the honor he could bestow upon it. Over the grave he placed a costly marble monument with suitable inscription upon it. Among other things inscribed were these impressive words: "HE DIED FOR ME."

This shows that that man appreciated and loved that boy. Jesus died for you—have you done as much for him? If not, is it not ungrateful in you not to do it? Will you not begin it now? Blessed Jesus hast thou died for me? And shall we not live and labor for thee?

"See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down,
Did e'r such love and sorrow meet?
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."
Amen and amen.

Chapter VII

DENOMINATIONAL MATTERS

Denominational matters did not connote and denote the same in the days of the Campbells and Dr. Brents as they do to us today, at least, they were treated with less importance. In that period everything centered around the creeds either for or against them, seeking for a more Scriptural creed. There was little of no opposition to denominations as such. The churches were largely at peace with each other, thinking that the denominations were beneficial. Some today still hold to this view, but the Campbells and Dr. Brents in their searching and probing the Scriptures for their models, came to the conclusion that they were sinful,—"The church is essentially one," and must be organically one. The creeds and the Denominations were inexorably yoked together; and they stand or fall together.

However they were not offensive in their teaching on this point. They were more interested in a full complete Bible ideology than in any part of which; but by the time Dr. Brents came on the stage, there was considerable tension on this subject; however he was not extreme on the matter. I quote the following from one of his sermons preached in his old age on the Millennium, which he devoutly believed in and expected as follows: "Some think that the Millennium will consist of the breaking down of denominationalism and the universal acceptance of the pure Gospel of Christ, as taught by Mr. Campbell and his co-workers. However, desirable this may be, we see no prospect of it; nor can we find satisfactory evidence on which to base such a belief. Denominationalism is here, and it is here to stay. It will be here when Jesus comes, perhaps just about as it is now. Some of the denominations that are here now will doubtless pass away. Some are dying, and have been struggling in the throes of death for a number of years. The handwriting is on the wall, and they must go; and he is a poor reader of the signs of the time who does not already see this; but perhaps other

parties will rise up and take their place, and thus denominations will continue as long as time endures. All the world has not yet accepted the pure word of God, and never will. He is dreaming who expects the millennium to come about in this way."

Throughout Dr. Brents' long career as a preacher and debater I found no expression of bitterness and offense by him. In his many long and exhaustive debates in his defence of the Christian Church, when it needed most defence, I found no criticism for being unfair, discourteous or abusive by any of his opponents in debate. This could not be said, however, of many of his contemporaries. As the church grew and opposition to it increased, tensions became worse, feelings on both sides were embittered to the discredit of the Church. Many of the preachers came to be known as "fighters," which they really were. This kind of Gospel strategy led to the discrediting of debates and increased denominational strife. Debates served their day and generation and must go they say, which I think is another extreme, which I have treated in the chapter on Dr. Brents' debates. As long as religious error exists, it must be exposed and rejected; but there is a Christian way of doing this.

But there are two or more sides to most questions to which the Campbells and Dr. Brents gave full, free and courteous discussion. This attitude was obvious and evident in all their teaching and preaching, but not with many of their contemporaries, which resulted in "cocksureness" in many preachers of that day; but Dr. Brents was relatively free of this fault. He was sure and positive but not dogmatic and intolerant. Furthermore, the Denominations became more antagonistic, which resulted in the "thirty year" religious war as it became to be known.

But the Denominational troubles from without were not all the difficulties and problems. There were those from within, which came to be known from Dan to Beer-sheba. The Denominations began to point the finger, saying, "Look. These people who were going to unite all,

are divided themselves." However it was many years before this was literally true. Dr. Brents was in full agreement with the Campbells and often told them so. He was a real Campbellite. He readily and fully agreed with them on the essentials, and especially their major theme, union on the Scriptures. The implications and details came later and gave trouble; and, besides, these were beginning and creative days and the formation of convictions of their own, and some matters were under investigation. I think that Alexander Campbell never fully made up his mind whether his religious project was a church or a Movement; and many Disciples today have not yet decided; and this difference has cut down through the Disciples and given trouble. Are we just another sect or Denomination, or are we a church, or the Church? The answer to these questions determines many other related matters. As I have been able to judge, the Campbells at different times answered both ways. Dr. Brents answered, we are a church, and directed his all accordingly.

The above answers determined their views on Christian unity. If it is a restorative unity Movement, it is temporary and will pass away with other temporary movements. If it is the Church or a part of it, it is eternal. Also the church is a two-fold institution, a local concrete congregation and an abstract Kingdom of God on earth. Which one is the object of endeavor and emphasis? Both, of course; but there was a difference of emphasis with the Campbells and Dr. Brents, not spoken of but dormant in their work and teaching. The Campbells being obsessed with the unity ideal that embraced the whole world, gave their time and effort to the building up of the world institution, the Kingdom of God; whereas Dr. Brents, being a strong institutionalist (See his sermon on The Establishment of The Church in his book, The Gospel Plan of Salvation), gave his time and effort to the local body. One worked for a temporary ideal, a united church; whereas the other worked for an earthly Temple and a spiritual New Jerusalem, both of which were greatly needed by lost souls; but this small difference finally worked havoc with the Christian Church.

But Christian unity was not the only item that gave internal trouble. Many other points of difference of less importance arose, which hindered their progress. Congregational organization gave much trouble. Both A. Campbell and Dr. Brents wrote elaborate, agreeable treatises of the subject. The name also gave trouble. Barton W. Stone, Dr. Brents and many others contended for the name, Christian; but Alexander Campbell held to the name, Disciples, which difference has come down to the present unsolved. They were fully agreed on the plan of Christian salvation, which Dr. Brents put into book form, which became the text book and guide of the Restoration for evangelists through the South and West. All were fully agreed on the active plan of salvation as deduced from the New Testament. But finally some one dragged Organized Missions and instrumental Music In Worship out of the skeleton closet; and serious trouble began. The Campbells opposed both at first; but afterwards changed to approval or consent. Dr. Brents, true to their accepted essential principle, "Where the Bible speaks, we speak; and where the Bible is silent, we are silent," said nothing so far as we could discover. Jesus was silent on both, so was Dr. Brents during his whole ministry. In his old age his daughter, Mrs. Charles Dabney, asked him why he never expressed his views or preached on the subject. His answer to her put all such matters of the silence of the Scriptures in the realm of Christian liberty, which the congregation could have or have not as they saw fit. The use of the silences of Jesus and the apostles was the great cross in the household of the Christian church. Some took the position that these silences excluded from the church everything on which they were silent; and the others took the position that all such were automatically put in the realm of Christian liberty. The latter position was based on the ruling of the Apostles on the matter of circumcision. Dr. Brents did not argue the case but most all others did. The difference was never settled and finally in 1906 it led to the division of the church one year after the death of Dr. Brents.

Personally, I feel very much as did Martha and Mary

on the death of Lazarus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, our brother would not have died." That is, "Dr. Brents, if you had been here, we would not have divided." I also do not know his personal views or judgment as to the expediency of these specific things; but I think that he would have opposed them on these grounds, which solution might have prevailed. On the other hand, Dr. Brents was a man of great ability, strong convictions, wide influence and high standing. During his mature life, he dominated all policies and situations; and none of his associates challenged his views. I doubt that before the division came any one would have been bold enough and able enough to antagonize him. Yet he was not tyrannical or offensive in any way; but he had a strange influence over people. His very presence made opposition difficult. He was strongly opposed to division and would have, I believe, found some way to prevent it. But, according to the leaders, the government had requested a separate census report; and those that sent it in constituted the Church of Christ; and we have been a divided people ever since.

Church membership has also been a disturbing question from the beginning; but it never gave serious trouble until recent years, because nearly all held close membership views. Dr. Brents declared membership to those only that comply with the Scriptural terms. The Campbells held the same view but not so strictly. He never argued the case; and he was silent on the subject of fellowship, which was the only theological question that he said nothing on. What is said here is, therefore, in view of his silence on the subject. Trouble has come from a confusion of church membership and Christian fellowship. Church membership is confined to the saved, which is in the hands of the Lord, Mark 16: 16, Acts 2: 47 and does not come in the jurisdiction of man, so either close membership or open membership is off human bounds; but fellowship was fully treated by Jesus and is in the hands of his disciples, Matt. 18: 20; Mark 9: 38-41. The terms of fellowship prescribed by Jesus are, meeting in his name for work and worship. He not only states the terms but gives examples. This was too broad a fellowship for his disciples just as it

is for Disciples today. Dr. Brents, I think, could not bring himself to accept and practice such an open fellowship. Like people today they were too sectarian; but Jesus never changed or repealed the above terms. They are clear and simple in execution. Any one that meets in the name of Jesus for Christian work and worship may be received into the fellowship but not into the saved state of the church. Nothing is said of salvation and church membership. This fellowship places them only in the visible assembly for work and worship; but salvation and church membership are left with Jesus and the individual alone, Rom. 14: 4. I have preached this for over fifty years in sermons, books and pamphlets; but no one has agreed with me. If this is not Christian fellowship, what is it? If Jesus did not mean this, what did he mean? To my surprise Dr. Brents said nothing on the subject. I feel that he never made up his mind on the subject and said nothing. Personally, in his contacts with the religious world he was apparently open fellowship but not open church membership. In fact, practically all Disciples have been the same; and, if they would leave church membership to the Lord where it belongs, we would be more peaceful and happy.

The problems of church membership and fellowship are parts of the larger problem of Christian unity. The whole subject of unity has given trouble all through the years. The Campbells had a passion for unity, and they thought their plan of unity on the Scriptures would solve the problem; but it did not. Many of the people did not want unity. They wanted what they had, division, which they thought was the better polity. All could have their own Denomination as they liked. They loved their denominations and worked to advance them. On the other hand the Disciples, or Christians only, went their lone way protesting their being called a denomination. There was a dormant difference between the Campbells and Dr. Brents on the matter; but it gave little or no trouble. It was a difference of emphasis. Dr. Brents thought that the local bodies were necessary steps toward the universal body, the kingdom of God; and he gave his time and attention largely to the congregations; and, whether or not the de-

nominations ever united, the true church would be here. I doubt that he was ever wholly committed to the universal body. He was a strong local institutionalist and he never organized or joined any ecumenical organizations; however he organized the local body to the nth degree of the Scriptures. All through his religious career he was more of an individualist than a co-operator. Independence is a commendable Christian possession of Christian liberty; but we can have too much of both. Why is it that each one has to lean to liberty or license, one way or the other, when Jesus wants all to be balanced? The Disciples like all others have had serious troubles over trifles and non-essentials; but Dr. Brents did much to keep them on main lines of transportation from earth to heaven.

Dr. Brents steered clear of all troublesome divisive matters such as the speculative, the uncertain, the silences, the liberties, expediciencies, etc., To him the way of the Lord was non-essentially broad as well as essentially "straight and narrow." I never found Dr. Brents associated with any party within the church. He was *a* trouble-shooter instead of a trouble maker. The church has proved itself to be the most inflammable institution in the world, which Dr. Brents seemed to realize and was shy of "the very appearance of evil." He had positive views and convictions in season out of season; but unless it was a plain teaching of the Bible, he never advocated it. His aloofness from trouble made him appear unsympathetic, cold and lacking in fellowship. Avoiding trouble, he even declined to write for the church papers, of which we today have lived to see the wisdom of his warning.

But church papers have not been the only sources of trouble in the church. There have been differences of convictions and opinions that have been disturbing and divisive. Dr. Brents attempted nothing more than the unity of the local body. He neither organized nor joined any effort to unite any larger bodies; however the New Testament church or body was a larger brotherhood than the local congregation. The Kingdom of God on earth included all the members of the divine family of God the Father and Jesus the Son and elder Brother, which is large

for organization and control; and the smaller body, the Disciples, is in a deplorable condition with three or more distinct fellowships. If only all could be brought to accept and practice the broad fellowship of Jesus, Matt. 18: 20, that would be a far step toward universal unity.

In view of these difficulties some are for calling it a failure and settling down as one of the Denominations; but Jesus commanded unity such as is between the Father and the Son. Others, encouraged by the progress that has been made during the last half century, are for pressing on toward the goal; and there is much in favor of this view. In fact, there is a condemnation of those that "put their hands to the plow and turn back." Those that have attempted "great things for God" have been greatly blessed; but people can attempt too much, more than they can accomplish. Dr. Brents may have been right in concentrating on the local body in his unity work. Alexander Campbell has been written up in a book under the title, *A Fool For God*. He may have been; but we are sure that Dr. Brents was not a fool for God nor for man.

Chapter VIII

HIS DECLINING YEARS

Dr. Brents lost the first two decades of his life in getting a late start. He was twenty one years of age before he seemed to have any direction to his life. No one now knows what became of this period of his life; and few people know what became of his youth. These years fly by like birds of passage, seeking pleasure and fancy. While this period appears unimportant, wise men tell us this is the time for acquiring a knowledge of self and our world. In fact, without this knowledge of ourselves and our world, we would be helpless creatures, not even good jelly fish. After it is all over they tell us we learn more from that period than from all the remaining periods. Dr. Brents acquired his knowledge of himself and his world in the schools of Nature and Experience. In his childhood and youth he found nothing worth recording except he was a member of a large pioneer wilderness family. At least, he faced life with a strong mind in a strong body.

After having drained three professions he came up to old age in vigor and retired in his late seventies from the strenuous objectives of his busy life. Having returned to Marshall County and bought a large farm about ten miles East of his old home on a hill overlooking Liberty Valley and near Old Liberty Christian Church and also near my father's home a mile over Elk Ridge to the South. From the time that they lived in Liberty Valley he must have bought the farm also as a home for the family while he preached and debated. He attended Old Liberty Church and preached when there. He built or bought a large home. I do not know how many of the nine children were at home at this time. It appears from the time after their return to Marshall County that they spent 28 years in this home, covering the time of his religious work.

One of Dr. Brents' greatest achievements was his family. He raised nine children, four boys and five girls. The first mother died early leaving five young children. The second mother soon stepped into the breach to meet the need,

which was an act of heroism and love; and the crisis was met. There followed the four children of the second marriage, which made a heavy load in itself. These two mothers were heroines of the highest order. The first, Angilina Scott, came to him in his blind, foolish frivolous youth, when he had no ambition or direction in his life. She taught him to read and write; and perhaps secured the old English grammar for him, which was an Aladdin's lamp to him. With her influence and the appeal of the children, he was soon on his way to fame and fortune. All praise to Angilina Scott. But no less a heroine was Elizabeth Jane Taylor, the second mother, a widow, who took up the labor of love. She was a step and a real mother at the same time, which was a difficult situation.

Dr. Brents was a devoted family man, having the interest of the children in mind and sacrificing for them. I think that he must have resigned the presidency of the Medical College to go to Spencer, Burritt College, to give the children an education, where most of them graduated. Also doubtless he had the children in mind when he bought the farm and country home. He produced a family of great credit and worth.

All are now dead and made honorable and useful careers; but it is a great loss to his history to have none of their tributes and memories of their father. No one else knew him so well or loved more. His real and true history is known fully to no one else; and usually children die with this history sealed within them, which seems true in this case.

While Dr. Brents did not trace the name back to its historical origin, one of his relatives, Chester Horton Brent did do so, tracing the family back to Hugh Brent, of Va., Ky., Tenn.; and the descendants of Dr. Brents have preserved a genealogy of the immediate family, written by a grandson, Wm. Rufus Brents, of Sherman, Texas, and now in possession of another grandson, R. L. McBride, Jr. of Lewisburg, Tenn., which is continuous and correct, running back to the days and family of king Edward. The following genealogies are taken from this record.

Thomas Brents, Sr 1775-1837, wife Margurett McQuirter had the following children: Alpheus; William; James, wife, Rhoda Davis Cowden; Elizabeth, husband, Steven Talley; Mary Lucinda, husband, Hill; Jane, husband, Flemming; Matilda, husband, Brooks, and Thomas Wesley.

Dr. Thomas Wesley Brents, 1823-1905, Wife, Angilina Scott, Children, Dr. Thomas Elias; Marguerett; Alexander Campbell; Mollie; John. Second wife, Elizabeth Jane Taylor, children, Clemma; Ella, husband, Dabney; James; Ida, husband, McBride.

But this is the history of Dr. Brents and not his family; and space forbids an account of the family; but there must be credit and honor that are due.

Like most families of the great, they had too much father. They could not start from or reach the level of their father. There was just one Dr. Brents, one in ten thousand; and he was above them as he was above his other contemporaries, which was embarrassing and a handicap. However, one, James, broke through this handicap and became the editor of the *Louisville Post*, one of the great papers of the nation; but he ran into a bigger handicap in his competitor, Hon. Henry Waterson, who was a handicap to all the other editors; but he held his way with Marse Henry and became a great editor. I had a brush off with James in my early days. I started to school under him in the country school. He reported to my mother that she would have to take me in charge or suffer the consequences. She took me in charge; but I am not trying to get even with him at this late date. Another son, Dr. Elias Brents and son, Wm. Rufus, reached fame and fortune in Sherman, Texas; but deaths interfered and ended all. Personally, I knew only one of the family, Mrs. Ella Dabney, who was a cultured and brilliant woman, the wife of Charles Dabney, a Nashville insurance head. All the children are now dead; and the grandchildren are on the stage of action. I have met four of this generation, namely Rev. James Brents, (nephew), Nashville, Christian preacher and author; Thomas W. Brents, Tuscaloosa, Ala. business; R. L. McBride, Jr., Vice-President of First

National Bank, Lewisburg; and Brents McBride, Nashville, head of the Conservation Department of the State. Genetists tell us that we do not inherit from our mothers and fathers but from our grandparents. This seems to be true of the above Brents in both body and mind. The McBrides bear a striking resemblance to Dr. Brents. They lack only his whiskers to being the old Dr. Brents incarnate. All of the first generation have passed to their rewards with their father, Dr. Brents. One of the girls, Clemma, I think, married Victor Dorris, one of the great preachers of Tennessee and Missouri.

Dr. Brents came to old age in strength and vigor. While he had the infirmities of old age, he had many interests and ways of spending his time. He was not of the type to take a rest when he was not tired. He had many avocations as well as vocations in his long active life, to which he could turn in his old age. There was no such thing in that age as Retirement, or Emeritus; and, if there had been, he would not have availed himself of it; but he became too old for any of his vocations or avocations. He held on to farming to the last. For many years he had superintended the large rich cotton plantation (650 acres) on horseback or sitting in his large white home on a hill, from which the level fields were all visible. Here in this large two-story white frame house, which overlooked the whole of Liberty Valley, he did most of his reading, study and writing. This was his home for twenty-eight years. This house since burned and was replaced by a brick after his death. When the time of "the Sear and yellow leaf" came in his old age, the wear and tear of a long crowded hectic life were manifest in his body but not in his mind, so he moved to Lewisburg, the County seat town ten miles Northwest. I have no memory of this moving day. My father's home was over Elk Ridge one mile to the South; but there was a great vacancy left after they moved out. He built a large white house in Lewisburg on Farmington St. patterned after the farm house, which showed his attachment to the country home, where they had lived so long. This hermitage gave him an opportunity for reading and study that enabled him to do the great work that he did. I be-

lieve that the hand of God is thus plainly traceable throughout the long life of Dr. Brents. Any way, like Joshua the son of Nun "he never would stop until the work was done." Dr. Brents' work was done, so he moved into town for a rest in his old days; but he was restive with nothing to do, so before he bowed completely off of the stage of action, he planned a venture in a new field, banking. There was no bank in Marshall County. It was before the day of Banks. Banking was carried on by rich individuals. Dr. Brents was the best known man in the County and knew most people. He conceived a public individual bank or a stock company bank, I do not know which. Anyway the bank was started with Dr. Brents as president in charge. I do not know where the money came from; but it was there. Dr. Brents never appeared to have much money; but, when it was needed, he had it or got it. He operated the bank for four years successfully; and it is today one of the great banks of Middle Tennessee. Not that Dr. Brents alone made it so. After him there have been other great men back of it and leading it, namely, Dr. Sam Hardison, W. D. Fox, "Uncle Willie," who gave it life and immortality, and present executives, Lee Moss, and R. L. McBride, the grandson of Dr. Brents. The wealth, the stability, the security, the trust, and above all, the intelligence of old Dr. Brents still hovers over this institution, making it known and trusted.

Dr. Brents made only one failure in his life, a marriage in his old age, which seems to be irresistible and inevitable for old men. The mistake was soon manifest; and separation was effected.

Dr. Brents never lost any of his great faculties in his old age. He was the same superman to the end. A young preacher came to town and issued a challenge to meet Dr. Brents in debate, which Dr. Brents ignored; and he published Dr. Brents as deserting the cause. Like an old retired warhorse, Dr. Brents said, "Go tell that young upstart, I will meet him and teach this jack-a-nape some sense."

Throughout this whole study I have tried to avoid being

fulsome, which Dr. Brents himself hated; but in all races of men there is "One in ten thousand," a superman, that stands out above and beyond all others, whom you can not portray without being fulsome with respect to others. There is no doubt about Dr. Brents being such a man; and I make no apologies for so portraying him. He can not be accounted for on any other grounds. This does not mean that he was faultless. What such a man does with his talents, life and character is his own affair and responsibility. Dr. Brents had his faults, some of which I have gathered from tradition, which I feel obligated to mention in the interest of the balanced truth of the man. He was egotistic, but with his talents, who would not be? He was a ten talent man that received the praise of his Lord. Apparently, he was unsympathetic, proud and cold, domineering, critical, exacting, a big eater, which is the common fault of most preachers. With praise for his virtues and charity for his faults, we write this record of the life of Dr. Brents with a feeling of incompleteness, that there is much in his great life that has allowed to be forgotten, because his contemporaries are all dead and no one kept a record; but enough is known to make him the leading and greatest citizen of Marshall County and far beyond through the South. Religiously, his parish covered the whole South in laying the foundations of the Christian Church and the church of Christ. He lived to a mature old age of 82 and came to a natural end. He was born into a small world and died in the same. At the time of his death his world had greatly shrunk to Lewisburg and Marshall County; but formerly it had covered the area of the whole South; and the fruits of his labors still cover the same area. If life did not have its fruits that ripen and spread beyond the grave, life would not be worth the candle that lights it. No one in the Christian Church and the church of Christ has had a greater post-mortem fruitage than Dr. Brents. Ask the preachers past and present, the young evangelists and the elders in the churches. The simple story of his book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, has convinced and converted thousands all over the South and West and doctrinally armed the members of the churches. As a young minister, that book

helped me as no other did, also, I was in the ministerial succession from Dr. Brents. All churches have profited from his exposure of the error of the passive system of salvation and his emptying the churches of all passive symbols. We have unity today where they had division.

Dr. Brents' personal vine is still bearing fruit in the churches today. "By this my Father *is* glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to me my disciples." Jno. 15: 8. Dr. Brents' vine had a rich fruitage during his life, which has continued beyond the grave, a good fortune that has come to few. But with his death and burial in the lifetime fields of his labors the sun of his life set beyond the hills of time to rise on eternal life.

He was known as a great man and was really great; and he did not have to leave home to be great. With the exception of several years service in medical college and a few years in a church college, in both of which he achieved preeminence, he spent his whole life in the County in which he was born, serving neighbors and friends. When the religious giants threatened the young Disciple cause and church, the elders did not have to leave home for a defender and proclaimer. He met and defeated every enemy and contender. His fame soon spread to far sections of the South; and he was called to meet the national religious Goliaths. For his success see his debate with Dr. Herod herein. He proved to be one of the greatest debaters this country has produced. While he has been long dead, his teaching has "run and been glorified." When I came to Nashville first in 1898, there were two Christian churches and one Church of Christ, College Street. Today there are eight Christian churches and near a hundred Churches of Christ in the County (estimated, statistics not known), many of which are large and costly and located at advantageous points. They have built churches here, yonder and everywhere there was *a* need or an opening for a church; whereas the Christian Church has grown very little. There are many causes and factors in this difference; but I speak of only one that has to do with Dr. Brents. He formerly wrote and published the book, *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, which he deduced from the Scriptures.

This book had wide circulation in Tennessee and other states. In this book he exalts the Bible as the written and spoken word of God and the New Testament as containing the divine pattern of the church. This teaching had much to do with the above statistics and achievements. Also before his books, Dr. Brents preached and debated constantly in this and all other sections. It was an instance of the Gospel's "running and being glorified." In the two thousand years since the Day of Pentecost, the Gospel has been and still is God's power to save; but its propagation is in the hands and hearts of the people who believe and work for it. It is the active plan of salvation, which Dr. Brents and others labored to establish. I wish that Dr. Brents could have lived to see this demonstration of this plan of salvation; but with this re-establishment of this way of salvation; his work was done; and "the rest" promised the people of God awaited him.

When Dr. Brents was born the Christian Church, including the Church of Christ, was estimated by the hundreds; when he died, it was estimated by the thousands; but today it is estimated by the millions. What part of this growth and increase is due to Dr. Brents, I do not know. I would say, in the North and East, little or none; but in the South and Southwest, much. Dr. Brents was a great preacher, a powerful debater, a wise theologian and a superb writer, whose work and influence were far reaching in his day and generation and has been continuous since his death. I have been a roving evangelist in the interest of Christian unity; and I have had wide personal contacts with elders, preachers and evangelists. Many of them especially evangelists spoke gratefully of their indebtedness to Dr. Brents. Some made lay preachers with the aid of his books. These books circulated freely and widely throughout the South and passed from one generation to another. My copies came from my father's possession. While Dr. Brents was not personally active in much of this work, no one known to me was more helpful in the long run. All of us can truthfully say, "Others have labored; and we have entered into their labors," especially the labors of Dr. Brents.

It is too late to interview friends and neighbors and

other contemporaries of Dr. Brents to get their estimate of him, because they are all dead. I doubt that they could fully and correctly appraise his worth and merits. The friends and neighbors of Jesus thought that he was just one of Joseph's family and were surprised and bewildered by his words and deeds. This was true of Dr. Brents. While he was "not without honor in his home" he was not fully known; and his home people did not fully understand and appreciate his work. They were doubtless surprised and awed by his achievements; but he was beyond their understanding. It has now been over a century since he began his work. It takes time for a man's record to mature for historical use. In the light of the Christian Church and the Church of Christ today, we are the better able to appraise his worth and merits. This growth and progress are not due to Dr. Brents alone. Hundreds of others spent and were spent in this foundation work. He did a great doctrinal and theological work, which is still evident from his writings and influence; and he put up a superb defence of the faith in his debates. This is written to acquaint you today of what he was and did that you and those of the future may correctly appraise him and appreciate him. He was a super man then and still is today.

After a long and useful life Dr. Brents came to a peaceful and natural end in his home in Lewisburg, Tenn., June 28th, 1905, at the age of 82 and was buried in the cemetery at Lewisburg, with R. Lin Cave, of Nashville, and Dr. Sam Hardison officiating, who were lifetime friends and co-workers in the ministry and medicine. "Like a story that is told," said David, man goes to his rest and reward. Every man's life is interesting when known and told, and Dr. Brents' especially so. This is written to make him better known and honored. The influence and lessons of his life will abide with us long after he has gone from the earth. As I linger at his tomb, many lessons of his life crowd my mind and heart as follows:

While youth lasts, it is never too late to get an education. Religion, truth, is worth any sacrifice; it is worth fighting for. God has a plan for everyone's life, which must

be found, followed and worked out. If any one uses to the full all that God has given him, he will get more and succeed. The end must be kept in mind along the hard road of preparation and hard work. There is no royal road to learning, and achievement.

HIS EPITAPH (book)

Here lies

A GREAT HEALER OF THE BODY

A WISE TRAINER OF THE MIND

A STRONG PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL

A POWERFUL DEFENDER OF THE FAITH

A WRITER OF VICTORIAN ENGLISH,

DR. THOMAS WESLEY BRENTS, M.D.: D.D.

1823-1905

Dr. Brents has been long dead; but the cause for which he lived and worked has made great progress. This is a living, moving world. Man stops at the grave; but the tide moves on into the unpredictable future. Some doubtless think that I have been fulsome in his portrayal; but he was a man apart and above his contemporaries, *a superman*, so none but superlatives can contain and reveal him. Under his leadership the Christian Church and the Church of Christ made great progress. At his death the two churches were numbered in thousands; now they are estimated in the millions. They have followed the religious ideals deduced from the Bible by the Campbells and Dr. Brents. They have followed these prophets as they followed Jesus and his Apostles. Their words have "run and been glorified," the Church of Christ making the greatest growth of any church.

But we are living in a changed world. Those that are in or coming into these two churches today find a far different world to the frontier conditions, which the Campbells and Dr. Brents found and worked. We no longer have a land and home frontier, which the inhabitants sought and found. Our frontier today is people threatened with war, not trees and land; and many of them have no homes except nomadic

shelters and government owned houses. We are no longer a rural people. In my city alone there are more than seventy-five Churches of Christ besides the numerous denominational churches. Christianity has become a world religion with world responsibilities and problems. The pioneer church under the Campbells and Dr. Brents met and fulfilled its mission. Can or will we fill ours?

We do not need to reform their work nor adopt their program. We have the same Bible, the same Gospel, the same Saviour, the same church, the same essential items of worship, the same freedom and the same hope. We have a rich heritage from our fathers. What will we do for the future? We start from where they left off, "following them as they followed Christ. No one can or needs to do the work of Dr. Brents. We need only Isaiah's dedication, "Here am I, Lord, send me."

Dr. Brents was a triple doctor in the original meaning of the word, teacher, in medicine, education and religion; and he reached pre-eminence in all three professions; but finally it was religion, to which he gave his major study and effort, "the one thing" of his study, effort and purpose. He was a religious doctrinaire, a ten-talent superman, whose absorbing theme and purpose of life was religion, for which he is credited, praised or blamed. If Dr. Brents were living today and could look back over the fields of his labor in the South and the West, where he sowed, cultivated and defended the seeds of the Christian Church and the Church of Christ, he would behold a golden harvest from his planting. These four million people, though they never knew nor heard Dr. Brents, could testify to the rich heritage that we have in Dr. Brents, and as long as there is a Christian Church or a Church of Christ in this area, he will share the credit of a pioneer "master builder" and be revered as a prophet of God.

Chapter IX

AFTER WORD

In closing the life of Dr. Brents, I am full of personal ideas, which you can take at their worth. I have tried to keep Dr. Brents in the center of the stage; but I have been tempted often to take the witness stand myself; and I may have spoken my own mind at times. If so, you will have to screen these from the record. It has been my sole all-purpose to portray Dr. Brents alone. Also I may have misrepresented him in some respects. I leave it to you to decide and correct the errors. This After Word is to relieve all tensions, especially my own.

I come now to speak a word myself on religious conditions today. The Ecumenical Church looks like the dream of the Disciples come true; but it bears little resemblance to the Restoration of the Campbells and Dr. Brents. There are seven or more of the leading Protestant churches that have theoretically accepted it; but right or wrong, we are still out. We must remember, however, that it was Bishop Brent (I do not know whether or not he is related to Dr. Brents) and our own Peter Ainslie, who started this Movement over a quarter of a century ago. As a press observer, I attended this meeting at Lousanne. In two weeks of meeting and speaking the churches did not find enough common ground to celebrate together the Lord's Supper. While we have not been able to do this, we have made great progress in the last twenty-five years in other respects; but we have not yet solved the problem. In the meetings and progress the Disciple plan of Unity On The Scriptures has been lost sight of; but whether lost or found, the Disciples still belong in the conferences. That is why we came into the kingdom, yet I doubt that Dr. Brents would have attended. He was not a unity enthusiast on the universal body; as the Disciples are supposed to be. He was a builder and emphasizer of the local body as the objective agency of the universal body, the Kingdom of God, which Jesus came to establish in the earth. The local body was largely the object of his (Dr. Brents) endeavors,

while the Kingdom of Heaven on earth was his final hope, the one concrete and the other abstract. He built the one and dreamed of the other. He took little interest and effort, however, for unity in the Kingdom, which has become the attitude of the Church of Christ. Bro. Srygley said to me a few years ago, "What is this noise that you are making about Christian unity? I am already united with those that believe as I do." They are little concerned about ecumenical efforts and organizations. In fact, they are opposed to them. Christian unity may be nothing more than a religious dream; but it is in line with Jesus Christ's great commission, which he charged on all of his disciples. After a hundred years of wrangling among ourselves and cooperative work with the denominations, great mistakes have been made; and also great success has been achieved. We ourselves are worse divided than we were in the beginning. A recent general disciple unity meeting broke up in ill and disgraceful feelings; and another, confined to the editors of church papers as speakers and conferees, showed three unreconcilable fellowships. Whereas on the other hand, the press reports thirty four millions of the followers of Jesus Christ ready to unite on Him as Lord and Saviour; but there is more to Christianity than that. Since the beginning in 1927 in Lausanne, there has been great progress and achievements in the cause of Christian unity; and I believe that the Disciples have made great contributions to this cause. Any way, I still believe in Christian unity, whether in the local or the universal body, whether working singly or co-operatively. These matters on which Jesus was silent, I believe, belong in the realm of Christian liberty and are as important as Christian unity.

During the past century the Church has been plagued and weakened by internal troubles. It has been the Denominational age when the churches have spent more time and efforts fighting each other than they have in fighting the world. Today the world has the church pushed near the brink of war. The forces of evil have driven peace to the brink of a suicidal war, which will destroy both Church and State. The Church has not or can not make the Christian approach. This has been left to the State; and the

State has failed it. With the war peaceably settled, there remain other world problems, which the Church must meet and solve. Dr. Brents looked for a millennium on the earth with all evil conquered and cast out. His faith was as simple and true as a little child's, however, we are still far from that age.

The church of today and tomorrow has plenty to do, great world tasks and causes; but this has always been true of the church. Internal troubles are better than in the past but there are still internal problems. I mention only one, the Humanist Cult. A Protestant sect has arisen that looks upon self-culture, patterned after the highest education and culture as man's ideal and goal. As I write this, one of these advocates, Richard Niebuhr, is lecturing night and day to the students of Vanderbilt University, outlining what amounts to a new religion;—a new evangel and reformation, new steps in theology, new symbols, new dynamic faith, etc. This seems to be the ideal of university schools of religion generally. Christianity is a culture; but it is not a cult. We need no new religion, only the one we have, revitalized and glorified. Paul and Jesus pled for the glorification of the church that they had. "Herein are you glorified in that you bear much fruit."

The cult of modern Humanism in recent years has weakened the authority of the Scriptures. According to Time's intellectual critic, this cult, originally imagined and conceived by an English superman, Hulme, and promulgated by his disciples, Freud, Ezra Pound, E. S. Eliotte, et al., a humanistic cult; and has had effects on all philosophic thinking, especially religion. Christianity is a cult of human growth and achievement under Jesus Christ, that is the universal growth of character like Christ's natural growth of the lilies and Paul's, "mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," "unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Jesus Christ," is all that we need. This is the ideal of Christianity; but Christianity is much more than a beautiful growth. It is also a struggle against evil and need. Many of our ethical preachers need to recommit themselves to the Deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ, the source of all growth and beauty, who is first, last

and always in the center of Christianity. Human culturists alone have no place in the church. Their own culture and education are doubtless due to the teaching of Christ. Dr. Brents without schools was entirely indebted to Him.

Furthermore, it is folly today to speculate on which church, the Christian Church or the Church of Christ, occupies the position of Dr. Brents. In fact, neither one does fully. If both churches were today as they were when he died, he would doubtless accept both; but both have changed. Some Christian churches are bordering on Unitarianism and Humanism; and the Church of Christ has hardened and narrowed their fellowships, since Dr. Brents died, based on the exclusiveness of the silences of the Scriptures. Dr. Brents is needed in both. This book's purposes is to bring him back in doctrine, work and worship; and all need a more Christian and active fellowship in making disciples of the lost.

The terms, prescribed by Jesus in Matt. 18: 20: Mark 9: 38-41, are the terms of fellowship not salvation. Nothing is said of salvation here. Salvation follows fellowship; but the terms are different. The terms of fellowship are meeting in the name of Jesus for work and worship. Meeting in the name of Jesus implies religious faith in Jesus, which is the first step also in salvation but not the only step. In this stage of discipleship Jesus called for warm amiable fellowship to lead the candidate to a full salvation; and he rebuked John and James for their narrow sectarian exclusiveness. He recognized only two classes of people in his public relations, "those for us and those against us," which is the broadest division possible. When one entered the first class by meeting in the name of Jesus, we must follow through with him to complete salvation; and when and where the candidate passed into the hands of the Lord, who is "all and in all," is not for us to decide. Nothing is said about "open membership or close membership or associate membership." "The Lord added them, those that were being saved."

But what about those that have taken the first steps, and no more, that is, meeting in the name of Jesus for work and

worship? Leave them where Jesus left them in his hands; but, if proper fellowship is brought to bear, there will be few or none such. The authority and compliance with all the terms of salvation are not in the hands of the congregation but in the Scriptures and the Christ of the Scriptures. Paul left all such to the wisdom and mercy of God and forbade all human judgment. Rom. 2. I wish that I could find such a church today. The Christian Church and the Church of Christ have preached and practiced the full plan of Christian salvation from the beginning; but both lack Christian fellowship for seekers of salvation.

As I look back over this manuscript, I realize its imperfections; but it is the best that I can do now. Like Dr. Brents I have come to the seat of old age, even older than he, and I realize my infirmities and incapacities; but the writing of his life has been a "Labor of love" for my grandfather in the Gospel, of whom I am very proud. I could not rest in my grave with Dr. Brents forgotten. It has been a lone undertaking with no one that could or did help. His friends and acquaintances have followed him to the grave with the throngs that saw and heard him in his life. This analogy, however, occurs to me, "There came a man, sent of God, and his name was 'Brents.' " In recording his life, — "He came unto his own (his own family, his own church and his own fellow citizens); and they received him not." However, the door of appreciation and gratitude is still open to all that will help in the expense of making his memory and reward sure and lasting. There is another man whose name is John, who is bearing this expense alone. I solicit your help.

Worse than the need of financial help is, I am left a man without a church. The church that Dr. Brents left has divided since he died. Since then I have not known where and what I am. I have continued with the Christian Church; however today the Human Culturists and Unitarians make me unhappy and out-of-place. On the other hand, my approval of organized missions and instrumental music in the worship disqualifies me for membership in the Church of Christ. Besides I am a believer in and am an advocate of Christ's broad fellowship, Matt. 18: 20; Mark

9: 38-41, which would make me a *persona non grata* in this church, so in both I am a hanger-on with a hope of unity sooner or later. We need another Dr. Brents to straighten us all out doctrinally and actively.