

Restoration History

LESSON 4 — Four Great Lieutenants

- by Charles Dailey

(This short lesson series was designed for a church class and gives an overview of our heritage in being like the church of the New Testament era. The series is not designed for the college classroom with documentation on each point. We have relied heavily on the class notes of Dr. Roger Chambers.)

Introduction:

1. In the first lesson, we noted that God used at least five different men in the U.S. to lead break outs from the established denominations. They were aimed at ditching creeds and using the Bible alone as the only rule of faith and practice.
2. In the second and third lessons, we saw that God was working in the lives of the men of the Campbell family, at least Thomas the father and his oldest son Alexander. They had both left the Presbyterian Church and established the Brush Run Church in western Pennsylvania.
3. There were scores of preachers who heard the call of being Christians only. Among them, four stand out and are the subjects of this fourth lesson.

I. Walter Scott

- A. Scott was born in Scotland, one of ten children. His parents were cultured and well educated. They sent Walter to the *University of Edinburgh* in Scotland for his education.

Following his schooling, he moved to New York and began teaching at a classical academy on Long Island. Then he moved on to teach in school in Pittsburgh in 1819. Here he came in contact with another teacher, George Forrester, a man with a Haldane heritage. As they studied Scripture, both Scott and Forrester gave up infant sprinkling and were buried with the Lord in baptism.



- B. Meeting with Campbell.

Morrison Meade Davis, writing in *How The Disciples Began and Grew* (Amazon) says,

In 1822, at the age of twenty-six, Mr. Scott first met Alexander Campbell. The Lord had made them for each other, and they seemed intuitively to recognize the fact, for from that moment a friendship and partnership in the work of the Master began which grew in depth and power till ended by death.

They were by nature kindred spirits, and had been born and reared in the same religious atmosphere. Both loved the Bible with an unquenchable love, and were taxing every energy to know what it taught. Both were disgusted with human creeds, and were searching for something full and final as a bond of union for Christians.

William Baxter also contrasts them. He says,

“In no sense were they rivals, any more than Moses and Aaron, or Paul and Silas; but, like them, with different gifts, devoting their lives to the accomplishment of the same glorious end.

Campbell was always great and self-possessed; Scott, subject to great depression, and, consequently, unequal in his public efforts. But at times he knew a rapture which seemed almost inspiration, to which the former was a stranger. Campbell never fell below the expectation of his hearers; Scott frequently did, but there were times when he rose to a height of eloquence which the former never equaled. If Campbell at times reminded his hearers of Paul on Mars’ Hill, commanding the attention of the assembled wisdom of Athens, Scott in his happiest moments seemed more like Peter at Pentecost, with the cloven tongue of flame on his head, and the inspiration of the Spirit in his heart while from heart-pierced sinners on every side rose the agonizing cry, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”

In these graphic pen-pictures of Mr. Campbell and his greatest lieutenant we get a good view of the men, and are impressed with their fitness for joint labors in a common cause.

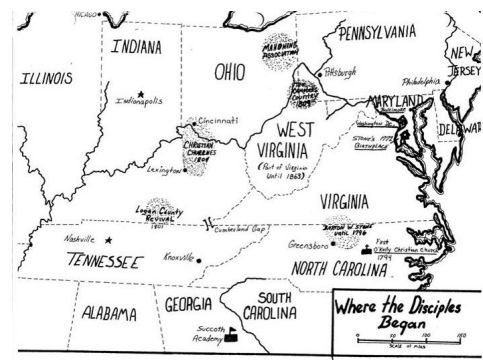
- C. Scott as a Preacher. Scott began the revival circuit unacquainted with what other preachers were doing. He was not acquainted with the emotionalism of the time, inducing listeners to bark like dogs and jerk themselves under the impression that the Holy Spirit was working in them.

Instead, Scott took his Greek text and carefully analyzed it in order to discover all that it had to say about evangelism. This in itself was a step in the right direction. It brought clarity and consistency into the situation. Scott soon found that the Book of Acts was the place where he could find the greater part of the information which the New Testament has to furnish upon the subject of conversion.

- D. Scott believed the key point of the Gospel is the Messiahship of Jesus. This rests on rational proof while all else rests on his authority. The result of this was an ongoing revival in the area where Walter Scott was preaching.

Nearly 20 years had passed since the publication of the *Declaration and Address*. The Campbells had succeeded in planting only two churches. Their lack of success was no doubt partly due to the circumstances but was chiefly caused by the fact that they had not worked out a clear method for presenting the beautiful plan of pardon. Walter Scott laid it out with remarkable clarity. He was the first Restoration preacher to proclaim the gospel “plan of salvation with the logical “steps” - hearing, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- E. Under Scott’s preaching, whole congregations, as a body, accepted the Restoration message and became simply New Testament churches. New congregations were formed, distinguished by their unusual zeal and activity. A tidal wave of restoration and evangelism swept over Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the middle west. The Restoration Movement was on its way.



F. M. M. Davis says,

In 1830 he was on his favorite theme before a great audience in a grove near Wheeling, (West) Virginia, and Mr. Campbell was among his hearers. His distinguished hearer, usually calm and self-composed, on this occasion was aroused; his eyes flashed, his face glowed, and his emotions became so intense that he shouted, "Glory to God in the highest!" As an evangelist, Mr. Scott was at his best. God wanted him for this special work, and when endowing him for it he was lavish in his gifts. His warm heart, his musical voice, his chaste and charming language, his tender pathos, his winsome personality, his burning zeal, and his great theme, "The Messiahship," made him almost irresistible. And it was Scott, rather than Barton W. Stone, who struck the keynote of evangelism which has been so marked a characteristic among his brethren.

The five-finger exercise was his way to show the inquirer how to respond to the gospel, drawn from Acts 2:38. Peter preached the good news of the risen Christ. When they asked in Acts 2:37, "What shall we do?," the apostle's answer was, "Repent, and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Scott would raise his first finger and talked about faith in the risen Jesus. Scott understood that we are saved by grace and not by works, but it is grace through faith. The second finger he named repentance or change of life. It is a step beyond faith and absolutely required. No repentance, no salvation. The third finger called for immersion into Christ so we could be raised from the watery grave to walk in this new life.

The fourth and fifth finger symbolize God's response. Finger four is for the remission of sins. It's not that we "feel" saved, but rather that God has cleared the heavenly record book. That takes place in heaven, not in our hearts. God's other response here is the gift of the Holy Spirit. He not only saves us, he gives us the power to change our thoughts and actions.

Historian Leroy Garrett writes:

Scott used this device to woo people to his services. He would walk onto a schoolyard, and with children gathered about, he would have them hold out a hand. Finger by finger he would spell out Faith, Repentance, Baptism, Remission of sins, Holy Spirit. They were then told to make a fist of the hand, go on home, tell their parents what was on their fingers, and that an evangelist will be preaching about this at the school house tonight at candle lighting.



Walter Scott immersed about 1,000 people a year for 30 years. He was the true evangelist of the early movement. He was close to Alexander Campbell, but each had their own gifts.

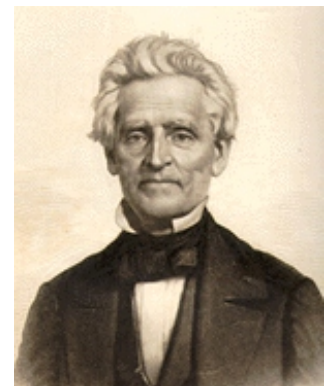
Find more on Walter Scott at: www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/wscott.html

II. "Racoon" John Smith

- A. Since John Smith is a very common name, his friends dubbed him "Racoon." There is no record of why the name was given, but some have likened his appearance to that of a racoon.

M. M. Davis writes,

Mr. Smith, the ninth of thirteen children, was born in a little log cabin in East



Tennessee, October 15, 1784. The library in this cabin consisted of three books: the Bible, the Confession of Faith, and a hymn-book. These books were supplemented by the wit and wisdom of his Irish mother, who stored his mind with legend, history and true principles. Occasionally a schoolteacher came that way, and John was always one of his best pupils.

When John was twelve years old the father crossed the Cumberland Mountains and plunged deeper into the wilderness in search of cheaper land for his children, locating in a beautiful section known as Stockton's Valley. And soon after this John's young heart began to yearn for, and reach after, God. But Calvinism in its extremist form was the only religion that he could find. His logical mind turned from this, and he said: "Since my destiny is fixed and I can not change it, I need not give myself any concern. I have nothing to do." But his conclusion, though logical so far as Calvinism was concerned, did not satisfy his soul; and after the death of his mother in 1804, his spiritual agony became great, and he never rested until on the 26th day of December he was received into the Baptist Church, and on the day following was baptized.

- B. Smith the preacher. Smith claimed no call to the ministry, but had a strong desire to preach. He agreed to make a talk. He panicked, his memory failed him, and he ran out into the darkness and fell down praying. His memory returned, and he went back into the audience with his message.
- C. He was ordained in May 1808, and the same day baptized four people. John was a good preacher. His voice was deep and rich, his utterances deliberate and distinct. Some claimed that Smith could be heard as far away as two miles. John studied the English Bible diligently, late at night and at noon in the fields. At the dinner hour he ate with the Bible open before him as he memorized scores of verses.

D. Davis writes:

The Christian Baptist, edited by Alexander Campbell, was placed in his hands. This bold religious monthly was just the thing he needed. With sledgehammer blows it dealt with the very problems which puzzled him. And so, the next year, 1824, when Mr. Campbell visited Kentucky, Smith met him, and communed much with him, and, as a result, he became a convert to his teachings concerning the ancient order of things. He thought his Baptist brethren, when they, too, saw the light, would go with him; but he was destined to disappointment. Instead, bigotry and prejudice waged a fierce war against him, and in 1830 a rupture occurred in their ranks, but a majority of the people went with Smith.

- E. By 1830, Smith had led a majority of the Baptists in Kentucky into the reform. Scores of congregations were established. The emphasis of his preaching was that there is no promise of salvation without immersion, baptism is to be administered without further examination of the candidate, the Word of God is what influences alien sinners, we must follow the Bible and not creeds, and that any Christian is free to baptize.
- F. Smith was powerful and persuasive. After he had taught on a text, his listeners could remember the details of his sermon after 30 or 40 years. He combined a remarkable memory, a quick wit, common sense, and a passion for the Word. He was Elijah-like in his unwillingness to compromise. Smith did not dress well, even according to frontier standards.

He had learned without formal education. This homespun prophet, an obvious son of the wilderness, could quote Augustine, Cato, and Thales, as well as he could quote Paul. Campbell said of Smith, "John Smith is the only man I have ever seen that a college education could ruin."

- G. His humor was merciless. When asked the difference between baptism and the mourners bench, he replied, “One is from heaven, the other is from the saw mill.”

When asked if he was not embarrassed when preaching before lawyers and judges in Sparta, Tennessee, Smith answered, “Not in the least; for I have learned that judges and lawyers, so far as the Bible is concerned, are the most ignorant class of people in the world, except Doctors of Divinity. I do confess that the first time I ever preached before Alexander Campbell, I did falter a little.”



- H. Timely. Smith’s sermons normally lasted 2-3 hours, and consisted of 3 parts:

1. Correction of misrepresentations. (The Restorationists were continually slandered and misrepresented.)
2. Expose doctrinal errors.
3. Present the Gospel of Christ.

He taught from the *Living Oracles* (Campbell’s translation) rather than the *King James Version*. When baptizing, he said, “I immerse you” instead of “I baptize you.” He allowed members to break their own bread at the table instead of doing it for them as the presiding minister.

Next to Campbell and Stone, John Smith did more for primitive Christianity in Kentucky than any other man. Grafton pays him a true and graceful tribute when he says:

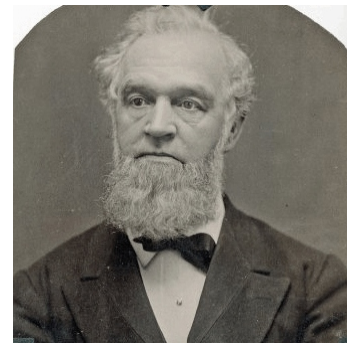
“John Smith was a typical pioneer. What Daniel Boone and David Crockett were to the early social and political life of Kentucky and Tennessee, John Smith was to religious society of that period.”

There is more information about John Smith at: <http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/jsmith.html>

III. Isaac Errett

- A. Our third man stands in the front rank as a preacher and writer of the Restoration Movement.

Henry Errett, his father, was an Irishman, and his mother was an English-woman. They came to New York about the time the Campbells began their work in Pennsylvania, and were among the firstfruits of the work in the great metropolis, the father being an elder in the first church of that city. Isaac was born January 2, 1820. He became a printer, and before he was seventeen years old was tendered the position of editor of the paper on which he was working. But he declined the honor, and became a teacher. Neither did this suit him; and so in 1840 he became a preacher, beginning in his twentieth year. He preached for the churches at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; North Bloomfield, Warren and New Lisbon, Ohio, and at Muir, Ionia and Detroit, Michigan.



- B. God used Mr. Errett’s writing skill. He became editor of the *Christian Standard* in 1865.

The men primarily responsible for the founding of the *Standard* were Isaac Errett, the first editor, James A. Garfield (later U.S. President), and three of Phillips brothers of Newcastle,

Pennsylvania. The group put together \$100,000 to get the periodical started. The first issue appeared in Cleveland, March 4, 1866. It carried news of Alexander Campbell's death.

- C. The *Christian Standard* was designed both to appeal to intellectual readers and to cultivate a broader culture than was then general among the Disciples. The appearance the paper was impressive, employing many engravings and presenting a generous variety departments - poetry, original essays, correspondence, foreign religious news, Bible class, family, missionary, and editorial items; news of the churches, and domestic, political, financial, commercial features.

(This writer has read every copy of the news of the churches from 1866 until 1896)

- D. The Standard lost so much money the first year that the stockholders voted to discontinue it at the end of 1867. It was moved to Cincinnati under the direction of R. W. Carroll and the Cincinnati issue was July 31, 1869. From this point it began to prosper.

The Standard preserved the principle of cooperation through extra-congregational organizations.

Errett wrote in June 20, 1868 issue of the *Standard*: "Let the bond of union among the baptized be Christian character in place of orthodoxy - right doing in place of exact thinking; and, outside of plain precepts, all acknowledge the liberty of all, nor seek to impose limitations on their brethren, other than those of the law of love."



Standard Publishing 1892
Touched up by Amy Kubow

Davis writes:

Some of his own brethren urged that he was narrow, exclusive and uncharitable, and thus hindering the plea. They intimated that the baptismal question should be ignored, and the pious unimmersed should be received into full fellowship.

Thus for twenty-five years of the most critical history of the Restoration Movement, Mr. Errett, its recognized leader, with pen and tongue, held it to the open sea; and we are largely indebted to him for the gratifying fact that the ship did not flounder upon the reefs of unscriptural practices and human dogmas.

There is more about Isaac Errett at:
www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/people/ierrett.html

IV. John William McGarvey

- A. Probably no man in the Movement was more trusted than J. W. McGarvey. He was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, March 1, 1829, and died in Lexington, Kentucky, October 6, 1911, in his eighty-third year. His father was an Irishman, and came to America when a young man.
- B. In 1839 the family moved to Tremont, Illinois, where the foundation



of his education was well laid in a local academy. In April, 1847, he entered the Freshman class of Bethany College. In 1848 he gave his heart to God, and was baptized by Professor Pendleton, and at once determined to devote his life to the ministry of the Word. In July, 1850, he graduated, as one of the honor men, delivering the Greek oration, entirely in the Greek language.

- C. After leaving Bethany, he taught a school for boys for one year. Following a call of the Fayette Church, he gave up the school, and in September, 1851, was ordained as a preacher. In 1853 he accepted the work at Dover, Missouri, where he remained nine years, spending much of his time in extensive tours over the State.
- D. He also had five public debates during this time. In 1862 he took up the work in Lexington, Kentucky. During this year he published his *Commentary on Acts*, a work of great merit. In 1865 he was elected professor of sacred history in the College of the Bible at Lexington. After thirty years' service he was made president of the college, which position he held to the day of his death.
- E. He was a man of convictions, and ever ready to contend with all who would assail what he believed to be true. His courage was not that of the coarse bully, but it was the courage of a calm and conscientious hero.
- F. M. M. Davis was one of his students and writes from that point of view:

He was an eminent Bible critic. He stood like a mighty Gibraltar against the waves of destructive criticism, and saved the Book from their furious onslaughts. But for the work of this sturdy man, whom no considerations could swerve a hairbreadth, what might have been our condition to-day? He waded through volumes of intricate study, and familiarized himself with every phase of German philosophy, that he might know both sides of the question. During this investigation, embracing the period between his sixtieth and seventy-fifth year, when many feel that it is time to sheathe the sword and turn over the fight to others, he would often come from his study, stretch his arms, take a deep breath and exclaim, "I feel as though I had been in a struggle with a mighty giant!" And the time is not distant when the entire religious world will honor him as the leading defender of the faith. From 1893 to 1911 he conducted a department in the *Christian Standard*, "Biblical Criticism," which has been of great value.

- G. Davis continues:

He was a strong preacher. Who that ever heard him will ever forget his sermons? After spending the week in his classroom one would think his students would want to hear some one else on the Lord's Day; but not so. In the large diningroom where most of the young preachers boarded, this question came up every Sunday morning: "Where are you going to church to-day?" And the answer usually was: "If I knew Lard would be on his high horse [Moses E. Lard was preaching at Main Street and McGarvey at Broadway], I would go to Main Street; but as there is doubt about this, I will go to Broadway, for 'Little Mac' never disappoints us." When Lard was at himself, he was a powerful preacher; but, like all men of moods, he was not always "at himself;" but McGarvey, while he often preached great sermons, never fell below a lofty level. His sermons were not ornate, but they were lucid unfoldings of the Book. They flooded man's way with light, and inspired him to walk in it. His language was simple enough for a primer, and his sentences were condensed like telegrams. He was easy to hear and hard to forget.

He was a forceful writer. He was concise and clear. He said what he meant, and meant what he said. One might not agree with him, but he never misunderstood him. He often used a sharp pen, and woe to the antagonist who got in his way. He wrote voluminously, and was always read. His books are standards

as expositions of the Scriptures, and as a defense of the Book against infidel criticism.

But he was pre-eminently a Bible teacher. Here he did his greatest work. The classroom was his throne, and never did a king reign more naturally, more royally and more profitably than did he. He knew what he taught, and taught what he knew. There was nothing hazy about him. He never left the student dangling in the air, and wondering what he meant. He placed his feet upon a rock and made him feel that his foundation was sure. When, in death, he met his Master, he could safely say, "I never weakened the faith of any young man entrusted to me."

His knowledge of the Bible was wonderful. As one of the many students who sat at his feet, this writer can say that he never heard him read a lesson in the classroom, either from the Old Testament or the New: he always recited the Scriptures. He seemed to know them "by heart." When he visited the Holy Land he kept ahead of his guide, and often knew locations better than he. As a Bible student, both in general and detailed knowledge, perhaps he has had no peer since the days of inspiration. *The London Times* said: "In all probability John W. McGarvey is the ripest Bible scholar on earth." And behold the result: His students, famous for their loyalty to the Lord and usefulness in his Kingdom, are found in every land, telling the "Old, Old Story"; and though their teacher rests from his labors, his works do follow him.

H. McGarvey was a prolific writer and some of his books are still available.

His book on the *Authorship of Deuteronomy* (347 pages) is available for download. In it, he argues that Moses wrote the book, responding to the critics who say it was written very late in Israel's history. ncbible.info/MoodRes/Moses/LibMoses.html (at the bottom of the page.)

His *Fourfold Gospel* (243 pages) is a masterpiece, combining every word from the four gospels into one continuous story and then adding very useful commentary. It is still used today and is available on the Internet in two forms: Both as a download and in an on screen version.

Both versions are available at: ncbible.info/MoodRes/FourGospels/LibGospels.html

McGarvey's *Commentary on Acts* (279 pages) was written during the Civil War. He could hear gun fire in the distance. The work is excellent and timeless.

It is available for download at: ncbible.info/MoodRes/Acts/Acts.html.

J. W. McGarvey also wrote a commentary on *Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*. It is available online through: ncbible.info/MoodRes/Paul/LibPaul.html

Though he died about 100 years ago, his excellent work still blesses those who love God's Word.

Conclusion:

1. The Stone-Campbell Movement was growing. While Alexander Campbell led the way, he was not the first to renounce creeds and connect immersion with salvation.
2. Without Walter Scott, the Movement would have had limited outreach.
3. Without "Racoon" John Smith, the Movement would have had far less an impact in Kentucky and consequently in the Pacific Northwest and California, because many Kentuckians move west. .
4. Without the pen of Isaac Errett and the Christian Standard, the movement would have lacked a main

line publication that represented the majority of the people.

5. Without John McGarvey, the movement would have lacked a key man to expose the rationalism that attacked the truthfulness of Scriptures.
6. Campbell later said:

It is not our object to make men think alike on a thousand themes. Let them think as they like on any matters of human opinion, and upon 'doctrines of religion,' provided only they hold the Head Christ and keep his commandments. I have learned not only the theory, but the fact, that if you want opinions to cease or subside, you must not debate everything that men think and say. You may debate anything into consequence, or you may, by a dignified silence, waste it into oblivion.