

**THE CAMPBELL-STONE MOVEMENT:
A GRAND DESIGN FOR WORLD-WIDE-EVANGELISM
ON BEHALF OF JESUS THE CHRIST**

by

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**Response to the Presentation of the Plaque from the E. E. S. by
Bruce Shields and to the Introduction by Earl Stuckenbruck**

When Mr. Abba Eban came to Washington, D. C. as the first Ambassador from the new State of Israel, Rabbi Norman Gerstenfeld, the Spiritual Leader of Temple Israel, hosted a special meeting for the Clergy of the District of Columbia and surrounding area to meet and to hear the Ambassador.

Rabbi Gerstenfeld was well-known for his effusiveness. But, befitting this auspicious occasion, his eloquence "soared and tickled angels' feet."

With good humor, the Ambassador responded: "My friendship with Rabbi Gerstenfeld urges me to accept all that he has affirmed of me. My sense of fairness chides me to deny much of what he has said. And, my ego urges me to enjoy fully every word of it."

As you may have guessed, Earl and Bruce and I are good friends who esteem each other highly.

Greetings:

To see so many personal friends and friends of the European Evangelistic Society from around the world present for this Breakfast and for this Lecture is, indeed, an "intimidating" delight.

Appreciation:

It is an honor to present this Dean E. Walker Convention Lecture; and thus to "pull the ripcord" on my "golden parachute" at the

conclusion of my twenty-two years as the Society's President. Dean Walker was an irenic-spirited Christian and worthy of the finest such a series seeks to offer. He was devoted to God's active self-revealing in the Eternal Word Incarnate and had scholarly confidence in the authenticity of the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures as presenting fairly the Eternal Word Inscripted. He grasped that Christians are a "people of the Person of Jesus the Christ" and not a "people of the Book." He had carefully disciplined a keen mind and was willing to speak an incisive teaching word for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

A dear friend, Winston K. Pendleton, worthily carries the family name from Dr. W. K. Pendleton, the second President of Bethany College. His awareness of Dean Walker's recognized sharp discernment and Socratic willingness to divide truth and error as he saw them encouraged Winston to invite Dr. Walker to speak before a Capital Area Convention of the Disciples of Christ; and, then to introduce him as "the Axe of the Disciples - that is spelled 'A-X-E.'"

Introduction:

The Campbell-Stone Movement: A Grand Design for World-wide Evangelism on Behalf of Jesus the Christ.

My title is borrowed in part from the late W. Carl Ketcherside. As we talked in his preparations to speak before the Society's luncheon during the 1977 Convention of the Christian Churches of Florida, Carl appreciated the Society's evangelistic strategy in our entering the world-renowned Eberhard-Karls University in Tuebingen with its annual concentration of serious young minds from every culture in the world, to engage them in research into the importance of Jesus Christ for daily life occupations. He saw how these young persons could take any new awareness of the importance of Jesus back into their own cultures and share it through daily contacts. He saw the evangelistic importance in committed Christian scholars placing usable translations of the commentaries on Jesus written by the Early Church into the hands of Christian leaders in every culture around the world, for their training and usage in Ministry. And, he saw the need for personal evangelism among average persons in the increasingly secular culture of Europe today. Of the methodology in Christian missions employed by the Society, Carl exclaimed, "At last, the Campbell-Stone Movement has a workable strategy for world - wide conquest on behalf of Jesus Christ!" And, he told the convention, "It would be tragic if we were to allow this tremendous opportunity to lapse through indifference... and I encourage others to include in their thoughts, prayers and sacrificial giving the Disciples Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, located in the university city of Tuebingen, Germany."

The Campbell-Stone Vision:

As had many persons in the continuing Church of the intervening centuries, the leaders of the Campbell-Stone reformation within the Church believed that the restoration of the dynamic faith of

the Early Church and of its God-given unity in Jesus Christ - joined together again - could produce effective evangelism in any age and culture. Early Christian evangelism had walked upon the two "legs" of "faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" and of "unity in Jesus Christ." Now, in this nineteenth century and in this providentially-supplied "new world," Christian evangelism could stride triumphantly again on these same two "legs."

In 1827, the messengers to the Mahoning Valley Baptist Association chose Walter Scott as their evangelist. Shortly, Walter Scott synthesized the several accounts of Christian conversion recorded in Acts and formed his Five-finger Exercise for Evangelism: faith, repentance, baptism, the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Barton W. Stone's vision for effective evangelism was born amid the Cane Ridge Revival. Stone's imagination was "fired" by what he had experienced - and, he was convinced that it could continue to happen on the American frontier, if the Apostolic Gospel of Jesus Christ were preached amid unity. Person-to-person unity in Christ with the restoring of the dynamic faith in the person Jesus the Christ as experienced through the New Testament was the key.

This young movement was the religious salvation of the American frontier, where the inability of penitent persons to "pray through and receive assurance of election for salvation by the will of the sovereign God" (Calvinism) was cause for religious depression and suicide. Not alone because of this movement, but in the 19th century, the percentage of Christians to the population in America increased from 1 in each 20 persons to 8 in each 20 persons.

Dr. Jesse M. Bader, the founder of this World Convention of Churches of Christ, spoke for many when he said, "The Church

does not have an evangelistic mission; the Church IS God's evangelistic mission on earth."

My Christian Ministry of fifty-eight years has been characterized as having been "lived in the developing tension-cracks within the Campbell-Stone movement." To this, I do confess right willingly. This has been done by reason of conviction and choice. From my parents, I learned that Christian unity is personal and that each Christian is bounden by one's Savior to preserve and to foster the oneness of the Church. During my four years in Johnson Bible College, its President, Alva Ross Brown, came to exercise a profound influence upon my life. During the final week of my senior year, he led one of the nightly Prayer Meetings in the old Chapel. As was frequent with him, his text was a lengthy reading in Ephesians. Quietly, he said, "Boys, there are developing divisions within this brotherhood. Each of you may choose to identify with one or with another emerging group. But, I fervently urge each of you not to permit any differences in your choices to come between you. You came to Johnson Bible College with "the desire above every other desire to learn to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ." Do not develop a sectarian nor a bitter spirit or engage in other unseemly behavior. I plead with you to devote yourself to preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the spirit of unity." I was profoundly moved by this godly man's appeal.

My assignment, when I had chosen my title, was to assess what had happened, during the period of my Christian Ministry, to the vision of powerful evangelism which we inherited from our forefathers in this Movement.

And what has the nearly six decades of my ministry witnessed concerning this vision for evangelism?

The two Apostolically-proven sturdy "legs" of "faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" and of "unity in Christ" have been re-

defined from "means to the goal of evangelism" into "conflicting goals." We have quarreled over which re-defined "goal" was to be preferred. We have redefined redeemed "brothers and sisters in Christ" as being "not of my family." We have used the reforming of the Church and unity in Christ as "reasons" for dividing from one another rather than for evangelizing with one another. We have taken these two Apostolically-proven "legs" and we have used them as "clubs" and have beaten one another bloody with them. Then, too exhausted from the pleasure of "doing in one another" to go out into the field and do battle with Satan and his forces, we have boasted of our "orthodoxy" in divisions.

And Evangelism has been trampled in the fray. The schoolboy learns from Caesar's *Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres*. "Working within this Movement, one learns from the "wars" experienced that this Movement for world-wide evangelism through the restoration of New Testament Christianity and Christian Unity "*est divisa in partes tres*," also.

The Churches of Christ (non-instrument):

As I begin this portion of my assessment, I must insert a mention of the thrill which I felt during last evening as the Churches of Christ (non-instrument) led the worship for this Convention. The strong singing - the passionate preaching of Brother Rubel Shelley as he confessed the sin in the contentious divisions of the past and his plea for the renewal of expressed unity in our mission of evangelism - all this was a moving experience for one who has experienced all three groupings in one's Christian life. And, all around me I could hear the shattering of the unexamined judgments of each other which we have carried in self-righteous and smug isolation for the past half-century. While professing hopefulness for solving "differences" with distant religious neighbors, we have dismissed the "scuffles" going on in our family backyard with "he started it" - "unsolvable" - "a waste of effort."

"Living love at home" seems to require more personal humility than "prating about love at a distance." For the churches of Christ, this has been a time for acculturation or of catching up with the previously ignored religious scene. This has produced the "Mainline," which contains about 85% of the membership, and, which is increasingly open to cooperation with the Evangelicals; the "Progressives," who felt that the acculturation did not go far enough, but who either have left or have made their peace with the "Mainline"; and the "Conservatives," who have absolutized their historic position, maintaining that they are not only "Christians only" but the "only Christians," and, which contains about 15% of the membership and the 28+ divisions. A proliferation of publications "dedicated to doctrinal truth" marks this latter group. Two friends have been significant contributors to this acculturation: the late W. Carl Ketcherside, who remarkably exhibited the Spirit-grace of "love." (My confidence in the oneness of the Church at Labor and the Church in Triumph causes me to "sense" his presence this morning.) And, Dr. Leroy Garrett, who with Ouida, his wife, is present "in the body" this morning. Since we are meeting in the Stampedede Corral, it might be fitting to refer to these two men as having been "burrs under the saddle."

And, what of evangelism? Dr. Richard Hughes in Reviving The Ancient Faith assesses: "Churches of Christ entered the 1970's experiencing minimal growth and anxiety over their institutional identity."²

The Christian Churches/Churches of Christ:

This has been a time for maintaining "Individualism." Dr. Byron Lambert in his paper "From Rural Churches to an Urban World: Shifting Frontiers and the Invisible Hand", presented before the 1995 Forrest H. Kirpatrick Seminar, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, maintained the strategic importance of this characteristic amid the popularity of "individualism" in today's culture.³

Dr. Charles Cook, during the Restoration Forum which preceded the North American Christian Convention in July 1996 observed, "We have two extremes among us today. Those who insist on reliving our history and fighting yesterday's battles over and over again and those who act as if we had no history that is worth remembering." He continued, "In more recent years, the disinterest and doubt regarding restoration, has seemed to come from those within our movement who see the nature of the church as shaped more by cultural influences and pragmatic considerations than by Biblical revelation and precedent. Thus, any talk of restoration to them, is an anachronism."⁴

The program book for the NACC and the Convention's Exhibit Hall reflect the diverse opinions over doctrines on - missions - ordinances vs sacraments - the proper roles for women - the Holy Spirit - proper music and worship forms - "denominational preachers" on the program - mega-churches - and other traditional differences.⁵ Some say with "tongue in cheek" that the diversity exhibited in the North American Christian Convention is due to the fact that "this is the only circus in town that keeps its tent flaps open to all."

Meaningful evangelism and church-planting programs have been proposed urging the entire body nationwide to join in, but these have not been sustained by continuing or widespread cooperation. Increasingly, capable scholars and educators brook displeasure and reach out beyond the "Independents" and are valued as participants by those who come to know them. The Theological Forum of the NACC and conversations with the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) have raised hopes and expectations. Individuals are calling for more active associations with the Evangelicals.⁶ But, no practical means beyond "individualism" have been seriously "trial ballooned" for continuing participation as a body with Evangelicals. Successful "Church Growth" has become "pragmatic" in methods. Concern for the restoration of the New Testament Church is not dead, but pre-

occupies a lessening percentage.

There are the capabilities to become more influential contributors among today's Evangelicals. Too often, these opportunities continue to be sacrificed on the frontier-altar of "individualism." But, an ever increasing number are willing and are trying to respond to these opportunities as individuals.

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ):

The period since World War II has seen first the preoccupation with Restructure. This was a "first" within the Campbell-Stone movement: - the creation of a churchy-structure, for the purpose of structurally dividing the inheritors of this Movement.⁷ The Reports from the fifteen years of work by the Commission on Restudy of the Disciples of Christ, which was created by the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ in 1935, affirmed repeatedly that the existing uneasy relationships within this Movement might well have continued for some time had not this disruption been deliberately created.⁸

Currently, under the initiative of the Council on Christian Unity, the General Assembly has voted itself to be "in a covenant relationship with the United Church of Christ and the Consultation on Christian Union." "The U.C.C. is noted as being the most theologically liberal of the eight denominations in the COCU discussions. The U.C.C. with 6,180 churches, reports that an average of 29 churches a year have left to join other groups or to become independent since it began keeping such records in 1993. The denomination even held a consultation in January 1996, to discuss the flight of its churches."⁹

The "No" vote on Resolution #9521, "A Policy Statement Regarding Disciple Pastors and Congregations who choose not to participate in the C.O.C.U. Process,"¹⁰ which was recorded during the General Assembly, meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. in

1995, has created anxiety among conservative congregations (beyond Disciple Heritage) whether the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S.A. and Canada now is becoming the "second fork" of which Dr. W. H. Garrison first spoke in his Lecture "A Fork in the Road" during the Pension Fund Breakfast in 1964.¹¹ It is being asked with sober concern whether the parameters of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) now are becoming "structural and political correctness."¹²

As to evangelism: Brent Schondelmeyer writes in The Christian, "One of the most controversial empirical findings in the Ronsvalle's work [George and Sylvia Ronsvalle, Behind Stained Glass Windows] is their projection that by 2036 A.D., Church membership in eleven mainline Protestant denominations - the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) among them - will be zero, if trends established between 1968 to 1993 continue."¹³

To conclude this all too brief appraisal of the three groups: I express my appreciation to the several persons who in their concern for helping me toward fairness in my expressions of appraisal have sent to me "scads" of materials during this past year. Much more has been left on "the cutting room floor" than I could include here.¹⁴

As this century ebbs, the inheritors of this Campbell-Stone movement for worldwide evangelism upon the "two legs" of Unity in Christ and Restoring vital New Testament Christianity find themselves - Job like - so preoccupied with finding potsherds with which to scratch their own "boils" that they have little vision or inclination to share their heritage of worldwide evangelism with others - though the possibility is not dead.

In response to this "jeremiad," some might murmur, "After so much judgment, do you really feel that any hope for the future could be offered?" Yes, I do. I have observed that God always raises a fulcrum of hope over which to lay His lever of judgment,

since His intent in judgment is not to destroy, but is to hearten and to restore. Humbly, I would attempt the same. Isaiah was called to a mission foredoomed because "the people having eyes would not see, and having ears would not hear." (6: 9-16) Yet, in Isaiah 53, God raised the fulcrum of His redemptive Suffering Servant and of Redemption through Him across which to lay the lever of his judgment. The late Dr. Arthur Holmes delighted to alliterate: "Preaching is the presentation of the Perfect Person by imperfect persons to imperfect persons with the purpose to persuade imperfect persons to accept the Perfect Person as the pattern for their personal lives."

God's intent in judgment is the restoration of His creation to its created relationship with Him (Romans 8: 18- 25).

Important Necessities

What do I see as important components to a Fulcrum of Hope in the renewal of the vision of world - wide evangelism striding triumphantly upon the two Apostolically-proven "legs" of "New Testament Christianity" and of "Unity?" I note three here and I am limited to the fuller discussion of only one.

1. A renewed awareness of the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit within the Church even as Jesus promised and the Apostles' Pentecost sermon assured.

During an interview for a teaching position in a conservative Christian college, one trustee asked the candidate, "When you hear of the Holy Spirit, what do you think?" The quick response was, "I think of an 800-pound gorilla." Mystified, the trustee "waited for the other shoe to drop." It was: "He is big enough and strong enough to do what he wishes to do."

Jesus promised, "When the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds

from the Father, he will bear witness of me and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning." (John 15:26)

Had we retained the warm sense of the indwelling and the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in the Church which characterized the preaching of Walter Scott and of other early leaders, we might well have been more warmly evangelistic than we are now.

2. A fresh study of Biblical Hermeneutics.

In 1930, Dr. Jesse M. Bader invited his new friend, Dr. Ludwig von Gerdtell, to tell of evangelism among university students during the days of the Weimar Republic in Germany. Von Gerdtell challenged the First World Convention with, "If the Bible is the Word of God, as we confess it to be in all our great church creeds, then it must be the guide for all reforming of the Church."¹⁵

With von Gerdtell, I would agree. However, it takes but little "religious" reading or TV channel-surfing for one to realize that we live in a day of confusion over how the Bible is to be viewed - and, therefore, how it is to be understood.

Opinions on how to look at the Bible run a strange gamut from an impoverished view that it is irrelevant in today's culture to viewing the Bible as a graceless Rule Book for earning "Brownie Points" with God.

With this brief notation, I would leave Hermeneutics to the more adequate skills of our new President, Dr. Bruce E. Shields. I truly wish to deal with my final item much more fully.

3. We must recover the disciplining awareness that the love of God is the love of the Holy God. We must recover the sense of

"terrifying awesomeness" in our redemption.

The late Dr. Perry L. Gresham began his Lectures for the Week of Ministry at Milligan College in 1975 with the assertion, "Each person has both the need and the right to be confronted in every corporate worship by the Church with the holiness of God." He spoke not of accommodation in worship to one's previous theologies nor to one's culture. He spoke of exalting confrontation in corporate worship which challenged the accepted. One is reminded of Soren Kierkegaard's assertion that "in worship, the only spectator is God himself. The rest of us are there to glorify and to please the holy God." Gary Holloway, Professor of Church History at the Institute for Christian Studies, Austin, Texas, observed, "Ironically, attempts to make the church relevant may lead it to become completely irrelevant. If Christians are not distinct from the surrounding culture, why should anyone seek to join them?"¹⁶

So often, we begin our evaluation of the propriety of God's actions in some human situation with, "I just cannot believe that a God of love would ...", and we shape our appraisal from a self-interest definition of "love." That God is defined in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures as "the God of love" is well-documented and is accepted.

Yahweh is Holy

In the ancient world amid which the Patriarchs and the Children of Israel lived, when one people conquered another, the conquered people were told "we have the same gods of fertility, seedtime and harvest, caves and groves of trees, etc. But we have stronger names, so you will use our names for them." By synthesis rather than by confrontation, the gods of the two nations were accommodated.

When the fugitive Moses asked the stranger god at the burning

bush, "Who are you, sir?", he was being polite. The "gods" of Egypt he knew. Now, he was in Midian and did not know their proper names here. If Moses hoped for a simple answer, he was to become confused even further. "I AM WHO I HAVE BEEN AND WHO I WILL BECOME," was the answer. (Exodus 3:13-15) God does not explain himself; he only describes himself. In telling Moses who He is, He tells Moses who He is not. "I am 'Other' - and you may/can not 'know' Me by comparing Me with other 'gods'. I alone am Personal Reality. I am Yahweh."¹⁷

When Moses responded to Pharaoh's enquiry "what is the name of your god?" and Moses answered "Yahweh," neither did Pharaoh understand. But, then came the "tenth plague." "A cry went up from every home in Egypt not protected by the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on the door lintel." (Exodus 12:21-32) Death had come to the first-born of every family and of their livestock! Pharaoh might not understand, but he must recognize that Yahweh existed. The first-born son of Pharaoh had been considered to be a "god" and a personal gift from "Re." The first-born of each Egyptian family was considered to be "a sanction from the gods" upon this marriage. That night, Yahweh "canceled" every one of Re's "sanctions" in Egypt. The next morning, those priests who remained alive found death even in the Temple among the animal-gods (Exodus 12:12).

This final plague convinced Pharaoh and the Egyptians that this Yahweh really was "Other." They bribed the children of Israel to leave quickly. Then, cupidity overcame awe and fear, and Pharaoh's army pursued to retrieve the slaves and the treasures given as "glad to get rid of you" gifts. But, in the Reed Sea they were inundated with evidence! Israel was watching and learning - slowly.

At Mt. Sinai, Yahweh said, "I am the Lord your God, and you shall have no other gods than Me." Again, in the Shema, (Deut. 6:4-9) Yahweh said, "I, the Lord your God, am the only God.

You shall love me with all your heart, soul and mind." Again, He commanded, "When you enter the land and conquer it as I have promised, you shall not attempt to synthesize me with the gods there." "You shall utterly destroy their 'gods' and their 'holy places' and their priests for they are 'false'."

A new revelation was dawning. Too easily, we neglect the eternal life-and-death issue in the gap between Yahweh's sovereign efforts to reveal His holiness - using Israel as the channel - and humankind's reluctant ability fully to accept His self-revealing. And, so we "judge" the austerity inherent in the self-revealing as being "too harsh." But the Canaanites had entered the Iron Age before this slave people (Joshua 17:16-18) and Israel reasoned that "their new tools could make life better for us." Wouldn't a more "open-minded" religious accommodation to these people allay their fears of the "habir" and encourage easier business transactions with them? So, they tried synthesis.¹⁸ The "promised" land never was fully possessed, armies levied upon them from all sides and tragedies developed in the monarchy. The Prophets told them why they were thus troubled, and they would not believe the Prophets. At last, they were carried away into a captivity so deep that singing became almost a lost art and "they hung their harps upon the willow trees." (Psalm 137:1-9; Ezekiel 26:13) The Persians granted a return - and briefly - in God's time-view - they flourished. Then, "not one structured stone was left upon another by the Romans."

The Eternal Word incarnate in the flesh as Jesus of Nazareth was no less austere than Yahweh had been toward Israel.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6-7)

"I am the living Bread of life come down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall

give for the world is my flesh." (John 6:51)

"All authority has been given to me. Therefore, go and disciple all the nations. And, lo, I am with you always unto the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Price of Holy Love - Jesus became sin for our sakes !

Paul writes - "For our sake, God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Behold what value eternal holiness has placed upon "so greatly loving the world that He would give his only son," to redeem His creation unto eternal fellowship with Himself!

Sympathizing with Jesus' physical pain is frequent. But, painful as physical death upon a cross was, Jesus died a much more painful and fearsome death, says Paul. With this death we may not empathize fully, for we have not known absolute holiness eternally - nor have we experienced eternal companionship with God on the most intimate, harmonious and unthreatened level - as had the Word Incarnate - Jesus. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Of the seven words which Jesus spoke from the cross, the fourth word sets before us the great "mystery" of Jesus, who had no sin (hagnos - willfully holy rather than innocent - cf. Hebrews 2:10 - 18:5:5 - 10), became sin for the sake of our becoming righteous. The thought is intense! Sin and Holiness are mortal enemies - irreconcilable - the eternal harmony which Yahweh had revealed as being the Godhead was suddenly sundered, even as the veil to the Holy of Holies was torn asunder from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). As the Holy God looked at Jesus upon the cross, His holiness saw not his sinless son, the Eternal Word Incarnate, but saw all the estrangement of sin in all His creation. Rejected by earth for his purity and thrust back heavenward upon a cross - Jesus now

was rejected by heaven, because he had become "the cosmic black hole" into which was drawn the total sins of humankind. Here was one forsaken by eternal holiness and by eternal oneness with the Father and with the Spirit dying alone upon a cross for "all sin."

Dares one to say that for our redemption on the cross of Calvary the Eternal Godhead became in Time vulnerable and threatened and less than the Godhead had been through-out eternity? Being all-sufficient in His sovereignty and in His eternal attributes, God nevertheless counted it His chief glory to graciously imperil the inexhaustive resources of His very Being, because "He so greatly loved the world!"

Job recognized one's proper fear of holiness and refused the counsel of his wife that he curse God and die. (Job 2:9 - 10) We might do well to reflect upon the proper fear of holiness which Jesus expressed when he counseled, "Fear not those who can only kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell." (Matthew 10:28)

John Newton insightfully penned:

" 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fear relieved;
How gracious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!"
- John Newton

Isaac Watts wrote:

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glory in,
When Christ the mighty Maker died [alone],
For all man's sin."
- Isaac Watts [altered by the Lecturer]

Why should we find amazement in the heaven-distilled midday darkness which lay over the land as Jesus died - the terrors of creation as it writhed in torment at its Maker's death - the confusion in the realms of death and of life when the tombs of the dead were opened and those who had been dead walked in Jerusalem's streets again?

Dorothy L. Sayer, is an Englishwoman, a writer of mystery novels and of short plays and poetry on the life of Jesus. In The Devil to Pay, she has God to muse upon His holy will to redeem mankind. His options for doing this, their relative costs to Him, and the awful choice of holy love:

The Devil to Pay¹⁹

"Hard it is, very hard

To travel up the slow and stony road
To Calvary, to redeem mankind; far better
To make but one resplendent miracle,
Lean through the cloud, lift the right hand of power
And with a sudden lightning smite the world perfect.
Yet, this was not God's way, Who had the power,
But set it by, choosing the cross, the thorn,
[The empty tomb]. Something there is, perhaps,
That power destroys in passing, something supreme,
To whose great value in the eyes of God
That cross, those thorns and [the empty tomb] bear witness."
[altered by Lecturer]

Dare we to patronize such holy love as being less than sovereign and ultimate in our eternal redemption!

Prayer: "Holy God, by the mercy of Thy Spirit, enable us to pass amid those things which are temporal in such manner that we finally lose not that which is eternal. Amen."

NOTES

1. W. Carl Ketcherside, Trumpet Call of Destiny: a pamphlet published by the E.E.S., 1977.
2. Richard T. Hughes, Reviving The Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1996; p. 351.
3. Byron C. Lambert, "From Rural Churches to an Urban World: Shifting Frontiers and the Invisible Hand;" Discipliana, Vol. 55, No. 3, Fall 1995; pp. 67-80.
4. Charles C. Cook, "How I Present Restoration Principles;" A presentation for the Restoration Heritage Conference; Dallas, Texas; July 1 & 2, 1996; unpublished, pp. 5 & 6.
5. Richard Phillips, "From Modern Theology to a Post Modern World; Christian Church and Churches of Christ;" Discipliana, Vol. 54, No. 3, Fall 1994; 83-95. He identifies five sub-groups within the Christian Church/Churches of Christ (CC/CC): e.g. (1) Restorationists, (2) Evangelicals, (3) Church Growth Pragmatists, (4) "High Church" Sacramentalists, and (5) Charismatics.
6. Dick Alexander, "Opportunities For the Future.:" Christian Standard, Vol CXCCX, No. 28 and 29; July 8 and 16, 1995; pp. 6 & 8.
7. Dean E. Walker Conversation at the close of the Inaugural Service for the new denomination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S.A. and Canada; 1968.
8. The Report of the Commission on Restudy of Disciple of Christ: Authorized by the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ; San Francisco, 1948; 1934 - 1951.

9. Calmetta Y. Coleman, "Father Bell's Curve," Staff Reporter for The Wall Street Journal, Vol. LXXVII, No. 170, June 14, 1996; Section A1, Column 1.
10. Business Docket and Program book of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ): "Becoming A Dwelling Place for God;" General Assembly, Pittsburgh, Pa., Oct. 20-24, 1995; David Lawrence Convention Center; Resolution #9521, p. 315.
11. Winfred E. Garrison, A Fork in the Road; An Address made at the Oreon E. Scott Minister's Breakfast, Detroit, Michigan, October 7, 1964; printed and distributed by Pension Fund of the Christian Churches.
12. Winfred E. Garrison, a letter of July 21, 1967, written to Robert W. Burns for inclusion in The Wrong Fork; A Statement read before the jointly-held meeting of 17 members of the Atlanta Declaration Committee and 7 members of the Central Committee of the Commission on Restructure in Dallas, Texas on August 3, 1967. Among the "Thoughts" which he offered were: 1. "The fundamental error is that it would make acceptance of, and submission to, a specific ecclesiastical structure the criterion and bond a unity among Disciples of Christ." 2. It is "a denial that the Church is essentially one" and "our hope then must be to unite these many Churches, by ecclesiastical diplomacy,...." 3. "...the proposed General Assembly defines the Disciples of Christ (alias "Christian Church") as consisting of those whom, and those congregations which it represents." 4. "Two of the professed Guidelines for Restructure are: (1) structures rooted in Christ's ministry made known through the Scriptures; and (2) structures which express our historic ecumenical concern and involvement. The Design meets neither of these requirements." To the Statement was appended a summary of the major issues discussed between the Atlanta Declaration Committee and the Restructure Commission on that date. Copies of the Statement and Report were printed and circulated by the Atlanta Progress Committee.
13. Brent Schondelmeyer, "Church giving: A wealth of worry;" The Disciple, January 1997, p 2-6.
14. A sobering appraisal of the cultural captivity of the Church in the early portion of the period under observation is offered from a not-often-sought viewpoint by Eugene E. Sonnenberg in The Formation of A counter Culture (1967 - 1973: Toward Definition of a Challenge to The Church During a Period of Change; A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Divinity; Area of Christian Ministries, Emmanuel School of Religion; 1974.
15. Ludwig von Gerdell, "Christ and the Culture in Continental Europe;" an Address delivered on Wednesday, October 22, 1930, during the First World Convention of Churches of Christ; Washington, D.C., U.S.A.; Official Program, p. 26.
16. Gary Holloway, "Forrest H. Kirkpatrick Lectures;" The Disciple, July/August 1995; p. 46.
17. Rick R. Marrs, "In the Beginning: Male and Female;" ESSAYS on Women in Earliest Christianity; Vol. 11; Edited by Carroll D. Osburn; College Press Publishing Company; 1995; Chapter 1, footnote, 8. He wrote, "Israel stood unique among her neighbors as an aniconic society. Her God could not be captured through the construction of any idol, for such images partook of creation itself. The Creator of the universe stands free from Israel and the world. However, inexplicably, this same Creator freely chooses to image himself in none other than his creation of humans! i.e., God cannot be imaged by any human construction, for he has already imaged himself in his own creation of humans (note especially Deut. 4:12-18, where imaging is directly linked to creation.)"

18. William Ewing, "Asher," A Dictionary of the Bible. Vol. 1, "A-Feasts;" Edited by James Hastings with the assistance of John A. Selbie; T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh; Ninth Impression; 1910; p. 164. Asher, whose rich lands were close to the Phoenecian cities with their open markets and prosperous commerce, seems to have identified his interests with theirs quickly. By the days of David, Asher does not appear in the list of chief rulers (1 Chronicles 27: 14-22); and never gave a hero, judge or ruler to Israel. Note Judges 5 17-18 in the days of Deborah, when King Jabin and Sisera threatened Israel (Judges 4 12-ff) and a defense mobilization was called, "Asher sat still at the coast of the sea, settling down by his landings." (Judges 5:17); but df. (Luke 2: 36-38).

19. Dorothy L. Sayer, "The Devil to Pay;" Masterpieces of Religious Verse, Edited by James Dalton Morrison; Harper and Brothers, New York; 1948; p. 189.

Addendum

Alfred T. DeGroot, Disciple Thought: A History; Introduction by Winfred E. Garrison; Ft. Worth, Texas; Author; Texas Christian University; 1965. This 277 page book has been of great help as background reading in preparing this Lecture. Its pages are typewritten and the pages are photocopied.