

Let Ephraim Alone

Robert Graham, 1868 (1/2)

“There is among ourselves a falling off from the simplicity of the gospel, a conforming to the mode of the *other* denominations, the loss of zeal for the spread of the gospel for fear people will think the solicitous only to build up a party, the decrease of Bible reading and study among us of late, the growing disposition to recognize the distinction of clergy and laity in our churches, and among much more that might be named, our conforming to the unscriptural phraseology of sects, to say nothing of our adopting many of their anti-scriptural customs.

Robert Graham, 1868 (2/2)

“With the uniform experience of past ages before us, the tendency of men to make the gospel popular under the plea of extending its influence, and that, too, even at the cost of its purity and power to save, should make us keen to detect and fearless in our condemnation of all departures from the faith.”

Some believed the change in society influenced churches to change with the times.

I. People Often Change With Times

Gal.5:7

- Constant concern in Scripture...
 - 1 Co.4:14
 - 2 Pt.2:1...
 - Jude 3-4

Thomas Campbell motto:
“Where Bible speaks, we speak.
Where Bible is silent, we are silent”

- Compare 2 Jn.9

Reactions to the motto

W.K.Pendleton: this view of
the old motto is wrong.

- “A. Campbell had formed ‘Christian Association of Washington.’”
- Wrong! Thomas Campbell gave up infant baptism on this basis.
 - It did not mean he was consistent in everything he ever did.

Reactions to the motto

Isaac Errett

- Motto must be redefined if the church was to conform to an age of progress.
 - Ro.12:2.
- His take: Thomas Campbell meant ... “that nothing should be urged as a term of Christian fellowship for which there could not be a thus saith the Lord.”

Reactions to the motto

Many were eager to throw off this bond

- It was too narrow; too strict.
- Horrifying thought: Bible binds us; nothing may be practiced without divine authority.

Reactions to the motto

Some took middle of road position: favored
Missionary Society, opposed music...

Some fought for ancient oracles –

- M. Society is substitute for God's plan (church) – they lost faith in God's plan.
- God's plan works: Col.1:6, 23.
- M. Society originated in false pride and desire to be like denominations.
- M. Society caused division. Ro.16:17-18.
- M. Society was dictator of local churches.

Reactions to the motto

Some compromised

- Joseph Franklin could not beat them, so he joined them.
- J.B. Briney...
- John F. Rowe opposed IM but fellowshipped preachers / churches using it.
 - Then: organ was permissible under elders
 - And: organ permissible if it was 'little'
- Ex.32

Reactions to the motto

Others stood firm

- David Lipscomb: “IM as a part of divine worship was associated with bleeding beasts as sacrifices and the incense offering. There is just as much reason and authority for the revival of either of these as for the revival of IM in worship.”
- Innovators blamed opponents for division.
- 1 K.18

I. People Often Change With Times

II. Worldliness Affects Churches

Music

1867: St. Louis church, new building...

- Chief argument for IM: rapidly changing world
 - Worship without IM was fine for backwoods, but not for modern cities.
- Case: church in Bedford, IN., 1880
- Case: church in Huntsville, TX

Music

- Churches usually did not claim authority from Scriptures for organ; they merely claimed it **was not condemned.**
- This would allow anything . . .
 1. Praying to Mary
 2. Worshipping dead saints
 3. Infant baptism

Schools

- KY. University, Lexington (McGarvey, 1865)
- Faculty filled with 'higher criticism'
- Regent wanted school that would serve denominations, too
 - McGarvey: fired.
 - Tolbert Fanning opposed endowment for college...
 - Bethany / College of Bible – now bastions of infidelity and proud skepticism.

Denominational drifting

- W.T. Moore, *Lectures on Pentateuch*:
 - Church is denomination founded by T. and A. Campbell ... a branch of the Baptist denomination.
- After Civil War: many started using 'denomination' of churches of Christ ... 'Christians in all denominations...'
 - A return to NT church was not desirable...
- 'Pious unimmersed'
- Union meetings with denominations...

Denominational drifting

- Jacob Creath:

“When a man leaps the falls of Niagara, can he stop before he touches the bottom over the falls? When a man leaves the *Bible alone*, there is no rest for him this side of Rome.”

Church buildings

- Stylish buildings appealed to proud, worldly people.
- ‘Garfield Memorial Church.’
- Buildings cannot hold people to truth.

“It is a historical fact that churches spending extravagantly on buildings seldom remain satisfied with the simple gospel more than one generation” – West

Change in preaching

- Some became intolerant of hearing first principles.
- J.B. Briney –

“Does he mean he is tired of faith? No, he speaks of it often.

Tired of repentance? No; he’s for it, at least in theory.

What then? Tired of baptism for remission of sins.”

Change in preaching

- Those who preached first principles were 'legalists'
- Some denied there is law under Christ.
Ro.8:2; Ga.5:14
- Moses Lard's summary
- Preachers soon became known as . . .
 - Pastors . . . Reverends . . .
 - Mt.23; Ac.10
- Weak preaching produced weak members

I. People Often Change With Times

II. Worldliness Affects Churches

III. Common Excuses For
Supporting Error

1. “We have good motives.”

- So did Uzzah, 2 Sm.6.
- So did Saul, Ac.26.

1. "We have good motives."
2. "We do good works."

○ 2 Tim.3 –

¹⁶ All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1. “We have good motives.”

2. “We do good works.”

3. “Better to do something than nothing”

○ Uzziah? 2 Chr.26

○ Tit.3:10-11

1 Jn.2:19

- James 3:17
- Hosea 4:17
- Ph.1:9-11
 - a. Understanding of Scripture, 9 [time]
 - b. Wisdom in situation, 10a [training]
 - c. Courage to stand, 10b-11 [trust]