

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH: LESSON 6

CONTROVERSY: MISSIONARY SOCIETY - INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

INTRODUCTION:

The church grew rapidly during the 1830's. The Restorers and their respective groups were united in the common Cause. The seed, however, was being planted that would result in division.

"Cooperation Meetings" were conducted and would gain in popularity and practice in the 1840's, culminating in the American Christian Missionary Society.

In Midway, Kentucky in 1859 a melodeon was introduced to the church. This in later years would lead to further divisiveness.

I. SOCIETY CONTROVERSY

A. The Trend Toward Organizing Churches:

1. Mahoning Association was dissolved at Austintown, August, 1830.
2. Brethren met the next year for preaching, mutual edification, and hearing the reports of the progress of the Cause. Cooperation was discussed.
3. Alexander Campbell published seven articles in the Millennial Harbinger on "The Cooperation of Churches," (1831-1832).
4. In a sixteen article series (1841-1842), under the title, "The Nature Of The Christian Organization" Campbell proposed a "general organization" among churches.
 - a) "Our organization and discipline are greatly defective, and essentially inadequate to the present condition and wants of society."
5. In 1844, in Stubenville, Ohio, a meeting was held to discuss "cooperation." This was followed by another one in Wellsburg, Virginia (Dec.26, 1844), and again in Wellsburg on April 1, 1845.
6. The American Christian Bible Society was organized in Cincinnati, January 27, 1845 through efforts of D.S. Burnet.
 - a) First time churches had been called upon to accept and support a national society.

CHURCH HISTORY - LESSON 6

PAGE 2

7. The American Christian Missionary Society was founded in Cincinnati on October 23, 1849.
 - a) Though absent Campbell was elected President, and Burnet, vice-president.
 - b) Delegates could become life members for \$20, and life directors for \$100.
8. While the work of the ACMS was not as broad as Campbell would have liked, he realized his dream of an organization outside the church doing the work of the church; pooling their resources, acting as one to accomplish greater things in the field of evangelism.

B. Opposition To The Society:

1. Jacob Creath, in a letter to Campbell, tried to show his inconsistency by reminding him of what he had written in the Christian Baptist.
2. Churches adopted resolutions opposing the Society.
3. Tolbert Fanning, an influential preacher in the south, founded the Gospel Advocate in 1855 for the purpose of examining church organization and "Christian Cooperation."
4. Benjamin Franklin, at first a supporter, became opposed to the Society - He said it was an "'outside society' with laws and names unknown to God."
5. American Christian Missionary Society endorsed the Union in the Civil War at Cincinnati, Ohio, October, 1861.
6. Influential papers during this period:
 - a) The American Christian Review (Benjamin Franklin).
 - b) The Christian Standard (Isaac Errett).
 - c) The Gospel Advocate (David Lipscomb).
 - d) Lard's Quarterly and Apostolic Times (Moses E. Lard and J.W. McGarvey).

C. Pivotal Year: 1866

1. Gospel Advocate resumed publication.
2. The Christian Standard was launched.
3. The American Christian Review reversed its position with regard to the Missionary Society and began to fight it.

4. This was the beginning of a decade of controversy and alienation. At the end of this period, it was obvious a split was inevitable !

CHURCH HISTORY - LESSON 6

PAGE 3

II. THE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CONTROVERSY

A. Beginning Discussion:

1. Result of a question asked J.B. Henshall. He replied in the Ecclesiastical Reformer in 1851.
2. John Rogers wrote Campbell and asked his position on the use of an instrument in the worship of God. Campbell's reply: "To all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cowbell in a concert."

B. First Introduced:

1. The church in Midway, Kentucky was the first to introduce the instrument in worship in 1859. L.L. Pinkerton was the preacher.
 - a) When the melodeon was brought in the meeting house of the church, one of the elders had his slave remove it and stored it in his barn.
 - b) Several years passed before it became a matter of controversy.

C. Reaction:

1. By 1868 probably 50 congregations out of 10,000 used the instrument.
2. Moses E.Lard, J.W. McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin and others strongly opposed instrumental music in worship. It was not a problem in the south because of David Lipscomb's influence.
3. The advocates of instrumental music in worship used two main arguments: (1) The Old Testament authorized it; (2) Expediency, such as meeting houses and song books.

III. COMPLETE DIVISION: 1906

A. Census Reflects Division:

1. The United States Government in 1906 recognized two separate bodies: (1) Disciples of Christ (Christian Church) and (2) Church of Christ.
 - a) The Missionary Society, Instrumental Music and growing friendship with denominations led to break among the brethren.

b) Division was complete.

CHURCH HISTORY - LESSON 6
PAGE 4

B. Basic Differences:

1. Concept of Authority.
2. Since the Bible does not tell us how churches may act together, man is at liberty to devise a plan. The Bible does not tell us how to organize the church universal, so we are free to use our own wisdom.
3. Instrumental Music: "The Bible does not tell us not to have it."