Pillars of the Truth

Article #7

*The Restoration*

Franklin Camp

**The Restoration**

J. Franklin Camp, Deceased

The Restoration Movement is close to my heart for many reasons. It is close to my heart because of the ties of the past. My grandfather was a pioneer preacher. The first sermon I ever preached was in a congregation he helped to establish. My Father was also a pioneer preacher. Like Paul, he "made tents" and supported himself so that he could preach in weak places. He preached for forty years and in all those years never received any money except one time. On one occasion, a congregation gave him $5.00 and on his way home he stopped by the home of a poor family in the community and gave the money to them. The first local work I ever did was with my home congregation where my father had preached for forty years.

**MY SALVATION**

But as much as the ties of the past mean to me, there are deeper and more fundamental reasons for my interest in the Restoration Movement. Above everything else I want to enjoy life now and go to heaven when I die, and I believe with every fiber of my being that the Restoration Movement holds the principles that can make this possible. This is not just because it is the Restoration Movement, but because its principles are scriptural. This is the reason that I think we need to study it and know what it is.

**ITS BEGINNING**

The Restoration Movement was launched in the midst of a troubled and divided religious world. Men had grown tired and weary of the things that caused division. Because the principles upon which it was started were scriptural, it had an appeal beyond anything that had happened since the dawn of Christianity on Pentecost. The Restoration is needed in our day just as much as when it was first started. Today the religious world has lost its way even more than it had when the Restoration was started. Though the religious world then was in error, it held to many of the great fundamentals of faith, such as the Deity of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, and the resurrection. This is not true of religion of our day. Modernism is eating away the very vitals of Christianity. Many good people in the denominational world are tired and sick of all of this and are looking for something solid to build their faith on. They are frightened and are looking for some way out. The principles of the Restoration are the only light for a world that has lost its way. I think we have the greatest opportunity since the early days of the Restoration. Multitudes are wanting to get back to the Bible. Preachers are admitting that division is wrong and that religious unity is to be desired. Of course they do not want it on the basis of the Bible, but their call for unity opens the door for us to present the restoration plea. But there is a grave danger that we may let this opportunity slip unless we find our bearing and chart our course by the principles and convictions that characterized the Restoration in its beginning.

**TO BRING UNITY, YET WE ARE DIVIDED**

The Restoration Movement was started because of the division brought about by the doctrines and commandments of men. It was started to bring about religious unity. Yet the very slogan that was designed to unite men had become the source of division. Were the pioneers wrong? I cannot believe that they were. The Bible condemns division and teaches unity. Division cannot be right and unity must be possible on some grounds, or the Bible would not demand it. If unity is not possible, then there is no hope for a sin-cursed world.

If unity is taught in the Bible and it is desirable and the Restoration was designed to bring about unity, why do we have division in the church? I am convinced that it is not because there is anything wrong with the principles of the Restoration, rather division has come about as a result of mis-application and misunderstanding of these principles.

**HAS THE RESTORATION REACHED ITS DOTAGE?**

Campbell said in 1824, "The history of the church for many centuries has proved, the history of every sect has convinced us, that it is impossible for any one sect to gain such ascendency as to embrace the converts of others, and thus unite the allied forces of darkness, as it is to create a world. Every sect has its infancy, its childhood, its dotage. Every sect with a human creed, carries in it, as in the human body, the seeds of mortality."

Shall the Restoration have its infancy, its childhood, and its dotage? Someone has said that the Restoration Movement will destroy itself by splinters, faction and division. Will this be true or false? That will depend upon those and others like us who are here today.

**THE MEN AND THE MOOD**

The kind of men and the mood that produced the Restoration are as essential today as they were in the beginning if the movement is to continue. When we get to the place where we think we have outgrown the kind of men that started the Restoration Movement, we are planting the seeds that will destroy it. This is not to say they were perfect men, but their attitudes toward division and their love for truth are just as necessary now as in the past.

**BIBLE STUDENTS**

The very heart of the Restoration Movement was the Bible studied, loved, obeyed, and proclaimed. The pioneers may have lacked many things that we have, but they had no lack of Bible knowledge. Their preaching was not about the Bible, but the Bible. Their sermons were filled with Bible quotations. Every argument was supported by Bible truth. Entirely too much of our preaching today has a hollow sound and little appeal because there is too little Bible in the sermons. The faith and conviction of those pioneers came as a result of the careful examination of the scriptures. They knew what they believed and why. They accepted nothing until they were sure that the Bible taught it, and they were not sure that the Bible taught anything until they arrived at such conclusions by their own study. Too much of our faith is second hand. There are too many of us that believe things, not because we have hammered them out on the anvil of truth, but because these beliefs have been handed down to us. A second-hand faith is worth very little. It will not last long and is sure to be corrupted within two or three generations. No doubt this is one reason that God gave us the Bible in writing. Truth transmitted only by mouth is soon corrupted. But with the truth written down, every generation may have it for itself from a fountain that is pure.

**WE NEED TO BE DISTURBED**

The following figures are given by Brother Woods in the Gospel Advocate of Sept. 17, 1964. "Forty percent of the members of the church never attend any service except Sunday morning." This is nearly half of the membership of the church. This kind of percentage will have a tremendous influence on the future of the church. You can mark it down that this group is not going to keep the church from apostasy unless this weakness is corrected. The knowledge and conviction of such members are too little to stay the tide of drifting away from the Bible.

"Seventy-five percent of the members of the church are unable to take the Bible and find what it teaches men to do to be saved." The conditions of salvation are simple. When this percent of the members of the church do not know where to find these simple truths in the Bible, we are already in trouble. Can you conceive of there having been few if any in the church in the early days of the Restoration Movement that lacked this knowledge?

"Fifty percent do not know why we do not use mechanical instruments of music in worship." This means that half of the members of the church have no knowledge of Bible authority. The very heart of the instrumental music question is the matter of Bible authority. What sense does the slogan of the Restoration "We call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways" mean to the member of the church that does not know why we do not use mechanical instruments of music?

"Twenty-five percent would not object to using instruments of music in worship." This means that one-fourth of the members of the church not only do not know what the Bible teaches, they have no respect for it. The person that claims to know enough to be a member of the Lord's church and yet would be willing to worship with an organ cares not what the Bible teaches.