

WORKS
OF
ELDER B. W. STONE.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A FEW DISCOURSES AND SERMONS

(ORIGINAL AND SELECTED).

BY
ELDER JAMES M. MATHES.

"Little children love one another."--JOHN.

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CHAPTER III.

HIS IMMERSION.

SOME time after the new organization had been inaugurated, he became dissatisfied with his "Infant Sprinkling." He says:

"The brethren, elders and deacons, came together on this subject; for we had agreed previously with one another to act in concert, and not to adventure on any thing new without advice from one another. At this meeting we took up the matter in a brotherly spirit, and concluded that every brother and sister should act freely, and according to their conviction of right--and that we should cultivate the long-neglected grace of forbearance toward each other--they who should be immersed should not despise those who were not, and *vice versa*. Now the question arose, who will baptize us? The Baptists would not, except we united with them; and there were no elders among us who had been immersed. It was finally concluded among us, that if we were authorized to preach, we were also authorized to baptize. The work then commenced, the preachers baptized one another, and crowds came, and were also baptized. My congregations very generally submitted to it, and it soon obtained generally, and yet the pulpit was silent on the subject. In brother Marshall's congregation there were many who wished baptism. As brother Marshall had not faith in the [27] ordinance, I was called upon to administer. This displeased him, and a few others.

"The subject of baptism. now engaged the attention of the people very generally, and some, with myself, began to conclude that it was ordained for the remission of sins, and ought to be administered in the name of Jesus to all believing penitents. I remember once about this time we had a great meeting at Concord. Mourners were invited every day to collect before the stand, in order for prayers (this being the custom of the times). The brethren were praying daily for the same people, and none seemed to be comforted. I was considering in my mind what could be the cause. The words of Peter, at Pentecost, rolled through my mind, 'Repent and be baptized, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' I thought, were Peter here, he would thus address these mourners. I quickly arose, and addressed them in the same language, and urged them to comply. Into the spirit of the doctrine I was never fully led, until it was revived by brother Alexander Campbell, some years after."

In 1809 his first wife died, and his only son by her, Barton Warren, also died, leaving him with four little daughters, the eldest not more than eight years old. October 31st, 1811, he was married to Celia W. Bowen, near Nashville, Tennessee, cousin to his former wife. After a brief residence in Tennessee, he returned to Kentucky, and for a time was engaged in teaching a school in Lexington, and preaching of Sundays. While thus engaged he studied the Hebrew language under a Prussian doctor, a Jew of great learning and ability.

Soon after he was chosen principal of the "Rittenhouse Academy," in Georgetown, Kentucky. In his [28] new location he succeeded well, both as a teacher and a preacher; yet he was induced to resign his position in the Academy, and devote all his time to evangelizing, and great success followed his labors. About this time (1823) Elder Alexander Campbell visited Kentucky. His debate with W. L. Macalla, and subsequent preaching, caused great excitement in Kentucky, and other States. Brother Stone says:

"When he (A. Campbell) came into Kentucky, I heard him often in public and in private. I was pleased with his manner and matter. I saw no distinctive feature between the doctrine he preached and that which we had preached for many years, except on baptism for remission of sins. Even this I had once received and taught, as before stated, but had strangely let it go from my mind, till brother

Campbell revived it afresh. I thought then that he was not sufficiently explicit on the influences of the Spirit, which led many honest Christians to think he denied them. Had he been as explicit then, as since, many honest souls would have been still with us, and would have greatly aided the good cause. In a few things I dissented from him, but was agreed to disagree.

"I will not say there are no faults in brother Campbell; but that there are fewer, perhaps, in him, than any man I know on earth; and over these few my love would throw a veil, and hide them from view for ever. I am constrained, and willingly constrained, to acknowledge him the greatest promoter of this reformation of any man living. The Lord reward him!"

In 1826 Bro. Stone commenced the publication of a religious monthly periodical, put up in pamphlet form, of twenty four pages per number, called the "Christian Messenger." It had a good circulation, and no doubt [29] did great good in spreading abroad the knowledge of the truth. At the end of six years, or. in 1832, Elder John T. Johnson became co-editor of the Messenger with him, and so continued till Bro. Stone removed to Illinois. Just before J. T. Johnson became co-editor of the Messenger, a union was effected between the Christians with Bro. Stone, and the Reformers, so called, who had come off from the Baptists in Kentucky through the labors of A. Campbell, and those with him. They occupied the same foundation, and could not do otherwise than unite together when they came to understand each other. And to cement and make permanent this union, two distinguished Elders were chosen to ride through the churches and labor together. John Smith, formerly a Baptist, and John Rogers of the Christian body. The union has been permanent. Of this union Bro. Stone says: "They (the Reformers), held the name *Christian* as sacred as we did--they were equally averse from making opinions the test of fellowship--and equally solicitous for the salvation of souls. This union, irrespective of reproach, I view as the noblest act of my life." [30]

[WEBWS 27-30]