

# *Where the Scriptures Speak*

By Dr. Dallas Burdette  
Website: [freedominchrist.net](http://freedominchrist.net)

We assume that a reasonably intelligent person is logically consistent, and therefore we seek to interpret what he says in one place in the light of what he says elsewhere. It is a basic rule of hermeneutics that a particular teaching should be interpreted in the light of general teaching, that is, in light of its context. Every teacher expects that his pupils will not take his words out of context. That context is the totality of what he has said or written elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

“**Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent**” became the battle cry for the birth of the Reformation movement initiated by Thomas (1763-1854) and Alexander (1788-1866) Campbell.<sup>2</sup> This slogan became the impetus for a movement that resulted in three distinctive bodies: (1) Churches of Christ, (2) Christian Churches, and (3) Disciples of Christ.<sup>3</sup> This cliché is quoted by all three movements to call attention to their reliance upon the Bible and the Bible alone for their faith and practice. This essay demonstrates that one may speak **WHERE** the Bible speaks and, at the same time, fail to speak **AS** the Bible speaks.

**Even though all three movements rely upon the same motto, no two can agree upon the exact blueprint, or precise pattern, supposedly set forth in the New Testament.** The movements cannot agree over the Scripturalness of missionary societies, Bible colleges, located preachers, orphan homes, and so on. Also, within the Churches of Christ, Christians cannot agree upon the pattern to be observed in a so-called worship service; namely Sunday school or non-Sunday school, individual cups or one common cup, instrumental music or vocal singing only, wine or grape juice, break the bread or pinch the bread in the communion, and so on.

**The question that confronts every believer is:** What did this epigram originally mean? Still another question is: How should believers interpret this phrase in seeking to adhere to the teachings of the Bible in their lives: Again, how do we apply this slogan to the present day controversies over the many divisions that exist within the body of Christ? In order to arrive at an honest interpretation of this now famous motto, it is imperative that we consider its historical background. In order to grasp the real purpose behind this motivating epigram, it is necessary to briefly look at Thomas Campbell’s *Declaration and Address* as well as the writings of his son, Alexander. For us to avoid subjective postulations, we must look at the evidence—the document itself—for an objective analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Stein, *difficult Sayings in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 36-37.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Indiana: Religious Book Service, 1897), Vol., 1: 237.

<sup>3</sup> Some Christian Churches are identical to the Disciples of Christ

For example, we discover that Thomas Campbell employed this formula to eliminate sectarianism within the various denominations. That is to say, he employed the motto to call attention to the spirit of factiousness and division that existed within Christendom. In other words, we ought not, according to Thomas Campbell, to make our inferences and deductions from Scripture premises the criteria whereby we determine whether we are or whether we are not Christians. This in-depth study explores the “birth of a motto” in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the original expression. This section explores the history leading up to the framing of the dictum. What were the events behind this now famous phrase that launched his statement into orbit? What were the implications for such a slogan? In discussing the “birth of a motto,” we must explore the very heart of this saying in order to apply the catchphrase as it was originally intended to be used.

Next, this chapter explores the “intent of the motto.” **What was the motive behind the slogan?** Then, this study analyzes the “historical roots of the motto.” Since John Locke (1632-1704) influenced both Campbells (father and son), then an investigation of the political and religious history before and during the life of Locke is essential to understand correctly the drive behind the writings of Campbell’s *Declaration and Address*. In order to unfold the thinking of the Campbells, we must read Locke’s *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. This letter takes one behind the scenes in order to grasp more fully the impact that Locke’s writing had upon the Campbells. This is especially true of Locke’s letter concerning toleration. Locke’s letter of toleration reveals a spirit of inconsideration for the dissidents. His letter reveals the history of kings and queens in their endeavors to enforce conformity upon their subjects. This history begins with the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) and concludes with the reign of William of Orange (1689-1702).

And, finally, this chapter discusses the comparison between Locke and Campbell. This study parallels the thoughts among Locke and Thomas and Alexander Campbell. For instance, the use of certain words and phrases employed by all three men sheds light on how Thomas and Alexander Campbell relied heavily for their call for toleration among Christians in their new movement. For example, consider the following words or phrases: (1) heresy, (2) expressly stated, and (3) Church of Christ. This history sets the stage for a clearer understanding of the motive behind Locke’s letter about toleration and the Campbells concern over toleration.

## BIRTH OF A MOTTO

As to whether we have failed the motto or it has failed us depends on what Campbell meant by it or how we interpret it. Campbell never expounded on what he meant by it. He first introduced it to the Christian Association of Washington, the para-church entity he organized in 1809 when he launched his movement to unite the Christians in all the sects. When it was pointed out that if he followed such a rule he would have to give up infant baptism, he conceded that such might be the case, a decision he finally made. But Campbell never examined the broader implication of his motto as a rule of interpretation, such as whether something is forbidden if it is not expressly stated in Scripture, or if we are authorized to act only “where the Scriptures speak.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Leroy Garrett (1918-2015), “The Motto That Got Us into Trouble,” *Restoration Review* 34 (March 1992): 253.

**On February 9, 1808, the Chartiers Presbytery convened a heresy trial against Thomas Campbell.**<sup>5</sup> This trial was the first detailed heresy trial in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Part of the charges brought against Campbell had to do with administering the Lord’s Supper without properly questioning the participants. As a result of this failure to adhere to the traditions of the Presbytery, **Rev. Mr. Anderson levels the charge that Mr. Campbell says**, “we have nothing but human authority or agreement for confessions of faith, testimonies, covenanting and fast days before the dispensing of the Lord’s Supper.”<sup>7</sup> In response to the charges, Mr. Campbell crisply articulates his sentiments:

That we have no formal or express command either by Christ or his apostles enjoining upon the Pastors of the Catholic Church or any part of it to draw up a compend of the Divine truths contained in the word of God and to make approbation of them a term of communion to entrants into the Church of Christ as a *sine qua non* [“something absolutely indispensable or essential”] of their admission.<sup>8</sup>

On September 13, 1808, Thomas Campbell renounced the authority of the Presbytery.<sup>9</sup> Why did the Presbytery reject Campbell and why did he renounce their authority? **“Thomas Campbell was rejected, not for violating a clear ‘Thus saith the Lord,’ but for deviating from a party creed,”** according to Leroy Garrett (1918-2015).<sup>10</sup> Even though the Presbytery defrocked<sup>11</sup> Thomas Campbell, he continued to advocate Christian unity among the various Christian sects.

Since Thomas Campbell and others had no formal meetinghouse, they met in private homes. As a result of these gatherings, the group began to give more attention to the Bible as the rule of faith and practice. Later, a special meeting was proposed to set forth a clear and distinct statement of the principles they advocated. One such meeting took place in the home of Abraham Altars.<sup>12</sup> The original intent of their gatherings was not to organize another religious party, but rather to promote unity within the Christian community. Robert Richardson (1806-1876) is especially helpful in this area when he expounds on “formal or express command”:

No separation from the religious parties had been contemplated—no bond of union amongst those attending the meetings had been proposed. . . . Neither on his part however, nor on that of any member, was there the slightest intention of forming a new religious party. On the contrary, the whole

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<sup>5</sup> William Herbert Hanna, *Biography of Thomas Campbell Advocate of Christian Union*, reprint (Joplin, MO: College Press, nd), 45.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51. “*Sine qua non*” means an essential element or condition.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>10</sup> Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 141.

<sup>11</sup> “Defrocked”: to deprive of the right to practice a profession.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Religious book Service, 1897), 1:231.

design of the effort was, if possible, to put an end to Partyism, and to induce the different religious denominations to unite together upon the Bible as the only authorized rule of faith and practice, and to desist from their controversies about matters of mere opinion and expediency.<sup>13</sup>

During this meeting, in the home of Abraham Altars, Thomas Campbell set forth the motto that became the “guiding star” of the Movement: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”<sup>14</sup> What did Thomas Campbell seek to convey by this motto? What was behind this statement? Robert Richardson, Alexander Campbell’s biographer, unveils the intent behind the “rule” when he summarizes the objectives of the Christian Association of Washington:

The whole design of the effort was, if possible to put an end to Partyism, and to induce the different religious denominations to unite together upon the Bible as the only authorized rule of faith and practice, and to desist from their controversies about matters of mere opinion and expediency.”<sup>15</sup>

**Thomas Campbell sought to put an end to sectarianism that existed in all of the various denominations.** To Campbell nothing ought to be made a term of communion that God did not explicitly order in His Holy Word. In other words, since the Word of God did not require an inquisition before observing the Lord’s Supper, then we should choose to observe the formula, “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” Creeds could not be the test of fellowship, only the Word of God. Prevailing error, even today, still crystallizes around the now famous expression. Twenty-one years after the *Declaration and Address*, Alexander Campbell set forth the idea behind the phrase concerning unity:

It is cruel to excommunicate a man because of the imbecility of his intellect. We have been censured long and often for laying too much stress upon the assent of the understanding; but those who have most acrimoniously censured us, have laid much more stress upon the assent of the mind, than we have ever done. We never did, at any time, exclude a man from the kingdom of God for a mere imbecility of intellect; or, in other words, because he could not assent to our opinions.<sup>16</sup>

Also, Richardson draws attention to Thomas Campbell’s motto:

It was from the moment when these significant words were uttered and accepted that the more intelligent ever afterward dated the *formal and actual commencement of the Reformation* which was subsequently carried on with so much success, and which has already produced such important changes in religious society over a large portion of the world.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 1:232.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1:237.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1:232.

<sup>16</sup> Alexander Campbell, “Millennium—No. II,” *Millennial Harbinger* (Bethany, VA: Editor, 1830; reprint, Joplin, MO: College Press, 1987): 145-146.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, 1:237. See also Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 142-143.

Further, Dr. Leroy Garrett (1918-2015) correctly points out that this rule “is one of the most often quoted non-biblical sayings in the history of the Movement, and is generally viewed as the essence of its plea.”<sup>18</sup> Even though this rule was initiated by Thomas Campbell, nevertheless, it appears that this concept originated out of the Reformed tradition, under the leadership of **Zwingli** (1484-1531) in Switzerland.<sup>19</sup> One of the mottoes out of the Reformation Movement of **Luther** (1483-1546) and Zwingli was “Scripture alone.” This slogan, “Scripture alone,” is similar to Thomas Campbell’s motto. Both slogans mean essentially the same. The reformers sought, even as the Campbells, to restore primitive Christianity. These mottoes sound simple enough, yet Christians were/are still divided over what “Scripture alone” meant. For example, out of the **Lutheran Reformation** and the **Zwinglian Restoration** movements, division proliferated. Interpretation played a key role in deciding how to interpret the phrase “Scripture alone.”

From its inception, the rule announced by Thomas Campbell has been questioned as to its soundness. Can this rule be followed *in toto* (totally, entirely)? Immediately following Campbell’s statement, Andrew Munro, a bookseller and postmaster at Canonsburg, said, “Mr. Campbell, if we adopt that as a basis, then there is an end of infant baptism.”<sup>20</sup> Dr. Richardson informs his readers that **James Foster also questioned Thomas Campbell** with great emphasis: “Father Campbell, how could you, in the absence of any authority in the Word of God baptize a child in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?”<sup>21</sup> Whereupon, “Mr. Campbell was quite confounded at this question. His face colored, he became for a moment irritated, and said in reply, in an offended tone: ‘Sir, you are the most intractable person I ever met.’”<sup>22</sup> **Ultimately, that which was intended as a basis of unity became the rule that divided.**

## INTENT OF THE MOTTO: UNITY

It is worthwhile to consider for a moment the general function of scholarship within any religious tradition, and particularly the Christian. At certain times in the development of a religion, it is necessary for men to stand off from their beliefs and practices, to analyze them and order them, to attempt to understand them better in the light of their origins and growth and conflict with other beliefs and practices. The primary motive here may be the desire to purify the religious tradition itself in a time of corruption.<sup>23</sup>

The analysis of the “birth of a motto” concluded with the anecdote about Thomas Campbell’s stern reaction to Andrew Munro’s response to the Scripturalness of infant baptism.

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<sup>18</sup> Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 143.

<sup>19</sup> See Leonard C. Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene: ACU Press, 1988) for an excellent survey of the Reformed tradition under the leadership of Zwingli and other reformers.

<sup>20</sup> Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, 1: 238.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:240.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1956), 4.

The attitude of Campbell's reply should once for all demonstrate that Thomas Campbell did not mean that one had to have "book, chapter, and verse" for every teaching within the Christian community. The objective of this chapter is to understand this well-known slogan in light of its origin. To understand this saying, one must go back to the fountain, or the source of its origin, which understanding helps to lead one from legalism to freedom.

## THOMAS CAMPBELL AND THE DECLARATION AND ADDRESS

Following the expulsion of Thomas Campbell from the Presbytery, the Christian Association of Washington was formed to advocate Christian unity among disciples of Christ upon "Scripture alone." On August 17, 1809, twenty-one of their number came together to determine the means whereby the Association could carry out the principles enunciated by Campbell. During the meeting the *Declaration and Address* was presented.<sup>24</sup> The cliché enunciated by Campbell is best explained by his sixth proposition in his *Declaration and Address*:

**Prop. 6.** That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore, no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the church. **Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession**<sup>25</sup> (Emphasis mine—bold)

The last sentence in the above citation sets forth clearly what Campbell intended to convey by his "now" famous motto. Even though this clause is couched in different words from the "now" famous motto, nevertheless, this sentence is a good commentary on the cliché. The *Sitz im Leben* (setting in life, or life situation) of this dictum demonstrates beyond doubt the intent of Campbell's "now" famous guide. When the Presbytery sought to bind their "inferences and deductions" upon Campbell as terms of communion, he refused to comply with their wishes, thus, he was defrocked or excommunicated.

A close reading of the *Declaration and Address* with the *Appendix*<sup>26</sup> will enhance our understanding of one of the most important documents in the history of the Churches of Christ, Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ. This document advances unity among all believers in the various denominations.<sup>27</sup> Campbell did not press forward the notion that every person

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<sup>24</sup> Hanna, *Biography of Thomas Campbell Advocate of Christian Union*, 118.

<sup>25</sup> Thomas Campbell, "Declaration and Address," in C. A. Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, reprint (Joplin: College Press, 1985), 110.

<sup>26</sup> The Appendix is an explanation of the *Declaration and Address*. In order to understand clearly the meanings of certain phrases in the *Declaration and Address*, one must read the Appendix.

<sup>27</sup> In the Appendix, one finds undenominational expressions saturating its entire contents; for example, consider the following: "assure our brethren" (p. 128), "with respect to all the Churches of Christ" (p. 131), "to our brethren" (p. 131), "our brother" (p. 137), "Christian brethren" (p. 149), "our fellow-Christians" (p.

had to see eye-to-eye upon every issue, but rather that no person should make his “inferences and deductions” the test or standard whereby one determines if another is or is not a child of God. Although Campbell wrote more than one hundred and ninety-nine years ago, Christians should still join him in his sentiments expressed in “Proposition Two” in the *Declaration and Address*:

**Prop. 2.** That, although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable division among them. **They ought to receive each other, as Christ Jesus hath also received them, to the glory of God.** And, for this purpose, they ought all to walk by the same rule; to mind and speak the same things, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.<sup>28</sup> (Emphasis mine—bold)

In his *Appendix*, a response to the sectarianism of the Presbytery and explanation of the *Declaration and Address*, Campbell seems to have fully assessed the Christian Association of Washington’s position:

We only pretend to assert, what every one that pretends to reason must acknowledge, namely, that there is a manifest distinction between an express Scripture declaration, and the conclusion or inference which may be deduced from it; and that the former may be clearly understood, even where the latter is but imperfectly if at all perceived. . . . Christian unity and love ought not to be set aside to make way for exalting our inferences above the express authority of God. Our inference, upon the whole, is, that where a professing Christian brother opposes or refuses nothing either in faith or practice, for which there can be expressly produced a “Thus saith the Lord,” that we ought not to reject him because he cannot see with our eyes as to matters of human inference, of private judgment, “Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish? How walkest thou not charitably?” Thus we reason, thus we conclude, to make no conclusion of our own, nor of any other fallible fellow-creature, a rule of faith or duty to our brother.<sup>29</sup>

Unless God “expressly” commands something, then, we should not impose upon others our deductions. There was no “thus saith the Lord” concerning an examination before partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Thus, Campbell refused to make this a criterion by which to determine whether we could or could not participate. This practice of exclusion is what Campbell meant by the phrase: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak, where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” As stated above, to understand this phrase correctly, we must read the *Appendix* along with the *Declaration and Address*. C. A. Young does seem to have fully captured the proper way to read this document when he writes:

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151), “**toward a Christian brother**” (p. 156), “**acknowledged brother**” (p. 156), “**our oppressed fellow Christian**” (p. 157), “**a fellow-Christian** (p. 158), “**our brethren**” (p. 159), “**acknowledge each other as Christians**” (p. 161). It is significant that Campbell recognized the Presbyterians as brethren at the time of the writing of the *Declaration and Address*.

<sup>28</sup> Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 110.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-134.

One has but to imagine the coming together of Seceder Presbyterian sectarianism, bigotry and exclusiveness and Thomas Campbell's catholic and affectionate nature, to account for this document. One must read it with this background in mind.<sup>30</sup>

This "exclusiveness" and "bigotry" existed within all denominations. Everyone demanded that individuals conform to his or her particular brand of orthodoxy. This philosophy of religious fractiousness, as a whole, has not changed. Christians are still thrown out for the least infraction of the party creed. The voluminous writings of Alexander Campbell continue to explain, though indirectly, the motto initiated by his father. For example, he wrote in the *Christian Baptist*, approximately fifteen years after the *Declaration and Address* that the root of division centered on "unity of opinion." Pay attention to Alexander's succinct comments:

So long as unity of opinion was regarded as a proper basis of religious union, so long have mankind been detracted by the multiplicity and variety of opinions. To establish what is called a system of orthodox opinions as the bond of union, was, in fact, offering a premium for new diversities in opinion, and for increasing, *ad infinitum*, opinions, sects, and divisions.<sup>31</sup>

Again, in Alexander Campbell's most discerning article on "**The Foundation of Hope and of Christian Union**," he expresses the *summum bonum* (,sü-məm-'bō-nəm, "the highest or supreme good") of Christian unity, which is what the *Declaration and Address* is about. He captures the very essence of Christian unity when he sets forth the very heart and foundation of Christian oneness:

But the grandeur, sublimity, and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this, that THE BELIEF OF ONE FACT, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes to salvation. The belief of this ONE FACT, and submission to ONE INSTITUTION expressive of it, is all that is required of Heaven to admission into the church.<sup>32</sup>

## HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THOMAS CAMPBELL'S MOTTO

Like any growth, development may be healthy or it may be malignant; discerning the difference between these two kinds of growth requires constant research into the pathology of traditions. But it is a healthy development that keeps a tradition both out of the cancer ward and out of the fossil museum.<sup>33</sup>

Traditions often develop into a "fossil museum." The cliché initiated by Thomas Campbell to unite Christians in all the sects is now a cancerous growth that needs surgery to restore it to its original intent—religious toleration! Since the Campbell's were influenced by

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>31</sup> Alexander Campbell, "The Foundation of Hope, and of Christian Union," *Christian Baptist* 1 (April 1824): 176.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>33</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 60.

the writings of John Locke (1632-1704)<sup>34</sup> concerning political and religious toleration, we would do well to make a comparison between the writings of Locke and Campbell. This comparison should help to clarify the central thrust behind the now famous motto—“Where the Scriptures speak, we speak.” It goes almost without saying that the Campbells based their religious toleration upon the Word of God, but, on the other hand, both men (Thomas and Alexander) relied upon the phraseology of Locke to convey the truths of God encapsulated in human language. Even though Locke did not employ this particular motto, nevertheless, he advocated the same principle in his famous *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689).

How should we interpret the letter of Locke? Why was Locke so concerned about toleration toward dissenters in religion? How do Locke’s writings shed light upon Thomas and Alexander Campbell in their religious climate? Dr. Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), an American evangelical, a Christian Theologian, and philosopher, sets forth a principle of interpretation that has some helpful insight in understanding the connection between Locke and Campbell. Here is what he says,

If we are to understand present-day trends in thought, we must see how the situation has come about historically and also look in some detail at the development of philosophic thought-forms. Only when this has been done are we ready to go on to the practical aspects of how to communicate unchanging truth in a changing world.<sup>35</sup>

Schaeffer cautions against the “autonomous principle,” that is to say, the study of disciplines in unrelated parallel lines. This understanding of “parallel lines” is essential to a proper understanding of Locke and the Campbells as well as the Stone/Campbell Movement of the twenty-first century. We must not isolate Locke and the Campbells’ writings, but rather study these three men as parallel lines. Schaeffer explains “unrelated parallel lines” this way:

We have studied our exegesis as exegesis, our theology as theology, our philosophy as philosophy; we study something about art as art, we study music as music, without understanding that these are things of man, and the things of man are never unrelated parallel lines.<sup>36</sup>

It is not an accident that the disposition set forth in this now famous phrase of Thomas Campbell and his monumental document about Christian union is also expressed in the writings of John Locke. Both men were concerned about toleration. Some expressions are the same in

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<sup>34</sup> The following is an interesting note on the life of John Locke, found in Elizabeth Livingstone, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 306-307, where it is stated:

Locke was the foremost defender of free inquiry and toleration in the later 17<sup>th</sup> cent. In the *Letters Concerning Toleration* (1689, 1690, and 1692) he pleaded for religious toleration for all except atheists and RCs whom he excluded as a danger to the State.

<sup>35</sup> Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Three Essential Books in One Volume: The God Who Is There, Escape from Reason, His Is There and He Is Not Silent* (Illinois: Crossway, 1990), 208.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

both documents, but it really goes without saying that we do not have to employ identical words in order to communicate the same truths. Approximately one hundred and twenty years before Campbell wrote his *Magna Charta* for the Christian Association of Washington, John Locke also wrote his famous letters concerning *Toleration* in 1689, 1690, and 1692. In these letters he called for religious toleration for all except Roman Catholics and atheists. He advocated allowances for individual opinions on the ground that human understanding was too limited for one man to impose his beliefs on another. In order to understand the Campbells and Locke, we must survey the political and religious philosophy before and during the time of Locke as well as the religious conditions that existed in the time of the Campbells.

## **THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF ENGLAND BEFORE AND DURING THE LIFE OF JOHN LOCKE**

The political and religious history of England, beginning with **Henry VIII** (1509-1547) through **William of Orange** (1689-1702) and **Mary** (1689-1694), are crucial to a proper interpretation of the motto: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak.” Even though Locke does not quote this cliché, nevertheless, this concept is found sprinkled throughout Locke’s *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. To correctly understand Locke’s emphasis upon “expressly stated,” one must begin with **Henry VIII**. In other words, when we uncover the political and religious turmoil during and after his reign, then this understanding helps us to set the stage for Locke’s essay about long-suffering. An investigation of the historical roots of the now famous motto must begin, at least, with the rule of Henry VIII. Without an understanding of this period (1509-1702), we cannot fully appreciate Locke’s stress upon an error-free grasp of the biblical meaning of heresy or the characteristics of a true church or broad-mindedness toward dissidents.

Beginning with Henry VIII is not an arbitrary decision, especially since this King is recognized as the founder of the Church of England. This time frame covers approximately two hundred years of history (1509-1702). Near the end of this period (1689), William of Orange plays a significant role in this critical part of England’s history. During his reign, Parliament passed the *Act of Toleration* and Locke also wrote his famous *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689). The history preceding both of these actions is essential to a precise awareness of the merit of these transactions. During the reign of these kings and queens (1509-1702), we discover that certain acts enacted by these kings and queens, along with Parliament, framed rage toward the dissenters. The various *Acts of Uniformity* passed by Parliament were enforced with rigor. Those who would not conform to the *Acts of Uniformity*<sup>37</sup> were persecuted with

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<sup>37</sup> See Livingstone, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 527, where the *Act of Uniformity* is defined:

UNIFORMITY, Acts of. (1) The 1549 Act imposed the exclusive use of the first Book of Common Prayer in all public services and laid down penalties for holders of benefices who failed to

excommunication, banishment, torture, imprisonment, and even death. To interpret the writings of Locke, it is essential that one begin with the political and religious persecutions leading up to the accession of William of Orange and his wife Mary II, daughter of James II. This history is not intended to be exhaustive, but illustrative of the fury and wrath against dissent that caused Locke to write his letter concerning toleration in 1689 and Parliament's decision to issue an *Act of Toleration* in 1689.

### Henry VIII (1509-1547)

One hundred twenty years before Locke was born (1632), **Henry VIII** became king of England (1509). Upon his ascension to the throne, he opposed the Reform Movement and his *Assuetia Septem Sacramentorum* won him the title of "Defender of the Faith."<sup>38</sup> Pope Clement gave Henry this title because he stoutly disagreed with the reforms advocated by Luther (1483-1547). After Henry broke with the Catholic Church, he maintained his rights to this title, only it was not the faith of Catholicism with its Pope, even though the Ten Articles and later the Six Articles promoted the Catholic teaching, but the faith of Henry that he defended. The Six Articles<sup>39</sup> identified the Church of England as entirely Roman Catholic in doctrine, except that he himself was head of the Church of England. In other words, he was sovereign over church and state.

**Twenty-five years after Henry's ascension to the throne, the Church of England came into existence (1534).** This church began when the English monarch, rather than the Bishop of Rome, was recognized as the head of the church on earth. He summoned Parliament (1534) to pass Acts (legislative actions) to transfer the leadership of the Church in England to him.<sup>40</sup> Parliament also passed another law called the **Act of Succession** in order to declare Henry's marriage to Catherine unlawful, but, at the same time, to declare his marriage to Anne as lawful.<sup>41</sup> In addition to this Act, which declared him to be the head of the church on earth, he also managed to get enacted another Act called the Act of Supremacy, which confirmed Henry as the Supreme Head of the Church in England.<sup>42</sup>

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comply. (2) The 1552 Act ordered the use of the revised BCP [Book of Common Prayer], of that year. Absence from church was punishable by ecclesiastical censure, and attendance at other forms of service by imprisonment. (3) The 1559 Act ordered the use of the 1552 BCP, with slight modifications. Absence from church was now punishable by a fine. (4) The 1662 Act required that all ministers should publicly assent to the 1662 BCP and ordered its exclusive use. Ministers not episcopally ordained were to be deprived. Some 2000 Presbyterian ministers who refused to conform were ejected from their livings.

<sup>38</sup> See "Henry VIII," in Livingstone, *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>39</sup> For complete documentation, see Gerald Bray, ed., *Documents of the English Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), s.v. "The Act of the Six Articles, 1539," 222-232.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> In addition to his marriage to Anne Boleyn, between 1533 and his death in 1547, Henry also married Jane Seymour (1536), Anne of Cleves (1540), and Catherine Parr (1543).

<sup>42</sup> Harmon B. Niver, *A School History of England* (New York: American Book Company, 1904), 169. See also Bray, *Documents of the English Reformation*, s.v. "The Ten Articles, 1536," 162-174.

Beginning with the reign of Henry, approximately one-third of his kingdom was in the hands of the Catholic Church. Many leaders in the Church did not approve of Henry's actions. Henry was not pleased with the clergy and monks, for they had strongly opposed him in his religious reform. In light of their antagonism, he set about closing the monasteries and taking their estates for himself and for the men who supported him. As a result of his resentment, he confiscated the cathedrals, monasteries, chapels, and abbeys (monasteries) held estates. Niver writes: "The king's agents visited and inspected these institutions and were supposed to find some irregularity in their management as a just ground for closing them."<sup>43</sup>

Once more, Niver goes right to the heart of the king's tyrannical position of submission to himself as head of the Church of England: "In 1536 the king informed his subjects what they might believe in matters of religion."<sup>44</sup> How did he put forth his demands? Well, he did this through a creed of "Ten Articles"<sup>45</sup> in which he insisted that the people of England must accept and obey—no exceptions without the peril of one's head. Even though Henry had earlier opposed the Reformers, nevertheless, his creed, in certain articles, favored the reformers. However, three years later, the king issued a new creed of Six Articles that supported certain tenets of the Catholic Church. Again, Niver captures the essence of this new creed:

Three years later, Henry and the Parliament issued a "**new creed**" of six articles, supporting six of the doctrines of the Catholic Church, "With this 'whip of six strings' he persecuted his people until the end of his reign. Any one who disagreed with him, was to lose his property for the first offense; for the second he lost his life. In two weeks, five hundred people were arrested, and during the rest of Henry's life, which stretched out eight years longer, twenty-eight were put to death."<sup>46</sup>

### **Edward VI (1547-1553)**

Following the death of Henry in 1547, his son, **Edward VI**, became king (1547-1553). Edward's father had established an independent church by putting himself in place of the Pope and destroying the monasteries. However, most of the doctrines of the Catholic Church remained unchanged. The Six Articles provided for the mass and confessional and forbade marriage of the priest. England was divided over these questions of doctrine. The Reformers would do away with it all and have a simple service of song, prayers, and preaching in England. The Six Articles, during Edward's reign, developed into Forty-two Articles, which, years later, were reduced to Thirty-nine.<sup>47</sup> Following the death of Edward, Mary I, also known as "Bloody Mary," assumed the throne of England. Mary was the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon.

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<sup>43</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 171.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 172.

<sup>45</sup> See Bray, "The Ten Articles, 1536," in *Documents of the English Reformation*, 162-174.

<sup>46</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 172.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 175. Today, the clergy in the Church of England are required to affirm only a general assent.

## Mary I (1553-1558)

**Mary was the first woman to rule England** (1553-1558). She sought to restore the Catholic form of worship and the rule of the Pope. The Pope was again recognized as the Supreme head of the Church. Mary considered Church and State one entity under her control. Thus, during her reign, religion was considered a part of politics as in previous periods. To rebel against the religion of the State was to be guilty of treason. Those who opposed the state religion were generally considered as enemies of the government and were treated as heretics. Persecution prevailed in great numbers against those who refused to accept the dictates of the State. Niver draws attention to the atrocities that reigned during her stay on the throne:

The chief Protestant teachers were condemned to be burned in the places where they had taught. Nearly three hundred persons were put to death. Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury and author of the prayer book; Ridley, Bishop of London; and Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, were the most distinguished victims.<sup>48</sup>

**Thomas Cranmer** (1489-1556) was responsible for the abolition of church ceremonies, the destruction of images, the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) of 1549 and 1552, and the Forty-two Articles. **On the ascension of Mary I**, he was accused of treason and sentenced to death under earlier statutes (laws). The other bishop, Nicholas Ridley (1500-55), also favored the teachings of the Reformers. As a result of his beliefs, he too suffered death by burning upon the ascension of “Bloody Mary.” **Hugh Latimer** (1485-1555), another bishop, also opposed the Six Articles and had earlier resigned his See under the reign of Mary’s father, Henry VIII. After his resignation, he later returned to favor, but upon the ascension of Mary I, he was confined to the Tower and burnt (1555) at the stake along with Ridley.

As stated above, those who opposed the state religion were considered enemies of the government. Queen Mary revived the old laws of **Henry IV** (1399-1413) and Henry V (1413-1422) concerning dissidents. During the reign of Henry IV, a decree was enacted by which persons convicted of teaching heresy, that is to say, opinions that did not conform to the status quo, were turned over to the civil authorities to be burnt before the people.<sup>49</sup> Upon Henry V’s ascension to the throne, he followed his father’s policies and pursued the Lollards (disciples of Wycliffe [1330-1384]) for their refusal to subscribe to many of the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. During his reign, the writings of **Wycliffe** were ordered burned by the Council of Constance (1415), and his remains were exhumed and burned. This order was carried out in 1428.<sup>50</sup> Following the death of Mary I, Elizabeth ascended to the throne of England.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>50</sup> See Elgin Moyer, *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church*, revised and enlarged by Earle E. Cairns (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 441-442.

## Elizabeth (1558-1603)

Upon **Elizabeth's** (daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn) accession to the throne (1558-1603), Parliament decided that the queen must be "Supreme Governor of the Realm" in church matters as well as in other things. Parliament also changed Cranmer's (1489-1556)<sup>51</sup> prayer book<sup>52</sup> by leaving out things that were offensive to the Catholics. Niver writes concerning the revised edition: "This book was ordered to be used in the service of all the churches in England, under grave penalties for disobeying the order."<sup>53</sup> Before leaving this discussion of Elizabeth, it is significant that Elizabeth, too, had dirty hands. Livingston writes:

Elizabeth's own hands were not spotless. As we shall see, nearly two hundred Catholics were put to death in England during her reign. Under her, also, the torture was frequently used to force confessions from the accused, whereas under Mary it had scarcely ever been resorted to. . . . A fine of twenty pounds a month was laid on any one who would not attend the established church. As many as two hundred of the Jesuits were imprisoned or put to death. . . . During the rest of the reign the Catholic dissenters were treated with the greatest severity. Priests and laymen who would not recant were banished, and about fifty, including two women, suffered death. . . . It tried and punished the Puritans harshly. By this time most of the Catholics had been driven into the established church; and, to make it conform somewhat to the old form of Catholic worship, the High Church party grew up, which Elizabeth herself favored, and which afterwards, by its severity, drove the Puritans into rebellion.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See Livingston, "Cranmer, Thomas (1480-1556)," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 135, where he writes:

He was partly responsible for the Ten Articles and for the dissemination of the Bible in the vernacular. After Henry's death (1547) Cranmer was one of the most influential counselors of Edward VI, and his ideas developed in an increasingly Protestant direction. He was also largely responsible for the abolition of the old Church ceremonies, for the destruction of images, for the BCP of 1549 and that of 1552, as well as for the Forty-Two articles. On the accession of Mary (1553), he was accused of treason, tried and sentenced, but the Queen spared his life. He was, however, imprisoned, tried for heresy, and degraded. He made several recantations but renounced them and was burnt at the stake.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, "Common Prayer, Book," where he writes:

The first BCP [Book of Common Prayer] was issued in 1549 and its use ordered by the first Act of Uniformity. In doctrine and ritual it was a compromise between the old and new schools and pleased neither. Revision in the light of Protestant criticism led to the issue of the Second BCP in 1552. After the reign of Mary, this was reissued, with a few alterations, as the Elizabethan BCP 1559, to which the Ornaments Rubric was attached. After The Restoration, the 1662 Act of Uniformity authorized a BCP revised by Convocation. The most important change was the introduction of the AV for the Epistles and Gospels. This 1662 Book remained almost unchanged until modern times.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 184, 191, 194.

## James I (1603-1625)

**James I (1603-1625)** brought into England a new idea as to the power of the king. **Prior to James I being crowned king, the people maintained that the king was not above the law.** But James believed that he was above the law and could do as he pleased. Again, Niver writes: “His favorite expression was, ‘God makes the king, the king makes the laws.’”<sup>55</sup> From this theory derived the belief that a king derives his power directly from God. Thus, this theory of “divine rights” is sometimes called “the divine right of kings.” By virtue of Elizabeth’s death, he succeeded to the English throne. On his way from Scotland to London, the Puritans presented him with a petition signed by supposedly one thousand Puritan clergymen to repeal the laws against the dissenters. In actuality, there were only eight hundred signatures. This petition was named “Millenary Petition,” named for its supposed signature of one thousand clergymen.<sup>56</sup>

**Some of the laws included uniformity in the dress code for robes and the preaching of sermons. The Puritan ministers objected to the wearing of robes<sup>57</sup> and delivering prearranged sermons. In other words, they wished to be allowed to preach sermons of their own.** In addition, they did not like to make the sign of the cross when children were baptized, or to kneel in partaking of the Lord’s Supper, or to use a ring in a wedding ceremony. To begin with, **James I** listened to their complaints, but he became extremely angry when they did not agree with him on every point. On the other hand, The English bishops praised his every decision. Thus, he deserted the Presbyterians and gave his support to the English bishops. His wrath also turned toward the Catholics. Even though, at the beginning of his reign, he sought to be more conciliatory toward the Catholics by suspending a law of Elizabeth that fined Catholics for not attending the English Church, yet later he revived this law of fining the Catholics twenty pounds a month if they did not attend the English Church. As a result of the reenactment of this law and the extravagant and heavy fines, many were ruined financially.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 204. Also, see Hall and Albion and Pope, *A History of England and the Empire-Commonwealth* (Lexington: Xerox College Publishing, 1971), 220.

<sup>56</sup> See Hall and Albion and Pope, *A History of England and the Empire-Commonwealth*, 221.

<sup>57</sup> See Livingston, “Vestirian Controversy, The,” in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 536-537, where he says:

A dispute about clerical dress which began under Edward VI and under Elizabeth I became one of the foundations of the Puritan party. The question became acute in 1550, when John Hooper, nominated BP of Gloucester, at first refused to be consecrated in the surplice [a loose white liturgical garment with wide sleeves] and rochet [a white linen vestment with tight sleeves worn by bishops] prescribed by the BCP. After Elizabeth’s accession to the restoration of vestments in the Chapel Royal excited opposition. M. Parker’s Advertisements (1566) required the use of a surplice in parish churches and a cope [a semicircular cloak worn at liturgical functions in the W. Church when the chasuble, that is, the outer garment worn by bishops and priests when celebrating the Eucharist is used]. London clergy refused compliance and were deprived. Serious disturbances followed.

<sup>58</sup> See Niver, *A School History of England*, 203-213.

**As James I came to the throne in 1603**, even though he was new to the English throne, nevertheless, he was painfully aware of religious differences within Christendom as a result of his earlier reign in Scotland. To resolve some of these differences, he called a meeting at Hampton Court. One objective of the meeting at Hampton Court, with its thousand rooms built by Cardinal Wolsey, was to deal with the dissension between the Puritan and Anglicans over the Bishop's Bible.<sup>59</sup> The circumstances for this meeting are described in the preface of the Authorized Version:

The very historical truth is that upon the importunate [demanding] petitions of the Puritans, as his Majesty's coming to this crown, the conference at Hampton Court having been appointed for hearing their complaints: when by force of reason they were put from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last, to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion [Prayer] book, since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated [in the Great Bible], which was, as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was judged to be but a very poor and empty shift, yet even hereupon did his Majesty begin to bethink [remember] himself of the food that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gave order for this translation which is now presented unto thee.<sup>60</sup>

From this meeting in 1604, plans were set forth for a new translation of the Scriptures. During this conference, John Rainolds (1549-1607), a Puritan and biblical scholar, addressed the king about a new translation of the Holy Scriptures. The Bishop of London objected: "If every man's humor might be followed, there would be no end to translating."<sup>61</sup> **Ultimately, the king agreed to a new translation. In this new undertaking, the translators were not at liberty to eliminate certain ecclesiastical words.** Fifteen rules were provided for the assistance of the translating committee. One of these rules (**number 2**) was "the old ecclesiastical words should be retained."<sup>62</sup> An example of an ecclesiastical word would be the English word *church*. The word *church* was retained rather than "congregation," which Wycliffe and Tyndale preferred.<sup>63</sup>

The controversy over the Greek word **ἐκκλησία** (*ekklēsia*, "congregation") did not originate with James I, but rather predates him approximately two hundred and twenty years to the earlier translation (1380) by **John Wycliffe** (1330-1384). Later this controversy over the word *church* surfaced again with **William Tyndale** (1494-1536). Both Wycliffe and Tyndale refused the English word *church*. Both men objected to the word *church* since this word

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<sup>59</sup> See Gustavus S. Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), 2, where he calls attention to the Catholics and Puritans and Anglicans as they were at each other's throats:

The Puritans opposed Sabbath breaking and the keeping of the other holy days, baptism by women in their homes, display of the cross in baptism, bowing at the name of Jesus, and other practices considered high church or popish.

<sup>60</sup> Cited in Ira Maurice Price, *The ancestry of Our English Bible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), 269.

<sup>61</sup> Paine, *The Men Behind the King James Version*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 271.

<sup>63</sup> See F. F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English* (: New York: Oxford University press, 1978), 98.

connotes an ecclesiastical organization, that is, a religious institution or corporation. But, on the other hand, the translation of the Greek word *ekklēsia* as “congregation” sets forth the true meaning of the Greek word. In other words, the word *congregation* signifies the people of God, the body of Christ, that is to say, the new community of God without reference to a particular party within the Christian community.

Wycliffe published the first English translation from a translation (Latin), but, on the other hand, Tyndale published the first English translation from the original Greek. It is also worthy of note that Erasmus (1469-1536) translated the Greek word *ekklēsia* as “congregation” in his Latin translation. **Wycliffe died before the established Church could prosecute him.** Tyndale was burnt at the stake in 1536 (during the reign of Henry VIII [1509-1547]). It is also significant that the Greek word *ekklēsia* was employed by the Septuagint translators to translate the Hebrew word **קְהָל** (*qā-hāl*), which means congregation. The English translators never translate this Hebrew word and the Greek word, as far as this writer can find, as “church” in the Old Testament, but rather as “congregation.” Following the reign of James I, Charles the First assumed the throne of England.

### **Charles I (1625-1649)**

**Charles I (1625-1649) conducted a reign of terror, civil and religious.** For instance, in the civil aspects, he resorted to illegal means of collecting taxes. About eighty persons who refused to pay were put in prison. A third Parliament was convened to address forced loans and arbitrary imprisonments. From this Parliament came the second greatest document in the history of the English nation, namely, the Petition of Rights.<sup>64</sup> As a result of Parliament’s actions, James took action against members of Parliament and operated without a Parliament for eleven years. Two men assisted him in this clandestine operation; namely, **William Laud** (1573-1645), who was soon made Archbishop of Canterbury, and **Thomas Wentworth** (1593-1641), who later became Earl of Strafford and the king’s chief adviser.<sup>65</sup>

Laud undertook the task of making the Puritan churches use the prayer book and conduct services according to the Act of Uniformity.<sup>66</sup> In 1604, the clergy of the established Church of

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<sup>64</sup> The first great document to be signed by a king was the Great Charter, or Magna Charta, which became the foundation stone of English liberty. This document contained provisions for the protection of life, liberty, and property. **The English barons forced king John (1199-1216) to sign this document.** Prior to this document, John took away property from his subjects by force, got rid of his opponents by poison and secret assassination. Many were thrown into prison and left to starve, never being brought to trial for their pretended offenses.

<sup>65</sup> See Niver, *A School History of England*, 216-217.

<sup>66</sup> See Livingstone, “Uniformity, Acts of,” *The Concise Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church*, 527, where he describes in detail the Act of Uniformity:

(1) The 1549 Act imposed the exclusive use of the first Book of Common Prayer in all public services and laid down penalties for holders of benefices who failed to comply. (2) The 1552 Act ordered the use of the revised BCP of that year. Absence from church was punishable by ecclesiastical censure, and attendance at other forms of service by imprisonment. (3) The 1559 Act ordered the use of the 1552 BCP, with slight modifications. Absence from church was now

England adopted a body of rules explaining how ministers should conduct their services. As stated above, **Laud forced the Puritans to use the prayer book and conduct services according to the Act of Uniformity.** Ministers were to wear white robes and follow the prayer book accurately, without deviation. In other words, the minister could not read here and there as he saw fit.<sup>67</sup> He employed spies, used the old courts of Star Chamber and High commission to suppress dissent.<sup>68</sup> The clergy were forced to sign an oath never to change the government of the English church.<sup>69</sup> A number of canons were adopted declaring that the king had unlimited power over persons and possessions. Robert Baker, in his history, reveals: “Thousands had fled to America to escape the intolerable policies of Archbishop William Laud.”<sup>70</sup> **The Archbishop enforced the common law concerning the place of the communion table in the building. The common law stated that the communion table should be in the east end of the church, but the Puritans wanted it in the middle.**<sup>71</sup>

Ultimately, Laud was impeached, put in prison, and tried in 1641. He was executed in 1645.<sup>72</sup> Prior to his death, the Puritans gained the majority in the Parliament. Religious and political reforms were started. The Episcopal and liturgical (prayer book) forms were abolished and the Westminster Assembly, made up principally of Puritans, was called to advise Parliament on the creed and government of the New English church. The Westminster Confession<sup>73</sup> was adopted by Scotland in 1647 and by England in 1648.<sup>74</sup> In 1646 the

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punishable by a fine. (4) The 1662 Act required that all ministers should publicly assent to the 1662 BCP and ordered its exclusive use. Ministers not episcopally ordained were to be deprived. Some 2,000 Presbyterian ministers who refused to conform were ejected from their livings.

<sup>67</sup> See Niver, *A School History of England*, 219.

<sup>68</sup> See Robert A. Baker, *A Summary of Christian History*, revised by John M. Landers (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 251.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>71</sup> See Niver, *A School of England*, 219. See also Jonathan Swift’s (1667-1745) satire concerning “A Voyage to Lilliput,” in Miriam Kosh Starkman, *Gulliver’s Travels and Other Writings by Jonathan Swift*, originally published in 1726 (New York: Bantam, reprint 1981, 35-90. To summarize: This first voyage, as described by Swift, is about a war over the breaking of an egg. Some thought that the egg should be broken at the little end, others at the big end. Thus, some were called “Big-Enders” and others “Little-Enders.” This story illustrates vividly the controversy over the communion table. In other words, should the communion table be placed in the east end of the church building or middle? This controversy raged during the reign of Charles I (1625-49). One cannot help but wonder about the one-cup party versus the multiple-cups party that presently exists within the Churches of Christ. The scenario about the communion table is just as frivolous as is the insistence upon one drinking vessel during the communion today. Swift uses his story about the war of the Lilliputians over whether to break the egg at the big end or the little end to illustrate the futility of the conditions that existed in his day over so many issues—such as robes and the communion table.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>73</sup> See Livingston, “Westminster Confession,” *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 551, where he writes about the Westminster Confession:

The profession of Presbyterian faith drawn up by the Westminster Assembly. It was approved by Parliament in 1648, having been ratified by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the

Presbyterian type of church government was established and a Presbyterian liturgy for public worship in place of the prayer book of the Church of England became the norm. Charles I refused to compromise over episcopacy (the system of church government by Bishops). The bone-of-contention hovered over the Episcopal form of church government by bishops versus the Presbyterian form of church government, which centered on restorationism—that is, the blueprint or pattern for church government based on the New Testament documents.

**The so-called Bishops' Wars<sup>75</sup> occurred during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649).** The English people tolerated the tyranny of the king, but the Scotch Covenanters<sup>76</sup> took up arms against Charles I when he sought to enforce the prayer book upon them. Charles I was defeated, but he later raised another army to whip the Scots into line. His army showed sympathy with the Scots by breaking into the churches and moving the communion tables into the middle of the building.<sup>77</sup> As stated above, Charles was executed under an Act of Attainder; that is to say, an act of Parliament that condemned him to death without a trial. Laud also was impeached, as listed above, and put in prison without a trial and executed four years after Charles' death.

### **Oliver Cromwell (1653-1658)**

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) became Lord Protector of England upon the death of Charles I. He tolerated all Protestant sects except when they wanted to disrupt the government. He was a friend of the Quakers, sent missionaries to the Indians, and allowed the Jews to return to England. **Even though Cromwell tolerated the Quakers, nevertheless, the Puritans persecuted them severely.** When Charles II (1660-1685) came to the throne, there were 4,000 of them in jail. Niver, on this point, furnishes worthwhile reading about the plight of the Quakers:

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previous year. It immediately established itself as the definitive statement of Presbyterian doctrine in the English-speaking world.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 551.

<sup>75</sup> See Ibid., “Bishops’ Wars,” 66, where Livingston writes: “Two brief campaigns in Scotland in 1639 and 1640. After Charles I tried to enforce the use of the BCP [Book of Common Prayer] in Scotland, the Scots rebelled, with the avowed aim of abolishing episcopacy.”

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., “Covenanters, 134, where Livingstone states:

Bodies of Presbyterians in Scotland who bound themselves by oath to maintain their religion. Various small covenants were signed between 1556 and 1562, leading up to the King’s Confession of 1581. Charles I’s attempt to introduce the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 prompted the National Covenant of 1638. After the outbreak of the civil War the English Parliament made an alliance with the Scots in terms of the Solemn League and Covenant (1643; q.v.). The persecution of Presbyterians in Scotland between 1661 and 1668 gave rise to further Convents.

<sup>77</sup> See Niver, *A School History of England*, 221. Again, one is reminded of the “Big-Enders” and the “Little-Enders. Does one break the egg at the big end or does one break the egg at the little end? Does it really matter?

It was common to slit their noses, cut their ears, bore through their tongues with a hot iron, and whip them through the streets at the cart's tail. Their numbers increased rapidly in spite of this treatment, and in 1675 there were more than 60,000 of them in England. Charles was disposed to favor them. He saw that they were quiet, industrious, and loyal people.<sup>78</sup>

**The Quakers first appear in England in the time of Cromwell.** They wished to do away with the feasts, sports, and shows of the times. This religious group rejected the government of the church by the king and bishops. These devout individuals would not bear arms, refused to pay to support the church or to observe the Sabbath by formal sermons and prayers. The Quakers believed in the “inner light” by which God reveals right and wrong through the conscience.

### **Charles II (1660-1685)**

Charles II (1660-1685) brought back the Parliament that Cromwell dismissed. His reign also reestablished the old Anglican Church, its bishops, and prayer book. He reopened the theaters; holidays were again celebrated with the old bear baiting along with horse racing, cockfighting, dancing, and buffoonery (court clowns). These festivities were reinstated as a way of life. Upon his accession, he granted pardon to all except the judges and executioners who had put his father (Charles I) to death in 1649. He immediately sought to drive out the Puritans and other dissenters. All dissenters who would not use the prayer book were refused financial assistance from the State.

**Charles II also enacted an Act that prohibited religious meetings for dissenters.** Dissenters were also disqualified from holding office in a corporation, that is, a village or city. Non-conformist ministers were forbidden to come within five miles of any corporation<sup>79</sup> where they had preached since 1660.<sup>80</sup> With the Restoration,<sup>81</sup> according to Christopher Hill, the “religious toleration ended (temporarily) in 1660. Dissenters were driven out of political life for a century and a half.”<sup>82</sup> By the compromise of 1660, the idealists on both sides were sacrificed.

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<sup>78</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 253.

<sup>79</sup> See Livingston, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, “Corporation Act, 1661,” 131, where Livingston details the Act:

The Act requiring members of municipal corporations to take an oath abjuring rebellion against the king, declaring the \*Solemn League and Covenant null and unlawful, and affirming that they had received Communion acc. To the rites of the C of E [Church of England] in the year preceding their election.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-243.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, “Restoration, The,” 436, where Livingston describes the term: “A Term used by English historians to describe the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660, and the period immediately following this event.”

<sup>82</sup> Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1980) 162.

Sir Henry Vane (1613-1662)<sup>83</sup> and Major-General Thomas Harrison (1606-1660) were publicly disemboweled. Quakers and other sectaries (dissidents) were driven into a badgered underground existence.<sup>84</sup>

**John Bunyan (1628-1688), one of the most famous preachers and writers known today, was imprisoned under these new laws.** After the restoration of Charles II, he spent twelve years in the Bedford jail (1660-1672) for preaching without receiving permission from the Established Church (Church of England). During this period he wrote *Grace Abounding to the chief of Sinners* (1666). Following his release from prison in 1672, he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678, 1684), and *The Holy War* (1682).<sup>85</sup> In 1672, the Act of Pardon freed him from prison and gave him the liberty to preach.<sup>86</sup> Following his release, he became pastor for the Bedford Baptist Church.

In Scotland, during the reign of Charles II, many accepted the Church of England, but many did not, especially the Covenanters. **The Covenanters (Presbyterians) were cruelly persecuted during the reigns of Charles II and his brother, James II (1685-1688).** Upon the Restoration, persecution was enacted with a deadly vengeance in Scotland. For instance, James Guthrie (1612-1661), a Covenanter, was arrested. The principal excuse for his condemnation and execution was about a pamphlet he wrote, *The Causes of the Lord's Wrath against Scotland*. His paper had the honor of being on par with *Lex Rex* by Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661). **Rutherford attacked the concept of monarchical absolutism. In other words, according to Rutherford, it is *Lex Rex* (law is king) and not *Rex Lex* (king is law).** Both pamphlet and book were burned in the beginning of the "Restoration" of Charles II in 1660.<sup>87</sup> For one to hold a copy of either work was treason against the King and government. Ultimately,

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<sup>83</sup> See Maurice Ashley, "Vane, Sir Henry," in *The Academic American Encyclopedia* (electronic Version), copyright 1995, Grolier, Inc., Danbury, Ct., where one reads:

An English statesman, Sir Henry Vane the Younger, b. 1613, d. June 14, 1662, was a leading parliamentarian during the English Civil War. A Puritan convert, he was colonial governor of Massachusetts (1663-37). Returning to England, Vane became a member of the Short and the Long Parliaments and negotiated (1643) the alliance bringing the Scots into the English Civil War on Parliament's side.

Although against the king's execution, Vane served on the Commonwealth's Council of State (1649-53), handling naval and foreign affairs. An advocate of parliamentary supremacy, he opposed the dissolution of the Rump Parliament by Oliver Cromwell in 1653 and was imprisoned (1656) for attacking Cromwell's Protectorate. In 1659 he supported the army's overthrow of Richard Cromwell. After the restoration of the monarchy, Vane was executed for high treason.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714*, 162

<sup>85</sup> For a complete listing of his works, see *The Complete Works of John Bunyan*, 3 vols. (Delaware: The National Foundation for Christian Educations, reprint 1968).

<sup>86</sup> See Elgin Moyer, Earle E. Cairns, revised and enlarged, *Wycliffe Biographical Dictionary of the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 87, s.v. "John Bunyan."

<sup>87</sup> See Livingstone, "Rutherford, Samuel," in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 450. See also, John Purves, *Fair Sunshine: Character Studies of the Scottish Covenanters*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1957), 19.

Guthrie, along with Captain Govan, another Covenanter, was sentenced to hang on June 1, 1661. The last testimony of Guthrie is worth quoting:

Jesus Christ is my Life and my Light, my Righteousness, my strength, and my Salvation and all my desire. Him! O Him, I do with all the strength of my soul commend to you. Bless Him, O my soul, from henceforth even forever. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.<sup>88</sup>

Govan's last words are also quite illuminating: "Tell her [that is, his wife] that he died in humble confidence and found the Cross of Christ sweet, and that Christ had done all for him and that it was by Him alone that he was justified."<sup>89</sup>

In order to enforce religious reform upon the Scots, the Duke of York, who later became King James II (1685-1688), was sent by Charles II (1660-1685), his brother, to govern Scotland. The Duke was determined to bring the covenanters under his control. He hanged, shot, imprisoned, and tortured them into silence.<sup>90</sup> As a result of persecution at home and abroad, many turned their attention to the new colonies in America for political and religious freedom. During this period of tyranny, several new colonies were founded in America. For example, in 1663, the king gave the Carolinas to a company of his friends. Niver calls attention to this transaction:

The Carolina settlers included Presbyterians harried out of the western counties of Scotland; French Huguenots, or Protestants, driven out by the tyranny of Louis XIV; Quakers from England; Irish from the West Indies, who had been exiled by Cromwell; and other settlers who had been compelled to leave the older colonies.<sup>91</sup>

Also, England seized the Dutch settlements in America in 1664. This territory was given to the Duke of York. This seized area became the colony of New York. Later, the Duke of York granted New Jersey to two of his friends. These two parts—New York and New Jersey—were later purchased by William Penn (1644-1718) and other Quakers. Power was then put into the hands of the people, not the government. These colonies were filled up quite rapidly because of religious freedom. In addition to these two colonies, Charles II granted Pennsylvania (1681) to Penn for a debt he owed to Penn. Penn also purchased from the Duke of York three lower counties on the Delaware.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Purves, *Fair Sunshine: Character Studies of the Scottish Covenanters*, (Pennsylvania: Banner or Truth Trust, 1968), 19.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 20.

<sup>90</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 252.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 253-254.

**Charles II's reign reeked with political corruption. A reign of legal horror against the Whigs<sup>93</sup> and dissenters proliferated during his rule.** Christopher Hill (1912-2003) sums up the political turmoil with the following quote:

In the spring of 1682 the Duke of York returned to England; Jeffreys was made Lord Chief Justice and a Privy Councillor. Sunderland, dismissed in January 1681 for temporarily supporting exclusion, returned to office. A reign of legal terror against Whigs and dissenters began. Shaftesbury was arrested on a charge of treason, but was acquitted by a London jury. He fled to the Netherlands, where he died in 1683. . . .

In 1683 the Rye House Plot to seize the King led to the arrest and trial of many leading Whigs. Monmouth went into hiding, the Earl of Essex committed suicide in the Tower; Lord Russell and Algemon Sydney were executed though neither had been active in the plot. Sydney was convicted only of defending the view that government might be resisted in certain circumstances: this too in an unpublished treatise. In 1684 Oates was imprisoned and Danby and a number of Roman Catholic peers were released. Under the Triennial Act a Parliament should have met in 1684, but Charles called none before he died in February 1685. On his death-bed he proclaimed himself a Papist.<sup>94</sup>

### **James II (1685-1688)**

Upon the death of Charles II (1685), James II became king of England. James II (1685-1688), formerly the Duke of York, had all the beliefs of his father (Charles II) and his grandfather (Charles I) regarding the divine right of kings. The suppression of the Covenanters continued under the direction of Claverhouse.<sup>95</sup> Those who refused to abandon the Covenant<sup>96</sup> were shot, hanged, or drowned. Niver records a heart breaking story of an eighteen year old girl who was drowned as a Covenanter:

One girl of eighteen, Margaret Wilson, was fastened to a stake at low water in the Solway Firth, to be drowned by the rising tide. As the water rose to her head, she was taken out and asked if she would give up the covenant and attend the Episcopal Church. "Never," she replied. "I am Christ's, let me go!" She was put back, and the waves closed over her.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> See the *American Heritage Talking Dictionary*, CD ROM (Cambridge: Softkey, 1994), where the following definition is given: "A member of an 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century British political part that was opposed to the Tories. [Probably short for *Whiggamore*, a member of a body of 17<sup>th</sup>-century Scottish Presbyterian rebels.]"

<sup>94</sup> Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*, 169.

<sup>95</sup> See "Dundee, John Graham of Claverhouse, 1<sup>st</sup> viscount," in *The Academic American Encyclopedia* (Electronic Version), copyright 1995 Grolier, Inc., Danbury, Ct.

<sup>96</sup> See Livingston, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 134, where he writes:

COVENANTERS. Bodies of Presbyterians in Scotland who bound themselves by oath to maintain their religion. Various small covenants were signed between 1556 and 1562, leading up to the King's Confession of 1581. Charles I's attempt to introduce the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637 prompted the National Covenant of 1638. After the outbreak of the Civil War the English parliament made an alliance with the Scots in terms of the Solemn League and Covenant (1643; q.v.). The persecution of Presbyterians in Scotland between 1661 and 1688 gave rise to further Covenants.

<sup>97</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 255.

During the reign of James II, one of his judges, George Jeffreys (1645-1689), was known for his wickedness and brutality. The persecutions were not only against religious nonconformists but also against political nonconformists. One such case involved Alice Lisle:

This lady, seventy years of age, was accused of concealing in her house two fugitives from Monmouth's<sup>98</sup> army. It was not proved that she knew them to be rebels, nor that they were rebels. Three times the jury refused to bring in a verdict of guilty, but they were finally bullied by Jeffreys into submission, and Alice Lisle was put to death.<sup>99</sup>

Jeffreys<sup>100</sup> was sent into the western counties to visit the "assize,"<sup>101</sup> or court towns, and to try persons accused of aiding Monmouth. The bloody court sessions conducted by Jeffreys reeks with wickedness:

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<sup>98</sup> See "Monmouth, James Scott, Duke of," in *The Academic American Encyclopedia* (Electronic Version) where it gives a brief history of James Scott, duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch:

James Scott, duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch, b. Apr. 9, 1649, d. July 15, 1685, an illegitimate son of CHARLES II of England, led a rebellion against Charles's successor, JAMES II, in 1685. He married Anne Scott, countess of Buccleuch, whose name he adopted, and was created a duke in 1663. Monmouth became captain-general of the armed forces in 1678. When the 1<sup>st</sup> earl of SHAFTESBURY started his efforts to exclude the Roman Catholic James from the succession, he put forward the Protestant Monmouth as a possible heir. It was claimed that King Charles had married Monmouth's mother, Lucy Walter, and that Monmouth was therefore legitimate. Charles himself denied this, however, and sent both Monmouth and James abroad in 1679. Monmouth soon returned but took refuge (1684) in Europe after exposure of the Rye House Plot to murder both Charles and James.

On June 11, 1685, four months after Charles's death, Monmouth landed at Lyme Regis, Dorset. On July 6, however, his rebel force was smashed at Sedgemoor, Somerset, by troops led by John Churchill (later duke of MARLBOROUGH). Monmouth was executed and his supporters were rounded up and tried in the Bloody Assizes conducted by Baron Jeffreys.

<sup>99</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 257.

<sup>100</sup> See "Jeffreys, George Jeffreys, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron," in *The Academic American Encyclopedia* (Electronic Version), for a summary:

The English judge George Jeffreys, b. between October 1644 and May 1645, d. Apr. 18, 1689, was created Baron Jeffreys of Wem in May 1685. He gained notoriety for his part in the trials of the supporters of the duke of MONMOUTH's rebellion against King James II in July 1685. In the trials, called the Bloody Assizes, nearly 200 persons were condemned to death and about 800 transported to the New World. Especially infamous was Jeffrey's insistence on a verdict of guilty for Alice Lisle, who was accused of harboring rebels; he also extorted money from many of the defendants. Nonetheless, in September 1685 he became Lord Chancellor. After the flight of King James in December 1688, Jeffreys was arrested; he died in the Tower of London.

<sup>101</sup> See "assize" in *The American Heritage Talking Dictionary*, CD ROM (Cambridge: Softkey, 1994):

Three hundred and twenty persons were executed, and their mutilated and dismembered bodies were fixed up along the highways and over the doors of town halls and churches, in the different villages where trials were held. Eight hundred and forty-one were sold into slavery under the broiling sun of the English West Indian possessions, there to labor until they died.<sup>102</sup>

Upon the completion of this work of savagery against all who opposed the reigning regime, James congratulated him on his success and made him chancellor. James and the parliament sought to knock down and punish rebels. He increased his army and appointed Catholics without requiring them to adhere to the Test Act.<sup>103</sup> As a result, the House of Commons became alarmed. At the same time, France, under Louis XIV (1638-1715), revoked the Edict of Nantes,<sup>104</sup> a law that protected French Protestants, and followed the revocation with cruel persecution, which forced thousands to flee into Germany, America, England, and Holland. If James were allowed to disobey the Test Act by choosing Catholics to fill his offices, then he might choose to treat the Protestants as badly as the French King.<sup>105</sup>

James II now openly assailed the Church of England and the Colleges. He created an Ecclesiastical Commission Court, suspended clergymen who justified Protestant doctrines, but, on the other hand, he permitted clergymen who had become Catholics to maintain their places. Since the universities at Oxford and Cambridge were under the control of the Church of England, James insisted on the appointment of a Bishop at Oxford, who was Catholic at heart, to the presidency of one of the Oxford colleges. This decision put him at odds with the Colleges, because no one was allowed to teach but a member of the Church of England.

**James II announced a Second Declaration of Indulgence in April 1688.<sup>106</sup> All ministers were required to read this Indulgence in their churches for two successive**

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1a. A session of a court. b. A decree or edict rendered at such a session. 3. Law. A judicial inquest, the writ by which it is instituted, or the verdict of the jurors. 4. **assizes. A.** One of the periodic court sessions formerly held in each of the counties of England and Wales for the trial of civil or criminal cases.

<sup>102</sup> Niver, *A School History of England*, 257.

<sup>103</sup> See Livingston, *The Concise Oxford dictionary of the Christian Church*, 505, where he writes:

TEST ACT, THE (1673). The Act requiring all holders of office under the Crown to receive Communion acc. to the usage of the C of E, to take the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance to the Sovereign, and to make the "Declaration against Transubstantiation." It remained in force until 1829.

<sup>104</sup> See *The American Heritage Talking Dictionary, CD ROM*, for the following definition:

NANTES. A city of Western France on the Loire River west of Tours. Dating to pre-Roman times, it was captured by Norse raiders in the ninth century and later fell to the dukes of Brittany. The Edict of Nantes, granting limited religious and civil liberties to the Huguenots, was issued in 1598 by Henry IV of France and revoked in 1685 by Louis XIV. Population, 240, 539.

<sup>105</sup> See Niver, *A School History of England*, 258.

<sup>106</sup> See Maurice Ashley "Jeffreys, George Jeffreys, 1<sup>st</sup> Barron, *The Academic American Encyclopedia* (Electronic Version), copyright 1995, Grolier, Inc., Danbury, CT, where the author writes:

**Sundays, but they refused, except four clergymen.** Even with the four that read, their congregations got up and left the house as soon as the reading began. Seven bishops drafted a petition to request that the King not enforce his order. James declared that the petition was rebellion, and he then arrested the bishops and confined them in the Tower.

The trial of the bishops occurred on June 29, 1688. The judges were chosen by the king to secure a conviction. But the jury would not bring in a guilty verdict. Immediately, the people at Westminster set up a shout, and the crowd in the street echoed it. As a result of this action on the part of James, he lost the friendship of nine-tenths of his people, even his own children and relatives.<sup>107</sup> His days were numbered. Shortly thereafter, he fled to France, never again to set foot on English soil. The throne was declared vacant. The belief that the king received his power directly from God was overthrown with James. With the election of William of Orange (1689-1702) and Mary II (1689-1694), the source of power was restored to the people.

### **William of Orange (1689-1702) and Mary (1689-1694)**

William of Orange and Mary II<sup>108</sup> were invited by many English nobles to become king and queen to save the liberties and rights of the people. Before they were crowned, that had to agree to a Declaration of Rights<sup>109</sup> drawn up by the Parliament to protect the liberties of the

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James's reign lasted only 4 years. In 1687 and 1688, in a tactless attempt to procure liberty of conscience for all his Christian subjects, he issued two declarations of indulgence, which alienated the Church of England. He also evaded the TEST ACT of 1673 by promoting Catholics to high office and military commissions. In 1688 **he put seven bishops on trial for refusing to order his declarations to be read in all the churches, but the bishops were acquitted.** All of these actions contributed to his overthrow, which was finally precipitated by the birth of his son in June 1688. The prospect of a Catholic succession led the Protestant opposition to invite James's Dutch Protestant nephew and son-in-law, William of Orange, to come to England. He assumed the crown as WILLIAM III, and his wife, James's older daughter, became MARY II.

<sup>107</sup> See Niver, *A School History of England*, 258-260.

<sup>108</sup> See Maurice Ashley, "Glorious Revolution," *The Academic American Encyclopedia* (Electronic Version), 1995, Grolier, Inc., Danbury, Ct. where the author gives some very insightful comments:

The Glorious Revolution is the name given to the overthrow in 1688 of the Roman Catholic JAMES II of England and the accession to the throne of his daughter MARY II and her Dutch Protestant husband, WILLIAM III. Invited to invade England by seven English noblemen, William hoped to bring England into the imminent War of the GRAND ALLIANCE against France. He feared that James would ally himself with the French king LOUIS XIV or that James's favoritism toward his Catholic subjects would so provoke the Protestant majority as to cause another civil war, thus making England impotent in Europe.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, where the author writes:

people. In 1689, William was compelled to accept the Bill of Rights and to approve the Toleration Act.<sup>110</sup> The new rulers had to agree to abide by the old laws and customs of England. Their predecessors had abolished laws without the consent of Parliament. The new Declaration set forth the doctrine that no king could ever again set aside the laws of England without the authority of Parliament. The king and queen agreed to a number of provisions. These provisions were later made into the Bill of Rights. **This Bill is the third great document in the English constitution. The other two documents were the Magna Charta<sup>111</sup> and the Petition of Rights.**

This Act was not total toleration for the various religious sects. For example, the Act did not provide toleration for Catholics and Unitarians to worship in their own churches. The oath of supremacy was still required of all clergy in the Established Church. Through the alliance of parson and quire, however, thought-control remained in the villages. These groups hated the Act of Toleration because this allowed men to avoid going to church. Although dissenters were legally free to worship, nevertheless, they were not allowed to attend the universities. To compensate for this denial of access to the approved universities by the government, the dissenters multiplied academies rapidly.<sup>112</sup>

Hill says, "The Toleration Act of 1689 finally killed the old conception of a single state Church of which all Englishmen were members."<sup>113</sup> Prior to this piece of legislation, there was

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The invitation was sent to William on June 30, 1688; when he arrived in November, his partisans rose in rebellion in Yorkshire and elsewhere. William's triumph was bloodless; James's forces, under John Churchill, later duke of MARLBOROUGH, deserted, and James himself fled. When William and Mary were made joint sovereigns (1689), they acquiesced in a Declaration and BILL OF RIGHTS, which opened the road to constitutional monarchy.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., once more the author offers some helpful comments to explain the events surrounding the conflict:

In England, William was never popular, and his position became temporarily precarious after Mary's death in 1694. Parliament refused to support his costly anti-French designs after Ryswick until Louis's ambitions became clearer. William approved the Toleration Act (1689) for nonconformists, and his Whig ministers established (1694) the funded national debt and the Bank of England. He was also compelled to accept a BILL OF RIGHTS (1689) and the Triennial Act (1694) requiring that a new Parliament should meet at least once every three years. The Act of SETTLEMENT (1701) further restricted royal prerogatives. William was succeeded on the British throne by Mary's sister, Queen Anne.

<sup>111</sup> See William Statsky, "Magna Charta," *West's Legal Thesaurus Dictionary, A Resource for the Writer and the Computer Researcher* (San Francisco: West Publishing Co., 1985), 471-472, where he pens:

Magna Charta: The great charter, considered the foundation of English constitutional liberty. In 1215, King John granted the charter to the barons at Runnymede. Its provisions regulated the administration of justice, defined ecclesiastical jurisdiction, secured personal liberty and rights of property, defined limits on taxation, etc.

<sup>112</sup> See Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*, 249-253.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 210.

discussion of broadening the Church of England in order to include Presbyterians, the most conservative of the dissenters. Also, in 1662, 1672, 1687, and 1688 bids (Declaration of Indulgence) were made to support those who were cut off from the state church. But these Declarations were designed to restore the Catholics to political positions, which Charles II (1660-1685) and James II (1685-1688) favored.<sup>114</sup> **Locke** (1632-1704) favored toleration. In fact, he wrote his *Letter Concerning Toleration* in 1689. Still his views did not allow toleration for Catholics and atheists. He also maintained in his *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), according to Hill, that certain individuals must be told what to think.<sup>115</sup>

## COMPARISON BETWEEN JOHN LOCKE AND THOMAS CAMPBELL

In order to fully grasp the mindset behind Thomas Campbell’s now famous motto, one must understand the mindset of John Locke as he or she seeks to unravel the intent behind Campbell’s cliché. An understanding of the political and religious history before and during the time of Locke accounts for Locke’s tone of toleration. An examination of Locke’s *A Letter Concerning Toleration* and Campbell’s *Declaration and Address* reveals the thought patterns that permeated both men. Both men wrote against the practices of religious intolerance. Both Locke and Campbell sought to apply principles that would bring about unity within the Christian community.

**A common practice in the 1600s was to accuse one of heresy when one did not subscribe to the traditions of the state church.** This same policy of intolerance for religious differences also existed in Campbell’s day. **The various warring factions in Campbell’s time** could not put one to death for refusal to swear an oath to the pronouncements of the church fathers, but, on the other hand, they could exercise the power of excommunication. To set the tone for this comparison between Locke and Campbell, perhaps the following citations from the two men should set the stage for an understanding of the aims of both men toward religious toleration.

### *A Letter Concerning Toleration*

The toleration of those that differ from others in matters of religion, is so agreeable to the Gospel Jesus Christ, and to the genuine reason of mankind, that it seems monstrous for men to be so blind, as not to perceive the necessity and advantage of it, in so clear a

### *Declaration and Address*

That with respect to the commands and ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, where the Scriptures are silent as to the express time or manner of performance, if any such there be, no human authority has power to interfere, in order to supply the supposed deficiency by the making of

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 210-211.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 253.

light.<sup>116</sup>

laws for the Church; nor can anything more be required of Christians in such cases, but only that they so observe these commands and ordinances as will evidently answer the declared and obvious end of their institution. Much less has any human authority power to impose new commands or ordinances upon the Church, which our Lord Jesus Christ has not enjoined. Nothing ought to be received into the faith or worship of the Church, or be made a term of communion among Christians, that is not as old as the New Testament.<sup>117</sup>

Both men confronted the spirit of intolerance for religious differences. When Christians refused to conform to a particular brand of orthodoxy, then the dissenting parties were branded with the label *heretic*. For one to disagree with the king or with the clergy was tantamount to disagreement with God Himself. In Campbell's era, one's refusal to succumb to a synod or church council amounted to treason against God. An analysis of the proposals set forth by both men should assist Christians today in reestablishing the unity for which Jesus prayed to the Father (John 17). Both Locke and Campbell sought to bring about Christian toleration within the existing churches of their own day. The following scrutiny is an investigation of the objectives of Locke and Campbell. In this inquiry between the two men, we can readily grasp the similarity of objectives in their thinking.

### Objectives of Locke and Campbell

Locke's date of birth (1632) occurred during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649), which was a time of political and religious upheaval. On the other hand, Thomas Campbell was also born (1763) during a time of religious turmoil on every street corner, so to speak. Unlike Locke's political climate—political fighting—**Campbell experienced religious infighting within the various sects**. For example, shortly after Campbell's arrival in America (1807), he found himself embroiled in an attack from the **Anti-Burgher, Seceder** Presbyterian Church of which he himself belonged. Locke and Campbell felt the blow of separation and its effects upon

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<sup>116</sup> John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, originally published 1689, reprint (New York: Prometheus, 1990), 17.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas Campbell, "Declaration and Address" in *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 109, 110.

the Christian community. Both of these men had to grapple with the concept of heresy, as it was loosely unleashed upon an unsuspecting community of God's people.

### **Heresy: An attitude of the Mind**

In order to combat this tossing about of the word *heresy*, both **Locke** and **Campbell** spoke of that which is “expressly stated” in the Word of God as the means of determining the actions to be taken toward others. **The two men spoke of the existing denominations as the churches of Christ.** It had not occurred to either man to identify the particular fellowship of which he was a part as the “kingdom of God,” thereby excluding all others from a relationship with the resurrected Christ. It is significant that the expression Church of Christ was not employed of a distinctive religious body, but rather this term only signified the body of Christ as a whole. The Church of Christ, as a denomination, did not yet exist. At the time of the writing of the *Declaration and Address*, Campbell was still Presbyterian, even though he had been defrocked.

Beginning with Locke, one observes political and religious intolerance as common as apple pie is today. Not only did this spirit of dogmatism exist within the government against its people, but this narrow-mindedness against freedom of thought also existed within the various militaristic factions within the various groups professing the Christian faith. On the one hand, the government persecuted Christians that did not conform to the state church. On the other hand, some Christians oppressed other Christians when they did not promise allegiance to their meticulous brand of religious thought. “Every one is orthodox to himself,” writes Locke.<sup>118</sup> Locke also captures the essence of one-sidedness when he forcefully paints a picture of the horrible conditions of prejudice against other believers: “This narrowness of spirit on all sides has undoubtedly been the principal occasion of our miseries and confusions.”<sup>119</sup>

Locke sees Christendom divided. For this reason, he seeks freedom of conscience and freedom of religious expression. In his *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, he aspires to set forth principles upon which denominational infighting may be abolished, which is what both Campbells (Thomas and Alexander) sought to accomplish. To break these barriers of exclusion and persecution erected by government and church, he presented a spirit of toleration, compassion, mercy, open-mindedness, and impartiality based upon the principles laid down by Jesus and the apostles. In Locke's time frame, every individual who refused to conform to the status quo received the critical epithet of *heretic*. In other words, the climate of the day put forth the idea that one is guilty of *heresy* who does not accommodate his or her religious thoughts and actions to the hallowed beliefs of the established church and clergy.

The Church of England is not the only one that enforced conformity on its subjects, but other religious groups also practiced excommunication against those who refused to interpret the Scriptures as their own in-house religious leaders. In order for one to be considered orthodox, one had to conform to the interpretation placed upon God's Word by the preachers and the church. Everyone was considered apostate who declined to kow-tow to the strange and

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<sup>118</sup> John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 13.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

odd interpretations assigned to many Scriptures. The reason for separation from other Christians was based upon the buzzword of the day—*heresy*. This word still sends chills up and down the spines of God’s faithful people.

**Heresy then, as well as today, was the sin of the day. Heresy was/is associated with belief, which is not its true meaning.** Divisiveness is a term that adequately describes the word *heresy*. All were accused of *heresy* that departed from the norm of their unique—only one of its kind—group. Heresy is generally interpreted as a departure from “the faith.” But is this meaning the biblical meaning? Since persecution and excommunication centered on this nasty word, then Locke had to deal with the proper significance of the word *heresy* as utilized by the Word of God. In Locke’s day, as well as the twenty-first century, this word conveyed/conveys to the average person something of ominous proportions—wrong belief not sanctioned by the Church of England or some other local fellowship of believers with an axe to grind. This philosophy is still prevalent today. **Out of the Stone/Campbell Movement, there are approximately twenty-five or more divisions, each of which accuses the other of heresy.** In other words, *heresy* is holding to a belief that differs from the tradition of an exclusive group.

**Locke, in concluding his *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, states:** “It may not be amiss to add a few things concerning heresy and schism.”<sup>120</sup> He then proposes the scenario that neither a Turk nor a Mohammedan can be classified as a heretic or schismatic. They may, it is true, be considered apostate or infidel, but not heretic or schismatic.<sup>121</sup> He reasons that by this true definition of *heresy*, then, one of different religions (Turks and Christians, for instance, are of different religions) cannot be a heretic or schismatic to the other.<sup>122</sup> Even within Christendom, there may be different denominations—sometimes called, although incorrectly, different religions—such as, Lutherans or Papist, yet both of these denominations profess faith in Christ and are still Christians in the biblical sense. Both denominations are of the same religion—Christianity. Locke asserts that whether one is Lutheran or Papist that both still acknowledge the “Holy Scriptures to be the rule and foundation of their religion.”<sup>123</sup>

As a result of these separations into distinct religious bodies, he concludes that both parties are guilty of *heresy* in the biblical sense. Why? Locke bases this understanding upon the biblical meaning of *heresy*, not the meaning in vogue. Both groups were guilty of *heresy*, not because of wrong beliefs, but because of separation, which is the true meaning of *heresy*. Locke recognized that the biblical concept of *heresy* is related to an attitude of the heart, not error of judgment in one’s interpretation of Scripture. He cuts away all underbrush as he explains the “nuts and bolts” of *heresy*: “heresy is a separation made in ecclesiastical communion between men of the same religion, for some opinions no way contained in the rule itself.”<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid. It is significant that even though Locke speaks of denominations as different religions, he still speaks of the various groups as of the same religion. This concept of different religions is still in vogue today by many religious groups. For instance, if one differs with my interpretation, then this person is of a different religion, in spite of the fact that both fellowships profess faith in Christ as the Savior of the world.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

Again, he goes right to the core meaning of *heresy*: “Heresy is a separation made in their Christian communion for opinions not contained in the express words of Scripture.”<sup>125</sup> In other words, *heresy* for Locke centered not on belief, but separation. For Locke, *heresy* had nothing to do with the rightness or wrongness of belief; it is the manifestation of an attitude of the mind toward others; it is the spirit of divisiveness; it is the arrogance of factiousness; it is my way, or no way at all. Yet again, he continues to hammer away the real meaning of *heresy*: “He is only a heretic who divides the church into parts, introduces names and marks of distinction, and voluntarily makes a separation because of such opinions.”<sup>126</sup>

Locke zeros in on the word *heresy* in order to draw attention to what the church is actually guilty of, not individuals that cannot in good conscious subscribe to the dictates of the church. The church is actually guilty of *heresy*, not the individuals condemned by the church. Yet, on the other hand, he also calls attention to individuals who withdraw themselves from other believers who do not profess the same opinions: “When anyone separates himself from the communion of a church, because that church does not publicly profess some certain opinions which the Holy Scriptures do not expressly teach.”<sup>127</sup> The following is a lengthy passage from Locke, but it has to be quoted in full:

For when they have determined the Holy Scriptures to be the only foundation of faith, they nevertheless lay down certain propositions as fundamental, which are not in the Scripture; and because others will not acknowledge these additional opinions of theirs, nor build upon them as if they were necessary and fundamental, they therefore make a separation in the church, either by withdrawing themselves from the others, or expelling the others from them. Nor does it signify any thing for them to say that their confessions and symbols are agreeable to Scripture, and to the analogy of faith: for if they be conceived in the express words of Scripture, there can be no question about them; because those are acknowledged by all Christians to be of divine inspiration, and therefore fundamental. But if they say that the articles which they require to be professed are consequences deduced from the Scripture, it is undoubtedly well done of them to believe and profess such things as seem unto them so agreeable to the rule of faith.<sup>128</sup>

**In Locke’s political and religious climate, Christians divided over their deductions and inferences from Scriptures.** These inferences and deductions were analogous to the Word of God, according to the divines. For example, if one could not subscribe to their conclusions (deductions and inferences), the dissenters were referred to as heretics. This philosophy of labeling dissenters with the label heretic is still prevalent today. Another term that is employed by many within the Stone/Campbell Restoration Movement is the word *digressive*. This word also conjures up in the mind something that no one wants to be. It runs through the soul like fear of the dreaded virus known as the HIV. The Stone/Campbell Movement began as a

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 75. One cannot help but reflect upon the words—“express words of Scripture”—of Locke as that which Thomas Campbell, as well as Alexander Campbell, also expressed in their writings, especially the *Declaration and Address* by Thomas Campbell.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 75, 76.

**Reformation Movement**, but later this Movement degenerated or collapsed into a **Restoration Movement**.

Christians today, as well in the time of Locke and the Campbells, still bind their inferences (conclusions) and deductions (reasoning) upon other believers as the Word of God. **The interpretation of the church leaders—elders and preachers—is still identified by many believers as on par with the Word of God.** In fact, in the minds of many leaders, their logic and conjectures are equated with the Word itself. For us to dissent from their understanding is tantamount to disagreeing with God Himself. **And yet, we must recognize that there is a difference between our perceptions of God’s Word and the Word itself.** Interpretation is one thing and the Word of God is another thing. Locke, too, writes about the absurdity of any man equating his interpretation with the Word of God:

I do not think there is any man arrived to that degree of madness, as that he dare give out his consequences and interpretations of Scripture as divine inspiration, and compare the articles of faith, that he has framed according to his own fancy, with the authority of the Scripture.<sup>129</sup>

Heresy and schism come when Christians seek to impose their deductions and inferences upon other Christians. It is true that the discernments and judgments of certain individuals about the Scriptures may, in fact, be the Word of God, yet these differences ought not to be forced upon other believers until they themselves see the connection, and evidently see that they are so, otherwise divisions will continue to occur. With keen insight and discernment, Locke pens the following insightful words to assist individuals in reanalyzing the current position on disagreements:

This only I say, that however clearly we may think this or the other doctrine to be deduced from Scripture, we ought not therefore to impose it upon others as a necessary article of faith, because we believe it to be agreeable to the rule of faith, unless we would be content also that other doctrines should be imposed upon us in the same manner; and that we should be compelled to receive and profess all the different and contradictory opinions of Lutherans, Calvinists, Remonstrants, Anabaptists, and other sects, which the contrivers of symbols, systems, and confessions, are accustomed to deliver unto their followers as genuine and necessary deductions from the Holy Scripture. I cannot but wonder at the extravagant arrogances of those men who think that they themselves can explain things necessary to salvation more clearly than the Holy Ghost, the eternal and infinite wisdom of God.<sup>130</sup>

The plight of the church today is not different from that which existed in Locke’s day. Locke sought to unravel the mystery behind the word *Heresy* through an analysis of the religious intolerance perpetrated upon the dissenters. *Heresy* comes about when believers impose their interpretation or opinion upon others as articles of faith. Both Thomas and Alexander Campbell—the founders of the denominational church known as the Church of Christ, Christian Church, and the Disciples of Christ—confronted the religious world for its divisive spirit over deductions and inferences. The imposition of creeds with its judgments and

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 76, 77.

decisions as equivalent to the Word of God upon Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), father of Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), is what catapulted the Campbell Movement, which later merged with the Stone Movement initiated by Barton Stone (1772-1844).

Shortly after Thomas Campbell's arrival to America, the Presbyterian Synod accepted him, but, six months after his coming, he found himself in trouble with the Presbyterian Synod. He was accused of offering communion to other Presbyterians who were not of his faction. He was defrocked by the Synod; thus, on September 13, 1808, he became an independent preacher with no denominational affiliations.<sup>131</sup> When the Synod defrocked Thomas Campbell for offering communion to other Presbyterians not of their own particular molds, the Synod revoked his license to preach. In response to the sectarian spirit of the Synod, he wrote his *Declaration and Address* (1809). Campbell, also, addressed the issues of inferences and deductions, which many ecclesiastical structures made obligatory upon other Christians. He, like Locke, paints a graphic picture of misuse of inferences and deductions as a bond of Christian unity:

**Prop. 6.** That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians farther than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so; for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power and veracity of God. Therefore, no such deductions can be made terms of communion, but do properly belong to the after and progressive edification of the Church. Hence, it is evident that no such deductions or inferential truths ought to have any place in the Church's confession.<sup>132</sup>

Campbell stresses that deductions and inferences from Scripture premises have no place in the Christian community, but rather belong to the progressive edification of the church. If one accepts the deductions and inferences of another person without confirmation in one's own mind, then, one's belief is not in the Word of God, but rather one's faith is in the interpreter of the Word. Locke also writes the same sentiments about binding deductions and inferences upon other Christians: "Now nothing in worship or discipline can be necessary to Christian communion, but what Christ our legislator, or the apostles, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, have commanded in express words."<sup>133</sup> This quote from Locke also mirrors the thought pattern in Campbell's Proposition Six, as cited above.

Alexander Campbell, son of Thomas, twenty-one years after the writing of the now famous document, writes in the same vein: "I will now show how they cannot make a sect of us. We will acknowledge all as Christians who acknowledge the gospel facts, and obey Jesus Christ."<sup>134</sup> Later, in 1835, Alexander Campbell addresses the charge of heresy imposed upon other believers who could not assent to the whims of would-be-interpreters. He captures in

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<sup>131</sup> See Dabney Phillips (1917-1992), *Restoration Principles and Personalities* (University, AL: Youth Action, 1975), 13-31.

<sup>132</sup> Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address* in C. A. Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, reprint (Joplin: College Press, 1985), 110.

<sup>133</sup> John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 77.

<sup>134</sup> Alexander Campbell, "Millennium II," *The Millennial Harbinger* 1 (April 1830): 146.

graphic language the dilemma of Christians who refuse to kow-tow to the supposed individuals who possess greater knowledge of the Word:

Indeed, in most cases where proscription and exclusions now occur in this country, the excluded are the most intelligent members of the society; and although no community will accuse a man because he knows more of his Bible than his brethren, and on this account exclude him from their communion; yet this, it is manifest, rather than heresy, (of which, however, for consistency's sake, he must be accused,) is, in truth, the real cause of separation.<sup>135</sup>

Both father and son understood the logic of John Locke. These three men grasped the concept that one is guilty of *heresy* when he or she becomes factious. It is in this same vein that Leroy Garrett goes right to the heart of the controversy when he writes:

There is no necessary relation between heresy and doctrine, whether the doctrine is sound or unsound. Heresy is not wrong opinion or false teaching. We affirm that heresy can exist today and did exist in the primitive church quite apart from any erroneous opinions or false teaching.<sup>136</sup>

The traditions of the church in Locke's day, as well in the Campbells' day, made it difficult, if not impossible, to read the Word of God without blinders. It goes almost without saying that not all "plain teaching" is equally plain to all. Once more Garrett writes:

And so with the philosophers: Socrates was poisoned, Aristotle exiled, Spinoza excommunicated, and Bruno burned alive. Their heresy was that they dared to think for themselves. History teaches us that cultures have rewarded nonconformity with reprisal; it has always been a sin to be different.<sup>137</sup>

Another quote from Locke on heresy expresses the sentiments expressed by Thomas Campbell many years later:

For if they be conceived in the express words of Scripture, there can be no question about them; because those are acknowledged by all Christians to be of divine inspiration, and therefore fundamental. But if they say that the articles which they require to be professed are consequences deduced from the Scripture, it is undoubtedly well done of them to believe and profess such things as seem unto them so agreeable to the rule of faith; but it would be very ill done to obtrude those things upon others, unto whom they do not seem to be the indubitable doctrines of the Scriptures.

The phrase "express words of Scripture" permeated the writings of Locke as well as Campbell's *Declaration and Address*. Campbell picked-up on this phraseology and employed this concept to respond to the Presbyterian Synod in defense of his actions concerning the communion. The

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<sup>135</sup> Alexander Campbell, "To Mr. William Jones, of London, Letter IV," *The Millennial Harbinger* 6 (March 1835): 112.

<sup>136</sup> Leroy Garrett, "Who Is A Heretic?," *Mission Messenger* 25 (March 1963): 35. See also Carl Ketcherside, "What Is Heresy," *Mission Messenger* 25 (March 1963): 39-44. To access these essays ONLINE, go to <http://www.unity-in-diversity.org>.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

following analysis seeks to explore more fully the employment of this phrase in their reactions to the sectarian spirit of the age within which they all lived.

### The Phrase: “Express Words of Scripture”

The phrase, “express words of Scripture”, or similar expressions, occurs frequently in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* by Locke<sup>138</sup> and the *Declaration and Address* by Campbell.<sup>139</sup> A cursory reading of both documents reveals that Locke and Campbell sought to convey the central thrust of unity within the various denominations. Unless God expressly states that something is to be done or not to be done, then, Christians ought not to bind their opinions upon other believers to admission into the church of Christ. Locke expressly states that

I would ask them here if it be not more agreeable to the church of Christ to make the conditions of her communion consist in such things, and such things only, as the Holy Spirit has in the Holy Scriptures declared in express words, to be necessary to salvation? I ask, I say, whether this be not more agreeable to the church of Christ, than for men to impose their own inventions and interpretations upon others, as if they were of divine authority; and to establish by ecclesiastical laws, as absolutely necessary to the profession of Christianity such things as the holy Scriptures do either not mention, are at least not expressly command? Whoever requires those things in order to ecclesiastical communion, which Christ does not require in order to life eternal, he may perhaps indeed constitute a society accommodated to his own opinion, and his own advantage; but how that can be called the church of Christ, which is established upon laws that are not his, and which excludes such persons from its communion as he will one day receive into the kingdom of heaven. I understand not.<sup>140</sup>

This lack of “expressly stated” is what caused Campbell to offer the communion to other Presbyterians. He maintained that unless the Word of God expressly prohibited his allowing

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<sup>138</sup> See John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* for the following examples of Locke’s diversity in expressing his thinking: (1) “in express words”—three times, pp 24, 27; (2) “express law”—one time, p 35; (3) “express command”—one time, p 46; “express word of Scripture”—three times, pp 75, 76; (4) “commanded in express terms”—one time, p 77; (5) “Scriptures teach in express words”—one time, p 77; and (6) “expressly teach”—one time, p 75.

<sup>139</sup> See Alexander Campbell, *Declaration and Address and Appendix* for the following examples of Campbell’s diversity in expressing his thinking: (1) “expressly enjoined”—two times, pp 109, 160; (2) “an express Scripture”—one time, 133; (3) not expressly revealed and enjoined in the word of God”—one time, p 134; (4) “expressly revealed”—one time, p 137; (5) “express terms or by approved precedent”—two times, pp 138, 150; (6) “expressly produced”—one time, p 139; (7) “expressly contradict”—one time, p 139; (8) “express letter of the law”—one time, p 139; (9) “expressly prohibited”—one time, p 141; (10) “no express law”—one time, p 141; (11) “expressly commanded”—two times, p 141; (12) “expressly revealed will of God”—two times, pp 146, 183; (13) “express and declaration and injunctions”—one time, p 149; (14) “expressly revealed and enjoined”—two times, pp 149, 160; (15) “the express law of Christ”—one time, p 159; (16) “express revelation”—one time, p 163; (17) “express light of divine revelation”—one time, p 178; (18) “express terms”—one time, p 178; (19) “in express terms of the Bible”—one time, p 178; (20) “expressly declared”—one time, p 179; (21) “express terms”—one time, p 183; (22) “express declaration”—one time, p 191; and (23) “expressly said”—one time, p 199.

<sup>140</sup> Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 24-25.

other believers from other factions within the Presbyterian Church to commune with them (also Presbyterians), then he would not refuse the Lord's Supper to Christians in other fellowships. When Campbell wrote Proposition Three in his *Declaration and Address*, he objected to making anything an article of faith not expressly taught in the Word of God:

That in order to do this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith; nor required of them as terms of communion, but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the Word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted, as of Divine obligation, in their Church constitution and management, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in express terms or by approved precedent.<sup>141</sup>

**This chapter reinforces the motive behind the motto that Thomas Campbell coined to express his sentiments about fellowship within the various denominations, which he called churches of Christ.** Campbell confronted head-on the same sectarian attitude that Locke faced in his day. Locke, for instance, in his *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, addressed the government with its state church as well as the warring factions within the respective denominations. On the other hand, **Campbell went to the jugular vein of fractiousness on the part of those who considered themselves as the only orthodox ones.** Campbell did not have to contend with government, only divided Christendom. He draws attention to the paralyzing evils of division when he writes Proposition Eleven in his *Declaration and Address*:

**Prop. 11.** That division among Christians is a horrid evil, fraught with many evils. It is antichristian, as it destroys the visible unity of the body of Christ; as if he were divided against himself, excluding and excommunicating a part of himself. It is antisciptural, as being strictly prohibited by his sovereign authority; a direct violation of his express command. It is antinatural, as it excites Christians to contemn [scorn], to hate, and oppose one another, who are bound by the highest and most endearing obligations to love each other as brethren, even as Christ has loved them. In a word, it is productive of confusion and of every evil work.<sup>142</sup>

Division in Campbell's day, as well as this century, proliferated when Christians sought to bind their inferences and deductions upon other Christians. Salvation was made contingent upon absolute perfection in knowledge. Campbell sought to point out that an all-out perfection in understanding of divine Scripture is not prerequisite to salvation. No one possesses complete insight of Holy Scripture. Within the Christian community, one observes infants, children, young men, and fathers. Knowledge is a growth process. Campbell grasped the significance of mental levels with the kingdom when he penned Proposition Seven:

**Prop. 7.** That although doctrinal exhibitions of the great system of Divine truths, and defensive testimonies in opposition to prevailing errors, be highly expedient, and the more full and explicit they be for those purposes, the better, yet, as these must be in a great measure the effect of human reasoning, and of course must contain many inferential truths, they ought not to be made terms of Christian communion unless we suppose, what is contrary to fact, that none have a right to the

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<sup>141</sup> See C. A. Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 108-109.

<sup>142</sup> Thomas Campbell, "Declaration and Address," in C. A. Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 112, 113.

communion of the Church, but such as possess a very clear and decisive judgment, or are come to a very high degree of doctrinal information; whereas the Church from the beginning did, and ever will, consist of little children and young men, as well as fathers.<sup>143</sup>

**Thomas Campbell's son, Alexander, also criticized the practice of making deductions of some great mind as the criterion by which Christians accept other Christians: “Men have foolishly attempted to make the deductions of some great minds the common measure of all Christians.”**<sup>144</sup> He goes on record as one who never made his deductions a prerequisite for fellowship. We should observe carefully his own succinct statement about his own practice toward those who do not possess the same opinion as his: “I never did, at any time, exclude a man from the kingdom of God for a mere imbecility [irrationality] of intellect; or, in other words, because he could not assent to our opinions. All sects are doing this, or have done this.”<sup>145</sup> It is significant that both father and son understood that the

Grandeur, sublimity, and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this, that THE BELIEF OF ONE FACT, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes, to salvation. The belief of this ONE FACT, and submission to ONE INSTITUTION expressive of it, is all that is required of Heaven to admission into the church.<sup>146</sup>

It is in this same vein of the Campbells that Locke (120 years before Thomas Campbell wrote the *Declaration and Address*) stresses that “Nobody is obliged . . . to yield obedience unto the admonitions or injunctions of another, farther than he himself is persuaded.”<sup>147</sup> It appears from Locke's writings that he was familiar with the Apostle Paul's epistle to the Romans. In the Roman letter, one cannot help but to reflect upon Paul's admonition to the church when controversy erupted over doctrinal issues that did not undermine the one foundation of Christianity, namely, Jesus. Paul writes: “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind” (Romans 14:5). We cannot submit to the belief of another without conviction in our own minds; otherwise, our faith is not in the Word of God, but in an individual.

**We cannot read the writings of Locke without a consciousness of his familiarity of Paul's writings.** For instance, Paul, in this same epistle, writes: “But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin” (14:23). Once more, Paul nails the coffin shut on this issue of intoleration when he castigates individuals who wished to enforce unity in conformity. Paul questions the

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 110-111.

<sup>144</sup> Alexander Campbell, “Millennium—No II,” *Millennial Harbinger* 1, no. 4 1830 (Bethany, VA., Alexander Campbell, Ed; reprint, Joplin, MO: College Press, 1987): 145.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>146</sup> Alexander Campbell, “The Foundation of Hope and of Christian Union,” *The Christian Baptist* 1, no. 9 [April 5, 1824] (Buffaloe, Brooke County, VA: Editor, 1827; reprint, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate, 1955): 177.

<sup>147</sup> John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 57.

believers in Rome who wish to make their conclusions the means of “right standing” before God. The fourteenth chapter of Romans reveals that the church was up in arms over the eating or not eating of meats. Some were mistaken about the eating of meats and others were not. But, for Paul, whether one was right or wrong was not the real issue at stake. The subject was unity within the body of Christ, not splitting up.

Again, Paul poses the following question: “Who are you to judge someone else’s servant?” (14:4a). Paul did not stop with that question, but rather he proposed an answer from God’s perspective: “To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand” (14:4b). Having reflected upon Paul’s admonition, one should now reflect upon Locke’s response to differences within the church, which also was based upon Romans 14:

Yet if I be not thoroughly persuaded thereof in my own mind, there will be no safety for me in following it. No way whatsoever that I shall walk in against the dictates of my conscience, will ever bring me to the mansions of the blessed. Faith only, and inward sincerity, is (sic) the things that procure acceptance with God.<sup>148</sup>

**In harmony with Holy Scripture, Locke, and both Campbells, set forth the teachings about “unity in diversity” as enunciated by the Holy Spirit.** Alexander Campbell, for instance, sets forth the views advocated by his father in the *Declaration and Address*:

So long as unity of opinion was regarded as a proper basis of religious union, so long have mankind been distracted by the multiplicity and variety of opinions. To establish what is called a system of orthodox opinions as the bond of union was, in fact, offering a premium for new diversities in opinion, and was increasing, *ad infinitum*, opinions, sects, and divisions. And what was worse than all, it was establishing self-love and pride as religious principles, as fundamental to salvation, for a love regulated by similarity of opinion, is only a love to one’s own opinion; and all the zeal exhibited in the defense of it, is but the pride of opinion.<sup>149</sup>

The amount of time and space taken here to compare Locke and Thomas Campbell is easily justifiable. The problems in Locke’s day, as well as Campbell’s day, encapsulate the warp and woof of the continuing controversy as it has come down to Christians within the Churches of Christ, the Christian Churches, and the Disciples of Christ. As we reflect upon the divisions today within the various religious denominations, we should, once more, turn to Locke for another insightful note on how to maintain unity within the true church:

But since men are so solicitous about the true church, I would only ask them here by the way, if it be not more agreeable to the church of Christ to make the conditions of her communion consist in such things, and such things only, as the Holy Spirit has in the holy Scriptures declared in express words, to be necessary to salvation? I ask, I say, whether this be not more agreeable to the church of Christ, than for men to impose their own inventions and interpretations upon others, as if they were of

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 40, 41.

<sup>149</sup> Alexander Campbell, “The Foundation of Hope, and of Christian Union,” *The Christian Baptist* 1, no. 5 (April 5, 1824): 176.

divine authority; and to establish by ecclesiastical laws, as absolutely necessary to the profession of Christianity such things as the holy Scriptures do either not mention, or at least not expressly command? Whosoever requires those things in order to ecclesiastical communion, which Christ does not require in order to life eternal, he may perhaps indeed constitute a society accommodated to his own opinion, and his own advantage; but how that can be called the church of Christ, which is established upon laws that are not his, and which excludes such persons from its communion as he will one day receive into the kingdom of heaven, I understand not.<sup>150</sup>

Just a casual reading of this citation from Locke, we recognize the same thought patterns in the thinking of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. All three men advocated unity based upon acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord in one's life, not correct intellectual understanding. Locke also addresses the whims of presenting one's own views as the culmination and embodiment of THE TRUTH. He pens: "For every church is orthodox to itself; to others, erroneous or heretical. Whatever any church believes, it believes to be true; and the contrary thereunto it pronounces to be error."<sup>151</sup> These men had to combat the belief that error, in and of itself, automatically condemns one's soul.

These reformers were conscious that even though we may be in error, we must also recognize that not all error will condemn our soul; else we could not be saved. Also, they had to face the fact that even though all truth is truth, nevertheless, all truth is not essential to salvation, else we could not be saved. These men were mindful that God had never made absolute freedom from error in intellect a condition of salvation, nor had He made possession of absolute truth essential to eternal life. If so, then no one could be saved. What does matter, at least, according to Paul, is whether one loves God or not:

Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup> The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. <sup>3</sup> **But the man who loves God is known by God.** (1 Corinthians 8:1-3)

As we review history beginning with Locke until the present era, we discover that history repeats itself over and over again. Divisions always come when men seek to impose their views upon others. In the 1600s, men imposed their views upon others, and, as a result, Christians refused communion with other believers; in the 1800s, the same mindset prevailed—the command of conformity. In the 1900s, division among Christians proliferated up-and-down the landscape. In the 1950s, this author became a part of one of the most dogmatic groups in the religious world. This movement has since divided many times within its own ranks. Why? Unity in conformity, not unity in diversity, is the battle cry of this war-torn movement. Alexander Campbell, in trying to stay the tide of factiousness, captures the essence of the problem for all times when he writes:

The New Testament was not designed to occupy the same place in theological seminaries that the carcasses of malefactors are condemned to occupy in medical hall—first doomed to the gibbet, and

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<sup>150</sup> Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 24, 25.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

then to the dissecting knife of the spiritual anatomist. Christianity consists infinitely more in good words than in sound opinion.<sup>152</sup>

Again, Campbell zeros in on the truth that opinions can never unite, but only divide. Listen as he seeks to bring individuals to an awareness of the part that opinions play in the breaking up of the body of Christ into pieces:

But men cannot give up their opinions, and, therefore, they never can unite, says one. We do not ask them to give up their opinions; we ask them only not to impose them upon others. Let them hold their opinion; but let them hold them as private property. The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been, private property.<sup>153</sup>

Locke, Thomas and Alexander Campbell frequently employed the expression, “expressly stated,” or some closely synonymous worded phrase to convey the basic concept of binding or not binding one’s own opinions upon other Christians.

## **CHURCHES OF CHRIST AND THEIR BASIC PRESUPPOSITIONAL MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH**

C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes express in concrete language the major fallacy that exists today in the Stone/Campbell Movement. The following analysis summarizes the current status of thinking in this much divided movement today:

We also face an additional obstacle stemming from our heritage among Churches of Christ. We often have assumed that our roots are simply in the New Testament and that we really have not been shaped in any significant way by the intervening history. We assume that our churches are simply New Testament churches, nothing more and nothing less. The sects and denominations of Protestantism may be products of history, but our origins come entirely from the Bible. The implications of such an assumption are clear; the recent past has scant value in clarifying who we are and from whence we have come.<sup>154</sup>

The denominational Church of Christ just assumes that its roots go all the way back to the day of Pentecost. The truth of the matter is, there were no Churches of Christ in existence until the times of Thomas and Alexander Campbell. It is true that the Church of Christ was in existence, but not the Church of Christ Church. In fact, even Locke employed the expression church of Christ in the 1600s, but the Church of Christ Church did not come into existence until the early part of the nineteenth century under the leadership of Stone and the Campbells.

Many Churches of Christ are fond of using the term *denomination* to distinguish its movement from other movements. One way in which the Churches of Christ seek to widen the

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<sup>152</sup> Alexander Campbell, “The Foundation of Hope and of Christian Union,” *The Christian Baptist*, 1, no. 5 (April 5, 1824): 178.

<sup>153</sup> Alexander Campbell, “Millennium. NO. II,” *Millennial Harbinger* 1, no. 4 (1830): 145.

<sup>154</sup> C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, Texas: ACU Press, 1988), 2.

gulf between themselves and other denominations is to assign the epithet—The Lord’s Church, whereby they assign all other fellowships belonging to Christ to an eternal burning hell. What does the word *denomination* mean? Basically, the word simply means to give a name to. In other words, any time one designates a particular religious group by a different name to distinguish it from other religious groups, then, that body is a denomination, even if it is the Churches of Christ.

As far as this writer knows, there were no congregations that used the term church of Christ in a denominational sense in the days of Locke or even the Campbells. Prior to the time of Locke, when Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door of the cathedral at Wittenberg in 1517, the Church of Christ as a distinctive religious body did not exist. This is not to deny that Christ’s church (assembly or community) did not live (exist), but rather that the specific organization known as the Church of Christ did not bodily inhale or exhale—it had no reality. Again, one might also inquire as to where the Church of Christ church was when Pope Urban II (1041-1099) launched his First Crusade beginning in AD 1095? Many believers, apparently, think that the term Church of Christ has always existed upon the lips of its adherents. The religious body of people today known as the Churches of Christ did not exist until the time of Alexander and Thomas Campbell.

There is nothing wrong with the expression church of Christ if we use the expression to refer to the body of Christ as a whole—His universal church. Locke’s (1632-1704) *A Letter of Toleration* reveals his concept of the true church of Christ. We find that he employs the familiar phrase in the sense of God’s community of believers, not a distinctive religious body of believers. He writes:

But since men are so solicitous about the true church, I would only ask them here by the way, if it be not more agreeable to the church of Christ to make the conditions of her communion consist in such things, and such things only, as the Holy Spirit has in the holy Scriptures declared in express words, to be necessary to salvation? I ask, I say, whether this be not more agreeable to the church of Christ, than for men to impose their own inventions and interpretations upon others, as if they were of divine authority; and to establish by ecclesiastical laws, as absolutely necessary to the profession of Christianity such things as the holy Scriptures do not either not mention, or at least not expressly command? Whoever requires those things in order to ecclesiastical communion, which Christ does not require in order to life eternal, he may perhaps indeed constitute a society accommodated to his own opinion, and his own advantage; but how that can be called the church of Christ, from its communion as he will one day receive into the kingdom of heaven, I understand not.<sup>155</sup>

Even though Locke wrote the above excerpt over three hundred years ago, nevertheless, he still captures the essence of a trustworthy church of Christ. When he speaks of the church of Christ, he does not have reference to a single body by that name. In fact, there was no such denominational group known as the Church of Christ. Whether one was Catholic or Protestant, one was still a member of the church of Christ. Locke, for example, was a member of the

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<sup>155</sup> Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 24, 25. The following is Locke’s use of the term “church of Christ” in his *Letter*: **page 13** (once), **page 17** (once), **page 24** (twice), and **page 25** (twice); also, he uses the expression “Christian Church” on the following pages: **page 16** (once), **page 30** (once); he also speaks of the “true church” on the following pages: **page 13** (once), and **page 24** (once).

Anglican Church (Church of England). He, nevertheless, confronted the religious establishment for its factional way of thinking toward other believers. In his day many Christians did not exhibit the general feeling of open-mindedness for disagreement with the basic doctrines of the church. In other words, one had to belong to a particular sect. This narrow attitude about the nature of the church brought about persecution. As a result of this fanatic atmosphere, Locke addressed himself to the marks of a genuine church of Christ:

Since you are pleased to inquire what are my thoughts about the mutual toleration of Christians in their different professions of religion, I must needs answer you freely, that I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristic mark of the true church. For whatsoever some people boast of the antiquity of places and names, or of the pomp of their outward worship; others, of the reformation of their discipline; all, of the orthodoxy of their faith, for every one is orthodox to himself: these things, and all others of this nature, are much rather marks of men's striving for power and empire over one another, than of the church of Christ. Let any one have ever so true a claim to all these things, yet if he be destitute of charity, meekness, and good will in general towards all mankind, even to those that are not Christians, he is certainly yet short of being a true Christian himself.<sup>156</sup>

Once more, Locke sets forth the characteristic measure of a true-blue church of Christ. The mark of the true church of Christ is the spirit of toleration. He shuttered at the remedy in his day for lack of conformity to established ecclesiastical organizations—fire and sword. It was, be of the same mind or die. In the twenty-first century, it is no longer the stake with flames engulfing the body, but, today, one's refusal to conform to the whims of ecclesiastical organizations, elders, and preachers result in excommunication. Locke understood what many in this day have not yet grasped—men and women can no more all think alike than they can all look alike. Yet, in Locke's day also, many did not comprehend this basic concept in intellectual attainments. He penetrates into the very heart of the matter when he writes:

That any man should think fit to cause another man, whose salvation he heartily desires, to expire in torments, and that even in an unconverted estate, would, I confess, seem very strange to me, and, I think, to any other also. But nobody, surely, will ever believe that such a carriage maintain that men ought to be compelled by fire and sword to profess certain doctrines, and conform to this or that exterior worship, without any regard had unto their morals; if any one endeavor to convert those that are erroneous unto the faith, by forcing them to profess things that they do not believe, and allowing them to practice things that the Gospel does not permit; it cannot be doubted, indeed, that such a one is desirous to have a numerous assembly joined in the same profession with himself; but that he principally intends by those means to compose a truly Christian church, is altogether incredible. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if those who do not really contend for the advancement of the true religion, and of the church of Christ, make use of arms that do not belong to the Christian warfare.<sup>157</sup>

Locke speaks of the “Christian church” and the “church of Christ” in the above quotation; nevertheless, these expressions were not employed in a sectarian fashion. He rebukes the methods employed to bring about conformity within the church. We must be left to our own consciences in our own application of the Word of God in order for us to be true to the Word of

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 16, 17.

God itself. He also correctly assesses the meaning of the term church of Christ as well as what it is that allows one entrance into the body of Christ. He, with his usual keen insight, captures the biblical concept of the meaning of the English word *church*:

A Church then I take to be a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls. . . . No man by nature is bound unto any particular church or sect, but every one joins himself voluntarily to that society in which he believes he has found that profession and worship which is truly acceptable to God. The hope of salvation, as it was the only cause of his entrance into that communion, so it can be the only reason of his stay there. For if afterwards he discover any thing either erroneous in the doctrine, or incongruous in the worship of that society to which he has joined himself, why should it not be as free for him to go out as it was to enter? No member of a religious society can be tied with any other bonds but what proceeds from the certain expectation of eternal life. A church then is a society of members voluntarily uniting to this end.<sup>158</sup>

The writings of Locke also agree with Thomas Campbell's understanding of fellowship. Campbell, too, employs the expression Church of Christ (at this time he is still Presbyterian) throughout his now famous document (*Declaration and Address*) to denote the body of Christ (the Christian community) in general. Whether one is Presbyterian or Baptist, this individual is still a member of the church of Christ. A few citations from Campbell's famous document give credence to this statement. Listen, once more, to Thomas Campbell as he seeks to set forth the true nature of the church:

**Prop. 1.** That the Church of Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the scriptures, and that manifest the same by their tempers and conduct, and of none else; as none else can be truly and properly called Christians.<sup>159</sup>

It is noteworthy that Thomas Campbell uses the expression church of Christ to designate "all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him." At the time he penned these words, the Church of Christ did not exist as a distinct denomination. Just a casual glance of Proposition One reveals that Campbell uses the capitol "C" in speaking of Christians in all the denominations as being in the Church of Christ. Whether we use the little "c" or the capitol "C" make little material difference as far as terminology is concerned. He does not speak of church of Christ in terms of conformity in doctrinal sentiments, but rather of the confession of faith in Christ and holy living as the prerequisites to membership, not perfection in understanding. He understood that the Christian community exists with the various denominations. Thus, he expresses this opinion most forthrightly in his Second Proposition:

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>159</sup> Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address* in Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 107,108.

**Prop 2.** That although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ Jesus hath also received them, to the glory of God. And for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing; and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.<sup>160</sup>

For Campbell, the Church of Christ exists in distinct religious fellowships. Christ's Church should "walk by the same rule." What he meant by this phrase is that Christians should base their relationship to one another upon one's faith in Jesus and submission to Him in their daily walk with God. He did not mean, as is commonly taught today, unity in conformity on doctrinal matters. Not only did Locke influence Campbell, but Campbell also was influenced by another group of believers who wrote *The First London Confession* in 1664. The following chart gives Campbell's Proposition Two, as cited above, and Article XLVII of *The First London Confession* in parallel columns to illustrate Campbell's dependence upon other writings in forming his own conclusions:

*Declaration and Address*  
Proposition Two

*The First London Confession*  
Article XLVII

That although the Church of Christ upon earth must necessarily exist in particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another, yet there ought to be no schisms, no uncharitable divisions among them. They ought to receive each other as Christ Jesus hath also received them, to the glory of God. And for this purpose they ought all to walk by the same rule, to mind and speak the same thing; and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment

And although the particular Congregations be distinct and several Bodies, every one a compact and knit Citie in it selfe; yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all meanes convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all needful affaires of the church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only head.<sup>161</sup>

We cannot read the second document (*The First London confession*) without assigning conscious copying on the part of Campbell in composing his own *Declaration and Address*. Both documents speak of the Church of Christ existing in "particular and distinct societies, locally separate one from another." Campbell as well as the Baptists believed that all that profess faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things were a part of the Church of Christ, even though the denominational Church of Christ did not have its existence at the time both documents were written. We surmise from Campbell's document that he never entertained the

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>161</sup> Quoted in H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1990), 51.

idea that he was not a member of the Church of Christ, even though he was Presbyterian. In harmony with the gist of the *Declaration and Address*, his son, Alexander, advanced the same mental concept of the church. Listen to Alexander as he writes about his own movement, thirty-two years after his father's famous document, to Andrew Broaddus:

Whenever the history of this effort at reformation shall have been faithfully written, it will appear, we think, bright as the sun, that our career has been marked with a spirit of forbearance, moderation, and love of union, with an unequivocal desire for preserving the integrity, harmony, and co-operation of all who teach one faith, one Lord, and one immersion. In Confirmation of this fact I am happy to add that no Baptist of good character for piety and morality, has ever been, because of a diverse theory or opinion, excluded from our communion or communities. If divisions then exist, we presume the crime of making them will not lie upon us; unless the declaration of an opinion, the affirmation of a particular view, or the correction of an error in doctrine, discipline, or government, be tantamount to making a party. I may add, in farther corroboration of our anti-sectarian character and feelings now, that, under the blessing of Heaven, a very large party has been formed, in many regions equaling any other denominations; and in others, where we have had an equal ratio of preachers, surpassing them in number; we, as a denomination, are as desirous as ever to unite and co-operate with all Christians on the broad and vital principles of the New and everlasting Covenant.<sup>162</sup>

Alexander Campbell expresses the sentiments set forth in his father's Magna Charta for the new reformation movement. Thomas Campbell attached an appendix to explain in greater details the ramifications of his startling document. In his "Appendix," he addresses Christians in other "distinct bodies" as brethren, which is what his son also wrote about in his letter to Broaddus. The following is a sampling of Thomas Campbell's benevolent spirit he manifested toward those whose opinions differed from his understanding: (1) "It remains with our brethren";<sup>163</sup> (2) "This, we are persuaded, is the uniform sentiment of real Christians of every denomination";<sup>164</sup> and (3) "Let none imagine, that in so saying, we arrogate to ourselves a degree of intelligence superior to our brethren."<sup>165</sup> These excerpts from his "Appendix" illustrate the discernment that Campbell manifested toward those of other denominations. He alleged in his explanation of his famous document that believers in other denominations were Christians. We cannot help but observe the candidness of Campbell as he reflected upon the unity of the church:

As to creeds and confessions, although we may appear to our brethren to oppose them, yet this is to be understood only in so far as they oppose the unity of the Church, by containing sentiments not expressly revealed in the word of God; or, by the way of using them, become the instruments of a human or implicit faith, or oppress the weak of God's heritage. . . . Our intention, therefore, with respect to all the Churches of Christ is perfectly amicable.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Alexander Campbell, "The Editor's Response to Mr. Broaddus," *Millennial Harbinger* 4, New Series, no. 12 (December 1840): 556.

<sup>163</sup> Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address*, in Young, *Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union*, 115.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

### **Both Thomas Campbell and John Locke understood the biblical concept of unity.**

Both men were conscious of Christian unity and religious affiliation within the various religious bodies (denominations). In respect to differences, Campbell wrote: “We ought not to reject him because he cannot see with our eyes as to matters of human inference, of private judgment.”<sup>167</sup> Again he composes the following scenario concerning error and the church: “Do we not conclude that the person’s error cuts him off from all ordinary possibility of salvation, by thus cutting him off from a place in the church, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation<sup>168</sup> For Campbell, error in interpretation of Scripture did not negate a person from belonging to the Church of Christ. What is unity based upon? Listen to Campbell as he, once more, articulates concisely his thoughts concerning his perception of Christian fellowship:

By the Christian Church throughout the world, we mean the aggregate of such professors as we have described in Propositions 1 and 8, pages 48 and 50, even all that mutually acknowledge each other as Christians, upon the manifest evidence of their faith, holiness, and charity. It is such only we intend when we urge the necessity of Christian unity.<sup>169</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

Both Locke and Campbell considered the existing denominations as the Church of Christ. This concept serves to deliver believers from the mistaken idea that the Church is something people attend or that it is an ecclesiastical organization. The church is the people, not an establishment. Simply calling one by the name Church of Christ does not, in and of itself, constitute a true Church of Christ. There is no such thing as the Baptist Church or the Presbyterian Church or the Methodist Church or the Church of Christ Church; there is only one church (body of Christ) and that church consists of all who have put their faith or trust in the Savior of the world—Jesus the Messiah.

When Thomas Campbell (father of Alexander Campbell) initiated this famous slogan—“Where the Scriptures Speak”—he did not intend to say that we must give book, chapter, and verse for everything we do. He primarily meant that he would not refuse the communion to other Presbyterians unless the Bible strictly forbade such actions. Thus, Campbell, when called upon the carpet for his ecumenical spirit, coined the phrase to mean: Unless the Bible forbids the actions that you condemn (the Synod), then I will speak where the Bible speaks and I will be silent where the Bible is silent. In other words, if the Bible outlaws my offering communion to other Presbyterians that are not a part of our orthodox group, then I will withhold communion. If the Bible is mute about this issue, then I will not refuse the communion to other believers.

In bringing this chapter to its conclusion, I cite Alexander Campbell’s remarks about John Locke:

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 161.

The celebrated John Locke, for fourteen or fifteen years, applied himself closely to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and employed the last period of his life scarcely in any thing else. He was never weary of admiring the grand view of that sacred book, and the just relations of all its parts. He every day made discoveries in it, which gave him fresh cause of admiration. And so earnest was he for the comfort of his friends, and the diffusion of sacred knowledge amongst them, that even the day before he died he particularly exhorted all about him to read the Holy Scriptures. His well-known recommendation to a person who asked him which was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the Christian religion, in the full and just extent of it, was—“Let him study the Holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life. It hath God for its author—Salvation for its end—and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.”<sup>170</sup>

Hopefully, this in-depth essay has unfolded for the reader the true import of “We speak **where** the Bible speaks,” which correct understanding promotes unity, not separation from other believers. Another study, in this same vain, is “Unity in Diversity”, which study reinforces the concepts set forth in this detailed study on “We Speak **Where** the Bible Speaks.” Remember, one may speak **WHERE** the Bible speaks and not speak **AS** the Bible speaks. “Audience relevance” is critical to sound exegetical skills in reading each book of the Bible. In other words, how did the first-century readers interpret the Scriptures? As Christians, we must deal with “Unity in Diversity.”<sup>171</sup> **Just a brief analysis of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and Romans 14:1-15:7 sets the biblical principle that God does not want one to use his or her knowledge as a club to beat to death those who do not yet understand things very clearly.** Unfortunately, this failure on the part of many of God’s people to explore the above Scriptures has resulted in division among the people of God without end, divisions on every street corner. The teaching about “Unity in Diversity” illustrates that it is not necessary for Christians to cross every “t” and dot every “i” according to the political party leaders in order to maintain fellowship among the so-called chosen of God. This understanding of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and Romans 14:1-15:7 helped to lead me out of legalism to freedom in Christ.

Just a perusal of 1Corinthians 8:1-13 and Romans 14:1-15:7 calls attention to Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians concerning knowledge that puffs one up. In my investigation, I analyzed the pitfalls of advancing “absolute” perfection in knowledge before the right-hand of fellowship can be extended to other believers. **We quickly observe from 1 Corinthians 8 that freedom from error is not a condition of salvation else all men and women would be damned.** Within the kingdom of God, we detect that there are infants, children, young adults, and older individuals (more mature) in God’s kingdom. No one is at the same level of knowledge. Once more, this understanding of toleration toward other believers led me from legalism to freedom in Christ.

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<sup>170</sup>Alexander Campbell, “Instances of Diligence in Reading the Scriptures,” *Millennial Harbinger* 4, New Series, no. 12 (December 1840): 548.

<sup>171</sup> For an in-depth study on “Unity in Diversity,” see Dallas Burdette’s essay on “Unity in Diversity,” which study is found on my website: [freedominchrist.net](http://freedominchrist.net) under the caption: “**Articles on Unity in Diversity.**”