

# ***Fort Payne church of Christ***



## **The Weekly Moment**

*A Weekly Motivational Message*

Wednesday, July 25, 2018

### ***The Name Is All That Remains***

**By Mel Futrell**

(Mel preaches for the Shades Mountain congregation in Birmingham)

In the early 19th century (1804), Barton W. Stone and others had left Presbyterianism because of its Calvinistic emphasis and were making great strides at restoring New Testament Christianity. They, in fact, were calling themselves “Christians” and were taking “the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven.” 1 It is true that not all of their religious beliefs and practices conformed to the New Testament pattern (Romans 6:17; 2 Timothy 1:13). And we make no attempt to defend Stone, the Campbells or any other for that matter who held to error (Galatians 1:6-8). However, as I was taught growing up, there is a vast difference between the man who is headed toward the truth and the man who is headed away from the truth. Barton Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and others were moving in the right direction — toward the truth.

But, at the same time, some among them had returned to the Presbyterians and others like Richard McNemar and John Dunlavy had joined up with the Shakers. This bit of historical background leads us to a statement by brother Bill Humble about folks leaving the “Stone Movement” that I believe to be applicable to some brethren to-day. Humble wrote:

“The defections seemed a very serious loss at the time; but historians have noted that those attract-ed to Shakerism might have been so fanatical as to cause trouble for Stone later, and their leaving might have been a blessing in dis-guise.” 2

My point in drawing on this statement and history is to demonstrate that **weirdly an almost opposite thing** is at times happening to-day. Some brethren although they have clearly left their first love (Revelation 2:4), they have clearly departed from “the faith” (1 Timo-thy 4:1); they are not leaving! Please understand me, these are brethren whose beliefs and worship practices do not correspond to revealed truth about the worship of the Lord’s church. These are brethren who have knowingly embraced religious denominational beliefs and practices. Frankly, the name they wear is about all that remains of their once upon a time loyalty to our Lord Jesus and His one true church.

Mind you that this is a given, brothers in Christ, or congregations for that matter, should be given “space to repent” (Revelation 2:21). If they wish to repent we should be happy, ready, willing, and able to receive them. Such ought to be our hearts desire and prayer to God (Romans 10:1). Yet, it is also true that one can so err from the truth (James 5:19), that they are no longer recognized as belonging to the Lord (Revelation 2:5). I’m afraid some brethren are there now!

So let me be a bit more specific about who I have in mind by the aforementioned thoughts. In particular I’m speaking of brethren around the country who have adopt-ed instrumental music and brought it into the worship of the local church. According to the 2018 edition of *Churches Of Christ In The United States* there are “11,965 congregations in 11,984 different worship locations.” 3 And 60 of these “have adopted instruments in some or even all of their Sunday worship services.” 4 To break it down some more, 40 of these congregations are classed as instrumental and a cappella. While another “20 congregations...use musical instruments in all of their worship services.” 5

Now brethren it won’t do to argue, “Well it’s only 60 out of 11,965!” The fact is these 60 congregations have added to the worship of God something [mechanical instrumental music], that is totally lacking Scriptural authority! They have moved away from the truth — Far Away! Yet, they still want to be identified with the church that belongs to Christ. Mind you, the name we wear matters. But the way we are organized and the doctrine we believe, teach, and preach also matters. How we worship matters!

It would be best for those brethren who have corrupted the worship of God, by the sinful introduction of instrumental music, to repent of this their wickedness and begin again to worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). But if they won’t, then we must avoid them and have no fellowship with them (Romans 16:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 John 9-11). Because sadly, all that remains is the name.

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ENDNOTES

1 Humble, Bill, *The Story of the Restoration*, 1969, p. 10.

2 Ibid, p. 11.

3 *Churches of Christ In The United States*, 2018 edi-tion, 21st Century Christian Publishing, p. 19.

4 Ibid, p. 20.

5 Ibid, p. 20.

Think about it.

Here’s hoping you’ll make the “*most of your minutes*” this week.

Hope to see you at Bible Study tonight.

In Christian Love,

***Bob Strickland***