

# Fort Payne church of Christ



## The Weekly Moment

*A Weekly Motivational Message*

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

### Walter Scott 1796-1861



One of the chief promoters of the great religious movement in modern times was **Walter Scott**. His ancestry as well as his name was the same as the renowned novelist of the last century. He was born on the last day of October, 1796, in Moffat, Scotland. His parents were John Scott and Mary Innes, who had five sons and five daughters. His father was a music teacher and a man of culture. The mother was refined and so sensitive that the news of her husband's death caused her death and she was buried in the same grave with him. Walter was the sixth of ten children.

At the very beginning of this brief biographical sketch of one of the purest, noblest and truest spirits of the Restoration, we desire to let one of his pupils, who became the best historian of the Restoration, give us his estimate of Walter Scott. After telling us that Scott was a tutor for several years in his father's home, Dr. Richardson says: *"It was about this period also that he wrote his Essays on Teaching Christianity, in the first volume of the **Christian Baptist**, in which he, over the signature of 'Philip,' first presented and developed the true basis and most important point in the Reformation, to-wit: The belief in Christ as the Son of God, the Christian faith and bond of Christian Union. Brother Scott really laid the true and distinctive foundation of the Reformation."*

Baxter, in preparing his life of Walter Scott, found a dearth of material because this hero of the Cross had *"lived so much for others that he had little thought or care for himself."* We can only give a survey of the life of this great, gifted and God-fearing man. Before the death of his parents, Walter was given good educational advantages. Through great economy, he received training which usually only the children of wealthy parents enjoyed at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. After the necessary academic preparation, he entered the University of Edinburgh, where he completed the collegiate course. It was the prayer of his parents that he should *"preach the Word."*

A touching incident of his boyhood days throws a flood of light upon the kindhearted character of this noble man. It is said that Martin Luther sang and begged for the lazy drones who belonged to a monastic order.

Walter Scott, when a boy of sixteen, sang late at night for a poor blind beggar. Singing the sweetest of Scotch airs, he poured out the fullness of a sympathetic heart in the interest of suffering humanity.

Soon after he completed his University training, Walter Scott was influenced to come to America by the fact that his uncle on his mother's side, George Innes, had a government position in New York City. He sailed from Greenock and reached New York July, 1818. His uncle was a man of integrity and highly esteemed. He secured Walter a position as Latin tutor in a classical academy on Long Island. Soon, however, he set out on foot with a light heart and a lighter purse in company with a young man to go West. They reached Pittsburg in May, 1819, where Mr. Scott fortunately—we may say, Providentially, became acquainted with a fellow countryman, who had been greatly influenced by the Haldanes, Mr. George Forrester. He was the principal of the best academy in Pittsburg, and, quick to recognize the superior talents and training of Walter Scott, he engaged him as his head assistant.

Mr. Scott soon found that Mr. Forrester held views which were then quite peculiar, though fortunately they are not so peculiar now. *"Mr. Forrester's peculiarity consisted in making the Bible his only authority and guide in matters of religion, while his young friend had been brought up to regard the Presbyterian Standards as true and authoritative exposition and summary of Bible truth."* Being a diligent student of the Word of God, he soon saw the consistency of Mr. Forrester's position.

The Bible had for him a new meaning. It was no longer a store-house of texts to confirm dogmatic systems, but a revelation, an unveiling of the will of God. *"The gospel was a message and to believe and obey that message was to become a Christian."* Seeing that religion was personal and not a matter of proxy, he made a careful study of the conditions of pardon and, being a thorough Greek scholar, he was soon convinced that baptism should symbolize his death to sin and the rising to live a new life in Christ. He was baptized by Mr. Forrester, who soon after gave up his academy and placed the management of it entirely in the hands of Mr. Scott. The school became very prosperous, but the principal felt that he ought to be preaching the glad tidings of salvation. About this time a pamphlet fell into his hands, which had been put into circulation by a small congregation in the city of New York, and which had much to do with deciding the course he should pursue.

The church alluded to was composed mainly of Scotch Baptists and held many of the views held by the Haldanes and were, in many respects, far in advance of the other religious bodies. This pamphlet was published in 1820. It set forth with admirable clearness and simplicity the teaching of Scripture regarding the design of baptism. The careful reader will find in it the germs of what was years afterwards insisted upon by Scott in his plea for baptism for the remission of sins and also by **Alexander Campbell** in his celebrated *"Extra on Remission."*

As a patriotic, country-loving citizen, Scott was crushed by the Civil War. For several months he refused to take the Lord's Supper because of strife among brethren. He was stricken seriously ill on April 16, 1861 (diagnosed as typhoid-pneumonia) and died April 23.

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*