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W. W. OTEY: CONTROVERSIALIST

BY

Cecil Willis

(2)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

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1962

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The Bible teaches that man does not live to himself (Romans 14:7). We are social creatures. Everything that one is or does is the result of composite influences upon him. It would be impossible to delineate all of these influences. Especially have these things been true of this work. Many have helped to bring it to completion. I shall be unable to mention all that have contributed to this paper, but do not want this failure to mention certain helpers to be taken to indicate a lack of appreciation for various services rendered.

Dr. Henry K. Shaw accepted the responsibility of supervising and guiding me in this work, even after Dr. Pellett had specifically told me that Dr. Shaw had no responsibility to do so since I had not majored in his field. My major Professor was on leave of absence when this paper was in process. In addition to accepting this chore under these conditions, Dr. Shaw also freely gave of his time in consultation, helped to locate and to secure access to some rather rare primary sources, and read and criticized the manuscript. These services are here acknowledged and appreciated.

Many helped me to locate primary source materials. Among these were Dr. Claude E. Spencer of the Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Dr. C. C. Ware of the Carolina Discipliana Library, Alberta Pantle of the Kansas State Historical Society and Callie Faye Milliken of Abilene Christian College. I also would like to acknowledge efficient service

rendered by the library staffs of Christian Theological Seminary and of Lynchburg College.

Perhaps most helpful in the collection of this historical data has been the assistance of the subject of this paper himself, Mr. W. W. Otey of Winfield, Kansas. He has freely given days of his time that we might discuss materials for this paper. Mr. Otey also committed to me many boxes of correspondence, manuscripts and other historical artifacts. These materials proved invaluable and explain how the writer came to have access to many of the materials used, such as the extensive use made of personal correspondence.

Second only to Mr. Otey's assistance was that of his daughter, Mrs. Verna Hammer, also of Winfield. After Mr. Otey became physically unable to reply to my letters of inquiry, Mrs. Hammer continued to secure from him answers to specific questions which I needed to have answered.

Hoyt Houchen of Abilene, Texas without charge researched some copies of the Christian Leader and the Christian Worker to which I did not have access. My brother, Lewis, attended to the laborious task of verifying the footnotes.

The work of producing this paper, I truthfully can say, has been a pleasant one. My hope is that some good somehow will result from it, in addition to the benefits I personally have received from doing it.

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INTRODUCTION

For over seventy years the name of W. W. Otey has been familiar with the members of the Church of Christ. During this period Otey publicly has been engaged in disseminating the gospel by tongue and pen. For perhaps twenty of these years, when he was in his prime, he was without a peer among Churches of Christ in the North as a successful harbinger among the lost. In several gospel meetings in which he preached, often largely at his own expense, about one hundred persons were baptized. Churches bought him two tents with which he went into many areas where the gospel plea had not been heard and in which Christ had not been named. In many of these places today exist large churches with splendid meeting houses that stand as monuments to the zeal, fervor, sacrifice, ability and success of this now venerable gospel preacher. Otey preached for hundreds of congregations in twenty states. He often was called to work with the very strongest of Churches of Christ.

His style as a gospel preacher was a very simple one. His power as a preacher lay in the fact that he addressed himself to the understanding of his audience. Once the audience sufficiently had been taught, Otey did not hesitate to try to persuade them of the urgency of acting upon that which they had just learned. There was an air about his manner that conveyed to his hearers his obvious sincerity. His moral life was above reproach. He, following the charge given to Timothy to "take heed to thyself, and to thy teaching," was able to bring to himself

the hope of glory as well as salvation to his hearers. As a preacher, Otey was no sensationalist preying upon the excitable emotion of his auditors. Instead, he was a cool logician laying upon the hearts of his audience in rapid-fire fashion the many scriptural reasons why they should become steadfast Christians. In teaching the holy facts, commands, and promises of the gospel, with Otey there was no place for jest and levity. He was dead serious about his task from the time he stepped onto the speaker's stand. Matters that involved the eternal destiny of souls were not laughing matters. His purpose was not to entertain but to inform his hearers. The thousands whom he taught and baptized across this great land bespeak the wisdom of such a straight forward manner in preaching.

Otey's power as a gospel preacher was not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. He lacked many of the qualities that modern church members consider to be requisites of a successful preacher. He had no significant progenitors upon whose coat tail he could ride to pulpit fame. He graduated from no great educational institution. In fact, he had not even the advantage of an average education for his day. Education is an excellent and helpful tool, but it is a sorry end in itself. Certainly Otey felt some advantages would have been his had he received a more thorough education, but he could not feel that a lack of formal education should prevent him from preaching the gospel. For all that is known, a formal education may so have changed Otey as to have destroyed much of his power for good. It is a fact that there are thousands of preachers who surpassed Otey in secular educational attainments who have not accomplished a tithe of his work spiritually. Perhaps it may have been with Otey as Dean Kershner of Butler University School of

Religion said of Daniel Sommer. Sommer had been invited to speak before the School of Religion student body. After Sommer had delivered in a forceful manner an eminently scriptural lesson, a student remarked of Sommer to Kershner, "Wouldn't that man have been a power if he had received a college education?" Kershner replied, "A college education would have destroyed the power of that man." So might it have been with Otey.

The mere fact that one is deprived by misfortune of full formal educational privileges is no excuse for him to remain in ignorance. The person who heard Otey preach or read his many articles or books would not conclude that he was uneducated. For in fact he was educated in the things that really matter. He thoroughly acquainted himself with the content of God's Word. G. H. P. Showalter, editor of the Firm Foundation, referred to Otey as "a man of one book, the Bible."¹ After all, this is the most important and only truly indispensable requirement of the gospel preacher. Regardless of what else one knows, without familiarity with the sacred text he is destined to failure as a preacher. And though knowledge of some other things satisfies one's curiosity and is of some side line benefit, with a saturation of the Bible and a reasonable amount of presentation ability, the gospel preacher cannot be a total failure.

Though Otey distinguished himself as a preacher, he gained more notoriety among the brethren as a debater and controversial writer. Otey never had a great number of debates. Certainly chief among his debates is the now famous Otey-Briney Debate held at Louisville in 1908.

¹ G. H. P. Showalter in Introduction to book by W. W. Otey, Christ or Modernism (Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1953).

Most of the attention focused upon the printed debate was done so immediately after its appearance--as is true of most publications. After a few months had passed, everyone really interested in reading the book had done so. It was discussed for awhile, and then lost in the recesses of history temporarily. Then in the case of the Otey-Briney Debate the unusual happened. After nearly fifty years demand for it was renewed. Some debates are reprinted because of the significance of the men. Others are reprinted because of the weight of the issues. The latter was the case in this instance.

Among the Churches of Christ there arose a new controversy that embraced the same basic issues as those debated by Otey and Briney when they discussed the missionary society question. The few brethren who yet possessed copies of the debate began to realize that virtually nothing was being presented by those currently favoring human organizations to do the work of the church that had not been advocated by Briney in 1908. Little was being presented by those opposing human organizations to do the work of the church that Otey had not presented in Louisville. So this debate was reprinted. It is safe to state that at least as much attention was again given the debate as when it first appeared. Even till now almost every issue of some of the current religious journals contains some mention of the Otey-Briney Debate. Brotherhood familiarity with the aged Otey had been revived. By his speeches made half a century ago Otey again was thrown into public light.

Otey is now in his ninety-fifth year. He was young and active in the first series of controversies that divided the church. In the late 1930's, while Otey appeared to be in the sunset of life, he began to see signs of the same dispositions, attitudes and trends that he remembered

as characterizing the "Progressives" in the 1890's. It scared him. Was the church to be forced to undergo again the bitter experience of division from which it had not yet quite recuperated? Pensive Otey began to write often on trends he detected among a new generation of "Progressives". Otey was not alone in expressing alarm at what he saw. Several others felt that a halt must be called, or else the church faced inevitable wholesale digression or division. Recent history has demonstrated these fears were not without foundation.

Otey's clarion voice again was heard on the pages of many periodicals. He was not now a young man, yet he was trying to do a young man's work as to volume. In other respects his was a work which no young man could do. Though according to the calendar Otey's work was about done, some of his most significant work was accomplished in the last score of years--a period when most men are retiring from active life. Otey got weary to be sure, just as any other aged man would. But the statement of the Lord, "Be thou faithful unto death," repeatedly spurred him to renew his efforts. Almost without interruption Otey has now been a significant preacher for three-quarters of a century--longer than most men live.

Otey's wide influence has been many times amplified by his prolific pen through the printed page. He has written for most of the prominent papers of his time. He has written perhaps seven hundred and fifty articles for publication, in addition to many news reports that he sent in. Much of the time he earned his own living in addition to preaching. Part of the time he did so by choice; the remainder of the time he did so by necessity. He was not adequately compensated for his labor. In spite of the fact that he often labored to earn a living in

addition to a full preaching schedule, either of which consumes most men's energies, Otey still wrote about as much as any gospel preacher of his time. It is likely that Otey was best known through his writings. In addition to many hundreds of periodical articles, he wrote seven books and several tracts and booklets. He has manuscripts for two other books complete, though these may not be printed till his death. It is obvious his pen was not stilled for long at a time.

As a writer, Otey had many qualities to be emulated. He wrote but few long articles. However, when a subject needed thorough discussion Otey was capable of doing so, as is evidenced by his long, well-documented series on Mormonism in the 1890's. Usually, however, Otey's articles were short and pungent. He seemed to possess the quality so lacking by many to state a major thesis in a few words. Usually the point for which he was contending he phrased in a single sentence of simple, but well-chosen words. This made for clarity in his writings. Though many differed with him, most everyone understood his position. He deplored ambiguity, equivocation and duplicity in one's life, words or writings. He did not try to speak or write in such a way to leave him a loophole should he later change his mind. When further study necessitated a change of position, he forthrightly admitted the change. Immediately he then set forth to advocate in clear and potent style what he now believed to be the truth.

The ravages of years indicate that shortly William Wesley Otey must lay aside the tabernacle of this flesh. His weary, worn-out body will return to the dust from whence it came. His daily-renewed spirit will return to God who gave it. His works will remain to be appraised by historians who shall follow. The objective historian will not be able

to write a complete chronicle of the religious history of this era and ignore W. W. Otey.²

² Shortly after these pages were written, on November 1, 1961 W. W. Otey died. This accounts for the fact that the following pages are written as though he is yet alive.

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD INTO WHICH HE WAS BORN

It was indeed a troubled world into which W. W. Otey was born. The great Civil War had not been over quite two years. This war was the chief cause of the then turbulent times. In this chapter we shall attempt to show briefly the causes of the war and its effect upon life in Virginia.

For a few years prior to the war, issues were arising that fomented strife, and that eventuated in war.¹ The Southern states found themselves consistently being outvoted in congress. States do not mind losing an occasional unimportant vote, but they resent always being on the short end of the count. This latter state was that in which the South found itself on most important issues of the day. The Southern states depended on free trade to sell on the world market their primary money crops, cotton and tobacco. However, the Northern industrialized states needed a high tariff in order to protect themselves from the older, established, more efficient European industrialized nations. This difference of tariff needs created an additional tension between the North and the South. These issues, with the South in the minority, created the greater and more significant issue of State's rights. Could the minority be forced by a majority to act contrarily

¹ Oliver P. Chitwood and Frank L. Owsley, A Short History of the American People, (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1945), I, pp. 616-679.

to its own best interests? The North had different outlooks and needs than the South. The South, by its position on State's rights, asked, "Could not each group regulate its own affairs to its own best interests?" The Northern states maintained that exercise of State's rights would ultimately destroy the Union. But the Southerners could not exist economically without expediting their interests in every possible way, regardless of whether the North liked it or not.

Slavery also played an important role in laying the cause for the war. The Southern economy had been built around cheap, slave labor. The South felt it could not immediately release the slaves without destroying itself economically. In the North, since 1830 or so, there had been varying pressures rising to attempt, if not to abolish slavery, at least to stifle its growth. It, then, is not difficult to see how a rift was created between the North and the South. Instead, as we look back, it is more difficult to surmise how the Civil War could have been averted.

This breach widened until the seven Deep-South slave-holding states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Mississippi and Texas felt that they could serve their own interests best only by seceding from the Union. Governor Francis W. Pickens of South Carolina, stated in his inaugural address of December 17, 1860, that Lincoln had been elected "upon issues of malignant hostility and uncompromising war to be waged upon the rights, the interests, and the peace of half of the states of the Union."² South Carolina, by unanimous vote of its state convention, seceded on December 20, 1860. In the first part of January, 1861, Georgia, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and

² Ibid., p. 683.

Louisiana followed the pattern set by South Carolina. Representatives of these states then met in Montgomery, Alabama in February to set up the Confederate Government. Texas had not yet completed the formality of secession, so was not represented in the Montgomery meeting.

Furthermore, on January 9, 1861, as the "Star of the West" attempted to enter the harbor at Fort Sumter, South Carolina artillery fired upon it, forcing the ship away from the fort.³

Soon after Lincoln was inaugurated it became obvious to him that the seven Southern states would have to be brought back into the Union immediately, lest secession become more widespread, and the budding power of the young nation be obliterated. With this in mind, Lincoln on April 15, 1861 called for 75,000 volunteers to serve three months. The stated purpose of this force was to put down combinations "too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceedings" and "to cause the law to be duly executed."⁴ This was one of the most optimistic actions ever taken by Lincoln. He underestimated the needs of the Union army by about 1,500,000 men and was in error as to the time required to quell the "rebellion" by three years and nine months.

When Lincoln's request for 75,000 volunteers went forth, other states were caught in a dilemma. Would they supply their quota of the volunteers, or would they join with the South in secession? States that may not otherwise have chosen sides were thus forced to align themselves with one side or the other. This resulted in the secession of the "border states." Virginia was the most popular, most famous, and most wealthy of the eight remaining slave holding states then in the

³ Ibid., pp. 688, 689.

⁴ Ibid., p. 692.

Union. Virginia had been called "The Mother of States" and "The Mother of Presidents."⁵ Virginia's sympathies lay with the South. Hardesty in his History of Montgomery County says, "Virginia championed the cause of her southern sisters."⁶ Though Virginia knew it meant war, she refused to send her quota of soldiers to the Union. Instead, she mobilized herself for battle.

The North felt that if Virginia immediately could be crushed, the war virtually would be over. President Lincoln, and his Secretary of State, Seward, had "believed for months that one crushing victory over the southern armies would disperse the soldiers homeward."⁷ With this objective in mind, on July 16, 1861, 35,000 men left Washington intent on taking Richmond, Virginia. 18,000 others moved into the lower Shenandoah Valley, the granary of the state of Virginia. 20,000 other men would make their way through the section west of the Alleghenies. West Virginia, which consisted of 39 transmontane counties, was not formed and admitted to the Union until June 20, 1863. Everyone believed Virginia could be dealt such a crushing blow that the South would retreat from its adamant position. Victory appeared to be inevitable. This invasion resulted in the Battle of Bull Run. It was here that General Thomas J. Jackson earned the sobriquet, "Stonewall," for "standing like a stone wall!" against the invaders. Inspired by Stonewall's courage, the Virginia forces rallied, and repelled the Union forces in a battle

⁵ Frederick D. Power, Life of William Kimbrough Pendleton (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1902), p. 61.

⁶ Charles W. Crush, The Montgomery Count Story (No Bibliographical Data Given), p. 73, quoting Hardesty, History of Montgomery County (No Data Given).

⁷ Chitwood and Owsley, Op. Cit., p. 697.

that saw 460 Union soldiers killed and 1,124 wounded. The Northern army was so routed that they went scurrying back to Washington. In fact, so decisive was the Southern victory here that some historians have thought that had the South immediately pressed its advantage gained at Bull Run, "...the South could have won the Civil War."⁸

The Nation's bloodiest war had started. Eventually the North would have 360,000 of its men killed in battles, or one out of every five men in uniform. The South, with smaller armies, would lose 258,000 men, or one out of every four of its enlisted men. This percentage of killed is emphasized when one projects it to World War II days. 405,000 Americans were killed in World War II. But had the percentage of participants been killed in World War II as died in the Civil War, American dead would have numbered 3,600,000!⁹

Due to the fact that Virginia was immediately adjacent to the Northern territory, and so close to Washington, Virginia came in for a heavy part of the fighting. It is likely that more than a hundred thousand of those killed died on Virginia battlefields. As the two mighty armies struggled back and forth across Virginia time and again, at each crossing indelible battle scars were left.

Every available man was enlisted in Virginia's armies. Jonathan Otey, William's grandfather, was in Company "C" of Fifty-Fourth Virginia Infantry. This Company was recruited at Christiansburg in the summer of

⁸ John Masters, "The Day the South Could Have Won the Civil War," Reader's Digest, Vol. LXXVII (November, 1960), p. 159-168.

⁹ Anonymous, "The Untold Story of the Civil War," U. S. News and World Report, Vol. L, No. 16 (April 17, 1961), p. 63.

1861. It served throughout the war and surrendered with Johnson's army near Raleigh, North Carolina, April 26, 1865. "It served on many a fiercely contested field, and many that went with it to battle returned no more."¹⁰

Joshua Wesley Otey, our biographical subject's father, was not formally in the Confederate army. Nevertheless, he was informally enlisted in the Southern cause. Joshua Otey hauled salt from Bristol, Tennessee to Virginia for the Confederate Government.¹¹ While sitting one night by the campfire on one of his trips from Bristol to Virginia, Otey was shot from the darkness, the bullet striking him in the hip. Though a painful injury, it was only a flesh wound. He never knew who it was that shot him, but it likely was a Northern sympathizer trying to sabotage the Southern cause. This wound resulted in chronic rheumatism, which in later years caused Otey to be unable to work a good part of the time. Later he applied for a pension, but his requisition was denied, since he was not "officially" in the Confederate army. Strangely, this rheumatic condition of long years standing left him a few years before his death.

William Wesley Otey's mother, Sarah Ann, was a Showalter. And the Showalters were more directly implicated in the defenses of the South. Sarah Ann's brother, Henry B. Showalter, who later became W. W. Otey's father-in-law in addition to being his uncle, and two of Sarah Ann's first cousins, Josiah T. and William Showalter, enlisted early in the war in the Floyd County, Virginia Company. They were listed as men numbers

¹⁰Crush, Op. Cit., p.79.

¹¹Interview with W. W. Otey, June 19, 1959.

"92", "93", and "94" on the Floyd County muster roll preserved at the Floyd County Court House at Floyd, Virginia.¹² The town of Floyd was founded in 1831, and was first called Jacksonville, in honor of Andrew Jackson. The Floyd County company became Company "A" of the 54th Regiment of Virginia Infantry. It was J. T. Showalter's job to carry ammunition to the front line men. Henry and William Showalter were in the fighting ranks, though Henry did do some necessary carpentry work for the army on occasions. Henry B. Showalter reported that fighting never got too rough but that J. T. Showalter would yet supply adequate ammunition to the front line men. William Showalter at first tried unsuccessfully to get a discharge on the basis that he had too weak a stomach for the goriness of battle. But men were too direly needed to release an able-bodied man on such a feeble excuse. William's stomach strengthened with battle experience, so that before the war was over, J. T. Showalter said he believed William could have eaten a man's bones.

Company "A" was in the battle at Christiansburg, Virginia in 1861, at Blacksburg, Virginia in February, 1863, and was in North Carolina till April, 1865. They, then, were in the Civil War, from first to last. Sometime between February and September of 1863, Company "A" was transferred to the southern battlefield, camping at Chickamauga, Georgia.

From "Chickamauga," Henry B. wrote his wife, Elizabeth, on November 12, 1863.¹³ It was quiet there at the time that he wrote. The battle of Chickamauga with its 35,000 casualties already was past, and the major battle for Chattanooga was to begin within ten days. He wrote

¹² Floyd County Muster Roll.

¹³ Letter from H. B. Showalter to his wife Elizabeth, November 12, 1863.

his wife that he had spent the day coloring his pants with black walnut bark, which he set with copperas. He was well pleased with the outcome of his work. He also was darning his socks which gave him six good pairs, "which will last me through the winter if I live to need them."

Henry reported:

Joshiah Showalter has been here to see me today...He is very religious. He has prayer meetings at his quarters frequently. He told me today he thought he ought to preach and wanted to know what I thought of it. I told him if that was his feelings that I could not see anything against it and that I thought it might do a great deal of good. He appears to be perfectly resigned to his fate. Let him be where he may be as much so as any man I ever saw reads his Bible and studies it whenever he has a chance. He has written to Bullard [Dr. Chester Bullard at Snowville, Virginia--CW] to see the church asking if they think he ought to preach or not but has received no answer yet. He is the most changed man you almost ever saw for five or six months past and I hope he will hold on to the good way in which he has started.

Josiah Showalter was later to exert a tremendous influence over W. W. Otey.

While at Chickamauga, Henry Showalter was very worried about his family back home. War was raging within a few miles of his family. So desperate were Virginians becoming for food, that in 1862 one of the main reasons for the Southern forces pushing northward into Maryland and Pennsylvania to do battle, was to give the war-ridden Virginia a respite and to permit the harvesting of their much needed crops.¹⁴

Showalter, in the aforementioned letter, advised his wife to take good care of the corn and meat she had. Too, he was concerned lest the children have not sufficient clothing. He said the "children were getting rite bare for clothing," according to information brought him in a recent letter from his wife. But he had great faith all would be

¹⁴ Chitwood and Owsley, Op. Cit., p. 711.

well. He said, were

it not for the promises of the Bible I would conclude that you would both freeze and starve, but David says he was young and now says I am old and I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor their seed begging Bread. And if he is powerful to speak into existence the heavens and the earth and the millions that inhabit them He can and will provide for his people. He could feed us as He did the children of Israel with manna from heaven. So for me and mine we will serve the Lord and trust Him for His goodness and the preservation of our lives whilst this dreadful war may rage.

Company "A" of Floyd County went on to fight at Missionary Ridge after Chattanooga was lost. J. T. Showalter intended to be a non-combatant. But at Missionary Ridge he was separated from his supply wagons, and was forced to join in a frontal assault by the Confederates on the Yankee bulwarks. After that assault, whenever there was a reckoning of the men of Company "A", every third one in the ranks was missing. Showalter reported that after the battle of Missionary Ridge, so numerous were the slain, that one could walk a mile and never touch the ground.¹⁵ These Floyd County men went on to fight at Resaca, Peach Tree Creek, and at Mt. Zion, all in Georgia. They also were a part of the forces that tried unsuccessfully to stop Sherman's march to the sea through Georgia. Sherman declared that "War is Hell," and said: "we are not only fighting armies, but a hostile people, and must make the old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies."¹⁶ This he did by an almost total destruction of public and private property valued at \$100,000,000, at least four-fifths of which was said to be a useless waste.

¹⁵ J. W. West, (Compiler and Editor), Sketches of Our Mountain Pioneers (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. W. West, 1939), pp. 212, 213.

¹⁶ Chitwood and Owsley, Op. Cit., p. 738.

Company "A" was found at Jonesboro and Atlanta (July 22, 1864), Georgia. By then the strength of the South had withered. On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Grant at the McLean House at Appomatox, Virginia. The Floyd County Company then was in North Carolina, and was among the last Confederate forces to surrender, doing so at Durham, North Carolina on April 18, 1865. However, four days before President Lincoln had been assassinated.

The Civil War monument on the lawn of the Floyd County court house which commemorates the Floyd County men who fought at Cedar Run, Chickamauga, Drury's Bluff, Cold Harbor, Seven Pines, Fredericksburg, Bull Run and Manassas reads:

Stoop, Angels Hither
From the Skies;
There is no Holier
Spot of Ground
Than where Defeated
Valor Lies
By Mourning Beauty
Crowned.

W. W. Otey was born near Snowville, Virginia. No actual fighting was done in Snowville itself. Troop movements were all about the little town though. General Stoneman with 3,000 Calvarymen came through Carroll and Floyd Counties on April 8, 1865, traveling over the Jacksonville (Floyd)-Christiansburg turnpike. These "Federals" camped in Christiansburg until Lee's surrender ten days afterward, at which time they made a boisterous celebration.¹⁷

During the war word came to Snowville that a band of Negroes was coming to Snowville, killing women and children on the way. Most of the able bodied men were already in the army and gone. So the few remaining

¹⁷ Crush, Op. Cit., p. 105.

old men and the young boys armed themselves as best they could and went forth to encounter this ravaging mob. However, they learned it was a false report, which of course, greatly relieved the Snowville residents.¹⁸

On several other occasions the old men and young boys had to flee to the mountains with all the remaining livestock to keep it from being confiscated by Federal troops passing by. Once during the war, 15,000 soldiers passed through the one street little town. The passing alone took one half a day.¹⁹

The local businesses, though small by modern standards, were virtually all turned to war production. A factory, operated by George Hambrick, for making bowie knives and swords was at Snowville. Hambrick's two sons would deliver the finished products by ox cart to Christiansburg, from which they were shipped to the armies. Just before the end of the war, this factory was forced to close due to a shortage of manpower with which to run it.²⁰

The little community became familiar with bloodshed and death. Almost every family had someone in the hard-pressed Confederate armies. Likewise, almost every family had someone maimed or killed. Thomas G. Shelor's son, Jotham, was killed on the second day after his enlistment. Shelor was one of the preachers in the Snowville church.²¹

The closest the actual fighting came to Snowville was at Cloyd's Mountain, near Dublin, in Pulaski County, only about twelve miles from

¹⁸ William R. Hundley, Historical Sketch of Snowville, Virginia, (East Radford, Virginia: W. R. Hundley, 1932), p. 17.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

²⁰ Louise B. Allison, Early History of Snowville, (East Radford, Virginia: L. B. Allison, No Date Given), p. 5.

²¹ Hundley, Op. Cit., p. 6.

Snowville. The Southern army, though vastly outnumbered, by skillful maneuvers and wise strategy succeeded in turning the Union army back into West Virginia. Six hundred Federal soldiers were killed and 200 captured, while the South lost only 300 in both killed and captured. The roar of the cannons during the battle was distinctly heard in Snowville.

When the Showalters and Joshua Otey returned home, they found havoc had been wrought throughout Virginia. Armies, North and South, had foraged off the land. Women and children could not operate farms sufficiently enough to support themselves; certainly not so as to support a war. In the summer of 1867, only three or four months after W. W. Otey had been born, W. K. Pendleton, who then had become President of Bethany College at Bethany, West Virginia, decided to visit his old home and familiar spots in Virginia. His description of what he found gives an exact picture of what the circumstances were in Virginia at the time W. W. Otey was born. The country still showed the ravages of war.

Fences are gone, houses are gone, people are gone, fields growing up in underbrush, the clay about the encampments and bloody battlefield is still seen, and the long lines of fortifications streak the greenfields with their ridges; at intervals the remains of blockhouses, stockades, breastworks and other barriers to bullets.²²

Pendleton spoke of the sorrows created by losses of loved ones in the war that hung "like funeral badges about the knockers of many a door." He also found that the spades of 1867 were busy burying in permanent burial grounds the many thousands who fell upon Virginia's soil. The Government was gathering these dead into the National cemetery. He wrote of Hollywood and Oakwood, where 14,000 were placed to rest.

²²Power, Op. Cit., p. 258.

The country had some bitter wounds to lick. A shadow would loom over these people for many years. It was hard to resurrect laughter. Even Richmond had changed. Instead of the gaiety and joy that once characterized it, Pendleton now found a "sort of lethargy" hanging over it. "Men looked thoughtful, women veiled and sad. There is a deep and abiding discontent among the people." This crushed, depressed spirit reached every sector of Virginia. "General unrest, upheaval, destruction, and poverty prevailed."²³ One from southwest Virginia wrote, the people "were left in a crippled condition financially."²⁴ A member of the church said, "Heavily smitten have we been in dear old Virginia..²⁵ Frederick A. Hodge said, "The country was impoverished for years."²⁶ The wife of W. H. Hopson, the preacher of the old Sycamore church in Richmond, wrote that "The country surrounding the city was desolated. Stock gone, fences destroyed, farming implements worn out--literally, they seemed to have lost everything but pluck and honor."²⁷

²³ H. Jackson Darst, Ante-Bellum Virginia Disciples: An Account of the Emergence and Early Development of the Disciples of Christ in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Virginia Christian Missionary Society, 1959), p. 167.

²⁴ The Christian Examiner, March 12, 1868, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 168.

²⁵ The Christian Examiner, January 1, 1868, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 168.

²⁶ Frederick Arthur Hodge, The Plea and Pioneers in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Everett Waddey Co., 1905), p. 138.

²⁷ Ella Lord Hopson, Memoirs of Dr. Winthrop Hartly Hopson (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Company, 1887), p. 163.

Not only had the great war left indelible marks upon the bodies of many that returned, but perhaps more importantly, it left its marks upon the spirits of those affected directly and indirectly by the war--and this embraced everyone. These people were sad and discouraged. They found it difficult to go out into the fields and to begin anew. They lacked the heart to begin reconstruction. But they knew they must.

Such was the spirit of the times in war-torn southwestern Virginia in 1867 when William Wesley Otey was born. This was the kind of social and emotional environment in which he was to grow up.

CHAPTER II

THE OTEY AND SHOWALTER FAMILIES

In May, 1879, Dr. Chester Bullard, in giving a speech before the Christian Ministerial Association of Virginia which was in session at Lynchburg, told of the history and progress of the restoration effort in southwestern Virginia. In doing so, it was necessary for him to give a brief history concerning the nature of the people who settled southwestern Virginia. Dr. Bullard stated that the early settlers in this section were in the main "Scotch-Irish."¹ This description perfectly fitted the Otey family. Dr. Bullard then was living in Snowville. The Oteys, at the time of William's birth, lived on Sugar Run Creek, about two miles south of Snowville. The Oteys and Dr. Bullard were very well acquainted, both Joshua and Sarah William's parents, having been baptized by Bullard.² Joshua and Sarah Otey are listed in the Snowville church membership roll till 1869, after which they transferred their membership to the Laurel Hill church.³ This must have been done some little time before they actually moved from Snowville. Bullard's description of the nationality of southwestern Virginians could not have better described the Oteys, had Bullard only had them in mind.

Though no known extant record verifies the family tradition, nevertheless it was believed by the Otey family that William's great-grandfather,

¹ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 158.

² Interview with W. W. Otey, August 20, 1960.

³ The Snowville Church Records.

Thomas Otey, was one of two brothers who came to America from Scotland in the late 1700's. This is the earliest information of any of William's paternal ancestors in this country. That Thomas Otey was William's great-grandfather is shown by the Floyd County marriage record book in which is recorded Jonathan Otey's (William's grandfather) marriage to a widow, Catharine Carroll, October 13, 1876. Jonathan was required to list his father's name on his marriage license application.⁴ Thomas Otey, shortly after arriving in this country, settled in Rockbridge County, Virginia, which is north and east of Roanoke. The only record of Thomas Otey in Rockbridge County is that of the marriage of his daughter, Nancy, to James Kenney, October 5, 1807.⁵ Thomas signed the marriage bond for his daughter. Thomas' marriage is not recorded in Rockbridge County records, nor is there any record of ownership by him of any land. This fact collaborates the family tradition that he was an emigrant to this country, though these meager records leave unanswered the questions of how and why he came to be so far westward so soon after entry into this country.

It was in Rockbridge County that Jonathan, William's grandfather, and Henry, his brother, were born to Thomas and Elizabeth Otey. Jonathan was born September 4, 1801.⁶ Early in the 1800's, Jonathan joined in the great westward movement of his day. He settled first in Montgomery County, Virginia. On August 19, 1827, Jonathan was married in Montgomery County to Nancy Sowers, daughter of Henry Sowers, by a preacher named Martin Waller.⁷

⁴ Floyd County Marriage Records.

⁵ Rockbridge County Marriage Records.

⁶ Floyd County Marriage Records.

⁷ Montgomery County Marriage Records.

Jonathan did not linger long in Montgomery County. In the early 1830's he was living in Floyd County, owning land in the Beaver Creek and Middle Creek district near Locust Grove. Jonathan dealt considerably in the sale of land. Sale by him of twenty-one separate parcels of land is recorded in the Floyd County records. In 1873 he bought one 58 acre tract of land at public sale for the delinquent taxes against it--a total of ninety-nine cents! Jonathan divorced Nancy Sowers in 1876 to marry the widow, Catharine Carroll.

At just which ones and how many of these twenty-one Floyd County places Jonathan lived is not determinable. We learn that about this same time in the early 1830's Jonathan took residence in Pulaski County, near Snowville. Snowville is located in the eastern end of Pulaski County on the banks of the Little River, which separates Pulaski from Montgomery County. Snowville is about twelve miles southwest of Christiansburg, and about ten miles south and slightly east of Radford. The exact date of Jonathan's move to the Snowville area is not known, but it was several years before the pioneer preacher, Dr. Chester Bullard, arrived there about 1840.

It was while Jonathan lived at or near Snowville that his sons, Joshua and Henry, were born. Jonathan stayed in the general area of Snowville for many years, though he moved several times. Joshua (1829-1918), William's father, and his brother Henry, grew up around Snowville. Henry, after coming to manhood, secured a job in the Floyd County court house which he held for many years. Floyd was the county seat of Floyd County, and was about nineteen miles southeast of Snowville.

Jonathan died in the late 1870's before William was old enough ever to remember having seen him. William remembered seeing his grandmother Otey

only once. He remembered that she spoke German, which indicates some German blood in William's paternal ancestry through his grandmother.

It was in the Snowville area that Joshua met, courted and finally married Sarah Ann Showalter, William's mother, on December 7, 1853.⁸ After Joshua came to manhood he had a very difficult time deciding what he wanted to be. Jonathan had been a painter when he was not involved in some land deal. Joshua tried painting for a while. But Snowville was a very sparsely settled area at the time. The people were so poverty stricken after the ravaging war that money was too scarce to hire a painter. They had to do their own painting if it was done at all. Sarah Ann's brother, Henry B. Showalter, was a good carpenter. He taught Joshua a bit about the carpenter's trade. But at this Joshua did not stay long. Soon he found himself turning back to "mother earth" to seek a living. When men fail in trades and business enterprises, still they must eat. So they return to the soil. This Joshua Otey was forced to do.

Joshua made several efforts to secure land holdings, but without permanent success. He contracted, along with his brother-in-law, for several hundred acres of land. But within a few years Showalter owned this land alone. Otey either must have been unable to raise his share of the money, or else sold his share to Showalter. Joshua Otey, though an exceptionally hard worker, was quite obviously a very poor business man. He failed first in one thing and then another, as we shall have occasion to observe in further detail later. William later said of his father: "My father was the most optimistic, hardest working, poorest manager that

⁸Joshua Otey Family Bible, in possession of L. C. Otey, Bluefield, West Virginia.

I have ever seen."⁹ Joshua was a lean six footer, weighing only about 150 pounds. This fairly well describes most of the other Oteys. He was partially lamed by chronic rheumatism which developed from his being shot in the hip during the Civil War. This lameness greatly hindered him in providing for his family, as he had to depend on manual labor for their living. Jonathan tried to be of some help to Joshua. On August 1, 1854, he deeded fifty acres to each of his two sons. This land was located on the banks of Little River, near Snowville. But in 1858 Joshua sold his land, and thereafter never independently owned any land.

William Wesley Otey was born during Joshua's years spent near Snowville. The Otey home was located on Sugar Run Creek where it emptied into Little River, about two miles south of Snowville.

William's mother was Sarah Ann Showalter (1832-1929). All the Showalters in the United States today originated from two members of the Showalter family, Jacob Showalter of Whitehall Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania; and Christian Showalter of Earle Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.¹⁰

The first that is known of the family is that its home was near St. Gallen on the Swiss shores of Lake Constance. The family was definitely of the yeomanry and fortune did not smile upon it for a time and there was a migration into Germany where they resided for about twenty years and recouped some of their fortune---that¹¹ is enough to carry them to the shores of the then new continent.

⁹ Interview with W. W. Otey, August 4, 1960.

¹⁰ Unpublished Showalter Genealogy compiled by Dr. W. J. Showalter.

¹¹ Letter from Hazel Showalter Marshall to Dr. A. M. Showalter, Christiansburg, Virginia, June 4, 1940.

Jacob Showalter and his family arrived in Philadelphia in 1750, having come over on the British vessel, "The Brotherhood."¹² His family then consisted of his wife, eight sons and three daughters. His sons were Peter, Jacob Jr., Christian, Henry, John, Joseph, Valentine (in some records referred to as "Felty"), and Ulrich. When Jacob Showalter Sr. signed the required oath of allegiance to this country upon his entry, he signed in the old Swiss fashion, "Jacob Schowalder". However, all of the sons who were then of age signed the Americanized form, "Showalter". John, Joseph, Valentine, and Ulrich (the latter before moving to Fayette County, Pennsylvania) moved into the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, and located in Rockingham County. Two descendents of the Jacob Showalter family, John and Henry, later moved on further west, John into Franklin County and Henry into Botetourt County, both counties in Virginia. It is thought that this John and Henry Showalter who moved into southwestern Virginia were grandsons of the Jacob Showalter who first came to this country, through either Jacob Jr., or Peter. That they were grandsons of Jacob Sr. is virtually certain, but whether through Jacob Jr. or through Peter is thus far indeterminable.

William Otey is a direct descendent through his mother of Henry Showalter of Botetourt County. Henry came from Pennsylvania and bought a tract of 100 acres on the Mud Lick Branch of the Roanoke River in Roanoke County, October 15, 1792.¹³ On November 5, 1798 he bought 100 acres more from Isaac Nave on Back Creek. And on September 4, 1800 he bought a third tract of 100 acres, this one on Cavern Creek, a branch of

¹² Lecture given at Showalter Reunion, August 6, 1933, by Dr. W. J. Showalter.

¹³ Roanoke County Records.

the Roanoke River. The children of Henry Showalter and his wife, Magdalena Halderman, were John, Henry, Abraham, Nicholas, David, Jacob, Daniel, Elizabeth, Mary, Hanna and Sarah. Henry died in 1841 when about ninety years of age.

Two of these children of Henry Showalter are important in William Otey's genealogical account. David (1803-77) lived and died in Pulaski County, Virginia. He is buried in the cemetery in front of the New Salem church building. His sons were Josiah, William and Nathaniel. Josiah (1839-1915) became a gospel preacher, and had tremendous influence over young William Otey, both before and after he decided to preach the gospel. Josiah became the father of twelve children, four of whom were E. T. (1872--), who became a gospel preacher though supporting himself on his farm; Dr. A. M. Showalter (1879--), who owns and operates a hospital in Christiansburg, Virginia; C. D., who taught at Milligan College and later became Principal of a college in Tazewell County, Virginia; and G. H. P. Showalter (1870-1954) a gospel preacher who edited the Firm Foundation, a religious weekly published in Austin, Texas, for forty-seven years before his death in 1954.

Isaac Daniel Showalter was another of the sons of Henry Showalter. At the Showalter Reunion on August 6, 1933, Dr. W. J. Showalter, Chief of the Division of Research of the National Geographic Society, and author of The Travels of George Washington, Virginia, A Commonwealth that has Come Back, Virginia, The Beckoning Land and other books, spoke to the gathering. He traced the Showalter family history, which sketch has been of great help to me. Dr. A. M. Showalter of Christiansburg, Virginia made this information available to me. However, concerning Daniel Showalter,

the grandfather of William Otey through his mother, Dr. Showalter merely stated: "Concerning Whom there is no data at hand."

Isaac Daniel Showalter married a young lady by the name of Sarah Griffith. To this union were born five daughters and one son. The daughters were Lucyndia, Lydia, Sarah Ann (William's mother), Eliza, Marinda, and the only son was Henry B. One of the reasons why so little is known of Isaac Daniel Showalter is because he died very early in life with what then was called pneumonia fever. Daniel, born July 28, 1806, died while only thirty years old on January 7, 1837. The only son, Henry B., later became not only William Otey's uncle, but also his father-in-law. Henry was only six years old when his father died. The young mother had a very difficult time rearing the children till they became of age. However, she somehow managed to care for them.

Daniel's wife, Sarah, lived until shortly after the Civil War. During the war, Henry B., and his cousins, Josiah T. and William Showalter, were in the same Virginia regiment. When the war was over and Henry's time was completed, the South having soundly been defeated, Henry returned home to his wife and children. This was a great day in the life of Henry, his wife and children, and of his long-widowed mother. Henry rushed into the house, embraced his wife and children. Then he turned to his mother to embrace her. When he did so, she immediately dropped dead!

Sarah Ann Showalter, William's mother, was a tall, portly woman weighing perhaps 150 pounds. No pictures either of her or her husband, Joshua, have been preserved. In their late years they lived on Laurel Ridge in the north end of Floyd County near Basham with their son, Charles Dexter. C. D. Otey lived near the Montgomery County line. While Joshua

and Sarah lived with Charles, Charles' house burned, destroying all the pictures of both Joshua or Sarah. Joshua died in 1918 and was buried in the small family cemetery immediately in front of C. D.'s house. There are only eight or ten graves in this cemetery. It is surrounded by a massive stone fence, and is a beautiful location for a cemetery, standing high on Laurel Ridge, overlooking beautiful valleys. No houses are now near this cemetery and it is a forgotten place, except to those few descendants to whom it is hallowed by the dust of their loved ones.

Sarah Ann lived to be 97 years of age, and also died at the home of her son. Shortly before her death she suffered a broken hip in a fall. This was the main contributing cause to her death. Sarah Ann is buried beside her husband, Joshua. Their son, C.D., carved the markers for their graves out of native sandstone, even handcarving the names and vital statistics on the markers. These stones have kept remarkably well, so that they are still legible, though made of soft stone. This probably is because of the protection afforded by a cedar tree that C. D. planted above their graves.

William Otey then was born of Scotch-Irish and German-Swiss parents. He never knew either of his maternal grandparents, or his grandfather Otey, though he did see his grandmother Otey once.

In the next chapter we will state what is known of William Otey's early life until his baptism.

CHAPTER III

FROM BIRTH TO BAPTISM

Snowville, Virginia, the little village near which W. W. Otey was born, was a marvelous community for its day. Southwestern Virginia is strictly a mountainous section and very sparsely populated. For instance, the entire population of Floyd County, the county in which Otey mainly grew up, today is only ten thousand. There are a few small cities in the area, such as Christiansburg, Radford and Pulaski, but none of them is any considerable size.

Snowville today is what a non-partisan visitor would call simply a "wide place in the road." Louise Allison said in 1958, "it appeared as a sleepy, all-but-deserted village."¹ So it yet appears. Yet one hundred years ago it was the industrial center of southwestern Virginia.²

What today is known as Snowville was settled by Asiel Snow (1796-1884). Snow was a cabinet maker who came from Massachusetts to Christiansburg, Virginia to ply his trade. After completing a piece of furniture ordered by John Simpkins, Snow delivered it to him. Simpkins then was living in what later became Snowville. Snow on this trip liked what he saw. Especially was he impressed by the power potential of the nearby Little River. In 1833, Snow decided to move to the banks of the Little River.

¹ Allison, Op. Cit., p. 1.

² Darst, Op. Cit., p. 88.

Asiel Snow's wife was Mary Bullard, the sister of Dr. Chester Bullard, who by 1833 was beginning to preach the gospel in southwestern Virginia. The settlement now known as Snowville was until 1850 known as "The Foundry" because it became one of the principle industrial communities in ante-bellum southwest Virginia. For a while in 1850, the community was known as "Humility," the name of Chester Bullard's mansion.³

In order to develop an industrial community, power has to be generated. Snowville was ideally located from this standpoint. Asiel Snow, "the enterprizing New Englander,"⁴ built a dam across Little River, which permitted and provided the power for his many industrial activities. After sufficient power was available, Snow built a trip hammer forge, a linseed oil factory, a sawmill, a carding mill, a grist mill, a tannery, a shoe factory and a blast furnace. As the city became a regional industrial center, it also was given an important merchandising business, which was owned and operated by a relative of Bullard's, D. B. Bill (1820-85). The village later began to wear the name of its founder. "These enterprises all operating in Snowville made it the most prosperous town in all southwest Virginia at this early date."⁵

While Snowville was in its infancy, so was the effort to restore pristine Christianity in southwest Virginia. Dr. Chester Bullard, who then lived near Christiansburg, began to make periodic visits to Snowville, both to visit his sister and her family, and more importantly, to preach the gospel he only recently had learned. A congregation at first called

³ Allison, Op. Cit., p. 2.

⁴ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 88.

⁵ Hundley, Op. Cit., p. 3.

"New Salem," but called "Cypress Grove" in the early 1840's, was established in 1833.⁶ Snowville soon came to be known as the disciples' "Jerusalem of southwest Virginia."⁷ W. H. Book, a preacher later notable, who was born there, called Snowville "the Jerusalem of America" and the "head-quarters for so-called Campbellism."⁸ It is not at all likely that the Snowville church was the most significant one in America. A hometown boy probably here overstates his case. It more likely accurately could be stated that "For years the church at Snowville was the banner church in the State."⁹ Out of the Snowville church came many preachers, among them James Redpath, Thomas Shelor, Chester Bullard, W. S. Bullard, Dexter Snow, W. H. Book, J. D. Hamaker, James P. Hawley, J. T. Taylor, J. T. Showalter, E. T. Showalter, and indirectly, W. W. Otey. So prolific was the Snowville church in producing preachers that the Chesapeake Christian spoke of Snowville as that town "in the great southwestern section of Virginia, which has produced so many noted ministers of the Brotherhood of Churches' of Christ."

Snowville was given added influence as a religious center when Dr. Bullard, a preacher-medical doctor, settled there sometime in the early 1840's, and built his mansion, "Humility," on the bluff across from the Cypress Grove church. This mansion is still a splendid residence and is yet in use. Snowville thus very early became "a market, an

⁶ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 89.

⁷ Hundley, Op. Cit., p. 9.

⁸ W. H. Book, Real Life and Original Sayings of W. H. Book, (Richmond, Virginia: Ware and Duke, 1900), pp. 9, 10.

⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

industrial and a religious center of the New River country."¹⁰

Two miles south of this budding "Pittsburgh of Virginia" lived a hard working, honest farmer-carpenter struggling to raise his increasing family. Joshua Otey had ten children; seven boys and three girls. The boys were named Edwin R. (September 24, 1854); Charles Dexter, whom William later described as "the most pious man I ever knew," (October 2, 1856), probably named after the Snowville preacher, Dexter Snow; Daniel B. (March 2, 1859), who was named for his grandfather Showalter; Henry B. (August 11, 1864), and named for Sarah Ann's brother, Henry B. Showalter; William Wesley (March 14, 1867), named after his father; Leonard C. (April 15, 1872); Lynwood Clark (December 8, 1874); and the girls, Sarah Adline (November 6, 1861); Viola (November 25, 1869); and Hattie (September 28, 1876). The thoroughness of the gospel influence is seen on the Otey family in these early years in that every one of these ten children eventually obeyed the gospel. On the other Showalter side of the family, the gospel power was just as effectual.

Young William Otey spent the first five years of his life on a rented farm near Snowville. Finally, due to financial struggles, in 1872 Joshua Otey had to move his family from near Snowville in Pulaski County to a farm near Christiansburg in Montgomery County. However, this was a move of only about eight miles. This move was only the beginning of moves. These years, while Joshua Otey's numerous children were growing up, while the financial drag was the greatest, were very difficult ones. The poverty occasioned by the War amplified his problems.

¹⁰ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 89.

Joshua Otey always thought he could do better somewhere else. He never kept his feet planted long in one place. His success in Montgomery County proved to be no better than that which he had experienced in Pulaski County. When William was 8, Joshua moved the family to another rented farm near Riner, also in Montgomery County. Here also Joshua did not stay long. So often did Joshua change locations during these years that he came to be known as a "mover." His frequent moves make it difficult to trace the family activities. This problem is enhanced by the fact that the Pulaski County court house, then at Newbern, burned in 1839, destroying all the county records, and thus obscuring the activities of the Oteys. Several of Joshua's moves were only for one year. His move to an Ellett Creek farm near Pilot in Montgomery County was one such of these moves.

In 1878, a disappointed but yet hopeful Joshua Otey prepared for what was then considered to be a rather long move---about twenty miles. He and one of his older sons had crossed Pilot Mountain in the southern end of Montgomery County and had gone on to the northeastern end of Floyd County to find a new location for the struggling family. It was customary at this time for down and out, struggling families, along with ambitious youths, to move westward. Though this was not a pioneering move in the strictest sense of that term, yet it was a move in harmony with the spirit of the time to press westward. However, there was something a little different about this move than some of the preceding ones. It had even better prospects than had some of the others.

Joshua Otey was making another daring attempt to re-establish himself financially. He had contracted to buy eighty acres of land

two miles west of Simpson postoffice, and near Locust Grove, in the northeastern end of Floyd County. The owner of the land lived in another community. Joshua Otey had no money to pay down on a farm. But to the owner, it looked like good business to "sell" to a hard-working farmer with a large family of boys. They should make enough improvements on the place to make it worthwhile to the owner. With bright hopes, Joshua moved his family across the mountain and settled in the rural community. The farm then had a good four room log house on it, with three small fields that had been opened for farming. The country in this area is exceedingly hilly, even mountainous. A "field" can be of any size. These three were tiny ones. More land had to be cleared if any improvement in the family financial status could be expected. So the entire family began the hard work of clearing new ground.

The family lived four years in this community, longer than in any other place while the children were growing up. Farming in this section of Floyd County proved to be similar to farming for Joshua Otey in Montgomery County. He barely could make enough to feed his family, and that was all. For the family to survive required the efforts of all those large enough to work. The result was that formal education looked like an unaffordable luxury at this time. The boys were "educated" on the work end of an ax or a hoe. There were two or three efforts made to get the boys a smattering of formal education. But these were short lived efforts.

The first fall the Oteys were in Floyd County (William was then nine years old), there was an effort made to permit William and his older brother, Henry B., to go to school for a few months. However, these few

months soon became a few weeks instead. This section of Floyd County was a sparsely settled one. Schools here were not adequate even for that day. William and Henry had to sit together on a bench and study from one very worn copy of the now famous McGuffey's Reader. There were about forty students in the one classroom. So widely diversified were the students in this classroom that no classes or recitations were at any time provided by the instructor for those of William's and Henry's ages. Some of the older students would come by two or three times daily and give a little instruction. However, they did pick up a few things by listening to the other classes recite. William became impressed with the magnitude of this universe, so little of which he had as yet ever seen. He then had never been over twenty miles from the place of his birth, and furthermore, it was to be many years more before he ever traveled more than twenty miles from Snowville.

William and Henry were only able to stay in school a few weeks. There was work to be done at home. But they left school, certainly with the hope of getting back at least by the next term. Schools in this part of the country then only ran about five months a year. All that term passed, and they could not be re-enrolled. Another year passed, and they yet were not re-admitted to school. However, the fall William was eleven, he was re-admitted to the community school to study a while longer under Jake Akers, the teacher there. He heard the teacher and the older students talking about "adverbs" and adjectives," words about which he then knew nothing, except that they had something to do with what was called "higher education." It was a good many years later before he learned any more of these perplexities. This educational session was like the first in that it also lasted only a few weeks. The

fall William was 13, he was in school again for a few weeks. And this closed his formal education. In all, he had about four or five months of schooling. And when he left school, William later said, "They never said a word about conferring on me any honorary degree!" So closed the formal educational attainments of W. W. Otey.

The family did have a Holmes's speller, and an arithmetic book or two. So William did learn to read. Though his formal education had ended, his education had not. The summer he was fourteen, what William, when past ninety, described as "one of the most important events" of his life occurred. He read the entire Bible through for the first time. This reading made an unforgettable impression on him. Perhaps this more than anything else turned his mind toward spiritual matters, which were to possess his mind and thoughts through most of the days and nights of over seventy years he spent preaching and writing the gospel.

Joshua was never able to pay one dollar on the farm. He had lived on the farm with his family for four years. No deed was ever drawn (quite understandably) legalizing the transaction. Nothing more than a verbal agreement was made. Whether Joshua moved of his own accord, or whether he was asked to move by the owner, is not known. However, in the summer of 1882, he moved to another farm in the same community. This was another of those "one year" moves.

After only a few months on the second farm in the Locust Grove area, Joshua Otey was ready to move his family again. This time he moved back east about six or seven miles, to a place on Brush Creek where it intersected Little River in the north end of Floyd County, near the Montgomery County line. Joshua, on this move, was trying a new business experience for him. He entered the sawmill and grist mill

business. Asiel Snow in Snowville had operated both types of business. Joshua had had opportunity at least to become familiar with the operation. But it is one thing to know how a sawmill works, and quite another successfully to manage one. Otey tried hard here to make his efforts profitable. But throughout two years business was exceedingly poor. Finally, it became obvious that he had to attempt something different once more.

Meanwhile, the brother of Joshua's wife, Sarah Ann, had settled in the western end of Floyd County near Indian Valley, some twenty miles from where Joshua Otey then was living. H. B. Showalter had moved into what came to be known as the "Showalter-Turpin Community." Later the community came to be called simply "Showalter, Virginia," a postoffice being maintained in the home of H. B. Showalter. "Showalter" was located just south of the Pulaski County line, and just east of the Carroll County line. In fact, the Pulaski County line was on top of a mountain (Macks Mountain, sometimes referred to as Max Mountain) that ran through the H. B. Showalter farm. H. B. Showalter's land, then, was bounded on the north by the Pulaski County line, and on the west by the Carroll County line.

On September 4, 1858, W. C. Turpin, who had married a sister of H. B. Showalter and Sarah Ann Otey, purchased from Asiel Snow, the founder of Snowville, 2240 acres of land. However, Turpin was never given a deed for the land. Later H. B. Showalter bought half interest in the 2240 acres held by Turpin. Afterward, Showalter purchased 100 acres more of this land. This gave Showalter claim to 1220 acres of land. However, since Turpin had no deed to the land, of course, he could not

give a deed to Showalter. It was not until 1899 that Showalter secured a legal deed to the land.¹¹ By then he had disposed of part of it. But on September 21, 1899, he was granted deed to 600 acres of the land which he then owned.

In later years, probably due to the fact that no legal description of the land was made a part of a recognized deed, there arose a dispute between H. B. Showalter and his brother-in-law, W. C. Turpin, over the land they once jointly held. This resulted in a long series of law suits which consumed the value of most of the land they jointly held. However, W. C. Turpin and H. B. Showalter resolved their differences, and died good friends.¹²

H. B. Showalter was in 1884 situated on several hundred acres of what was considered good farming land for that part of the country. He was considered a well-to-do farmer. He had a nice house for his family. The Turpins also had a comfortable home. Showalter had to have some help to manage his farm. His brother-in-law, Joshua Otey, was "down and out" financially. Too, both of them were members of the Church of Christ, and this made an even closer tie between them. There appeared but one thing for Showalter to do - take in Joshua Otey. With Otey's large family of boys, he could be worth at least as much to Showalter as a farmer as anyone else he might secure. It hardly appeared right to Showalter to hire someone else when his brother-in-law needed work so badly. So an agreement was made for Joshua Otey to bring his family to H. B. Showalter's farm.

¹¹ Copy of 1899 deed in writer's possession.

¹² From interview with F. F. Showalter, grandson of H. B. Showalter, October 28, 1960.

This move may not have had unusual significance to Joshua Otey, but it was of great importance to his son, William Wesley. In the fall of 1884, Joshua moved his family to the Showalter community. And even though Joshua lived till 1918, he never thereafter lived very far from Showalter, Virginia.

The move was one of about twenty miles. It took the greater part of the day to make the move in the wagons. It was late in the afternoon when the Otey family arrived. H. B. Showalter had a good house in which his hired help had been living. The Otey family moved into this house. The family's arrival in Showalter was like a family reunion. Joshua Otey had lived so many different places the last twenty years that the Showalters and the Oteys had seen nothing of one another. Some of the younger Otey children had never seen the Showalter children. The Oteys got in too late to prepare their own place for lodging that night. Various ones of the relatives arranged to keep part of the family. Some of the relatives had already come to get part of the family to take with them to spend the night. William Otey and his sister, Adline, were still at the new home place, arranging the furniture.

Henry B. Showalter (1830-1916) had married Betty Turpin (1830-1916). He had a family of girls. When his will was written January 3, 1906, he stated that, "being of sound mind and getting old," he wished to remember his three daughters, Ruth Criner, Sarah Melvina Quesenberry, and Amanda Elizabeth Otey "that now lives in Lynn, Indiana." When H. B. Showalter died he had disposed of all of his land holdings, except twenty acres on which he had his house. Too, he had spent the money he received for the land, as his entire estate, when settled,

was \$1185.55.

Henry's daughter, Amanda Elizabeth, came to the new Otey home to get William's sister, Adline, to go home with her for the night. This meeting was the first between William and "Minnie." William was busy arranging the house, and the girl walked up, at first unnoticed by him. A year after this first meeting, William married his cousin, Minnie Showalter. Upon the occasion of her death on July 23, 1956, W. W. wrote telling of this first meeting. He stated:

It was on December 29, 1884, nearly seventy-two years ago, that I met Minnie Showalter for the first time. How vividly I recall that hour! Standing some ten feet distant, I happened to turn my face toward where she was standing. Our eyes met and held as if by magic for a moment. Were I an artist, I could even now, after nearly seventy-two years, paint that unforgettable face, and even the dress she was wearing. I could not see her clearer if she were right now standing before me as she did in that solemn and sacred moment when first we met. The face was a true likeness of maidenly modesty and purity. I read the story of Jacob & Rachel long years ago. His mother had to send him the long distance to his uncle Laban, to escape the wrath of Esau. He went to the well, and met a girl, I imagine about 16 years old, who had come to water her sheep. 'And Jacob kissed Rachel,' his cousin. I did not kiss my cousin, Minnie Showalter at that first meeting, but I loved her more than seventy years."¹³

This seems to have been as near a case of "love at first sight" as any one might observe.

Minnie was born February 13, 1869; William was born March 14, 1867. When first they met, William was then not quite eighteen years old, and Minnie was not yet sixteen. Meeting Minnie was a pleasant bonus William got along with this move to Showalter, Virginia.

¹³ W. W. Otey, "Blessed Are The Dead," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VIII, No. 20, (September 20, 1956), p. 10.

During the months that followed William and Minnie were together quite a lot, living only a few hundred yards apart. Minnie was the only girl friend William ever had. During those days, it was customary for the boys and girls to walk together (It still is!) when they went to some religious or social function. Minnie Showalter was the only girl with whom William ever even "walked." Otey said he found Minnie Showalter was "easy to talk to." This must be an understatement. By the middle of the next summer, William was wrestling with a heavy problem. He had begun to feel that he ought to go back to school. He was eighteen years old now, and still had completed only four or five months of school. Yet he had another desire--He wanted to get married! He rationalized, as one can do so well under such circumstances, that one does not have to have a formal education. It might be more difficult to get along, but school can wait. William Otey was in love!

The time already had come when young William Otey must confront H. B. Showalter to request his daughter in marriage. Showalter was described as "a large man, of 200 pounds, possessed of the most violent temper; yet the most tender hearted when his feelings were touched."¹⁴ William's brother, L. C. Otey, stated that H. B. Showalter was one that on occasion engaged in the art of fisticuffs. L. C. said that when "H. B. Showalter hit a man, he usually stayed down." William, then, had good reason to be a little "shaky" as he confronted H. B. Showalter. Henry replied, after William had stated his reason for coming, "William, I have nothing against you, but it is contrary to scripture to marry a cousin." Just what reply William made to Henry B. is not known, but it

¹⁴ Interview with W. W. Otey, August 20, 1960.

must have been convincing, for on December 22, 1885, a license to marry was issued to William Otey and Minnie Showalter.¹⁵ He was 18 years and 10 days old; she was 16 years and 9 days old. William listed his occupation as a "Farmer." On Christmas Eve, 1885, which they rationalized was a convenient time to get their families together,¹⁶ a preacher by the name of J. L. C. Lindsey united this young couple in marriage. On the day when the Oteys celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary, W. W. told the reporter, "On Christmas Eve of 1885, I received a Christmas present that has grown more wonderful and valuable throughout the years - and that was my wife."¹⁷ Jacob worked seven years for his cousin Rachel. And William said, "I am sure that had it been the custom I would have worked seven years for Minnie."¹⁸ They were a happy couple when first married, and yet a happy couple over seventy years later when Minnie's death dissolved the union.

Shortly after William was married, he started preparing a place for his young bride and himself to live. Immediately back of H. B. Showalters' house, up the hill toward the crest of Macks Mountain, was a small spring that supplied the water for a stream that ran down the hill directly past the Showalter home. Around this spring was a cluster of large, beautiful trees. It was here that Otey purposed to build his home. The water of this spring has since been diverted to supply a small lake built on the Showalter place. A great grandson, Roy Showalter,

¹⁵ Floyd County Marriage Book.

¹⁶ The fourteen page autobiographical typewritten script in writer's possession.

¹⁷ The Winfield Eagle, December 24, 1955.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Principal of Indian Valley Grade School, now owns and lives on the H. B. Showalter farm.

These nice trees and the cooling spring nearby would make a very pleasant place in which to live in the summertime. There were plenty of trees for timber on the side of Macks Mountain. Otey spent several weeks getting all the needed materials prepared. He could get good advice on how to do the work from his father-in-law. Though Showalter was a prosperous farmer in the community, he spent most of his time carpentering. During the Civil War, a part of his time in the service was spent in making rafts, and in advising as to how much a particular raft could safely carry. After the war, he had been employed to build a covered bridge across Little River. The bridge was pinned together with locust pegs, for which Showalter was paid five cents each for making. This bridge stood over one hundred years.

William, besides his other duties about the farm, cut the timbers for his house and hauled them together. Then he began the work of hewing and scoring them. He also had to split out the puncheons to make the floor, and the clapboards for the roof.¹⁹ These procedures were the customary ones in erecting a house in those days. When all was in readiness, the relatives came in and helped him to raise the 16' x 20' one room house, and the young Otey family had its first home!

Like any interested father-in-law, H. B. Showalter wanted to help the young family get started. He told William that he could have forty acres of land on the farm for his own. A strip was laid off all the way from the top of Macks Mountain down the side to the site of William's

¹⁹ James M. Mathes, Life of Elijah Goodwin (St. Louis: John Burns, 1880), pp. 89-91.

new house. None of this land had ever been cleared. William, therefore, began the hard work of clearing the side of a mountain for farm land. Henry never deeded this land to Otey, and when the Showalter farm was sold, Otey got nothing out of it. But it was a nice helpful gesture on the part of Showalter to the struggling young couple.

The Oteys now were situated on their own farming plot and had a new house, inadequate as it was. The days now consisted of long, toilsome hours. But manual labor alone did not possess young Otey's mind. He was now living only seven miles from Snowville. Thirty-five years before, William's parents had been baptized near Snowville by Dr. Chester Bullard. Throughout the intervening years as Joshua Otey moved from one community to another, it was almost impossible to find a convenient place to worship regularly. The family of Otey children grew up without much opportunity to worship each Sunday with God's people. However, in the years of his youth, William had heard four or five gospel sermons. Too, the Bible was discussed occasionally in the home.

Henry Showalter was also a member of the church. Many years before a congregation had been established by J. T. Showalter in the Showalter community. But during the Civil War when most of the men were away, and battles were raging within only a few miles of the meeting place, and people were apprehensive of what a day would bring, regular meetings of the congregation ceased. One would have thought that such conditions would have had exactly the opposite effect. But they did not.

William went to his father-in-law and told him that he had never been baptized, and wanted to be. Henry sent word to his cousin,

Josiah T. Showalter, who lived near Snowville, to come to baptize William. J. T. Showalter had now become quite a significant preacher in the area. Dr. Chester Bullard was now so old that he was almost incapacitated. He died in 1893. There were a few other preachers in the area, among them James Calfee, D. A. Snow, and Cephas Shelburne. But none was more actively engaged in preaching the gospel than J. T. Showalter. Showalter was a school teacher by profession, teaching about five months a year. Upon receiving word that William Otey wanted to be baptized, J. T. Showalter "sent an appointment" to the Showalter community. He preached at Laurel Ridge that Sunday morning early in the summer of 1886, and came to the Showalter community that afternoon. Services were held that Sunday night at the Mountain Cove school house in the community. During the service, William made the "good confession," and was ready to be baptized. Showalter was by now writing considerably for the American Christian Review. In 1887 he was made a "Corresponding Editor." When he made his periodic report, he reported William Otey's conversion with this factual language: "I filled an appointment in Floyd County, Virginia at a school house near H. B. Showalter's and one young man came forward, made the good confession and was baptized."²⁰

Early the next morning the men of the family dammed up the waters of Little Indian Creek.²¹ It was not long until sufficient water had been stopped to form a pool deep enough for an immersion. On a Monday morning in the summer of 1886, William Wesley Otey was

²⁰ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXIX, (September 30, 1886), p. 317.

²¹ W. W. Otey, "Prayer," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXVI, No. 10, (March 8, 1949), p. 3.

baptized into Christ. Thus began a life of service in the kingdom of God which was to span three-quarters of a century.

The defunct church in the Showalter community was soon revived. The zeal in William Otey occasioned by his recent baptism, and the salutary effect his baptism had on others in the community, was sufficient stimuli to result in regular meetings being re-established. It likely was the fact that no one in the congregation was willing to take the public part in the service that caused the church to cease to meet. For no sooner had they begun meeting again than almost the entire load of the public responsibility in the service fell upon W. W. Otey. Otey was a fairly good song leader. This job immediately became his. Though J. T. Showalter had to assist Otey in completing his first public prayer, soon he had improved greatly. Showalter advised Otey thereafter to reflect more on God whom he was addressing than on the people surrounding him. Immediately also was imposed upon Otey the work of teaching and speaking. Though certainly it would have been better for the church had there been more experienced men available and willing to participate, nevertheless, this situation was excellent for William. Immediately after his baptism he was given sufficient work to make him study and to develop himself. The more he studied the more interested he became. The more he worked the more proficient he became. This situation could lead only to one end: William Wesley Otey was going to preach the gospel for life!

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH IN VIRGINIA

From 1886 to 1904 W. W. Otey preached the gospel among the Churches of Christ in southwestern Virginia. In order for one to understand the background of this work, he needs to give some attention to the history of the Churches of Christ in that area.

The state of Virginia had a very important role in what has come to be termed the "Restoration Movement." Many of the important men of this movement either were born, worked or lived in Virginia. Thomas and Alexander Campbell lived at what is now Bethany, West Virginia, but which was then Bethany, Brook County, Virginia. Other outstanding preachers who influenced Virginia were Samuel and John Rogers, Jacob Creath, Sr., his nephew, Jacob Creath, Jr., Aylette Raines, John O'Kane, T. M. Allen, Barton W. Stone, T. M. Henley, W. K. Pendleton and a host of others.

The establishment of the restoration effort in Virginia goes back about as far in history as that of any segment of this effort in America. At the turn of the 19th century, people over this entire area were becoming disgusted with sectarianism. Few of the communities were then thickly settled. There appeared to be no need for many warring sects to exist in a community of only a few score souls. The divided picture of denominationalism was confusing to the people. Something needed to be done to destroy this division. Men in various parts of the

country were simultaneously beginning to think the same way. In the latter part of the 18th century and the early years of the 19th century, without any collaboration or even in most instances, without any knowledge of the other groups, spontaneous efforts to restore Christianity of the New Testament began to be made. This longing for a dissolution of division resulted in the efforts of James O'Kelly in North Carolina among the Methodists, Elias Smith and Abner Jones in New England among the Baptists, Barton W. Stone and "Raccoon" John Smith among the Presbyterians in Kentucky, and of Thomas and Alexander Campbell, first among the Presbyterians and later among the Baptists, in southwestern Pennsylvania, the "Western Reserve" of Ohio, and in what came to be West Virginia.

Virginia was so centrally located that tentacles from all of these movements toward restoration reached her. The state of Virginia is so divided by the Blue Ridge Mountains that in the early 1800's two almost completely separated societies existed. Hence it is necessary to sketch the history of the restoration effort in Virginia in two parts, one section east of the mountains, and the other in the western section embracing the lower Shenandoah valley and southwestern Virginia. Primarily we will be interested in this chapter in the southwestern section of this movement. But first we will give some attention to the eastern section.

EASTERN VIRGINIA

The Campbell influence was the predominant one in instigating the intention to restore New Testament Christianity in southeastern Virginia. In 1825 Alexander Campbell, through arrangements made by Thomas M. Henley,

visited the meeting of the Dover Baptist Association, October 8-20, at Upper Essex.¹ On the same trip, he also visited the Goshen convention which met one week earlier (October 1-3) in Spotsylvania County.² These meetings gave him opportunity to speak and to influence some of these Baptists by his reformation movement. It was at these meetings that he first met Thomas M. Henley and Peter Ainslie who became early workers with him. However, it was also here that he first met Andrew Broaddus, Robert B. Semple and Jeremiah B. Jeter who became his first outspoken critics in the area. It was then admitted by even those among the Baptists that opposed Campbell's effort that the Baptists needed some reformation. Hence Campbell's plea found good soil for growth.

Not only did Campbell's personal appearance give impetus to the restoration movement, but perhaps more importantly, his new paper, The Christian Baptist, came to be widely read and of tremendous influence in this area. Through The Christian Baptist, Campbell entered into a long correspondence with Andrew Broaddus and Robert Semple,³ two of the most important Baptist preachers in the area. By 1828 Campbell was being hotly opposed. Semple then wrote:

the "Christian Baptist" has doubtless exhibited many valuable pieces and principles; but, taken as a whole, I am persuaded it has been more mischievous than any publication I have ever known. The ability of the editor, joined to the plausibility of his plans or doctrines, has succeeded in sowing the seeds of discord among brethren to an extent in many places alarming...⁴

¹Atlantic Missionary, February 22, 1882, in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 179.

²Dover Association Minutes, in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 179.

³See Hodge, The Plea and Pioneers in Virginia, p. 35-39 for summary of this correspondence.

⁴The Christian Baptist, (Revision by D. S. Burnet; Cincinnati: Central Book Concern, 1880), p. 431, 432.

Jeremiah Jeter who later made a tremendous effort to halt Campbell and his work with his Campbellism Examined and Campbellism Examined and Re-Examined, wrote in 1828 that the Christian Baptist

was from various motives extensively patronized.... Sentiments which would at first have been rejected with horror were gradually instilled into many. The seeds of discord and strife were widely scattered among the churches.⁵

Campbell was gaining influence.

One of the most important things that happened to influence this reformatory effort was when Campbell was chosen as one of the delegates to attend the Virginia Constitution Convention in Richmond which met October 29, 1829 - January 30, 1830.

Campbell's presence in Richmond gave impetus to the Reformation.... His role in the Convention, his dynamic personality, and his eloquence served to call public attention to the restoration plea at a time when the city was filled with other representatives to the Convention, distinguished visitors and interested citizens. It was a particularly propitious opportunity for the Reformation to be set forth by its most famous champion.⁶

John B. Taylor, the preacher for the Second Baptist church in Richmond, described the Convention and Campbell's place in it thusly:

It is an august and dignified body. Among the rest there are Madison, Monroe, Mercer, John Randolph, etc. Mr. Monroe presides, but in a very awkward manner. Alexander Campbell is also a member, and is exciting considerable interest throughout the city, preaching every Lord's Day morning in the First Baptist meeting-house to immense crowds of people...⁷

People came from twenty to fifty miles away just to hear Campbell preach. These three or four months proved to be very rewarding ones in so far as Campbell's efforts were concerned.

⁵Jeremiah B. Jeter, Memoir of Abner W. Clopton, (Richmond, Virginia: Yale and Wyatt, 1837), p. 148 quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 4.

⁶Darst, Op. Cit., p. 6.

⁷George B. Taylor, Life and Times of James B. Taylor, (Philadelphia: The Bible and Publication Society, 1872), p. 83.

"By the time Campbell left Richmond in January, 1830, a discernible body of Reformers had emerged within the Dover, Goshen, Middle District and Meherrin Associations."⁸ The first congregation resulting from Campbell's efforts in eastern Virginia was formed in the lower part of Louisa County in 1826.⁹

We cannot here proceed further with the history of this effort in eastern Virginia as our concern primarily is with southwestern Virginia. But the leaven had begun to work. It apparently would have permeated the whole lump had it not been for some set backs which it suffered, which included the attacks of Jeremiah Jeter, which went for two years unanswered by Campbell, and the defection of Dr. Thomas. Thomas Campbell visited eastern Virginia in December, 1831, and in early 1832, attending meetings at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania. He then reported that "the cause of reform is daily gaining strength."

THE WESTERN DISCIPLES

We now cross the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains to the Shenandoah and New River Valleys to see the beginnings there. Dr. Chester Bullard, speaking on "Our Status in This State" before the Christian Minister's Association at Lynchburg in May, 1879, declared that the Tidewater area in the eastern section of Virginia was "the orient of our movement."¹⁰ But the earliest churches in Virginia were established in the lower end of the Shenandoah Valley.

⁸Darst, Op. Cit., p. 7.

⁹Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 2.

¹⁰Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 153.

These southwestern Virginia churches were a cosmopolitan group. They were situated in the wake of three or four different reformatory movements. The disciples east of the Blue Ridge were called "Reformers" in their early history, due to the fact that they were still working inside the Baptist fellowship attempting to reform it. Those west of the Blue Ridge were generally called "Christian." Rice Haggard, an early Methodist preacher in the O'Kelly wing of the restoration movement, first suggested to Stone the propriety of wearing the name "Christian," as that given by divine authority to the disciples at Antioch.¹¹ At the Lebanon church in Surry County, Virginia in 1794 he suggested the unanimously passed resolution "that hence forth and forever the followers of Christ be known as Christians simply."¹²

H. Jackson Darst gives this good summary of the influences upon these southwestern disciples:

The Christians represented three streams of diverse origin which had assumed a loose connection by the time the Reformers arose among the Baptists. The first Christian church had originated in 1794 at Surry C. H., Virginia, from a resistance movement against the autocracy of "Bishop" Asbury in the Methodist Church. James O'Kelly and a number of others in Virginia and North Carolina withdrew from that denomination in 1792 and in 1794 formed "The Christian Church." Independent of the "O'Kellyite" action, Elias Smith and Abner Jones, Baptist ministers of New England, began organizing Christian Churches in 1801. Soon there were such churches in Canada, New York and Pennsylvania. Growing out of the excesses of frontier revivalism in 1803, Barton W. Stone and four other ministers withdrew from the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Synod of Kentucky and organized the independent Springfield presbytery.¹³

¹¹ W. E. MacClenny, The Life of Rev. James O'Kelly (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950), p. 138.

¹² Ibid., p. 116.

¹³ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 18.

These three movements, those of O'Kelly, Jones and Smith, and Stone, all had considerable to do with the revival of New Testament Christianity west of the Blue Ridge.

James O'Kelly, as a young Methodist preacher, spent the early part of his preaching life in Virginia. Later he was assigned to work in North Carolina, and it was from North Carolina that the greater part of his reformatory effort sprang. However, it had its seed in Virginia, and some of its earliest fruit was borne in Virginia. When the ties were cut with the Methodist denomination, these people knew only to turn to the New Testament. In the same 1794 meeting at which the resolution was presented in which the name "Christian" was suggested, Rice Haggard, holding a New Testament in his hand, also asserted, "Brethren, this is a sufficient rule of faith and practice..."¹⁴ A sprinkling of churches was established through this effort springing from O'Kelly. When John and Samuel Rogers visited Giles County, Virginia in the 1820's, they found

the people of this section were mostly either Methodists or O'Kellyites. These O'Kellyites were a very liberal people, and in full sympathy with us. O'Kelly broke off from Coke and Asbury, in the beginning of the present century (Rogers wrote this in 1880 - CW), and traveled extensively with Rice Haggard and Joseph Thomas, the White Pilgrim, (so called because of his wearing a white robe while travelling to preach - CW) all of them preaching the same views, in the main, with Barton W. Stone. I do not remember that O'Kelly ever visited the West; but Haggard and Thomas did.¹⁵

¹⁴ MacClenny, Op. Cit., p. 116.

¹⁵ Rogers, Samuel, Autobiography of Elder Samuel Rogers (Cincinnati, Ohio: Standard Publishing Co., 1880) p. 101.

Joseph Thomas, who lived for years at Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley,¹⁶ had associated with both O'Kelly and Barton W. Stone, and had been immersed by the northeastern Christians of the Abner Jones-Elias Smith connection. He was, therefore, a product of three independent restoration movements. Thomas established a church at Strasburg in the lower end of the Shenandoah Valley in 1808. James O'Kelly, then in North Carolina, came to preach for this church the same year. Thomas preached in the New River country as early as 1808.¹⁷ At the Giles County court house at one of his appointments on December 20, 1818, he met Landon Duncan, a Baptist preacher of the New River Association,¹⁸ and also the tax assessor of Giles County.¹⁹ Duncan soon aligned himself with Thomas' effort. Duncan soon brought another preacher, Thomas Kirk, also of the New River Baptist Association, into the effort. Through the influence of the Haggard resolution, emphasis was now being put upon the scripturalness of the name "Christian." Duncan and Kirk soon publicly "renounced every prevailing sectarian name and party rule."²⁰ They sent a document to the New River Association making inquiry

¹⁶ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 123.

¹⁷ Thomas, Joseph, The Life of the Pilgrim Joseph Thomas, Containing an Accurate Account of His Trials, Travels and Gospel Labours up to the Present Date (Winchester, Virginia: J. Foster Printer, 1816), p. 46, 55, 278, 279.

¹⁸ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 24.

¹⁹ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 202.

²⁰ West, J. W. (Compiler and Editor) Sketches of our Mountain Pioneers (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. W. West, 1939), p. 275.

as to the scripturalness of sectarian names. This inquiry was not brought before the Association, being considered by them of little consequence. This incensed Duncan, and caused him to produce the "Landon Duncan Document"²¹ in which he explained in seven reasons why he refused to wear any sectarian name. He asserted that the "Baptist" name was not after Christ, but was a "party name." Further, he said, there is "No authority under the Gospel for forming and supporting creeds, covenants, articles, etc., etc., made by fallible men." He stated that he believed that there is "but ONE true church, which is the body of Christ," and that he believed "it wrong to support any party name, or rule, as they create divisions, and destroy Christ's rule in the administration." As a result of this document, four of the ten members of the congregation to which Duncan belonged stated agreement with him.²² In September, 1819, Duncan, preaching at James French's on Wolfe Creek, converted three others. These eight began to meet alternately at the neighborhoods on Walker's Creek and Wolfe Creek. On August 19, 1820, they were constituted two churches and began to meet separately.²³ Between 1818 - 1828, John and Henry Williams, Samuel Kyle, John and Samuel Rogers, George Thomas, William Lane, and Thomas and John Adams preached in this New River area.²⁴ It was through John and Samuel Rogers that this church came in contact with the work of Barton W. Stone.²⁵

²¹ J. W. West, Loc. Cit.

²² Darst, Op. Cit., p. 27.

²³ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 277-283.

²⁴ W. G. Johnston, Centennial of the Gravel Hill Christian Church (Craig County, Virginia: August 23, 1935) p. 5, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 26.

²⁵ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 27.

It is likely that had the O'Kelly influence on these churches been the only influence upon them they would have perished. Frederick Hodge stated in 1905 that "Most of these O'Kelly churches drifted in to Sectarianism." The visit of John and Samuel Rogers, from the Stone wing of the restoration movement, was a "Godsend." Samuel Rogers said:

In Giles county we found the churches in need of much encouragement. With some of them, the light seemed to have been altogether extinguished. None of them were living up to their privileges, and all needed much instruction and encouragement. Here we remained long enough to see the drooping spirits of the people much revived....I have reason to believe that our visit to this part of the country was just in time to save many from a hopeless state of apostasy...I am disposed to think that in the providence of God our mission to Giles county, Virginia, was at the very time to save them.²⁶

These churches in the valley existed independently of the influence of the eastern Virginia Christians until 1840, when R. Lindsay Coleman (1807-80) and James W. Goss (1812-70) visited them.²⁷ Coleman and Goss reported, "They were about as much sectarian as the Baptists,... all standing in the need of reformation."²⁸ These churches in the valley practiced foot washing for many years.²⁹

In order to trace the beginning of the church in the Floyd-Pulaski-Carroll Counties area, it will be necessary to come back to this church

²⁶ Rogers, Op. Cit., p. 97.

²⁷ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 28.

²⁸ The Christian Publisher, October, 1840, pp. 207, 208, 229-232, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 28.

²⁹ J. W. West, Op. Cit., pp. 277-283.

at Giles County. However, we need to go back just a little to pick up the influence of the northeastern Christians upon this area. On April 25, 1809, William Lamphiers, a preacher of Alexandria, wrote to Elias Smith then in New England, the publisher of the Herald of Gospel Liberty, about information on Christians in the Shenandoah Valley area. Smith wrote, "There has been a church of seventeen members gathered lately in Shenandoah County (Virginia), and the prospects are still flattering, very flattering."³⁰ This was likely the Walnut Springs church near Strasburg.³¹ Elias Smith himself, in August, 1812, came to preach for this church. Smith, then living in Philadelphia, during a twenty-four day trip, preached twenty-eight times to these Shenandoah Valley brethren.³² Darst observed that "The work in the lower valley in the neighborhood of the Roanoke and New Rivers was largely an extension of that in the Shenandoah."³³

Though it was the O'Kelly influence that instigated the work in Giles County, later the Barton W. Stone influence began to predominate it. Joseph Thomas had traveled in Kentucky, where he had met Stone. Thomas "was among the most active preachers" in the Shenandoah-New River area.³⁴ So far as is known, Stone himself never personally worked in this area.

³⁰ Herald of Gospel Liberty, May 12, 1809, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 20.

³¹ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 20.

³² Elias Smith, The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels and Sufferings of Elias Smith, p. 395, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 21.

³³ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 23.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

However, a number of his co-workers did. Stone began publication of The Christian Messenger in 1826. It was widely circulated and read in the New River area. Alexander Campbell and Stone first met in 1824. An amalgamation of the efforts of Stone and Campbell was effected at a meeting at Lexington, Kentucky, January 1, 1832. Stone's influence "was strongest in the western states and in the great Valley of Virginia."³⁵

George Adams, a preacher from the "West" ("probably Kentucky or Ohio"³⁶) visited Giles County in 1825, laboring principally in the Sinking Creek Valley. He remained here till 1830. About 1826, when the Rogers brothers, John and Samuel, cohorts of Barton Stone, came for their short visit in Giles County, they spoke of Landon Duncan and Adams as "godly men" who "at their own charges, were giving a portion of their time to the work of the Lord."³⁷ It is probable that it was through Adams' visit that a direct contact was established between the Giles County brethren and Barton W. Stone.³⁸ Parker Lucas, an early associate of Landon Duncan in this work, became an agent for The Christian Messenger in February, 1829.³⁹ In August, a correspondent (likely Lucas) reported through the Messenger that there were six churches in the county with two hundred members.⁴⁰ Both Parker Lucas and Landon

³⁵ Ibid., p. 20. See also, W. E. Garrison, An American Religious Movement (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1945), pp. 98, 99.

³⁶ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 26.

³⁷ Rogers, Op. Cit., p. 99.

³⁸ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 27.

³⁹ The Christian Messenger, February 24, 1827, p. 74, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 27.

⁴⁰ The Christian Messenger, July 25, 1827, p. 214, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 27.

Duncan sent in occasional news reports to The Christian Messenger. We have seen that these Giles County brethren had direct contact with the north-eastern movement of Elias Smith and Abner Jones, with the O'Kelly effort of Virginia and North Carolina, and with the Stone movement in Kentucky. Later contact was established with the "Reformers" (Campbell, etc.), though at this time these brethren seemingly had no knowledge of the Campbell work.

Among these early churches in Giles County, there soon arose a little trouble. Parker Lucas maintained that in order for the brethren to be in fellowship one with the other there must be complete "unanimity of religious sentiment."⁴¹ There were others in the area who differed with Lucas on this point. Parker Lucas and Landon Duncan were given to speculation on the subject of the Godhead and on the atonement. This speculation caused the brethren in the area to be labeled by some as "Unitarians."⁴²

Darst stated, "This condition of expansion, consolidation and contention existed when Chester Bullard...joined the Christians. He was to become the pre-eminent influence among them and to serve as the intermediary in uniting them with the Reformers in Eastern Virginia."⁴³ Chester Bullard (1809-1893) was born on March 2, 1809, at Farmingham, Massachusetts, twenty-one miles west of Boston. When he was nine years old his family moved to Staunton, Virginia. When he was seventeen years

⁴¹ Christian Standard, March 18, 1893, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 28.

⁴² Darst, Op. Cit., p. 28

⁴³ Darst, Loc. Cit.

of age, the Bullards moved to Montgomery County, about three miles from Christiansburg, near the source of the Roanoke River.⁴⁴ His family were Congregationalists.⁴⁵ Early in life Chester repeatedly went to the mourner's bench to try to "get religion." At seventeen years of age he professed salvation in a Methodist church, but never formally joined himself to any religious body. He differed with the Methodists on the subject of justification.⁴⁶

As a young man, Chester became interested in the study of medicine. But due to what he termed his "father's fallen fortune," he was deprived of a proper education.⁴⁷ At this time he stated that he knew "nothing of the Church established in the West [the Stone movement-CW], and then struggling into being in Tidewater Virginia [the Campbell effort-CW]." Being unable to attend any reputable medical school, Bullard in 1830 went to study under Dr. D. J. Chapman near New White River Sulphur Springs in Giles County. Sulphur Springs was located where Sinking Creek flows four miles under Thomas Mountain and empties into New River.

It was inevitable that a truth seeking young man would come in contact with the energetic preacher, Landon Duncan, also in Giles County. While studying under Dr. Chapman, Bullard began to attend the periodic meetings at the Wolfe Creek church then meeting at the home of Landon Duncan. Bullard had tried to get a Baptist preacher to baptize him, but had been refused unless some Baptist church would admit him. So Bullard

⁴⁴ J. W. West, Op. Cit., pp. 21-28.

⁴⁵ J. W. West, Loc. Cit.

⁴⁶ J. W. West, Loc. Cit.

⁴⁷ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 152.

had until now continued unbaptized. Shortly after he met Landon Duncan, he requested baptism, though Bullard stated that his views were somewhat divergent from those of Duncan and Barton W. Stone. Duncan, who did not concur with Lucas' "unanimity of religious sentiment" position, with some reluctance consented to baptize Bullard. The baptizing was near the home of Parker Lucas in Sinking Creek Valley December 11, 1830.⁴⁸

Bullard preached his first sermon that night. Dr. Bullard completed his medical studies under Chapman in 1831, and returned to his home near Christiansburg to begin his medical practice. He was ordained to preach by Landon Duncan in 1834, at which time Duncan reported, "He is a young man of promising parts...it is said that the sectarians are much opposed to him."⁴⁹

The significance of Dr. Chester Bullard's ability and work is seen by the following appraisals.

Dr. Bullard travelled all over Virginia preaching, baptized thousands, and organized a great number of churches. For many years he was the only real preacher of the reformation in Southwestern Virginia. He was an earnest man, a strong preacher, an exhorter of great force and an untiring worker. He lived to see much fruit of his early labors and enjoyed the honor, esteem and love of all who knew him.⁵⁰

He baptized between 8,000 and 10,000 persons in southwest Virginia.⁵¹ Most of the churches in Pulaski, Montgomery, Floyd and Carroll Counties were the result of Bullard's labors. These were the primary areas in which Otey preached while in Virginia.

Ella Lord Hopson, Dr. Winthrop Hopson's wife, described Bullard as a preacher with this language: "While Bro. Shelburne was bold and

⁴⁸ Christian Standard, March 18, 1893, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 74.

⁴⁹ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 29.

⁵⁰ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 205.

⁵¹ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 21.

aggressive, like Peter, Bro. Walthal was loving and tender, like John, and Bro. Chester Bullard struck a happy medium between the two."⁵²

B. A. Abbott said, "Dr. Bullard was a man of decided force of character and surpassing eloquence. He had done the work of a pioneer in his section. His followers were called 'Bullardites.'"⁵³ W. H. Book who grew up under Bullard's influence added, Bullard "was in all probability the first one to preach the gospel as we now believe it in the State."⁵⁴

Bullard preached much, but wrote very little. Besides sending in an article now and then to one of the religious periodicals and an occasional news report, he only published a short debate with Elder M. Ellison on "Is the Baptist Church Truly Christian?" in 1857, and a 56 page sermon delivered in memory of D. Boyd Poage at Newbern March 26, 1874. These two brief works were the extent of his literary effort, excepting an unpublished autobiographical sketch. But his power was in his preaching; not in his pen.

Bullard in 1879 referred to southwestern Virginia as "the field of most meagre promise and agency."⁵⁵ But it proved to be more fruitful than one might at first have thought. Soon after returning to his home near Christiansburg, Bullard began in earnest the work of preaching the

⁵² Hopson, Op. Cit., p. 168.

⁵³ B. A. Abbott, Life of Chapman S. Lucas, (Richmond, Virginia: Christian Tribune, 1897), p. 25.

⁵⁴ Book, Op. Cit., p. 11.

⁵⁵ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 158.

gospel he had just learned. In 1834 Bullard planted his first church (Catawba) or Canterbury in Roanoke County.⁵⁶ No sooner had Bullard begun to preach than developed a rift between himself and Landon Duncan and Parker Lucas. Bullard was not as speculatively inclined as were these other brethren, and with Lucas' "unanimity of religious sentiment" doctrine, trouble was inevitable. Bullard thus became alienated from the Duncan-Lucas led group, and for awhile in 1836 existed somewhat as a separate fellowship. By 1836 there were six churches with which he was working: Catawba in Roanoke County, New Castle and Antioch (which became Gravel Hill) in what became Craig County, Sinking Creek in Giles County, North Fork of the Roanoke in Montgomery County (about eight miles west of the Catawba church), and New Salem (Cypress Grove) at Snowville in what became Pulaski County.⁵⁷ H. D. Coffey stated that by 1835 "Bullard, Snow and others in southwest Virginia were seeking the light and preaching the word, without addition or subtraction."⁵⁸

Bullard's work began to acquire recognition among disciples in other areas. In the September, 1837, Millennial Harbinger, through a reprint from The Christian Publisher, a report was given of the work in Montgomery County. The writer stated: "We believe the cause is prospering

⁵⁶ Gospel Advocate, January, 1835, p. 16. (This paper was published first at Georgetown and later at Lexington, Kentucky by John T. Johnson and Dr. B. F. Hall) quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 74.

⁵⁷ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 75; Christian Standard, March 18, 1893; Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Reformation in Southwest Virginia and of the Shiloh Christian Church from 1837-47, written 1847; Minutes of Shiloh Christian Church, 1847-54.

⁵⁸ Henry Davis Coffey, My Life with God (Lynchburg, Virginia: F. M. Coffey, 1938), p. 100.

in Montgomery. There are four churches in that county, built upon the true foundation. Brother Bullard is the only proclaimer."

The next year Bullard sent in a report to the Millennial Harbinger, though till now he likely had not read a copy of the paper. By June, 1838, the cause had begun to show considerable progress. Bullard stated that when he first came to the county four years ago he had much opposition. In the beginning of his work, he said he spoke on one occasion to only six persons "on as pleasant a day as the sun ever shone upon... and the first year I did not make one proselyte." But soon he could announce "things have altered." He said, now "I have full houses-- I have planted four congregations--the nucleus for the fifth is forming."⁵⁹ He reported the gospel now "is gaining ground steadily, if slowly in these parts, and would, I think, be triumphant if there were laborers." He then was preaching in four different counties. He anticipated the day when reports of such glorious success would be heard from that section as then were coming up from Kentucky.

During this time when the disciples in this section existed somewhat as a "separate fellowship," they were stigmatized "Bullardites," as in other areas they were branded "Campbellites." Once while Bullard was baptizing in a mountain stream, he was bothered by some ill-mannered boys who were perched on a limb over the baptismal pool. As each convert was resurrected from the water, these pesterers would shout "Hurrah for the Bullardites." As the last person was baptized, the limb broke and

⁵⁹ Chester Bullard, Letter to Editor, Millennial Harbinger, June, 1838, p. 286.

the boys fell into the pool. As the boys scrambled from the water, Bullard shouted "Hurrah for the Devilites!"⁶⁰

Bullard, at this time, was familiar with Alexander Campbell's work only by reputation.⁶¹ He admitted that his knowledge of Campbell's work was gained from listening only to Campbell's enemies. He resolved to let Campbell speak for himself, and thus initiated a correspondence with him. Till now virtually all that he had heard about Campbell had been bad. Bullard's oldest brother, while on a trip to Pennsylvania, had chanced to find a copy of the Christian Baptist in his hotel room prior to his retiring for the night. He read it before going to bed, and was intrigued by it. Upon his return to Virginia he persuaded his sister, Mrs. Asiel Snow of Snowville, to subscribe to the paper. Only two issues of the Christian Baptist were received before it was superceded by the Millennial Harbinger. And only two years of the Millennial Harbinger were received before Mrs. Snow's early death.⁶² So for several years the Christian Baptist and the Millennial Harbinger had been coming into the Snow home. However, after Mrs. Snow's death, they were read but little.

In the summer of 1839 Bullard was visiting in the Snow home. Old copies of the Harbinger still were lying about the house. He leisurely picked up a copy. It chanced to be the "Extra on Remission" in which Campbell was stressing that baptism is "for the remission of sins."

⁶⁰ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 25 as related by J. T. Watson in the History of the Gravel Hill (Craig, County, Virginia) Church.

⁶¹ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 25.

⁶² J. W. West, Loc. Cit.

Bullard was very pleasantly surprised at what he found. Instead of having verified the then circulating vicious reports about Campbell's doctrine, he found Campbell's views to be very similar to his own. Bullard said it was this day that he really discovered Acts 2:38.⁶³ This event caused Bullard to determine to meet Campbell at his earliest opportunity.

By now the work in southwest Virginia was beginning to show considerable progress. In 1839, James Calfee, an associate of Bullard's in Pulaski County, reporting on the work in the area in The Christian Publisher, stated that they were forced to stand "against floods of denunciation" but that "few meetings pass without additions to our numbers."⁶⁴ Calfee was himself doing some preaching by 1842. Bullard, in 1886, said that the Calfee family "has laid South Western Virginia, under heavier indebtedness than any family known to me." By 1839 there were about four hundred disciples in Bullard's area. Bullard was then giving the greater part of his time to preaching, though with but little financial support. Three preachers were giving part time to preaching, among them James Redpath, a converted Methodist from near Snowville, and Claiborne Curtis of New Castle.⁶⁵

Alexander Campbell was to be in Charlottesville in June of 1840 for a general meeting of the disciples in eastern Virginia. For some time Bullard had been longing to meet this man. He therefore determined

⁶³ Chester Bullard Autobiographical Manuscript, Carolina Discipiana Library.

⁶⁴ The Christian Publisher, May 24, 1839, p. 166, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 76.

⁶⁵ Chester Bullard Autobiographical Manuscript, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 78.

to go to the Charlottesville meeting, traveling the distance by horseback. He reported having a "happy interview" with Campbell. Prior to this meeting P. V. Scott reported that "Among the 'Bullardites' there was a prejudice against the 'Campbellites' that was as strong as among the denominations of that day."⁶⁶ Like so many others of his day, Bullard was captivated by the great man and his Bible centered views. When Bullard heard Campbell speak in Richmond, he stated he spoke "to the great congregation as I thought I never heard anyone speak."⁶⁷

At these meetings Bullard arranged to exchange some work with some of the brethren of the eastern section. J. W. Goss (1807-80) and R. L. Coleman (1812-70) accordingly toured the southwest in August.⁶⁸ Shortly afterward, Cephas Shelburne (1817-65) and A. B. Walthall came to work in Bullard's area as evangelists for the Southwestern Co-operation.⁶⁹ Bullard reported that these were very beneficial tours, so far as the brethren in southwestern Virginia were concerned.

In 1840 Bullard held one of his first meetings in eastern Virginia at Scottsville. It was likely this was a part of the exchange work arranged with Coleman and Goss. At this meeting Dr. and Mrs. James T. Barclay united with the disciples, having been staunch Presbyterians.⁷⁰ This was the Dr. Barclay whom the American Christian Missionary Society sent out as its first missionary in 1850. Indeed, it was said by Dr. W. E.

⁶⁶ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 25.

⁶⁷ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 155.

⁶⁸ The Christian Publisher, October, 1840, pp. 206-208 quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 77.

⁶⁹ The Christian Publisher, December 1, 1842, p. 95 quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 93.

⁷⁰ The Christian Examiner, April 2, 1875, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., pp. 163, 211.

Garrison, "Though nothing had been decided, or could be, before the convention [at Cincinnati at which the Society was formed-OW], it might without serious inaccuracy be said that the missionary society was organized to send Dr. Barclay to Jerusalem."⁷¹

Several things of importance occurred as a result of this trip east by Bullard. Bullard had met with Campbell, and thus formally aligned himself with the efforts of Campbell. However, meanwhile, through other channels, the brethren in Giles County had also become affiliated with the work of Campbell. Bullard and Landon Duncan were not in fellowship, yet both were in fellowship with Campbell. So it appeared they should be in fellowship one with the other. A reconciliation was arranged about 1840 through their mutual friends.⁷² This action united the disciples in Pulaski and Montgomery Counties with those of Monroe and Giles Counties.

Also resulting from Bullard's attendance at the Charlottesville meeting and a later meeting of the Southeastern Co-operation held at the Fork church in November, 1840, was that the eastern Virginia Christians came to recognize his ability and to have confidence in him. It also helped to cement the east and the west together. This newly acquired confidence in Bullard was manifested when William A. Stone and Paul Wilson came to the southwest a short time later to persuade Bullard to come east to help them deal with some brethren who then were being called "Thomasites."

⁷¹ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, (New York:Harper and Brothers, 1931), p. 190.

⁷² Darst, Op. Cit., p. 77.

Since May 1, 1834, Dr. John Thomas had been publishing a paper called The Apostolic Advocate in Richmond. In the summer of 1835, Thomas began to teach that unless a person specifically understood that he was being baptized in order to receive the remission of sins, though he had been immersed, yet he had not scripturally been baptized at all. This was a direct slap at the Baptists, many of whom had become affiliated with the movement, but who had not been re-immersed. This was the beginning of about a century of controversy on "sect baptism" or "rebaptism." This controversy was the first to divide the brethren. The position of Thomas incensed the Baptists who had aligned themselves with the restoration movement.

Alexander Campbell was drawn into the controversy through the now famous and still controversial "Lunenburg Letter," in which a woman friendly to Thomas inquired if there were Christians among all the sects. Campbell replied, "There is no occasion, then, for making immersion, on a profession of faith, absolutely essential to a Christian-- though it may be greatly essential to his sanctification and comfort."⁷³ This reply was equivalent to saying that there were, in his judgment, genuine Christians in all denominations, which set him in diametric opposition to Thomas. Bullard agreed with Campbell's denunciation of Thomas' position at least at this time, though there are some later statements from him that would be difficult, if possible at all, to harmonize with this position. This position on re-immersion brought Thomas under severe criticism by some.

⁷³ Millennial Harbinger, September, 1837, pp. 411-414.

It was not long until Thomas began to speculate on the millennium, for which also he was rebuked. He declared that man has no immaterial and immortal soul. He taught that the "souls" of infants and heathen will sleep through eternity.⁷⁴ This position advanced by him is virtually that of the modern Jehovah's Witness group. So intense became the controversy that Campbell and Thomas had a debate on the mortality of man, the resurrection of the dead, and the state of the wicked after their destruction, at Painesville, Virginia, in November, 1838. There was talk of publishing the debate, but Campbell decided its dissemination would only add fuel to an already too brightly burning flame. Thomas at this meeting agreed no longer to propagate these speculative views, but soon recinded the agreement.

As stated, in 1840 Bullard was asked to come to the southeast to help reclaim the "no soulists," as they were then called. Darst wrote, "No more propitious choice could have been made. Bullard was young, zealous and unidentified with the conflict which had shaken Eastern Virginia."⁷⁵ His visit, it was reported, did much toward stopping the spread of "no soulism." This conflict, which hampered the work in the east severely, never affected the churches in the southwest very much. Somehow Bullard stopped the subscriptions of the brethren in his area to the Advocate, so that the "subscribers went to the post office for naught."⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 124.

⁷⁵ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 130.

⁷⁶ J. Z. Tyler (Editor), The Disciples of Christ in Virginia (Richmond, Va.: Christian Examiner Print, 1879), p. 106.

Thomas' followers later broke completely with the Churches of Christ, and took up the name "Christadelphians" (Christ's brethren).⁷⁷ Their strength today is primarily in England and Australia, though there are a few congregations in this country. On June 11-15, 1855, Edward T. Orvis and Allen B. Magruder ("No Soulist") had a debate at the Acquinton meeting house in King Williams County, Virginia, which was published.

Meanwhile, around Bullard were being drawn a number of able helpers in the preaching of the gospel. In 1841, T. G. Shelor of Floyd County, Bullard's brother-in-law, a former Presbyterian, began to preach. By 1844, Andrew G. Elmore (1811-95) was preaching at New Salem and Hezekiah Whitt, a former Baptist, was preaching some at Snowville. A. B. Walthall and Cephas Shelburne of southeastern Virginia also worked a while in the southwest. Dexter A. Snow, Bullard's nephew, began to preach about 1850. There was even a colored preacher, a "Brother Harry of Giles," preaching among the colored people as early as 1847.⁷⁸ The churches were growing and Bullard was seeing fruit from his labors; even fruit now was being borne by some of those whom Bullard had baptized earlier.

The gospel was very unpopular in these early years in Floyd County. T. G. Shelor lived and worked at Floyd from 1845-50, but with little success. In 1850, Bullard held a meeting at Floyd and baptized nine who were constituted a short lived congregation. Many of the congregations where W. W. Otey later was to preach were established about this time, among them Newbern or Shiloh (1837), and Mt. Harmony

⁷⁷ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 138.

⁷⁸ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 78.

or Pine Run (1838). By 1848, when Alexander Hall of Loydsville, Belmont County, Ohio, compiled the list of churches which touched off the controversy with Alexander Campbell over its accuracy, he reported there were 101 congregations in Virginia.⁷⁹ Many of these, and some of the larger ones, were in Bullard country---southwestern Virginia.

In the February 13, 1858 issue of The Christian Intelligencer was published a list of preachers in Virginia. Living and working in Montgomery, Pulaski and Floyd Counties were Dr. Chester Bullard, J. P. Hawley, Cephas Shelburne, T. G. Shelor, Dexter A. Snow and Hezekiah Whitt. By 1860 the thirteen southwestern counties of Giles, Monroe, Mercer, Tazewell, Botetourt, Grayson, Wythe, Bland, Fayette, Raleigh, Carroll, Alleghany and Bath had 1500 members of the church, though there was still a great scarcity of meeting houses.

The prospects for growth appeared unlimited. Then came the Civil War. Many things, including the work of the church, went into reverse. The Virginia brethren were fervent in their support of the Confederate cause.⁸⁰ Most of the leading members and many of the preachers were in the "Rebel" Army. In the Intelligencer of May 16, 1861, Dr. Bullard wrote an article in which he used Romans 13 and similar passages to show that disciples must give their allegiance to Virginia. He stated, "either you must be true and loyal or leave the state." During the war not much religious work was done. Armies were wreaking havoc all around the area. The preachers did spend considerable of their time preaching among the Confederate soldiers, especially during the time they spent in their

⁷⁹ The Christian Register, 1848, pp. 33-36.

⁸⁰ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 165.

winter quarters. The brethren did not try to get into the chaplaincy very much because they felt they would not be allowed to teach their distinctive doctrines. Theirs, therefore, was chiefly a "civilian ministry."

When the war ended in the spring of 1865, the churches had been severely shaken. Many of the church buildings had been used by soldiers of both armies, some as hospitals and others as stables. Many of them were unusable after the war. Among the thousands of men killed had been many elders and deacons in the churches. War had moved many of the members of congregations from their old communities. In many instances the churches virtually had to start over again after the war.⁸¹ But with the miseries prevalent after the war, people were religiously bent.

Immediately after the armistice, the prospect of the church work began to brighten. Between April and November of 1865, Bullard baptized five hundred in southwestern Virginia. The churches had a ten percent increase in membership in the first seven months of peace.⁸² In the Millennial Harbinger, James W. Goss reported, "While our material interests are well nigh ruined, and Zion has suffered largely, I rejoice to know that God has blessed us this year."⁸³

⁸¹ Millennial Harbinger, 1867, p. 63.

⁸² Millennial Harbinger, 1866, p. 46.

⁸³ Millennial Harbinger, 1867, p. 389.

CHAPTER V

"NEW ERA" DISCIPLES AND CONTROVERSIES

With the ending of the war a new era arose for the churches. New attitudes arose. A new civil war soon was in prospect - one within the churches. "When reconstruction was completed and Virginia was readmitted to the Union in 1870, the great pioneer period of the Disciples had ended."¹ The older pioneers, for the most part, had gone on. "Second and third generation Disciples quickly came to occupy positions of influence."² These were men who enjoyed the fruits of other men's labors. They realized not at what price they enjoyed their heritage. Among these younger brethren

there was less bitterness toward the denominations; a growing feeling existed that little could be accomplished by following the venerable practice of pointing out from the pulpit the errors of the sectarians. The reliance on itinerant evangelists, the principal ministerial provision "down to the days of the beloved and lamented Abell (died in 1874)," was unacceptable to the younger brethren; resident full-time "pastors" became the order of the day.³

Darst further stated, "These changes in belief, practice and attitude which occurred in the several decades immediately following the War resulted in the Disciples rapidly losing much of the distinctive character which they had possessed during the ante-bellum years..."⁴

¹ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 170.

² Ibid., p. 171.

³ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 171.

⁴ Loc. Cit.

A. W. Fortune said, "In working out their program the Disciples found it difficult to adhere to their original principle and meet the needs of a changing world."⁵

However, there were some of the brethren who were unwilling to discard, without a fight, these "distinctive" characteristics upon which the churches in the area had been built. This conservatism on the one hand and liberalism on the other, resulted in an inevitable tension between the preachers and members in various churches. Dr. Chester Bullard, who had been living for several years in Snowville, died February 27, 1894, lacking fourteen days being eighty-four years old. He was buried about noon, March 1, on "Chester's hill" overlooking Snowville, the Cypress Grove church, and his mansion, "Humility."⁶ In his later years, Bullard became possessed with the attitudes of some of the younger brethren. He gave up some of his earlier positions. Some of the "fight" had gone out of his preaching. There were some of the brethren who were glad to see this "new era" arise; others maintained it must not prevail.

The disciples now found themselves situated in two widely divided camps. One group maintained the silence of the scriptures was just as binding as its oracle, and that one must not go beyond that which is written. The other group thought the silence of the scripture permitted liberty and no restriction should be imposed. A. W. Fortune portrayed these divided sentiments thusly:

⁵ A. W. Fortune, The Disciples in Kentucky (Lexington, Kentucky: 1932), p. 362.

⁶ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 28.

There were two different interpretations of the church which inevitably came in conflict. There were those who believed the church should move on with the world and adapt the spirit of the New Testament to conditions that were ever changing. They held that, when not forbidden by the New Testament they were free to adapt their program to changing needs. On the other hand, there were those who believed the pattern of the church was fixed for all time, and the fact that certain things were not sanctioned was sufficient reason for rejecting them. The men on both sides were equally honest, but they had a different approach to these issues that were raised.⁷

This quotation fairly summarized the differences between brethren shortly after the Civil War and is yet descriptive of the differences between the Churches of Christ and the Christian Church. These antithetical attitudes expressed themselves in the various controversies of the time. These controversial points were quite numerous by the 1880's, but became more so as the years passed and these different attitudes toward the scripture bore fruit. But the main battle grounds became the usage of mechanical instruments of music in worship and the formation of missionary societies to do the evangelistic work of the church.

During the Civil War, a cousin of William Otey's mother, Josiah T. Showalter, the son of Daniel and Jennie Taylor Showalter, had begun to preach. When only eight years of age he had become a member of the Cypress Grove church at Snowville. He was a school teacher-farmer-preacher, and was one of the first to receive a "professional certificate" licensing him to teach for life.⁸

John F. Rowe wrote a mutual friend of himself and Showalter:

⁷ Fortune, Op. Cit., p. 364.

⁸ J. W. West, Op. Cit., pp. 211-213.

The idea that Bro. Joe should be penned up in a school room as a pedagogue, when there is such a mighty work to be done in the open field, both by tongue and pen! Hurl him out of the school room and send him after his Master's business.⁹

But due to Showalter's large family (he reared twelve children) and the poor support provided preachers, it was many years before he could give full time to preaching.

By 1870, when the internal strife was beginning to boil considerably, Showalter was yet a young man, only thirty-one years of age. However, he already was serving as an elder of the well-known Snowville church, along with such noted men as George W. Abell, who was a famous Virginia preacher, Asiel Snow, M. Bridges, and D. A. Ammen.¹⁰ Chester Bullard had been an elder, but had resigned for some reason.¹¹

One of the actions of this eldership that was of interest was an anti-war resolution passed in 1871. This resolution read:

We the undersigned Elders and Deacons of Cypress Grove church, being convinced the wars of this world are opposed both to the letter and the spirit of the Christian religion hereby recommend to the members of the above church, that they declare their determination, that under no circumstance will they bear arms, or engage in these wars.¹²

J. T. Showalter had been in the War and knew firsthand what it entailed. He conceived it to be incompatible with New Testament Christianity. Showalter seemingly never forgot the charge made on Federal entrenchments on Missionary Ridge. W. R. Hundley spoke of J. T. Showalter as one of "several prominent ministers" who came from the historic old Snowville

⁹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (January 22, 1885), p. 29.

¹⁰ Snowville Church Records.

¹¹ Loc. Cit.

¹² Snowville Church Records.

church founded in 1833. He stated, J. T. Showalter "came out of the War a minister and spent his life preaching and farming."¹³ Showalter's anti-war position later was to cause him serious difficulty with Daniel Sommer, editor of the Octographic Review, and it became the occasion of a virtual break by Showalter with his favorite paper.

George W. Abell, the State Evangelist, along with several other preachers, was making Snowville his headquarters. Showalter spent a good deal of his time working with Abell. When Abell sent in his reports to the papers, he seldom failed to mention the assistance of his cohorts. Showalter and Thomas G. Shelor helped Abell in several meetings in 1869 in Montgomery and Pulaski Counties that resulted in eighty conversions.¹⁴ After Abell held a debate in Newbern with Dr. Gilbert, a Methodist preacher, he named Showalter as a "standing committee" through which arrangements could be completed for a "rerun" of the debate, if the Methodists really wanted a repeat, as they professed.¹⁵ Later Abell reported, "I would not fail to state here the invaluable assistance rendered by Showalter, Hawley and Gipson in the meetings in Montgomery..., my adopted county."¹⁶ W. H. Book, who studied under Showalter in the public schools, said Showalter in 1900 was "a preacher of wide experience."¹⁷

¹³ Hundley, Op. Cit., pp. 12, 13.

¹⁴ Peter Ainslie, Life and Writings of George W. Abell (Richmond, Virginia: Clemmitt and Jones, 1875), p. 166.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 181.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 187, 188.

¹⁷ Book, Op. Cit., p. 7.

Showalter was a very energetic preacher and for over fifty years never failed to preach at least once each Sunday. He spent most of his time preaching for the rural conservative churches near his home. Soon his influence came to permeate the smaller churches in the immediate area. He was one of the younger generation who refused to be swept along by this "new era" attitude. He liked the "old paths" better.

The Snowville church could not escape trouble. Many preachers, both "conservative" and "liberal", "anti" and "progressive", had preached for it. Garrison labeled these that are here referred to by the historic appellatives, "liberal" and "progressive", as "the more liberal part" and as the "more progressive element."¹⁸ Benjamin Franklin's son, Joseph, referred to the two groups then in the church as "radicals and conservatives" and as "progressives" and "old fogies."¹⁹

Among the "liberal" preachers speaking for the Snowville church were W. K. Pendleton, Chester Bullard, Dexter Snow, W. S. Bullard, W. H. Book, and L. A. Cutler. On the other hand, the Snowville church had Benjamin Franklin, Dr. W. H. Hopson, Daniel Sommer, G. W. Abell, J. T. Showalter, G. H. P. Showalter and J. F. Rowe preach for it on occasions. As the issues of the day surged forth, the Snowville church was affected greatly. Chester Bullard and J. T. Showalter headed the opposition groups in the Snowville church. Hundley stated (and Allison paraphrased Hundley's remarks):

¹⁸ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, pp. 231-238.

¹⁹ John T. Brown, Churches of Christ, (Louisville, Kentucky: John P. Morton and Co., 1904), p. 421.

During the war Bullard and Cephas Shelburne had a debate over the slave question...then later came a triangular debate between J. R. Miller, J. T. Showalter and W. S. Bullard over the organ and other questions that was never entirely gotten over. This and other minor affairs almost ruined the peace, harmony and usefulness of the church for the time being.²⁰

Hundley boasted that the Snowville church had the best "choir" among the churches west of Richmond. So heated became this exchange between Showalter and the Bullards that the Snowville church minutes insert this note by the name of J. T. Showalter and his family: "JTS and family withdrew from the congregation Nov. 1895--They being anti-mission, anti-organ, etc."²¹

The mechanical instrumental music controversy was the most vehement one of the period and became the major contributor to division. The first instrument known to have been introduced into any now identifiable congregation was at Midway, Kentucky in the late 1850's. J. W. McGarvey wrote in 1864, "In the early years of the present Reformation, there was entire unanimity in the rejection of instrumental music from our worship."²² Four years later he bemoaned, "I could once boast that there was not an organ or melodean in a single Christian Church in Kentucky."²³ For several years McGarvey was one of the leaders of the opposition to the instrument. The controversy caused him no little grief, even necessitating for him a change of congregations in Lexington for conscience sake. He later became somewhat philosophical

²⁰ Hundley, Op. Cit., p. 13.

²¹ Snowville Church Minutes.

²² Millennial Harbinger, 1864, p. 510.

²³ Millennial Harbinger, 1868, p. 216.

and resigned to the introduction of the instruments, though he never endorsed them. McGarvey said in 1898,

I did my best by writing and speaking for about fifteen years to check the progress of the innovation [of instrumental music-CW] among us; but when all the papers through whose columns I could hope to reach those engaged in it were closed against the further discussion of the subject, and when the minds of those I could hope to convince were equally closed, I desisted, because I did not wish to whistle against the wind, especially when I had no whistle to whistle with.²⁴

David Lipscomb charged that McGarvey had simply hopped "on the hind seat of the band wagon with his hands tied." Lipscomb refused to desist in his opposition regardless of whether most of the brethren favored the instrument or not.

Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, writing in reply to some strictures by Ben Franklin against the instrument, said in 1860,

So far as known to me, or I presume to you, I am the only "preacher" in Kentucky of our brotherhood who has publicly advocated the propriety of employing instrumental music in some churches, and that the church of God in Midway is the only church that has yet made a decided effort to introduce it.²⁵

A storm over this issue was brewing. Garrison stated, "This became a major issue in the 'sixties.' Before that, musical instruments were so rare the question did not arise."²⁶ Historically it can be stated correctly that the issue did not flare until immediately after the Civil War. In 1868 Benjamin Franklin estimated that there were ten

²⁴ Gospel Advocate, February 10, 1898, p. 88.

²⁵ L. L. Pinkerton, "Instrumental Music in Churches," American Christian Review, Vol. 3, No. 9, February 28, 1860, p. 34.

²⁶ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 235.

thousand congregations in the brotherhood, and that not over fifty of them then used the instrument.²⁷ But after the war there was a rash of introducing the instrument by these "new era" disciples that reached into southwestern Virginia. There were important brethren on both sides of the issue. So a war was certain.

Dr. Winthrop H. Hopson moved to Virginia late in 1862 or early in 1863.²⁸ He, like McGarvey, violently opposed the instrument, though he favored the society. In 1865 Hopson was invited to begin work with the large church called "Sycamore" on Broad Street in Richmond.²⁹ When Hopson began work in Richmond there were about three hundred members, but the church soon grew to over five hundred members. Hopson, who was considered one of the "big preachers" of his day, was in position in the large Richmond church to make his influence felt throughout the state. He lived in Virginia only five years and three months, three years and three months of these being spent in Richmond.³⁰ But he made his presence felt. J. W. McGarvey said that in his prime Hopson "was the most popular preacher among the Disciples."³¹ If this is correct, then the most popular preacher in Virginia was opposed to the instrument. Dr. Hopson came to preach for the Snowville church. His conservatism on the instrument question was an early influence over the Showalters and the Oteys, then in the Snowville church. Thus his work was often

²⁷ Earl Irvin West, The Search For the Ancient Order (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1950), Vol. II, pp. 80, 81.

²⁸ Hopson, Op. Cit., p. 171.

²⁹ J. T. Walsh, The Life and Times of John Tomline Walsh (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1885), p. 63.

³⁰ Hopson, Op. Cit., p. 179.

³¹ Ibid., p. 236.

on the lips of the Showalters and the Oteys.

Mrs. Alexander Campbell remembered, in a letter to Hopson, that the Missionary Convention at Bloomington, Illinois, out of deference to Hopson's convictions, did not use the instrument. She said, "the organ was not heard during the convention, but good, hearty congregational singing."³² This pleased Mrs. Campbell as much as Hopson, for she shared his conviction. Nevertheless, Darst stated, "In the latter 1860's, Dr. Hopson of Sycamore and others thundered against the organ,"³³ but within twenty years Virginia churches began introducing musical instruments in their worship."³⁴

In addition to McGarvey and Hopson, other important men also tried unsuccessfully to stem the tide. Moses E. Lard, through his Quarterly, made a valiant but virtually fruitless attempt. Lard expressed the sentiment of Showalter and the other southwestern Virginia conservative brethren when he said:

He is a poor observer of men and things who does not see slowly growing up among us a class of men who can no longer be satisfied with the ancient gospel and the ancient order of things...The spirit of innovation is a peculiar spirit. While coming in it is the meekest and gentlest of spirits; only it is marvelously firm and persistent. But when going out, no term but fiendish will describe it. It comes in humming the sweetest notes of Zion; it goes out amid the ruin it works, howling like an exorcised demon. At first it is supple as a willow twig; you can bend it, mould it, shape it, to anything; only it will have its way. But when once it has fully got its way, then mark how it keeps its footing. It now calls for reason, argument, or Scripture; but no more has it an ear for reason, argument or Scripture than has the image of Baal. Argue with

³² Hopson, Op. Cit., p. 234.

³³ Ainslie, Op. Cit., pp. 152, 153.

³⁴ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 171.

the spirit of innovation indeed! I would as soon be caught cracking syllogisms over the head of the man of sin. Never. Rebuke it in the name of the Lord; if it go not out--expel it. This only will cure it. ...Let us agree to admit organs, and soon the pious, the meek, the peace-loving will abandon us, and our churches will become gay worldly things, literal Noah's arks, full of clean and unclean beasts. To all of this let us yet add, by way of dessert, and as a sort of spice to the dish, a few volumes of innerlight speculations, and a cargo or two of reverend dandies dubbed pastors, and we may congratulate ourselves on having completed the trip [to apostasy--CW] in a wonderfully short time. We can now take rooms in Rome, and chuckle over the fact that we are as orthodox as the rankest heretic in the land.³⁵

George W. Abell, who then lived at Snowville and was influencing Showalter so greatly, wrote a letter to Dr. W. H. Hopson and John G. Parrish, the editors of the recently revived state paper, The Christian Examiner, in which he commented upon the trend of the times among churches. Abell's influence has often been underestimated, if not overlooked altogether. W. H. Book called him "one of the greatest preachers of his time."³⁶ H. D. Coffey, whom Abell baptized, called him "that consecrated man of God."³⁷ B. A. Abbott, Chapman Lucas' biographer, referred to Abell, stating, "At that time [i.e. 1867-CW] Abell was the leader of Virginia disciples, was a man of education and intellect and admired for his zeal and self-renunciation in preaching the gospel."³⁸ Chapman Lucas, who later was referred to as "Bro. Abell's successor," had grown up under the fatherly influence of Abell. Though this letter by Abell is rather long, it gives a good insight into the

³⁵ Moses E. Lard, "The Work of the Past-Symptoms of the Future," Lard's Quarterly (April, 1865), pp. 260-262.

³⁶ Book, Op. Cit., p. 6.

³⁷ Coffey, Op. Cit., p. 21.

³⁸ Abbott, Op. Cit., pp. 15, 24.

trend among churches at the time. Though Abell stated he was "not approving nor disapproving," he failed to hide with such a simple statement the fact that he was displeased with the way things were going. He was not advocating that men give up in their opposition so much as writing in friendly satire to men who shared his "Anti" convictions. But to the letter:

In all this line of travel, one is struck with what may be termed "advance and progress."

We are certainly, sirs, getting to hold a good hand with our neighbors, in all that constitutes the refined, the fashionable and the wealthy. Now, I do not mean to say one thing condemnatory under this head, and that for reasons satisfactory, at least, to myself. In the first place, it would do no good; then again, it might seem ungrateful, after all the kindness I have received at the hands of these brethren and sisters; and lastly, it might do harm. I refer to the costly meeting houses, instruments of music and fashionable choir singing.

Now, I am not approving nor disapproving, when I state the matter of fact, that these are abounding, and, mark the prediction, will superabound among us as a people. These points are already carried along the northwestern reserve. Nor, is the victory limited to this portion of Ohio; and this State, distinguished as the "Keystone of the arch," is becoming with the more refined art of the "Key and other notes" of the melodeon and the organ as accompaniments of the public worship.

This is the line of argument. We have wealth; then is it not worthwhile for us to be niggardly parsimonious; our private residences are worth from fifty to seventy-five thousand dollars, then why should we not have fine houses of worship as well as others? When this point is carried, and we get a house of worship costing say seventy five or one hundred thousand dollars, as two I have recently preached in are said to have cost, then the next thing is to put a fine organ in them; for without this they would be incomplete.

The initiatory step is to introduce the melodeon into the Sunday school, there can be no harm in this, of course; next, it cautiously creeps into the prayer meeting; and when all necessary precautionary steps have been taken, and opposition sufficiently silenced, it culminates in the full blasts and deep tones of the splendid organ at the eleven o'clock and evening services on the Lord's day, very much to the edification of the refined sensibilities of the refined auditors.

Now brother McGarvey, Professor Loos, Dr. Hopson and President Pendleton may exhaust all their argumentative powers against it; brother Franklin may bring his heavy artillery to thunder against it; but, gentlemen, let us tell you, while I perfectly accord with you, it is just so much ammunition, time and labor thrown away. You may keep it out of your plain chapel at Bethany--which, by the way, is plenty good for me, but which would only do for the brethren and sisters in the localities referred to until they could have it pulled down and one befitting their tastes reared in its stead--but as for getting them out of the houses where they have already been installed, or keeping them out of others as the tide rolls on, you must as well think of changing the course of the Alleghany, the Monongahela, or their united streams, the mighty Ohio. So, gentlemen, mark it, your guns will soon be spiked before the restless march of this mighty army of progress and advance. Why, don't you know that it is already predicted that so soon as Bethany gets a good run of boys from wealthy and fashionable parents, that the good old Bethany Chapel, surrounded by so many hallowed associations, will be leveled to the ground, a magnificent edifice, costing fifty to one hundred thousand dollars, will occupy its place; the holy organ and fashionable choir, accompanying the public exercises, will be heard resounding in the spacious building, very much to the gratification of President Pendleton and Professor Loos? And don't you know that it is already insinuated that the little baby melodeon is already heard crying in the Sunday school, either of Dr. Hopson in Richmond, or brother McGarvey in Lexington; and all that is needed is time and proper exercise and nutriment to develop it into the fullgrown, long sounding, heavy pealing organ?

I tell you again, gentlemen, you had as well give up the matter first and last, or inaugurate another mighty rebellion, awful secession and bloody war among churches. It is true, it seemed to me like a considerable contrast to be standing up in a splendid temple, costing seventy-five to one hundred thousand dollars, enveloped amid the tones of a splendid organ, and wrapped amid the ecstasies of a splendid fashionable choir, pleading for a few dollars to have the gospel preached to the poor, ignorant freed men of the South. But if the brethren and sisters were kind and liberal and hospitable to me, as they were, what business was it of mine how they sung and how they performed? Is not brother Errett acting on this same principle? Do you hear him continually thundering against organs and fashionable choirs? No! And why? Because if his batteries ever burned with fires of this kind, they have long since been silenced.

So, brethren, you had as well profit by the experience of others, and surrender before you are overcome.³⁹

Slowly, quietly, but surely these "new era" disciples were preparing the minds of the brethren for the introduction of the instrument.

Dr. Bullard could be taken in if he liked, but not J. T. Showalter. He would not now be swayed by the man who previously had so much influence over him. It was not long until "Preachers, churches, and papers were lined up on one side or the other of this controversy."⁴⁰ As the lines were drawn tighter, soon "The first question asked a new preacher in the community was whether he was for or against the organ."⁴¹ By the early 1870's the instrument question had become a flaming issue that eventually would burn away the cords of brotherliness.

Another of the main issues of the day against which Josiah Showalter and William Otey were to fight was the introduction of missionary societies to do the work of the church. Garrison and Degroot called this "the most serious of the controversial issues."⁴² The dispute over the societies began to come to a head with the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849. Even prior to this time there had been some dispute about the scripturalness and propriety of societies.

For several years prior to the 1849 there existed in Virginia a cooperative work called "The Southwest Co-operation." Chester Bullard

³⁹ Ainslie, Op. Cit., pp. 141-143.

⁴⁰ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 237.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 346.

⁴² W. E. Garrison and Alfred Thomas Degroot, The Disciples of Christ; A History (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), p. 350.

was the prime mover back of this cooperation. The first attempt to form such a convention was in June, 1839, when six congregations sent messengers to a meeting held at the North Fork of the Roanoke meeting house in Montgomery County.⁴³ The reason for this meeting was to try to raise money to secure someone to help Chester Bullard in the evangelistic work needed to be done in the area. They proposed that a salary of \$150 or \$200 be provided. Cephas Shelburne was accordingly hired in 1842.⁴⁴ His successors as cooperation evangelists were A. B. Walthall, Elisha G. Duncan and J. A. Cowgill. In 1845 this "Co-operation" had 17 churches with 700 members.⁴⁵ The Southwest Co-operation merged with the American Christian Missionary Society in 1863-64.⁴⁶

As has always been the case, the existence of such a society begat its own opposition. A similar cooperation had been formed in the eastern part of the state. In November, 1839, James Henshall, editor of The Christian Publisher, in an effort to remove any opposition to the eastern cooperation, advised: "Our error heretofore has been the creation of a body corporate, having power and functions, means, etc., etc...For such a body, with parts and powers, there is no authority in the New Testament. Ours will be a meeting merely."⁴⁷ This proposed "meeting"

⁴³ Tyler, Op. Cit., p. 89; Darst, Op. Cit., p. 201; Millennial Harbinger, 1839, p. 469.

⁴⁴ The Christian Publisher (R. L. Coleman, James Henshall and J. W. Goss, Editors), December 1, 1842, p. 95.

⁴⁵ The Christian Intelligencer, June 6, 1845, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 94.

⁴⁶ Virginia State Meeting Minutes, 1864, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 94.

⁴⁷ The Christian Publisher, 1839, p. 240, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 145.

was held at Richmond, November 8-11, 1839. However, little came of it.

Immediately after the meeting, a discouraged society advocate wrote,

I am now satisfied that no good can come from cooperation meetings. The churches will have, individually, to do all they can in procuring Evangelists, and let two, three, four, or any other number unite in sustaining one, as their ability, need, and opportunity for doing good may suggest.⁴⁸

These cooperation meetings accomplished little in their early years. Between 1840-44 several meetings were held, but no definite action was taken. But at a meeting at Gilboa, October 9, 1845, James Bagby and R. L. Coleman were employed as evangelists to be paid \$250 each per year. This was about the first concrete work performed by the cooperation effort. Darst said of this meeting, "The meeting at Gilboa in 1845 signaled the end of hesitation and conflict. The period of discussion was over."⁴⁹ But this was not true at all. The opposition was just marshalling its forces. It is true that from that time onward the society advocates were determined to act in spite of any opposition. But the fight was by no means over. Rather, it barely had begun. It was not many years until what the society opposers feared had become an admitted reality: "As time went on an increasing number of Disciples throughout the state recognized the General Co-operation as the voice of the Brotherhood."⁵⁰ This usually has been the history of societies, and other centralized activation of congregations. They have evolved into something their founders never intended them to be. Severe storm clouds now gathered.

⁴⁸ The Christian Publisher, 1839, pp. 277-279, quoted in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 145.

⁴⁹ Darst, Op. Cit., p. 148.

⁵⁰ Loc. Cit.

In June, 1841, J. W. Goss, the editor of The Christian Publisher, said that missionary work was failing partially because of "opposition by many to any organized effort." In this article he admitted that opposition to the founding of missionary organizations was "very general" and was to be found in almost every congregation. Also in 1845, T. M. Henley reported that the followers of Dr. John Thomas, who were considerable in number, had opposed the cooperation, and that others had voted against it lest these brethren be offended.⁵¹ When Parker Lucas withdrew his membership from the Sugar Grove congregation in 1845, one of his reasons for starting a new congregation which met in his home was his opposition to the cooperation.⁵² The advocacy of cooperation societies was fairly weak in these early years; proportionately weak was the opposition. But "there were some...who opposed missionary societies from the first attempt to have them organized on the ground that they were not authorized by Scripture."⁵³ With the determined efforts by those favoring missionary societies after 1845, the opposition in like manner stepped up its efforts. A heated battle began to be waged.

With the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849, general warfare was declared. Men like Jacob Creath, Jr. had been opposed to societies from the beginning. Creath delighted to quote Campbell of the Christian Baptist who opposed societies of human origin

⁵¹ The Christian Intelligencer, October 22, 1845, paraphrased in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 209.

⁵² The Christian Intelligencer, 1845, August 17, 25, paraphrased in Darst, Op. Cit., p. 194.

⁵³ Fortune, Op. Cit., p. 367.

to do the work of the church, against the Campbell of the Millennial Harbinger who now favored such. Creath charged, "If you were right in the Christian Baptist, you are wrong now. If you are right now, you were wrong then."⁵⁴

Opposition forces were also arising in the south. When Tolbert Fanning started the Gospel Advocate in July, 1855, one of his stated purposes was "to give the subject of cooperation a thorough examination... I have for years believed that a change must take place in our views on cooperation, before we can labor to each other's advantage, or to the honor of God."⁵⁵ Shortly thereafter Fanning set himself and the Advocate in the path of the progress and growth of the society movement with a strong determination to deter it.

The most significant opposition to missionary societies at this time came from Benjamin Franklin. Franklin was recognized to be a man of tremendous innate ability. John T. Brown said, "The editor of the American Christian Review was ultra conservative, and was easily the leader of that side."⁵⁶ Upon the occasion of Franklin's death, his good friend and co-worker Jacob Creath, Jr. wrote:

If our brethren believed in canonizing men, he could soon be placed in the front ranks of the roll of canonization among our great men, and if their mantles ever fell on any man, that man was Benjamin Franklin...He has left no one who can fill his place, and we shall not see his like soon again.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Jacob Creath, "Conventions - No. V," Millennial Harbinger, Third Series, Vol. VII, No. 11 (November, 1850), p. 637.

⁵⁵ Tolbert Fanning, "Cooperation," Gospel Advocate, Vol. I, No. 4 (October, 1855), p. 110.

⁵⁶ Brown, Op. Cit., p. 421.

⁵⁷ Jacob Creath, "Brother Franklin's Death and Services," American Christian Review, Vol. XXII, No. 10 (March 4, 1879), p. 73.

Earl West commented,

It is not likely that a greater, nobler, truer, purer preacher of the gospel lived since apostolic times than Benjamin Franklin... It is not exaggerating in the least to say that after the death of Alexander Campbell in 1866 the most prominent man in the brotherhood was Benjamin Franklin.⁵⁸

When David Lipscomb learned of Franklin's death, he wrote, "The cause loses its most able and indefatigable defender since the days of Alexander Campbell, and his loss is simply irreparable."⁵⁹

But Franklin's great influence against the society movement was greatly hampered by the fact that he at first vacillated on the subject. He had a hard time making up his mind which position he was going to occupy.⁶⁰ It was not brotherhood sentiment that influenced Franklin. He just at first had not thoroughly studied the subject.

In 1850, the Connelsville, Pennsylvania church adopted a series of resolutions, some of which were against the societies. Two of these resolutions declared:

2nd. That we consider the Church of Jesus Christ, in virtue of the commission given her by our blessed Lord, the only scriptural organization on earth for the conversion of sinners and sanctification of believers...5th. That we consider the introduction of all such societies a dangerous precedent--a departure from the principles for which we have always contended as sanctioning the chapter of expediency--the evil and pernicious effect of which the past history of the church full proves.⁶¹

At this early date Franklin assisted Campbell in repelling the effect of this church's resolutions.

⁵⁸ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. I, pp. 99, 104.

⁵⁹ David Lipscomb, "The Death of Benjamin Franklin," Gospel Advocate, Vol. XX, No. 43 (October 31, 1878), p. 677.

⁶⁰ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. I, p. 107.

⁶¹ Millennial Harbinger, 1850, p. 282.

During the war, the society, over the objection of many brethren, adopted the "war resolutions" in which it favored the Northern cause. At the convention at Cincinnati in 1863, sympathy for the soldiers who were defending the nation from the "attempts of armed traitors to overthrow our government" was publicly expressed.⁶² This resolution turned many of the brethren against the society. But "that which hindered it even more was the change in Benjamin Franklin's attitude toward it."⁶³ On January 1, 1856, Franklin published the first issue of the American Christian Review as a monthly. By January 5, 1858, interest in it had increased until the Review became a weekly. It then listed the imposing contributorial staff of Moses E. Lard, C. L. Loos, John Rogers, Isaac Errett and Elijah Goodwin.

W. E. Garrison said that the passing of Alexander Campbell on March 4, 1866 "seemed a signal for the release of the pent-up energies of the anti-society forces."⁶⁴ Probably the reason for Garrison's statement is the fact that by December, 1866, Franklin was conscience bound to announce through the Review that he no longer was a society advocate. Furthermore, he was now ready to take on all defenders of the society. Franklin's change caused him, like Campbell, to be quoted on both sides of the issue. But unlike Campbell, Franklin freely admitted the change.

⁶² Fortune, Op. Cit., p. 368.

⁶³ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 46.

⁶⁴ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 240.

But Franklin was to hurt his influence again. In 1869 the Society, in an effort to appease its objectors and to unite the brethren behind it, developed the "Louisville Plan." Franklin at first considered this to be not so much a society as merely an "agreement" to work in a certain way.⁶⁵ "It was intended to be a 'golden mean' between extremes."⁶⁶ Franklin tried to endorse the "Louisville Plan," though he did so only weakly. Two years later he set his face against the "Louisville Plan," which he now said to be a society just as the others had been, and against societyism in general until the day of his death in 1878.

The American Christian Review, with Franklin as its head, had come to be the most popular paper in the brotherhood. Brown stated, "The periodical grew wonderfully and distanced all competitors for several years."⁶⁷ W. K. Pendleton admitted the Review then was "the most popular paper amongst us."⁶⁸ The historians, Garrison and Degroot, affirmed that the Review was "unquestionably the most influential paper in the brotherhood for over a quarter of a century after 1856."⁶⁹ But it opposed the society.

The Apostolic Times, founded in 1869 with Moses E. Lard, J. W. McGarvey, W. H. Hopson, L. B. Wilkes and Robert Graham on the staff, operated as a sort of half-way house, opposing the organ and favoring

⁶⁵ Ben Franklin, "Great Convocation," American Christian Review, Vol. XII, No. 44 (November 2, 1869), p. 348.

⁶⁶ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 95.

⁶⁷ Brown, Op. Cit., p. 421.

⁶⁸ Millennial Harbinger, 1868, p. 712.

⁶⁹ Garrison-Degroot, Op. Cit., p. 356; Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 157.

the societies, and pleasing virtually no one. The Gospel Advocate under its new editor, David Lipscomb, was another "Anti-paper" at this early date.⁷⁰ Without doubt the Review was the leading light of this formidable group.

It would take no wizard to judge that those favoring the societies were unhappy with the current religious periodicals. Accordingly, in 1866 the Christian Standard was launched with Isaac Errett at the helm, a prime design of which was to take up the slack in society support which the Review's opposition had created. J. H. Garrison stated,

The Christian Standard, of which Isaac Errett was the editor, was started in 1866. Many brethren felt that the Review no longer fairly represented our position. The Standard stood for progress; for Christian liberty; for the use of all wise expedients for advancing the cause; for higher education; and for a more spiritual conception of Christianity.⁷¹

This statement by Garrison was unfair to the Review. Garrison implied the Review opposed progress, Christian liberty, the use of expedients, higher education and a spiritual conception of Christianity. All of these charges Franklin denied. Garrison merely assumed and asserted the very things Franklin, Rowe, and Sommer would have liked to see him try to prove.

W. T. Moore added, "Many, however, began to feel that the reactionary tendency of Mr. Franklin's paper was not conducive to the best interests of the Disciple movement."⁷² Moore further stated the

⁷⁰ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 244.

⁷¹ J. H. Garrison, Memories and Experiences (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1926), p. 61.

⁷² William Thomas Moore, A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1909), p. 523.

Review under Franklin constituted "a very decided force in the development of what a considerable number of Disciples believed was wholly contrary to the spirit and aim of the Disciple movement..."⁷³ J. S. Lamar, Isaac Errett's biographer, asserted,

There were several weeklies, also, among them the "Review" and "Gospel Advocate," but these were not satisfactory. They were regarded as being narrow in their views in many respects, hurtful rather than helpful to the great cause which they assumed to represent.⁷⁴

There was no doubt in any one's mind but that the Standard was intended to advocate the opposite of those things propagated by the Review. In March, 1867, Errett stated of the Standard, "It is the only weekly among us that advocates organized effort for missionary purposes." This would be true, if he meant by "organized effort," efforts made through a society of human origin. It was not long until the Standard and the Review found themselves locked in combat over the society question. J. S. Lamar accused the conservative papers of

breathing an unwholesome religious atmosphere. They seem to infuse an unlovely and earth-born spirit, which they clothe, nevertheless, in the garb of the divine letter, and enforce with cold, legalistic and crushing power. The great truth for whose defense the Disciples are set, demanded a wiser, sweeter, better advocacy--an advocacy that should exhibit the apostolic spirit as well as the apostolic letter.⁷⁵

Of course, Lipscomb and Franklin deeply resented this literary dig, and said so through their papers. This implied everyone's attitude was wrong except that of the society advocates.

⁷³ Loc. Cit.

⁷⁴ J. S. Lamar, Memoirs of Isaac Errett, Vol. 1 (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1893), pp. 300, 301.

⁷⁵ Loc. Cit.

The Christian Standard seems to have served well the purpose of its founders. Later historians declared,

The Christian Standard...was the one journal which may fairly be said to have saved the principle of church cooperation through societies for the Disciples of Christ. ...The other papers... either wavered in their support of this principle or were against it.⁷⁶

The Review, while riding its crest of popularity, was making a tremendous impact upon the conservative brethren in southwest Virginia. John F. Rowe had been associate editor with Franklin of the Review from 1867 till Franklin's death in 1878, after which Rowe became the editor. "It is as a writer that J. F. Rowe is best remembered today. The brotherhood had few men that could wield a pen with Rowe's pungency and clarity."⁷⁷ In 1872, Franklin said there were not half a dozen men who could write as well as Rowe.⁷⁸ When John T. Walsh first met Rowe at Worcester, Massachusetts in 1871, he was not at all impressed with him as a preacher. He sized Rowe up like this: "Brother Rowe, was, also, an able preacher, but his delivery was not so good. He seemed to have a nasal trouble, which injured his voice; what he said was good."⁷⁹ Earl West said, "Rowe bordered upon a failure as a preacher."⁸⁰

But Rowe, as editor of the powerful American Christian Review, wielding his mighty pen, exerted great force over the brethren. The reach of the Review into southwest Virginia is demonstrated by the fact

⁷⁶ Garrison-Degroot, Op. Cit., p. 356.

⁷⁷ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 161.

⁷⁸ Ben Franklin, "John F. Rowe," American Christian Review, Vol. XV, No. 48 (November 26, 1872), p. 380.

⁷⁹ Walsh, Op. Cit., p. 88.

⁸⁰ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. 2, p. 162.

the pulpit Bible in the New Salem church, J. T. Showalter's home congregation for so many years, yet reads, "Presented to New Salem Congregation by Editors of A. C. Review as premium for club to said paper, Dec., 1884," and signed "Rowe and Rice."

In 1889 J. T. Showalter held a meeting at Wytheville. During the meeting Henry B. Showalter, along with his young son-in-law, W. W. Otey, came to Wytheville to work "at the honorable trade followed by the Savior," and attended the meeting. J. T. Showalter reported that Henry B. Showalter "is a subscriber to the Octographic Review [called the American Christian Review until 1887-CW] and has taken the Review for lo! these many years."⁸¹

One, therefore, has no difficulty in learning from what source the conservative influence came that was exerted over the Showalters and the Oteys. They had been influenced by Dr. W. H. Hopson, George W. Abell, Benjamin Franklin, John F. Rowe, Daniel Sommer, and had been reading the Review, the most powerful conservative organ of its day.

As a result of these controversies over the instrument, societies and related subjects, a division was in the making in the churches during the 70's, 80's and 90's. Though W. T. Moore said these controversies were over "infinitesimal matters,"⁸² yet they were of sufficient consequence to disrupt the peace and harmony of the churches. A. W. Fortune reported in 1932: "As a result of these controversies the Disciples have divided into two bodies, the one designated as Disciples of Christ, and the other designated as Churches of Christ." This split

⁸¹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, August 1, 1889.

⁸² Moore, Op. Cit., p. 512.

is recognized as formally occurring in 1906 when J. W. Shepherd submitted separate statistics to the Federal Census Bureau for the Churches of Christ. But this split had been in process since shortly before the Civil War. Since the Churches of Christ have no formal central organization, a rupture only could come through the slow and painful course of division, one congregation at a time. This process was in full motion when young William Otey began to preach in 1886, and continued for three or four decades till a formal general division had been effected.

With an understanding of how there came to be Churches of Christ in southwest Virginia, of some of the tensions of the day, and where J. T. Showalter and W. W. Otey were aligned, we now are ready to begin to follow more specifically the work and activities of W. W. Otey.

CHAPTER VI

EARLY VIRGINIA PREACHING

From the time of Otey's baptism in 1886 till 1888, little is known of his activities. He was just one among many other young men who was struggling to rear a family on a poor mountain farm. But he was dead serious when he obeyed the gospel. Though he worked long hours clearing his land and getting a crop in, he also spent as much time as possible studying the Bible. This study was necessitated since it largely had been through his instrumentality that the Laurel Creek congregation had been resuscitated, and the load of public teaching rested primarily on him.

The influence of Josiah Showalter over the area and over Otey cannot be over estimated. Showalter was the primary personal influence over Otey for several years. In the late 1880's he was the only "anti" preacher in the entire area, and perhaps in the entire state. There were some who opposed the organ, but favored the societies. There were others whom Showalter considered to be compromisers.

When Showalter met young R. C. Cave, the son-in-law of W. H. Hopson, at J. R. Miller's in Snowville, he stated that Cave was not a "Progressive" but worked with them. Cave then preached for the Seventh Street church in Richmond, in which the organ had been introduced under the leadership of J. Z. Tyler. Cave, wrote Showalter, "thinks the times,

circumstances and condition of the church justify the human expediency."¹ Showalter was an "anti" all the way. He opposed voting in the churches, preacher's conventions, fairs and festivals in the churches to raise money, societies, organs and everything else he considered to be innovations, regardless of whether others opposed them or not.

J. T. Taylor, a preacher of Mechanicsburg, Virginia, wrote of Showalter, "If there is a man on earth that fears no man, no weather, no hardship it is he....Sun, moon and stars may change but Showalter never!"² H. D. Howard, one of the elders of the Pine Run church where Showalter preached stated, "We have preaching once a month, and it is needless to say we have no organ, no choir, and no pastor."³ Apparently there were more "anti" churches than preachers. Showalter found that impossible demands were being made upon his time. Oh! for a helper. Unbeknown to Showalter, one was in the making, though he was as yet over on a small hillside farm in Floyd County.

Many things of interest happened in the life of Otey during the two years from the time of his baptism until his name begins to appear within the religious publications of the brethren. In 1886 at Snowville, not far from Otey's home, a debate was held on whether more "moonshine" whiskey was sold in Snowville than elsewhere. Though there were many pleasantries in the newly built log cabin owned by Otey, there must have been some unpleasant experiences. The "very cold and rough winter" of that year must have contributed to the Otey's discomfiture.

¹ J. T. Showalter, "R. C. Cave And The Virginia Christian Missionary Society," American Christian Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 40 (October 1, 1885), p. 314.

² J. T. Taylor, "Breezes From The Mountains," American Christian Review, Vol. XXIX, No. 22 (January 28, 1886), p. 170.

³ H. D. Howard, "Letter From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXIX, No. 51 (December 16, 1886), p. 403.

Showalter said, "All over the country the cry seems to be, 'Can you come over and preach for us?'" He was sorry that his time could be stretched but so far. Many worthy calls had to go unanswered. However, he wanted it known that it was not financial consideration that caused him to fail to answer the many requests to come to preach. He said, "The true preacher always says, yes I can whether there be money in it or not."⁴ But the "true preacher" had no more hours in his day than had a time-serving pastor.

One of the places to which Showalter then was devoting considerable of his time was Laurel Ridge, which was located on the line between Floyd and Montgomery Counties. The small congregation in this community was largely made up of Oteys--William's brothers and their families. Showalter reported, "With the three Otey brothers and the wife of one, a good woman, as a nucleus there is no reason why the church of God at Laurel Ridge should not grow and increase in numbers."⁵ William's oldest brother, Charles Dexter, was the most significant member of this congregation. C. D. became a gospel preacher and worked a lifetime in the area, though at this time he was not yet preaching. Showalter's work with the Laurel Ridge congregation had an influence upon William also. Showalter wrote:

It seems that since I have been laboring here and caused these brethren to meet and break bread, the zeal of Bro. C. D. Otey and others has taken hold of another brother Otey [William-Ow] and that brother has gone back to his home in Floyd County and

⁴ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXII, No. 21 (May 23, 1889), p. 4.

⁵ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXII, No. 19 (May 9, 1889), p. 4.

started up the breaking of bread where years ago I was instrumental in getting the brethren to break bread but where they let it go down. The zeal of one frequently provokes another.⁶

Not only had the Otey brothers' zeal provoked William, but William's zeal had provoked others of his relatives in the Showalter community to restore regular meetings in the Laurel Creek church.

On May 3, 1889, William Otey sent in his first of several hundred insertions to be printed in the Octographic Review. In a letter to Brother Daniel Sommer, Otey wrote:

I am twenty-two years old and without much education, but the lack of a collegiate education ought not to discourage us. What the Church most needs is a host of plain God fearing men that determine to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. I have not begun preaching yet, but I want to prepare myself to begin in the near future.⁷

Actually it could be said that Otey already had been preaching for over two years--virtually from the day of his baptism. But all his preaching till now had been confined to the congregation where he lived. He now was ready to begin to "send appointments."

Shortly after Otey had stated his intentions to preach, he attended the New River District Convention in session at Radford "as an observer." He already had been taught enough by Showalter to know he should not participate. "Delegates" from ten or twelve congregations were represented in the loosely organized convention. "Venerable men" added up the amounts of money promised, and selected a man to go preach

⁶ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXII, No. 38 (September 19, 1889), p. 4.

⁷ W. W. Otey, Letter to Daniel Sommer, American Christian Review, Vol. XXXII, No. 26 (June 27, 1889), p. 2.

in areas where the church was weak.⁸ This was the manner in which cooperation meetings were conducted in these early days.

Otey was just a "beginner" by 1889, but his father in the gospel was waging war on every side. Soon he would have a willing and courageous young man by his side anxious to wield the sword of the spirit. Showalter must have felt he was going to be overwhelmed, if not by the arguments, at least by the number of his opposers. He reported a heated controversy with W. H. Book, a "Progressive," at Snowville.

Showalter also was having trouble with other members of his home congregation, the Snowville church. His famous debates with Chester and "Willie" Bullard were now under way. He wrote against the practice of "majority-rule," saying, "...adopt the majority-rule principle and you have an easy road to all the human expedencies that are found among those who profess Christianity."⁹ Though Showalter was attending a few of the conventions, he did not endorse what they were doing. On June 9, 1886, he visited the "Disciples Preachers and Officers Meeting of Southwest Virginia," during which "some things wise and otherwise" were said.¹⁰ He said he had little time and interest in attending such meetings. He did like to attend to observe how far and how fast brethren had digressed. Showalter wrote also against the usage of the name "Christian Church." The subject of expediency was being abused, so he wrote several articles on it. In one of these articles he said:

⁸ W. W. Otey, "A Scrap of History," Firm Foundation, Vol. IXIV, No. 34 (August 26, 1947), p. 34.

⁹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 48 (November 26, 1885), p. 378.

¹⁰ J. T. Showalter, "A Bird's Eye View of a Preacher's Meeting," American Christian Review, Vol. XXIX, No. 29 (July 15, 1886), p. 226.

There is a great difference between modern expediency and that of the Bible. The latter lets alone things which are lawful for individuals for the good of the church; the former introduces such things as the organ into the worship, which has never been made lawful, and which destroys the peace of the church.¹¹

He even wrote an occasional article against the users of the "filthy weed."

With Showalter under such tremendous pressure, it was but natural that any cohort of his would be under the same sort of pressure. Young Otey soon was to undergo what might be called a trial of fire. His mettle was to be tested. The reader will have to judge as to the quality of the material out of which Otey was made. But one must remember that Showalter set a good example before Otey in withstanding pressures and was a constant source of encouragement to him. The year 1890 was the last year William Otey had in which to prepare himself before he was called upon to enter the open conflict. Otey used his time propitiously.

Daniel Sommer was by now one of the most prominent men in the brotherhood. George W. Rice wrote of Sommer, "As an earnest and clear-headed gospel preacher he falls behind no one in rank. For zeal, devotion and earnestness in preaching the gospel I place him next to Brother Franklin."¹² Earl West observed of him, "That Daniel Sommer was a great preacher, possessing a great mind and heart, no person at all acquainted with his life can for a moment doubt. He was fearless, independent,

¹¹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXVI, No. 39 (September 27, 1883), p. 306.

¹² George W. Rice, "Why I Am Now On The Review," Octographic Review, Vol. XXX, No. 24 (June 30, 1887), p. 1.

and ambitious."¹³ After Ben Franklin's death in 1878, John F. Rowe was made editor of the American Christian Review. But in 1886 Rowe was forced out as editor of the Review. W. B. F. Treat was selected to replace Rowe. Rowe was so provoked by being pushed out that he and G. W. Rice started the Christian Leader, the identical twin of the Review. Showalter thought, "From the appearance of the Christain Leader, its aim is to supplant the A. C. Review."¹⁴ This new paper divided the once united forces of the Review.

The December 9, 1886 issue of the Review announced that Daniel Sommer, "prominent evangelist," had purchased the paper from Edwin Alden who was not a member of the church, but who had published the paper merely as a business venture. Sommer was to act as owner, editor, and publisher. But the official announcement was that Sommer would serve as "proprietor and publisher," while W. B. F. Treat would continue as editor. Nevertheless, it was known that Sommer was the controller of the paper.

For years the Review had been the epitome of conservatism among the disciples of Christ. Franklin and Rowe had been under pressure from those designated as the "Progressives." The Review had been their main instrument of widespread influence. However, the Review came to be considered the center of that "radicalism" to which many objected. Sommer, in becoming the owner and publisher of the Review, accomplished two things. He gained for himself a prominence which he otherwise may never have gained. Secondly, he instantaneously made for himself many

¹³ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 304.

¹⁴ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXIX, No. 38 (September 11, 1886).

enemies. Those that had opposed Franklin, Rowe and the Review soon transferred their opposition to Sommer. Sommer soon came to be one of the "most loved" and yet one of the "most hated" men in the church. Had Sommer never connected himself with the Review, he would not have gained the popularity he achieved in the brotherhood. What he believed, he believed strongly. What he wanted to say, he said plainly. He was a hard preacher and a stinging writer. "The truculent Daniel Sommer was particularly adapt at making close friends and fierce enemies--- only he preferred to call them 'friendly friends' and 'unfriendly friends', never enemies."¹⁵

There was no man in a better position to become the epitome of "Anti-ism" in the north than was Daniel Sommer. The battle was hot; feelings were running high. In southwest Virginia, Daniel Sommer had some good friends in J. T. Showalter and W. W. Otey, and some bitter enemies in the "Progressives" of the area.

Otey have been reading the Review for three years or more. In 1889 Daniel Sommer began to print twelve lectures in a pamphlet called the "Helper." The "Helper" was a sixteen page, double-column paper, and appeared every other month for two years. Otey had been reading everything Sommer wrote. He, therefore, immediately wrote for the "Helper." It made a deep impression on him. His second letter to the Review editor was occasioned by his reading of the "Helper." Otey wrote, "In my judgment they are of more real value to a man desiring to become a public servant of the church than any uninspired writing which I ever read."¹⁶

¹⁵ Earl West, Op. Cit., Vol. II, p. 292.

¹⁶ W. W. Otey, Letter to the Publisher, Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 6 (February 5, 1891), p. 1.

Meanwhile, faithful, old J. T. Showalter continued to needle the liberals in the area. He wrote that "The 'pastors' are getting tolerably thickly settled now in these parts, and I hear of 'missionary jugs' and the like even in the county of Pulaski....There is a wide range in the price of pastors. They go all the way from \$400 to \$4,000."¹⁷ Showalter had been invited by Henry Schnell Lobingier to attend the Virginia Christian Missionary Society State Meeting. But he spurned the invitation, simply stating, "I hardly ever have time or money to spend that way..."¹⁸ Perhaps the most pungent statement that Showalter made against the "Progressives" was this: "'Progressive' Disciples, who run preacher's meetings, missionary societies, and other unscriptural things, are a lean, lank-looking set, hankering after the fleshpots of Egypt."¹⁹ Showalter found that this statement cut the liberals. So he repeated it often. It was not his aim to ingratiate himself with the "Progressives."

Showalter considered a Christian out of place when he engaged in politics. Since Missionary Ridge, he had been "anti-war." Afterward he almost accepted David Lipscomb's position on the Christian and Civil Government, though Showalter maintained a Christian could continue to vote. And if one is going to vote, said Showalter, he ought to vote against liquor---that is---he should vote the Prohibitionist ticket. During one political season as the campaign fervor rose, Showalter opined, "No doubt many young goslings will take part in the campaign,

¹⁷ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIII, No. 12 (March 20, 1890), p. 8.

¹⁸ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 44 (October 29, 1885), p. 346.

¹⁹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," American Christian Review, Vol. XXVIII, No. 26 (June 25, 1885), p. 201.

who could not tell the difference between Democrat and Republican, and make about as much fuss, or more fuss, than the old geese."²⁰ Showalter's position on war and the Christian's relationship to Civil Government caused him to break with the Review in the early 1900's. He then wrote till his death periodically in the Firm Foundation, an Austin, Texas paper, with which his son, G. H. P. Showalter, had become affiliated.

The Bible College education issue, in which Otey was to have such a prominent part in later years, began to make a more frequent appearance in the journals. Jacob Creath, Jr. and Benjamin Franklin, both of whom Daniel Sommer admired tremendously, had come to be very suspicious of Bible Colleges. Sommer had some unpleasant experiences while at Bethany College that contributed to his opposition to Bible Colleges. J. T. Showalter objected to Bible Colleges if they were to be church related. He summarized his position on the college question with these words:

Like most things nowadays, they are more wrong than right. If a Bible College is established for the purpose of teaching young men to become preachers, or "preparing them for the ministry," then it is wrong, it is evil and that continually. There is neither precept nor precedent for any such appendage to the Church of God...But while it is wrong to tack on such an appendage to the church, yet that does not prove that all colleges are necessarily evil...Some few men have become well-educated without ever having the opportunities afforded at college, but of course they did it under disadvantageous circumstances...So, to sum up, 1st, there is no need of Bible Colleges or Theological Seminaries. 2nd. If they, (the colleges which are of the right kind) are presided over as they should be, they furnish opportunities for instruction not to be had elsewhere.²¹

By 1890 things had reached such a state in southwest Virginia that there was little fellowship between the liberals and the conservatives.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 5 (January 1, 1891), p. 5.

It is true that Showalter was still preaching the second Sunday of each month at the very "Progressive" Snowville church. W. H. Book was yet holding meetings at Laurel Ridge, a conservative congregation which George W. Abell and Showalter had started. Showalter stated there was little to indicate fellowship was being maintained between the two groups in the church. He asked,

How is it now? Even among the people who claim to stand with Campbell, there is every sort of organization, Women's Aid Society, State Missionary Society, General Missionary Society, Young Ladies' Aid Society, and a long and increasing list of things as much unknown to the Word of God as the counting of beads, auricular confession, or any other doctrine of the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth. What is the use of making out that there is fellowship between such innovations and the apostles. There is none. In one breath they will cry against the Sand Creek Declaration as schismatic, and in another they will condemn and ostracise all that do not favor their plans.²²

During the summer of 1890, Daniel Sommer began to make plans for an early fall visit to southwest Virginia. Showalter and Otey rejoiced. Neither had ever met Sommer, and both felt that the stature of Sommer would lend support to the cause they advocated. The brethren advocating the societies began to get a little jittery at the thought of Sommer coming to their area. The society advocates were planning to hold a convention at Pulaski City at what they thought would be the very time of Sommer's visit. This coincidence made them apprehensive for fear that Sommer would dash the enthusiasm of brethren for the society. Showalter, in his characteristic pungent style wrote, "...some that are carrying around the offensive remains of a dead co-operative body, are afraid that the meeting will be disturbed by the presence of Daniel Sommer

²² J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIII, No. 18 (May 1, 1890), p. 8.

at Pulaski City...Brother Sommer will not get to Va. until after it is all over. So do not be uneasy, dear brethren."²³ Showalter had started the church at Pulaski City. Though W. H. Book was the preacher there in 1890, still the church had not committed itself entirely on the "Progressive" side. Showalter's influence in Pulaski City was equally feared with that of Daniel Sommer.

When the fall of 1890 came, Daniel Sommer did as he had intended and made an extensive tour among the churches in southwest Virginia. Of course, there were some churches in which he was not welcome to preach. The visit went much smoother than one might have thought, for through an obvious collaboration, the "Progressive" preachers shunned the meetings in which Sommer was to participate. This effrontery aggravated Showalter to no end. He stated,

They that run societies will raise a cry against Sand Creek for their "Declaration" [At Sand Creek, Illinois, brethren from five churches had announced that they would no longer consider as brethren those that insisted upon adding unauthorized items to the organization and worship of the church--CW], and yet every man is proscribed so far as they can make it so, who opposes their man made societies. As evidence, where is the society man who came to hear Bro. Sommer? Among all the "pastors" not one put in an appearance.²⁴

So intense became the proscription of objectors by the society advocates, that dear old Brother Abell confided to J. T. Showalter in a letter written in 1874 shortly before Abell's death, that proscription was the reason for his leaving the state. He said he was forced out because he would not sing the right tune.

²³ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIII, No. 34 (August 21, 1891), p. 8.

²⁴ J. T. Showalter, "Societyism in Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 7 (February 12, 1891), p. 8.

Showalter then was preaching one Sunday each month at Laurel Hill, Snowville, Shiloh, Pine Run, and on the fifth Sunday, at Mechanicsburg. He, therefore, was able to arrange appointments for Sommer at most of the places where he preached. The Snowville church records show that Sommer preached there on one occasion, though no date is indicated. It is very likely that it was on this 1890 trip that he preached at Snowville, as there is no indication he had been through the area before, and after 1890 he would not have been welcome. Indeed, he was likely not very welcome then. But Showalter was an elder at Snowville and probably could arrange an appointment for Sommer. It is unbelievable that no society preacher attended the Snowville meeting in which Sommer preached, since so many of the society advocates resided in the Snowville area. But this fact points up the peak to which antagonistic feelings by this time had come.

One of the appointments arranged for Sommer was at the Shiloh church, about nine miles due west of Snowville. It was also about nine miles from Shiloh to the Showalter community. When Otey learned that Sommer was to be at Shiloh, he was determined to go hear him. When the day for Sommer's appointment arrived, Otey and his family went by wagon to Shiloh. Sommer was walking up the long flight of steps going into the building when he glanced back and saw a tall, gangling, young man anxiously coming to meet him. He could tell that the young man was wanting to be introduced to him. So Sommer came back down the steps, and W. W. Otey and Daniel Sommer shook hands. Thus was formed one of the closest ties in W. W. Otey's life. Sommer soon had filled his appointments and returned to his home. But the lives of Sommer and Otey were to touch again and again.

The winter of 1890 was one of the most severe experienced in south-west Virginia for many years. Snowfall was much heavier than usual. Preachers found it almost impossible to reach and to fill their appointments. Otey was too young at this time to merit much notice in the papers. But his father in the faith, Josiah Showalter, reported his difficulty in traveling to his appointments. Surely Otey's experiences were very similar. When Showalter recounted some of his difficulties in travel, brethren out west, where at least the land was level, were critical of him for relating his personal experiences. But Showalter went ahead and said what he pleased. He related:

I will say in addition to what has been said, that if the good brethren who are disturbed over the weather had ridden with me last Saturday to Mechanicsburg, through the cold air, over two mountains, crossing one creek three times and another once, the roads over the mountains in places being only paths of such heavy grade that a horse though good, could hardly make three miles an hour through the snow, a distance of near thirty miles, and then after preaching Saturday night, Sunday at 11, and at night, also Monday at the same hours, have gotten into the saddle again after a heavy rainfall on Monday night, and over the mountains by a path suited only for a sure-footed mule, crossing swollen creeks and streams just about as full as it was safe to risk...I think that even Bro. L. D. Ammons, of Gorin, Mo. would not have thought hard of a little notice of it.²⁵

In the spring of 1891, Otey got his first taste of public controversy over the issues then raging in the church. He was still living at Showalter, Virginia and working on the land allocated him by his father-in-law. But a good portion of each year was spent by H. B. Showalter in the carpentry trade. This work afforded an opportunity to bring in a little cash to buy the staples of life. It was at this

²⁵ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 16 (April 16, 1891), p. 5.

time that Otey began to learn the trade of carpentry which helped him much in later life. H. B. Showalter secured a job building a store in Radford, which was about fifteen miles from Showalter, Virginia. Otey went to assist in the completion of the work.

While they were in Radford, the church there dedicated a new \$4,000 building. L. A. Cutler, then one of the most popular "Progressive" preachers in Virginia, had been invited to come for the dedication service. But for some reason, at the last moment, he was unable to attend. Instead, E. A. Cole of Richmond came to assist W. J. Cocke, the local preacher, in the dedication service. On the program also were Lt. Governor Tyler, who was a Presbyterian, Samuel Sanders, a Baptist preacher, and G. E. Cassel, a local lawyer and nothing religiously. All of the building expense was paid, except \$950. After the dedication audience had assembled, the local preacher announced that the \$950 would have to be raised before the service could proceed. Cocke announced that every lot in Radford would have its value enhanced twenty dollars, in his appeal to the local business men to help underwrite the cost of the building. He stated he would like to have the building locked until the last dollar was raised, lest someone try to leave. Though this was likely said in jest, it irritated Otey. Cocke also stated that if anyone tried to leave before the money was raised, he would point them out and say "Yonder goes the ugliest person in Radford."²⁶

After the dedication, Cole stayed over for a few days to conduct a meeting for the church. One of the sermons he preached during the

²⁶ W. W. Otey, "Church Dedication at Radford, Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 22 (June 25, 1891), pp. 3,6 and "More From Radford, Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 28 (July 2, 1891), p. 6.

meeting was, "Why I Am A Disciple." Otey had been attending each night. He decided to write out a series of questions, since the public had been invited to do so. He was told to drop them in the question box, and that they would be dealt with the next night. Among the questions he asked were:

3. Is whatever we do as worship or work without faith, sin?
6. Why do you (or do not) oppose missionary societies, the organ in the worship, suppers, fairs, festivals, and such like, among the disciples?
7. Is it not a fact that the disciples worshiped and spread the gospel for the first twenty or thirty years without any of the things mentioned above, and is it not a fact that they were more successful in converting the sects and the world then than now? and 11. Who are responsible for the division; those who introduce things²⁷ not mentioned in the New Testament or those who oppose them?

Otey suggested that Cole or Cocke could give the questions whatever public notice they liked, only he would appreciate their replies also being put in writing.

When Cole read the questions near the close of the service, he announced that all should come back the next night, as he intended to deal with them then. The meeting the next night progressed smoothly. It was the final service of the series. The service ended and never a word was said about the questions. This surprised Otey. When he asked afterward why no attention was given the questions, Cole said that he did not think Otey was seeking information, that the brethren at Radford were united, and they were going to press right on. Otey asked, "Are you going to press on in the truth or beyond and out of the truth?" It astonished Otey to think that a young man "who never saw inside the walls of a college," as he expressed it, could confound and silence Cocke and Cole. However, Cocke and Cole probably just thought Otey unworthy of any

²⁷ Ibid.

notice. Too, they preferred that these subjects not be discussed just then. For the Radford church was not at all as united as Cole thought. Within a few weeks, when the organ was brought in, a division in the Radford church resulted. Shortly afterward, opposition became so great that the organ was removed and put up for sale. But later the tide reversed itself once more. At a convention held at Radford late in 1892, it was reported, "The organized missionary spirit certainly had the convention, and determined opposition to all persons or papers advocating anything else was the verdict."²⁸ One Christian Standard writer wrote, "the sands of Sand Creek are fast disappearing from South West Virginia."

On Saturday night before the second Lord's Day in July, Showalter visited the Otey brothers in Floyd County. William and Daniel Otey had come from Radford. Six of the seven brothers were present. The unanimity of mind among these brothers on this occasion caused Showalter to apply Psalms 133:1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Showalter reported after the visit that

Brother W. Otey is going to give himself to the ministry of the word for which I feel thankful, as he is a sound and true man and has been all the while. He is also a young man of only twenty-four or twenty-five years of age. I hope the loyal-hearted disciples will encourage him in the good work as he is a worthy man.²⁹

One month later Showalter was called back to Floyd County to assist in a service, during which W. W. Otey was "ordained" as a gospel

²⁸ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 47 (November 22, 1892), p. 5.

²⁹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 32 (August 6, 1891), p. 5.

preacher. Showalter's account of the day read:

On the 2nd Lord's Day in August I visited Floyd Co., Va., the home of Bro. W. W. Otey whose name has become very familiar with the readers of the O.R. The church there unanimously recommended him on that day as a faithful man and able to teach others. I hope that he may be successful as a proclaimer of the ancient gospel. Having all the while been satisfied with the simplicity of the gospel, I hope he may remain so until the labors of life are ended.³⁰

Showalter now had the co-worker he had been needing for so many years. Some of the heavy load could now be shifted from his shoulders to those of his young helper. Immediately Showalter began to turn part of the work he had been doing over to Otey. The fourth Lord's Day appointment at Pine Run, five miles south of Draper, was committed to Otey. So great had been the demand on Showalter's time prior to the beginning of Otey's work, that he had not had the time to answer the calls he received outside his immediate area. Showalter had been writing extensively for several years now. Brethren in other states were wanting him to come for some work. Heretofore, he had been limited primarily to Pulaski, Montgomery, Floyd, Giles and Bland Counties. With Otey on the scene, Showalter began to answer calls from the states of West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana, in addition to more extensive preaching appointments in Virginia.

But Showalter's relief at the thought of having a co-worker was shortly to receive a tremendous jolt. Within a month after Otey had been set forth by the Laurel Creek church as a faithful and able proclaimer of the word, he was prostrate with a near-fatal case of typhoid fever. There had been an epidemic of the fever raging in southwest Virginia for

³⁰ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 35 (August 27, 1891), p. 8.

over a year. The summer before, two of Showalter's children were at the point of death with the same disease. While the fever raged at its worst, Otey was delirious. Many of the neighbors, most of whom were related to Otey, came to offer whatever assistance they could give to Minnie and the children. While Otey's mind was under the dominion of the fever, somehow he got to thinking that he had bought the farm of John Draper, probably the best farm in Pulaski County. Every person that came to see him had to listen to Otey's story of his purchase of the Draper farm. Finally, H. B. Showalter, while alone with Otey, told him he had not bought Draper's farm. Otey was yet as poor as when he became ill. Otey appeared to be disappointed and told Showalter he had done much to put him back in bed. Afterward Otey was reminded, with some embarrassment, of his financial success realized only in a delirious dream.

Showalter, in his almost weekly reports to the Octographic Review, informed the brethren of Otey's condition. For several days it appeared that Otey might not live. Showalter wrote,

When I saw Bro. W. W. Otey, the second Lord's Day in October, he had about reached the crisis with the typhoid fever, and I learned Friday before the fourth Lord's Day that he was improving... I hope the brother will soon be ready for the work of the Lord in preaching His gospel to a lost and perishing world.³¹

Showalter's hope was realized. Otey was recovered by Christmas, though it was some three months longer before he was able to do any writing for the Review. For several months Otey penned his articles under the heading, "Virginia Items." For many years Showalter wrote under the title, "Jottings From Virginia."

³¹ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIV, No. 46 (November 12, 1891), p. 5.

Some of Otey's first instructional articles had to do with Genesis 16:13, the importance of studying the four gospels, and against the "pastor" as an officer in the church. He also wrote that the disciples "have nothing to fear from a controversy with their religious neighbors. Their position is easiest defended."³² In August, 1892, Otey wrote an article against Premillennialism, in which he stated it would be strange to hear some preach that David was king, had a throne, a law and subjects, but no kingdom. In like manner, he said, "Brethren, you who claim that the 'kingdom of God's dear Son' is not yet set up please harmonize this and tell us how there can be a king, a throne, a law, and subjects ruled by the law of the king, and yet not have any kingdom."³³

The District Convention was scheduled to be held at Snowville on August 31, 1892. J. T. Showalter announced his intention to attend the meeting. Showalter knew how the meeting would be operated. He was yet an elder at the Snowville church, and the convention must have been arranged there over his objection. He wrote in announcing the convention, "This is to be a society meeting, and of course society men will run it. A few will make all the motions and second them, and manage all that comes up."³⁴ W. W. Otey went to visit Showalter in order that he too might visit the convention to observe what went on.

³² W. W. Otey, "Virginia Items," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 10 (March 8, 1892), p. 3.

³³ W. W. Otey, "Virginia Items," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 34 (August 23, 1892), p. 8.

³⁴ J. T. Showalter, "Jottings From Virginia," Octographic Review, Vol. XXV, No. 33 (August 16, 1892), p. 1.

During one particular day of the convention, J. T. Showalter was unable or unwilling to attend, working instead on his farm nearby. Otey and G. H. P. Showalter, Josiah's son, attended the morning session of the convention. The Society leaders of the entire state were there in large numbers, including L. A. Cutler from Richmond. W. H. Book, who "had as bitter a dislike for J. T. Showalter...as any one could have for another man," proceeded viciously to attack J. T. Showalter.³⁵ Book never called Showalter's name, but everyone knew of whom he was speaking. Otey said that Showalter "was the only preacher left in Virginia who had not left the word of the Lord... and was the most hated man in the state till G. H. P. and myself were regarded as preachers."³⁶ After hearing Book's scurrilous attack, Otey and George Showalter rushed home for dinner to tell J. T. what had gone on. Showalter calmly announced, "I will attend this afternoon," intending to defend himself if attacked. No further attack was made upon Showalter and no incident occurred as a result of the morning session. Otey, reflecting on the Snowville convention, stated that there were only six small country congregations in the entire state of Virginia that had not gone over to the society movement. Snowville was the first congregation in southwest Virginia to introduce the organ. When it did so, shortly after this convention, Showalter and his large family left and placed membership with the New Salem church, two miles west of Snowville.

J. T. Taylor, who was a preacher residing at Mechanicsburg in Bland County, was related to J. T. Showalter. Taylor took the opportunity

³⁵ W. W. Otey, "Showalter and Otey," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXVIII, No. 41 (October 9, 1951), p. 7.

³⁶ Ibid.

to attend the convention and to visit his cousin. Before this convention Showalter had stated that Taylor was entirely free of the "spirit of Innovationism." Taylor wrote a review of the convention in which he stated:

It was my good pleasure to meet W. W. Otey at Snowville, Va., during the district convention. Bro. Otey is a young man of much promise--a bright intelligent face, humble, and a great lover of the truth....Bro. Otey did not seem to enjoy the convention, as the preachers did not act very brotherly toward him--they tried to draw him out on several questions, but he declined. This was wise. The only unwise thing was, he should never enter a convention, where his presence is not desired.³⁷

Otey was a few years older than G. H. P. Showalter. Since J. T. Showalter did not attend much of the convention, Otey, therefore, became the prime object of all the "digs" made toward the "Antis" in this convention. Otey wrote a reply to Taylor's assertion that he did not enjoy the convention. He said:

I confess I did not enjoy the convention. If it is a joy to see professed followers of Jesus ignore the commands of God, and substitute their own inventions--to hear them misrepresent, ridicule and belittle all who insist on obeying the New Testament without addition, subtraction, substitution or adulteration,--then it would have been a joyful occasion.³⁸

Otey did not think his presence was unwise, since this was a public meeting, though he freely admitted it was not wanted.

Taylor invited Otey to come to the Mechanicsburg area to preach even after Otey's stinging review of the Snowville convention. Otey came away from the convention determined more than ever to fight every semblance of that which he conceived to be digression. So he wrote Taylor,

³⁷ J. T. Taylor, quoted in article by W. W. Otey, "Virginia Items," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 50 (December 13, 1892), p. 3.

³⁸ W. W. Otey, "Virginia Items," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 50 (December 13, 1892), p. 3.

All right, Bro. Taylor, I hope I will be enabled to pay you a visit and preach in your field in the near future...But I can not, WILL NOT, DARE not sanction or endorse anything not enjoined by command or approved example. Neither can I bid any man God-speed who abides not in the doctrine of Christ.³⁹

There is no record of Otey going to Mechanicsburg to preach. So it may be assumed that his adamant reply was sufficient to cancel that appointment.

While at Snowville, Otey challenged two "Modern School preachers" for a discussion on the issues then dividing the church. But the discussion was not conducted, because as Otey said, "they did not have the courage to accept."⁴⁰

Though things were made exceedingly turbulent by the district convention at Snowville, the breaking point had not quite come. On Christmas night, 1892, G. H. P. Showalter, third son of Josiah, preached for the Snowville church. Division came later when the organ was introduced.

In addition to preaching at Pine Run, Otey also began to fill another appointment for Showalter at Max Creek. H. T. Turpin reported that on the first Lord's Day in December, 1892, one lady at Max Creek confessed her faith "and was baptized by W. W. Otey the next morning in the clear cold, waters of Max Creek."⁴¹ This is the first of several thousands of baptisms resulting from Otey's labors.

Otey's interest in preaching already had overshadowed his farming interests. The needs of the churches were so demanding that he found it

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ H. T. Turpin, Correspondence to the Editor, Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4 (January 24, 1893), p. 3.

difficult to do justice to his farming. Too, for conscience sake he had been forced to turn from the best money crop, tobacco, to wheat. Though it was an unfortunate decision so far as the southwest Virginia churches were concerned, Otey abruptly decided to move to Ohio to preach.

CHAPTER VII

A FEW MONTHS IN OHIO

On February 14, 1893, Otey, his wife and three babies, left Showalter, Virginia early to board the "Lightning Express" at Radford to go to Beallsville, Monroe County, Ohio. At 11:26 P.M., the train left Radford and traveled 276 miles northeast to Shenandoah Junction, seventy-eight miles west of Washington, D.C. There they took passage on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to Bellaire, Ohio, passing through Cumberland, Maryland in the process. At Bellaire they took a third train to Beallsville, arriving at 11:06 A.M., having traveled about 630 miles. Their journey was not by the shortest route, but probably was the quickest and best for their day. This was quite a trip for a young man who had never been over twenty or twenty-five miles from home in his life. Arriving at Beallsville, they stayed in the home of Brother William Loper till suitable quarters could be secured for the Otey family.

Otey did not come into Ohio under false colors. As soon as he arrived, he announced through the papers to the brethren of southeast Ohio, "...I am here to stay, for a while, at least. If anyone desires to know where I stand in regard to the multitude of Societies that are being introduced into the Church, I will simply say that I am squarely opposed to them..."¹ His column, "Virginia Items," would have to be

¹W. W. Otey, "From Beallsville, Ohio," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVI, No. 9 (February 28, 1893), p. 6.

dropped, but he hoped to be able to write more from Ohio than his farmer-preacher duties would permit while in Virginia.

He had come to Ohio to work. He, therefore, wasted no time in getting started in the work he had come to do. In early March he held a meeting at Malago, Ohio, the same place where George T. Smith and N. W. Cramblitt had held a debate shortly before. Two were baptized in this meeting. He found that the Octographic Review was growing in favor in that part of the state. He next conducted a meeting at Glencoe, Belmont County, Ohio, during which two men were baptized. At Salt Run, four miles east of Caldwell, Ohio, he held a seven day meeting which resulted in eight additions.

While at Beallsville, he began to write under the heading, "Bible Reflections." A short time later he selected the heading, "Facts and Reflections," a column heading that had been used by George T. Smith till his defection from the faith. The extra time now afforded Otey enabled him to write on subjects requiring more study. Much of his earlier writings had been in the form of news reports with a few pertinent paragraphs appended. He wrote on the power of the gospel in one article, on the importance of immediate obedience to the terms of salvation in another, and of the inevitable result of holy men becoming contaminated if they continually associate with those devoid of spiritual understanding, in another article.

The brethren at Yankee Ridge, Coshocton County, Ohio, wrote that they were interested in securing Otey to work with them if it were possible for him to do so. The Yankee Ridge church was a fairly large one, consisting of 175 members. But for some reason, possibly the fear of being branded a "pastor," Otey did not go to work with them.

Brother J. K. P. Rose, one of the elders of the Sand Creek church in Shelby County, Illinois, wrote an article in which he again announced, as the Sand Creek church had done a few years before, that they refused to have any fellowship with "innovationists." Otey replied,

I have just read Brother J. K. P. Rose's article in O.R. of May 16th and I heartily endorse all that he says. The organ, societies, and such like are right or they are wrong. If they are wrong then we are doing God's will in opposing them. Every disciple is either for or against these things.²

During the summer of 1893, Otey wrote a series of articles in which he emphasized that God's creation was one of order and not confusion. He stressed that so far as man's religious activities are concerned, God either set some limitations upon him or He did not. If no limitations are imposed, then man is free to do anything he is disposed to do as acts of worship. On the other hand, if God stipulated certain boundaries and restrictions, man sins when he transgresses these boundaries.³

In August, Otey wrote a few paragraphs on the objective of a preacher. He insisted that every gospel preacher ought to intend to preach, first, so that none will fail to listen attentively; second, so as to present the word clearly and plainly so that none can fail to understand it; and third, so that the gospel having been touchingly and forcibly presented, none will fail to accept it and render obedience to it. He further said, "The gospel preacher should strive to arouse the most stupid, to instruct the most simple, and pierce the most hardened."⁴

² W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVI, No. 23, (June 6, 1893), p. 8.

³ W. W. Otey, "God's Appointments," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVI, No. 27, (July 4, 1893), p. 8 and No. 29, (July 18, 1893), p. 2.

⁴ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVI, No. 35, (August 29, 1893), p. 8.

Through these early years of Otey's life, and for about twenty years more, he wrote exclusively for the Octographic Review. All references made to articles during these early years are therefore to materials published in this paper.

Near the close of 1893, Otey wrote a series of articles on "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," in which he replied to the argument then being made in defense of the introduction of mechanical instruments of music in worship. The users of the instrument were maintaining that since the instrument was used and sanctioned in the Old Testament era, it therefore, must be permissible in New Testament worship. Otey replied by showing that there is to be a differentiation⁵ made between the Old Testament system and the New Testament system.

In August, he conducted a nine day meeting four miles south of Woodsfield, Monroe County, Ohio, in which nine were baptized and two restored.

Just as abruptly as Otey decided to move to Ohio, he decided to leave. After having gone from Showalter only eleven months, he returned. Nothing was ever said about why he decided to move to Ohio, or as to why he decided to leave. It is obvious, though, that things did not work out in Ohio as Otey had expected and hoped they would. During the last two months of his stay in Ohio he wrote nothing for the papers. Upon his arrival back at Showalter, Virginia he wrote, "After a somewhat⁶ prolonged silence I again take up the pen."

⁵ W. W. Otey, "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVI, No. 52, (December 26, 1893), p. 5.

⁶ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 25, (June 19, 1894), p. 8.

CHAPTER VIII

A DECADE IN VIRGINIA

Upon his return from Ohio, Otey, having aged a little and gained considerable experience, resumed his work among the Virginia churches with the same zeal and vigor which he previously had shown among them. Upon his return, he was destined to spend a decade working among these southwest Virginia churches. Due to the tenor of the times he had been forced to become a controversialist, but this was no conflict with his nature or disposition. Virtually the whole of Otey's life found him embroiled in some controversy. The Lord's church apparently is in a perpetual crisis. Otey was not one to sit passively on the side line while others fought the battles and paid the price of victory. He was a true yoke-fellow, a fellow soldier in the conflicts of his time.

Shortly after Otey's return to Virginia, he became involved in his first conflict with J. T. Showalter. C. D. M. Showalter was Josiah's oldest son. After completing his education in the public schools, C. D. M. Showalter went to Milligan College where he studied under Josephus Hopwood. Milligan College was just over the Tennessee state line, near Johnson City. C. D. M. Showalter, after returning from Milligan, founded Greendale Institute in Washington County, Virginia, and later served several years as President of Tazewell College at Tazewell, Virginia. Later he became associated with Virginia Christian College at Lynchburg, now known as Lynchburg College.

While Josiah's son was at Milligan College, it was incorrectly reported to Josiah that his son had purchased a part of Milligan College. J. T. immediately wrote in the Review that "Prof. C. D. M. Showalter" had purchased an interest in Milligan College, and urged all the Review readers to send their children there for a classical education, suggesting also that there their morals would be "looked after."

As soon as the article appeared, Otey wrote an article on colleges. He stated, "That colleges have been a source from which evil has sprung among the disciples is a statement that cannot be successfully denied." Furthermore, colleges are the "laboratories in which nearly all the 'societies' have been compounded and set forth." All the colleges are dangerous, thought Otey. But Milligan professed to be a loyal school. This made it all the more dangerous. Otey, therefore, declared, "...I believe Milligan College in Tennessee to be in all probability the most dangerous institution among the disciples."¹ Not only so, but President Hopwood had referred to J. T. Showalter as an "extremist." This Otey deeply resented.

J. T. Showalter felt it to be the part of duty to reply to Otey's article. He wrote that he feared Otey's article would be harmful to the young preacher. Of course, one must realize that Otey's criticism must have been especially stinging, since Showalter believed his son now owned part of the school. Actually J. T. Showalter had been misinformed. His son did not own part of Milligan College. Furthermore, he felt that Otey should not have written as he did, for some of the things upon which Otey based his criticism had been told him in confidence by Showalter.

¹W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 30 (July 24, 1894), p. 8.

In Showalter's reply to Otey, he admitted that Hopwood correctly had labeled him an "extremist". But he charged that Hopwood was a "fanatic" and "ignorantly" gave more credit to the Society than he should.

Since Otey has charged that Milligan was the most dangerous institution among the disciples, Showalter asked Otey to name the least dangerous one. He asked, would it be Bethany? Lexington? Otey's criticism of Hopwood was that he was too soft, since he permitted faculty and students in the school to contribute as individuals to the society if they wished to do so. In fact, Hopwood even made the provisions necessary for them to contribute individually, if they so desired. Within a few years, President Hopwood made a trip to see Otey while he lived at Draper, Virginia, to try to soften his criticism of the societies. Hopwood, during this later visit told Otey that "the time will come when we are all united on the wisdom of missionary societies..." But Otey was not swayed by the President's visit. This exchange between Otey and Showalter was the first one of its kind, so far as is known. Though it became heated, neither permitted it to mar their felial relationship.

George Showalter, Josiah's son, held a meeting at Pine Run in August while Otey was preaching there monthly. Seven were baptized and four reclaimed. Showalter wrote, "Bro. Otey is honest and earnest, and a man powerful in argument. He is fully awake to the responsibility of the man of God."² George then was only twenty-three years of age, and was in his third year at Milligan College. Showalter's good impression

² G. H. P. Showalter, "Good News," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 37, (September 11, 1894), p. 6.

of Otey was reciprocated. Of Showalter Otey stated, "I believe he is as free from the taint of societyism as the garments of Shadrach, Meshack, and Abednego were from the smell of fire...It does not strain me to say that I love him."³ A union was formed between George Showalter and Otey that lasted virtually all their lives without a blemish.

OTey-HYLTON DEBATE

In early September Otey held a meeting at Mitchell school house, which was only four miles from Mt. Jackson in Carroll County. Mt. Jackson was strong German Baptist or "Dunkard" territory. "Dunkards" had been among the first settlers into that part of the country.⁴ There had already been several skirmishes between the "Dunkards" and the brethren. Now the stage was being set for a full-fledged debate-- Otey's first! The church, through Otey, challenged to meet any "Dunkard" in Floyd County. Mt. Jackson was just over the Floyd County line in Carroll County. The "Dunkards" had fifteen preachers in the county, while Otey was the only conservative preacher among the brethren in the county. Otey went to preach at the Bethany church which met only one-quarter of a mile from a "Dunkard" meeting house. He announced he was going to preach on three points of difference between the church and the German Baptists.

The result was propositions were signed for a debate with C. D. Hylton,⁵ who was then thirty-five years old, well educated, and

³ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflection," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 39 (September 25, 1894), p. 5.

⁴ Crush, Op. Cit., p. 153.

⁵ W. W. Otey, "Otey-Hylton Debate," (4 articles), Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 45 (November 6, 1894), p. 3; No. 46 (November 13, 1894), p. 3; No. 48 (November 27, 1894), p. 2; No. 51 (December 18, 1894), p. 2.

the most capable preacher among the "Dunkards" in that part of the state. Hylton was not anxious to have the debate. He wrote Otey, "I am not anxious for a debate with you...I have nothing to say about the church you represent...We have never denied you being a church of Christ, and why should you challenge us to deny it." But Otey continued to insist that the debate be held. Finally the dates October 23-24, 1894 were agreed upon and the place was to be Mt. Jackson.

H. M. Reed was selected to moderate for Mr. Hylton. One hardly could have expected Otey to have chosen anyone other than venerable old Brother Showalter to assist him. The original plan had been for the church and the "Dunkards" each to select any man they wished for the debate. Had that plan been pursued, Showalter without doubt would have been the debater. Finally it was decided to limit the possible participants to Floyd County. Otey knew he was the man for the debate in that case, for he was the only man in the county that the challenging church would endorse.

When the dates for the debate came, the weather had cooled off and was perfect for such an occasion. The result was that a tremendous crowd gathered. Much interest in the area had been aroused over the discussion. When one considers the fact that today Floyd County has only ten thousand residents, it sounds fantastic to ask that one believe that twelve to fifteen hundred attended each session of the debate. But so reported both the "Dunkards" and the brethren.

No specific duration was set for the debate. Otey permitted Mr. Hylton to decide when he had enough. Nevertheless, when Hylton announced he had to leave to catch a train for West Virginia at the close of the second day's session, Otey complained that the discussion

was not more than two-thirds through.

Otey wanted to be in the affirmative on what is called a "general church proposition." This sort of proposition asserted that the church of which the affirmant was a member was scriptural in name, origin, doctrine, practice, worship, etc. Instead, Hylton insisted upon affirming that his own church, the "Brethren or Dunkard church," was scriptural in name, doctrine, worship, etc. J. T. Showalter complained that Hylton spent most of his time discussing those traits of the "Church of the Brethren" which all admitted to be scriptural, and hardly could be brought to discuss the disputable doctrines and practices.

Otey made specific charges against the "Dunkard" church. He charged that neither the name "Baptist" nor "Dunkard" was in the Bible. Hylton replied that the name was unimportant. Otey objected to the twenty-odd questions that "Dunkards" ask a candidate for baptism, none of which is in the Bible. He also objected to the practice of voting members into fellowship. Hylton cited Acts 10:47 as authority for doing so. Otey replied that an inspired preacher with the keys of the kingdom did not have to ask uninspired men to authorize or to sanction his action. Hylton asserted that the "Dunkard" church, which was established in 1704, was established one hundred years before Alexander Campbell built Otey's church. Otey denied that Campbell built any church, and capitalized upon Hylton's admission that the "Dunkard" church was started over sixteen hundred years too late to be the New Testament church. Otey also charged that the "Dunkard" church, with its district and annual conferences at its head, had the wrong head. The church's head is Christ. A good deal of the time was spent in discussing trine

immersion, which Otey declared would constitute three baptisms, while the scripture speaks of but "one baptism."

The brethren were well pleased with Brother Otey's "maiden voyage" as a debater. However, the "Dunkards" appear also to have been pleased with Hylton's part in the debate. H. M. Reed, Hylton's moderator, wrote, "Bro. Hylton wore his smiles, as usual, and seemed perfectly composed throughout the entire discussion... Upon the whole, our brethren and friends were well pleased with the discussion..."⁶ Reed also charged that Otey used the expression "friends" eighty-three times in thirty minutes. Otey said the charge was an "unqualified falsehood." Kenneth Morse, the present editor of The Gospel Messenger, commented upon Reed's report thusly: "It is quite evident that this is a one-sided version of what must have been an interesting discussion."⁷

The experience of the debate was sufficient to persuade Otey that good could result from such discussions. He felt duty bound to oppose with every faculty and facility that which he conceived to be error. He would have the privilege of participating in several other such encounters and would seek to arrange many others.

Late in 1894, Otey left Showalter, Virginia once more. He was to return to this cherished spot no more, except on brief visits. He had been preaching for the Pine Run church monthly for some time. It was ten hard miles across the mountains to the Pine Run meeting house.

⁶ H. M. Reed, "The Hylton and Otey Debate," Gospel Messenger, November 27, 1894, quoted in letter to writer from Kenneth I. Morse, April 25, 1961.

⁷ Letter from Kenneth I. Morse to the writer, April 25, 1961.

There were a number of churches in the western end of Pulaski County that needed teaching. Otey and Showalter had decided that he could do much good trying to save some of the churches in the western end of Pulaski County from the "Progressive" influence. Otey left his log cabin in Showalter to move into a house on H. D. Howard's farm on Pine Run Creek, only a short distance from the Pine Run meeting house. Howard was one of the elders of the Pine Run church. Otey liked his new location. He wrote, "I am about 1 mile from the railroad and near Pine church. I am more conveniently located than before."⁸ He was now situated about five miles from both Pulaski City and Draper, then called "Lucretia."

Shortly after moving to Pine Run, Otey wrote more on the essentials of effective preaching. He emphasized as requisites, clearness, earnestness and forcibleness. He recommended that young preachers keep in company with wise men from whom they could learn. He said that some young preachers attempt to overcome embarrassment by speaking rapidly.⁹

It had become customary for the brethren in a general area to meet annually, during which some outstanding brethren preached. Otey was never very favorably disposed toward these meetings, which Daniel Sommer announced as "Mass Meetings." Neither did Otey like the expression "Mass Meetings" and so wrote in the Review. He suggested that if the brethren were going to have the meetings, the expression

⁸ W. W. Otey, "Otey-Hylton Debate (3)," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 48 (November 27, 1894), p. 2.

⁹ W. W. Otey, "Miscellaneous Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (January 15, 1895) p. 4.

"Assembling of the disciples of Christ" would be a better description. Sommer thought Otey's suggested name was too long. Otey thought Sommer's expression conveyed the idea of formulating brotherhood sentiment.

For only three years had Otey been preaching to any considerable extent. Yet he stated, "for eight years my thoughts by day and my meditations by night have been chiefly concerning that institution that Christ purchased with his precious blood." He, therefore, began to write on "Apostasy and Reformation." He showed that there had already been two apostasies and subsequent reformation, and that another apostasy was then in the making necessitating another reformation. He spoke of the Catholic apostasy and Luther's effort at reformation, and of the Denominational apostasy and Campbell's effort at reformation. Finally, he said the brethren then had apostatized and needed another reformation, which he urged.¹⁰

Thaddeus S. Hutson, with whom Otey was later to associate much, then lived at Lynn, Indiana, a future home for Otey. Hutson wrote that a preacher had the right to know what he was going to receive for his labor in the gospel. He asked, "Is it criminal to know how much he is to receive?" Though Otey thought highly of Hutson, esteeming him "second to no young man of whom I know," yet he felt that which Hutson had written was unauthorized by the Head of the church. In regard to Hutson's insistence upon a previously specified contractual wage, Otey wrote, "To this we answer, It is a departure from apostolic teaching and practice."¹¹

¹⁰ W. W. Otey, "Apostasy and Reformation," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVII, No. 10 (March 5, 1895), p. 10.

¹¹ W. W. Otey, "Pay the Preacher," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 22 (May 28, 1895), p. 5.

During the summer Otey saw the need for some instruction on calling "Bible Things by Bible Names." He read where brethren wrote of "organizing" churches, whereas the Bible spoke of "setting in order." The Bible spoke of "giving thanks" and brethren would "return thanks." The Scripture spoke of "communion with his body and his blood" and the brethren spoke of the "emblems." He also encouraged the brethren to give liberally and not to "sell your inheritance in heaven for a few dollars." He told of one man who said, "I thank God that salvation is free, and I know it is, for I have been a Christian (?) twenty-five years and it has not cost me but twenty-five cents."¹²

During the summer at Pine Run church, a great meeting was conducted. J. T. Showalter had preached there off and on for several years. But since Otey had been preaching for the church, Showalter had little occasion to come to Pine Run. Arrangements were made for him to come hold a meeting for the church. Brethren came from far and near to hear the well-known preacher. The rather small Pine Run meeting house would not hold all that came. Showalter on Sunday addressed all that could be seated in the building. But about seven hundred persons could not get within hearing distance. Showalter suggested that Otey take those outside down by the bank of Pine Run creek, under the shade of three large trees, and preach to them. So two preaching services were conducted simultaneously. Otey reported he had "as orderly and attentive people as I ever saw assembled out doors."¹³ With Otey preaching each morning at eleven, and Showalter at night, four were baptized during the

¹² W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 23 (June 4, 1895), p. 5.

¹³ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 37 (September 10, 1895), p. 5.

meeting.

In the fall of 1895, G. H. P. Showalter moved to the Pine Run community to teach school for six months. "He is held in high esteem in this community," wrote Otey. Most of those in Showalter's classes were children of church members in the community. Many of his students still fondly remember their school days under G. H. P. Showalter, among whom are two daughters of H. D. Howard, an elder in the 1890's at Pine Run, who now live in Pulaski, Virginia.

Though Otey had spent only eleven months in Ohio, he had made a good impression upon the brethren there. In August, 1895 he was invited back to Monroe and Belmont Counties to preach. He boarded the train just one mile from his home, and traveled the nearly seven hundred miles in just forty-eight hours, an amazing feat in those days. He got off at his former dwelling place, Beallsville. The meeting was held at Gates church near Captina. Six or eight preachers were present at the Sunday service which was attended by twelve hundred persons. The crowd was so large they went to a "grove" nearby to find sufficient room for everyone. George T. Smith, then of Illinois, who by then had developed the "no-elder theory," through "courtesy" was invited to address the assembly. Otey said he "sugar-coated some of his false teaching and threw it out before the audience." Otey replied to Smith's speech.

While there, D. M. Ice told Otey that he was not on either side of the controversies then raging in the church. He refused to be for or against the organ and societies. He was a "middle-of-the roader" and just "for the brethren." Otey said, "When anyone says this you can safely count him on the other side." On Friday night after the Captina meeting,

Otey began a series of services at Beallsville.

On his way home from Ohio, on September 12th, Otey stopped at Fairmont, West Virginia to preach a few days for the church. He found the church there in severe trouble. Otey was of the opinion that the preacher named Koon was causing the trouble. In speaking of troublers, Otey said, "If apostasy be a sin, then they have sinned the most knowingly, deliberately, and grievously of any people who do live, or have lived on the face of the earth."¹⁴

During 1896 Otey wrote some good articles. He stated that no man should regret having what is called a "strong temper." A strong temper is a good servant, but a poor master. Another article on "Self Discipline" stated that the Christian is in continual warfare, but his greatest enemy is himself. Self discipline is probably the hardest lesson one has to learn. In a later article he said that when a preacher moves into a new community where the sectarians prevail, they begin to watch him to see when he will mention "water." But the time may come, said Otey, when they will not be as prejudiced against water as they now are. They may even be as favorable toward it as was the one who desired that the tip of the finger might be dipped in water and placed on his tongue.¹⁵ In July he wrote on "Church Festivals." He charged that church festivals and fairs appealed to the appetites of Satan's servants to support the Lord's cause. "Is Christ so poor that his servants must send him to the

¹⁴ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 41 (October 8, 1895), p. 5.

¹⁵ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIX, No. 27 (July 7, 1896), p. 5.

feet of the devil's servants to beg? Shame on such conduct. It is a reproach, disgrace, slander on the name of Christ."¹⁶

In August he wrote four articles on parental responsibility stating that this is "the most sacred charge ever committed to the care of parents..." In the same month he wrote about "Christian Church 'Pastors'" whom he said,

will talk in a soft, undertone about "sweet spirits". They say that they don't believe in "quarrelling" and "fighting". But when these questions arise, toward whom do they act in a "sweet-spirited" manner, and who is it that they don't believe in fighting? The answer is "sectarians". That is the length, breadth, height and depth of such talk. Just call for scripture for certain things and their "sweet spiritedness" and non-combativeness at once deserts them.¹⁷

By the close of 1896 Otey had been working with the Pine Run church for nearly two years, during which time there had been forty additions to the congregation. The members at "Pine" that were there when he came also had been strengthened. These two years had been very pleasant ones for Otey and his family.

After a sickness continuing from May to November 28, Otey's youngest child, Showalter Guy, died of strangulated hernia, and was buried in the Howard family cemetery near the Pine Run meeting house. Otey wrote, "His coming gladdened our hearts and brightened our home; his leaving saddened our heart, humbled our spirits and prepared us to appreciate the promises of Jesus."¹⁸ E. T. Showalter, J. T.'s son,

¹⁶ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIX, No. 30 (July 28, 1896), p. 6.

¹⁷ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIX, No. 34 (August 25, 1896), p. 8.

¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "Thoughts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XXXIX, No. 51 (December 22, 1896), p. 5.

reported the death of the Otey child stating, "During the past year many have been taken away by death, and many more have been left in sore bereavement. Among the latter, our beloved Brother and Sister W. W. Otey...."¹⁹ G. H. P. Showalter preached the baby's funeral.

During the last part of December, Otey held a meeting at Max Creek. He had been preaching there infrequently for several years.

While working with the Pine Run church, Otey had a terrifically hard time supporting his family. He had hoped to be supported sufficiently that he might give all his time to preaching. Had he not expected it to be so, he would not have left his farm in Floyd County. But support had been inadequate. Consequently, he had to pull out his tools and fall back on the carpentry trade. There are many additions to houses, smoke houses, and remodeling jobs in the area of the Pine Run church that today stand as monuments to an honest preacher's effort to support his growing family. On one occasion when the Pine Run members showered the Otey family with a surprise gift of groceries, he stated how unlike was his support to that received by the preacher on a stipulated salary. Yet, he would have to confess, his support was irregular and inadequate. It is quite obvious that Otey's support at Pine Run would be inadequate when one reads the financial report and finds a yearly contribution of \$7.70.

During early January, 1897 Otey went to Carroll County to preach at the congregation where G. H. P. Showalter then was preaching regularly. This was Otey's first visit in that area. During 1897 Otey had the opportunity to widen his preaching sphere, going to several congregations

¹⁹ E. T. Showalter, "News Report," Octographic Review, Vol. XL, No. 1 (January 1, 1897), p. 8.

to which he had not been before and returning to some for whom he had not preached recently.

One notices that Otey frequently changed the heading under which he wrote in the Review. After he had chosen a heading and used it for a while, it would not be long until someone else would begin to write regularly under the same heading. Otey then would change to some other heading. In March he wrote a series of articles entitled "Calvinism" reviewing the Primitive Baptists or "Hardshells," as they were commonly called in that area. This series probably did something to arouse the Primitive Baptists, so that within a few years Otey had a debate with one of their preachers.

When he sat down to write on the night of March 14, 1897, it suddenly dawned on him that it was his thirtieth birthday. This caused him to review in his mind the past years. Doing so, he was caused to say, "In looking back over the past there are many mistakes that I could wish with all my heart had never occurred. It is human to err. Those past mistakes can never be undone."²⁰ He was now a man, and other men would no longer overlook any mistake that he made as that of an impetuous young man.

While living at Pine Run, during the early part of 1897 Otey helped in the establishment of the congregation at Draper, about five miles away. Three or four years before, the preacher, W. H. Book, at Pulaski City had done some preaching at what was then called "Draper's Station." Some had been converted, but no congregation was organized. In 1896, Otey persuaded these brethren to begin to meet at Draper. For

²⁰ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol. XI, No. 13 (March 30, 1897), p. 8.

about a year they had met in the home of H. H. Huddle. There were only eight people present for the first meetings. But by March, 1897, a lot was purchased for \$100 and a meeting house erected. Though the few members there were poor, they built a house 26' X 40' and had it all paid for but \$23 when the first service was conducted in it. This was partially made possible by the fact that not only was Otey preaching for them without pay, but he also was an efficient carpenter, and he built the meeting house, also without pay.

Many congregations had now been split over the organ and missionary society questions, which usually resulted in the conservatives having to find another meeting place. Receiving no compensation for the money they had put in the buildings, conservative brethren began to write restrictive clauses in the deed in an attempt to protect the property and to preserve it for causes they could endorse. The liberals began to criticize, saying the conservatives now had a "creed in the deed." Objection or not, the brethren had their fingers burned once and intended for it to occur no more, if they could prevent it.

When the deed for the Draper church property was drawn, Otey had written into the deed that

no organ or other musical instrument be used or kept, and that no fair, festival or other practices unauthorized in the New Testament be held or conducted in, upon or about, said premises. ...In case that any such acts or unauthorized practices are committed or performed in, upon, or about said premises or any organ or other musical instrument be introduced or used in any house or edifice erected on said premises, then such parties as shall introduce any such unauthorized practices shall forfeit all their rights to worship in, or upon said premises.²¹

²¹ Pulaski County, Virginia Deed Book 18, pp. 396, 397.

The futility of attempting to cause a congregation to continue in its present course by restrictive clauses is seen in the fact that no statement in a deed could have been worded stronger than this one by Otey. Yet in 1950 the organ was introduced into the worship at Draper. Any that objected, if there were any, were forced to leave. The statement is still in the deed, but no one but a member of that congregation can bring suit to retain the property for its intended purposes. Virtually the same thing happened in the Pine Run church. Within a year after Otey left Virginia to move to Indiana in 1904, the Pine Run church, under the instigation of J. O. Shelburne then of Texas, also put the organ in over much objection. After Otey left, Clyde Howard said, "old preacher Otey was one of the smartest men we ever had at Pine," and these included James Calfee, J. D. Haymaker, J. T. and G. H. P. Showalter, and Chester Bullard. Yet Otey hardly had gotten out of the area before his teaching was laid aside and the organ introduced.

Otey was confident that what did happen at Draper could never happen. He accordingly wrote, "The restrictive clause will be in the deed. Innovators need not apply. Their seeds of discord will not find congenial soil in the hearts of the disciples at Draper."²² It might be observed that this was true of the disciples then there, but their children and other later members did introduce the instrument.

The building at Draper was built, and paid for without "...fairs, festivals nor piteous begging..." When the new meeting house was first used for worship, Otey preached in the morning, with G. H. P. Showalter

²² W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol XL, No. 13 (March 30, 1897), p. 8.

preaching that night. Showalter left shortly after this to go to Lockney, Texas to become principal of Lockney Christian College.

During the early part of June, while Otey was writing his report and article for the Review, the most violent earthquake he had ever experienced occurred. The windows, doors, furniture and his writing table trembled violently. It seemed as though the house would be shaken from its foundation. It caused Otey to think of the words of the Lord in Matthew 24:3-8.

Meanwhile Otey was preaching as often as possible--in fact, too often for his own financial good. He was finding it necessary to live off of borrowed money, as the brethren were not supporting him sufficiently. For example, the Shiloh church records show that he was paid \$1.50 for his preaching at his appointment there. One must remember that this was all the cash income from preaching that he would have for the week.

At each of these many places where he was preaching a bounteous harvest was being reaped. He baptized one in the New River at Pine the third Sunday in June. While preaching at Clark's Mines, he converted a Methodist man and his wife. During a two week meeting at Bethany (also known as Chestnut Ridge) in Floyd County, four were baptized, one from the Methodists and two from the "Dunkards." This was near where the "Dunkard" debate with Hylton had been held. He held two meetings by himself and assisted in a third within eighteen months at Bethany, for which he was paid a "nice gift of substantial sympathy."²³ The Bethany church continued to meet until 1956, when its few remaining members began

²³ W. W. Otey, "Good News," Octographic Review, Vol. XL, No. 34 (August 24, 1897), p. 8.

to attend the Christiansburg Church of Christ. In fact, most of the country congregations where Otey and Showalter preached no longer meet, the remaining members going into Christiansburg, the nearest congregation. Laurel Hill, New Salem, and Clark's Mill do still meet regularly.

Otey had found something new under the sun---a Methodist demanding immersion! He wrote criticizing the mad craze in the churches for something new. There can not be anything new about the ancient gospel. Yet some people will not be satisfied "even with a bicycle unless it is a '97 model," said Otey.

The New River Evangelizing Board was to meet in Pulaski City on September 6th, 1897. A formal request was given through Col. J. R. Miller to Otey to attend the meeting of the Board. Several of the well-known brethren were on this board, including W. S. Bullard of Snowville. The Board had decided to begin spending eighty percent of its funds in evangelistic work inside the district boundaries, rather than the usual five percent annually. Some of the board members knew that Otey was exceedingly hard pressed financially just at that time. They reasoned, to offer Otey some work under their auspices, should he accept the offer, would eliminate his opposition to the District Board. They hardly could have contacted Otey, when from most standpoints, he would be compelled to view any more favorably their offer. Nevertheless, Otey knew what his response would have to be before he went to Pulaski City on September 6th. He could not turn his back upon those principles which he verily believed. Four of the five board members were in favor of "pushing the work along lines we can agree upon," but Otey could not "agree upon" the existence of the board itself through which to do evangelistic work. Otey offered to cease his objection to the Missionary

Board if someone would show him scriptural authority for it. But until someone produced the scriptural authority for the Board, "all the gold in Klondike" could not stop his opposition. Otey knew this stand was in diametric opposition to every earthly interest he had. But stand he must! Before he left the meeting, Otey asked, "Gentlemen, do you have confidence in your position? Can you find a man that has the courage to meet the writer in a fair discussion on these things? If so where is he?" Stating firmly, "No, I am not for sale," Otey went back to his home near Pine Run Creek.²⁴ With the exception of the effort made by Professor Josephus Hopwood who shortly thereafter came to Draper to talk to Otey to try to bring him back into line with brotherhood sentiment, the liberals left Otey alone. They knew where he stood and knew they had little chance of moving him from that stand.

During the latter part of 1897, Otey could find no time to write, as he was exceptionally busy preaching each Lord's day and every night that he had the opportunity to do so. Financial pressures had driven him to work long hours daily with whatever odd jobs he could find in the area. He continued to preach at Pine Run, Draper, Shiloh, and Laurel Hill. He wrote in March, 1898, "I have been so situated for several months that I could not in justice to myself and readers, write for publication. But I have not been idle with tongue...I will soon be in the field evangelizing."²⁵

In late May he received a letter from W. K. Lofflin of Wythe County asking him to come to baptize him and his wife. While on this

²⁴ W. W. Otey, "Col. Miller's Letter," Octographic Review, Vol. XL, No. 51 (December 21, 1897), p. 8.

²⁵ W. W. Otey, "Good News," Octographic Review, Vol. XLI, No. 22 (May 31, 1898), p. 8.

trip, Otey preached the fifth Sunday in May at Boon Furnace, receiving permission to use the Methodist meeting house in which to meet. In July he began a meeting at the little town of Auburn in Montgomery County. Here an idea hit Otey that was to burn inside him for many years. He deplored the fact that congregations of good size and considerable wealth were doing so little to spread the gospel elsewhere. It was good to object to man-made societies, but objecting brethren must be busy doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way. So he wrote, "Any congregation of fifty members ought....to establish another self-sustaining one every five years at the most."²⁶ Each congregation, Otey declared, should select some point where the gospel would likely be received and see that it was preached there.

In August he went for another meeting at the Bethany church, conducting it in a grove near the meeting house. On the Lord's day he preached in the morning on "All-Sufficiency of Christ" and at night from Romans 8:16 on "Witness of the Spirit." After ten sermons, four had been baptized. Otey felt more at home among Bethany disciples than among the members of any other church.

By now a crisis had been reached in Otey's life. He was compelled to do something he hated more than death to do. He was going to be forced for a while to turn from the evangelistic field for financial reasons. He thought it likely that during the next year he would do less preaching than any year since he had begun. For over five years, while devoting one-half his time to preaching, he had received less than enough support to sustain himself and his family for one year. During

²⁶ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol. XLI, No. 33 (August 16, 1898), p. 3.

the past nine months he had held four meetings, in addition to preaching each Sunday from one to three times. For this nine months work he had received less than thirty dollars. It had cost him more than that to keep his horse which he rode to his appointments. He had built a kitchen on the house of James Altizer, a Chestnut Ridge church member, for the three year old colt he rode, sometimes forty miles in a day. He now had a wife and four children and the "eulogies of sermons" would not feed and clothe them. Furthermore, he had been at the point of nervous prostration due to over-work and anxiety caused by financial embarrassment. He had lived as economically as he knew how. To avoid the payment of rent, he bought a small house and one acre. Yet in spite of his efforts to live as cheaply as possible, Otey was now in debt \$350--as much as he could make in ten years while just preaching, if the next ten years were to be as the last ten.

Dr. Chester Bullard of Snowville had started nearly all of the congregations where Otey then was preaching, including Pine Run and Shiloh. Bullard said he grew up when the people thought that money had little to do with religion.²⁷ Many years later Bullard stated that he contributed more annually than he received for a year's work. He, of course, earned a good living at the medical profession. He was too embarrassed to speak about money. Consequently, Bullard permitted the people to fail to do their duty toward gospel preachers. Bullard said, "One prominent wrong was the failure to educate the brethren in the important duty of supplying the sinews of war. The churches in south west Virginia and West Virginia, and the border counties of North

²⁷ Hodge, Op. Cit., p. 157.

Carolina and Tennessee are largely the fruitage of unrequited labor."²⁸ Shortly before Bullard's death, he commented that he thought the greatest failure he had made toward the churches was in failing to teach them to give properly to reward duly the laborers among them. He regretted the hardship that this failure had wrought upon younger gospel preachers.

W. W. Otey was one of these young men bearing the consequence of Bullard's and other older preachers' failure to teach the brethren properly. It always has been a case of embarrassment to faithful gospel preachers to preach the church's responsibility toward the support of the gospel, fearing someone might think they act from a selfish motive. But no man should be forced to go to warfare at his own charges, and the laborer is worthy of his hire (1 Corinthians 9:7, 14). But the failures of the past could not be corrected instantly. Otey was in debt deeply, and something had to be done about it.

Otey specifically stated, as he reported his case to the paper, that he was not asking for donations. He simply thought the brethren had a right to know why his pen would be silenced in the Review and his voice heard less frequently in the evangelistic field. His head and his hands were his only capital, and therefore, his only source of income. Therefore he said, "I regard it as my duty to God, my family, and the church of Christ, that I give my energies to business for the next year in order to clear myself of the burden of debt."²⁹ Though he clearly stated he was not asking for contributions, still a few sent money. One

²⁸ J. W. West, Op. Cit., p. 26.

²⁹ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol. XLI, No. 40 (October 4, 1898), p. 4.

dollar was received from the church at Hastings, Nebraska, and sixty-two cents from a brother in Dakota, which Otey dutifully reported.

Though Otey was going to have to give himself considerably to business for a while, he determined that he would continue to preach as much as possible. On Saturday before the second Sunday in November, he baptized two at Garnard Chapel in Montgomery County, while he was on his way to his regular appointment at Laurel Hill.

He made immediate plans to move into Draper to enter the small fruit growing business with John Draper, a well-to-do farmer in Draper's valley, for whom the town now known as "Draper" was named. It was known as "Lucretia" when Otey moved there.

For the first several months of 1899 nothing was written by Otey's pen. He only found time occasionally to write a short article. The division in the church bothered him. He thought it bothered others also. So he wrote on the subject.

To reflect what a power the disciples once were when they were a unit and our present divided and weakened condition is sad in the extreme. But it is far better that the division has come than that the whole church should be corrupted, as it certainly would have been had not watchmen on Zion's walls sounded the alarm and called a halt in the mad rush toward Rome.³⁰

In the summer Otey got into an extended correspondence with an unnamed Presbyterian "D.D." The Presbyterian had boldly preached that sprinkling was scriptural baptism, to which Otey just as boldly objected. Otey suggested that they discuss the subject before the interested public either in written or oral form. The Presbyterian agreed to write his reasons for his position, but suddenly broke off the correspondence.

³⁰ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol. XLII, No. 21 (May 23, 1899), p. 5.

What correspondence passed between them was printed in the Review. Otey had now been placed on the "Contributorial Staff" of the paper and felt he should send in an article as frequently as possible. After moving to Draper he began preaching at Pine Run very seldomly, giving most of his time to Laurel Hill, Draper, and a place near Mountain View. Two Sundays monthly were spent at Draper. It plagued Otey to see the many places where churches could be started if only he had the time to work at establishing them.

OTey-LINES DEBATE

The second important debate conducted by Otey was held in 1899. In June he received a letter from R. B. Williams in Carroll County stating that Dr. Wilkinson, a medical doctor but also a Mormon elder, had challenged the brethren for a debate. Otey wrote asking Williams and Wilkinson to meet him at Mitchell Cross Roads in Carroll County on June 25th to make the arrangements for a debate. Wilkinson demanded three witnesses to the signing of the proposition, seemingly fearful that Otey might not honor his signature otherwise, and the debate would fail to materialize. But no thought could have been farther from Otey's mind.

The proposition which they signed read, "Resolved, That Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and the Book of Mormon is also the word of God." Otey insisted that he be given permission to have a stenographer at the debate for the purpose of recording it for publication. Clark Braden's debate with E. L. Kelley was the only Mormon debate with a member of the church then in print. Dr. Wilkinson stated that he would not do the debating himself unless he found it impossible to get a suitable man to come to represent them. He proposed that he get the President of their Virginia conference, which suited Otey excellently.

The dates agreed upon for the debate were October 11-14. Shortly before time for the debate to begin, Otey wrote, "I have not yet learned whom I will meet, and it makes no difference to me just so he is a gentlemen, and possessing ability. I desire the best they can produce..."³¹

The Mormons seemingly had a difficult time securing just the man they wanted for the job. Four different men were announced as Otey's opponent. The fourth, and the one that did the debating was Joseph H. Lines, imported from Pima, Graham County, Arizona. The sessions were arranged for a two hour meeting both morning and afternoon.

Otey had no intention of going into the debate without being prepared. He, therefore, ordered seventeen books on Mormonism, including their important official publications. When the debate began, he had read six thousand pages from Mormon publications. He was prepared to document every charge he made. One unfortunate thing about the debate so far as Otey was concerned was his inability to get a stenographer to record it. He hired three different ones. The third was employed just two days before the debate was to begin. Otey even had given partial payment to him. But the stenographer's physician advised him at the last moment that he should not attempt such a laborious task. So no stenographer was present, or the Otey-Lines debate would have been printed. Otey later said this failure was "one of the deepest regrets of my life."

Otey announced before the debate began that he intended to present material which "will shock the moral sensibilities of those who are not informed in regard to their teaching and practice. The whole system is

³¹ W. W. Otey, "Debate With The Mormons," Octographic Review, Vol. XLII, No. 37 (September 12, 1899), p. 6.

revolting in the extreme." He did not expect what he had to say to be very pleasant to Mormon ears. Thus he expected a "lively debate." "Think of the most debasing immoralities and the most horrible crimes that the mind can invent, and I will prove the founders and leaders of Mormonism guilty of them all wholesale."³²

Lines was said to be the best man they could get to meet Otey. Otey charged that the Mormons taught that unless a man married several wives he could not be exalted to the third heaven. Mormons, said Otey, do not teach and practice in Virginia what they teach and practice in Utah. As a witness that this was true, Otey called the father of Dr. Wilkinson to the speaker's stand to testify. Dr. Wilkinson did everything possible to prevent the testimony of his father, and it appeared for a while that the debate immediately might be discontinued. However, Otey announced that if the debate was stopped he would remain several days in the community for the express purpose of exposing Mormonism. So Dr. Wilkinson's father, Stephen, was permitted to testify that the practice of Mormons in Utah was different than their practice in Virginia. Stephen Wilkinson had just returned from the Klondike gold fields and had lived among the Mormons.

Lines, during the debate, read from P. P. Pratt to prove that Joseph Smith was a prophet. But when Otey read from Pratt to show that Mormonism taught that only governments ordained by Mormon priests were legal, Lines said, "I rise to a point of order. Pratt is not recognized as authority in our church." Otey felt that if he was not, there was no advantage in Lines quoting Pratt.

³² W. W. Otey, "Otey-Lines Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. XLII, No. 44 (October 31, 1899), p. 6.

Once during the debate, Dr. Wilkinson, who had been responsible for Lines coming, rose and said, "Elder Lines, you are clear off the subject." He proposed that Lines get back to Smith, the Book of Mormon and leave out Utah and Brigham Young. Each time that Otey made a charge against Mormonism that was disputed, he would turn to a marked passage in one of the official Mormon books. Otey declared that the Mountain Meadow Massacre, in which 120 people were killed, was Mormon doctrine in practice. It was twenty years before those guilty of this crime were turned out of the Mormon church. Otey said that the Mormon doctrine of "blood atonement" was that they should cut unbeliever's throats to save them. Dr. Wilkinson publicly said he would send for a copy of Smith's book of sermons, from which Otey purported to be quoting, and if he found such a quotation in it, he would renounce Mormonism.

At the close of the debate, Otey asked, "All who now think Mormonism something better than when this debate began stand." No one stood. He read the statement again. Five persons then stood, including those that came from Arizona. Even Dr. Wilkinson did not stand. Otey turned to him and asked if he wished to be counted with the five. Wilkinson said he would have to be given time to investigate some of the charges Otey made before he be counted with the five. The Mormon church never had another meeting in the community. The debate had killed it.

When the opposite proposition was read, asking for all to stand whose appreciation of Mormonism had lessened as a result of the debate, every remaining person stood as one man. Otey felt he had gained a victory for truth by the debate. He was exceedingly sorry the

stenographer had not been present. He felt admissions were made by the Mormons there they had been unwilling to make elsewhere, and that these admissions should have been published.

He, therefore, read to the audience the following proposal:

Proposition to Dr. Wilkinson and Elder Joseph H. Lines: I will give you \$200 to furnish a Mormon to debate again this proposition 6 days so that I can have a stenographer to take it down, and you can set any date that suits you within one year and any suitable place within 1,000 miles, and you can give me 60 days notice of time and place.

Otey sent a copy of this proposal to the Presidents of the Virginia and Southern conferences of the Mormon church, and to the President of the church in Salt Lake City. But nothing was ever said concerning it. Shortly after the debate Otey wrote four long articles dissecting Mormonism, in which he indicated by his writing that he had made a penetrating study of Mormonism. This was the first and last debate he was privileged to have with the Mormons.

Shortly before the Mormon debate began, Otey received some criticism which stated that he previously opposed the use of baptistries, held to the "re-baptism" position, taught that one had to kneel to pray scripturally, and opposed the Christian participating in civil government. Otey felt some explanation was in order. He said

For a while I thought that what is called re-baptism was right. But after a careful consideration of the subject, in the light of the Bible, I am thoroughly satisfied that for a preacher to sit in judgment on the validity of another's obedience when they have obeyed the thing commanded is presumptuous in the extreme.

He also admitted that he was at first prejudiced against baptistries, since he grew to manhood in a country where one could scarcely get half a mile from a stream of water sufficiently large in which to baptize.

In regard to kneeling in prayer, Otey never tried to endorse kneeling as some did, though he thought "all truly humble people prefer to kneel when they can reasonably, decently or orderly do so." Otey had to admit that he formerly was "unsettled" on these subjects and "had a leaning toward the other side from the position I now occupy."³³ One should not be critical of a young man who learns he is wrong and admits he has changed his position. Those to be criticized are those who think they are wrong and refuse to change, or who change and refuse to admit it. Neither is honest.

During 1900, Otey found time to do less writing than any year since he had been preaching. He had observed that a number of the brethren had gone rather wild over what were called "union meetings." Otey wanted no part in them. He maintained that instead of the church converting denominationalism to New Testament Christianity as a result of these "union meetings," denominationalism was converting the church to sectarianism. "Union meetings" had caused some of the churches to take an unscriptural name, "Christian Church." Others had added the "one man pastor," the Sunday School as a separate organization with its Superintendent, mechanical instrumental music, the assessment plan of raising money, district, state and national conferences and conventions, "Presidents," "State Evangelists" and missionary societies, all of which, Otey maintained, had been learned and appropriated from denominationalism. Denominationalism had nothing that the church needed. Otey, therefore, opposed "union meetings."³⁴

³³W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol. XLII, No. 44 (October 31, 1899), p. 3.

³⁴W. W. Otey, "Which Is Being Converted?" Octographic Review, Vol. XLIII, No. 11 (March 13, 1900), p. 2.

During the early part of 1900 Otey and his family had a severe case of influenza, which caused every member of the family to be bedfast except a five year old boy. He was still limited in the amount of evangelistic work that he could do due to his labor to support his family. In an article he exhorted families to have more daily devotions, suggesting also that they would profit by reading the Octographic Review.

Draper's Valley was an extension of the valley lying west of the Blue Ridge, and was in what was considered one of the most prosperous counties in the state. It was fine fruit growing country, but fruit growing had not yet been introduced into that part of the state. Otey and John Draper, therefore, became partners in a nursery business. But first they had to sell the farmers in that area on the advisability of going into the fruit business. Several acres of river bottom land were rented upon which Otey planted thousands of seedlings which he later grafted. This venture did not turn out well, as the largest flood in years came, and Otey's many thousands of apple trees were ten feet under water.

While on a visit to Floyd County to see his father-in-law, Otey grafted a small seedling in the back yard of the Showalter place. This tree, now a giant apple tree, is considered the ancestor of the "Showalter Apple," a strain developed by Otey and still sold in Southwest Virginia.

Otey then bought ten acres on top of Peak Knob, a mountain near Draper, from M. I. Draper for \$200. On these ten acres he planted a peach orchard. These trees also never made Otey any money, as shortly before they were ready to bear fruit an extremely late and heavy frost came destroying the fruit. Otey was beginning to think that as a business man he was destined to follow in the steps of his unsuccessful father, Joshua.

Otey and several other men formed a company to plant many thousands of apple trees in Patrick County. Though the financial load was greater than a poor man such as Otey could carry through to completion, yet the success of the company was such that when Otey found it necessary to sell out, he received \$1,000 for his part in the company. This was the most money Otey had ever had till this time. Though it had at first looked as though Otey might not be able to pay off his debts as quickly as he hoped to do so, when he sold the Patrick County interest, he had sufficient money to pay off all his bills. However, Otey remained in the nursery business several years longer. He had bought a house and lot in Draper for \$365, and spent the remainder of his Virginia days here.

In December he held a meeting at J. T. Showalter's home congregation, New Salem, during which three were baptized.

He had written nothing for publication in the Review since May of 1900. Some of the brethren began to speculate on whether Otey and Sommer were still on good terms. Otey had stated over two years before when he moved to Draper that he would be unable to write as much as previously. The fact that it was being rumored that he and Sommer had split up made him feel compelled to write his reasons for writing so little. In his nursery business his nephew, Forrest Showalter, was his only helper. Otey wrote, "...my time is now divided somewhat as follows: grafting, planting, cultivating, selling, digging, billing, delivering and collecting, planting young orchards and managing them, cultivating and selling small fruits."³⁵

³⁵ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Comments," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 2 (January 8, 1901), p. 3.

In addition to these numerous chores, he was preaching at five places each month, and at one of these places he was preaching twice monthly. Though his time for preaching was terribly curtailed, for some reason his preaching was meeting with better success than usual. This success may have been the result of the fact that the line was now clearly drawn between the conservatives and the liberals. With division present and recognized, there ceased to be so much turmoil inside each congregation. If a person was either conservative or liberal, there was a congregation of that persuasion to which he could go. With widespread division, paradoxically, there had come congregational peace. People could more easily be reached with the gospel now. Brethren could turn from fighting among themselves over the issues of the day to trying to reach people of the world.

One might well say that a new era was being reached in Otey's life. From this time onward, for perhaps twenty years, Otey was as much in demand to conduct gospel meetings as anyone among the conservatives in the North. He conducted some very successful meetings in which many persons were baptized. When one tastes preliminary success, it often stirs his zeal to put forth proper effort that makes greater success possible. Such is what happened in the preaching activity of Otey in this era.

So great were the opportunities in Pulaski County, thought Otey, that someone had to be induced to come to assist in the work. In an attempt to persuade some young man to come make his home there, Otey wrote extolling the beauties and prosperity of the county. But no helper was forthcoming at this time. Otey simply would have to redouble his own efforts and reach more people.

Otey's experience with majority rule in congregations had been a bitter one. It never worked out to what he considered to be God's will. The uninformed masses are not apt accidentally to stumble upon God's plan. So he wrote, "Among all the innovations in religion none, perhaps, is more dangerous than that of submitting matters of work and worship to a promiscuous vote. Once admit it and the flood gate of all human devices is raised."³⁶

A. J. Nance, then of Hammond, Illinois, proposed that each reader send one dollar to the Review to assist in its publication. Otey wrote in response that dollar bills with him just at that time were rather scarce. However, he was growing a nursery and had more trees than dollars. Of course Otey was willing to help the Review, but instead he proposed to give one hundred apple trees to each one who would give the Review twelve dollars. How many apple trees Otey gave away in this manner is not known, but some did accept his generous offer.

OTEY-DULA DEBATE

During the summer of 1901, Otey conducted his third Virginia debate. His opponent was J. G. Dula of Tazewell County, a member of the Second Advent Christian Church. Omer Motsinger, a young preacher of Orleans, Indiana, who had responded to Otey's request for help in that area, had come to view the prospects. Motsinger had been in Virginia preaching for three months, six weeks of the time living with Otey. Therefore, Motsinger served as Otey's moderator in the debate. Motsinger, young inexperienced preacher and writer that he was, wrote several factual, dryly written articles reviewing the debate, from which

³⁶ W. W. Otey, Facts and Comments, "Octographic Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 32 (August 6, 1901), p. 5.

is gained all information known about it. He did not relate where the debate was held, but it was near Draper.

Motsinger reported that Dula's first proposition was, "I affirm that man is mortal." This obviously could not have been the exact way the proposition was worded, for it would have been impossible for Otey to deny that Dula affirmed that man was mortal, which is what the proposition as reported by Motsinger would have required him to do. The second proposition was, "Resolved that the wicked and the devil will be annihilated, (utterly destroyed) after the judgment by fire," which Dula also affirmed. A third proposition was signed which Otey was to affirm: "That the kingdom of Christ was established in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost and is still in existence."

The debate was conducted on July 26-27, 1901, with two sessions daily, each session being two hours in length. The weather was oppressively hot. Dula was in a hurry to return home for some reason. So by "mutual consent" they dropped the third proposition that they might devote more time to discussing the second proposition. Good order prevailed throughout the debate and Otey and the brethren thought that considerable good came from it. Motsinger wrote two articles in the Review which covered the first proposition only, stating his intention to write more later. Two months later, after an unexplained delay, the two other articles on the second proposition appeared.

During 1901, the pace of Otey's preaching activity was stepped up considerably. In early August he visited the church meeting on Wolfe Creek in Giles County which had been one of the earliest congregations in that section of Virginia. This was Landon Duncan's home congregation.

Also in August he preached at the congregation meeting in East Pulaski City, with two baptisms resulting. He preached at the residence of one of the three Gregor brothers who were former members at Pine Run church. Eight were baptized on this Lord's Day. On Monday night he preached at Oglesby school house with three more additions. On this week end Otey had baptized thirteen persons after preaching several times. For this work he was paid not one cent. Therefore, he felt he had good reason to be resentful of the label, "anti-missionary."

For some unknown reason, Otey was dropped from the Contributorial staff of the Review for a few months in 1901. Showalter was then having some controversy with Sommer over the relationship of the Christian to civil government, and to war in particular. This controversy resulted in a final break between Showalter and the Review. It is likely that Otey's close relationship with Showalter caused Sommer to suspicion that dropping Showalter would involve dropping Otey. But on this issue, Otey differed with Showalter and agreed with Sommer. After only a few months, Otey's name was added again, without comment, to the Review staff.

By 1902 the conservative brethren had begun to realize that the liberals had to be pressed to meet them in open and public discussion. Real progress had been made for the cause of truth in bygone years when sectarianism was forced to attempt a defense of its positions. With overt division now a virtual reality, the conservative brethren began to realize that the only way some people would ever be able to hear their side of the issues would be through public debate. Daniel Sommer began to press J. B. Briney in private correspondence for a debate. Sommer stated that the condition had become so serious that division was resulting. Certainly these were momentous problems that merited more consideration

than till now had been given them. However, Briney replied:

If such conditions do exist, I am obliged to regard you as a factionist, and your churches as factions, and therefore not entitled to recognition. In the body of Christ you would be entitled to your opinions...But when you create a schism with your opinions, and carry off a faction, you place yourself under the severest censure of Scripture, and forfeit all claims upon the consideration of the brethren.³⁷

The "Progressives" felt that the issues did not merit discussion and that the trouble best could be squelched by keeping it out of public consideration. Briney wanted no part of the debate!

The "Conservatives" then began to needle Clark Braden, who also was a reputable debater. He could not reply that he did not believe in debating, for he had conducted too many to make such a reply. But neither was Braden anxious for a debate on the subjects. W. G. Roberts finally pressured Braden into a debate to be held beginning November 11, 1902, at Belmont, Illinois. But what propositions Roberts had to agree to! Roberts had to affirm:

The things to which those who are nicknamed "Anti" object in the religious teaching and practice of those who are nicknamed "Progressives" are matters of religious faith, religious worship, religious practice or religious duty for which scriptural authority can and should be demanded; and they should be excluded from the religious teaching and practice of all Christians, for lack of scriptural authority.

In the same debate Braden was to affirm:

The things to which those who are nicknamed "Anti" object in the religious teaching and practice of those who are nicknamed "Progressives" are outside matters of religious faith, religious worship, religious practice or religious duty for which scriptural authority can and should be demanded; and they are mere opinions, mere aids, mere means, mere expedients, mere methods, mere instrumentalities used in living religious faith, worship, duty or practice, for which no scriptural authority can or should be demanded.

³⁷ J. B. Briney, letter to Sommer, Octographic Review, Vol. XLV, No. 9 (February 25, 1902), p. 8.

To say the least, clearer propositions could be worded. But Roberts accepted these in order that the debate might be conducted.

After the Braden-Roberts debate, Braden obviously decided that some good could come for his cause from such discussions. He immediately challenged Daniel Sommer also to meet him at Belmont, Illinois. The "pastors" at Carmi, Keensburg and Belmont also signed the challenge, indicating their endorsement of Braden for the debate. Counter challenges were issued by G. B. Hancock, J. W. Perkins and E. G. Denny. So Braden broadened his challenge to include anyone, no longer insisting only upon Daniel Sommer as his opponent. Braden wrote, "The writer now challenges Daniel Sommer and any and all representatives of anti-ism to debate the real issues as stated above, at any time or place, in the United States or Canada, where proper arrangements can be made."³⁸ E. G. Denny had done considerable debating. He immediately accepted Braden's challenge, securing proper endorsement and suggesting the debate be held at Sullivan, Indiana, since there were twelve "anti" churches and three "progressives" churches in the county. Because Braden insisted that Denny sign an agreement objectionable to Denny, this debate never transpired.

A preacher's institute, consisting of eight preachers, was formed in Olney, Illinois February 4-5, 1903, for the express purpose of challenging "Anti-ism." Thad Hutson debated J. H. Tiller of the Christian Church at Stoddard County, Missouri in April, 1903. The fight was now coming out into the open. The period of inner-congregational controversy was now about over. One group of brethren now was ready to

³⁸ Clark Braden, letter to Sommer, Octographic Review, Vol. XLVI, No. 11 (March 17, 1903), p. 5.

encounter the other on the polemical platform. Otey soon was to find his place among those engaging in debate on these matters.

In May, 1902, Otey made a trip into Floyd County. He preached at the old Mountain Cove school near Showalter where fourteen years before he had obeyed the gospel and begun to make his first attempts at public speaking. Two were baptized. In June he returned to preach three times more, baptizing two others. Others were being baptized by him at Ogleby school house, and at Hebron in Carroll County, where he had begun to preach on the 4th Sunday. Otey reported, "I have had the best average audiences this summer and more confessions than for some years."³⁹ In August he returned to Ogleby school house which was in Wythe County, six miles west of Draper, to baptize five. He had begun to preach at Clark's Mill, a small community three miles south of Draper, in a small unoccupied store building on the first Sunday evening of each month. Otey had lived within a few miles of Clark's Mill for eight years. He was well known in the area, and the prospects for success looked good. He wrote, "I am glad that it is not necessary to change locations every year or two in order to have any influence for good."⁴⁰

For several years the position of the Review had been moving more and more in opposition to what commonly was called "Bible Colleges." Jacob Creath, Jr. and Benjamin Franklin both had become so suspicious of Bible Colleges that they began to oppose them. Daniel Sommer had been greatly influenced by both of these outstanding preachers. Sommer had begun in recent years to devote more and more time to a discussion of

³⁹ W. W. Otey, "Good News," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 33 (August 19, 1902), p. 8.

⁴⁰ W. W. Otey, "Good News," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIV, No. 42 (October 21, 1902), p. 8.

the Bible College question. Some of the brethren in the South, primarily David Lipscomb and James A. Harding, had begun to differ with Sommer. In 1903 Sommer wrote a series of articles called "Concerning the Unscripturalness of Establishing Religio-Secular Schools With the Lord's Money." Sommer taught that "faithful obedience to the divine doctrine of 'equality' will place all the Lord's money in the church treasury, or in the hands of the Lord's needy ones. With all the Lord's money thus placed there will be none in the hands of Christians for building religio-secular schools."⁴¹ One can see from this quotation that Sommer considered all of the money that an individual had, above the bare necessities of life, to be the Lord's money. According to this position, he therefore opposed the usage of the individuals' funds to build Bible Colleges. Because of his usage of the phrase, "the Lord's money," some have concluded that Sommer opposed only the use of congregational funds to build schools. Sommer seemed oblivious to the fact that the same argument would have made it impossible for him to pay \$12,000 as he did to purchase the American Christian Review in 1886.

Because of this emphasis upon opposition to schools supported by "the Lord's money" (which in Sommer's terminology meant either congregational or individual funds), some of the writers on the Review staff began to renege on endorsement of the Review. G. B. Hancock had been a prolific writer for thirty-five years. Shortly after the Otey-Lines debate, Hancock had written a long and excellent series of articles called "Mormonism Exposed," which was later printed in book form. This book still is in great demand and is yet kept in print. But because of

⁴¹ Daniel Sommer, "Concerning the Unscripturalness of Establishing Religio-Secular Schools With the Lord's Money," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVI, No. 36 (September 8, 1903), p. 8.

what he considered the Review's "extremes" on the college issues, Hancock severed his relationship with the paper. Though he did not endorse "seminaries," neither could he endorse Sommer in his opposition to the existence of Bible Colleges. Hancock felt compelled to write a statement showing why he no longer would be connected with the Review. Till now Otey had said nothing publicly on the subject. Shortly afterward he felt conscience bound to speak out.

Though Otey likely was unaware of it at the beginning of 1903, his Virginia preaching was nearly at an end. Processes were underway that would eventuate in his leaving the state permanently as a resident.

During the summer of 1903, Thad Hutson of Lynn, Indiana made a preaching tour of Virginia. He was very impressed by the country. Otey and his revolutionary nursery business had transformed the country. Hutson wrote in his report to the Review, "I am now in Draper, Va. at the home of Bro. W. W. Otey...This is the edge of a beautiful rolling valley surrounded by mountains on every side. A beautiful scene meets the eye from any direction. Here are the fullest trees of the most perfect apples I ever saw."⁴²

Hutson was impressed by the brethren at Draper, stating they seemed to be strong in the faith and of an intelligent class of people. But more impressed was he with Otey. He spoke of Otey as a man of "great energy, a fine character, and of more than ordinary native ability as a preacher and debater." The relationship of Otey and Hutson was a pleasant and cordial one. Probably this visit by Hutson from Indiana had considerable to do with Otey's decision a few months later to visit the Hoosier state.

⁴² Thad Hutson, "Considerations," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVI, No. 40 (October 6, 1903), p. 1.

Early in 1904 Otey wrote a reflective article on the "Spirituality of the Church."⁴³ He commented upon the remarkable growth of the church. His conclusion was that the church had prospered so in its early history, not because of boards and conclaves which were then non-existent, but because of congregational inner spiritual strength. He, therefore, urged more emphasis be put upon congregational edification and less upon erection of boards to do the work of the church.

Early in 1904 C. R. Carter, an elder of Lynn, Indiana church, wrote in the Review that the church at Lynn was interested in getting a faithful preacher to locate there. Immediately Otey was interested. His affinity with Sommer and the Review made it attractive to him. Ten years before, the Review had moved from Cincinnati to Indianapolis. Thad Hutson also had tried to persuade Otey to come further west. Otey was not at all pleased with the arrangement at Draper that necessitated his spending so much of his time laboring in the nursery business, to the neglect of his study and preaching. In late February Otey went to Lynn to visit the brethren, and preached for them four discourses. He was so favorably impressed with the congregation, the school, town, and surrounding country that immediately he contracted to purchase land with the intention of selling out his nursery stock and moving to Lynn by early fall.

There were several factors which made Otey interested in moving to Lynn. Lynn was very centrally located, being seven miles west of the Ohio state line, midway north and south in Indiana; eighty miles north of Cincinnati; 114 miles west of Columbus; and seventy miles east of

⁴³ W. W. Otey, "Spirituality of the Church," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVII, No. 11 (March 15, 1904), p. 4.

Indianapolis. This good location made it possible for Otey easily to preach in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Iowa and Michigan. He felt he hardly could have chosen a better location to make travel to preaching appointments convenient. This certainly was an improvement over the mountain trails Otey had been using for nearly twenty years in Virginia.

Lynn, in 1904, was a quiet little town of 1500 inhabitants and was clean both physically and morally. There was not even a saloon in the town. It appeared to Otey that this environment would be splendid for the rearing of his children. As Otey sought a place for his residence, his first concern was to locate near a loyal church. The battle in the church at Lynn already had been fought. Approximately one hundred members of the church there had arrived at the building one Sunday morning to find themselves locked out. A new congregation had been established and a new \$1800 meeting house erected before Otey's visit. Daniel Sommer, Thad Hutson, A. W. Harvey, and J. C. Frazee had been preaching for the congregation several years. The disciples there were thus well grounded in the faith. Second, Otey sought a town with a good school. Not every community had a good school system in those days. The Lynn school then had seven teachers and offered four years in higher mathematics and in Latin. Third, Otey was seeking a moderately sized railroad town from which he could travel in all directions to preach. It appeared to Otey that Lynn had everything for which he had been looking. He was better pleased than he had dared to hope. He had absolutely no difficulty making up his mind to move to Indiana.

One temptation confronted Otey while he was in Indiana that he had to overcome. For twenty years he had avidly read the Review. One

of his most pleasant day dreams had been that of supposing a visit to the Review office. While in Lynn he was within seventy miles of Indianapolis. But since he knew that after moving to Lynn he would have many opportunities for prolonged visits, he fought off the temptation to stealaway for a short visit on this trip.

On the surface it may have appeared to Otey that all he had to do was to go back to Virginia, get his family, and leave for Indiana. Little could Otey realize that in addition to the burdens upon him of selling his property and his nursery business that he would be busily engaged in some of the most fruitful preaching he had ever done in Virginia. He even had a debate for which to prepare and to conduct before he could leave. These things he did not know as he rode the train the five hundred miles back to Draper to tell his wife and children the good news.

Otey continued to preach at Pine Run, Shiloh, Draper, and East Pulaski, all in Pulaski County, as he had the time. He also was preaching at the Oak Grove school house with some success. Periodically, he continued to make trips to Floyd and Montgomery Counties to preach at Mountain Cove school house, at New Salem near Snowville, and at Laurel Hill. At these places he had baptized many people in the last two years, his success having been near phenomenal. Yet his greatest success till now was shortly to be experienced.

THE CLARK'S MILL MEETING

For about a year and a half Otey had been preaching in the little community known as Clark's Mill, about three miles south of Draper. Clark's Mill was cut off from Draper by a large bend in the New River. M. B. Clark, a prominent Presbyterian, had offered Otey the use of his

empty store house located on the bank of New River in which to conduct a series of gospel meetings. Beginning the fourth Sunday in April, 1904, the meeting continued over six Sundays. Though Otey had not intended to stay so long at Clark's Mill, interest was at such a high pitch, wisdom would not permit him to close sooner.

Otey was receiving virtually no monetary support for his preaching at this time. He, therefore, had to work a full day. Then late in the evening, he and his family would begin the three mile walk to Clark's Mill. Otey usually had to carry at least one of the smaller children on his shoulder. Along the way the family would be joined by other families also going to the meeting. After preaching a rousing sermon, Otey then would begin the three mile walk back home. After getting a little sleep, he had to rise early to begin a new day's labor. One wonders when he got his rest, or did his studying.

The Clark's Mill area was then rather thickly settled, primarily with Primitive Baptists. The Primitive Baptist was the only church in the community. Though the meeting was conducted just when most of the farmers in the area were busy planting corn, interest was such that by "early lamp light" most of the farming activity had stopped and a large crowd was gathered. When the meeting had closed after six weeks of nightly services, ninety-seven persons had been baptized into Christ. Among these were forty women and fifty-two men. Otey's second daughter and oldest son and M. B. Clark's wife were among those converted. On one occasion during this meeting Otey baptized forty people in forty-five minutes. He often used this statistic to disprove the charge that there was insufficient time for twelve apostles to immerse three thousand on Pentecost. If the apostles had baptized the three thousand alone, the

work could have been accomplished in less than five hours if they baptized at the rate Otey did during this meeting. When the meeting closed there were few homes in the community that did not have some representation in the church.⁴⁴ On the fifth Lord's Day of the meeting, about one thousand people attended a baptizing in the afternoon. The old store building would not begin to accommodate so great a number. Another meeting place had to be found. Genial M. B. Clark offered the use of his nice grass lawn. Otey preached that afternoon from Romans 12. Including the baptizing, the service lasted three hours.

The original plan had been for those baptized at Clark's Mill to attend at Draper. But after a short time, they began meeting in their own community. A commodious building was erected, and a prosperous congregation continues to meet. A. L. Altizer of Christiansburg frequently preaches for the Clark's Mill church.

One of those baptized during the Clark's Mill meeting was an elderly colored lady--an ex-slave. Just as Otey started to immerse her, the husband of one of the women who was to have been baptized spoke up, "If you baptize that nigger, you are not going to baptize my wife!" Otey went ahead and baptized the colored lady, and just as the man had said, he was not permitted to baptize his wife.

Because of a previous commitment, Otey interrupted the Clark's Mill meeting long enough to conduct a short series at the Draper church. Draper was so near to Clark's Mill that he had about the same audiences as those to whom he had preached at Clark's Mill. After closing the nine day meeting at Draper, Otey immediately went back to Clark's Mill

⁴⁴ W. W. Otey, "The Clark's Mill Meeting," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVII, No. 25 (June 21, 1904), p. 4.

and preached a few nights longer.

During a Draper meeting, probably this 1904 one, while Otey was at the front of the building kneeling to lead the congregation in prayer, lightning struck the meeting house. It tore the front door loose, sending it crashing down the aisle. It passed directly over Otey's bowed head. Many observers vowed that had not Otey's head been bowed in prayer, he surely would have been killed. The large audience was so startled that pandemonium broke out. Otey soon composed himself enough to begin to lead in the singing of a spirited hymn. Otey was an excellent singer and usually led the singing in the meetings he held. The audience soon joined him in the singing, and order was restored.

While Otey lived at Draper, a number of interesting incidents occurred. Once as he was returning along the desolate and winding road from Pulaski City in his buggy, a young man and woman met him. They wanted to be married immediately. So Otey accommodated them, never even getting out of his buggy.

More amusing perhaps was another true incident. In one of Otey's meetings he baptized a couple that for many years had been living together as common law husband and wife. In fact, they had an eighteen year old son. Otey advised them, after baptizing them, to become legally married. He was somewhat surprised later to learn that this couple had a big "church wedding!"

While living in Draper, Otey preached many funerals. When someone in the community died, Otey the experienced carpenter, prepared a nice casket in which to bury the dead. He kept on hand white muslin for the inside of the caskets and black calico for the outside. The casket

prepared, preacher Otey then took over, and conducted the funeral. Any monetary recompense was unheard of for such efforts in Virginia in those days.

One other amusing event happened in Virginia, though this one did not involve Otey. Daniel Sommer and J. T. Showalter both attended a meeting. Sommer was a large man and wore a large hat. Showalter was just the opposite, a wiry man with a small head. When Showalter by mistake picked up Sommer's oversized hat, Sommer said, "You cannot wear my hat. Your head would rattle in it like a seed in a gourd."

The phenomenal success of Otey's Clark's Mill meeting gained him much attention by the brethren. It was not long till Otey came to be recognized as one of the most effectual evangelists among the brethren. Daniel Sommer publicly gave notice of Otey's work. He wrote,

We know Bro. Otey personally. He is reverential, sober-minded, dignified, plain and pointed, but always courteous....He is as free from sensationalism as any man can be, and is free from extreme or ultra notions....We advise every preacher among us to ponder Bro. Otey's course, and to study the secret of his success. He does not make fun of those in error, nor try to say the worst he can imagine of them. But he treats them as if they were capable of being taught and then proceeds to teach them.⁴⁵

Brethren that lived in an unusually hard area felt that if they only could secure Otey to come help them for a few days, many of their problems would be solved. He began to receive invitations to come preach in places where he had never been before.

One of these calls was from the church at Jackson, Pennsylvania. Jackson was in the eastern part of the state, near Shippenburg. The church there was very small, consisting of only twenty members, though

⁴⁵ Daniel Sommer, "Concerning Brother Otey's Work," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVII, No. 25 (June 21, 1904), p. 1.

the congregation was seventy years old. Otey left Draper with much enthusiasm, having just completed his most successful summer of work ever conducted thus far. He intended to continue the meeting at Jackson "as long as interest demands." When he arrived in Jackson some of the people were surprised, as they had expected Otey to be a much older man. He was then only thirty-seven. Otey himself must certainly have been disappointed in the Pennsylvania meeting. He stated that he encountered the strongest sectarian prejudice he had witnessed. If there were any converted during this meeting, the disappointed Otey made no reference to it in his report.

He received requests to come to other distant states. But he could not do so just then. He was too busy trying to wrap up his business matters in Draper.

OTey-J. C. HURST DEBATE

When he arrived back in Draper he found that some excitement had been created by Dr. J. C. Hurst, a medical doctor, a graduate of the University of Virginia, who also was a Primitive Baptist preacher. During the Clark's Mill meeting, Otey had baptized the son of a Primitive Baptist preacher. Too, Otey had written some articles severely critical of Calvinism, the theological system upon which the Primitive Baptist Church existed. Hurst was then forty years old and just in his prime. He later gave up his medical practice and became a full time Baptist preacher, spending his last years in Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Hurst then was preaching at Allisonia, a small community about five miles south of Draper. The debate was conducted there.

The proposition Otey affirmed stated: "Resolved, That salvation depends upon conditions to be performed by the alien sinner, and is not

by grace alone."⁴⁶ So rushed were the arrangements for the debate that likely neither participant was quite up to his capability. No detailed account of the arguments presented by either man was recorded. Good crowds attended all the sessions though.

Ever since Otey had decided to leave the area, he had worked feverishly to try to secure someone else to come there. He was going to leave with much sadness unless a suitable man could be located at Draper before he left. G. W. Foley, a young preacher from Brumfield, Kentucky, came to Draper to consider moving there. Foley was there during the Hurst debate and moderated for Otey. Foley reported that he found in Otey "no man-fearing spirit." Arrangements were made for Foley to preach once each month at both Draper and Clark's Mill. On this point, Otey could now rest a little easier, knowing that a replacement had been secured.

Meanwhile, G. H. P. Showalter had moved to Lockney, Texas to become Principal of the Lockney College. Arrangements were made for him to be associated with the Octographic Review. This made Otey happy for he considered Showalter to be "an Israelite in whom there is no guile."⁴⁷ Showalter soon became editor of the influential Texas paper, the Firm Foundation, a position he held for forty-seven years.

The latter part of November, the actual time to leave Draper arrived. Otey and his family found this departure to be much harder than

⁴⁶ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVII, No. 36 (September 6, 1904), p. 4, and No. 42 (October 18, 1904), p. 6.

⁴⁷ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVII, No. 35 (August 30, 1904), p. 4.

they had anticipated during the several preceding months during which they had been talking about it. Already Otey was receiving letters from several Indiana churches requesting part of his time. The Lynn church was going to use him one Sunday a month in its work. Another church had requested that he reserve one-fourth of his time for them. Yet another congregation in a town where the cause had been crippled "by innovations and other troubles" wanted him to help them. It certainly appeared to Otey that the Indiana work would keep him plenty busy. This was exactly what he wanted.

When Otey moved to Draper, eight disciples were meeting in a dwelling house. As he prepared to leave Draper in 1904, there were two hundred members meeting in a nice new building free of indebtedness. G. W. Foley had now moved to Draper and had been there for two months. Otey felt that he was leaving the work in good hands. Though Otey had contributed more money to the Draper church than he had received from it, he was extremely thankful and proud to have had the privilege to share in its progress.

The fourth Sunday in November was to be his last Sunday in his native state. He preached Sunday morning at Clark's Mill. He later referred to this occasion as "the saddest parting of my life." That night he returned to Draper to preach a farewell sermon to the largest crowd they had ever had in Draper.

On Monday afternoon, most of the members of the church went with Otey and his family to the railroad station. The Oteys were taking little with them. Because of the length of the trip, most of their household goods had been sold or given away at great personal loss. When the train arrived at 4 P.M., with tears streaming the faces of those

boarding the train as well as of those waving fond goodbys, the Otey family left Draper. After a ride of over twenty hours, they arrived in Lynn, Indiana a little after one o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. The years spent at Lynn were to be Otey's busiest and most fruitful of his entire preaching life.

CHAPTER IX

A HOOSIER PREACHER

When the train carrying the Oteys arrived in Lynn, nearly every member of the church in the city was at the station. The brethren there felt themselves fortunate to have a man of Otey's ability located there. Arriving November 28th, 1904, Otey continued to live in Lynn until the fall of 1911. These were the most productive and busiest years of his entire life. He had been preaching about twenty years now. He had learned to side-step most of the pits into which inexperienced preachers drop. This is not to say he made no more mistakes. But he made fewer mistakes. Physically he was in his prime. He was going to give himself entirely to gospel work. He had every reason to do his best work under such favorable circumstances. And so he did.

The brethren in Lynn lost no time in putting him to work. They had requested that he devote one-fourth of his time to working there. After arriving on Tuesday night, Otey began a gospel meeting on Saturday night with the Lynn church. The intervening days he and his family spent getting themselves situated in their home recently acquired two miles east of Lynn. He was also to preach monthly at Gilead, a country congregation four miles east of Lynn, where J. C. Frazee also was preaching monthly.

On the third Sunday in December he went to preach at Rigdon in Grant County. Arrangements were made for him to preach there monthly also. The Rigdon church, though small, was strong in faith. He had

not yet been in the state a month. Yet he had only the fourth Sunday appointment open.

While living at Lynn, Otey wrote more for the Review than at any other time in his life. It was not at all unusual for him to write thirty-five to fifty articles a year during this period. He pleaded with the brethren to develop stronger ties of brotherly affection. He advised elders that it would be good for them occasionally to visit other congregations, as they might learn something by the visit that would help in the work of the congregation they were to oversee. Otey was an optimist at heart. He did not like to hear discouraging talk. As long as he felt he was doing the will of God, regardless of what might appear to be the magnitude of obstacles that appeared in his way, he found no place for discouragement. He wrote, "But thanks be to God the worst part of the battle is over. The lines between the Church of Christ and the 'Christian Church' have been drawn...There is no longer cause for discouragement."¹ Brethren, therefore, should cease speaking in a despondent tone, he suggested.

Finally the long anticipated opportunity to visit the Review office at Indianapolis came. During the following years, Otey stopped by almost weekly, since he had to go through Indianapolis so frequently on his preaching trips. He arrived by train in Indianapolis for this first visit January 5th. Otey had not seen Sommer in eleven years. He first had met Sommer fourteen years before at the Shiloh congregation in Virginia. Otey remarked, "I am more indebted to him for counsel and encouragement than to any living man...there has never been the least

¹ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 2 (January 10, 1905), p. 4.

rupture in our relationship. May God grant an unbroken continuance."² Otey's visit was for two days and two nights, during which the chief topic of discussion was the welfare of the church. While in Indianapolis Otey, for the first time, met Austen, Allen, and Bessie Sommer, as well as A. W. Harvey who then lived in the city.

As soon as sufficient arrangements could be made, Otey began to preach in Indiana with the same untiring zeal as had characterized his work in Virginia. In early January he held a short meeting during which he preached nine times at Covington. He intended to stay longer, but his wife's sickness at Lynn necessitated his leaving. Will D. Taylor, who then lived at Covington, wrote of Otey, "He is an able defender of the faith and commands the attention and respect of all who hear him."³

Otey preached the fourth Sunday in January at Sugar Grove in Darke County. E. M. Zerr was then working with this small but earnest and zealous band of disciples. On the fifth Sunday Otey preached at Hazelrig, thirty-five miles north of Indianapolis. He promised to hold them a meeting during the summer.

From Hazelrig, Otey took the train to Martinsville to attend a debate between Ira C. Moore and a Christian Church preacher named Ira C. Cramer. Otey knew that brethren from many places in the state would attend the debate. This would afford him an opportunity to meet many of them at once. Too, very frankly, he had to admit to himself that he liked to attend debates. Cramer, the week before, had debated W. G. Roberts

² W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 4 (January 24, 1905), p. 3.

³ Will D. Taylor, "Good News," American Christian Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 5 (January 31, 1905), p. 5.

also in Martinsville. Cramer had boasted that he would put Roberts and Moore in the same grave. Otey thoroughly enjoyed himself during this debate. He referred to Cramer's efforts as being "truly pitiful." Otey said Roberts and Moore reminded him of two veteran hunters encircling a thicket where a partridge was hiding, pouring volley after volley into the thicket with six inch guns. "The hunters and the arms were so out of proportion to the game hunted," thought Otey.⁴ Ira Moore was also impressed by this first meeting of Otey, referring to him as "an enthusiastic and effective preacher." From Martinsville Otey went to Switz City from which he caught a train to Owensburg where he was to conduct a ten day meeting.

On January 30, 1905, an event occurred that affected the Review adversely. L. F. Bittle (1833-1905) died. Bittle is one of the forgotten heroes. When Sommer bought the American Christian Review in 1886, he united it with his and Bittle's paper called the Octograph. Hence the Sommer edited Review was called the Octographic Review. Sommer and Bittle had worked closely together for twenty years. They were in agreement regarding excluding "worldly advertising" from the Review. Sommer said of Bittle that in him "the lion and the lamb were united." Sommer believed that Bittle was the first to point out the contradiction between Alexander Campbell's Christian Baptist position and his Millennial Harbinger position regarding evangelistic societies of human origin. However, Jacob Creath, Jr. probably was the first to do this. Bittle was thought by some to be the best educated man in the brotherhood, though he never attended any college. As a writer he was gifted beyond

⁴ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 6 (February 7, 1905), p. 5.

many. Hardly any issue of the Review appeared without something from his prolific pen. Bittle requested that nothing of his life be published, as he did not wish to have the private matters of his life laid bare before a curious public, and he wished the praise or eulogy of no one after he was gone. Bittle died at his home at Highland Park in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, and was buried at the Great Valley "church-yard" at Chester, Pennsylvania, after a funeral service conducted by E. J. Pritchard. The Review had lost a power for which it had no replacement.

As spring weather arrived, Otey stepped up the pace of his preaching activity. He held a meeting at Van Buren with the assistance of J. C. Frazee. In April he preached for the North Indianapolis congregation, the home congregation of the Sommers. D. Austen Sommer, the Review's Office Editor, wrote, "Churches of Christ will make no mistake when they write Bro. Otey for a part of his time."⁵ Also in April he held a meeting for the seventy-five member Fort Recovery, Ohio church. During this meeting Sister Otey became seriously ill, and had to be taken to the St. Vincent hospital in Indianapolis. This sickness hindered Otey's preaching for a while. But soon he was back in the field. While he had to be home, he devoted more time to the Lynn congregation. Five classes were conducted each Lord's Day. On May 16th five persons were baptized. The church was constantly increasing.

In July he held a good meeting at Oaktown. Twelve were added in the first nine days. So great was the public interest in the meeting that the town stores closed during services so people could attend. Twenty-four in all were added during the Oaktown meeting.

⁵ D. Austen Sommer, "Office Notes," American Christian Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 18 (May 2, 1905), p. 5.

third Sunday in July, Otey began a meeting which was "to continue indefinitely" at Pekin. But even though the Pekin meeting was making the most favorable start of any meeting he had conducted in Indiana, due to getting sick himself, he had to close the meeting. Four were baptized the first five days. Later in the summer he held meetings at Rigdon and Bryant, Indiana, and at Fort Recovery, Ohio. He was getting many more calls for meetings than he possibly could hold.

While Otey was home due to his wife's sickness, A. J. Nance and W. G. Roberts came to Lynn for meetings. These brethren were among the best known of preachers in the area. W. G. Roberts probably conducted more debates than any other man in the north among the Churches of Christ. These meetings gave Otey opportunity to become well acquainted with these brethren about whom he had read so much. Nance wrote that Otey entertained him in "true Virginia style," while Roberts spoke of a very pleasant visit in the home of "our never tiring brother, W. W. Otey."

As Otey traveled among the churches, he observed some things were lacking. He felt that most meetings that failed did so because of indifference toward them on the part of the members of the congregation. He wrote that the church's greatest needs were more faith, recognition of Christ as Savior, diligence to overcome a popularized Christianity, excelling singing, and to outshine all others in purity.⁶ In writing on the subject of Evolution which later became a favorite topic of Otey's, he stated, "The integrity of Moses as a truthful writer, and the divinity of Jesus, stand or fall together."⁷ There are very few topics

⁶ W. W. Otey, "Our Greatest Needs," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 17 (April 25, 1905), p. 4.

⁷ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 48 (November 28, 1905), p. 4.

discussed in the Bible upon which Otey, in his long life, did not write something. He had an energetic pen.

He advised brethren to cease depending on the "writing brethren" to hold their meetings. Some of the unknown brethren could do just as good a job, and Otey warned the churches that some of the "writing brethren" did not preach as well as they wrote.⁸ Though there was a dearth of preachers, some men of great ability lay as yet virtually undiscovered.

At a meeting which Otey conducted at Kamp, Illinois, where H. W. Cuppy preached, there were nine additions in nine days. Afterward Otey wrote trying to stir the brethren to greater effort: "When we object to preaching the gospel through some human society, do we stop and ask ourselves the question, how much am I doing to spread the church, God's missionary society?"⁹

In August, 1905, Otey felt compelled to say something on the college question. A considerable breach already had been widened between the Review and the Gospel Advocate. Repeatedly Sommer had printed an article entitled "The Review's Position in Regard to Education and Colleges" which he had written. This article said in part:

...this journal is set in opposition to the New Testament Church establishing schools, or colleges or universities, either wholly or partly secular as institutions separate from the church, and with money which should be placed in the treasury of the church, and then designating them by the name "Bible."¹⁰

⁸ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 43 (October 24, 1905), p. 4.

⁹ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 50 (December 12, 1905), p. 8.

¹⁰ Daniel Sommer, "The Review's Position in Regard to Education and Colleges," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 35 (August 29, 1905), p. 6.

Sommer thought as such these schools were parallel to the missionary society, digressive and divisive.

Till now Otey himself had said little on the college question publicly. He felt he ought now to speak out more clearly. Otey made it plain that he was in favor of education. His opposition to the schools, as he conceived them then to be operated, was not the result of a "sour grape" disposition created by his lack of education. He stated, "Where and how this knowledge should be obtained enters not within the province of this paper." The main question with Otey was, "Does the New Testament authorize Christians to appeal to individuals and churches for money to build and support institutions of learning in which secular and religious knowledge is taught...?"¹¹

There were some things admitted by both sides in the college controversy. These common admissions were, therefore, not the points of dispute. These common grounds as enumerated by Otey were:

1...that any number of Christians have the privilege of banding themselves together, for the purpose of teaching secular knowledge ...as much so as farming or other secular callings...2. They have the privilege of teaching the Bible a part, or all the time, as they may deem proper...3. They can form this arrangement purely as a private secular enterprise to make a living. It is as legitimate as any other calling. Or they can do it as an act of charity and make it partly or entirely free, or charge the student full compensation. The farmer or merchant can run his business in like manner if he wishes.¹²

Otey, therefore, did not object to the school's existence as such or to the Bible being taught in it, or to tuition being charged. He did object to this private enterprise being linked to the Church.

¹¹ W. W. Otey, "Bible Schools and Colleges," Octographic Review, Vol. XLVIII, No. 35 (August 29, 1905), p. 1.

¹² Ibid.

However, there were some specific criticisms he did level against schools as they currently were being operated. 1. He declared that the fruit of the schools had been evil. Though good and wise men build them, none was better or wiser than Alexander Campbell. Yet the school he founded was "harmful in the extreme." As religious institutions he maintained colleges were inherently wrong, since "the principle upon which they are founded is contrary to the teaching that the Church is a perfect institution for the conversion of the sinner and perfection of the believer."¹³ 2. Otey also objected to calling the schools "Bible Colleges" or "Christian Colleges," since most of their teaching was secular. 3. He objected to the appeal that was made by colleges to individual Christians or to churches encouraging them, in the name of Christianity, to contribute to them. J. N. Armstrong had stated in 1904 that one's salvation might depend upon whether he contributed to the college he headed. Otey resented one's interest in the advancement of the cause of Christ being measured by whether or not he contributed to a school. If schools appealed to individuals or churches in the name of Christianity, they did so because they conceived themselves to be doing the work of the church, which Otey denied. He maintained if they were doing the work of the church, the church ought to support them. If they were not doing the work of the church, the church ought not to support them. But teaching secular education is not the work of the church. Otey asked if the schools were purely secular callings, as some maintained, why "do you give them sacred names, appeal for support in the name of Christianity, and take the Lord's money to support

¹³ Ibid.

them in the work of teaching either religious or secular knowledge?"¹⁴

Otey believed that if the schools were to strip themselves of their sacred names, and make their appeal only on a secular basis, they would get virtually no money. He summarized his position with these closing words:

Strip them of these objectionable features, and sever all connection, in name, by association and implication and in reality, with the church and its work as institutions, and place them just where you sometime say they are, as purely private, secular arrangements, and my opposition to them will cease.¹⁵

Otey insisted he did not object to the existence of schools as such. He did strongly object to them being connected overtly or by implication to the church. Otey's foundational thesis for his position was, "The work of the church must be done in its church capacity and not through a college or missionary society."¹⁶ Colleges, so long as they operated in the realm of the individual, were alright. But when they began to invade the sphere of the church, they were engaged in that for which they had no authority, reasoned Otey. Otey was to be called upon to discuss this subject many, many times more in his later public life as a preacher and a writer.

Otey began a meeting at Newcastle on February 22, 1906 where forty-three years before Benjamin Franklin had established a congregation. But the Newcastle church had been caught up in the mad rush of "progress," and the instrument was added in the late 1870's.¹⁷ The nearby Hillsboro

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Mary Georgiana Wilson, "A History of the Christian Church of Henry County, Indiana" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Butler University, 1950), p. 95.

congregation was sixty years old, and most of the brethren opposed to the instrument moved to Hillsboro when it was introduced at Newcastle.

Daniel Sommer and William Howe had a debate on the issues that were before the church in Newcastle in 1898. The brethren at Newcastle had asked Otey to come to assist them in re-establishing the church there.

The meeting which Otey conducted lasted eighteen days. The Methodists were also conducting a meeting, during which they claimed 863 conversions. On Wednesday night Otey spoke an hour and a half to a full house on the "Differences Between the Church of Christ and the Christian Church." He pointed out differences in name, manner of teaching, missionary work, raising money, and "church music." As a result, ten members of the Christian Church joined with twenty members from Hillsboro in starting a church in Newcastle. Among these was E. M. Zerr, who continued to preach till he died in 1960. Zerr was the only member of the Church of Christ to write a commentary on the entire Bible. His commentary consisted of six volumes. Otey stated that Zerr "has a clear head, is strictly loyal to the truth, and above all, unselfish."¹⁸ Otey preached in the same Lutheran building where forty-three years before Franklin had preached when he came to establish the church. This building still stands, though now used for a newstand. The greatest compliment paid to Otey's preaching during this meeting, in Otey's judgment, was the remark by one hit hard by the sermons, "That fellow ought to be hung."

¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "The New Castle Meeting," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 12 (March 20, 1906), p. 5.

After holding a meeting in January for the Sycamore congregation, a country church in Fulton County, Otey again exhorted every church to select a "point" where another church could be established, and see that the gospel was preached there. There were several cities around the Sycamore church where there was no congregation. Sycamore eventually responded to Otey's plea to do something about this matter.

During the spring and summer, Otey held meetings at Sand Creek church in Shelby County, Illinois; at Limberlost congregation near Bryant in Jay County, Indiana; at Elm Grove in the same county; at Ludington and Summit congregations in Michigan; Hale, Missouri; Rippey, Iowa; and at Farmersburg, Rigdon and Cloverdale in Indiana. He spent a very busy summer.

Meanwhile he continued to write frequently. He wrote an article against Lodges, stating that one should give his glory through the church, and that some seemed to think that all Lodge members would be saved.¹⁹ In response to a request from A. D. Orrick of Kansas City, who had lost all his property in the Mississippi River flood and now had been smitten by a serious disease, Otey wrote on the Christian and suffering.²⁰

The Christian Church now was engaged in a great struggle over federation with other religious bodies. The Christian Standard, though it had been the primary voice of liberalism under Isaac Errett, had since swung to a more conservative position in relation to the Christian

¹⁹ W. W. Otey, "Which Shall It Be?," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 16 (April 17, 1906), p. 4.

²⁰ W. W. Otey, "Afflictions," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 19 (May 8, 1906), p. 4.

Evangelist position, and therefore opposed "Federation." The Christian Evangelist, under the leadership of J. H. Garrison, was advocating it. Otey predicted a decisive victory for the Evangelist. He gave other instances of Christian Church compromises. He stated since they had given up New Testament authority already on several points, there was nothing to hinder their doing so again. "It is all a question of authority," thought Otey.²¹

Later in the summer he ventured a prophecy on the subject of Federation. He wrote,

When the Christian Church began to practice unauthorized things in her work and worship, she launched forth upon the treacherous sea of Human Wisdom, without chart or compass, and has been blown hither and thither by various "winds of doctrine." The first mate (the editor of the Standard) hears the breakers as they dash against the hull of stranded vessels, and sees the sure fate to which the proud ship is hastening, and is raising a wailing cry to the captain (editor of the Evangelist) to "cast anchor." But it is too late...²²

Otey predicted that the next National Convention would be packed with delegates favoring federation with the sects, and that the minority would withdraw and form a separate convention. Much of this prediction has since been fulfilled.

As a result of his articles on Federation, his old Virginia friend, Josephus Hopwood, then President of Lynchburg College, wrote Otey that on the basis of his Federation articles he would have to withdraw from users of tobacco, those that vote for "whiskey parties," and from lodge members. Otey replied that he had never used tobacco and had ceased to

²¹ W. W. Otey, "Church Federation," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 23 (June 5, 1906), p. 4.

²² W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 32 (August 7, 1906), p. 1.

grow it for conscientious reasons, had voted against "whiskey parties," and preached against lodges. He was glad to hear that Hopwood did too. Or did he? Otey declared these matters to be individual acts outside of the work and worship of the church, and only could corrupt the individual, while mechanical instruments of music and missionary societies are inside the work and worship of the church, and therefore bring congregational corruption.²³

Otey's meeting work this year was very fruitful. For example, during the Cloverdale meeting, there were thirty-three additions and 14 additions were had at Farmersburg. But this work was very tiring. Too, it necessitated being away from home almost constantly. Otey vowed that he would not make the sacrifices involved for any work of less importance than preaching the gospel. His travels brought him in contact with many of the important brethren whom he had not met before. Among the preachers he recently had met were S. D. Jones, W. P. Whaley, F. M. Edwards, V. M. Gilbert, C. H. Owen, and J. C. Bunn. He renewed his acquaintance with W. G. Roberts, whom he described as a terror to the Mormons. While others were impressing Otey, he was impressing them. W. G. Roberts described Otey as

a forciful and impressive speaker,...is a plain spoken man while in the pulpit. I was under the impression that he never said anything about innovations, creeds, etc., but he speaks out in plain, convincing terms against them. I have heard Bros. Sommer and Hutson preach, but I never heard plainer preaching along that line than Bro. Otey did at Rippey.

Lucas T. Harter of Limberlost congregation wrote, "His preaching is

²³ W. W. Otey, "Correspondence With a College President," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 31 (July 31, 1906), p. 3.

conspicuous for candor, truthfulness and earnestness in proclaiming the truth as it is in Christ."²⁴

While on his way to Hale, Missouri, Otey stopped at St. Louis long enough to hear J. N. Armstrong, President of the college at Odessa, Missouri, preach. This short visit afforded little opportunity for discussion of the college question. In later years Otey and Armstrong visited frequently and corresponded regularly. This brief visit did, however, stir Otey to write an article about "pastors" turned out by religious schools. In this article Otey taught,

Religious schools or colleges make a "clergyman," and a "clergyman" makes a "pastor," and a "pastor" must have a "flock" to "feed him" (not the pastor to feed the flock, college made pastors do but little feeding) and in return for the "flock feeding him," the "pastor" must "amuse" his "flock." And in this way nearly all "amusements" have been introduced.²⁵

He predicted that these religious schools would turn out men who were looking for a "charge," and though not all would do so, those who did not would be the exception rather than the rule.

Among other articles Otey wrote this year was one against neglecting the assembly. He observed that the Lord had promised to be in our midst when we assemble in His name. One would certainly keep an appointment made with the Governor. If so, without fail, one should keep his appointment with the Lord.²⁶ He also wrote endorsing the Review's stand to accept no advertisement from companies producing

²⁴ L. T. Harter, "Good News," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 16 (April 17, 1906), p. 8.

²⁵ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 36 (September 4, 1906), p. 4.

²⁶ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 44 (October 30, 1906), p. 5.

patent medicines since they are "frequently injurious to the health of those who use those nostrums."²⁷

Perhaps his best article of the year was one entitled, "Error's Foundation, Defense and Method of Advancement." Error's foundation is the wisdom of man, a substitute for divine wisdom. Its defense is sophistry, unscriptural, illogical, and fallacious arguments. Its method is the "hush business." Its advocates are supposed lovers of peace who charge others with being destroyers of peace and sowers of discord. Error will not affirm its practice, misrepresents its opposition, charges opposers with instigating the trouble, and tries to prevent open investigation.²⁸

So great had been his success in the meeting at Cloverdale that the brethren asked him to return for another meeting before the year was out. He returned just before the year ended. During 1906 Otey had been away from home nine months. He said the greatest sacrifice he was called upon to make to preach the gospel was this prolonged absence from his loved ones. The wives and children of gospel preachers pay much of the price of whatever good the preacher may accomplish. So ended another busy year of Otey's life.

Otey planned no meetings in 1907 until the summer. Instead, he planned to spend his time working with the churches at Rigdon, Sycamore, Cloverdale and Farmersburg. During the summer he intended to take a preaching trip of six weeks duration into Virginia. In September he

²⁷ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 31 (July 31, 1906), p. 4.

²⁸ W. W. Otey, "Error's Foundation, Defense and Method of Advancement," Octographic Review, Vol. XLIX, No. 37 (September 11, 1906), p. 2.

was to return for another meeting at the Sand Creek church in Illinois. During the first half of the year he spent much of his time on the train going to and from his weekly appointments. In going to both Cloverdale and Farmersburg he had to pass through Indianapolis. So at least twice a month he was in Indianapolis visiting the Review office. Apparently there was no other worker in the area who worked more closely with Daniel Sommer during this period than did Otey.

One of the weaknesses that plagued the churches during this era was the dire shortage of preachers. The ones in the field were overworked and under paid. First, Otey surmised that this shortage of preachers primarily was created by the digression taking most of them. In 1896 when D. S. Ligon put out a portrait of most of the conservative preachers, he could only list about two hundred. Probably not over ten percent of the congregations opposed the liberal trends that had invaded the churches. A second reason for such a preacher shortage was that too few men had in recent years been entering into evangelistic work because of the unpopularity of the church's position, parsimonious and meager support, and the necessity of being away from home so much of the time. Many preachers that Otey knew were receiving only about five dollars weekly for their efforts after they paid their transportation costs. He complained that some brethren who owned sufficient property to pay \$150 annually in taxes had the gall to ask for a dime to be changed on the Lord's Day so they could contribute five cents!²⁹ In comparison to the financial support he received while in Virginia, Otey had been rather well

²⁹ W. W. Otey, "Our Preacher Famine and Its Causes," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 17 (April 23, 1907), p. 4.

supported the two years he now had been in Indiana. Yet he still found it necessary to take up fruit-growing on the thirteen acres he owned east of Lynn in order adequately to support his family.

In early July he made his first visit back to Virginia since he had left in November, 1904. When he preached at Draper on this trip, the largest crowd was present that ever attended a service there. He stayed over Sunday to be able to preach at Clark's Mill, the place where he had converted ninety-seven in a 1904 meeting. The crowd was so large at Clark's Mill that they had to be seated on the river bank. Attendance was estimated at one thousand. Someone has said the way to have a big crowd is to estimate it. But an unusually large crowd gathered. Otey preached on "Growth in Grace and Knowledge of Jesus Christ." It gave him much satisfaction to learn that most of those whom he had baptized continued in the faith.³⁰

From Clark's Mill he went to Max Creek to preach a few times. Max Creek was the congregation before which he had attempted to preach his second sermon. He found this congregation now disbanded, but attempted to rally the few disciples who remained. It gave Otey great pain to report that the New River Convention was holding its session while he was in the area at Pine Run church. This fact alone indicates the direction which this congregation had gone. W. H. Showalter met Otey at Max Creek and brought him to New Salem where he was to hold a meeting. He certainly had hoped to be able to visit J. T. Showalter again, and fully expected to do so, since New Salem was J. T.'s home congregation. But Showalter was in Texas on a preaching tour at the

³⁰ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 31 (July 30, 1907), p. 8.

time of Otey's visit. If Otey ever met J. T. Showalter again it is not known.

The direction in which he found things going among the churches in Pulaski County caused Otey to observe, "If the advocates of truth would show the same diligence and zeal in its behalf that many advocates of error do, what would be the progress in turning sinners from darkness to light...?"³¹

In 1906 Daniel Sommer and B. F. Rhodes had conducted a debate before the student body of the college at Odessa, Missouri.³² Otey, after reading the printed account of this debate concluded, Rhodes "made the least effort to discuss the issue as any disputant after whom I have read."³³ Rhodes in this debate attempted to capitalize upon the admissions that Otey had made in a 1906 article in which he pointed out common ground between the Review and the college advocates.³⁴ Otey did not believe that Armstrong, Rhodes, Witty, Parmiter, and James Harding were as pleased with Rhodes' efforts as they pretended, and challenged them to push the sale of the printed debate if they thought they had gained such a signal victory. He wrote this while preaching in Virginia.

After baptizing several at New Salem, Otey went to Bethany or the Chestnut Ridge congregation.³⁵ He found the church there the most thoroughly

³¹ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 32 (August 6, 1907), p. 4.

³² Daniel Sommer and B. F. Rhodes, Sommer-Rhodes Debate-A Report of Skirmishes, (Indianapolis: Octographic Review, 1906)

³³ W. W. Otey, "And Still We Hear Echoes From the Skirmishes," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 33 (August 13, 1907), p. 4.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 7, 16.

³⁵ New Salem Virginia Church Records.

aroused he had ever known it to be. From here he went six miles to preach at the Mitchell school house, baptizing persons everywhere he went.

Of course, he could not miss his old home spot, Showalter, Virginia. Accordingly, from Mitchell school house he went to Showalter. Every man likes his home place, or so it seems. Otey had spent eight years at Showalter. Floyd County was a rural county with no railroad through it. It stood on a 2500 foot plateau, nearly as high as the Blue Ridge chain. Here he had built with his own hands his first home, a little 16' x 20' log cabin, which after twenty years still stood in the little valley at the foot of Macks Mountain. It was now owned and occupied by others. Showalter, it seemed to Otey, had the most delightful summer climate of any place he had ever been. Its springs seemed to have the coldest and sweetest water. He was tramping again the hills that brought back many sacred memories. The only blight to this trip was that his beloved Minnie was not with him. Her health still had not been completely regained. So she had to stay in Indiana.

Over on the hill a short distance from H. B. Showalter's place stood the little Mountain Cove school house, where Otey years before had confessed his faith, and shortly thereafter offered his first public prayer and gave his first exhortation. He wanted to preach there again before he left. Arrangements, therefore, were made for him to hold meetings at the school house. More interest was created than he had supposed. This required him to stay longer here than he had intended. Before he left he had baptized ten persons, raised sufficient money to pay three-fourths of the cost of a meeting house, and banded together

thirty disciples. The little meeting house still stands, though the congregation ceased to meet in 1958. C. D. Otey, W. W.'s brother, preached several years for this congregation.

The prolonged stay at Mountain Cove school left Otey only one day, a Sunday, to spend with the Laurel Hill church in Montgomery County. His parents had identified themselves with this church years before when they moved from Snowville. Otey's aged parents still were living in Floyd County. His wife's parents also were still living. He enjoyed himself while visiting with friends and relatives immensely, as well as spending the hardest six weeks he had ever spent in his preaching life. He got satisfaction out of feeling that it also was perhaps the most profitable six weeks he had ever spent. He returned home by train, arriving in Lynn on Tuesday evening.

No sooner had Otey arrived home than he had to leave for his second meeting with the Sand Creek church in Shelby County, Illinois. The previous year Otey had held a meeting for this congregation and had promised to return. The Sand Creek church was a country congregation located three and one-half miles northwest of Windsor. It was established by John Storm in 1834.³⁶ The primary significance of this congregation was that it was here that the famous "Sand Creek Declaration and Address" was made. In August, 1889, while Daniel Sommer was there preaching, brethren from five congregations signed a lengthy statement which closed with these words:

³⁶ N. S. Haynes, History of The Disciples of Christ In Illinois, (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1915), p. 653.

It is, therefore, with the view, if possible, of counteracting the usages and practices that have crept into the churches, that this effort on the part of the congregations hereafter named is made, and, now, in closing up this address and declaration, we state that we are impelled from a sense of duty to say, that all such that are guilty of teaching, or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, that after being admonished, and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we can not and will not regard them as brethren.³⁷

This declaration of a refusal to fellowship "innovationists" caused this church at Sand Creek to be known throughout the brotherhood.

N. S. Haynes, the Illinois historian, declared that the Sand Creek church never had used the instrument and had no intention of introducing it until Sommer's opposition to it in 1889 "created a desire and a demand for its introduction." Nevertheless, division resulted in the congregation in 1904. Those that favored the instrument in this instance were in the minority. They filed suit for control of the property. The lower court gave the property to the brethren opposing the instrument, and the Supreme Court upheld the lower court decision in 1905. Haynes said, "It was here that the pigmy and disloyal 'Address and Declaration' was issued in 1889. By that act that church wrote 'Ichabod' in large letters upon its record." He called the address a "cross and papistic address." Had the decision been rendered differently, Haynes himself might not have been so "cross" about the matter. The conservatives felt they had won a victory in the Sand Creek trial that would set a precedent in other places. Accordingly, one thousand copies of 118 pages of the sixteen hundred page court record were printed and sold for sixteen cents each.

³⁷ Robert H. Brumback, History of the Church Through the Ages, (St. Louis: Mission Messenger, 1957), p. 389.

The Sand Creek church continued to carry on a conflict with the liberals in the area, primarily with those in Shelbyville, fourteen miles away. When Otey went for the meeting in 1907, it appeared that the prospects for a successful meeting were poor. However, he was pleasantly surprised. The brethren from Liberty, Dugout, Ash Grove, Findlay and several from Shelbyville attended making possible the largest attendance in fourteen years. Even Mr. Kelley, a member of the Christian Church, who had been the attorney for the Sand Creek church in the recent litigation attended the meeting. Otey said the church in this trial had "won a brilliant victory."

The primary significance of this Sand Creek meeting was that it resulted in the Otey-Briney debate. When Otey arrived for the meeting, some correspondence had passed between J. P. Warren, one of the elders of the Sand Creek church, and J. Fred Jones, field secretary of the Illinois Christian Missionary Society. Warren gave the correspondence to Otey, asking him to arrange for a debate. After several months of close correspondence, Jones turned his part of the correspondence over to J. B. Briney. After several months more of steady correspondence details were arranged for the debate. But we will say more about that shortly.

During the last quarter of 1907 Otey wrote some important articles. In one article he showed that a failure to discriminate between that which is special and that which is general had resulted in the confusion surrounding the "woman question."³⁸ Otey strenuously objected to the modern Sunday School as it was a separate organization from the church,

³⁸ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 42 (October 15, 1907), p. 5.

but continued to maintain, as he had for twenty-two years, that learners should be separated into classes where materials they could grasp could be presented. Conscientious objectors should be excused from participation, but the teaching work must go on, thought Otey.³⁹

He also positively was alarmed at the rapidity with which brethren's attitude toward the proclamation of truth and exposure of error was undergoing a change. Some wanted the manner of preaching changed. The manner of preaching was as important as the message to be preached. The apostle Paul had said, "reprove, rebuke and exhort."⁴⁰ Otey thought one should not "'skin the sects' just to see them 'squirm'... But when errorists become aggressive they should be reprovved sharply."⁴¹ One can get so nice that he fails to expose error as it should be exposed. In another article, Otey agreed that money earned unlawfully was "tainted money," but argued that money collected unlawfully by fairs, festivals and rafflings was just as "tainted."⁴²

OTEX-BRINEY DEBATE

1908 was the most significant and eventful year of Otey's life. Its significance lay primarily in the fact that this was the year in which the now famous Otey-Briney debate was conducted. Otey had preached for the Sand Creek, Illinois church in both 1906 and 1907. After his August, 1907 meeting, he had been in continuous correspondences with J. Fred Jones and later J. B. Briney, trying to arrange for an oral

³⁹ W. W. Otey, "The Highway of Truth and the Two Ditches of Error-Number Two," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 49 (December 3, 1907), p. 5.

⁴⁰ 2 Timothy 4:2.

⁴¹ W. W. Otey, "The Highway of Truth and the Two Ditches of Error-Number Three," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 50 (December 10, 1907), p. 4.

⁴² W. W. Otey, "Tainted Money," Octographic Review, Vol. L, No. 51 (December 17, 1907), p. 8.

discussion to be held at or near the Sand Creek church. After Otey pressed Jones severely for a debate, Jones dismissed himself as a possible participant, announcing that Briney would carry on his part in any future correspondence. Otey, therefore, immediately wrote Briney. Otey did not write as though they were trying to make arrangements for a debate. Instead he wrote as if the agreement to debate had already been made, and they only had to attend to such minor details as propositions, location, time, etc.

Finally arrangements were made for the debate. Two propositions were agreed upon. They were, "The use of such organizations as the Illinois Christian Missionary Society, the Foreign Christian Missionary Society, etc., is authorized in the New Testament Scriptures and acceptable to God," and "The use of instrumental music in connection with the songs sung by the church on the Lord's day, when assembled for edification and communion, is opposed to New Testament teaching and sinful."⁴³ The debate was to be held at the Sand Creek church, and was to continue four days with two sessions of two hours duration each day. Each disputant was given permission to print the book separately, or jointly if arrangements satisfactory to both could be made.

Immediately Otey began to make his preparation. He intended this debate to be the best effort of his life, which it likely was. He began to secure reports on the Illinois Christian Missionary Society for several years back that he might be as conversant as possible on its activities. J. K. P. Rose, one of the elders of the Sand Creek church that had signed the 1889 "Declaration and Address," rented the Chautauqua

⁴³ W. W. Otey and J. B. Briney, Otey-Briney Debate, (Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, Publisher, 1908), p. 9.

fair grounds and auditorium from the Lithia Springs Company at Shelbyville, Illinois. It appeared that everything was in readiness for the debate.

However, shortly before the time for the debate arrived, Otey received a very surprising letter from Briney, in which Briney stated that J. Fred Jones had written him that the Christian Church brethren were unanimously protesting the debate being held at Shelbyville. Briney wrote that as far as he was concerned, the debate was "off." But Otey did not give up easily. He wrote Briney that he had signed propositions and a signed agreement from J. B. Briney, and that he expected J. B. Briney to honor his signature. If the debate could not be arranged at Shelbyville, he felt Briney honor bound to name another place.

Briney then wrote Otey that if one of the churches in Louisville that was in sympathy with Otey's position would invite the debate and furnish a house, he would be willing to go ahead with the debate. This posed a considerable problem to Otey, and Briney likely knew it. Otey, during all his preaching life, had been associated with the Review. The churches in Louisville had all been influenced by the Gospel Advocate. The Advocate and the Review were not now on very friendly terms as a result of the college dispute. Too, Otey was not known by any brother in Louisville. The brethren knew nothing of his ability to cope with J. B. Briney, then reputed to be the greatest debater after Campbell. There appeared to be little likelihood that the Louisville churches would endorse and invite Otey to represent them.

But still Otey would not admit defeat in arranging the debate. He immediately wrote M. C. Kurfees who lived and preached in Louisville. Kurfees asked Otey to come down to talk with some of the brethren there.

Many of the brethren wanted Otey to press Briney to honor his signed agreement to debate at Shelbyville. Briney would not be intimidated. He wrote Otey, "You can go to Sand Creek and hold the debate if you wish; I will not be there." Otey much preferred to publish a debate with Briney than to publish that Briney had backed down. Otey said enough "Backdowns" already have been printed. A debate now was needed.

So on Monday, June 25th, Otey went to Louisville to see Kurfees. Kurfees immediately called together the other three "loyal" preachers living in the city, along with an elder named Tatum of the Campbell Street church. Otey showed them the entire Otey-Briney correspondence. After seeing it, the brethren immediately wrote out the following declaration:

We, the undersigned, speaking for ourselves and feeling assured of the perfect agreement of the congregations we represent, can say that the proposed debate between J. B. Briney and W. W. Otey is invited by said congregations (Campbell Street, Portland, Highland, F Street) and that we furnish a house, as per J. B. Briney's request. Signed,

M. C. Kurfees - Campbell Street Church
 Robt. H. Boll - Portland Avenue Church
 A. B. Lipscomb - Highland Church
 R. A. Yohn - F Street Church.⁴⁴

After securing the statement, Otey then called Briney on the phone and asked him to meet him the next morning at Willards' Hotel. Otey informed Briney that some brethren would be there and he accordingly invited Briney to bring some with him. Briney stated that he would not be there. Otey asked if he then could come to Briney's home. Otey was told he could come. Otey then inquired if the brethren could come with him. Briney said he would just as soon meet these brethren at the Hotel as at his home. Otey could come to Briney's home, but he must

⁴⁴ W. W. Otey, "On to Louisville," Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 28 (July 14, 1908), p. 5.

come alone.

Otey stated that he would be there at nine the next morning, but would like to bring along a stenographer. Briney agreed that he could do so, provided the stenographer only took down what Otey said. So with that stipulation Otey saw no advantage in taking the stenographer. Next morning at nine, Otey arrived at Briney's house alone.

When Otey showed Briney the signed agreement meeting every requirement in his proposal, Briney only could reply, "That will be alright." However, when they came to discuss the propositions, Otey could not get Briney to agree to affirm his practice on instrumental music. Even though everyone recognized the difficulty of proving a negative proposition, it was the best to which Otey could get Briney to agree. Some of the more experienced debating brethren later criticized Otey for agreeing to affirm a negative proposition, but Otey said it was either do so, or let the debate fail to materialize.

Arrangements were completed for the debate to be held in one of the most spacious auditoriums in Louisville, that of the Trinity Methodist Church, located at Third and Guthrie Streets. The main auditorium would seat 1,000, with the seating capacity being increased to 1800 by opening the doors to the wings off the auditorium.

During the months before the debate, Otey worked feverishly in preparing. It was his opinion that no debate had been held in modern times that would have greater implication on the future of the church than the upcoming Otey-Briney debate. Daniel Sommer had been selected by Otey as his moderator. With plans being made for the debate, arguments to be studied and reviewed, Otey had all the more reason to visit in Indianapolis on each passing through the city. In late July

when Otey went through Indianapolis on his way to his monthly appointment at Cloverdale, Sommer was caused to observe of Otey:

Not very robust at any time, we think he looks more worn than usual, probably because of the time he has been putting in preparing himself for that Louisville debate. His eyes have the keen, searching look of the vulture, hunting for prey and when Briney finds himself opposed to this man in polemical battle we wonder if the fear of the Lord will not possess him to such an extent that he will fail utterly. But Briney is not a man to be treated lightly and we look for an interesting time, if he shows up at the scene of action. Anyhow, let us all flock there and see the spoiling of the spoiler.⁴⁵

Brethren from ten states made their plans to attend the debate. One brother wrote, "...their 'Goliath'...has been prevailed upon to sign propositions for a debate...I believe that he is perhaps the first man among them to agree to affirm New Testament authority for their societies." Briney also was called "the lion of the tribe of digressives." A brother J. W. Atkisson wrote, "I have worked steady, without a vacation, for nearly four years...by way of taking a little rest and recreation I have decided to attend the Otey-Briney Debate at Louisville, Ky....I hope to meet many brethren there."⁴⁶

To be perfectly fair though, one must state that most of the interest in the forthcoming debate was on the side of the conservatives. Those favoring the instrument by now felt the issue settled, and that nothing would be gained by such a discussion. W. E. Garrison stated that by 1900,

⁴⁵ Daniel Sommer, "Personal Items," Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 32 (August 11, 1908), p. 5.

⁴⁶ J. W. Atkisson, "Attend the Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 35 (September 1, 1908), p. 6.

The organ question was still being argued, but half-heartedly. The parties to it were now so widely separated by their attitudes for and against missionary cooperation that the feeble spark of interest in the debate about instrumental music could scarcely jump the gap to produce a visible flash or an audible detonation. The subject, so hotly discussed even a decade earlier, had come to have a quaint antiquarian flavor. Arguments against the organ were more likely to evoke a smile than a serious reply.⁴⁷

David Lipscomb's earlier charge that the Christian Standard was using the Missionary Society and the conventions to promote its own business was answered in an article by Isaac Errett, which closed with an angry, "We are done with David Lipscomb." This was almost as literally true of the attitudes between the two separate groups of churches as it was of the Errett-Lipscomb controversy. The conservatives had been labeled "merely a small group of extremists that withdrew,"⁴⁸ and the liberals saw little purpose in prolonging the discussion on the instrument. Millard L. Riley, who was married to Briney's granddaughter, wrote an unpublished biography of J. B. Briney, in which he said, "This debate between Otey and Briney was held at a time when the 'organ question' had become almost a 'dead issue'."⁴⁹

Since this Otey-Briney debate was one of the high points in Otey's life, it is important that some notice be given to his worthy opponent. John Benton Briney was born of "Pennsylvania Dutch" stock, the son of John B. and Eliza Matthis Briney, on February 11, 1839 in Nelson County, Kentucky. There were eleven children in the Briney family. Briney, like Otey, went only three short winter terms to school before he was grown. But unlike Otey, Briney, after coming to manhood, went on to

⁴⁷ W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 263.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 277.

⁴⁹ Millard L. Riley, "The Life and Work of J. B. Briney" (Unpublished B. D. Dissertation, Drake University, 1946), pp. 44, 45.

further his education, graduating from Eminence College at Eminence, Kentucky in 1866, a year before Otey was born. Within two years Briney began his debating career. By 1870, a reporter on the Briney-Miller debate, could state of Briney,

Brother B. holds no second rank as a debater. He possesses in a very large degree, the elements of a first rate advocate of the truth. He is very calm and deliberate. His English is unusually good. He puts his point before the people in a manner not to be misunderstood and then his proofs are marshalled around it in a style most gratifying to the brethren.⁵⁰

In 1882, Charles M. Fillmore of song writing fame, said, "I have heard virtually all of our great preachers. None of them has impressed me as having a finer conception of the meaning and purpose of a sermon, and measuring up to its demands than Bro. Briney."⁵¹ Shortly before Briney had planned to move to Tacoma, Washington, on January 1, 1891, he fell and suffered a severely broken leg, which left him lame for life. It also caused him to remain in Kentucky where a suburb of Louisville became his home.

Though Briney was an excellent preacher, he excelled as a debater. W. E. Garrison referred to him as "The redoubtable J. B. Briney," when speaking of his debate with T. W. Caskey on whether women could be preachers.⁵² A. W. Fortune said of him, "J. B. Briney participated in many debates with the representatives of other communions, his logical mind and natural wit making him a powerful antagonist."⁵³ J. H. Baker, in reporting the Briney-Fitch debate held at Kirksville, Kentucky said,

⁵⁰ "W" in Apostolic Times, December 1, 1870, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., Chapter II.

⁵¹ Charles M. Fillmore, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., p. 32.

⁵² W. E. Garrison, Religion Follows the Frontier, p. 264.

⁵³ Fortune, Op. Cit., p. 148.

"Brother Briney is one of our ablest men in debate."⁵⁴ Briney's biographer, Riley, described him as being

possessed of a keen, logical mind, and a splendid memory. He was trained in logic and practiced it almost flawlessly. He was gifted with a magnificent sense of humor. He was remarkably self-possessed and did not lose control of himself, even in the warmth of a hotly-contested battle.⁵⁵

In 1884, Briney was described as being "well developed physically, about six feet high, dark skin, black eyes and hair slightly silvered with age, a well-developed forehead, commanding appearance, and a physiogomy that indicates a superior intellect and great force of character."⁵⁶

S. M. Jefferson, the editor of Disciples of Christ said, "It may be said without fulsome in compliment to Mr. Briney, that as a debater he has among his brethren few equals, perhaps no superior."⁵⁷ Ashley

Johnson said "...if we take into consideration his personality, his intellectual equipment, his courage, his faith, Bro. Briney is the equal of any man who has advocated in any day or in any time, a return to the Christianity of the New Testament."⁵⁸ In 1942, when Dean Frederick D. Kershner looked back upon Briney's entire life in comparison to other great men, he stated,

⁵⁴ J. H. Baker, Apostolic Times, August 1, 1872, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., Chapter VII.

⁵⁵ Riley, Op. Cit., p. 64.

⁵⁶ Christian Standard, June 28, 1884, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., Chapter VII.

⁵⁷ S. M. Jefferson (Editor), Disciples of Christ, Vol. I, (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, (n.d.)), p. 528.

⁵⁸ Ashley S. Johnson, Christian Standard, February 7, 1914, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., p. 168.

He had more than thirty debates during his long career.... In some respects, after Alexander Campbell, he was the greatest debater which the Disciples have thus far produced, unless John S. Sweeney be regarded as an exception... Briney only irritated his antagonists and their friends when he mercilessly flayed their illogical defenses. As a consequence, when he left Tennessee, which was one of his great debating arenas, the nonprogressives so disliked him that it was impossible for any of the more liberal representatives even to establish a truce with them.⁵⁹

Briney's brethren thought he was a great debater. Those that were opposed to him thought him to be the best the opposition could supply. Otey said, "Without any doubt Briney is the strongest debater that the Christian Church has in its ranks."⁶⁰ Otey, in the debate admitted, "...the Christian Church is as strongly represented in the person of Elder Briney as it could be represented in the person of any man on earth."⁶¹

For years Briney had been a part of the controversy on instrumental music. He was so constituted that when there was an issue to discuss, he had difficulty keeping out of it. Briney at first was as strongly opposed to mechanical instrumental music as Otey was in 1908. This early opposition was the occasion of embarrassment to Briney during the Louisville debate. Briney, in the Apostolic Times in 1869, had said:

It was a glorious day for the cause of truth when the pious and venerable Thomas Campbell conceived and set forth the principle contained in the following language: "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent"... So long as we adhere to this principle may we march forward with heads erect and banners streaming....If we adhere to that as a basis, then there is the end of instrumental music in worship.

⁵⁹ Frederick D. Kershner, "Comet and Constellations," Christian Standard, August 1, 1942, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., Chapter VII.

⁶⁰ W. W. Otey, "The Louisville Battle," Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 39 (September 28, 1908), p. 5.

⁶¹ Otey-Briney Debate, p. 18.

But we must adhere to that or the Reformation is a failure.... Now, I affirm that an "instrumental accompaniment" is an addition to the ordinance, and affects its character, and is therefore an infringement of the divine prerogative. That singing as worship is a divine ordinance will not be questioned in the face of the Scripture cited above. (1 Cor. 15:15; Eph. 5:18,19; Heb. 13:15). That the "instrumental accompaniment" is an addition, is simply certain from the historical facts in the case, it having been born five hundred years out of time. Therefore, whatever men may think of its expediency it affects the character of the divine appointment, and cannot be tolerated for a moment.... From the foregoing it seems to follow, both logically and scripturally, that the "instrumental accompaniment" nullifies the ordinance.... Now, at this somebody may get "scared, feel his hair standing on end, start to run, find somebody else sitting by the camp-fires nodding," etc. Be it so. I could only wish that this fright were real. I should think that a man might well afford to become frightened when he sees himself tampering with an ordinance of the Almighty!.... Now, some one may say that in this I am so straight that I lean back a little. Be it so. If I lean back it is to rest upon the⁶² Word of God, and resting upon this, I dread not the fall.

Briney later changed his position, and ceased to oppose the instrument. He then began to lead in a fight to get churches to introduce the instrument. Riley stated, "It was in his championship of the right of churches to use instrumental music...in their worship...that Brother Briney made one of his greatest contributions to the brotherhood in which he was a towering figure for more than half a century."⁶³ Riley admitted that Briney probably was also at first opposed to the Societies, for

It has frequently been true that a person opposed to one [i.e. instrumental music-CW] is also opposed to the other [Missionary Societies-CW]. He probably changed his views on "The Societies" if he originally opposed them, at the same time and for the same reasons that he changed his views on the use of instrumental music in worship.⁶⁴

⁶² J. B. Briney, Apostolic Times, June 10, 1869, quoted in Otey-Briney Debate, pp. 27-31.

⁶³ Riley, Op. Cit., p. 51.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 53.

Riley felt that also in his advocacy of the societies Briney made a substantial contribution to "progress in the Brotherhood...."

Shortly after Briney changed his position on the instrument, he and J. W. McGarvey engaged in a written debate in the Apostolic Times. Those favoring instrumental music felt that Briney got the better of Brother McGarvey in that debate. W. W. Elliott stated, "At that time there were very few organs in our Kentucky churches. Probably this debate was a big factor in deciding the Kentucky brotherhood on this question."⁶⁵ J. J. Haley stated that Briney "unhorsed" McGarvey on the question, and killed "the organ conscience in Kentucky, by the complete overthrow of its father and first champion..."⁶⁶ Edgar C. Riley said, "Once Dr. W. T. Moore said to me that he never knew J. B. Briney to be right but once and that was when he whipped McGarvey."⁶⁷ McGarvey and those that agreed with him were perfectly satisfied with the discussion and felt Briney simply was threshing old wheat straw from which all the wheat had long since been gone. But this 1881 debate certainly served to enhance Briney's stature among those who favored the organ.

The Christian Standard in 1914 printed a book by Briney, Instrumental Music in Christian Worship, which was intended as a reply to M. C. Kurfees' book, Instrumental Music in the Worship. Briney died on Wednesday, July 20, 1927. On May 7-15, 1927, at Oklahoma City, Briney debated the instrumental music issues with F. B. Srygley. Briney then was 85, and this was his last debate. From early in his

⁶⁵ W. W. Elliott, Letter to Millard L. Riley, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., p. 45.

⁶⁶ J. J. Haley, Makers and Molders of the Reformation Movement, pp. 149, 150, quoted in Riley, Op. Cit., p. 45.

⁶⁷ Riley, Op. Cit., p. 46.

life till the last few months he was embroiled in the instrumental music debate.

The giant among the advocates of Societies and instrumental music was Otey's opponent at Louisville. But Otey would not have changed it if he could. He wanted to meet the best that could be presented. He felt nothing would be gained by defeating a weak opponent. He was glad Briney had been chosen to meet him. In Briney, he felt he met the Christian Church's best debater.

It is not necessary here to attempt to review the arguments made in this debate. The printed debate is yet available, and anyone wishing to read these arguments may do so. However, one might observe that the basis of all Otey's argument was that one may only do in work and worship that which is authorized by Scripture, either by generic or specific authority. He maintained there was neither generic nor specific authority for either the societies or instrumental music. Briney maintained that unless there was a specific prohibition imposed, man was at liberty to improvise as he saw fit. Otey asserted that he stood where Briney had stood on these issues. He, therefore, maintained that this debate might more correctly be called the Briney-Briney debate, since Otey was staking his case on Briney's early arguments, and called upon Briney to answer himself. Briney said his early arguments were only the arguments of a "boy preacher." Briney was now 69; Otey was only 41. Otey reminded Briney that if these were only the arguments of the "boy preacher," the experienced Briney should have no difficulty exposing them.

After the debate Otey reported that the first night Briney's brethren attended in numbers, but decreased steadily until on the last

night someone suggested it was doubtful if there were more than a score of his brethren present.⁶⁸ No count was made of those in attendance, but those who remember it state that the enormous house was comfortably filled at each session.

After the first session a prominent Louisville doctor asked Otey if he would come by his office the next day. Otey, who was staying with M. C. Kurfees, agreed to do so, not knowing the reason for the visit. When he arrived the doctor told Otey he agreed with Briney, but felt that Briney was not making the strongest arguments in favor of the instrument. He, therefore, set out to make these "stronger arguments" to Otey. Otey replied that he cared not to conduct two debates at once, and immediately left.

Nothing that Otey ever did attracted more attention than this debate. Daniel Sommer wrote, "It is the same old story, of a man, beaten before he entered the ring, resorting to foul tactics to dull the sharpness of the points made by his opponent..." Sommer thought that Briney only gained one point over Otey, and that was in his "unjust use of Greek."

Numerous brethren felt that Sommer did not say enough about the debate. Some wondered if he were jealous over the fact that he was not the one chosen to do the debating. J. M. Barnes, who wrote the "Introduction" for the printed debate, conceded that Sommer was "the Ajax, if not the Samson" of the debate but Sommer could not be brought to say more about the debate than, "The report of the discussion will make a good book." Finally, after being considerably pressed to comment

⁶⁸ W. W. Otey, "The Louisville Battle," Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 39 (September 29, 1908), p. 5.

further concerning the outcome of the debate, Sommer said,

Someone has wondered why I have said so little about the Otey-Briney debate. To quiet that wonder I state that it is to be published. Besides, the suggestion was kindly given to me in Louisville not to say anything harsh about Briney, and I could not say much about the debate without reflecting on him in a manner that might seem harsh to some.⁶⁹

Sommer also recently had insisted, due to the large number of debates, that every brother in the country should not take up space in the paper trying to write a detailed review of it. Nevertheless, one cannot keep from wondering if Sommer was exactly pleased with the debate. He may have thought Otey did not do as well as could have been done, or he may have been pouting over the fact he was not the debater.

R. H. Boll wrote the review of the debate for the Gospel Advocate readers. He was surprised that Briney could be induced to debate the issue at all, since his " 'progressive' friends are as shy and bashful as once the sectarians were on sprinkling, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the like." Boll supposed that Briney entered the debate only because he persuaded Otey to affirm a negative proposition. Boll reported that Briney "tried to represent Otey as a fool and an ignoramus and a boor." Otey's speech, with but little exception, was "courteous and gentle." And even yet Briney found occasion for "gross insults." "Briney was sharp and cutting, witty, sarcastic, spectacular, and a little on the demagogue order...one could not help but wonder what would have become of Briney if a man his equal in power and repartee and cutting speech had met him." Boll added, however, that Otey "held up his side with...efficiency."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Daniel Sommer, Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 40 (October 6, 1908), p. 1.

⁷⁰ R. H. Boll, "The Briney-Otey Debate," Gospel Advocate, Vol. L, No. 41 (October 8, 1908), p. 642.

J. M. Barnes, also reporting through the Gospel Advocate, said

Otey

is a tall, slender, light-complexioned Virginian, Indianian by adoption....I never heard so great an effort as that of J. B. Briney...to darken counsel, confuse the minds of the simple, and keep truth from being seen and recognized... Briney, if nothing else, is good natured and cunning.⁷¹

F. L. Rowe, who was to publish the debate, being editor of the paper then called the Leader-Way commented,

J. B. Briney is an experienced hand at debating, has engaged in thirty debates; while Otey is practically new in the field of polemics...For straightforward, honest arguments, and for gentleness and Christian spirit and transparent sincerity of purposes, the odds were greatly in Otey's favor, and, if I mistake not, the whole audience felt it.⁷²

Of course, there were some on the other side who did not feel Otey had gotten the better of the encounter. The Christian Standard and the Christian Evangelist gave virtually no attention to the debate before it occurred, and but little to it after it was published. The Standard permitted one small announcement of the debate by M. C. Kurfees.⁷³ The Evangelist's action is rather easily explained by the simple observation that they thought little more of Briney than they did of Otey. When the unnamed Christian Evangelist staff writer reviewed the printed debate, he commented,

No, there is not a mistake in the date of this book. It is 1908, and not 1809. There are a few brethren still stumbling over an organ and over a missionary society...he [Briney-CW] crushes every semblance of argument against the so-called innovation. But they think they have won a great victory.⁷⁴

⁷¹ J. M. Barnes, "The Otey-Briney Debate," Gospel Advocate, Vol. L, No. 44 (October 29, 1908), p. 698.

⁷² F. L. Rowe, "The Otey-Briney Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. LI, No. 42 (October 20, 1908), p. 4.

⁷³ M. C. Kurfees, "Briney-Otey Debate," Christian Standard, Vol. XLIV, No. 35 (August 29, 1908), p. 148.

⁷⁴ "Literature of Today," The Christian Evangelist, Vol. XLVI, No. 9 (March 4, 1909), p. 272.

Otey felt that considerable good was done since he knew of some whose position was changed directly as a result of the debate. Mrs. Dr. A. C. Caperton wrote Otey, "I came here on the other side, but am converted." One with an honorable official position in Louisville, but who asked Otey that his name not be used, wrote,

I have been a member of the Christian Church for the last thirty-five years, have read some little on these questions, and attended the debate between you and Brother Briney in order to study them thoroughly, and my opinion now is that instrumental music in divine worship and missionary societies are unscriptural...I am pleased with your quiet, dignified, earnest manner and would congratulate you on your success in defense of the truth.

Though Otey already had begun to advertise the debate, he ran into great difficulty in getting it published. When he returned from Louisville, the stenographer, whom he had paid \$200 in advance to record the debate, gave him one hundred pages of the manuscript. He waited and waited, and the stenographer sent no more of it. Otey wrote the stenographer fourteen or fifteen times, and got no answer from him at all. Finally, Otey had to make three trips to Louisville, and ultimately to threaten a damage suit against the stenographer before he told him what happened. The stenographer told Otey that during the debate he had kept his notes in a small locked box. Otey had prepared a carefully written speech for the first twenty minutes of his first speech on instrumental music, and for the last ten minutes of his last speech on the same proposition. The stenographer reported that someone had stolen from his box these two written speeches. How they were stolen from a locked box he did not explain. And since Otey had presented the stenographer his manuscript, the stenographer had made no notes on this part of Otey's speech. He, therefore, was unable to supply Otey with a report of this section of the debate, approximately thirty

typewritten pages. When Otey returned home from Louisville he was fortunate to find that he had not destroyed the pencil copies of his written speeches. He was able to reproduce what he had said, with the exception of two pages, which he rewrote as best he could from memory.

With many hurdles behind, the printed debate finally came from the press. Briney declined to assist with the cost of publication. But after F. L. Rowe finally received the completed manuscript, he lost no time in getting it in print.

After the debate was in the reading public's hand, Otey began to receive many letters of commendation. His father-in-law, H. B. Showalter, wrote, "I am well pleased with it and don't think that anything could be added to it that would make it stronger." W. H. Devore wrote, "I think you...left Briney in the brine." M. C. Kurfees stated, "...your part of it has gained in strength and effectiveness by publication."⁷⁵ An "Old Preacher" from Mill Grove, Missouri frankly wrote, "...I felt a little 'shaky' about the idea of putting up a young man against the most able and experienced debater in the Christian Church, but was well pleased with the outcome." Of course, not all Otey's correspondence was quite so complimentary of his effort. His old friend, W. H. Book, from Snowville, whom he had known for over twenty years, and who had by now become a popular Christian Church preacher and debater, wrote Otey, "I think you made a good fight, as good as anyone could make on that side; but at the same time I feel you were completely vanquished."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ M. C. Kurfees', "Kurfees on Louisville Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 12 (March 23, 1909), p. 5.

⁷⁶ "Otey-Briney Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 2 (January 12, 1909), p. 8.

Book's was the only signed comment from a Christian Church member that was not complimentary of Otey's effort.

The supply of printed copies of the debate did not last long. It then was out of print until 1955 when the Gospel Guardian reprinted it. It has continued to have a good sale among members of the Church of Christ. The significance of this debate is best summarized by the editor of the Gospel Guardian, Yater Tant:

Indeed, many students of the Restoration Movement are inclined to date the real beginning of the "counterattack" against the society advocates from the famous Otey-Briney debate in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1908. The mighty work of Lipscomb in Tennessee and of McGary and others in Texas had brought to a slow grinding halt, the cyclone of destruction that had swept through the churches. With the publication of the Otey-Briney debate it became apparent to all that the destructive advance of the innovators was being contained; the counterattack got under way, and the faithful Christians everywhere took new heart and new courage.⁷⁷

Though the debate was the most important thing Otey did in 1908, it was by no means all that he did. In February he held a meeting with the North Indianapolis church. Sommer was away at this time in a meeting in Missouri, but Otey did spend a good bit of his time about the Review office. In April he returned to New Castle to work with the church he had set in order two years before. This time the Lutheran meeting house which Franklin had used nearly half a century before in which to establish the church at New Castle, was not available, and the thirty-odd disciples now were meeting in the court house. Otey also preached at Lyons, Indiana in a meeting where the "faithful disciples" were said to outnumber both the Methodist and Christian Churches combined. Later he preached in a meeting at Kemp, Illinois.

⁷⁷ Yater Tant, in W. W. Otey, Living Issues, (Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1951), "Introduction."

Otey wrote little during the year that was not related in some way to the debate. At least nine of his fourteen articles during the year were regarding the debate. Before the debate Otey had intended to give himself unreservedly to this debate to make it the best effort of his life. He made a herculean effort, and historians already have branded it as the most important thing that he did in his long life. It has become a standard work among members of the Churches of Christ. D. F. Draper of Sabinal, Texas, called this debate "the greatest of all debates on societies and instrumental music in worship."⁷⁸ Nothing better on both of these issues has yet appeared, and certainly Otey's effort against the societies remains the best debate available on this subject.

With the coming of 1909, Otey was beginning to feel more strongly than ever the urgency of congregations spreading the gospel into new regions. During the next few months he was to be more energetically engaged in this sort of work than ever before in his life. Early in the year he wrote, "...no congregation can justly claim to be apostolic till it earnestly takes up the work of sending the gospel to those outside of its immediate community."⁷⁹ Late in January he went to Barracville, West Virginia, where Ira C. Moore then was preaching. After preaching for struggling churches in Preble County, Ohio and in Jay County, Indiana, Otey resolved to purchase a tent in which to conduct meetings in virgin areas. Sister Fannie Lane had promised him

⁷⁸ D. F. Draper, "Otey-Briney Debate," Firm Foundation, Vol. XXV, No. 24 (September 14, 1909), p. 6.

⁷⁹ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 1 (January 5, 1909), p. 8.

she would pay \$100 of the cost. Otey wrote asking others to help supply enough money for the necessary equipment. Within a short time enough money had come in to purchase a 30' x 60' tent, 100 chairs, lights and song books. A total of \$243.25 was received. Using Exodus 36 as a text, Otey announced, "It is Enough."⁸⁰ He now was equipped to do what he long had wanted to do--invade new areas with the gospel message.

On March 30th, the Christian Church in Lynn had J. B. Briney come to lecture on "Science and the Bible." Otey advised all the brethren in Lynn who consistently could "go into the house that they had largely built, and out of which they had been locked," to hear Briney. Otey arrived just a little late, most of the crowd already being present. The house was nearly full. Otey had not seen Briney since the debate in Louisville the preceding fall. Briney proceeded to lay down his coat on the chair on the rostrum. Just as he turned to face the audience, Otey rose, walked down the aisle with outstretched hand to greet Briney. Briney refused to shake hands with him. Otey said, "With a scowl, the image of which perhaps will never be effaced from the minds of those present, he gave me a piercing look of scorn, whirled his back and drew himself away, as though I were the very personification of a loathsome and deadly plague."⁸¹ Otey, with some embarrassment himself, and more for Briney, could only walk dejectedly back to his seat.

⁸⁰ W. W. Otey, "It is Enough," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 17 (April 27, 1909), p. 5.

⁸¹ W. W. Otey, "What Ails Briney?," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 15 (April 13, 1909), p. 8.

The next day, the Lynn Herald reported the incident, and severely rebuked Briney for his action.

Great man though he is, Mr. Briney allowed just one little incident to mar the effect of his great lecture, in the act of refusing to shake hands with W. W. Otey, who advanced to meet him. We do not know or care to know what was back of the act...there can be no true excuse for the refusal by any man professing to be a follower of the meek and lowly Nazarene.⁸²

During the summer, Otey took his last trip to Virginia for many years. On this trip his wife and two smallest children went with him. This was the last opportunity both Otey and his wife were to have to see their aged parents. Laurel Creek church, the congregation meeting in front of H. B. Showalter's house, had just completed a new meeting house. Otey held them a meeting while there, during which sixteen were baptized. While in Virginia, he also went to the Copper Valley school house to hold a nine day meeting. Twelve years before, while carpentering in the area, Otey had preached at this school house. In 1907, while on his six week tour, he had baptized two here. But on this trip he baptized twelve. Nearly enough money was raised to build a meeting house before he left. E. T. Showalter the year before had baptized fourteen here. So they had a fair sized congregation before their meeting house was completed. Otey and his family returned home July 15th, after five weeks, having had a very pleasant Virginia trip.

Since 1906 Otey had not written anything specifically on the college issue, but he did not want brethren to feel that the silence of his pen on the subject was indicative of an apathetic attitude toward it. He felt the college issue to be one of greatest importance. It

⁸² The Lynn Herald, quoted in W. W. Otey, "What Ails Briney?," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 15 (April 13, 1909), p. 8.

seemed to Otey that the Firm Foundation, Gospel Advocate, Primitive Christianity, and the Leader-Way were as persistent in pushing the college issue as the Christian Standard had been in pushing the instrument. He felt that Boll, Lipscomb, Harding, Showalter, and Warlick would be responsible for driving the "wedge" should division result.⁸³ Otey observed that not one word of criticism for any of the colleges could be written in any of the above named papers. He wrote J. C. McQuiddy suggesting a written debate be carried in both the Octographic Review and the Gospel Advocate, but McQuiddy did not wish to have it. Otey also proposed a written or oral debate with James A. Harding, but the Leader-Way refused to carry the article. Brethren in 1909 seemed to be clamoring for division over the college question.

In August, Otey went to Portland, twenty-eight miles from Lynn, a town of 10,000 without a single member of the church in it, to hold a meeting in the tent the brethren had purchased for his use. This meeting lasted over five Lord's days, during which Otey preached thirty-seven times, in addition to speaking thirteen times in a debate that resulted. Brethren from Lynn, Ft. Recovery, Limberlost, and Elm Grove assured a full tent each night. When Otey left Portland, a twenty member congregation had been established, and \$1200 had been raised for a new building already under construction when he left.

During this meeting, after Otey had preached on the differences between the Church of Christ and the Christian Church, the West Walnut Street Christian Church secured R. O. Rogers of Greenfield to come reply to Otey. Otey insisted upon a "full-fledged" debate. Propositions were

⁸³ W. W. Otey, "The Pittsburg Convention and Other Things," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 52 (December 27, 1909), p. 2.

drawn up on church identity, in which each affirmed the church to which he belonged was scriptural in teaching and practice. The debate was conducted under the tent.

Rogers affirmed that the instrument was commanded in 1 Corinthians 14. He then argued that it was just a matter of opinion and an expedient. Otey replied that the instrument could not be both a commandment and an optional expedient. If the instrument was only an expedient, Otey charged it was sinful for Rogers to make the instrument a test of fellowship, or to divide the church over it.

Thad Hutson, who moderated for Otey during the ensuing debate, reported that Brother Otey was "calm, deliberate, and pointed; Rogers, blustering, ranting and reckless."⁸⁴ But a much more interesting report of the debate was printed in the paper called the "Portland Sun."⁸⁵ The article entitled "Rogers Reviles Otey's Missions" reported, "Rev. Rogers began a vicious assault on the person and family of Evangelist Otey, that for vituperation and vilification would vie with the billingsgate of the Bowery and eclipsing the most sublime efforts of Rev. Billy Sunday as a religious clown." Rogers called Otey "a sort of ecclesiastical tramp," who for eight months a year left his wife and children "to shift for themselves on a fourteen-acre tract of the most sterile land that lay beneath the 'shining canopy of God's blue heaven.'" Rogers further charged that Otey had a "Ladies Aid Society" and a "Christian Endeavor" at home in the persons of his wife and children.

⁸⁴ Thad Hutson, "Rogers-Otey Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 36 (September 7, 1909), p. 3.

⁸⁵ The Portland Sun, quoted in W. W. Otey, "The Portland Meeting and Debate," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 36 (September 7, 1909), p. 4.

While Otey's family fed "'on the husks that the swine did eat',...Otey was engaged in the toothsome task of tearing the tendons from the limbs of yellow-legged chickens and langourously gormandizing on 'floating islands and two story pies.'" The "Sun" article continued, "After this tirade had continued for some thirty minutes the gong sounded and, sweating like a nigger at a wood-choppin, Rev. Rogers was dragged to his corner by his seconds."

"...Otey came to bat as cool as a frozen lake." He spent about five minutes in replying to the personal assault, during which he offered to stop the debate if the West Walnut Street Christian Church wished to withdraw its endorsement of Rogers. Since they refused to do so, the Sun reporter stated, "He then spent the remaining twenty-five minutes of his time in the legitimate discussion of the question at issue."

Daniel Sommer reported, "The victory for truth in that debate was grand." It reminded him of Alexander Campbell's statement that one week of debating was worth a whole year of preaching in the propagation and clarification of truth. Otey felt that the tide had turned and that the Christian Church now was on the defensive.

After the Portland meeting and debate, Otey took the tent to Mentone. For about two years Otey had been preaching for the Sycamore church located six miles south of Mentone. Repeatedly Otey had goaded these brethren to attempt to do something about evangelizing the area in which they met. The Sycamore congregation had been started about 1870 and had been saved from the liberalism then sweeping the churches by Thad Hutson. Otey had told these brethren that if the highest claim they had to loyalty was the fact that they had kept the organ out, they

had a very poor claim. They had to be busy doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way. Otey spent four Lord's days in Mentone. During this meeting thirty-two were baptized and eight⁸⁶were restored. Some members who had been attending at Old Palestine and some from Sycamore united with the new converts to form a good sized congregation. Elders and Deacons were appointed. The best lot available in the town was purchased and \$2100 was raised with which to build a new building. Otey promised to return for another meeting as soon as the building was completed.

During this year, Otey had assisted in erecting buildings for the churches meeting five miles north of Eaton in Preble County, Ohio, at Copper Valley in Virginia, and recently at Portland and Mentone in Indiana. He had done a good year's work.

For several years the Review had been operating at a small annual deficit. That debt had now come to be \$3,000. Otey felt that Sommer should not have to bear this burden alone. He proposed that interested readers assist in helping the Review become debt free. Within a few months the \$3,000 was raised and sent to Sommer.

Otey was confident a reading of the Otey-Briney Debate would do good. He, therefore, proposed that he would send copies of the book in six to twelve lots for sixty-two and one half cents each. Within a few months the supply was exhausted, and before the end of the year the second edition had to be brought out. It is likely that in spite of the thousands of copies sold of material Otey wrote, nothing he ever printed

⁸⁶ W. W. Otey, "The Mentone Meeting," Octographic Review, Vol. LII, No. 40 (October 5, 1909), p. 1.

paid for itself. That the materials might be read Otey sold much of his writings for less than cost. He never intended to try to make money on his publications. He wrote solely because he thought some good would result from what he printed.

During 1910 Otey was engaged in many controversies. His allegiance with the Review had alienated him from most of the other papers as the tensions increased over the college question. J. M. McCaleb, who had been preaching in Japan, charged through the Gospel Advocate that Otey and Sommer were opposed to foreign evangelism, since they did not enthusiastically back his Japanese work. Otey wrote a reply to McCaleb, but the Advocate refused to print it. After Otey wrote the Advocate four times requesting that his short reply be printed, J. W. Jackson, the Office Editor, returned Otey's article.⁸⁷

Otey's solicitation of funds in behalf of the Review debt caused Homer E. Moore, publisher of the Christian Companion at Wichita, Kansas, to ask what the difference was between soliciting money for a paper and soliciting money for a college. Otey charged that Moore was wanting the churches to support the colleges. Otey thought that the Review was doing a scriptural work in a scriptural way, and that the paper was nothing more than an extension of the preacher's power to teach.⁸⁸ Otey offered to pay advertising rates to get his reply inserted into Moore's paper, but to no avail.

⁸⁷ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 2 (January 11, 1910), p. 4.

⁸⁸ W. W. Otey, "The Difference Between Soliciting for the Review and Bible Colleges," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 2 (January 11, 1910), p. 3.

During 1910 Otey became involved in a long series of controversial articles with J. T. and G. H. P. Showalter. The college issue had alienated these brethren till now they were finding petty faults with one another. G. H. P. Showalter wrote an article in which he endorsed all of the schools, but in which he also objected to the collection of huge sums of money for elaborate buildings and to endow the schools. This position reminded Otey of the absurd position taken years before by John F. Rowe, in which Rowe said he would go along with a small organ, but was violently opposed to a large one.⁸⁹ J. T. Showalter felt that Otey was being inconsistent on the college issue and was seeing "hobgoblins" that did not exist. The brief difference between Otey and J. T. Showalter over Milligan College and C. D. M. Showalter must have yet bothered J. T. Showalter. Showalter's son, C. D. M., had married the daughter of the owner of Milligan College, James L. English. Otey had criticized Milligan College, stating that it was the most dangerous of all the colleges, since it professed to be loyal. Showalter had understood Otey to say that Hopwood, the Milligan President, was the most dangerous brother. However, Otey had not said this. After Hopwood left Milligan College he went to Lynchburg, Virginia and started Virginia Christian College, now Lynchburg College. Otey sent his two oldest daughters to Lynchburg to school. Showalter felt it very inconsistent for Otey to send his daughters to study under the "most dangerous" man in the brotherhood.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 29 (July 18, 1911), p. 6.

⁹⁰ J. T. Showalter, "Schools and Colleges," Firm Foundation, Vol. XXVI, No. 44 (November 1, 1910), p. 1.

But J. T. Showalter still admired Otey and could not forget how he, "with a superior energy, a commendable zeal, a cast iron countenance and an indomitable will,...built houses and built up the cause of Christ" in Virginia, riding an old gray horse to his appointments where he preached mostly without support. Otey had called the college question the darkest cloud then overshadowing the church. Showalter's favoritism toward schools made it impossible for him to resist a chance to "dig" Otey just a little. He was trying to show that Otey was of a "changeable nature." This was his reason for alluding again to the Milligan college question.

Showalter said when he baptized Otey, Otey's father was a Republican. But Showalter, being opposed to Christians engaging in politics, soon persuaded Otey to take a "Rip Van Winkle sleep so far as politics were concerned." Daniel Sommer then came along, woke up Otey politically, and persuaded him to vote Democratic, said Showalter. Otey too had to put in a little personal "dig" at the Firm Foundation, which then was accepting many advertisements from patent medicine manufacturers. Otey rebuked them for advertising a cure for cancer, and reminded them that another person recently had been fined for advertising a similar cure. These are illustrations of the petty faults that the difference on the college issue was causing the Showalters and Otey to find in each other.

It is impossible to overestimate the magnitude of the college issue in this period. Claude Witty, writing in the Christian Companion, had asked that brethren over the nation write him expressing their feelings about "Sommerism." Witty did not hedge about why he wanted the expressions of feelings. He was going to attempt, backed by the

statistical support he hoped to gather, to create a "public sentiment" against "Sommerism."⁹¹

Early in the year, Otey in his preaching travels, had met James A. Harding. Harding was in favor of the colleges. Harding and Otey had a very frank talk, in which Harding agreed to meet Otey in a debate on the issues. Otey wrote that arrangements ought to be made for the debate, since in their conversation they had not decided when and what kind (oral or written) of a debate they would conduct. However, this debate never transpired. Otey himself was not helping any to cool off the college discussion. He charged that Lipscomb, Harding, Armstrong, and G. H. P. Showalter were pushing "the foundation of nearly...all innovations" when they pushed the Bible colleges.⁹²

Otey's argument against the school was very well pin pointed. He simply affirmed that the colleges were either church institutions or worldly institutions. Approximately one fourth of their work was religious and three-fourths secular. The secular portion of their work certainly could not be the responsibility of the church, and if the church did any of its work through the college, it would constitute an action parallel to preaching through a missionary society.⁹³ If the school was a religious institution added to the "One Body," it supplanted the church in its work. If the church could not preach through a human organization, Otey could not understand why it would be right for the

⁹¹ A. M. Morris, "'The Overthrow of Sommerism' Reviewed," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 27 (July 5, 1910), p. 4.

⁹² W. W. Otey, "Observations on the Christian Church Convention," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 42 (October 18, 1910), p. 4.

⁹³ W. W. Otey, "The Core of the Question With Union and Harmony in Sight," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 8 (February 21, 1911), p. 4.

church to teach through a human organization.

Otey also raised the question of ownership of the colleges. Whose were they? He quoted J. C. McQuiddy in the Gospel Advocate of July 15, 1909 as saying of a proposed school at Cookville, "This institution is to be owned by the Church of Christ...The liberal city of Cookville gave \$10,000; the congregation worshipping at Cookville gave \$15,000."⁹⁴ Daniel Sommer reported that the Thorp Spring school was to be "held in trust for the churches of Christ."⁹⁵ Otey wanted to know who owned the schools. He asked, does the world own them, the Government, the Board of Trustees? And if the board held the schools in trust, for whom?

G. H. P. Showalter felt that Otey was amiss on the point of ownership of the schools. Showalter asked Otey to investigate further the question of ownership before speaking concerning it again. Otey said he would take Showalter's advice, even if it meant going to Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas for the investigation, if Showalter would agree to print in one column the result of his investigation. But Showalter did not accept Otey's proposal.⁹⁶ So certain was Otey that his points concerning the school engaging in both religious and secular work and the question of ownership were germane, that he pleaded with Harding, E. A. Elam, J. C. McQuiddy, L. S. White

⁹⁴ W. W. Otey, "The Difference Between Soliciting For the Review and Bible Colleges, Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 2 (January 11, 1910), p. 3.

⁹⁵ Daniel Sommer, "The College Question Again," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 34 (August 22, 1911), p. 1.

⁹⁶ W. W. Otey, "Sending Off to School," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 37 (September 12, 1911), p. 4.

or Joe Warlick to publicly discuss with him his two objections.⁹⁷ But Otey was never given the opportunity to test these arguments in oral debate.

Also in 1910 a controversy began that affected Otey more than any of these before mentioned. Yet this controversy was slow in coming into the public light. Daniel Sommer, through the Review, began to express and to permit to be expressed a position which now has come to be called "Evangelistic Oversight." This position asserted that a church had to be under someone's rule. If a congregation had no elders, under who's control was it? Certainly not another congregation's. Sommer concluded that the evangelist had the control in the church till elders were appointed. This position has caused debate among those brethren influenced by Sommer's teaching till the present, being most ably advocated in recent years by Carl Ketcherside of St. Louis.

At Otey's instigation, C. R. Carter, one of the Lynn elders, wrote some questions to Sommer that caused him to have to expose his position further. Otey did not concur with this position of Sommer. This difference was to seethe underneath the surface of public knowledge until it would completely destroy the relationship then existing between Sommer and Otey. In fact, it may have been rumored that such was happening even in 1910. Otey felt a public reply was necessary to a private remark by a former preacher friend who had observed that he was "sorry that as good a man as W. W. Otey will be a bootblack for Daniel

⁹⁷ W. W. Otey, "The Christian College Controversy Shortened," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 24 (June 14, 1910), p. 5.

Sommer."⁹⁸ Otey resented the implications of this remark. He also felt it necessary to state in print that his relations with the Review "have never been more pleasant than at the present." Whether this was an attempt to cover a flaming private controversy is not known, but this difference did not become a matter of public dispute between Sommer and Otey for two or three years. Yet when Otey wrote concerning Sommer's death in 1940, he spoke of the fact that he and Sommer seriously differed on evangelistic oversight.⁹⁹ Privately Otey stated this difference was in 1910, though it was about two years before it became public knowledge. According to Otey, Sommer repudiated this position before his death.

Otey was becoming dissatisfied with some other directions in which the Review was going. It seemed to him that too much emphasis was being put on how long a preacher stayed in a particular place. Daniel Sommer's son, Fred, wrote a long series on "The Bishop's Office" in which he had much to say about the "pastor system." Otey freely admitted that the "pastor system" was almost as far developed in some southern states as among the Christian Churches. Yet he maintained, "It is not so much a question as to how often an evangelists visits a congregation, but how he spends his time while with the church." Otey could not believe that a man had to stay away from home to please Christ, as some brethren were implying by their arguments. In fact, Otey had decided that unless he spent at least two-thirds of his time with his family, he would not be doing his family duty, though he confessed he

⁹⁸ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 45 (November 8, 1910), p. 5.

⁹⁹ Statement quoted from a carbon copy of an article Otey wrote reporting Sommer's death.

was having difficulty arranging to do so.¹⁰⁰

When warm weather came, Otey began to make preparation to begin holding meetings. He now had more invitations for meetings than he could fill in three years. Truly the harvest was plenteous and the laborers were few. Otey could not prevent expressing a wish: "O, for a thousand young men, pure in life, strong in zeal, who are willing to give their lives in the great work of redemption."¹⁰¹

When Otey got the tent out in preparation for his first meeting, he found that it leaked profusely. This presented a major problem, for he knew there was not sufficient time to secure funds for another one. The Indianapolis Tent Company suggested that he could spread the tent in his front yard, apply a mixture of twenty-five gallons of gasoline and twenty pounds of parafin with ordinary house brooms, and once more he would have it waterproofed. With the help of his "Christian Endeavor" society (his wife and children), he shortly had the tent in usable condition. The gasoline torches he had been using were inadequate lighting, and dangerous. He asked brethren to supply funds to provide the new lighting equipment, and soon he could again announce, "It Is Enough." Otey was not like some brethren. Some, when they find they have a good thing working for them, are willing to let it continue till the last possible dollar has come in. When Otey secured what was needed for a specific purpose, he refused to accept more.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ W. W. Otey, "The Bishop's Office," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 9 (March 1, 1910), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ W. W. Otey, "News Report," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 14 (April 5, 1910), p. 5.

¹⁰² W. W. Otey, "It Is Enough," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 24 (June 14, 1910), p. 5.

After a meeting at Owensburg, Indiana in late March, and a four Sunday meeting at Pennville, Ohio, Otey returned to New Castle where the brethren had just completed a new meeting house. Samuel Piety spoke in the morning, A. W. Harvey was the afternoon speaker, and Otey spoke at night. The disciples here now numbered forty. Before a meeting at Mitchell, Indiana, Otey was urged to return to Portland, the scene of the Otey-Rogers debate, for a few days. The brethren there had planned what they called an annual meeting. Otey had attended but three of these, one in 1893, another 1895, and a recent one at Lynn in 1910. However, he announced that he was "not now, and have never been an enthusiast for such meetings." He felt they were a step in the wrong direction.

The Mitchell meeting began late in June and continued for nineteen days. The weather was very hot. H. D. Leach led the singing in a splendid way--in fact, so well that he later traveled much with Otey to lead singing for Otey's meetings. With the help of A. F. Dalton, Ben Taylor, and others, two were baptized, and three restored. \$3,400 was raised to build a new building.

From Mitchell Otey moved his tent a few miles south to the county seat of Orange County, Paoli. All the brethren in the area tried to discourage the move, as they felt it to be hopeless. Nevertheless, Otey wanted to give it a try. This resulted in one of the finest meetings he ever held. Within a few days twenty-nine had been baptized, and forty-five other baptized believers were called together to begin meetings. There were seventy-four responses in all.¹⁰³ Before the tent was taken down, a splendid lot had been paid for, and \$675 had been

¹⁰³ W. W. Otey, "The Paoli Meeting," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 33 (August 16, 1910), p. 1.

raised toward a new building. During some of the afternoon sessions as many as seven hundred attended, and at night the attendance on a few occasions was one thousand. This was accomplished without any of the cheap showmanship of modern religious sensationalists.

From Paoli he went on further south to Palmyra, and began a meeting that looked promising, only to have to close it due to his own sickness. He had a violent skin eruption similar to what Job must have experienced. The doctor said it was caused by overwork and nervous exhaustion. He recommended that Otey give up meeting work for six to eight months. This made necessary the cancellation of a meeting planned in Kirksville, Missouri.

During 1910 Otey wrote much more than usual. Forty-two articles were printed in the Review alone. He wrote against the danger of letting "lesson leaves" become the standard of authority in the classes.¹⁰⁴ He also warned preachers against destroying their influence by the indiscretion of pipe or cigar smoking, and chewing tobacco.¹⁰⁵

Late in the year Otey put out his second book, a 100 page book of sermons designed to convert the sects. He wrote on "How To Become a Christian," "The Witness of the Spirit," "Which Church Should I Join?," "God's Ways and Man's Ways Compared," and similar subjects. The Review office editor wrote, "W. W. Otey ought to be swamped with orders for his new book. His experience with his tent is enough to recommend the work to any member of the church." The book met with a tremendous response. Otey had a few over two thousand copies printed. Seventeen days after

¹⁰⁴ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 2 (January 11, 1910), p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 5 (February 1, 1910), p. 5.

the book came from the press he only had 700 copies left.

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH'S CONVENTIONS

Both before and after the Otey-Briney debate, Otey had been watching with much interest the brewing storm between the Christian Standard and the Christian Evangelist. The Christian Standard, a few years before, had been the main instrument of the "Progressives." However, the movement had begotten a new generation of ultra-liberals. They were too liberal for the Christian Standard. The more liberal ones had rallied about the Christian Evangelist, a paper edited by J. H. Garrison. Otey had been predicting for some time that the ultra-liberals would win the controversy numerically. He predicted that J. A. Lord, J. B. Briney and the Christian Standard would have to "'get on the band wagon' with Garrison, Willet...or they will need to formulate another set of societies."¹⁰⁶

The society idea was growing. Clamor now was being made for delegate conventions, and for a united society in which all the societies with specific purposes would be amalgamated. The higher critical views toward the Bible also were dividing the Christian Church ranks. Peter Ainslie was pushing what then was called "Federation," a union with the sects. Briney, D. R. Dungan, McGarvey, Russell Errett and J. A. Lord were taking the conservative side of each of these controversies. But Otey predicted their defeat. Briney and his cohorts, in their early advocacy of the societies, instrumental music, etc., according to Otey, had "sowed the wind" and "are now reaping a cyclone."

¹⁰⁶ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 23 (June 7, 1910), p. 5.

A few years before, as David Lipscomb attempted to stay the tide of liberalism, he had been likened unto an old woman standing by the seaside trying to sweep back the ocean with a broom. Perhaps Otey drew from this analogy when he pictured J. B. Briney as a six year old boy standing by the sea. As each wave came crashing in, this little boy would charge the wave, and throw his cap at it in a vain attempt to stay it.¹⁰⁷

Briney and the Christian Standard were now fighting a losing battle. They had assisted in the promotion of a movement that now had grown till it was ready, if necessary, to devour them. Briney charged that the liberals among the Disciples were "attempting to steal the livery of heaven in which to do the devil's work."¹⁰⁸ A few years before, Otey and others had charged Briney and his coworkers with doing the same thing. It was a strange phenomenon, but within a score of years, the "Progressives" had so progressed that McGarvey, Briney, Lord, Errett, Book, and Dungan were now the "Antis" and "old fogies." The "wheels of progress" were rolling too fast for these Christian Standard writers.

Otey had kept himself pretty well posted on the controversy then in motion between the conservative and liberal "Progressives." He preferred to call them "Digressives." In 1909 the annual convention of the Disciples of Christ was scheduled for Pittsburg where a centennial celebration was planned to honor the giving of the famous "Declaration and Address" by Thomas Campbell in 1809. This was to be the convention

¹⁰⁷ W. W. Otey, "Babel-Pittsburg, or the Christian Church in Confusion-No. 2," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 26 (July 5, 1910), p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ W. W. Otey, "Babel-Pittsburg, or the Christian Church in Confusion-No. 3," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 31 (August 2, 1910), p. 4.

of conventions. Supposedly the war within the ranks would subside until after this great event had occurred. The Christian Standard had fought valiantly to keep H. L. Willett, a University of Chicago professor who epitomized the modernism then opposed by the Standard, from appearing as a speaker on the 1908 convention program at New Orleans. But the Standard had failed. These brethren did not give up, but immediately set about to make sure Willett and others of his kind did not appear on the Pittsburg program. Otey was so interested in this struggle for power that he attended the Pittsburg Centennial Convention to observe what happened so that he also might report it as an object-lesson to his conservative readers through the Octographic Review.

Briney, Dungan, Book, McGarvey, Errett, and Lord fought hard to keep Willett, P. J. Rice and Col. S. H. Church from appearing on the program. But when the committee to decide on the participants in the convention voted, the vote was 8-3 to permit the liberals on the program. Otey reported, "the ravings of Lord, Briney, McGarvey, Book, Dungan...were about as effective as popguns and paper wads would be against Gibraltar." When Willett presented his speech, he presented nothing objectionable in an effort to disarm his critics. As somewhat of a show of strength the convention secured the use of Forbes Field in which to observe the Lord's Supper on October 17th. Much had been written to try to have 50,000 present for that meeting. Fifty tables were used, one hundred elders presided with five hundred deacons assisting in the serving of the communers estimated at 30,000. A \$2,000 collection was taken.

The Christian Standard men returned home brooding over their defeat. The Standard was engaged to print a 600 page book on the

convention. However, in a "Publisher's Note" Russell Errett, manager of the Standard said,

The publication of this report was undertaken by the Standard Publishing Co., only on the express understanding that we were privileged to disclaim in this way all responsibility for the appearance of the names of Prof. H. L. Willett and P. J. Rice in its pages; and that the opposition of a great part of the brotherhood to their appearance on the program, as representative men, should here go to record...we object to the recognition, as representative, of men who are notorious for public utterances in conflict with the plain teaching of the Scriptures. We regard this statement as due, not only to ourselves under the circumstances, but to the integrity of this report. On no other condition would we have permitted the use of our imprint.¹⁰⁹

It was obvious the Christian Standard staff came home very unhappy. Otey wrote seven articles in review of this convention, significantly entitled "Babel-Pittsburg, or the Christian Church in Confusion."

At the Pittsburg convention arrangements were made for the 1910 convention to be held in Topeka, Kansas. It soon became obvious that an even greater fight was going to be made at Topeka. The world would not be looking in on the sessions quite as closely as it had at Pittsburg. R. A. Long, a Kansas City millionaire, had purchased the Christian Evangelist for \$1,000,000 and purposed to give it to the brethren as a brotherhood publishing house. An effort was being made, in Otey's opinion, to adopt a delegate convention to become a receiving agent of Long's gift. Otey knew that a great fight would occur. His previous series of articles had proved very interesting. So he resolved to attend the Topeka convention (October 11-15) to report its happenings through the Review.

¹⁰⁹ Russell Errett (ed.), Centennial Convention Report, (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1909), p. 5.

Otey went by train to Topeka, leaving Lynn October 9th. At Topeka he stayed in the home of W. B. Roberts, a staunch friend of the Review. It was obvious to Otey from the first that the Christian Evangelist group had planned and were managing the arrangements in the convention. Otey had been there only a short time until he had met and talked freely with J. H. Garrison, J. A. Lord, Russell Errett, Z. T. Sweeney, B. W. Young, Archibald McLean and a number of the lesser lights. Z. T. Sweeney introduced Otey as "our good brother Otey, one of the old apostolic brethren who will not have anything in religion except just what the Bible teaches."¹¹⁰ When one of the "Progressives" asked Otey what he was doing at the Disciple convention, Otey replied, "I am watching the 'man of sin' develope."¹¹¹ Word soon got around that Otey was present. He and a young preacher named Howard Peters of Mammoth Springs, Ark. were talking. Peters, not recognizing Otey, told him that he had heard that W. W. Otey of the Octographic Review staff was attending the convention. Otey asked Peters some questions about this man Otey. As they started to separate, Peters asked Otey what his name was. Otey replied "My acquaintances over in Indiana call me Otey."¹¹²

Every one present knew an open fight was going to be made in the convention. Even the daily papers were predicting such. Archibald McLean told Otey that not many were expected for the main sessions. T. C. Howe, Butler University President, was one of the speakers. Another of the speakers argued for the delegate convention by saying,

¹¹⁰ W. W. Otey, "Observations on the Christian Church Convention-No. 2,"

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

"we already have an ecclesiasticism, and the only question is how big a one shall we have?"¹¹³ When the convention voting was occurring, Otey estimated that only about fifty out of the two thousand present voted on most of the issues before the convention.

Otey was especially interested in the fight being waged over "Federation." Peter Ainslie III was by all odds the leading advocate of such at the convention. The "Christian Temple," where Ainslie preached in Baltimore, had an "open pulpit" and advocated "Open Membership." When the temple was "dedicated," sectarians, Jews and Catholics participated. Ainslie was President of the American Christian Missionary Society that year. So he presided over most sessions of the convention. Ainslie called this convention the "most stormy of all the conventions of the Disciples." He recalled that he had to use the gavel so often he "wore out all of the books on the desk commanding order."¹¹⁴

In his speech on the "Federation" issue, Ainslie said that the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, etc., "whatever be their names, all these likewise are our brethren." Otey quoted Ainslie as saying, "The denominations, together with the Catholics are our brethren, and our task is their fellowship."¹¹⁵ Ainslie soon found that there was too much opposition to his "Federation" views to bring them in motion form before the convention. So during the convention he called a private conference

¹¹³ W. W. Otey, "Observations on the Christian Church Convention," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 42 (October 18, 1910), p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Peter Ainslie, Working With God, (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1917), p. 300.

¹¹⁵ W. W. Otey, "Observations on the Christian Church Convention," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 45 (November 8, 1910), p. 5.

on the subject, which resulted in the establishment of "The Council on Christian Union of the Disciples of Christ."

The hot convention issue was over the delegate convention. Z. T. Sweeney, J. A. Lord, Russell Errett, J. B. Briney and others were strongly opposed to such. Briney and Sweeney were seated on the front row. Briney intended to make a strong speech in opposition to the formation of a delegate convention, as he considered it to be a big step toward ecclesiasticism. Garrison, Briney and Otey sat near each other on the front row. Garrison, as observed by Otey, appeared to be very satisfied. Well might he be, as he was getting what he wanted through the leadership of Ainslie, the skillful Baltimore tactician. Briney, whom Otey thought easily to be the most imposing character at the convention, on the other hand appeared to be agitated. Several times Briney jumped to his feet to make his speech. Each time Ainslie would cut him off without letting him even so much as complete a single sentence. Otey began to feel sorry for the defeated Briney. But as Otey said, he had sown the wind; now he was reaping the cyclone.

Otey had something to say in appraisal of most of the important men at the convention. Archibald McLean was an enigma to him. He never could quite decide what to think about him. Garrison "presents every mark of the scheming, time-serving political organizer." Otey felt that Garrison really was being reflected in Ainslie's action. J. A. Lord disappointed Otey, as Lord, when meeting face to face his enemies, "became calm as a shorn lamb."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ W. W. Otey, "Observations on the Christian Church Convention-No. 3," Octographic Review, Vol. LIII, No. 45 (November 8, 1910), p. 1.

After the convention, Otey took a trip through Kansas, during which he preached at Ottawa, Section, Parsons, and Winfield. At Winfield he renewed his acquaintance with A. M. Morris whom he had not seen for fourteen years. He was very favorably impressed with the little town of Winfield. In fact, though Otey had not yet decided it, within just a matter of months Otey would be living in Winfield. He had planned to take a trip into Oklahoma also, but he was very tired, and had now been away from home a month, during which he had averaged preaching once daily. So he dropped his plans for an Oklahoma trip. He returned through Wichita, where he visited Homer E. Moore and W. F. Parmiter in the Christian Companion office. There was no time for discussion of differences though. On the way home he also stopped at Garner for a short visit with I. D. Moffitt, with whom he was to be much more closely associated later. It was refreshing to weary Otey to be back home with his wife and children after another rather long absence and a very tiring year.

When compared to the two or three years immediately preceding, 1911 was a rather uneventful year in Otey's life. The main thing of significance in this year was the fact that Otey completed his stay in Indiana. During the last few months of his life in Indiana Otey continued to contend for what he believed to be the truth. Error had to be opposed. Equal responsibility to oppose it was borne by each person. Otey certainly did not want to fail to do his share.

In 1909 Otey had been in correspondence with a Christian Church preacher, J. L. Sharritt, of Indianapolis, regarding a debate. Sharritt had since moved to Lynn to preach for the Christian Church there. Otey

immediately proposed again that they discuss their points of difference. Sharritt refused. Yet the report persistently came to Otey that Sharritt at New Castle had charged that Otey would not meet him. So Otey made the proposal public, suggesting that they conduct a written debate to be carried in the Christian Standard and the Octographic Review (Sharritt wanted to carry it only in the Review), or Otey proposed that he would pay Sharritt \$10 a day to conduct an oral debate with him. But the debates never occurred.¹¹⁷

Otey's summer meetings were not as fruitful this year as they had been in preceding years. He had been forced to cancel a meeting in Kirksville, Missouri, due to his sickness in the early fall of 1910. So his first tent meeting this summer was at Kirksville. There were only six members in the city, which was the county seat of Adair County in northeast Missouri. J. C. Bunn of Braman, Oklahoma came to lead the singing. The audiences were small, with much variation in those attending. The result was that there was only one addition, an unusual thing for a meeting with Otey then. Otey and Bunn only were paid expenses for this meeting.

From Kirksville Otey moved the tent to Shelbyville, Illinois, where "the most noted church trial ever conducted by the Church of Christ was held..."¹¹⁸ There was no congregation in this city, and Otey was urging that one be established. E. M. Zerr and H. D. Leach assisted in

¹¹⁷ W. W. Otey, "Facts and Reflections," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 3 (January 17, 1911), p. 5; "J. L. Sharritt Once More," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 15 (April 11, 1911), p. 4.

¹¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "The Shelbyville Meeting," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 30 (July 25, 1911), p. 4.

this meeting which continued over three Lord's days. Two were baptized, and twelve others were gathered together to start a congregation.

Otey, while at Shelbyville, called attention to the fact that New Testament authority had not been found for instrumental music that caused brethren to begin to practice it. Instead brethren decided and began to use it without finding authority for it. After it was called in question, then they began to seek scriptural justification for it. Otey suggested this process was exactly backward to what it should be. One writer suggested that "boards" had been built for this and "boards" built for that till he was about "board" to death!

Otey had intended to hold a meeting at Winfield, Kansas next, but by now he had made up his mind to move to Winfield by fall. Therefore, he postponed the Winfield meeting until his move there. He was thereby enabled to return to Paoli, Indiana, where the summer before he had established the congregation. Paoli now had nearly one hundred members, and had completed a 35' x 50' meeting house which was paid for, except \$100.

From Paoli Otey returned to Lynn. He had a lot of things to attend to, as he had promised to be in Winfield, Kansas within two months. While at Lynn, in addition to being in the fruit growing business, Otey had begun raising registered Duroc hogs. He had done well with the hogs. So in addition to disposing of his property at Lynn, Otey had to arrange to ship two railroad carloads of his hogs to Winfield. Two of his boys rode with the stock to see that they were cared for. That must have been a pleasant trip! The move to Winfield was about 1,000 miles. But though there were many difficulties to encounter, the Otey family arrived safely in Winfield the latter part of October.

The seven year stay in Indiana was Otey's best period of work. He was at his prime physically and intellectually. He had been preaching twenty-five years now. He was by now well experienced. The brethren generally had taken notice of his work so that he was in terrific demand. He had given himself to the Lord's work with less distraction while in Indiana than at any other period in his life. He had been reasonably well supported. He had ample facilities to assist in his preaching in virgin fields. His heart was in his work, and power was in the Word. One could only expect these many factors to contribute to a fruitful era in his preaching life.

Kansas was to become "Home" to him for the rest of his life, though he left for about ten years at one period. Yet Kansas was to present to the Otey's many heartaches and disappointments.

CHAPTER X

THE SUNFLOWER STATE

Otey had the highest of prospects for his work when he came to Kansas. For the past several years he had done extensive meeting work with results surprising even to himself. By locating in Kansas he hoped to be able to preach in Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Texas, and of course, in Kansas. But circumstances were to take such a turn that this eighteen year period spent in Kansas was to be the least active, so far as preaching was concerned, of any period in his life. Just when he was best prepared intellectually and spiritually to do his best work, events occurred that curtailed greatly his activity. He preached less than he had for some years, and his prolific pen was almost altogether stilled.

The Otey family was exhausted after the eight day trip from Indiana to Kansas. The incidentals involved in moving had prevented him from writing for several weeks. As soon as the family arrived at Winfield there was no time for writing, as immediately Otey had to turn carpenter again and build with his own hands a place in which to house his large family. He immediately bought eighty acres of land four miles southeast of Winfield, and began working long hours daily to erect an imposing nine room residence.

Otey preached at Winfield the first and second Lord's Days in October, during which he baptized his son, Joe. All of Otey's children that were old enough to be were now members of the church. On the third Lord's Day he preached at Hutchinson, a nearby town of seventeen thousand,

where W. P. Reedy soon was to move. Otey expected to enjoy his life at Winfield, for the Winfield church was one of the strongest in the West. It had the largest membership of any in the state. The congregation had been started in the late 1870's. The split between the conservatives and the liberals over the instrument and societies had long since come. As usual, the liberals had gotten the property. But the brethren by 1911 had built a nice meeting house and had a large membership. Living in Winfield when Otey moved there were several gospel preachers, including I. D. Moffitt, A. M. Morris, B. F. Martin, and Frank Hedges. During a meeting which Otey held in November, another preacher, J. C. Bunn, and his wife placed membership at Winfield. Winfield then was a center of strength in the West. With so many preachers already living at Winfield, one wonders just why Otey selected this city as a place in which to locate. Winfield appealed to him, and after all, he expected to do but little of his work at Winfield. So really it mattered but little where he lived.

The meeting which Otey held at Winfield continued over four Sundays. During it he conducted twenty-four night services while "pushing the saw and wielding the hammer during the day." This surely must have been one of the most strenuous periods in Otey's life. During this meeting eleven were baptized, and seven were added by restoration and membership.¹ By the last part of January, Otey had his house finished and could then begin the work he had come to Kansas to do. For a few weeks he preached only on weekends at Cambridge and St. John. But he was anxious to get into meeting work. He, therefore,

¹W. W. Otey, "From Winfield, Kansas," Octographic Review, Vol. LIV, No. 44 (October 31, 1911), p. 5.

started his first meeting in 1912 before weather really was permitting.

With his house finished, he hoped that his "season of idleness from the Review's columns was nearly ended."² He was planning the biggest summer preaching campaign he had ever waged. He began his meetings by holding one at the Cowley schoolhouse which J. C. Dulaney had arranged for him to conduct.

The success of his next meeting, which was at Burden, was greatly hampered by the severely cold weather. It was rather obvious he had tried to start his meetings too early. But he had a full year of work planned. He had promised to go to Meridian and Tonkawa in Oklahoma. He had planned to spend the entire summer in southern Missouri. When he began checking his tent for his summer meetings, he found it unsuitable for another year's work. But interested churches assisted him in buying a new tent. The chairs for the tent had been stored at Shelbyville, Illinois where he had closed his last tent meeting the year before. They were shipped directly to Mt. View, near Springfield, Missouri, where his first tent meeting was to be held. He had promised to preach at Neosho, Willard, and at Alton, all in southern Missouri. During the summer he baptized many people in southern Missouri, which lead Otey to believe that the harvest was riper there than at any place he knew.

Shortly before he left for his Missouri meeting, Otey conducted a meeting during which he preached twenty times at South Walnut school house, which was near his home. Five were baptized during this meeting. Frank Hedges, I. D. Moffitt, and B. F. Martin, all preachers, attended

² W. W. Otey, "News Report," Octographic Review, Vol. LV, No. 4 (January 23, 1912), p. 8.

most of the services during this meeting.

Everything looked good for a long period of successful work. But the greatest storm Otey had yet encountered was just over the horizon. For over a year now Otey and Sommer had been carrying on a private debate, though through the paper everything looked peaceful. Ever since Sommer had written his articles in which he advocated what came to be called "evangelistic oversight," he and Otey had been at swordpoint. In the May 2, 1911 Octographic Review, Sommer had stated: "Evangelists are executive officers within the bounds of their jurisdiction... Besides evangelists are the only authorized disciplinarians of elders when charges or accusations are brought against them."

Otey had objected to Sommer's position when he first expressed it. But he was too busy in meeting work to give the position study and to attack it as he thought it should be. Furthermore, he wanted to give the position time to bear fruit, and to give Sommer time to explicate it further. But it soon became general knowledge that Sommer and Otey were being alienated by this difference. Sommer could not tolerate even a close friend differing with him, especially if this friend publicly expressed his difference. Otey came to realize the truthfulness of Samuel Piety's statement concerning Sommer: "A man can work under Daniel Sommer, but no man can work with him."

In 1911 there was trouble in the 26th and Spruce congregation in Kansas City, Missouri. J. G. Haner, one of the elders at 26th and Spruce, led out a group that later was labeled a "faction" by the older congregation. Since 26th and Spruce had been under Sommer's influence, it felt it should call in an evangelistic board to settle the trouble. Samuel Piety of Lafontaine, Indiana, J. R. Bush, and I. D. Moffitt were

called to hear the charges. They suggested that fellowship be withdrawn from the "faction." The dissenting group declared that Piety, Bush, and Moffitt had no business in the trouble there. They objected to "evangelistic oversight" and to a "modern ecclesiastical court of so-called evangelists."³ Shortly after the decision to withdraw fellowship had been reached by the evangelistic board, two members of the board, Samuel Piety and Bush, retracted their decision. The retraction may have been unanimous, except for the fact that I. D. Moffitt was not present for the second meeting. Bush and Piety felt they had acted too hastily, since the charges were not received at the mouth of two or three witnesses.

It appeared obvious that Otey would have difficulty staying out of this trouble. But he was never notoriously known for avoiding a scrap anyway. He was familiar with all of the preachers who were called to hear the charges. After the three evangelists negated their earlier action, Daniel Sommer was asked to come to assist the 26th and Spruce congregation in deciding what to do. Sommer was not one to back down so quickly. Sommer's coming resulted in the withdrawal of fellowship from the "faction" that left 26th and Spruce.

Meanwhile, Otey had become very critical of Sommer's position, though he had not yet written against it. When Sommer made his westward trip to assist 26th and Spruce, he also went into Kansas. Sommer afterward wrote, "The report still comes to me that a certain preacher is trying to make people who hear him believe that when churches are in trouble they should settle their own trouble or die of their trouble,

³ Stephen Settle, "Concerning The Church in Kansas City, Missouri," Octographic Review, Vol. LVI, No. 14 (April 8, 1913), p. 5.

without the aid of an evangelist."⁴ He quoted this preacher as saying, "If they can't settle their troubles let them die, while the preacher goes and builds up new churches." Without doubt this statement was aimed at Otey. Probably Otey never made the statement in the exact words Sommer quoted. But Otey had become one of the most outspoken against Sommer's evangelistic oversight position.

The conflict became so critical that while Otey was in southern Missouri during the summer of 1912, he wrote Sommer and demanded that his name be taken from the Review staff of writers. Sommer, being of the nature he was, gladly obliged. However, he never took a line of space to state why Otey's name had been deleted, or why nothing more was heard from him. No further reports were given regarding Otey's work in southern Missouri, funds for the expenses of which several churches had assisted to supply. Truly, this was the end of Otey, so far as the Octographic Review was concerned.

When Otey broke with the Review, mentally he was fully prepared for whatever repercussions might follow, though he could not possibly have known the many ramifications of these repercussions. He felt that the "faction" at Kansas City had been brow-beaten, abused and mistreated. So on his way back to Kansas after his summer of work in southern Missouri, he went out of his way to go through Kansas City and to preach for this group excluded from 26th and Spruce. Either Otey was oblivious to what this could do to him, or was so determined he was right in so doing that it did not matter to him.

⁴ Daniel Sommer, "Notes and Annotations," Octographic Review, Vol. LVI, No. 2 (January 14, 1913), p. 1.

No sooner had Otey arrived at home than charges were made against him by the Winfield church. The elders there were sympathetic with Sommer and his position. Otey had crossed Sommer, as well as having withstood his decision regarding the Kansas City trouble. He, therefore, had to be disciplined, thought the Winfield elders. Otey now had been so ostracized by the Octographic Review that no report was given concerning this trial. Little information is known regarding it, except what is incidentally learned by less public means.

Otey was by no means the only preacher previously associated with Sommer that broke with him over the evangelistic oversight position. Thaddeus S. Hutson was another of Otey's ilk, and there were others. In 1920 Thad Hutson wrote that the preacher who persecuted and prosecuted W. W. Otey at Winfield had been withdrawn from in Colorado for conduct unbecoming a Christian and for insubordination to elders. This preacher Hutson does not name though he insinuates it may have been W. P. Reedy of nearby Hutchinson. The same preacher, according to Hutson, had instigated the trouble that resulted in a lawsuit against the "invading 'evangelists'" at Purdin, Missouri.⁵ Hutson said that Otey "never was heard in his own defence." Few details are known concerning this Winfield trial, except that Otey was disfellowshipped by the Winfield church because of his objection to Sommer's evangelistic oversight doctrine. Sommer, according to Otey, later retracted the position, and Otey afterward was fellowshipped again by the Winfield church. However, this trial caused some unpleasantness for several years.

⁵ Thad Hutson, "Consideration," Christian Leader, Vol. XXXIV, No. 18 (May 4, 1920), p. 8.

What Otey could not then have realized was that this conflict with Sommer would force him into more than fifteen years of brotherhood obscurity. He was now shut out of the Octographic Review. He was as yet unwilling to write for the Christian Leader, to which eventually he turned. He had no way of keeping contact with the thousands of brethren who had read his articles throughout the years.

Copies of the papers in which Otey did what little writing he did during this period are no longer extant. Little is known of his activities during this period. Immediately after breaking with the Octographic Review, Otey began writing for the Gospel Proclaimer, a small paper published from Joelton, Tennessee, edited by Sherman Sexton and Charles Heinselman. Only one copy of this paper could be located, but it contained a lengthy article that filled almost the entire issue from Otey replying to an article by Daniel Sommer in which Sommer attempted to show that the pioneers had taught evangelistic oversight.⁶ Otey's reply said in substance that he was very little concerned what the pioneers taught. He was more concerned with what the Scriptures taught.

In 1912 Otey conducted his last public debate. A socialistic infidel named J. W. Madison, but known while in Winfield as "J. Madison Wright" was in town. A preacher named E. C. Love, of Tennessee, who had debated Madison on the west coast, also was in town. Love and Madison got into a wrangle on the street which resulted in a debate conducted in the opera house at Winfield. Love asked Otey to moderate for him. After the debate Madison wanted to take up a collection, but Otey, as

⁶ W. W. Otey, Gospel Proclaimer, Vol. IV, No. 2 (September, 1913), p. 1.

moderator, forbade it. During the closing part of the debate Madison challenged anyone else to meet him. This was too great a temptation for Otey to resist. So arrangements were made for a two night debate to begin two weeks later. Otey refused to discuss Madison's economics, as he had little interest in that. Instead, Otey chose to deal only with his "infidel part." During Otey's first speech, a local doctor arose and interrupted him. Otey casually asked, "Is there an ice house in town? If so, get a piece for this doctor. The seat of his pants is hot!" The interrupter sat down while the listeners laughed. Otey's only compliment paid to Madison was that he was the best "rabble-rouser I ever saw." No published report of this debate was made.

For some reason, the arrangement to write for the Gospel Proclaimer proved unsatisfactory to Otey. He, therefore, decided to start a paper on his own. In fact, he had the intention of starting a paper when he moved to Kansas. Obviously there had been some collaboration between Otey and Sommer in this intent, as Otey's daughter, Verna, spent two weeks in Indianapolis studying under Aunt "Kate" Sommer, Daniel's wife, concerning how to manage a paper. Late 1914 or early 1915 Otey started Gospel Light. The exact date of the publication of this paper is uncertain. The reason for this uncertainty is my complete inability to locate a single copy of this paper. After checking with the Otey family, the printer, the colleges in the area, the colleges operated by members of the Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ, and nearly one hundred historical societies in the area covered by the paper, not a single issue of this paper could be found. Even the Kansas State Historical Society at Topeka had no record of this paper's publication. Yet it has one of the finest periodical collections in the midwest, and

has complete files of many rare religious periodicals. All that we know concerning the content of this paper is from reprints from it by other papers.

Associated with Otey in the publication of this paper were James M. Briggs and Thad Hutson. For almost two years they published a sixteen page paper monthly. Otey in later years regretted publishing this paper, but the cause of this regret he never indicated.

The trouble between Otey and Sommer which resulted in the strained relationship between Otey and the Winfield church certainly must have hurt Otey's preaching opportunities. Many of the preaching appointments he received came directly or indirectly through his connection with the Review. By 1913 he was very hard pressed financially. Six of Otey's children now were in school. His earnings from preaching were not more than twelve dollars a week, certainly an inadequate amount to support his family and to pay for a mortgaged farm.

This financial pressure again forced Otey to leave full-time evangelistic work to give himself to the support of his family. It was after he had given up full-time preaching that Otey tried to publish the paper. The pressure of the responsibility of earning a living and trying to publish a paper may have been the cause of his regret of the paper venture.

While living in Indiana, and ever since he had come to Kansas, Otey had been in the Registered Duroc hog business. He now went into this business fulltime to try to support his family more adequately. This continued to be Otey's chief means of support until he moved to Belle Plaine, Kansas in 1923. Otey also farmed the eighty acres he owned near Winfield.

During 1913, Ira C. Moore, an old Indiana friend of Otey's, visited Winfield. Moore was one of the editors of the Christian Leader. This re-establishment of contact opened the door for Otey later to begin writing for the Leader. In one of his first Christian Leader articles Otey pressed Sommer to tell how the evangelist became an "executive officer"--by appointment or by election? He also wanted Sommer to point out the bounds of their jurisdiction. He then proposed to meet the properly defined issue squarely.⁷

When Otey began to publish Gospel Light, probably late in 1914, he did not write for the Leader for awhile. However, the Christian Leader did copy some of his articles from Gospel Light. In one quoted article he characterized his era, which fairly well describes the era that has followed. Otey wrote:

One of the most striking characteristics of this age, especially during the last quarter of a century, has been display, vainglory, pride. Throughout almost every field of action the effort of individuals, of earthly organizations, has been for the biggest thing ever before achieved. The aim, seemingly, has been to attract, captivate, and over-awe the beholder.

J. E. Cain, after a visit in Kansas, reported meeting Otey while Otey was on his way to fill a preaching engagement at Peck. Cain mentioned the recently launched Gospel Light, "which he (Otey) reports as well under way on the ocean of newspaperdom, with the most encouraging promise of success."⁹ Though the paper might then have appeared to be well on its way to success, it certainly was not. For

⁷ W. W. Otey, "The 'Review's' Remarks," Christian Leader, Vol. XXVIII, No. 10 (March 10, 1914), p. 9.

⁸ W. W. Otey, in Gospel Light, quoted in Christian Leader, Vol. XXIX, No. 12 (March 23, 1915), p. 9.

⁹ J. E. Cain, "Notings," Christian Leader, Vol. XXIX, No. 43 (October 26, 1915), p. 8.

it was published only a few months longer.

In 1916 C. Gall reported a meeting held at Fiatt, Kansas, which Otey attended. During Otey's visit he was asked to preach. Gall reported: "I spent many pleasant hours with him. He has a storehouse of knowledge and is discreet in using it. He is getting higher up in the hearts of faithful brethren all the time."¹⁰

During this period Otey did very little writing. From 1912 onward he wrote nothing for the Review. In the Christian Leader he wrote only two or three articles between 1918 and 1923. However, he did continue to preach. Until the time that he left Winfield to move to Belle Plaine, Otey filled weekend appointments at Burden, Cambridge, St. John, and Belle Plaine. The work at this latter place looked so promising that Otey decided to move there to give it more attention.

All of Otey's life he was infatuated with politics. Had he not had his devotion to gospel preaching, he might have become a professional politician. The nearest he ever came to doing so was in 1920 when he was a Democratic candidate for the Kansas State House of Representatives. His political aspirations were short-lived, however, as his Republican opponent, J. J. McDermott, defeated him 3,886 votes to Otey's 2,173.¹¹ On one other occasion he went to present a cause before the Topeka State Legislature in behalf of the Hog Growers Association. But this 1920 defeat ended his political career.

¹⁰ C. Gall, "Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XXX, No. 33 (August 15, 1916), p. 12.

¹¹ Letter from Alberta Pantle, Librarian at Kansas State Historical Society, August 31, 1961.

Otey had enjoyed some success in private business in Winfield. So when he moved to Belle Plaine in 1923, he purchased a valuable acreage just outside the city limits, and bought a house in town. He secured a job as a sales representative for a feed company and traveled Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. He earned about \$50 a week, which was a good salary then. Too, he became familiar with the state of Oklahoma. This familiarity later caused him to decide to move there.

Otey flattered himself in thinking that within two or three years the mortgage on the property would be paid. His intentions were to re-enter the full time evangelistic field as soon as his property was clear of debt. But within ten months the price of his royal blooded Durocs dropped from a value of about one hundred dollars a head to a butchering price of not more than twenty dollars. Eventually in 1926 Otey lost his Belle Plaine property, for his registered hogs had to be sold at low pork prices. When Otey left Belle Plaine, he was completely without funds. In fact, the suit he wore out of town was purchased with borrowed money. In Virginia and now in Kansas, Otey's business endeavors had suddenly turned sour after showing the finest of promises. He later wrote, "In later years I have regarded these losses as God's providence to turn me back with all my strength to the work of saving sinners and edifying the church."¹² Otey felt that had he enjoyed continued financial success, he might not have been strong enough to turn loose to begin again full time evangelistic work.

Just here, however, we need to back up a little to pick up the thread of his religious activities. Already we have disposed of his

¹² W. W. Otey, Unpublished autobiographical manuscript, p. 10.

business and political endeavors during this period. For several years he had written virtually nothing for any paper. After moving to Belle Plaine in 1923, he felt the need to re-establish contact with the brotherhood. In 1924 he wrote in the Christian Leader in reply to a number of inquiries as to what had happened to him.¹³ His youngest child was now in high school. During the past year he had preached mostly at Belle Plaine, though he did fill appointments occasionally at Milan, Peck and Cedarvale, all nearby congregations. About fifty were attending a young people's class he was conducting at Belle Plaine. He felt he was doing much good. The calendar said he was nearly sixty, though he felt more like thirty. He felt that he was good for at least twenty-five more years of work. He expressed an intention to begin to write regularly for the Christian Leader, if editor Rowe approved. Either Rowe was not too receptive to Otey's articles, or else Otey wrote but little after expressing this intention, as several months passed before he wrote anything more for the Leader.

Late in 1924 he wrote on "How To Treat Opinions," stating that no one had the right to teach in the press or in the pulpit his opinions. One only has the right to hold an opinion, and warned that opinion ridden men should be watched.¹⁴

During 1925-1928 he continued to write but little. He did state, after attending a meeting of twenty-five preachers from Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas at Tulsa, that preachers and writers were largely to blame

¹³ W. W. Otey, "A Word to the Brethren," Christian Leader, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6 (February 5, 1924), p. 6.

¹⁴ W. W. Otey, "How to Treat Opinions," Christian Leader, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 51 (December 16, 1924), p. 1.

for the trouble in the church¹⁵ He hastened to add that there was no formal organization in this meeting of preachers. A group had simply gathered to sing and to preach.

In 1926, after having lost his Belle Plaine property, Otey moved to Wellington, Kansas, where he stayed a few months less than three years. It was while living at Wellington that Otey published a tract on the "Second Coming of Christ,"¹⁶ in which he replied to the Premillennial speculations regarding the second coming. Otey also wrote that he considered it a mistake for churches to depend to any considerable extent on "periodical revivals, but must make the work an every day, week, month and year job."¹⁷ His only writing in 1927 was a series of four articles written in sermon form on Psalm 103.

Early in 1929 Otey severed all his business ties, disposing of his grocery store in Wellington and once more began to give himself entirely to preaching. Early in the year he went on an extended trip into Oklahoma during which he preached at Ames, Rocky, and Woodward. During the Woodward meeting there were fourteen additions. This was Otey's third and best meeting at Woodward. Price Cavolt, the Woodward preacher wrote, "He is a fine man in every sense." During this Oklahoma tour, Otey attended a week's preacher's meeting at Cordell. When he arrived home he announced that he was now ready to enter the general

¹⁵ W. W. Otey, "Tulsa (Okla.) Preacher's Meeting," Christian Leader, Vol. XXXIX, No. 7 (February 17, 1925), p. 8.

¹⁶ W. W. Otey, "The Second Coming of Christ," Published by the Pekin, Indiana Church of Christ.

¹⁷ W. W. Otey, "Custom Is Not Law," Christian Leader, Vol. XLII, No. 35 (August 28, 1928), p. 8.

evangelistic field, and already had received calls from Indiana and Texas. Too, he had just completed the first draft of a book named Creation or Evolution, about which more will be said later.

In early June Otey headed for Indiana where he had arranged several meetings. It had been eighteen years since he left Indiana, and he was anxious to get back to see what changes had been wrought in this time. On the way back east, Otey preached at both Emporia and Topeka, Kansas. In Kansas City, Missouri he preached for the 39th and Flora congregation. Arriving in St. Louis he found that the Spring and Blaine congregation was engaged in a tent meeting while their new building was in progress. They insisted that Otey stay over and preach under the tent for a couple of days, which he did. The third Sunday in June he preached for the congregation in Terre Haute, Indiana. Arriving in Indianapolis, he made his home for a few days with C. G. Vincent, who was the preacher for the Eastside church, now known as Irvington. While in Indianapolis, Otey preached for this Eastside congregation. He also had opportunity to visit twice with the Sommers at the Review office. He reported that "Chester and Allen Sommer, the two youngest sons, are in complete management and control of the paper."¹⁸ From Indianapolis he went to Lynn, Elm Grove and Limberlost congregations. The Limberlost church met on the bank of the Limberlost creek, where Mrs. Gene Stratton Porter, author of The Girl of the Limberlost, grew up. He also visited the Ft. Recovery and Sugar Grove congregations in Ohio. All these were congregations where Otey had often preached years before.

¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "Field Notes," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIII, No. 27 (July 2, 1929), p. 11.

He then headed toward southern Indiana, where he visited H. D. Leach, a singer who had traveled with him for his tent meetings in 1909 and 1910, and A. W. Harvey and Loren Raines, two preachers. Otey was then on his way to Paoli, a congregation which he had started. He conducted a meeting at Pekin which resulted in six additions.

From Pekin, Otey suddenly decided to go for a final visit to Virginia. He went to Cincinnati where he visited both the offices of the Christian Leader and the Christian Standard. From Cincinnati Otey went by train to Virginia. Back in Virginia, he conducted a meeting for the New Salem congregation, located just outside of Snowville, where he had been born over sixty years before. He wanted very much to visit his old friend, Ira C. Moore, then living in Charleston, West Virginia, but his travel schedule would not permit it.

He had committed himself to go to preach in both Oklahoma and Texas. So he had to hurry back home. His son Ray wanted to enter Abilene Christian College that fall. As soon as Otey returned home, he found that he had received an invitation to move to Rocky, Oklahoma to begin full time local work. Instead of going on to Texas, immediately he began to make plans to move. He now had no ties to keep him in Kansas. So after eighteen years in Kansas, he prepared to leave in the fall of 1929.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOONER STATE

When Otey moved to Winfield, Kansas in 1911, one of his purposes for doing so was that he might be well located to preach in the southwestern states of Oklahoma and Texas. Till now Otey had been so occupied with duties in Kansas that, though he was virtually located on the Oklahoma border, he had found but little time to preach in that state. However, he had held a few meetings in the state, as was seen in the preceding section.

The last few years had not been very satisfying ones to Otey. He was not happy with the fact that virtually all of his time had been devoted to business activities for several years now, and yet he had nothing to show for his efforts. His fallen fortune at least gave him the opportunity to get back into full-time preaching. Had the depression not ruined him financially, it is possible that he would have continued only as a part-time preacher, making impossible much of the good he later was to do.

Shortly before his return from his extended tour east into Indiana and Virginia in 1929, Otey began to make plans to move to Oklahoma or Texas. He had planned to locate near Abilene, Texas so that his son, Ray, might attend Abilene Christian College at least for one year. But this plan never materialized. During his visit to Cordell, Oklahoma to attend the preacher's gathering in April of 1929, Otey had preached for the small congregation at Rocky. His large family was about

all grown now. He found himself the least hindered by the press of home responsibilities that he had been for many years. It was this financial pressure caused by a growing family that had necessitated his entering the business world earlier. Now that Otey's financial board had been swept clean, he had nothing to hinder his entering full-time evangelistic work again. He announced his willingness to do so, stating he had learned nothing new to tell the people, though he did hope he had learned more effectively to tell the old, old story. Immediately he received word from the church at Rocky that they would like to have him to come to work with them. So late in 1929, Otey left Kansas where he had lived for eighteen years, and began a tour of work in the southwest that would keep him nearly ten years.

Rocky was a very small town located in the southwestern section of Oklahoma, about fifty miles from the Panhandle section of the border of Texas. Rocky was about three hundred miles from Winfield, Kansas. The church here was small and in much need of teaching. Immediately upon his arrival Otey began a gospel meeting at Rocky which resulted in four being baptized.¹ This gave the church encouragement, and improvements began to be observed in every phase of the congregation's work.

Otey had not been in this new location long until other churches began to use him in meeting work. During this first summer in Oklahoma he held at least eight gospel meetings, all of which apparently resulted in much good being done. In a three Sunday meeting at Taylor, Oklahoma, fourteen were added to the church. Also among his meetings that summer

¹ W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIV, No. 18 (May 6, 1930), p. 11.

was one at Butler, Oklahoma, in which twelve were added to the church. The congregation at Butler had recently been nearly wrecked by the actions of a noted preacher who had been preaching there. While preaching at Butler, this preacher had become an infidel.² This severely jolted the entire church, but the meeting in which Otey preached seemed to set them well on the road to recovery.

During the past twenty-five years, Otey had been giving some special attention in his study to the work of infidels. Not much had been written by members of the church in response to the repeated assaults of infidels. One finds Otey writing occasionally upon this subject nearly thirty years before this time. He now began to write more often about the dangers of accepting the evolutionary hypothesis, the denial of verbal inspiration, and what he called "social gospelism."³

While yet living at Belle Plaine, Otey had written to some of the outstanding evolutionists asking their recommendations as to the best books advocating and defending the theory of evolution. Otey ordered each book recommended and began a study of the most recent positions of evolutionary writers. His study resulted in the writing of a 148 page book called Creation or Evolution. The first draft had been finished shortly before he left Kansas, but the book was not printed until after he moved to Rocky. Before Otey would permit the book to be printed he sent copies of the manuscript to several of the college Presidents, including J. N. Armstrong of Harding College, James F. Cox of Abilene

² W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIV, No. 34 (September 23, 1930), p. 12.

³ W. W. Otey, "Our Times," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIV, No. 5 (February 4, 1930), p. 9.

Christian College, E. H. Ijams of David Lipscomb College and N. B. Hardeman of Freed-Hardeman College, asking that they read it and suggest any needed corrections.

These four Presidents wrote collectively,

We know of no other book like it. We believe the facts and evidence furnished in the volume will equip even the young and inexperienced to defend their ground and give a reason for their belief and hope in God. It should be in the hands of the young and old. We ourselves plan to use it in our schools as soon as available.

These four college Presidents also wrote George Pepperdine, a rich California brother, requesting after he had read the manuscript that he finance its publication. Pepperdine, though, declined to accept the suggestion. Otey felt Pepperdine's refusal to publish the manuscript was the fault of Batsell Baxter, the President of George Pepperdine College, and a close associate of Pepperdine's. According to Baxter, Pepperdine, till then, had turned down every manuscript presented to him with a request that he pay for its publication.

The book was highly recommended by the keenest of critics. Walter Renner, editor of a paper at Liberator, Illinois wrote, "He has given evolutionists the benefit of every doubt, yet he has dealt evolution a death blow." W. L. Oliphant who had just debated Charles Smith, President of the Association for the Advancement of Atheism in America wrote, "In my humble judgment the book, Creation or Evolution, by W. W. Otey is the best thing on the subject that has come from the press recently." W. H. Book, a Christian Church preacher and author for forty years wrote, "The book, Creation or Evolution, by W. W. Otey shows hard study, investigation and the work of a clear brain." J. N. Armstrong also wrote, "To say that W. W. Otey wrote the book guarantees a thoughtful,

cautious, and fair consideration of matters involved...I pronounce it decidedly the best thing of the kind I have read."⁴ Others wrote just as commendably.

In 1938 Otey rewrote this book, and Eerdman's Publishing House of Grand Rapids, Michigan reprinted it. After the book was rewritten, Otey called it The Origin and Destiny of Man. This printing was available only a short time. In 1950 the Firm Foundation of Austin, Texas again reprinted the book. A few copies of this edition yet remain to be sold. After rewriting the book, Otey felt that the final printing represented the finest and most careful piece of writing that he had done.

Perhaps no man ever wrote anything that brought only favorable response. One person wrote Otey that he had no desire to read the book, as the subject of evolution was now a closed issue. He cared to read no further on it; his mind was made up. Dr. Arthur Holmes, then of the University of Pennsylvania, while commending the book, felt that Otey had not dealt with the more recently proposed "creative" or "emergent" evolution. He suggested, seemingly with a bit of irony, "Perhaps you will some day take that up and show us how progress, which seems to be a matter of observation, is entirely consistent with the Jewish Theism of the Old Testament, and the Christianity of the New Testament."⁵

Otey still respected Daniel Sommer's judgment tremendously. He, therefore, sent Sommer a copy of the book, asking his appraisal of it. Sommer after many years still was fuming over the break Otey had made with the Review. When Otey had been in Indianapolis the preceding fall,

⁴ J. N. Armstrong, "Creation or Evolution," Christian Leader, Vol. XLV, No. 20 (May 19, 1931), p. 8.

⁵ Arthur Holmes in a letter to Otey dated March 12, 1913 - Note: Holmes obviously transposed 1913--it should have been 1931.

and twice had visited the Review office and the Sommer family, absolutely no mention was made of the fact in the Review. Sommer's disposition toward Otey was revealed in June, 1931, when the following statement appeared in the Apostolic Review:

W. W. Otey is now hand-in-glove with Prof. J. N. Armstrong, of "Bible College" fame. Who remembers when Otey talked of starting a paper, out West, "to stem the tide of Innovation sweeping up from the South?" That was like Otey, wasn't it? Fresh out of the Virginia hills--dreamer of big things! Now--"pastorating" down in Oklahoma. "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity."⁶

In view of Sommer's attitude, Otey could hardly have expected Sommer to be able favorably to review anything he had written. From Central Station, West Virginia, on January 31, 1931, Sommer wrote Otey. Sommer addressed him as "My Brother in Hope," which Sommer explained-- "I address you thus because I still have some hope for you, but not until you repent."⁷ Sommer said he had only begun to read Otey's "booklet" and added, I "don't suppose I shall proceed very far into its pages." He severely chided and rebuked Otey for not being careful in his use of English, and surmised that the many learned men who had read Otey's manuscript should have saved him from such egregious grammatical blunders as he thought he detected. Sommer closed this letter of very strong language by reminding Otey that "I corrected your manuscript many years ago, and acted the part of your best earthly friend. But you overestimated yourself and turned from me and against me."

Otey had not written many periodical articles for several years. During 1930, he only wrote four articles for the Christian Leader, though

⁶ Daniel Sommer, "Pick-Ups," Apostolic Review, Vol. LXXV, No. 25, 26 (June 23, 1931), p. 15.

⁷ Daniel Sommer, in a letter to Otey, January 31, 1931.

he wrote several others for the Firm Foundation. Until now the Christian Leader was about the only paper really open to his use. During the year he wrote urging the church to step up its efforts in the right kinds of works. He wrote that transportation facilities had greatly improved since he had gone along at a "four mile gait" on his old gray horse in the Virginia hills. However, he charged that the church was still traveling at this old "four mile gait."⁸ He urged more of the churches to secure the services of a preacher full-time.⁹ He continued to argue that it was not how long a preacher stayed in one place, but what kind of work he did while there that determined whether he was serving as a pastor or as an evangelist. Sommer and the Review were now giving much attention to what they called the "pastor system", which they defined to refer to the sort of full-time local work Otey then was doing. Otey also in an article suggested that the powerful telescope of the gospel ought to be turned upon ourselves to ascertain our own defects, instead of criticizing only the faults of denominations.¹⁰

After less than a year at Rocky, Otey, in late October, 1930, moved about eleven miles to the south to work with the church at Hobart. The Hobart church, when Otey moved there, was seriously divided.¹¹ Though there was division of sentiment, agreement was made to hire Otey for thirty days. Either of the two parties in the church

⁸ W. W. Otey, "A Four Mile Gait," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIV, No. 10 (March 11, 1930), p. 1.

⁹ W. W. Otey, "Building the Church," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIV, No. 38 (October 21, 1930), p. 8.

¹⁰ W. W. Otey, "Reverse the Telescope," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIV, No. 45 (December 9, 1930), p. 7.

¹¹ W. W. Otey, "Late Reports," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVIII, No. 2 (January 23, 1934), p. 9.

had the right to terminate his work at the end of thirty days. This thirty day agreement was the only agreement Otey ever had with these brethren, though he stayed four years there. His salary was \$60 a month.

Since Otey was still in the same area in which he had worked for the last year, he continued to get many calls for meetings--more calls than he could fill. The fourth and fifth Sundays in March he was in a meeting at Mangum, Oklahoma, and in late August he held a meeting at Indianahoma in which three were baptized.

Otey had known J. N. Armstrong, then President of Harding College at Searcy, Arkansas, for nearly thirty years. In recent years they had begun to correspond considerably. They visited each other whenever the opportunity presented itself. Through this close contact they came to think highly of each other. After Otey's book, "Creation or Evolution," appeared in 1930, Armstrong felt that it would be wise to have Otey come to Harding for a ten day lecture series to begin April 7th on the subjects discussed in the book.¹² Armstrong felt such a series would tremendously strengthen the faith of the young people in school there. Arrangements also were made for Otey to speak nightly for the Searcy church while he was there. This was the first of four such series of lectures that Otey conducted at Harding College. Otey's former associates on the Review staff noted his appearance at Harding, and it was this series that caused Daniel Sommer to observe that Otey was now "hand-in-glove with Prof. J. N. Armstrong of 'Bible College' fame."

During 1931 the nation was engulfed in its greatest depression. The effects of this slackening of economic activity reached into virtually

¹² W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XIV, No. 9 (March 3, 1931), p. 13.

every part of the nation, and affected most people adversely. Many of the preachers and brethren suffered from it. In Hobart there were several brethren who lacked the necessities of life. But Otey was thankful to be able to report that all of the Hobart church's needy were being cared for. Food and raiment were provided by the church for every needy member. Other churches around the nation found ample opportunity to demonstrate their ability and willingness to provide the needs of destitute saints in this trying time.

Early in 1931, M. C. Kurfees of Louisville, Kentucky, who had just been honored for having preached forty-five years for the same congregation, died. Otey wrote a tribute of Kurfees in which he rehearsed the great help Kurfees had been in arranging and conducting the Otey-Briney debate.¹³ On Otey's trip east in the fall of 1929, he had gone through Louisville and had spent seven hours in intense conversation with Kurfees. Little did either of them realize it would be their last meeting when Kurfees went to the train to see Otey off. They talked briefly through the train window, and these were the last words that passed between Kurfees and Otey, who through the years had become very close friends.

In the spring, after Otey had been at Hobart only four months, he attended the annual meeting of the preachers in the area. This year they met at Ardmore. Otey enjoyed himself greatly, as many of the fifty preachers present were men whom he had never met, and others were old friends of many years acquaintance.

¹³ W. W. Otey, "M. C. Kurfees," Christian Leader, Vol. XLV, No. 11 (March 17, 1931), p. 8.

The affairs of the church in Hobart were improving. Some of the hard feelings that had existed previously were being pushed into a corner. The brethren were beginning to think less about squabbling, and more about working. The result was inevitable--the church was showing considerable growth.

There was now another issue of great magnitude before the church. It seems that the church lives in a perpetual crisis. No sooner has one issue been dealt with than another of equal seriousness arises to take its place. R. H. Boll, E. L. Jorgenson, Charles M. Neal, and Don Carlos Janes of the Louisville, Kentucky area and several less significant men, had begun to preach the doctrine of Premillennialism. Other brethren felt this doctrine to be an indictment of the power of God and a diminishing of the significance of the church. According to some brethren, Premillennialism had been learned from sectarianism, and needed to be returned to them. Foy E. Wallace, Jr., then editor of the Gospel Advocate was leading in the fight against the Premillennialists. It was irksome to some, including Otey, to observe how that some of the "name" brethren refused publicly to divulge their position toward Premillennialism until the lines of fellowship had been clearly drawn, the major battles waged, and the sentiment of most brethren revealed. Then some of these big-time preachers began to blaze away at Premillennialism. Their action was amusing to most, and repulsive to some.

Otey had never been one to attempt to dodge an issue. Neither could he get the consent of his conscience publicly to keep quiet on this issue. There was no doubt in Otey's mind that this Premillennial doctrine was an unfounded speculative theory. It would have been less serious had

Boll, Neal, Janes, etc. held the theory privately, but they insisted on teaching it to the disruption of the unity of the church. They, therefore, had to be opposed. Otey wrote, "He who opposes error causes no division, but he who teaches error causes the breach."¹⁴ Otey believed that these men came within the purview of Romans 16:17 in which the disrupters of the peace are authorized to be marked and turned away from.

To bid them God's speed, in defending them or contributing to their support, is to become full partners in these disturbing errors...We have softpeddled, pussyfooted and used honeyed words all too long. Only two courses are open to us. We must either accept those vagaries and teach them, or oppose them....My course is "mark them."¹⁵

This statement was aimed at a rather large host of people who refused to speak against the theory, and who continued to express deep resentment toward the actions of those who did speak against it. Otey considered the "neutrals" in reality to be on the other side. He had more patience with an avowed teacher of Premillennialism than with a cowardly silent sympathizer.

Otey also called attention to the fact that it seemed that most of the "foreign missionaries" had to spend a few days "in a certain city on the banks of the Ohio before leaving." Many of those going overseas, especially into Japan, if not full-fledged Premillennialists, were at least too soft on it to suit Otey. Too, Otey charged that most of the Premillennialists were affected by a sort of "Holy Roller" doctrine on the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ W. W. Otey, "Mark Them," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVI, No. 18 (May 3, 1932), p. 6.

¹⁵ W. W. Otey, "A Plain But Much Needed Statement," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVI, No. 14 (April 5, 1932), p. 6.

This Premillennial controversy was one to hold the attention of brethren for several years, and Otey was to continue to be a prominent part of it, though he never wielded the influence on this controversy as did Foy E. Wallace, Jr., who headed the fight against it. After Otey's strong articles on this subject, he received many letters giving complete endorsement to the stand he had taken. Years before, when Otey yet lived in Virginia, he had written strongly against this theory through the pages of the Review. It was nothing new so far as he was concerned, though R. H. Boll and his cohorts had quite obviously recently been influenced by Russellism and other forms of denominationalism.

About this time an organization called the Morrow Foundation was established. R. S. King in the Gospel Advocate, April 27, 1933, stated: "The only purpose of the Bible and Testament Foundation is to help all secure the words of life as soon as possible." G. H. P. Showalter had objected to this Foundation, suggesting that Brother Morrow and others carry on the work merely "as individual christians and there will be no difficulty." This statement by Showalter implied that congregations were attempting or were being urged to function through the Morrow Foundation. Otey felt the need to say something about this Foundation. In part he wrote:

When men now form an organization with President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasury, to solicit money to spread the word of God in printed form, even though done "at cost," the church is again as definitely, specifically and certainly supplanted by a human organization. It is not the work but the ecclesiastical machinery against which objections are raised. A humanly formed organization to preach the gospel orally, and a humanly formed organization to spread the gospel in printed form are certainly parallel in principle and will eventually lead to the same condition. It is the same seed; the same harvest will be gathered. ¹⁶

¹⁶ W. W. Otey, "Let The Issue Be Met," Firm Foundation, Vol. L, No. 35 (August 29, 1933), p. 3.

The Morrow Foundation appears to have been a counterpart to the modern "Gospel Press" among the Churches of Christ.

During the fall of 1932, Otey announced his intention to spend August, September, and October of 1933 working in Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana. He had part of his schedule arranged, and wanted to arrange the remainder of it. However, when the time to go arrived, Otey decided against it. He wrote that "financial matters never looked darker in this country, and [are] growing worse."¹⁷ Too, there were many worthy men already in these areas who needed the work Otey had intended to do. He was busy in Oklahoma. So he felt the making of a trip to be unwise at the time. Times were so hard that during 1933 the Christian Leader was only able to publish twenty-eight issues, and some of these were in abbreviated form.

Otey was pleased with the fact that F. L. Rowe, editor of the Christian Leader, did not exclude a man's writings from the paper just because the writer did not agree with Rowe in every particular. Otey wrote Rowe, "It is a fine spirit."¹⁸

In the fall of 1932, George Steed of the Mt. Pleasant congregation, which was located west of Portland, Indiana, died. Otey, in writing a report of his death, was reminded of the night that he and Steed had gone to services at Mt. Pleasant, only to find that the organ secretly had been put in the meeting house. The doors were locked. Otey was forced to preach that night by moonlight. But Steed had been steadfast.¹⁹

¹⁷W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVII, No. 19 (September 5, 1933), p. 13.

¹⁸W. W. Otey, "In All Things Charity," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVI, No. 24 (June 28, 1932), p. 8.

¹⁹W. W. Otey, "Present With the Lord," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVI, No. 34 (November 15, 1932), p. 10.

Near the close of the year Otey held a meeting at Hollis, Oklahoma. The Hollis church had one of the most pretentious buildings then in southwestern Oklahoma.

In 1933 Otey was as busy as usual in meeting work. The church at Hobart was growing and at peace. Otey, therefore, could secure freedom from the duties of local work to hold several meetings. He held meetings at Lugert on Lake Altus, twenty miles southwest of Hobart, at Roosevelt and Granfield, all in Oklahoma. In most of the meetings in which Otey preached there were several who responded to the gospel invitation.

Since his break with the Review in 1912, Otey was "a man without a country," so far as papers were concerned. It seems that even F. L. Rowe had not too enthusiastically accepted Otey as a contributor to the Christian Leader. Otey never wrote as much for the Leader as he previously had written for the Review. In the early thirties Otey began to scatter his writing efforts among the papers a little more. His friend and relative, George Showalter, was editor of the Firm Foundation. So Otey began to send an occasional article to the Firm Foundation. Showalter rejoiced in Otey's break with the Review, as he considered the Review's positions extreme. He, therefore, gladly opened the columns of the Firm Foundation to Otey. This resulted in Otey ceasing to write for the Christian Leader within a few years, and turning almost exclusively to the Firm Foundation.

Otey's writing during the year was rather limited. But among his articles was one on the book of Revelation. Otey felt Revelation was the most abused book in the New Testament. He urged men to cease to "speculate about dates, persons, places, and times in Revelation, and to remain

faithful, watch and be ready, and trust the balance by faith in the Lord." ²⁰
 He also wrote regarding the current state of things inside the Christian Church. Ever since Otey's early conflict with the "Digressives" back in Virginia, he had kept close watch on their internal struggles. Otey depicted the Christian Church as being, at that time, in the worst state of confusion of all denominations. He felt that two evils had led to this confused state: (1) the craze for organizations, and (2) the employment of the popular vote to settle religious questions. He warned the brethren against falling into the same errors. More recent history of the Churches of Christ indicates that Otey's warnings went unheard, and the same two evils have reappeared.

About this time a gradual change came in the thinking of Daniel Sommer. In 1932 Allen and Chester Sommer, Daniel's sons, wrote a document called "The Rough Draft," in which they made an effort to sound out a basis for unity among those of different sentiments within the Churches of Christ. Daniel Sommer printed the document with editorial endorsement. In fact, it seemed that with the passing of time the document came to be attributed to him. Sommer now was an old man. He sought peace. He was now willing to overlook some things that in previous years he would not have tolerated at all. Some aligned with Sommer considered this mellowing to be a virtual apostasy on his part. His son, D. Austen, broke with Daniel over this document, and eventually started a rival paper called The Macedonian Call. With D. Austen Sommer went Carl Ketcherside, E. M. Zerr, Roy Loney and others. But Daniel Sommer nevertheless turned his efforts toward a milder sort of journalism.

²⁰ W. W. Otey, "Revelations," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVII, No. 24 (November 14, 1933), p. 2.

Daniel Sommer even made a trip south in 1933, which according to some was an effort to heal the breach that his earlier efforts had assisted to form. He even visited the schools which he had previously fought so viciously. He was permitted to speak on chapel programs at some of them. He came back, if not with different views, at least with a milder attitude toward the schools. After the trip south Sommer wrote,

...such schools if managed as individuals enterprises, or as extensions of the homes as educational institutions in caring for children...may be considered in the light of Romans 14th chapter. I have no right to say how far in education another man may go...while I am not thereby judged.²¹

Austen Sommer later wrote Otey that he felt his father, on this trip, had been deceived by the college brethren in the south.

Otey felt that the position expressed by Sommer in 1933 on the college question represented the position substantiated by Scripture. In July, 1952, Otey wrote in the American Christian Review, "I was closely associated with the Review more than 20 years, and many regarded me as being opposed to Bible colleges in any form, thinking I occupied the extreme position then occupied by Brother Sommer. But I never held that position."²²

Otey in 1934 concluded four years of very pleasant work at Hobart. He had come there only with an agreement to work thirty days, but now four fleeting years had passed. Without consulting any member in the congregation, Otey made up his mind that he should move in the fall. He felt that a preacher ought to leave before his influence waned, and he was

²¹ Daniel Sommer, "Report of Progress," Apostolic Review, Vol. LXXVII, No. 11, 12 (March 14, 1933), p. 11.

²² W. W. Otey, quoted in article by Allen Sommer, "How Are The Mighty Fallen," American Christian Review, Vol. XCVII, No. 7 (July, 1952), p. 11.

forced to move. He would rather leave while they wished he would stay than to stay while they wished he would leave. The Hobart church had progressed well during his stay there. The growth numerically had been tremendous, and peace continued to exist among the members. Within the last eighteen months, C. E. McGaughey had conducted two gospel meetings at Hobart. Forty-one were baptized in the first meeting and forty-nine in the second one. Within less than two years considerably over one hundred people were added by baptism to the membership of the Hobart church.²³

Otey got great satisfaction out of the success of these two meetings. Representatives of the Hobart Ministerial Association had been to see Otey about joining with them in a union evangelistic effort. Otey asked these men if they would permit him to preach what he believed. They said, "No." Otey then asked if a member of the Church of Christ could be selected to do any of the preaching. They objected. Otey could have no part in such an alliance, and only wanted to show these preachers by the discussion that in reality they had no unity. An evangelist from Memphis was secured for the meeting in which the five Hobart denominational churches participated. They reported twenty restored and eleven converted. Otey compared this to the outstanding results the "plain gospel" had recently produced during McGaughey's meetings.

During this last year in Oklahoma, Otey was very busy preaching in outlying communities. He held a meeting in a rented hall in which the church in Poteau, county seat of Leflore County, was meeting. He then

²³ W. W. Otey, "The Plain Gospel Still Lives," Firm Foundation, Vol. LI, No. 45 (November 6, 1934), p. 2.

moved twelve miles south of Poteau to another rented hall at Heavener for another meeting. He also held meetings at Indianola and Roosevelt, Oklahoma, where he had conducted good meetings the year before. He also went to Havana and to Ft. Smith, both in Arkansas, for meetings.²⁴

Otey wrote more in 1934 than he had for some time. He wrote that "The local congregation is the only organization authorized by the Lord." When the Bible speaks of the church as the manifold wisdom of God, Otey maintained this simply meant that the congregation constitutes the fulness of the wisdom of God, since the congregation is the only earthly organization one reads about the church having in the New Testament. And since there is no legislative power in the church, there simply is no use for voting in the church.²⁵ In another article Otey said, "No preacher can be at his best without a wife to balance, supplement and fill his deficiencies."²⁶ In writing concerning elders and their relationship to congregations, he suggested that elders have not the authority to dictate and arbitrarily to rule independently of God's word. It is not their business to make laws, but simple to see that God's law are discharged.²⁷ In the Christian Leader Otey also wrote on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

²⁴ W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Worker, Vol. XX, No. 2 (February 8, 1934), p. 5.

²⁵ W. W. Otey, "Church Government," Firm Foundation, Vol. LI, No. 29 (July 17, 1934), p. 2.

²⁶ W. W. Otey, "Husbands, Wives," Firm Foundation, Vol. LI, No. 38 (September 18, 1934), p. 3.

²⁷ W. W. Otey, "Clear Definition of Terms," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVIII, No. 2 (January 23, 1934), p. 2.

W. L. Thurman wrote commending his article, and said he always read anything that had W. W. Otey's name to it. "He always says something-- and in few words."²⁸

The Premillennial issue continued to plague the church. Otey wrote deploring the continued tendency of some brethren to press their opinions and speculations. He asked, "Has any one the scriptural right to so intensely, persistently, and unrelentingly, stress his opinion, both with tongue and pen, not only till the peace of the brethren is disturbed but till in many places the body of the Lord is rent asunder."²⁹ These are just samples of his writings for this year.

When Otey announced his intention to leave Hobart in the fall, he did not know just what work he would undertake next. He had given some thought to the idea of going back into full time meeting work. He wrote to Daniel Sommer to ask his opinion regarding his doing so. Sommer wrote two interesting letters in reply. He told Otey that he held no ill feeling toward him and Thad Hutson for their break with the Review years before, though undoubtedly their break had hurt the Review. Sommer suggested that Northwestern Missouri would be a good field for Otey, and proposed to inform Otey later of the possibilities of Otey entering that work. Sommer in these late years had become somewhat philosophical, and indirectly passed along to Otey some sage advice by revealing his secret thoughts.

²⁸ W. L. Thurman, "Gum Shoe Preachers," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVIII, No. 14 (July 10, 1934), p. 1.

²⁹ W. W. Otey, "The True Issue," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVIII, No. 1 (January 9, 1934), p. 1.

Your report concerning your health and endurance is very gratifying to me, and I trust your ability to work for the Redeemer's cause may be continued to the utmost, and when this life is ended I wish that you may live forever where we shall not need to consider the question of endurance. In the meantime I am regarding myself as the richest and happiest old man on the earth, as far as I am acquainted. Though I have not a dollar in any bank, and no belongings except a few books and a few promises of men who owe me. Yet I have invested nearly 65 years of unreserved devotion to the gospel. That makes me rich and happy. I still have many friends--friendly friends and unfriendly friends. The friendly ones talk in my favor and the others talk against me. Those of the latter class can do me more good by talking against me than they could by talking in my favor. All conditions of life I regard with favor. I am thankful for those conditions that are favorable, and I learn a lesson of patience from those that are unfavorable. When you write again tell me of your wife, for I am still especially interested in the woman that endures what a preacher's wife must endure.³⁰

But Otey decided against entering into full time meeting work. It was too demanding for a man now sixty-seven years of age. Instead he stated his willingness to consider another local work, though he insisted that the "job" and "salaries" would not determine the place to which he would move. He intended to move only where he sincerely thought he could do the most good.

Shortly after the announcement of his intention to move, he received an invitation from the church at Harlingen, Texas asking him to come there. Though Otey had never met any of these brethren, and though none of them knew him except through reputation, he made his plans to move there in September. J. D. Pinkerton was selected to work in his stead with the Hobart church. Otey shortly thereafter left for "The Lone Star State."

CHAPTER XII

THE LONE STAR STATE

The fall of 1934 brought to a close five years of labor in the state of Oklahoma. Otey had agreed to move to Harlingen, Texas. Harlingen, a city of 15,000, was considered the leading city in the world-famed Rio Grande Valley. It was about ten miles from the Rio Grande River and twenty-five miles from the Gulf of Mexico. The "Valley" was an area about thirty-five by seventy miles, and was a "land of perpetual fruits and vegetables."¹ After leaving the "Valley" one had to go one hundred miles to the north before coming to any settlements of great importance. There were eighteen small churches in the Valley working together in peace. Foy E. Wallace, Sr. and J. D. Tant had each devoted considerable time and effort to getting the Valley churches started. The prospects for growth appeared good to Otey.

Otey had a daughter that lived in San Antonio and attended the congregation where Jesse P. Sewell then was preaching. Otey and his wife planned a visit with their daughter and her family before going to Harlingen. It so happened that Sewell was to be away in a meeting while Otey was to be there. Sewell, therefore, arranged for Otey to preach in his stead. While in San Antonio Otey also was invited to

¹W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVIII, No. 25 (December 11, 1934), p. 11.

conduct a twelve day meeting for the Government Hill church, which resulted in seven responses.²

On Monday following the fifth Sunday in September, Brother and Sister Otey drove the 275 miles from San Antonio to Harlingen to view for the first time the city that was to be their home for the next three years. Shortly after Otey began work in Harlingen there were several additions to the church. During the first year he was there responses to the gospel averaged one each week.³ Otey received a twenty dollar a month increase in pay at Harlingen, though this fact had nothing to do with his leaving Hobart, since he did not know where he was going when he announced his intention to leave. He now received \$80 monthly for his labor. Otey wasted little time getting into meeting work in his new area of labor. Within a few months after arriving in the "Valley," he conducted meetings at Hargill where the brethren had just erected a new meeting house and at San Perlita.⁴

It is doubtful that any year of Otey's life passed but that he was involved in some major controversy. By 1935 there began to be some signs that the nation might become enmeshed in a war of frightening magnitude. Europe was in a turmoil. Hitler was building up a powerful military regime. The talk of war was in the air. Charles Holder wrote in the Firm Foundation urging the editors of the Firm Foundation, Gospel Advocate, Apostolic Times, Apostolic Review, and the Christian Leader to

² W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Worker, Vol. XX, No. 36 (October 18, 1934), p. 6.

³ W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIX, No. 18 (September 3, 1935), p. 12.

⁴ W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Leader, Vol. XLVIII, No. 25 (December 11, 1934), p. 11.

form a letter which young men could use as stating the position of Churches of Christ in opposition to war. Otey was fearful of the implications of such a move. He, therefore, wrote that no group of men had the right to try to speak for the Churches of Christ.⁵

Though these editors were the best and wisest of men, they had no right to sign a document committing anyone else to their position, thought Otey. They had not the authority to speak for the church universal. When the Christian Leader published Otey's article, Ira C. Moore, the "Senior Editor," felt the need to append a short reply to Otey. Moore felt that elders could speak authoritatively for the congregation over which they served as bishops, though he admitted none could speak for the universal church.

There was an intention expressed in the Christian Leader to publish a list of the men who were Premillennial. Otey wrote approving publication of a list of those who would teach those opinions radiating from Louisville. Otey felt even those who refused to take a position on the matter should be listed also, as they, in his judgment, only wanted to teach the innovations under false colors. Otey felt it would be impossible to mark and shun these men as the scripture taught unless they were named. J. M. McCaleb wrote an article challenging the usage of Romans 16:17, as Otey had applied it. Otey replied giving a careful definition and exegesis of the terms in the passage.⁶

⁵ W. W. Otey, "War," Christian Leader, Vol. XLIX, No. 21 (October 15, 1935), p. 2.

⁶ W. W. Otey, "Meaning of 'Mark' and 'Turn Away From'," Firm Foundation, Vol. LII, No. 50 (December 10, 1935), p. 3.

Upon the occasion of J. W. Chism's death, Otey wrote an eulogy.⁷ Chism had conducted over two hundred debates. Otey said Chism was the most advanced in Greek and Hebrew of any man among the members of the church who had studied the languages only at home. Otey must have had a somewhat melancholy feeling as he wrote repeated tributes upon the occasion of the death of many preachers his own age. With the passing of another score of years, Otey came to stand almost a solitary figure among those called "The Old Guard."

As Otey traveled among the churches, he found that some of the especially kind spirited sisters refused to continue taking the papers because of the many controversies then raging in them.⁸ Otey reminded such sisters that controversy was the crucible out of which truth often was secured. Too, he reminded these kind hearted sisters that the introducers of error were the ones to blame for any regrettable controversy that might ensue. He warned against what he often spoke of as "Trends"--tiny and apparently insignificant steps away from the truth.⁹ But, said Otey, "I think it may be safely said that no great departure from the teaching and practice of the Word of God was taken in a single step." In these initial stages are the only periods during which latent apostasy can be stemmed.

During 1936 Otey turned his attention more toward the work of the Harlingen church. He, therefore, held fewer meetings. Otey often

⁷ W. W. Otey, "The Ranks of the Old Guard Are Thinning," Firm Foundation, Vol LII, No. 13 (March 26, 1935), p. 2.

⁸ W. W. Otey, "Controversy," Firm Foundation, Vol. LII, No. 26 (June 25, 1935), p. 2.

⁹ W. W. Otey, "Light Wanted," Firm Foundation, Vol. LII, No. 45 (November 5, 1935), p. 3.

said that the Harlingen church was the most peaceful and enthusiastic of any with which he had worked. These attributes inevitably led to the growth of the church.

While Otey lived at Harlingen, the church conducted a lecture series in which a different preacher spoke each night. One of the speakers was the inimitable J. D. Tant who then lived in the Valley. Though Tant and Otey were similar in their severe strictures against all forms of error whether within the church or outside it, in other ways they were exact opposites. Tant was a comedian at heart, and saw no reason why a few amusing sayings should not have a place in his sermons. Otey was dead serious most of the time, and always when he was in the pulpit or in a worship service. After Tant had spoken on "Thirty Years of Progress in the Valley," while Otey was making the closing remarks before dismissal during which he encouraged all present to return the next night, Tant, who was sitting on the front row, interrupted him. Brother Tant said, "Brother Otey, Sister Tant will be unable to attend the service tomorrow night. Would it be alright if I brought another woman?" Otey was so surprised at the interruption that for a moment he could say nothing. While the audience laughed, Otey's face flushed with embarrassment. Otey was not equal to Tant in repartee. Tant's interjection must not have gone over very well with some others present, for the young brother who lead the closing prayer asked that God might forgive Brother Tant for his foolishness!

Otey was now being drawn closer to the Firm Foundation. In addition to the fact that both Otey and his wife were related to G. H. P. Showalter who edited the Firm Foundation, Otey had always liked Showalter as a man. Showalter occasionally came to Harlingen to visit Otey. He always

encouraged Otey to write more for the Foundation. Therefore, Otey increased his writings in Showalter's paper, at the expense of a lessening number of articles in the Christian Leader.

Most of Otey's writings during this year were regarding preachers. He noticed that nearly every lecture series had sermons on the qualifications and work of preachers.¹⁰ Otey thought that he could detect a tendency among preachers to assume the place of elders in the churches with which they worked. He had no objection to full time local work. In fact, he encouraged churches to make more use of preachers in such work. But he warned both churches and preachers against turning the oversight of congregations to preachers.¹¹ Among preachers he saw an unhealthy emphasis upon specialists. Some specialized in affirmative preaching, a very few as exhorters, and some as negative preachers. Though these supplemented in a small measure each other's deficiencies, yet preachers needed to be balanced.¹² "Halfbaked goody goodies" who were afraid to expose error, or negative preachers only were not enough. A balance between positive and negative preaching needed to be reached in each man. Though there might be a few churches who opposed preaching all the truth and opposing error, Otey felt that most of those reportedly opposed to exposure of error in reality opposed only "the course manner and harsh spirit in which it is done."¹³ Otey deplored the fact that the competition

¹⁰ W. W. Otey, "A Neglected Subject," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIII, No. 23 (June 9, 1936), p. 2.

¹¹ W. W. Otey, "The 'Located Minister-Evangelist'," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIII, No. 36 (May 12, 1936), p. 2.

¹² W. W. Otey, "The Balanced Preacher," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIII, No. 17 (April 28, 1936), p. 2.

¹³ W. W. Otey, "What Are the True Facts?," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIII, No. 28 (July 14, 1936), p. 3.

between age and youth among preachers in the church was so sharp. He felt that aged preachers could continue to be used and useful if they would live in the present and plan for the future instead of daydreaming of the past. They needed to study and prepare new sermons instead of preaching old, long, tedious sermons. Self pity and appeals for sympathy would not help the old preacher. The Lord had assigned to old men (elders) the important work of overseeing the church. If the Lord could so use these old men, old preachers could be of use if they would intellectually and emotionally prepare themselves to be used.

Shortly after James H. Childress, who had been writing a series of biographical sketches of preachers for the Firm Foundation, had been to Harlingen for a meeting, he was killed in an automobile accident. Otey had taken a liking to the young, enthusiastic, and hard-hitting young preacher and felt his loss keenly.¹⁴

After Otey's series of articles on preachers, his old friend Thaddeus S. Hutson who then was living in Parkersburg, West Virginia, wrote to commend his writing. It had been thirty-three years since Otey had come in his spring wagon pulled by his beautiful dapple gray horse to meet Hutson at the train station in Old Virginia. They both expressed a great desire to meet to talk over current problems. Hutson wrote:

I spent about five weeks in Nashville, Tenn. two years ago. I could write a book on my observations. But decided not to do so. The COLLEGE spirit dominates most of the churches there. So one who is not an outstanding school man is not so very welcome as a preacher. AND ONE CAN JUST FEEL IT WHEN AMONG THEM. But I met many noble souls in spite of that.

Hutson also asked, "I wonder if you take the "GOSPEL GUARDIAN" published

¹⁴ W. W. Otey, "My Tribute," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIII, No. 7 (February 18, 1936), p. 2.

by Foy E. Wallace? It is great--I think--especially against Bollism." Hutson closed his letter with this poetic tribute to Otey, "I am thankful to God for such a friend as you and on this earth we trod such loyal friends are few."¹⁵

The year 1937 was one of the less eventful years of Otey's late life. He wrote little, and devoted most of his time and effort to attempting to build up the church at Harlingen. His most significant article was one about immorality in schools operated by brethren. G. H. P. Showalter had written an article in opposition to some practices tolerated in some of the schools. Otey's article was basically a commendation of Showalter's article. Otey felt some of the schools ought to be forced to clean up themselves, or be forced to close. He felt that if students at schools which the brethren operated could participate with students from sectarian colleges in dancing, revelling, and such like, they should not fear the doctrines perpetrated by these denominational colleges. Otey even felt that punishing competitive athletics should be banished from the schools. The great emphasis placed upon intercollegiate athletics caused Otey to pose this question, "Elders think this fact over. If you cannot give to support man-made missionary societies to preach the gospel, how can you give from the church treasury to directly or indirectly support spending thousands of dollars in worldly competitive athletics?"¹⁶

¹⁵ Thad Hutson in a letter to Otey, May 19, 1936.

¹⁶ W. W. Otey, "Without Spot or Wrinkle--Without Blemish," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIV, No. 3 (January 19, 1937), p. 2.

Otey felt that not all debates were conducted as they ought to be. He even found some who vehemently would debate that one ought not to debate! Things in the realm of opinion were not legitimate subjects for public debate thought Otey. Opinions ought to be held; not propagated. Otey felt that no man should be debated who was not a representative man, and who did not have local endorsement. Propositions should be clearly worded, and a proper spirit should be manifested by participants in any debate.¹⁷

Otey was fearful that the same type of modernism that virtually had absorbed sectarianism and the Christian Church was making inroads among some of the Churches of Christ.¹⁸ Otey's warning on this point was not an unneeded one. A quarter of a century has nearly passed since his warning was voiced. One is blind indeed who cannot see modernism's influence in many practices and positions of members of the Churches of Christ, and it is feared that the end is not yet.

W. H. Book, an old friend of Otey's whom he knew in early life in Virginia, wrote the Firm Foundation to commend one of Otey's articles. Book was a Christian Church preacher, of the Christian Standard variety. Showalter, in speaking of Book's commendation said, "Brother Otey has been and remains one of our greatest and best gospel preachers. He is a preacher, debater, and writer combined and is excellent in all these lines."¹⁹

¹⁷ W. W. Otey, "Debates," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIV, No. 31 (August 3, 1937), p. 1.

¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "Opportunity," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIV, No. 43 (October 26, 1937), p. 5.

¹⁹ G. H. P. Showalter, "Things Missionary and Otherwise," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIV, No. 48, p. 4.

After three very pleasant years in what Otey liked to call "an earthly paradise of beauty," he was invited by telegram to move to Crane, Texas. Crane, a town of 3,000 people, was on the south slope of the Great Plains of West Texas. During Otey's three years at Harlingen, the church doubled in every facet of its work. Otey called the Harlingen church "one of the greatest congregations in all south Texas." On the last Sunday in September, 1937, Otey severed his relationship with the Harlingen church to begin the first Sunday of October with the church at Crane.

If 1937 appeared to be a little dull and uneventful for Otey, 1938 was more than going to make up for it. If one were to select the three most important years of Otey's adult public life, they would have to be 1908, 1938, and 1947. 1908 was the year of the Briney debate. The significance of 1947 shall be discussed later. In many senses, 1938 was the beginning of modern history for the Churches of Christ. History has a way of forming itself into different periods. 1938 marked the beginning of an era, the end of which is yet unseen.

The last quarter of a century has been one of repeated controversies within Churches of Christ. Yet most of these controversies have somehow been related to the church and its relationship to human organizations. It would be inaccurate to say this problem arose in 1938, for the same issues were discussed both before and after the formation of the American Christian Missionary Society in 1849. But beginning with 1938 the attention of the brotherhood again came to be more directly turned toward a study of whether the church could contribute of its funds to support works done through human organizations. Otey had for the most of his public life been giving attention to this subject in its

earlier forms. He, therefore, was one of the men best prepared and most anxious to have a part in pointing out what he thought to be the proper place for human institutions. Since the greater part of Otey's remaining public life was to be wrapped up in this issue, there is the need to devote sufficient space to considering these roots as they were unearthed in 1938.

Otey had moved to Crane in early October. He was going to be there only about eleven months. While there he was as busy as usual. The Crane church was rather small, consisting of only seventy-five members. Otey's evangelistic fervor was yet in him. Responses to the invitation at Crane averaged about one a week. While living at Crane Otey held a meeting at Alpine, in the heart of the Davis Mountains in southwest Texas, and at Hobbs, New Mexico, where C. C. Gobbel was preaching.²⁰

Shortly after Otey's arrival in Crane, he was invited by the Ministerial Alliance to become a member. Otey rejected the invitation on the grounds that he would be called upon to participate in things he thought to be wrong, and that his membership in the organization would imply his endorsement of things he believed to be wrong. Otey objected to union Easter services, and celebration of special days such as "Lent." Otey felt that if a preacher could not endorse such practices, and not only refused to participate in them but also opposed them, his absence in the Ministerial Alliance meetings would be more agreeable than his presence. He, therefore, refused to join. Regardless of what Otey did in and around Crane, his writings by far overshadowed these

²⁰ W. W. Otey, "News Report," Christian Worker, Vol. XXIV, No. 19 (May 12, 1938), p. 7.

localized activities. To these more important happenings we now shall direct ourselves.

In February Otey was invited to speak on the lecture program to be conducted at Abilene Christian College in Abilene, Texas. On Wednesday evening a report was given to those assembled concerning past accomplishments of the school. Some future objectives of the school were also discussed, after which forms were distributed among the audience for the use of those who wished to contribute to the college. While these forms were being distributed, G. C. Brewer was asked to make a few extemporaneous remarks. In the course of these remarks Brewer pointed out that if all the churches in Texas would contribute to the support and endowment of the school, such requests as then were being made would be unnecessary. In fact, many who were present understood Brewer to say that the church that did not have Abilene Christian College in its budget had the wrong preacher. Brewer stated he had argued in the past that it was right for churches to contribute to colleges, and was willing to argue it further if anyone felt argument was necessary.

This impromptu speech of Brewer's greatly upset Otey. Otey had to leave early Thursday morning to return home. He then had no opportunity to discuss the matter with Brewer. Nor did he discuss it with anyone else while there. As soon as Otey arrived in Crane, he wrote an article concerning Bible colleges and Brewer's Abilene speech. After serious deliberation, Otey thought it might be best to write Brewer about his speech before printing the article he had written. So on February 27th Otey wrote Brewer stating what he understood Brewer to have said at Abilene. Otey also added that it was his

sincere hope that Brother Brewer would reply that Otey had misunderstood what he had said. Otey hoped that Brewer clearly would state he was only asking for contributions from individuals. On March 2nd Brewer replied,

As to my statement at the College, you did not misunderstand me, but you left off a part of the statement that I think should be included. I said that I had argued for the practice of putting the Colleges and orphan's homes in the Congregational budgets, and I would be willing to argue for it again, if argument were necessary...²¹

Brewer went on to state that he thought that it had been the practice of churches since the founding of Bethany college in 1840 to contribute to schools. Many of the leading brethren favored it, and a considerable number of the best churches were then contributing to Abilene Christian College, as Brewer said he was prepared to show. Brewer argued in this letter that in regard to supporting colleges and orphan homes out of the Congregational treasury, "...the principle is the same..."

In reply to Brewer's letter, Otey on March 5th said that whether many of the leading churches or all the schools from Bethany to the present practiced congregational support of colleges did not prove such was scriptural. Otey further said that if Brewer's statement that he was willing to argue the matter again, if argument were necessary, constituted a challenge to debate the matter, Brewer could consider his challenge as accepted. He wrote Brewer,

The position I occupy places the matter on at least a safe basis from a scriptural point, will make for peace, disarm the few enemies of the schools, make many new friends, and in the end prove the best for the schools themselves. While your position is, to say the very least, open to doubt, will arm their enemies, alienate many who are seriously questioning this matter, and, mark my words, lead in the end to another rupture in the church of the Lord.²²

²¹ G. C. Brewer in a letter to Otey, March 2, 1938.

²² W. W. Otey in a letter to G. C. Brewer, March 5, 1938.

Otey could not believe that Brewer's statement represented the thinking of the men who headed the five schools then operated by members of the Churches of Christ. He, therefore, wrote to each college President asking for a clear statement regarding his position on the matter. As there has been much controversy regarding these events, and inasmuch as the originals of these letters are in my possession, I want to quote from the replies which these Presidents made.

J. N. Armstrong was not then the President of Harding College. George S. Benson was President. But Benson was out of town when Otey's letter of inquiry came. Since Otey had not met Benson, but knew Armstrong quite well, he, therefore, addressed his letter to Armstrong. Armstrong replied,

As you know, doubtless Harding College has never appealed to Churches as Churches for help. This has always been my position and the position of every college over which I have presided. When we were in discussion with Brother Sommer in 1906, I think, we stated in the discussion that if it would settle the trouble we would from then on not return any contribution sent from a Church, as a Church. We stated then that we had never solicited funds from Churches, nor would we do it, but that sometimes when we appealed for help the brethren would in congregation[s] take a special collection and send it to us, and that we had accepted such contributions. I don't think it wrong for a church to do this, else I could not in good conscience have accepted the collection. But I think that is poor business for both the Church and the College. Besides for the sake of unity among brethren I could never resort to that method to raise money for the College. I am glad to restate this all to you now.²³

When Brother Benson returned from his trip, he also wrote Otey: At Harding College it has been our general practice to solicit individual contributions. We expect to continue on this same basis. I do not recall having ever asked a congregation to make a gift as a congregation from the regular church treasury. It is my conviction, however Brother Otey, that it would not be wrong for a congregation to make a gift to a Bible school from the regular treasury of the church. But as a matter of policy I consider it best to solicit individual contributions.²⁴

²³ J. N. Armstrong in a letter to Otey, June 6, 1938.

²⁴ George S. Benson in a letter to Otey, June 7, 1938.

James F. Cox, President of Abilene Christian College, wrote:

It is probably best that all money the college raises from now on should be through individuals. I have never, myself, raised nor have I authorized any one to raise any money through the churches. We have received some money sent by the churches directly. They prefer to do it that way. I have never felt that I should return the money to them and tell them to parcel it out and send it individually...I regret that Brother Brewer mentioned the matter the other night. We asked him to say a few words to encourage the people to give to A.C.C., but we did not authorize him to make a statement about churches putting A.C.C. in their budgets.²⁵

E. H. Ijams, President of David Lipscomb College wrote:

For your information I am glad to say that during the time that I have been connected with David Lipscomb College, and so far as I know during its entire history, its directors and faculty have never appealed to churches for financial support. Our appeal has always been addressed to individuals, not to congregations as such. In a few cases known to me, congregations have made certain donations to the school, usually for the benefit of certain needy and deserving students. Such unsolicited contributions were accepted though not solicited. It is my conception, shared, I think, by all our directors and faculty members, that the church and the Christian college are distinct institutions. The Christian college, as we conceive it, functions mainly as a supplement to the home, aiding fathers and mothers to give their children an education that harmonizes with Christian faith, not as an adjunct to the church.²⁶

N. B. Hardeman, President of Freed-Hardeman College, in a curt letter of only eight lines in handwriting replied, "I am truly sorry that we can not get settled on matters relating to our schools and the churches. I certainly do not endorse Brother Brewer's statements and would oppose any congregation's putting Freed-Hardeman College in their budget."²⁷

Otey felt these college presidents at present were unwilling to join hands with Brewer in a concerted effort to worm the colleges into

²⁵ James F. Cox in a letter to Otey, March 4, 1938.

²⁶ E. H. Ijams in a letter to Otey, June 30, 1938.

²⁷ N. B. Hardeman in a letter to Otey, June 16, 1938.

congregational treasuries. He felt their letters indicated this unwillingness.

Armed with these letters, Otey now felt ready to go before the brethren with the issue through the pages of the Firm Foundation. Showalter shared Otey's fears on this issue at this time, and therefore, gladly printed Otey's articles.²⁸ These articles were given first page notice, and were also later printed in tract form by the Firm Foundation. In the tract, Otey prefaced the articles by a statement that "we" have always been very critical of the practices of others, and had always flattered ourselves that "we" were always willing for our teaching and practices to be examined in the light of scripture. Yet, he said, in some things we are about as sensitive of criticism as our religious neighbors. "That about which we have manifested most sensitiveness is 'Bible Colleges.'"²⁹

In this tract Otey discussed the subject of "Bible Colleges" under three headings: (1) Their relation to the Church; (2) Their advantages; and (3) Their dangers. He began by stating:

This writer has never opposed one man or a company of men establishing what is commonly called a Bible College. He has never opposed asking any individuals to give money to build and support such an educational institution. He has never opposed teaching as much or as little of the word of God in them by their managers as they could or desired, but has rejoiced in all such teaching...But this writer has from the first opposed with all his power, the church as a whole or as congregations owning such institutions...But he has opposed, and will continue to oppose, linking such schools vitally, officially and organically, connecting them with the church...

²⁸ W. W. Otey, "Bible Colleges," Firm Foundation, Vol. LV, Nos. 31, 32 (August 2, 1938), p. 1; (August 9, 1938), p. 1.

²⁹ W. W. Otey, A Tract Entitled, "Bible Colleges," p. 2.

And he unhesitatingly affirms that for the elders of any congregation to take money out of the Lord's treasury of a local congregation, contributed in its worship, and give it to support such an institution in so doing it officially endorses and organically connects the church with that institution, and violates every declaration of the word of God setting forth the truth that there is "one body" and that "ye are complete in him."³⁰

Otey felt the best friends of both the church and the schools were the ones who opposed linking the two together by church contributions, and that those who endorsed such were the worst friends of both the schools and the church.

In listing some of the advantages of the schools, Otey pointed out that many had been able to receive a literary education in an environment that was for the most part good, and they had the advantage of having Christians as teachers. Too, many that had been of public service in the church had been educated in these schools, which had enhanced their ability to serve.

However, Bible Colleges are human organizations, and human organizations do not remain static. Furthermore, their change is seldom for the better. Many of the activities in the colleges tend toward worldliness. The colleges' greatest danger, to Otey, was that they might become afflicted with unscriptural teaching. With perhaps 98% of the preachers receiving some training in these schools, they, therefore, could turn out upon the churches a host of false teachers. The history of colleges proved Otey's point. He felt that every school from the first down to the five infants among the brethren had become the source of false teaching. While this in itself did not indict

³⁰

Ibid., p. 3.

the five then in existence, it did show the tendency. The best that could be said of Bible Colleges was that they were an experiment. All the previous ones had gone bad.

Otey knew that these articles implied he was asking for a fight, but it was a fight that he felt needed to be waged. Brewer could not honorably take Otey's articles silently. Brewer reminded Otey that G. A. Dunn had asked some questions about the church support of schools and orphan homes in 1933, to which Brewer had replied in nine articles through the Gospel Advocate.³¹ These articles were printed in tract form. N. B. Hardeman who said in the earlier quoted letter that he did not agree with Brewer's Abilene statement, according to Brewer, had read these 1933 articles before their publication and endorsed them. Brewer said the college Presidents were being unfair to him in the current fight. He charged they are making "a Uriah out of me." He said the schools have "accepted money from churches for which I preach and are doing so even now," and that he was ready to produce the documentary evidence to prove it. He even quoted a letter from N. B. Hardeman to himself dated March 8, 1938 in which Hardeman said, "I have ever been unable to see, in the last analysis, why a church might not contribute to an orphan home or to a school if indeed it believed that such was a good work and worthy of support." How Hardeman proposed to harmonize his letters to Otey and Brewer, both letters having been written in 1938, is not known. Brewer said the college Presidents hedged in their letters to Otey because they feared

³¹ G. C. Brewer, "Bible Colleges: The Budget--A Reply to Brother W. W. Otey with Corrections and Explanations," Firm Foundation, Vol. LV, No. 33 (August 16, 1938), p. 6.

a brotherhood "which is not always brotherly." He, therefore, called on the schools to avow their practice and to defend it.

In the course of this article Brewer remarked, "W. W. Otey has been a Sommerite all his life." Otey took exception to this charge, and called upon Brewer to retract it. Brewer accordingly, good-naturedly wrote:

In my recent article in the Firm Foundation, I said that Brother Otey had been a "Sommerite" all his life. Brother Otey thinks I ought to correct this statement. All right, I will do it. Brother Otey is not a Sommerite. He does not agree with Daniel Sommer's well-known position on the college question. If he did so agree, it would still be not quite as fair and brotherly as I always want to be to call him a Sommerite. I apologize for using that term...³²

Otey's adamant position on this issue caused several to pose questions for him to answer. Arthur B. Tenny wrote asking, "For what may a local church spend its money?" Otey gave a very specific reply: to support the gospel, and for benevolence. There are several scriptures for these things. Anything else one affirms the church may spend money for, he had better be prepared to prove by scripture. And Otey knew of scripture for nothing else. Tenny also asked, "When does a piece of money become the Lord's money?" Otey replied, "At the very time that one becomes the Lord's servant by yielding himself to the Lord." But he stated that the money only comes under the church's control after it is contributed. By way of clarification of his reply to Tenny's first question, Otey added, "While not critically correct, yet it is common to refer to the money contributed into the general treasury

³² G. C. Brewer, "Campbellite, Sommerite, Bollite, and No Ite," Firm Foundation, Vol. IV, No. 42 (October 18, 1938), p. 2.

of the church as the 'Lord's money.'³³

One of the editors of the Gospel Advocate, F. B. Srygley, penciled in scrawly script a reply to one of Otey's letters, in which Srygley said:

Yes, I saw your articles on the Bible school question. I think you are right. Bible schools should be kept out of the Church Treasure. That is one thing that is a trouble today. We have too many institutions built up around the Church. Brethren run all over the country and start Bible school[s] and kill them and blame the Church for not supporting them. These institution [s] call for more machinery than the New Testament contains.³⁴

This controversy over the church support of colleges was to rage between Otey and Brewer for more than ten years. One might say that it continued till Brewer's death in 1956. The two never got any closer together. Each continued to cling tenaciously to his view. However, the issue was of such magnitude that it virtually became a cleavage point between brethren. Other men of nearly equal stature sided in with Otey and Brewer. Papers also began to take definite stands on the issue. This subject continued to be discussed by preachers and papers till today it bids fair to be one of the major causes of a division in the Churches of Christ, just as Otey predicted nearly twenty-five years ago. This will be a subject about which we will be required to say more as we attempt to write a complete and accurate chronicle of Otey's later life.

Though the college issue was the most important one upon which Otey wrote in 1938, it was by no means the only one in which he had a part. Second in importance was the effort to unite the "conservative" Christian Churches and the Churches of Christ. For a year or more

³³ W. W. Otey, "Tenny's Questions," Christian Leader, Vol. LII, No. 20 (September 27, 1938), p. 6.

³⁴ F. B. Srygley in a letter to Otey, September 30, 1938.

James DeForest Murch, associated with the Christian Standard, and Claude F. Witty of the Church of Christ, had been attempting to bring the two groups back together. Witty, in one of his articles compared the Christian Church and the Church of Christ to the Jews and the Samaritans. He said the Christian Church was like the Samaritans in that they had the spirit and depended upon this only for their salvation, while the Churches of Christ were like the Jews in that they had the truth and depended only upon it for salvation. Witty said these groups were each sitting upon the end of a board waiting for the other to come to it, while the need was for both to come to the middle of the board to be united. The Churches of Christ needed the spirit of the Christian Church, while the Christian Church needed some truth the Churches of Christ had, according to Witty.³⁵

In March the Christian Leader put out a special enlarged issue with articles from representatives of the Christian Church and from those favoring the union among the Churches of Christ. Writers from the Christian Church included W. H. Book, Frederick Kershner, Edwin R. Errett, and those from the Churches of Christ included Witty, H. H. Adamson, C. G. Vincent, J. W. Shepherd, Don Carlos Janes, Leslie G. Thomas and Ernest Beam. Though the Christian Leader was a little suspicious of the unity effort, several of its writers seemed to favor it a little too much to suit Otey. It is likely that this inclination was the principle reason why Otey stopped writing for the Christian Leader about this time, and turned his entire writing efforts toward the Firm Foundation.

³⁵ W. W. Otey, "Unity," Christian Leader, Vol. LII, No. 3 (February 1, 1938), p. 5.

Otey felt that he should speak out upon the issue. He suggested that II John 9 forbade the Churches of Christ to move to the middle of the board to meet the Christian Church. Some of the brethren felt that the Christian Church was "coming to us," which to Otey expressed a wrong idea. The Christian Church did not have to secure permission of members of the Churches of Christ to do what the Lord commanded. Otey felt that the Christian Church and denominationalism were getting more and more alike because the Christian Church had found it easier to drift downstream toward Rome than to row upstream toward Jerusalem. Otey was frank to admit that the Churches of Christ and the Christian Church were getting more and more alike, but it was not because of renunciation of any practices on the part of the Christian Church. Instead, the Churches of Christ were drifting toward the Christian Church. One of the college Presidents had told Otey (probably J. N. Armstrong) that "the next generation will see another division in the church and it will grow out of the Bible College."³⁶ Otey felt that after seeing what had happened in half a century to the Christian Church, the brethren should be dubious of following in the same steps. Yet some seemed anxious to do so. Otey observed,

Members of the Churches of Christ have launched out on the sea of Institutionalism, benevolent and educational, and in some instances have supported them out of the Lord's treasury, and thus vitally and organically connected them with the church...

This was a repetition of the early years of the "digression."

General meetings were being called to which representative men from both groups were being invited. Otey felt that little good could

³⁶ W. W. Otey, "Thou Art Inexcusable," Christian Leader, Vol. LII, No. 16 (August 2, 1938), p. 2.

come from such meetings, since these so-called "representative" men from the Churches of Christ could not speak in behalf of the other members. One young preacher, Tom Butterfield, then of Connelsville, Pennsylvania wrote Otey that it appeared to him that the fight Churches of Christ were going to have to make then was for the right to exist as congregations, as these "representative" men were attempting to commit the entire church to a compromising position with the Christian Church. The issues that had at first separated the brethren yet remained. The Christian Church appeared unwilling to forego its practices, and members of the Churches of Christ would be called upon to violate their consciences to enter into services with what they considered to be unwarranted innovations. Otey maintained that if Witty would strongly denounce the errors of the Christian Church in these unity meetings, either the errors or Witty would be thrown out. Otey felt an impasse existed.

Some of those greatly in favor of the Unity Movement felt that those objecting, such as Otey, only objected because they were not the leaders in the movement. They charged opposition arose strictly from jealousy. Otey replied that it mattered not with him who led, but it certainly gave him grave concern as to where they were leading him.

Though walled about with the repercussions of these two major issues, Otey yet found time to write on "Science and the Bible." This material was published in tract form. Otey taught that there was no conflict between any absolutely proven statements of science and the historical statements of the Bible. The apparent contradictions do not exist. To illustrate, Otey showed that the Bible does not state the

exact age of the earth, nor can scientists agree to its age. There could, therefore, be no contradiction between science and the Bible on this point. Otey did admit that science and the Bible were in mortal conflict on the origin of life. The choices were creation or evolution. But evolution was but an unproved theory.

The work at Crane made good progress during the few months that Otey was there. Additions continued to average about one weekly, while at one of the services on Lord's Day morning Otey reported that all of the members of the church except two were present. Otey was now past seventy, and he was a long way from the place he had come to call "Home." So in the fall of 1938 Otey and his wife made a trip back to Kansas with the view of relocating there. They had a resolute determination to move no more. Early in 1939 Brother and Sister Otey returned to Belle Plaine, Kansas where they lived till Sister Otey's failing health forced one final move to Winfield in 1953.

CHAPTER XIII

BACK TO BELLE PLAINE

For several years Brother and Sister Otey had been discussing where they wanted to settle for the rest of their lives. Only two places commended themselves unto them. These were San Antonio, Texas and Belle Plaine, Kansas. Otey favored returning to Belle Plaine, while Sister Otey thought she would like San Antonio best. However, after but a week's visit in San Antonio, Sister Otey said, "Let's go to Belle Plaine."

Sister Otey was an expert in raising flowers and dearly loved them. It seemed that just her touch was sufficient to insure the flower's growth and profusion in beauty. Many times she had been torn away from her floriculture just when it was most beautiful. This Otey promised her she would not have to do anymore.

Belle Plaine was twenty-three miles northwest of Winfield, where the Oteys had first settled in 1911. At Winfield, and Belle Plaine they had spent eighteen years, with the exception of the three years spent at Wellington, which was fifteen miles southwest of Winfield. Otey's intentions were to accept week-end appointments and to hold a few meetings. However, when he returned to Belle Plaine, he found that the congregation had no one working regularly with it. Therefore, from the first Sunday he was back in Kansas, he began to preach for the Belle Plaine church.

Otey had much that he wanted to say through the papers that he deemed to be of importance. Primarily it was his intention to write

through the Firm Foundation. But the Christian Worker, which in 1938 celebrated twenty-five years of publication, was published at nearby Wichita. So Otey wrote some for it also. Most of his writings, however, continued to appear in the Firm Foundation. In one article Otey said that the truth and error were in constant and irrepressible conflict. Controversy of the right kind was good and needed. But Otey felt that he could fill several pages of the Firm Foundation with charges, counter charges, insinuations and reflections bearing on the veracity and moral character of opposing writers from documents he had received during the past year.¹ This type of writing had no legitimate place in any controversy.

In 1935 Foy E. Wallace, Jr., a former editor of the Gospel Advocate, began to publish a hard-hitting paper called the Gospel Guardian. After only eight issues, the paper was suspended. But in 1938 Wallace began to publish a successor to the Guardian, called the Bible Banner. In the Banner Wallace and a large and efficient staff of writers had hit hard the theory of Premillennialism, as well as giving strong opposition to the Unity Movement which had come to be headed by Claude Witty. Witty had aligned with himself a wealthy New York business man, Clinton Davidson. Witty had been using the Christian Leader as a medium through which to push the Unity Movement. Davidson proposed to F. L. Rowe, the editor of the Christian Leader, that he would subsidize the paper if it would strike at Wallace and his Bible Banner. Rowe sent the proposal to his associate editors for their consideration in a confidential message. But one of the men, Ben M. Taylor of Bowling Green, Kentucky, was a close friend of Wallace, and he eventually divulged the proposal

¹ W. W. Otey, "Controversy," Firm Foundation, Vol. LVI, No. 12 (March 21, 1939), p. 2.

to Wallace.

Davidson proposed that the Christian Leader be copyrighted. Otey felt that the intention to copyright the paper was for the express purpose of making impossible reviews of articles and criticisms of views expressed through the paper. For nearly thirty years Otey had been associated in some way with the Christian Leader. He felt that he had the right to speak his sentiments. So he wrote both Rowe and Davidson strongly objecting to the copyright proposal. Though the copyright movement was blocked, the opposition to it also ended Otey's relationship with the Leader.

During the summer Otey held meetings at Alton and Mt. View, Missouri, in the southern part of the state. Otey had gone to these places with his tent in 1912, twenty-seven years before. Several of the older brethren fondly remembered those meetings and were responsible for his being invited to return.

Otey had not moved to Belle Plaine at the invitation of the church there. He had moved there because he liked the little town of 1,000 people and intended to spend his last days there. He, therefore, could not expect the congregation to support him. Though he preached quite often at Belle Plaine, he was not employed by them full time. He, therefore, accepted special appointments from Milan, Peck, Burden, and from the Douglas, Mathewson, and South Emporia churches which were in Wichita. During 1939 and 1940, despite the fact Otey was well past seventy, he preached every Sunday except two. One was missed due to a severe cold, and the other because of a minor traffic accident. But week-end appointments only would not support him. He was invited to go to Indiana for some meeting work, but he felt it was too far for one

his age to attempt to go.

Otey bought five acres of land just inside the city limits. He entered what might be referred to as the small truck farmer business. He raised berries, tomatoes, and other vegetables. He also went into the chicken business, and raised 500 of a "high class" of leghorns. Otey did not want to be a burden on the church in his old age. The cares of his small farming operation, as well as week-end preaching, left no time for writing. So Otey wrote nothing during 1940, though he did send in a news report to the Firm Foundation, in which he stated his intention to write shortly, "When the 'spirit' moves me."²

Though Otey and Daniel Sommer had clashed sharply on several issues, yet Otey deeply admired the man. When Sommer died on February 14, 1940, Otey penned a glowing tribute to him under the heading, "A Prince and a Great Man is Fallen." Otey thought Sommer was the finest example of manly dignity before an audience of any man he ever heard, and that he read the Bible more than any man during the restoration effort down to the time of his death. He traveled much, and preached and wrote more during his seventy years of public life than any man Otey had known. Otey could not let the difference between himself and Sommer on evangelistic oversight blight his sight toward Sommer's greatness. He closed the article with these words: "My sincere opinion is that, in the years to come, Daniel Sommer will be regarded as the Martin Luther of the church during the last generation. There will not soon appear his equal in many respects." (From carbon copy Otey kept of an article sent for publication.)

² W. W. Otey, "A Message From Kansas," Firm Foundation, Vol. LVII, No. 36 (September 3, 1940), p. 4.

During 1941 Otey continued to spend most of his time working on his small acreage in Belle Plaine. The period of extensive pulpit work for Otey was now gone, though for several years he continued to preach by appointment on week-ends. J. N. Armstrong was yet at Harding College. He continued to think highly of Otey in spite of the fact that Otey was critical of Armstrong's reluctance to take as strong a stand against Premillennialism as Otey thought he ought to take. Nevertheless, Otey was invited to come to Harding College January 26-February 1, 1941 to lecture in the morning concerning the materials contained in The Origin and Destiny of Man, and to preach at night.

The William Eerdman Company of Grand Rapids, Michigan brought out an edition of The Origin and Destiny of Man during this year. Otey bought for his personal use five hundred and fifty copies of the book. It was not long until he had only fifty or sixty copies left, which he agreed to donate to be placed in public libraries if some resident in the respective cities would send ten cents for postage. There is no way to know how much of what Otey wrote and printed he gave away. But he gave away so much of it that his printed materials never made him any money. However, he had not written these materials for the purpose of making money on them.

His writings during 1941 were very limited. Only two articles are known to have been written by him this year. In one he stated, "Liberty, political, and religious, can exist only where freedom of speech is enjoyed."³ Otey deplored the practice of some editors to forbid anyone to express anything in the paper contrary to the editors'

³ W. W. Otey, "Honorable Discussion," Firm Foundation, Vol. LVIII, No. 20 (May 20, 1941), p. 5.

views. He considered this to be a violation of the freedom of speech.

In the same issue of the Firm Foundation reporting the death of the illustrious J. D. Tant, Otey wrote regarding "Extremes," in which he pictured truth as a highway, with a ditch of error on each side.⁴

Otey's significant activities in 1942 were few. He continued to be so busy with his manual labor at home that he wrote very little. Though his pen was virtually stilled, his voice was not. He continued to preach without interruption. Otey was too old to be doing the strenuous work he imposed upon himself. He often found himself too weary to sleep. These sleepless hours were spent wondering what the future held for the Cause he held so dear. He was apprehensive. It was not too many months before he decided he was making a mistake in not writing more. Within the year he began to write a little, and by the next year he was using the influence of the press to the fullest extent.

The relationship between churches, preachers and elders had long bothered Otey. He felt that churches made a mistake when they appointed elders merely by majority vote, as many churches then were doing.⁵ Elders, after their appointment, were turning too much authority over to the preachers. Preachers had too much power in congregations.⁶ One preacher who recently had been instrumental in causing a disturbance in the Parsons, Kansas church caused Otey to observe that little men

⁴ W. W. Otey, "Extremes," Firm Foundation, Vol. LVIII, No. 21 (July 8, 1941), p. 3.

⁵ W. W. Otey, "Appointing Elders," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIX, No. 3 (January 20, 1942), p. 5.

⁶ W. W. Otey, "Trends," Firm Foundation, LIX, No. 12 (March 24, 1942), p. 4.

with big ambitions always are big trouble makers.⁷

Otey also spoke further concerning a matter that was a personal peeve with him--long articles in religious journals. He admitted that many "second rank" papers, bulletins and tracts were doing good, but the truth was not tersely enough told in them. They were too wordy. The chaff needed to be blown out from the wheat. Short articles require more thought, so lazy men write long ones, thought Otey.⁸

On December 12, 1941, another editor of long standing passed from the scene. Homer E. Moore had founded the Christian Worker and had worked with it over a quarter of a century. Otey had lived but a few miles from Moore for much of this period, and was well acquainted with him. When the news of Moore's death reached Otey, he wrote "A Brief Memorial" to his brother and friend.⁹

During 1943, there were basically three problems being given discussion in the papers published by members of the church. These problems were whether Christians ought to engage in combatant service during the war then raging, Premillennialism, and the Unity Movement. Otey had something to say publicly on each of these troublesome points.

Jimmie Lovell, head of the "Service Committee For Conscientious Objectors," wrote an article encouraging the Churches of Christ to provide funds to care for approximately one hundred boys from Churches of Christ who were then in conscientious objector camps. The Friends,

⁷ W. W. Otey, "Ambitious For Distinction," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIX, No. 36 (September 8, 1942), p. 2.

⁸ W. W. Otey, "Quality Not Quantity," Firm Foundation, Vol. LIX, No. 37 (September 15, 1942), p. 2.

⁹ W. W. Otey, "A Brief Memorial," Christian Worker, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4 (January 22, 1942), p. 5.

Mennonites, and Brethren had spent \$11,500 caring for these boys in camps which they had agreed with the government to maintain. Lovell's article irritated Otey noticeably. Otey maintained that those young men paying the price of liberty were the real martyrs; not the conscientious objectors. Otey was never an eloquent speaker or writer, nor did he make the effort to be so. But in his reply to Lovell he came very near eloquence. Otey wrote:

Will you not see the millions of our noblest young men in the indescribable hardships in the tropical jungles, many lying there wounded and being eaten by insects, and thirsting for only a little water? Look out there thirty thousand feet above the shark infested ocean, where ten thousand of our boys, yes, our boys, are flying those planes. Watch, there a Jap has hit a plane. Down, down it falls a streaming mass of flames, and those boys burning to death. Into the deep ocean it plunges---there to await the trumpet call. Over there another plane has been hit. There are those boys in their youth, they have built many air castles of their homes with wives and children around them. They bail out, and into the water their bodies plunge, a few inflate their rubber rafts only to perish many days later because no rescue came...We might go in spirit down a thousand feet under sea in the sub, and listen to the searching enemy above, send down his depth charge. The sub shivers, her seams part--turn away, it is too horrible to dwell on... Had I the words and pen of the most gifted writer on earth I would utterly fail to tell a thousandth part of the facts that are happening every day--the suffering of our boys to protect the liberty of that 100 in ease over whom so many tears are shed...The whole matter is disgusting, humiliating, shameful and at variance with every principle of¹⁰ justice, righteousness, and the dignity of true manhood.

This issue raged till the war ended with Otey, and Foy and Cled Wallace among those defending the right of a Christian to participate in war, and John T. Lewis and James D. Bales opposing it. The Gospel Advocate opposed it, while the Bible Banner endorsed it.

¹⁰ W. W. Otey, "Who Are The Martyrs?," Firm Foundation, Vol. LX, No. 50 (December 14, 1943), p. 3.

Immediately after Otey's article appeared, Will M. Thompson wrote him that his article was "splendid...It is complete." Thompson had first met Otey and R. L. Whiteside at Cordell, Oklahoma in 1915, and added, "I hold each of you in high esteem for your soundness in the faith..."¹¹ Showalter regretted publishing this article by Otey, as immediately thereafter Showalter was flooded with more than one hundred "pro" and "con" articles, few of which, understandably, could be printed.

In an article called, "The Tie That Binds," Otey charged that the common ground between those in the Church of Christ leading in the Unity movement and those in the Christian Church leading their side of the movement was a common faith in Premillennialism. Every criticism his several articles on the Unity Movement had provoked among members of the Churches of Christ had been from Premillennialists. Don Carlos Janes of Louisville had been one bitterly objecting to Otey's criticisms of the movement. Janes felt Otey had no right to speak against the meetings, since he had attended none of them. Otey said that he was willing to attend if he would be granted thirty minutes time on the program. Janes replied, "From my view point, your style of contention is not advantageous to the thing we both would like to see accomplished. I feel that you and all others who misrepresent the present effort really stand in the way of the peace we should have..." With a burst of sarcasm, Janes wrote, "I believe if everybody would consent to make you the arbiter that all the division between 'churches of Christ' and 'the Christian church' could be ended in a few minutes."¹²

¹¹ Will M. Thompson in a letter to Otey, December 20, 1943.

¹² Don Carlos Janes in a letter to Otey, October 14, 1943.

During the year David Lipscomb College had trouble with one faculty member who was sympathetic toward Premillennialism. Five of the eight board members were in favor of dismissing this faculty member. The Executive Council had unanimously recommended his dismissal. When this action was taken, it resulted in the immediate resignation of President E. H. Ijams, and the three dissenting board members. Otey wrote H. Leo Boles about the repercussions of this action. Boles replied that he thought the school would continue to operate as efficiently as ever, and added a personal commendation, "I have read and still read everything that I see published under the name W. W. OTEY."¹³

Quite frequently when troubles arose in a church, a law suit over the property resulted. Otey was unalterably opposed to such. He had never remembered a church suit in which those in possession of the building at the time of the suit failed to retain possession. But be that as it may, to Otey, a few dollars worth of material builded into a house never weighed a feather in comparison to truth, righteousness and suffering meekly when wronged. Otey had never been directly implicated in any church trial, even as a witness. Once he did go to one as an observer, and left thinking that he had never seen two sets of witnesses more biased or that went to greater length to gain their point. In cases where no reconciliation could be effected, Otey felt the "lesser evil" would be for the dissenting brethren to meet "peaceably" in two locations.¹⁴ Either group ought rather to suffer

¹³ H. Leo Boles in a letter to Otey, December 21, 1943.

¹⁴ W. W. Otey, "Which Is The Lesser Evil?," Firm Foundation, Vol. IX, No. 2 (January 12, 1943), p. 4.

wrong than to see this ugly spectacle occur. "Error presented in sugar coated pellets, colored in the most pleasing style does not justify wrapping the truth in ugly packages," Otey thought.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the church at Belle Plaine was working together in peace. Interest and attendance were gradually increasing, and Otey expected much growth so long as peace and zeal for the truth prevailed. In a November meeting, during which Morton Utley preached, eight were baptized.

Near the end of the year Otey became ill with a very severe case of influenza. He had to be hospitalized at Wellington for several days. Otey was nearly 77 and the doctor feared that the congestion would be too much for his heart. Otey thought he was going to die, and wrote concerning the fifty-eight years that he and Minnie had lived together. "Few men have ever been given a wife so true, devoted and loyal as a mother and friend to all as I received 58 years ago...when I married Minnie Showalter Otey." After he had begun to recuperate, the doctor told Otey that his heart sounded as though it should be good for fifteen years more.¹⁶ This surprised and encouraged him.

By 1944 Otey felt the imperativeness of the times demanded that he speak more through the papers. His truck farming operation had moved along till now it did not disrupt his interests in gospel work as much as before. However, each passing year Otey found the physical labor involved more difficult for him.

¹⁵ W. W. Otey, "The Tie That Binds," Firm Foundation, Vol. IX, No. 48 (November 30, 1943), p. 5.

¹⁶ W. W. Otey, "From The Field," Christian Worker, Vol. XXIX, No. 50 (December 23, 1943), p. 7.

The Premillennialism issue continued to plague the church. Otey felt that it was but an idle speculation, which caused him to observe that such speculations usually began and died with one man, and that speculators usually are entirely proselyters.¹⁷ Otey felt that the interpretation of the book of Revelation made by some was entirely in error. He doubted that he would find many who would then agree with the historical interpretation of Revelation made sixty years before by J. L. Martin in his book, The Voice of Seven Thunders, or with that of B. W. Johnson in his book forty years before, A Vision of the Ages. In fact, Otey was of the opinion, and he stressed it only was an opinion, that when a man became possessed with an effort to explain all the symbols of Revelation, his usefulness to the church was about gone.¹⁸

Closely related to the Premillennial issue was the death of J. N. Armstrong of Harding College in 1944. Harding had been under censure for several years by brethren opposing the millennial views. The Premillennialists had shown a liking to Harding College that they had shown to no other school. They were sending their children there to be educated. Some on the faculty were accused of Premillennial leanings. Even Armstrong had been accused of being a sympathizer. In Otey's article occasioned by Armstrong's death, he told how he had been closely associated with Armstrong forty years. Four times he had spoken by Armstrong's invitation on the lecture program at Harding. Otey said Armstrong was not a Premillennialist as had been charged, but Otey did say Armstrong had compromised with the teachers of the theory. Otey

¹⁷ W. W. Otey, "Facts Relating to the Future Kingdom," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXI, No. 20 (May 16, 1944), p. 4.

¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "Revelation," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXI, No. 6 (February 8, 1944), p. 6.

several times had spoken to Armstrong to try to get him to oppose the teachers of the theory, instead of opposing and criticizing those who did oppose the theory.¹⁹ L. C. Sears, the Dean at Harding and a son-in-law of Armstrong, wrote Otey to thank him for the article. Sears added, "I have talked with Brother Armstrong intimately about his views on Revelations and I believe you stated about as clearly and fairly as it could be done his point of view."²⁰ Sears stated an intention to write a biography of Armstrong, and added that he felt "a contribution of biographies of leading men in the church really makes an important gift to the future." This biography, however, was never written.

The threat of Communism for several years had bothered Otey. After reviewing how Lenin and Trotsky had built a Russia in which they left God out, Otey predicted that most of the small European nations would become Communistic, which has almost even now been fulfilled.²¹

The issue of whether it was scriptural for churches to contribute to colleges continued to be a major issue. Otey, and others like him, reasoned that if the colleges were not doing the work of the church, the church had no right to contribute to their support. On the other hand, if the colleges were doing the work of the church, they were doing that which they ought not to be doing, and the church could no more do its work through a college than it could through a missionary society. This and similar reasoning began to cause some to think about some other matters.

¹⁹ W. W. Otey, "J. N. Armstrong," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXI, No. 37 (September 12, 1944), p. 3.

²⁰ L. C. Sears in a letter to Otey, October 14, 1944.

²¹ W. W. Otey, "The World Revolution," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXI, No. 15 (April 11, 1944), p. 4.

Orphanages had not been very significant in the past. Only five of the nearly thirty benevolent societies now among the Churches of Christ were in operation before 1940. Renewed interest was being shown in the promotion of such benevolent enterprises. Others of these organizations were either being started or were in the planning stages. Much promotion of such organizations was being done through some of the papers. There had been some criticisms of the benevolent organizations in the early thirties. But since the promotion of such enterprises was not vigorously being pressed, neither was this early opposition very vigorous.

C. R. Nichol, a preacher of repute, had written in the Firm Foundation in 1933:

There is no place in the activities of the Church of Christ for human societies to take in hand the work commanded of the Church. Selecting men from different parts of the country, forming them into an organization to take in hand the funds of the Church of Christ in forwarding the work the Lord commands the Church to do, is nothing short of a human institution. Such organizations exist on the same basis as the Missionary Societies...If it (_____ Orphan Home) is an organization other than the local congregation and congregations of the church of Christ are functioning through it, why may we not have them function through that, or some such organization as that, in mission work?...Brethren call me at times for debates, and occasionally the missionary society is brought into the discussion. It is an organization through which the congregations function. On what ground am I to oppose such organizations, and then defend the organization of the _____ Orphan Home?

As the church supported college issue became more prominent, those struggling to defend church support of colleges began to argue that if the church could not contribute to the college, one human organization, neither could it support an orphan home, another human organization. N. B. Hardeman, President of Freed-Hardeman College, wrote in 1947:

I have always believed that a church had the right to contribute to a school or an orphanage if it so desired. In all that I have written there is no conflict on this matter. The right to contribute to one is the right to contribute to the other. Note the parallel: 1. The school is a human institution; it has a board of directors; it teaches secular branches in connection with the Bible. 2. An orphan home is a human institution; it has a board of directors; it teaches secular branches in connection with the Bible. The same principle that permits one must also permit the other. They must stand or fall together. ²² [My underlining-CW]

C. G. Brewer had made virtually this same argument in 1938 when he said regarding the church support of orphan homes and colleges, "...the principle is the same...."

The insistence of this alleged parallel between supporting the schools and supporting the benevolent organizations caused some serious questions to be raised in the minds of brethren regarding the scripturalness of separate benevolent organizations. F. B. Shepherd wrote Otey that while he was the preacher for the College church at Abilene, Texas, he had worked very hard to get the budget system installed, only to find, "I had a harder fight to keep ACC out of the Budget."²³ But another question had arisen in Shepherd's mind:

Have we any more scriptural authority to put the Orphan Home in the Budget than we have for the College? Are "our" Orphan Homes not "Institutions?" Are they not either larger or smaller than the local church? Has a local congregation the scriptural authority to "Organize an Orphan Home" as an incorporated institution? If the O. H. is an institution under the direction of a Board chosen from a multitude of congregations is it not a "Separate Institution?" If it is doing a work the church is obligated to do and churches maintain institutions and do part of their work through them, where do they get the scriptural authority? Where is the difference between the present day O. H. and the regular Missionary Society?"²⁴

²² N. B. Hardeman, "The Banner Boys Become Enraged," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIV, No. 43 (October 28, 1947), p. 1.

²³ F. B. Shepherd in a letter to Otey, November 5, 1944.

²⁴ Ibid.

These questions Shepherd said, had been in his mind for a "long while."

These questions had arisen in the minds of others also. In October, 1944 Otey wrote two articles on "Bible Colleges" in the Firm Foundation in which he opposed churches contributing to the support of colleges. On December 13, 1944, H. Leo Boles of the Gospel Advocate staff wrote, "I have read your articles in the Firm Foundation on Bible Colleges. I commend every word that you have written, and think that you have written with clearness and proper emphasis." Boles then said:

I am writing to ask a question: Do you put orphan homes, old folks' homes in the same class with Bible colleges?...I can see no difference between churches supporting educational institutions and institutions for taking care of orphans and old folks...I am not seeking a controversy; I am wanting to get myself clear on the questions, and will appreciate your help.²⁵

Otey replied that if the care for orphans was provided under the direction of elders and by the local congregation, in his judgment, no objection could be raised against it. In restating the contents of his letter to Boles, Otey reported that he said, "While I did not endorse an orphan home managed by a board, yet I had not written in opposition."²⁶ In his "Bible Colleges" articles, Otey obviously was not writing about orphanages. Otey had not written against the orphan home, not because he thought that those under boards were scriptural, but because he felt the church supported college as a centralized teaching organization posed a greater threat. Otey commended Boles' article on "Sins of Omission Among Colleges" in the December 23, 1944 issue of the Gospel Advocate. Boles replied, "That article had been written two months before it was published; the editor was afraid to publish it because of local conditions."

²⁵ H. Leo Boles in a letter to Otey, December 13, 1944.

²⁶ W. W. Otey, "The Beloved Dead," Gospel Advocate, Vol. XCII, No. 25 (June 22, 1950), p. 400.

These letters indicate that brethren on both sides of the church supported college issue were beginning to see that the church support of colleges and of orphan homes stood or fell on the same grounds. From 1944 till the present these issues have continued to be debated. One group has opposed church support of both colleges and institutional orphan homes, while the other group has tried to justify the church support of orphanages in a "side-door" effort to justify congregational support of colleges.

Otey had intended to put his two 1944 articles on "Bible Colleges" into tract form. The Firm Foundation was going to publish them, but Showalter wrote Otey that G. C. Brewer did not want the tract printed, as he felt that he was not fairly represented in it.²⁷ Otey insisted that the Firm Foundation was in the printing business and that he wanted the material printed. So these articles in 1945 were made available in tract form for free distribution.

Otey's severe strictures against the direction in which the colleges appeared to be going struck a responsive chord in the heart of many of the older preachers. T. Q. Martin wrote, "I am not opposed to Bible colleges, but I tremble seriously as I note the tendency toward worldliness, professionalism and digression...I do not know what the result will be but it seems to me we are headed in a dangerous direction."²⁸ A short time later Martin wrote, "We see eye to eye in the matter of Bible Colleges," and added, "This is the most timely tract that I have seen since the lamented M. C. Kurfees wrote 'Walking by Faith'."²⁹

²⁷ G. H. P. Showalter in a letter to Otey, March 13, 1945.

²⁸ T. Q. Martin in a letter to Otey, January 16, 1945.

²⁹ T. Q. Martin in a letter to Otey, February 16, 1945.

Kurfees' was a tract on instrumental music. F. L. Rowe wrote, "I too have felt for some years that the Bible Colleges are doing harm unwittingly."³⁰ W. W. Freeman, Professor of Latin at East Texas State Teachers College, was more specific of the error he saw being perpetrated by the colleges. He felt the schools were contributing to an unscriptural differentiation between "laymen" and a virtual "clergy." In speaking of modern style preaching, Freeman said:

This remunerative work attracts those with a nice wave in the hair, a pleasing delivery, a radio voice, or social qualities for the women or the Lion's club or the golf course. It gets men out of regular business occupations who have little preparation for evangelistic work in the real sense. College or no college, these men with a gift of gab and a sex appeal find more lucrative "employment" than they otherwise have enjoyed and they are honored as servants of Jesus Christ.³¹

Otey continued to write about what he called "trends." From the past, Otey demonstrated that apostasies had begun at the top and worked down to the rank and file members. Therefore, he was afraid of colleges as centralized sources of teaching. He believed the heads of the five colleges then operated by members of the Church of Christ were not possessed of greater wisdom or a deeper love for the truth than Alexander Campbell. They, therefore, were susceptible to the same errors into which Campbell and his school fell.³²

What Otey called "triple errors" (majority vote, clergy-preacher-rule, and joining the church to human organizations) were sweeping the churches into the most rapid apostasy since apostolic days. A rhetorical question was asked by Otey: "Do we have organized institutions through

³⁰ F. L. Rowe in a letter to Otey, February 6, 1945.

³¹ W. W. Freeman in a letter to Otey, June 21, 1945.

³² W. W. Otey, "Past-Present-Future," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXII, No. 1 (January 2, 1945), p. 4.

which the church does almost all of its benevolent work?"³³ He further said:

The eyes and minds of us who still remain who were in the midst of the apostasy fifty and more years ago were so fixed on the "little organ" that we failed to give proper consideration to the far greater errors that resulted in the changing of the entire organic form of the church itself...But the young men of this generation are without excuse if they fail to heed the warning and avoid the "trends" now plainly observed-- trends which are an exact copy of the worst "trends" seen by few and opposed by fewer years ago.³⁴

T. B. Taylor proposed through the Firm Foundation that all the churches in Texas should combine their resources and build a broadcasting station to be used by the most outstanding preachers. Otey wrote Showalter immediately requesting that he "sidetrack that proposition and allow it to die," because it would set in motion a movement for new organizations, the end of which God alone could see. He feared a near rupture in the church would be caused just by trying to locate these most "outstanding preachers" to use as speakers.³⁵ Too, he wanted to know who would select these "outstanding preachers."

One of the finest and most severely critical letters Otey ever wrote was written to a young preacher, the use of whose full name would cause him embarrassment, whom Otey had heard using the pulpit in a manner that Otey considered to be improper. By way of reproof Otey wrote:

The gospel is the purest, most sublime, dignified, and Godlike message ever committed to man. And without any doubt, our words, motive, spirit and manner should be on the same high and holy plane...The preacher of the gospel should present it without

³³ W. W. Otey, "Past-Present-Future-Number Two," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXII, No. 7 (February 13, 1945), p. 2.

³⁴ W. W. Otey, "Past-Present-Future Number Three," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXII, No. 24 (June 12, 1945), p. 1.

³⁵ W. W. Otey in a letter to Showalter, November 13, 1945.

apology, yet without bluster and braggadocio; emphatic but not arrogant; logical and persuasive, but not in the manner and spirit of a dictator threatening. In all the addresses recorded in the Bible by inspired preachers there is not found the least hint of a stale joke; sarcastic ridicule--not a single smart-alec wise crack to be found...The pulpit is the platform from which to point lost souls to Christ, and lead men to heaven. It should be as far removed from the stage and vaudeville comedy as redeemed, saved preachers can possibly elevate. Denominations who preach much error may and do turn the pulpit into a vaudeville stage. But those who preach Christ, a crowned King, reigning from his throne in heaven, are supposed to manifest a spirit and deportment that will honor both him and the message. It would be out of harmony to put a masterpiece of the painter's art in a frame smeared and daubed. Christ and the gospel are a holy, heavenly picture, the last and most glorious gift of God to redeem a lost race. What then, should be our spirit, manner, method, motive when presenting it to lead the lost to Christ?³⁶

The church, in Otey's judgment, had turbulent times before it. His recently published tract on "Bible Colleges" and his many articles on "trends" had caused considerable talk. A young preacher, Roy L. Ruckman wrote Otey, "I appreciate your warnings and want them to continue. My problem is this. I know that a falling away will come unless we stop the trend, and history has never shown such to stop...I frankly wonder today if death might not be the best thing for some of our colleges."³⁷ Otey, in a frequently reprinted article entitled "Is History Repeating?," listed several of the things that indicated that a digression was in process fifty years ago. He suggested that people make a list of these things and see if they noticed the recurrence of any of them. Among the things listed was the practice of churches wanting a preacher with a degree and who was a good mixer to whom charge of the church could be committed. Preachers were given the biggest possible salaries.

³⁶ Otey in a letter to "Harvey," May 26, 1945.

³⁷ Roy L. Ruckman in a letter to Otey, October 30, 1946.

Elders became mere figure heads. Preachers joined ministerial alliances, special youth programs were conducted, experts and specialists were sent forth by the church, and the organic form of the church was perverted. Most of these things have since occurred among Churches of Christ.³⁸

Otey also thought great danger lay in the fact that instead of the moral leadership residing in strong men such as Benjamin Franklin, Austin McGary, David Lipscomb as it had in the past, it now resided in colleges. He predicted that as the colleges go, so will the preachers go. And as the preachers go, so will the churches go. He, therefore, feared for the churches, for he had lost confidence in the men running some of the schools.³⁹

With this threatening departure, increased pressure would be brought upon elders of churches. Most anyone can preach, baptize a few, stay till trouble arises and leave, thought Otey. But elders had to stay, often forty years, with one congregation. He, therefore, felt deeply for elders and their problems. Elders were going to need the wisdom of Solomon, patience of Job, affection of David, and the impartiality of Paul, if they successfully were going to discharge their duties in the difficult times Otey thought he saw arising.⁴⁰

Though Otey was writing a good deal for the Firm Foundation, Showalter wrote asking him to write more. Showalter said, "We have bushels of manuscript, much of it excellent, but we still have room for an article from you."⁴¹

³⁸ W. W. Otey, "Is History Repeating?," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIII, No. 42 (October 8, 1946), p. 3.

³⁹ W. W. Otey, "Our Leadership," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIII, No. 47 (November 19, 1946), p. 4.

⁴⁰ W. W. Otey, "Qualification and Work of Elders," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIII, No. 4 (January 22, 1946), p. 1.

⁴¹ G. H. P. Showalter in a letter to Otey, August 12, 1946.

Earlier we stated 1908, 1938, and 1947 were likely the most important years of Otey's life. The previous years we have discussed. 1947's significance lay in the fact that the Brewer-Hardeman instigated college in the budget controversy flamed up again. Otey called his part in this controversy the most important piece of work that he did for the church in modern times. During much of the early 1940's attention was devoted to discussion of the war question in the papers. With the cessation of war, warfare broke out again over the church support of colleges. Otey had been implicated in this discussion since its revival, which was occasioned by Brewer's 1938 Abilene Christian College speech.

On March 14, 1947 Otey reached his eightieth birthday. On this day he wrote "Meditations at Four Score Years" in which he laid open his heart. He expressed a sincere regret that he had done so little in sixty years of public life. He had learned some things too. He had learned that he was not as big a preacher as at one time he thought he was. He had never preached one sermon he completely was satisfied with one hour after its delivery. It lacked clearness, warmth, heart force or something. He had found also that advice given, even when asked for, often offends. He had observed that some members will rally to an immoral preacher and criticize his critics. He was satisfied with but two things in his life--he had never encouraged or aided anything that he thought was digressive, and he had opposed every discernible "trend" from the truth. He and Minnie had fewer burdens, were happier and more contented than ever before. Their hearts beat more nearly as one than ever before. They expressed the desire to both die at once, and hoped

when the time came, to go quickly.⁴²

Otey decided in his own heart that, having reached eighty years, it would be the part of wisdom for him to let the younger men carry on the public controversies from then on. He fully determined to become implicated in no more. Yet at least another decade of his life was destined to be controversial. Otey confided his intention to be less controversial to a few friends. C. R. Nichol, as much as any other, persuaded him that his decision was a mistake. Nichol wrote, "I think I shall protest that you do not leave the fight for truth to younger men, as you suggest you may possibly do; but keep on a-keeping on with the pile-driver truth you have been landing. We need it, the church needs your logical, direct approach."⁴³ About a week before, Nichol had written, "My brother the fight is on, the seed has been sown, and there is trouble ahead...Do not let your pen remain silent on this issue. I will keep mine busy too."⁴⁴ Will M. Thompson added, "The church is headed for digression if the brakes are not thrown on."⁴⁵

Abilene Christian College in 1947 was trying to raise \$1,000,000 for endowment. Robert M. Alexander was heading the campaign to raise the money. In an ad in the Firm Foundation, January 21, 1947, Alexander stated, "If this endowment is to be Raised, Congregations Must Volunteer to Raise and Send in Regular Sums for This Purpose." Alexander further had said that the "church is depending heavily upon our schools to supply

⁴² W. W. Otey, "Meditations at Four Score Years," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIV, No. 1 (March 18, 1947), p. 1.

⁴³ C. R. Nichol in a letter to Otey, May 13, 1947.

⁴⁴ C. R. Nichol in a letter to Otey, May 4, 1947.

⁴⁵ Will M. Thompson in a letter to Otey, January 21, 1947.

its best prepared preachers."⁴⁶ Alexander later reported that "Several congregations of brethren have already pledged themselves to assist us in this campaign."

These statements from Alexander which also were signed by Don Morris, the ACC President, persuaded a good many brethren that the college was making an effort to wed itself, at least financially, to the church. These advertisements resulted in severe criticisms by R. L. Whiteside, Will Thompson, C. R. Nichol, F. O. Howell, Cled and Foy Wallace, and others. These criticisms caused those heading the school to try to back track a little. Alexander said, "We have not asked the congregations to support the school through their treasuries," which some brethren found impossible to harmonize with the wording of the ACC ads. Don Morris wrote Otey: "As you will notice in the article, it has been our agreement all along that congregations would not be asked to give as congregations to the school and that we would not ask any congregation to include the college in its budget."⁴⁷ Yet George Benson, President of Harding College, wrote C. R. Nichol, March 20, 1947, "Yes, I believe it is scriptural for a congregation of the church of Christ to take money from its regular Lord's Day treasury and send it to a Christian College to assist in the work such college is doing."

Otey felt that several of the schools were retracting the policy they had stated to him through their Presidents in 1938. Three times through the pages of the Firm Foundation and in his 1945 tract on "Bible Colleges," Otey had referred to the letters the college Presidents had

⁴⁶ Robert M. Alexander, quoted by C. R. Nichol in "A 'Christian College' Returned a Check," Firm Foundation, Vol. IXIV, No. 20, p. 2.

⁴⁷ Don Morris in a letter to Otey, April 26, 1947.

written him stating they did not endorse Brewer's proposal that congregations contribute to the effort to raise \$150,000 for ACC in 1938. Otey reported that Brewer said that the congregation that did not have ACC in its budget had the wrong preacher.

Brewer tried to deny having made the statement attributed to him at ACC in 1938. In the June 10, 1947, Firm Foundation, Brewer said:

I shall try once more to make my position clear. I have never advocated supporting the colleges out of the church treasury; I have never even advocated putting colleges in the church budget, and no church for which I have ever preached has ever had a Christian college in its budget, yet it is a known fact that I have preached for some of the largest churches in the brotherhood and these churches have the most liberal budgets that can be found among the saints. Two of the elders of the Lubbock church for which I was preaching at the time I made the Abilene speech were and are members of the Abilene Christian College Board. One of the elders of the church at Cleburne for which I preached was a member of the board. Neither of these churches nor any other church for which I have preached ever put any college in its budget. Yet it has been reported and repeatedly published that I said at Abilene Christian College that any church that did not have the college in its budget had the wrong preacher! The facts given above should convince any reasonable man that I never made any such statement. Would I tell the Lubbock church that it had the wrong preacher?⁴⁸

Brewer tried to get brethren to overlook what he said in his 1938 speech by stating that "This was sales talk..." Brewer thought Otey saw a "Ghost" on the point, and charged that Otey "has never been normal since" hearing the speech.

Otey deeply resented the implications of Brewer's article. It implied that Otey had lied about what Brewer said. Otey felt he must be exonerated. He had letters from several other brethren who also said that they heard Brewer's statement. R. L. Whiteside wrote Otey,

⁴⁸ G. C. Brewer, "Brother Otey Misses the Mark and Wounds the Bystanders," Firm Foundation, Vol IXIV, No. 23 (June 10, 1947), p. 1.

It would not be possible for a man to remember everything he said in an impromptu speech nine years ago. It seems that Brother Brewer forgot one thing he said in that Abilene speech, namely, that if a church has a preacher that was not in favor of putting a Christian College in its budget, it should get another preacher. Of course, I do not remember his exact words, only the substance of that one particular sentence. I do not suppose I would have remembered that statement had it not struck me as a very radical statement.⁴⁹

Whiteside asked Otey not to take too much to heart Brewer's June 10th article which Whiteside said was "rather ugly" and "betrays some anger," because "it is not the first time he ever said the wrong thing-- in the wrong way--at the wrong time."⁵⁰ Edgar Furr also wrote "...I was there, heard the speech, I was sitting near the front on the north side of the building. He said just what you said he said. I never forgot it."⁵¹ V. M. Gilbert added his verification: "I too remember quite well the Lectureship at Abilene in February of 1938 and what Brother Brewer said about church money going to support colleges."⁵² C. R. Nichol wrote, "I think it is possible that a man may speak under pressure, and not recall all that he said. That Brother Brewer made the statement, attributed to him in Abilene, I know, for I heard it; and am certain others recall it also."⁵³

Otey still had Brewer's 1938 letter to him in which Brewer stated Otey had not misunderstood what he said, and that he was still willing to argue that churches could support colleges and orphan homes. Brewer's

⁴⁹ R. L. Whiteside in a letter to Otey, June 16, 1947.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Edgar Furr in a letter to Otey, no date on letter.

⁵² V. M. Gilbert in a letter to Otey, January 29, 1952.

⁵³ C. R. Nichol in a letter to Otey, June 24, 1947.

statement, "I have never advocated supporting the colleges out of the church treasury...Neither these churches nor any other church for which I have preached ever put any college in its budget" astounded Otey. Brewer had even said that he could produce the cancelled checks to prove that the church for which he then (1938) was preaching, was at that time contributing to the college. Too, Otey found that in the August 1, 1935, Gospel Advocate Brewer had said, "At Cleburne and at Sherman also we put Abilene Christian College in our budget for \$1,000 a year." Otey was willing to concede a man could forget what he wrote or said. But if when shown his statements over his own signature, he yet would deny ever making the statement, Otey's confidence in his intellectual honesty was shaken. Nevertheless, Otey felt his own honor should be exonerated. Showalter was getting tired of the college controversy. Some thought he was feeling the pressure of bucking some of the "big preachers" and colleges who favored church support of schools. Whatever the reason, he told Otey he wanted to print nothing more on it. Otey still wanted Brewer's 1935, 1938, and 1947 statements printed side by side without comment. He felt these statements alone would vindicate his veracity. He offered Showalter \$50 to print them--he wanted to pay regular advertising rates. Showalter refused to take his money, but reluctantly printed the statements anyway.

N. B. Hardeman categorically had stated in 1938 that he did not endorse Brewer's ACC statement. But Hardeman in 1947 maintained he had opposed church support of colleges only on the basis of its inexpediency. He attempted to justify his position by saying, "...If the church can do part of its work--caring for orphans--through a human institution, why can it not do another part of its work--teaching the Bible--through a

human institution? These brethren have failed to show why...Brother Otey is wrong but he is consistent in opposing both."⁵⁴

Brewer also attempted to harmonize his 1938 and 1947 statements. He argued that, though churches for which he had preached had contributed to the colleges, they had not put them in their budgets for regular support, as though this made a difference.

As the summer months wore on, Brewer began to speak regarding a public debate on the subject. He said, "I want to face a man on the platform who will undertake this task...There is no limit in this challenge."⁵⁵ Otey wrote Brewer that he would accept the challenge for the debate. However, Brewer replied, "We strongly suspect that they're [i.e. Bible Banner publishers and writers-CW] using you as a catch-paw to pull their chestnuts out of the fire. We do not believe, however, they will endorse you for the debate."⁵⁶ Otey replied that he felt that he had been before the brotherhood as long and as prominently as had Brewer, but if Brewer would indicate what kind of endorsement and from whom he required of Otey, he would see if it could be arranged. Otey reported Brewer's remark to Foy E. Wallace, Jr., editor of The Bible Banner, which began to lead the fight in opposing church support of schools after Showalter had wavered. Wallace replied indicating complete satisfaction with Otey. Wallace wrote:

⁵⁴ N. B. Hardeman, "The Banner Boys Become Enraged," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIV, No. 43 (October 28, 1947), p. 1.

⁵⁵ G. C. Brewer, "Brother Otey Misses the Mark and Wounds the Bystanders," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXIV, No. 23 (June 10, 1947), p. 1.

⁵⁶ G. C. Brewer in a letter to Otey, October 1, 1947.

We esteem you far more highly than either of us [Cled, his brother, and himself-CW] has had opportunity to say or show, but we want you to know that we have no intention at all of forsaking you in the fight on the college issue...I am glad that Roy E. Cogdill stands with us one hundred per cent in these sentiments. He is an asset to the cause in this fight.⁵⁷

Otey proposed a written discussion with Brewer to be carried in the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation, and later to be printed in booklet form. Brewer replied, "The Gospel Advocate declines to publish such discussion as you propose and that paper will not carry your challenge and proposition. This I have from the editor."⁵⁸ Otey wrote Showalter urging him to take a stronger stand. In the letter Otey stated, "If a stop can be put to raiding the Lord's treasury for a time it will likely remain dormant till you and I have been called hence. I am sure we each should leave some permanent matter on the question to aid the next generation."⁵⁹ But Showalter said little more on the subject.

The entire discussion with correspondence and quotations from articles was laid before the public by Otey in a pamphlet called "Bible Colleges--No.2". In this booklet Otey suggested a proposition, stating his willingness to deny: "It is scripturally right to contribute money from the Lord's treasury to support what is commonly called a Bible College in its work." C. R. Nichol, in letters, had urged Otey to put such a challenge in print lest someone of lesser ability should do so. Too, he had urged that if Brewer made such a challenge that Otey wire an acceptance lest someone who was not properly prepared to discuss the subject should accept before a letter could reach Brewer.

⁵⁷ Foy E. Wallace, Jr. in a letter to Otey, May 23, 1947.

⁵⁸ G. C. Brewer in a letter to Otey, May 5, 1947.

⁵⁹ Otey in a letter to Showalter, undated.

This discussion of whether churches can support colleges out of their treasuries has continued without interruption to be before the brethren. It appears that it shall continue to be discussed for many years to come, as there yet are those propagating that these schools may be church supported, and there yet are those who oppose this practice. Likely Otey's prediction that this issue would cause division in the church may yet be fulfilled.

Otey wrote on other subjects during the year, but he wrote on none as significant as the Brewer-Hardeman-Otey controversy. During the year F. L. Rowe, and T. Q. Martin, both "Christian Leader" men whom Otey deeply respected, died. Otey did not let their death pass unnoticed.

During this year Otey did more preaching than he had for some years. He preached at Cleveland Avenue and at South Emporia in Wichita, and several times at Mulvane. He decided, however, that his age was such and his routine so established that it would be best for him to take no overnight trips thereafter--a policy to which he rigidly adhered the remaining years of his life. In his late years Otey seemed to pride himself in that he had not slept outside his own bed in nearly fifteen years. Otey had now reached the point in his life when he could not bear the load of a pressing public schedule that once he could carry. He had to lessen his activities. He regretted having to do so, but from here on his schedule had to be tapered sharply. This was his last "big" year.

The next year, 1948, was anti-climactical when compared to 1947. Most of the happenings in 1948 that were of major consequence were but repercussions of the controversies of the previous year. The employment

of human organizations in the work of the church continued to be his major concern. Otey was astonished to find brethren trying to justify the use of human organizations in the work of the church on exactly the same basis that the "digressives" had tried to justify the use of mechanical instrumental music in worship half a century before. Each group relied upon the "law of expediency." Too, Otey felt if "digressive" support of human institutions violated the law of expediency, he could see no reason why "loyal" church support of human institutions in evangelism, edification and benevolence would not violate the law similarly.⁶⁰ To Otey, "In principle there is not the least difference between employing one human organization than any other." Doing work through a missionary society resulted in division. "The same practice is as certain to bring the same results, if persisted in, as that effect always follows cause...Sow the seed of the least and most harmless appearing seed of human institutions in connection with the church, and the harvest, though long maturing, never fails to reach maturity."⁶¹

Conditions within the church had by now so deteriorated that leading brethren everywhere were growing apprehensive of what the future held. Scores of brethren indicated to Otey privately that they thought another apostasy was now virtually inevitable. Luther Blackmon wrote,

We are faced with apostacy and I see no hope of evading it, but perhaps the remnant may be larger than we expect. Soft preaching has begotten soft men who now are in elder's seats in the church. Naturally they are for soft preaching which will beget more soft elders...I am not sour on the world but I am deeply apprehensive.⁶²

⁶⁰ W. W. Otey, "Law of Expediency," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXV, No. 37 (September 14, 1948), p. 4.

⁶¹ W. W. Otey, "Basic Truth," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXV, No. 30 (July 27, 1948), p. 2.

⁶² Luther Blackmon in a letter to Otey, not dated.

C. E. W. Dorris, then nearly seventy-eight years old, a preacher of more than fifty-eight years of experience added,

We have seen many changes in churches and preachers and colleges, and of late years for the worse. It seems that the whole thing has gone or is going crazy over degrees and pastors...We old codgers in our active days got out and shelled the woods, preaching anywhere we could get people to hear, but now it seems that when the boys come from the colleges with degrees that they wait for a call to pastorate. I know preachers who never finished the third grade that I will put up against any of our pastors with all their degrees. My heart bleeds for the church. If things don't change we are going to need another restoration in twenty-five years.⁶³

Flavil L. Cooley then was exceedingly fearful of what human institutions were doing to the church. He wrote,

It is my sincere belief that organizations and boards are getting more and more respectable in doing the work of the church. Most of the preachers say they do not believe in it, but there is not much teaching on it. At least two of the board members of ACC are on Boles Home board. Rather a powerful setup.⁶⁴

Fred E. Dennis of Marietta, Ohio felt the same digressive tendencies were at work.

The Bible colleges are overstepping. God being my helper I shall fight until I can fight no more the idea of supporting schools from the church treasury. Too many other questionable things are creeping in...A preacher had better eat bread and water and stand for the truth. I wish it were possible for you to put in printed form the many messages you have received regarding the dangerous trends...I can't understand Hardeman. He has many thinking that he is against the schools being supported by the church, but still he receives the contributions ...I know you are old and not able to do so much, but keep writing all you can, and all you can get printed.⁶⁵

Otey himself privately expressed this opinion: "For years I have felt sure that another apostasy is shaping up, and will soon gain momentum."⁶⁶

⁶³ C. E. W. Dorris in a letter to Otey, June 30, 1948.

⁶⁴ Flavil L. Cooley in a letter to Otey, February 11, 1948.

⁶⁵ Fred E. Dennis in a letter to Otey, August 8, 1949.

⁶⁶ W. W. Otey in a letter to Allen Sommer, September 19, 1949.

Jesse P. Sewell had told Otey, "Brother Otey, I am not afraid the churches will ever introduce instrumental music in the worship, but I am afraid that the church will become worldly."⁶⁷ These letters reveal the feelings of preachers quite generally regarding conditions within the church in the late 1940's.

Otey's writings in 1949 were more diversified than for several years. He even found time to write on some less controverted themes. As is true with most elderly people, the subject of death was often upon the mind of Otey. He wrote quite frequently on the subject of growing old happily, almost as though he was giving himself a lecture in public. He felt the last days of the aged should be the most pleasant and satisfying of life if one trusts in the Lord, and unselfishly loves those who attend him. He chose to speak of death as "The Great Adventure."⁶⁸ The aged could find real security only if he could truthfully say, "I am ready to be offered." If one could do so, "Then no power can harm you or make you afraid."

Though he was trying to write on less controversial matters, still he felt the practice of putting tender children forth at eleven and thirteen years of age as public teachers of the church was without scriptural precedent. Yet such was being done in some instances. Too, he doubted that if brethren persisted in taking their children into denominational buildings to have a world-copying wedding where instrumental music could be employed, that they could without difficulty persuade the world to believe they really were sincere in opposing

⁶⁷ W. W. Otey, "A Problem of Our Day," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXVI, No. 17 (April 26, 1949), p. 3.

⁶⁸ W. W. Otey, "The Great Adventure," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXVI, No. 3 (January 18, 1949), p. 5.

instrumental music in worship.

The practice of the Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas and other sponsoring churches had caused Otey also to ask if there was any fundamental difference in result between a board of elders receiving and disbursing funds of over a hundred churches and the missionary society.⁶⁹ This subject was also to concern him much in his latter days. Otey could see no basic difference insofar as result was concerned. Both activated the church universal through a unified agency.

G. H. P. Showalter was becoming quite aged himself, and several were wondering who might be chosen to succeed him as editor of the Firm Foundation. Otey and Maurice Meredith corresponded regarding this matter. Meredith wrote,

You were speaking of the Firm Foundation passing into new hands. What do you think Frank L. Cox's position is on the college question? It appears to me that he is the one that Showalter is grooming for the office of editor. In fact, I think Showalter has said as much. I like Brother Cox, but he seems too slow and easy-going to put out much fight. Then, too, he's lined up with that 20th Century Christian, and most of those are "softies".⁷⁰

But deciding who would succeed Showalter was a decision that did not have to be made for some years yet.

Otey, Brewer, and Hardeman continued to have exchanges of correspondence and an occasional public clash over the school question. After speaking of the efforts of D. S. Burnet and Isaac Errett through the Christian Standard to sell a questioning brotherhood on the missionary society, Otey wrote Brewer, "Every generation has its Burnets,

⁶⁹ W. W. Otey, "We Wonder If...?", Firm Foundation, Vol. LXVI, No. 34 (August 23, 1949), p. 3.

⁷⁰ Maurice Meredith in a letter to Otey, April 12, 1949.

Erretts and a medium through which to press human institutions. Such journals seldom permit an expose of their articles."⁷¹ Otey did not stammer about whom and what he had in mind. He plainly named Brewer as the Isaac Errett of this generation, and referred to the Gospel Advocate as the Christian Standard of the Twentieth Century.

N. B. Hardeman continued to press Otey "to show the difference between a church's giving to an orphan home governed by a board of directors and the church's giving to a school likewise governed..." Hardeman felt, "If a church voluntarily wants to send a contribution to Freed-Hardeman College, as some are now doing, that contribution is gladly accepted and I think they are within their rights to do so. I see no reason why they have to ask you or anyone else what their privilege is."⁷² Otey felt basically there was no difference in principle in a church supporting a college or an institutional orphan home. So he opposed both, as Hardeman had previously admitted.

However, the main issue was whether churches could support colleges, and Otey felt Hardeman ought to be manly enough to affirm his practice rather than trying to prove one thing scriptural by paralleling it with another practice that was questioned. He felt Hardeman was dodging his responsibility to attempt to prove his practice to be scriptural. The orphan home issue was an emotionally loaded one, and Hardeman obviously thought some advantage would be gained for his side by attempting to shift the issue from the church supported college to the orphan home. If these issues appeared to be hotly contested in 1949 they were luke warm when compared to the heat of the controversy waged

⁷¹ W. W. Otey in a letter to G. C. Brewer, November 4, 1949.

⁷² N. B. Hardeman in a letter to Otey, June 7, 1949.

over them in the 1950's and early 1960's.

Otey, though now into his eighty-fourth year, was working unusually hard for one his age. On his five acre plot, in addition to the truck-farming of vegetables, Otey had planted three hundred peach trees that demanded his care. And if this was not enough, he was raising for market twenty-four hundred broilers every thirteen weeks. Yet he was feeling good in spite of doing manual labor that would test a young man. He felt as though he still could go strongly for several years.

During the year G. H. P. Showalter observed his eightieth birthday. Otey wrote a letter which was printed in the Firm Foundation congratulating Showalter on the achievement. In this letter Otey remarked, "If there has ever been a difference between us on any important question I have not known of it." Little did Otey realize then that this pleasant relationship of long years was shortly to be tried, till it became severely strained.

During 1943, G. C. Brewer, then the preacher at Broadway church in Lubbock, Texas, began to write urging brethren to prepare themselves to engage in post-war foreign evangelism. Special emphasis was to be given to Germany. Broadway then was supporting a young preacher named Otis Gatewood in Salt Lake City, who appeared to be doing an excellent work among the Mormons. Broadway announced their willingness to sponsor this post-war evangelistic program, and later secured a promise from Gatewood to go to Germany to assist in starting a work. The church in Brownfield, Texas eventually became the sponsors of the work in Italy, with Union Avenue church in Memphis sponsoring a similar work in Japan. Under this arrangement, one congregation became the agency through which

many congregations could function.

The Herald of Truth radio and television program, sponsored by the Highland Avenue Church in Abilene, Texas, is a more recent illustration of this type of congregational cooperation. Funds are received from well over one thousand congregations, with an annual budget of over one and one-half million dollars. This type of congregational cooperation, which became common after World War II, added to the catalog of controversies then threatening division among the Churches of Christ. G. C. Brewer, after defining the sponsoring church concept, said,

This whole idea was born because of a very sad condition that existed in the brotherhood forty or fifty years ago....Because of evils that arose from this lack of system and of intelligent dealing, some of us began to advocate that every man who goes into the field should have a home church in which he was recognized...⁷³

It was not until after World War II, however, that this concept was popularized among Churches of Christ. Basically those who favored the church support of colleges favored the sponsoring church type of congregational cooperation, and those who opposed congregational support of colleges opposed this centralization of resources and power in the elders of a single church.

Otey began to write against these combines of power, stating that they differed from the missionary society only in that the power of all these churches was centralized in the elders of one church rather than in a board of directors. The early missionary societies Otey had known in Virginia never handled one-tenth the money some of the sponsoring churches

⁷³ G. C. Brewer, "Reply to Brother Dorris and Others," Gospel Advocate, Vol. XCV, No. 35 (August 27, 1953), p. 544.

now were handling. "Such a 'sponsoring' congregation is performing every function of a humanly formed missionary society like that which destroyed the New Testament pattern of things, and led to the last apostasy."⁷⁴ Otey maintained that each congregation should plan and oversee its own work, and should directly support the man in the evangelistic field. He asked, "Will we disband centralized setups or plans, and cooperate after the New Testament setup or plan? Or will we turn back from the course of centralization? If so, it will be the first such act of which this writer has ever read, heard or observed."

This sponsoring church issue was one that caused a rupture in the pleasant relationship between Showalter and Otey. Otey thought that he could detect that Showalter was sympathetic toward the practice, though Showalter publicly had said nothing about it till now. Otey wrote Showalter in the summer of 1950:

I am distressed because of the rapid movement toward institutionalism, worldliness, show and ostentation in the churches. You spoke out on the question of contributing from the Lord's treasury to support schools. But in my conviction the centralizing now growing is of far greater danger. You have granted much space to Brewer, Bales and some others defending that movement. But little has appeared in opposition...Should it so turn out that we differ on this matter it will be our first difference in more than half a century, so far as I am aware.⁷⁵

It was not long, though, before Showalter began to commit himself in favor of centralization. In late November Otey wrote an article called, "Keep the Question Clear," to which Showalter replied. Showalter said he thought Otey saw some things in the sponsoring church setups that

⁷⁴ W. W. Otey, "Keep The Issue Clear," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXVII, No. 47 (November 21, 1950), p. 6.

⁷⁵ W. W. Otey in a letter to Showalter, August 7, 1950.

were not there, and that Otey's criticisms were not applicable to what was being done.

Though the controversy began to shift a little at this point from church support of colleges to orphan homes and congregational cooperation, men such as Brewer and Hardeman did not give up. They still pressed for the church support of the colleges. Hardeman wrote Otey, "I look upon each of them [colleges and orphan homes-CW] simply as an expedient for taking care of what the Lord has commanded."⁷⁶

The older, more experienced preachers continued to express grave fears over what they thought the future held. Joe H. Blue, an aged Arkansas preacher and debater who had devoted his life to building up the cause in Arkansas wrote, "We may not live to see it, but there is a division just ahead, and I hope I shall not live to see it."⁷⁷ C. R. Nichol, in a letter largely given to a discussion of R. L. Whiteside's physical condition, added at the close: "The outlook is stormy for the church; and me-think I see in the not far distance such a departure from the faith, that there will be a division in the church--Of this when I have typewriter I will write another day."⁷⁸ Will M. Thompson, great debater and preacher wrote,

I'm disappointed in some men and some papers among us in failing to condemn departures from the faith. The Firm Foundation is not what it was 25 & 30 years ago. This of course pains me for I've been a reader most all my life...If it were not for The Gospel Guardian we would not have a medium through which to expose error...Yater Tant in time will develop into a real Editor I think.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ N. B. Hardeman in a letter to Otey, January 26, 1950.

⁷⁷ Joe H. Blue in a letter to Otey, December 2, 1950.

⁷⁸ C. R. Nichol in a letter to Otey, July 2, 1950.

⁷⁹ Will M. Thompson in a letter to Otey, December 15, 1950.

Lloyd A. Boyll, writing regarding one preacher, said that "his defense of the orphan homes was only one way to promote his pet hobby that the schools can be supported by the congregations."⁸⁰ G. K. Wallace, then Superintendent of the Mid-West Children's Home at Wichita, Kansas which at that time was under the elders of a local church, wrote,

There is no more reason why we should form a separate organization through which to do benevolent work than the digressive should form one through which to do missionary work. I maintain that if it is the work of the church the church should do it; if it ^{s1} is not the work of the church the church should stay out of it.

These letters involved issues about which Otey intended to say considerably more, if God permitted him to live.

On Christmas Eve, 1950, Brother and Sister Otey celebrated their sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. They had reached a milestone that when they married in 1885 they had only one chance out of 120,000,000 of reaching. In addition to a story about the event in the Winfield paper, the Wichita Eagle sent out a photographer and reporter. The Eagle printed a three column story about their celebration. Otey was quoted as saying, "No two people could be more perfectly joined in life. We're just as foolish as we can be about each other." When asked if they had had any disagreements Otey replied, "Goodness yes, Hundreds of times. But we never disagreed on the important issues, and on the lesser ones we just said 'Let it go'."⁸² Governor Frank L. Hagaman wrote them a nice letter of congratulation on the occasion.

During the early 1950's the brunt of the institutional controversy shifted from the church support of colleges to the orphan homes and

⁸⁰ Lloyd A. Boyll in a letter to Otey, April 24, 1950.

⁸¹ G. K. Wallace in a letter to Otey, January 31, 1950.

⁸² Wichita Eagle, December 20, 1950, p. 2.

sponsoring churches. This is not to say that church supported orphan homes and sponsoring churches had not been discussed before this time. But these issues now received greater attention. Otey believed that no congregation had the right to attempt to function in behalf of other congregations. Elders could no more oversee the work of other churches than they could oversee the members of other churches. With this conviction, Otey, therefore, was severely critical of the Union Avenue church in Memphis which was overseeing the work being done in Japan. Otey secured copies of all the publications of Union Avenue regarding the Japanese work. All that he knew about their part in this Japanese work was what he had read from their literature. In addition to sending preachers to Japan, sewing schools, English classes, health centers, social services, commercial classes and a college were also established. Union Avenue said, "Our missionaries say give us ten years with Ibaraki Christian College in Japan and the gospel will be preached to the whole nation." Money sent for the college could be sent through the elders at Union Avenue.⁸³

E. W. McMillan, James D. Bales, and finally G. H. P. Showalter set themselves to defend the sponsoring church arrangement. Otey raised two objections to it. "First, is the method or plan unscriptural? Second, is all the work being done work that belongs to the church as its works?"⁸⁴ From the time that Showalter himself entered the controversy, more and more articles were permitted from those endorsing the sponsoring church arrangement, while less were permitted from the

⁸³ Mimeographed Report Published by Union Avenue in March, 1953.

⁸⁴ W. W. Otey in a letter to Paul Sherrod, January 25, 1951.

opposers of such arrangements. This trend has continued, until today critics of such works are now shut out of the pages of the Firm Foundation under its new editor Reuel Lemmons.

Otey and Showalter were engaged in rapid and pungent correspondence. They had begun publicly to criticize each other's position. Showalter denied the applicability of Otey's criticisms to the Union Avenue program. Otey felt compelled to use Union Avenue's literature to prove his contentions. But Showalter would not permit Otey to present in the Firm Foundation the documentation Otey felt necessary to establish his contention. This impasse resulted in Otey turning elsewhere for a place to present his evidence. From this point on, most of Otey's controversial articles were printed through the pages of the then young journal, The Gospel Guardian. Finally Otey suggested that he and Showalter should debate the sponsoring church issue. Showalter said Otey had presented a "blustering challenge" which showed he was "'spoiling' for a debate." Otey resented these remarks. Nevertheless, Showalter declined to debate the issues involved.

Otey wrote, "When a religious body grows to become numerous, cultured (?), popular, wealthy, worldly--then the seeds of error...find a congenial soil to take root and apostasy begins."⁸⁵ This Otey thought already had happened. Having been somewhat shut out of the Firm Foundation, Otey yet felt the need to say more on these issues.

He now was in his 85th year. During this year he cared for and harvested \$1500 worth of peaches and raised and marketed 2400 broilers. Yet he felt the urgency to write a book on the institutional and

⁸⁵ W. W. Otey in a letter to Showalter, March 5, 1951.

centralization issues. He had not the money for its publication. He knew that he would have to redouble his efforts to earn enough money to pay for the printing of the book. Yet he set himself to work on the manuscript of Living Issues which he completed in three months, much of it being written between midnight and dawn. This 137 page book published late in 1951 primarily was devoted to a discussion of Bible Colleges and the sponsoring church concept.

After Otey had resolved to write the book, he felt first the necessity of consulting with brethren about his intention. After all, he was eighty-five years old. Perhaps he might not be able to determine what his many years had done to his mental faculties. C. R. Nichol encouraged Otey to go ahead. Cled E. Wallace wrote, "His [i.e. Nichol's-OW] suggestions and your decision regarding the book you have in mind stir up nothing but favorable reactions in my mind."⁸⁶ Even Showalter wrote, "I see no reason why you could not prepare the best matter for a book that you have been able to prepare during your life. The older a man grows, the better his storehouse of knowledge--this till he begins mentally and physically to fail."⁸⁷

Otey wanted the book read, as he put in it some things that he felt were needed. He never intended to make any money on the book. In fact, he sold the entire edition at a price below cost to him. He wrote that he would like to have the names of everyone who would read the book. If they agreed with it, they could send him \$1. If they disagreed with it, they could pass it on to another brother and owe Otey nothing. Over

⁸⁶ Cled E. Wallace in a letter to Otey, March 10, 1951.

⁸⁷ G. H. P. Showalter in a letter to Otey, May 16, 1951.

500 of these books were mailed the first day after he had received his supply.

This book, now out of print, did much good in clarifying the issues involved in the minds of brethren. Young preachers even now search diligently to try to locate a copy of it. Otey later revised the manuscript of Living Issues, and added six chapters of new material with the intention of printing Living Issues Number Two. But before he was able to get the book in print, his remarkable physical constitution failed him. This manuscript remains unprinted till now, though it likely eventually will appear in print. Otey dedicated Living Issues to J. T. Showalter, of whom Otey said, "the author is fully persuaded^{ss} would, if living, approve without hesitation this book..."

Since it has been necessary to limit the survey of Otey's writings in some manner, I have decided to say little about his books, as most of these are available in libraries. Instead, I have concentrated on the less accessible magazine articles and correspondence. Hence I say nothing more here about Living Issues, one of Otey's most significant books.

Others were joining in the fight against the encroachment of institutionalism and centralization. B. C. Goodpasture was editor of the Gospel Advocate, which became the leading institutional organ. Brewer was his leading staff writer. Yater Tant, editor of the Gospel Guardian wrote:

^{ss} W. W. Otey, Living Issues, (Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1951), "Dedication" page.

Personally, I have no ill will of any kind toward either brother Brewer or brother Goodpasture. Quite the contrary so far as Brewer is concerned...Frankly, I find myself often sharing somewhat in Cled Wallace's feeling toward him---a sort of secret admiration, accompanied by a persistent and nagging temptation to stick a pin in him and let some of the inflated ego escape...Both of these brethren [Goodpasture and Brewer-OW] are set to lead the church into a devious and tortuous path of institutionalism. That is a simple statement of fact.⁸⁹

When Living Issues was published late in the year, Otey received many commendations of the work. Within a matter of months the supply was exhausted. Pages could be filled with laudatory statements from men like W. T. Boaz, A. E. Wickham, M. Roy Stevens, Franklin T. Puckett, J. G. Savage, Ira W. Rice, Sr., S. M. Rutledge, and Ted W. McElroy, who wrote commending the book. The commendation of H. M. Phillips is a good example of those received. Phillips said:

Received your book yesterday and read it through last night. I like it fine and am sure that it will do much good. Your position certainly is a safe one. I hope that the tide for institutions will some way be swept back and that people will try to work through the only organization ordained by the Lord--that is the church.⁹⁰

Otey had put the first book in print dealing entirely with these issues.

On May 13, Otey received a letter from Showalter, across the top of which Otey later wrote "Last," meaning that this was the last letter he ever received from Showalter. The issues had caused a painful alienation. Otey continued to write Showalter for some time. But Showalter did not answer. Across the bottom of a carbon copy of an unanswered letter which Otey had written to Showalter, Otey later wrote,

⁸⁹ Yater Tant in a letter to Otey, November 22, 1951.

⁹⁰ H. M. Phillips in a letter to Otey, December 29, 1951.

To this date, February 25, I have not received a word of answer. Why? Frankly I don't understand. I regard G. H. P. Showalter as clean, devout a Christian as I have ever known. Our minds and hearts have been more closely tied, I think, for a longer period of time, than any other two men in the church--more than sixty years. I have loved him as I have never loved any other man. And I love him still. These lines are typed through blinding tears, of which I am unashamed.

Yet Otey's affection for and admiration of Showalter could not cause him to accept what he thought was an erroneous position or to lend encouragement to what he considered to be a digressive trend.

1953 was a difficult year in the life of Otey. Though in his eighty-seventh year, he was yet in the fruit-growing and broiler business. He continued to write for The Gospel Guardian and Fellowship News, an Indiana paper for which he had served as question and answer editor for four years. The sponsoring church controversy continued to cause him to be implicated in many controversies, both public and private. He was carrying on a tremendous correspondence, primarily with young preachers, urging them to be true to the Book. But none of these burdens was chiefly the one that made the year difficult for Otey.

The health of his wife of nearly seventy years was breaking. She could not sit idle while Otey labored. So she was constantly overdoing herself. Regarding this situation, Foy E. Wallace, Jr. wrote,

You have been a great servant of God--and now far into your eighties you are a most remarkable man. Would that the hand of the clock of your life could be turned back twenty years-- That not being possible, I pray that your years may be extended to finish the important work of exposing the modernism of that so-called new Bible. And may you be spared the grief of losing your devoted companion before your work is done.⁹¹

⁹¹ Foy E. Wallace, Jr. in a letter to Otey, February 16, 1953.

Sister Otey needed to be gotten away from the work connected with their Belle Plaine place. After a terrifically hard day of labor, Otey awoke in the night with his legs numb from fatigue and overwork. Otey realized he was working entirely too hard. He got out of bed, walked into Minnie's room, and there in the darkness of night they had a long talk. They concluded they had to give up the Belle Plaine place. Otey's mind was entirely made up. Early next morning he went to town and arranged the sale of his place to a man who for some time had been wanting to buy it. It also appeared that Otey shortly was going to need help in caring for his ailing wife. So Otey prepared for the last move of his life.

He had a widowed daughter who lived in Winfield, the place to which Otey had moved when he first came to Kansas in 1911. Otey, therefore, having sold his place in Belle Plaine, purchased a house two doors from that of his daughter in Winfield. Sister Otey could now have the care that she was to need in the coming months.

Though Otey had a near invalid wife, and the many before mentioned burdens pressing upon him, he yet wrote and published a book in 1953 before he left Belle Plaine. In 1946 the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament had been published, followed by a similar translation of the Old Testament in 1952. Otey was not at all pleased with this translation, as he felt it to be the work of modernists who permitted their modernistic bias to show through their scholastic responsibility to translate accurately the original language.

Otey never liked to go into print with charges for which he did not have proof. He, therefore, wrote to each of the surviving members of the translating committee. Primarily he asked if they thought it

was essential to believe that Jesus was born without a natural father, and that without the shedding of his blood no one could be cleansed from sin. Professor Edgar J. Goodspeed, Millar Burrows, Henry J. Cadbury and others readily stated that they did not think faith in either point was essential. The virgin birth, according to Goodspeed, was but "an oft repeat Ancient Greek way of describing moral sonship to God."⁹² Goodspeed typed his reply on the lower part of the letter Otey had written.

Otey felt that these men, with this theological bias, had translated essential truths out of the Bible. On the virgin birth, with Otey it was not a matter of translation, but of inspiration. Matthew plainly taught the virgin birth of Christ, and even gave a translation of the Hebrew of Isaiah 7:14, one of the passages under dispute after the appearance of the New Translation. One, therefore, had to accept Matthew's translation of Isaiah 7:14 and his doctrine of the virgin birth, or deny his inspiration.

Otey's 194 page book, Christ or Modernism, published by the Firm Foundation, was not devoted entirely to a discussion of the Revised Standard Version, though it is rather obvious that the appearance of this new translation begat the idea for the book. The new translation therefore, received much attention. Attention was given to most of the problems over which fundamentalists and liberalists have debated through the years. The whole field of miracles was discussed, with particular attention given to creation, the nature of Christ, His virgin birth, and His bodily resurrection. This book is a significant addition to the

⁹² Edgar J. Goodspeed, in reply to a letter which Otey wrote December 8, 1952.

apologetic field.

E. W. McMillan charged through the pages of the Firm Foundation that Otey had misrepresented the Japanese work. Otey wrote Showalter requesting that space be given to quotations from the Union Avenue documents which he believed sustained his charges. Showalter did not reply by letter, but stated in the Firm Foundation that anyone who wanted to read the proof of Otey's charges could write to Otey and that Otey would send him a copy of Living Issues without cost. It amazed Otey that Showalter would present charges against his veracity in the Firm Foundation, for which he had written for so many years, and not permit him to reply. He hardly thought it fair for him to have to spend over one dollar for the right of answering a false charge before each of the perhaps fifteen thousand readers before whom it had been made. But this was the best that could be arranged. Showalter would print nothing more from Otey.

Otey did get great satisfaction from two letters he received from two young preachers in Japan named Joseph L. Cannon, and Richard F. Baggett. Both Cannon and Baggett denied any intention of doing the sort of work the Union Avenue pamphlet from which Otey had quoted stated was being done in Japan. These letters gave Otey much satisfaction and comfort. He printed one of the letters in The Gospel Guardian under the heading, "Much Joy."⁹³

Another sponsoring church program recently had been started that shortly would overshadow in magnitude anything done till now. The Highland Avenue church in Abilene, Texas became the sponsor of a radio

⁹³ W. W. Otey, "Much Joy," Gospel Guardian, Vol. IV, No. 46 (March 26, 1953), p. 1.

program, that eventually was televised also, that embraced the funds of well over one thousand congregations with an annual budget of over one and one-half millions of dollars. They now report that one-tenth of all the Churches of Christ contribute to the Highland Church for this program.

Otey at first had little to say regarding this program, and some wondered why. Did he think it unlike the Broadway and Union Avenue plans? Otey replied that he had said nothing about that new program because he wanted younger men to show its unscripturalness, and because he thought within a year or two it would fold up. He added:

The digressives never did anything with such a flare of showmanship as that thing; or with less scriptural basis. If someone had predicted 25 years ago that a young man, not long out of his teens, could so propagandize the churches as to raise more than \$800,000 in some 20 months, for such an exhibition, such an one would have been thought demented... Surely many churches will see the folly as well as the unscripturalness, and turn from it...The disease lies deep in world unrest, dissatisfaction with old things, the Bible in particular, and the craze for new methods. Worldliness in the church is the root from which the tree grows.⁹⁴

Otey believed it would take twenty-five full years to uproot these digressive trends. He predicted too, that many would move along with the trends and drift farther and farther from the truth. This too has been and is being fulfilled.

⁹⁴ W. W. Otey, "Otey To Adams," Gospel Guardian, Vol. V, No. 48 (April 15, 1954), p. 754.

CHAPTER XIV

"AS THE SUN GOES DOWN"--AT WINFIELD

As one studies the later life of Otey, he wonders how many more strongly controversial years the old man can stand. Most men have retired from the polemical field long before they approach their nineties. In fact, most younger men are reluctant to engage in controversy with one Otey's age, out of deference to his years. But Otey hit so hard in his writings that younger men apparently were not embarrassed to strike back. Some that wrote Otey often confided agreement with his writings which, for some reason, they would not otherwise express.

Otey was much relieved by the move to Winfield. His daughter, Verna, was nearby and freely assisted in her mother's care. Sister Otey continued to weaken. She was a great care upon the family. But her care was lovingly and freely rendered by both husband and daughter. Without the added burdens of the Belle Plaine truck farm, Otey really felt rather carefree. He felt free to write a good deal in 1954.

It was extremely difficult for Otey to stay out of a fight, especially if it involved things in which he had great interest. Those contests that involved what he believed to be truth and error he apparently never learned to resist. Only a few months before, he had stated his intention to stay out of the "Herald of Truth" debate. But it took him only a short while to discard this intention.

The College church in Abilene had been the sponsor of the Herald of Truth before Highland Avenue took it over. Glenn L. Wallace, the College church preacher, was among the first to question the scripturalness of the arrangement involved in the Herald of Truth. James Williford and James Nichols, two young preachers, had conceived the idea for such a nationwide program while they were preaching in Iowa and Wisconsin. But the bulk of the members of the Church of Christ was in the south. Soon they saw the necessity to move to the south to hunt a moneyed sponsor for their "brain child." The college church acquiesced, and became a somewhat reluctant sponsor. The treasurer of the Herald of Truth, even after Highland Avenue became the sponsor, was a member of the College church. Glenn Wallace wrote Otey, "...I question their right to conduct a program on such a scale....The elders here, with the exception of one man are in agreement almost 100% with my article..."¹ His article questioned the scripturalness of such an arrangement. The more Otey learned of the arrangement, the more opposed to it he became.

He, therefore, during the summer of 1954, wrote three articles severely critical of the sponsoring church arrangement by which the program was conducted. These articles Otey had printed in the Gospel Guardian. He no longer could get a strong article in the Firm Foundation, but he got in what he could. He wrote that "anything that cannot be expressed in Bible language is not Bible teaching and practice." He said brethren now are hearing

¹ Glenn L. Wallace in a letter to Otey, January 14, 1954.

whole lists of words, phrases, and sentences that are new to many. But the whole list could be lifted bodily from writings of fifty and sixty years ago--Expediency, cooperation, sponsoring, annual lectureships, the Lord has told us what to do but not how to do it, they oppose caring for orphans, oppose preaching the gospel in foreign lands.²

Otey said Briney and others had used the same cliches years ago.

Showalter replied that Otey's parallel was "extremely crooked." Otey also paralleled the prejudice of brethren with that manifested fifty years before. One preacher had said that every time his wife found a copy of the Gospel Guardian she immediately burned it. Another said each time an issue of the Guardian arrived, he had an irresistible urge to go spit. These attitudes discouraged Otey. He now expected the worst to come.

Otey's sledge hammer blows had to be landed somewhere other than in the Firm Foundation. In the first Herald of Truth article, he wrote that the founding of the Herald of Truth "marked the most momentous event in its effect on the church of the Lord since the organizing of the first Missionary Society in 1849." He further wrote:

Though not yet formally organized with constitution and bylaws, it has grown greater in its ambitious plan, and the amount of money commanded, than the growth of the digressive society during the first sixty years of its existence. It is performing every essential function the Missionary Societies performed during their first sixty years.³

He also was critical of the way the money was spent. Projected on the basis of the proposed budget, Otey reckoned that time on the program cost \$270 a minute. Recently James Williford, one of the Herald

² W. W. Otey, "Thy Speech Betrayeth Thee," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXXI, No. 2 (January 12, 1954), p. 5.

³ W. W. Otey, "The Herald of Truth," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VI, No. 13 (August 5, 1954), p. 1.

of Truth speakers, had preached a sermon drawing an analogy between a baseball game and the Christian life. Otey figured that this lesson on baseball had cost \$13,620. He objected to spending the church's funds to teach a lesson on baseball.⁴

Otey also maintained that elders could only oversee the work of a single congregation. These elders at Highland were admittedly overseeing a program financed by over one thousand churches. He, therefore, maintained that, though these elders denied it, they actually had ceased to function as elders, and constituted an official board over a work supported by a thousand congregations. To the world, the Herald of Truth appeared to be the voice of the Church of Christ exactly as they regarded "The Lutheran Hour" as the voice of the Lutheran Church.⁵ Even G. C. Brewer agreed with Otey on this charge.⁶

Man cannot criticize without being criticized. Otey, therefore, received his share of misrepresentations. One young preacher told Otey that when he introduced himself as being from near Winfield, people often remarked, "You are from over in Kansas where the old man Otey lives who opposes everything."⁷ Otey stated that he was indeed opposed to human organizations attempting to do the church's work, and to centralization whether in a society or an eldership. He, however,

⁴ W. W. Otey, "The Herald of Truth--No. 2," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VI, No. 14 (August 12, 1954), p. 8.

⁵ W. W. Otey, "The Herald of Truth--No. 3," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VI, No. 15 (August 19, 1954), p. 8.

⁶ See G. C. Brewer, Autobiography, Dehoff Publications, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1957, p. 139.

⁷ W. W. Otey, "Christians Should Be Fair," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXXI, No. 43 (October 26, 1954), p. 4.

had never opposed a scriptural work being done in a scriptural way, and wished that brethren would cease to misrepresent him. Though criticized, he could not now give up his stand and thus forfeit sixty-five years of labor and sacrifice. Some called him a legalist, but he wrote that "Legalism simply means lawful," and God is the author of both the form and the spirit of obedience. He objected to form without the spirit, but no more so, than to professing to have the spirit while neglecting the form.⁸

There already were enough hot issues being discussed to result in a rupture of fellowship. And it seemed that almost yearly new equally explosive issues were added. Brethren everywhere were apprehensive of the coming years. Flavil L. Colley, who had just conducted a debate with W. Carl Ketcherside in Dallas, Texas, wrote:

In the debate I stated that I started Boles Home, but I could not defend it because it was under a board. Frankly the position the board, and Brother Oler have taken is as digressive as the Missionary board of the Christian Church-- My position against them has not increased my standing with that element in the church that is contending for such thing. I have no desire to follow into digression these men who think more of their reputation and political standing than they do of the truth. You can understand the danger of these things, but I wonder if you know how deeply entrenched this thing is now.⁹

C. D. Plum, who for years had been a staff writer for the Gospel Advocate, had ventured to question and to criticize editor B. C. Goodpasture's proposal to quarantine all the preachers criticizing the institutions and sponsoring church setups. As a result, Plum wrote, "I'm sure I'm a

⁸ W. W. Otey, "Legalism," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXXI, No. 12 (March 23, 1954), p. 6.

⁹ Flavil L. Colley in a letter to Otey, June 28, 1954.

'has been' of the GA, because we just can't see alike on institutionalism."¹⁰
 Plum felt that "We need more Brother Oteys."

In 1954 death knocked once more to claim another of Otey's contemporaries. This time he struck nearer, to claim G. H. P. Showalter. Though Otey and Showalter had differed greatly on the sponsoring church arrangement, Otey did not let the difference destroy his respect for Showalter. He wrote, "...I regarded him as one of the purest men in thought and life; deeply pious and [one who had-*CW*] reverence for the Lord and his word."¹¹

Showalter's death increased conservative brethren's uneasiness regarding the future of the Firm Foundation. C. R. Nichol wrote, "Frankly I cannot but be uneasy as to the future of the Firm Foundation and its influence."¹² He added that the paper had drifted "from its tone of some years ago." Nichol reminded Otey of Don Carlos Janes' slogan, "Great things of God," and added that in view of some programs then being promoted, these promoters must have revised Janes' slogan to state simply "Great things," and left God out of the plan.

Otey and others felt that the future of the paper would be determined by the editor chosen to succeed Showalter. When it was announced that Reuel Lemmons was to head a corps of such liberal writers as M. Norvel Young, Ira North, Clifton Rogers, Homer Putnam Reeves,

¹⁰ C. D. Plum in a letter to Otey, March 9, 1955.

¹¹ W. W. Otey, "A Great Servant Called Home," Firm Foundation, Vol. LXXI, No. 47 (November 23, 1954), p. 7.

¹² C. R. Nichol in a letter to Otey, December 1, 1954.

Otey felt there would no longer be a place for his type of writing. Showalter's death, therefore, ended a long term of over forty years of writing for the Firm Foundation.

As soon as Lemmons was selected to serve as editor, Otey wrote him impressing upon him the responsibility that would be his as one in position to "censor" what thousands of brethren would read. Otey also warned about the imminent digression. Lemmons, however, did not share Otey's fears in regard to this condition. He wrote, "I see no reason, for instance, why the history of the past must be followed in the future. I believe that some of the causes of past apostasy have been so completely fortified against that they will not bother us again."¹³

Otey wrote the Highland Avenue elders, sponsors of the Herald of Truth, for a list of the contributors to the Herald of Truth. They replied refusing to supply such a list, implying that Otey wanted the list to use in some profit making enterprise. Otey, therefore, publicly replied that his only reason for wanting the list was that he might send to the elders of each of these contributing churches a free copy, in tract form, of his three articles on the Herald of Truth.¹⁴ These articles, though, were never published in tract form. Otey also added, "Though nearing my 88th milestone, I feel as vigorous as I have in many years. How soon He whom I have so imperfectly served will say, 'It is enough; lay your armor down', I know not. But until he does, I shall continue to contend for the Lord's blood-bought church...."

¹³ Reuel Lemmons in a letter to Otey, September 15, 1955.

¹⁴ W. W. Otey, "Harper and Otey," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VI, No. 35 (January 13, 1955), p. 11.

Otey enjoyed old age, for he continued to enjoy an active life. Until considerably past ninety he continued to walk thirty blocks a day at a brisk pace to keep himself in shape. He always guarded his eating habits carefully. He never permitted himself to put on an unnecessary pound, being fully convinced each unneeded pound shortened one's days. Many a flabby preacher received a rebuke from tall, straight and energetic Otey. Otey's eating was peculiar. Because of an ulcerated stomach condition which had plagued him for many years, Otey ate six times daily. However, he took only the smallest amounts of the plainest of food at each eating. He was fully convinced his eating habits prolonged his life.

Arrangements had been made by Otey with B. C. Goodpasture, editor of the Gospel Advocate, to reprint his book, The Origin and Destiny of Man. After serious reflection Otey decided to cancel the arrangements. He feared that someone later would imply his endorsement of the Advocate's present course by the fact the Advocate published his book. In an open letter to Goodpasture, Otey wrote:

I am convinced that the Gospel Advocate is leading a large part of the church of the Lord into an apostasy from the New Testament pattern....I would rather that it should never be reprinted than for anyone to have ground to believe that I endorse the present course of the Gospel Advocate.¹⁵

Otey was always careful lest he leave behind by thoughtlessness or carelessness something that might be used by others to negate his life of effort in opposition to innovationism.

¹⁵ W. W. Otey, "No Neutral Ground," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VII, No. 11 (July 21, 1955), p. 3.

During the year the Tant-Harper debates at Lufkin and Abilene were conducted on the Herald of Truth. Otey would have liked very much to have attended both of these, but his advanced age would not permit him to do so. He, therefore, awaited with anxiety a letter from C. R. Nichol, who assisted Tant in the Abilene debate. Nichol reported crowds were large, with perhaps two thousand in attendance. Good order prevailed, and the number of preachers present was unusually large. Nichol stated also his opinion as to the cause of the trouble: "The present issues are the outgrowth of a failure to stay within the limits of the teachings of the Bible."¹⁶

Sister Otey's health continued to fail. Otey believed that she could not live much longer. Within the last three years Sister Otey had been hospitalized several times. So the celebration of their seventieth wedding anniversary on December 24, 1955, was both a happy and a sad occasion to him. The Wichita Eagle again sent out a reporter. Otey, reminiscencing a little said, "On Christmas Eve of 1885 I received a Christmas present that has grown more wonderful and valuable throughout the years--and that was my wife." Seven of the children born to them were still living. These were Mrs. Viola Criner of Richmond, Indiana; Mrs. Verna Hammer of Winfield; Mrs. Willie Phipps of Fort Collins, Colorado; Mrs. Louise Diaz of San Antonio, Texas; Joe T., Hot Springs, South Dakota; Bentley, Independence, Missouri; and Ray of Denton, Texas. With fourteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, they had much for which to be thankful. Otey advised young people to be sure that after marriage they remain together, "for we have discovered that the autumn

years of married life are the sweetest years of all.¹⁷ But his happiness soon was to turn to sorrow.

Otey's fears became a reality when on July 23, 1956, "Mother" passed away. Those who had known Brother and Sister Otey throughout the years had gotten great joy and satisfaction out of witnessing their radiant love for each other. Of the many thousands of pages that Otey wrote, he never requested that I reproduce anything that he ever wrote except this short piece about his wife's death. Out of deference to this request, rather than to try to depict the event myself, I simply here transcribe his tribute as it appeared in several of the religious journals.

BLESSED ARE THE DEAD

On July 23, "Mother" fell asleep in Jesus to await his coming. After more than four years of great suffering she was released from all pain, and went to be with him whom she has deeply loved and served for about seventy-five years. During her more than four years of great suffering, I was by her side day and night. Gall bladder disease (not stone), hardening of the arteries, and heart ailment brought on the most intense suffering.

It was on December 29, 1884, nearly seventy-two years ago, that I met Minnie Showalter for the first time. How vividly I recall that hour! Standing some ten feet distant, I happened to turn my face toward where she was standing. Our eyes met and held as if by magic for a moment. Were I an artist, I could even now, after nearly seventy-two years, paint that unforgettable face, and even the dress she was wearing. I could not see her clearer if she were right now standing before me as she did in that solemn and sacred moment when first we met. The face was a true likeness of maidenly modesty and purity. During our long life together never once did I hear a coarse word fall from her lips; not once did she violate the rule of womanly modesty.

One year after we first met, we pledged ourselves to each other as husband and wife. For nearly seventy-one years we shared our joys and bore our griefs--together. We laughed together; we read God's word together; we prayed together;

¹⁷Wichita Eagle, December 24, 1955.

and together we worshipped Him whom we sought to serve. During these last thirty years, since our children had grown up and gone out from the home, our lives have been the closest and sweetest of all the long sojourn together. Often in the evening, as we sat close together, and as the evening shadows closed down to enfold us, we talked of our children and their welfare. Yes, I am not ashamed to say that we often found ourselves holding hands and talking in tender tones as in the days of our youth. The love of youth was sweet, but it could not be sweeter than this. And most important of all, we talked much about the "land that is fairer than day." We wondered how our time would be spent, and if we would know each other in that glorious land. On this we formed no opinion. We simply said that what is best, God will provide. His provision will be all that we could ask or desire.

I am sure that I have never known any one who was as impartial toward her children as "mother" was. It was only the one who happened to be sick or otherwise in need of sympathy that received her closest attention. She more nearly loved every body, yes, loved, than any one whom I have ever known. And with few exceptions, possibly, all who knew her loved her. Sympathy, kindness, tender acts characterized her life. No one whom I have ever known loved the word of the Lord, and the hour of worship, more sincerely. And what has been a marvel to me is that for nearly seventy years she remained to the last about the most appreciative listener I had.

Two hearts that beat as one for more than seventy years have now been severed, and mine is left torn and bleeding. "Mother" is not over in Highland Cemetery; no, she is with the angels and is happy.

What of me? The calendar says I will soon be ninety. The doctor says, "You are as sound as a teen-ager." But of course I do not have the strength of a youth. I think I would like to lie down and go to sleep and wake up on the other side. But the will of the Lord is mine. I have never lived in the past. Even now I still have much planned to do if it be His will. The Lord said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This, by His help, I shall endeavor to do.¹⁸

The remainder of Otey's life was spent in loneliness and mourning. He never reached the state in which he could speak of "Minnie's" passing without weeping. In his last years as he spoke regarding her to others,

¹⁸ W. W. Otey, "Blessed Are The Dead," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VIII, No. 20 (September 20, 1956), p. 10.

he chose to use almost the very words of this tribute to describe their life and relationship together. Otey's remaining days were best described by himself as one day he sat day dreaming at his desk and scribbled on the back of an old envelope, almost as though he were mumbling to himself, "I don't like to live alone!" It seems as though he wanted those who might later rummage through his things to know his loneliness.

With the burden of caring for his dying wife, one is amazed to find that one nearly ninety had time, strength, and interest to write. But Otey did have. In March, 1956 he wrote the last book he was to see published before his death. This book Otey appropriately named, The Tree of Life Lost and Regained, as in it he presents "a sweeping survey of the history of humanity and the development of God's scheme for its redemption from eternity to eternity."¹⁹ This book was different from any other Otey had written. It was intended primarily to be a "family book"--one the entire family could enjoy reading together. It was one that he was particularly prepared to write, having reached nearly ninety. Too, daily his heart was being prepared to write such a book as he watched his beloved die an inch at a time. During this time he shed more tears than he ever thought possible. One can hardly read this touching book without shedding sympathetic tears with the author. Otey intended this to be his last published work, and as James Adams said, it is a "fitting climax to his noble service in 'the kingdom of God's dear Son.'"

¹⁹ James W. Adams in "Introduction" To W. W. Otey, The Tree of Life Lost and Regained (Bellair, Texas: Bible Bulworks, 1956), p. vii.

In spite of a pained and grief stricken heart occasioned by his wife's condition, Otey was continually disturbed by what he observed in the churches. Like the apostle Paul, "Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."²⁰

J. W. Roberts, a Professor at Abilene Christian College, wrote that he felt Otey deserved a stern rebuke, but he refused to give it to such an aged man. This stung Otey more than the intended rebuke would have. Otey bluntly replied, "Listen, please, once for all, when I cannot take care of myself in controversy without regard to age, then I will retire from the field of polemics, and I will gracefully retire."²¹ Otey felt that it was largely through his warnings concerning "trends" that the present controversy had been initiated, and he felt honor-bound to continue to wage his part of the conflict to the end.²² One could no more by compromise appease the innovationists than one could have appeased Hitler, thought Otey. As Cecil B. Douthitt expressed it to Otey: "It is a fight to the finish...."²³ Otey continued to receive praise on every hand for the fight he had waged. James A. Allen, a former editor both of the Gospel Advocate and Apostolic Times wrote, "You have done a remarkable work for the cause of Christ and have been exerting a great influence in exposing the departures from the faith once for all delivered unto the saints."²⁴

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 11:28.

²¹ W. W. Otey in a letter to J. W. Roberts, December 8, 1956.

²² W. W. Otey in a letter to "Brother Ballard," February 8, 1956.

²³ Cecil B. Douthitt in a letter to Otey, February 7, 1956.

²⁴ James A. Allen in a letter to Otey, September 18, 1956.

Otey continued to press the fight. He wrote the elders of the Highland Avenue church asking, "Is the work you are performing in the Herald of Truth official work of elders? Or is it a work of a group of individuals associated together?"²⁵ Otey could only view their work as that of an overseeing board, as he was confident it was not the elders' duty to function in behalf of more than one thousand churches. He urged that Sterl Watson, E. R. Harper, G. K. Wallace, Cleon Lyles and other defenders of institutions and centralized arrangements secure and read anew the Otey-Briney Debate to see their own speeches made by Briney, and in more convincing style.

Otey's unwavering objection to humanisms in the work of the church resulted from the exalted view that he had of the church. He expressed it no clearer than he did in an article called "God's Greatest Work." In this article he stated:

God purposed and planned the church before the foundation of the world. It was inspired by His infinite love. He gave His dearest object, His only Son, for it. His wisdom devised its form and worship. His infinite power built it. Its purpose is to preach the gospel to all the world; save the lost, edify itself and make holy its members, care for its needy. In it God is preparing a people to dwell with him and the angels in eternity. ...The church is the embodiment of God's love, wisdom, and power. ...In short, the church is God's last and greatest work for the redemption of fallen man. Measured by any possible standard, it is beyond comparison. It is sad to contemplate that man has repeatedly tried to "improve" this great work of God by adding to its worship, substituting other organizations and institutions to do its work, carnalizing its government, and debasing and making earthly its holy mission! ...Let the church be the church, glorious and perfect from God's hand, and unmarred by human tamperings!²⁶

²⁵ W. W. Otey in a letter to Highland Avenue Elders, May 30, 1956.

²⁶ W. W. Otey, "God's Greatest Work," Gospel Guardian, Vol. VIII, No. 35 (January 10, 1957), p. 6.

His wife's death temporarily took a little of the fight out of Otey. After having completed The Tree of Life Lost and Regained, Otey turned his entire energy to caring for his ailing wife. After her death, for the first time in his entire life he had no plans for the future. He felt as though he would like to lie down and awake in a better world. But in his grief-stricken hours of loneliness, the words of Jesus, "Be thou faithful unto death," came to him.²⁷ He, therefore, arose and set to work on the manuscript of Living Issues, Volume Two. It was only a short time until he had completed this work. He added six chapters to the material found in Living Issues, as well as revising some of the earlier chapters. Sufficient funds have not yet been available to pay for the printing of this book. Probably it eventually will be published though. Otey afterward prepared the manuscript for a book of sermons, which also is as yet unpublished.

On March 14, 1957, Otey celebrated his ninetieth birthday. He, for several years, had had an appointment to preach a sermon at Mulvane, Kansas the first Lord's Day after his ninetieth birthday. Accordingly, on March 17, 1957 Otey preached on "The Value of the Soul" at Mulvane, which was his last planned public discourse. In his introductory remarks, Judson Woodbridge, the preacher at Mulvane said:

...some three or four years ago Brother Otey asked for an appointment to preach here on the first Sunday after he was ninety. The time has now come for that sermon. Judging from his appearance, he could make an appointment to come back after he has passed the 100 mark, and still meet it! He stands erect, and is as "spry as a kitten," needing neither cane, nor crutch to help him get around.²⁸

²⁷ W. W. Otey, "Explanation," Gospel Guardian, Vol. IX, No. 7 (June 13, 1957), p. 14.

²⁸ W. W. Otey, "The Value Of The Soul," Gospel Guardian, Vol. IX, No. 11 (July 18, 1957), p. 1.

On a few other occasions he gave short extemporaneous talks at the Winfield church, and once spoke one night during a meeting at Winfield on "The Life of the Lord." It is interesting to observe the great simplicity of Otey's preaching even after a long lifetime of study. He yet delighted to speak on such simple but needed themes as "The Value of the Soul" and "The Life of the Lord." He studied to simplify his lessons; not to becloud them with verbosity.

The conditions existing in the churches grieved Otey to sleeplessness and to tears. Yet he maintained that he never became discouraged. "My faith in God; in his word; in the glory of the church in its purity, and the final triumph of truth has been my refuge."²⁹ Otey had spoken against the missionary societies, instrumental music, church support of colleges, sponsoring churches, the Herald of Truth, and other great issues. Till now he had not said much about the practice, recently become popular, for churches to do their benevolent work through human institutions. N. B. Hardeman had accused Otey of at least being consistent more than ten years before when he had opposed churches contributing to separate institutions, whether they be colleges or institutional orphan homes. But Otey wanted to be more clearly on record regarding benevolent societies.

In a chapter written for Living Issues Volume Two Otey included an article on "The Seed Of The Kingdom" in which he dealt with the orphan homes under boards of directors. He already, by implication, had dealt with those under elders in his criticisms of the sponsoring church arrangement. In "The Seed Of The Kingdom," he pointed out parallels

²⁹ W. W. Otey, "The Price of Discipleship," Gospel Guardian, Vol. IX, No. 41 (February 20, 1958), p. 12.

between orphan homes and missionary societies in the following points:

(1) Each was a human organization; (2) No instructions are given in the word of the Lord for either organization, or qualifications given for their officers; (3) Each had a board of managers; (4) Each received contributions from churches; and (5) One institution was engaged in evangelism, the other in benevolence, but both scriptural works of the church.

Otey thought that if the benevolent work of the church could be done through a separate organization, so could its evangelistic work. One must either oppose benevolent societies, or apologize to the Christian Church for opposing its missionary society, thought Otey. Otey could not conceive how any brother could maintain that a separate corporation owning two thousand acres of land with fixed capital assets of \$706,713.83 could be called a mere "method" of the church doing its work. Yet Gayle Oler, superintendent at Boles Home had used these figures in a letter to Otey in describing the fixed assets of the Home.³⁰ That the Home merely was a method was, and is yet, the chief argument made to justify such institutions. Otey predicted, "Increasing our institutions in number and size, we will mature into something similar to the UCMS. That is exactly the road they [i.e. the Christain Church-CW] traveled."³¹

Shortly before the Abilene Tant-Harper debate in 1955, Thomas B. Warren and Roy Deaver switched from the conservative to the liberal position on the institutional issue. They popularized a complex

³⁰ Gayle Oler in a letter to Otey, March 24, 1956.

³¹ W. W. Otey, "The Seed of the Kingdom (Part II)," Gospel Guardian, Vol. IX, No. 49 (April 17, 1958), p. 8.

argument now commonly called the "Component parts-Constituent Elements" argument, which was based on a devious and fallacious use of syllogistic argument. Otey said this argument reminded him of one he heard years before in which one John Jones sought to prove that Jim Smith had a cat with three tails. Jones' argument went: "MAJOR PREMISE: Any cat (including Jim Smith's) has one tail more than no cat. MINOR PREMISE: No cat has two tails. CONCLUSION: Therefore, Jim Smith's cat, having one tail more than no cat, has three tails." Otey reasoned that if John Jones could have produced a cat with three tails he would not have had need for his obviously invalid syllogism. Similarly, if Warren and Deaver could have produced the chapter and verse for their separate organizations and centralized arrangements, the idea to concoct such a complicated scheme to justify their practice would never have entered their minds.³²

In mid-1958 Otey began to realize that the most of his public work, whether oral or written, was done. He wrote me that he realized his mental faculties were "beginning to skip" occasionally. This caused him to say, "Now I feel that my work, good or ill, is about done."³³ During the latter part of 1957 and early part of 1958, while Yater Tant was working on the biography of his father, J. D. Tant, he at least twice wrote Otey suggesting that Otey begin work on an autobiography. Otey replied that he was opposed to biographies and especially to autobiographies because they depicted only the good in a man's life, ignoring his mistakes and faults. However, I was of the opinion that

³² W. W. Otey, "Warren, Deaver and Jones," Gospel Guardian, Vol. X, No. 4 (May 22, 1958), p. 3.

³³ W. W. Otey in a letter to Cecil Willis, July 25, 1958.

eventually there would be an interest in a biography of Otey's life. Consequently, I encouraged him to gather the material that he thought might have some historical value, and to commit it to the trust of someone in whom he had confidence. He replied that he had not the strength to go through the mountain of material in his home, but would permit me to do so. I then lived in Kansas City, Missouri. I made a trip to Winfield and brought home with me, perhaps a dozen boxes of correspondence, papers, periodicals, and manuscripts, which have helped me much in preparation of this material. Otey at the time insisted that he give me the following statement that I later might be free to make any public use I saw fit of these materials. The statement, as he wrote it read:

August 23, 1958, Winfield, Kansas, TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:
 I have given into the hands of Cecil Willis, all of my correspondence, perhaps 1500 letters. Also a good deal of manuscripts and religious periodicals, to be used as he sees fit in advancing the cause of truth and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have such confidence in him that he will use them for the furtherance of the teaching of the word of the Lord. In Faith, Hope, and Love,
 W. W. Otey.

This statement has given me freedom of conscience to use materials then secured as I have in this paper.

Otey till now had given little thought to the imminence of his death. On Friday morning October 10, 1958, between nine and ten A.M., while alone at his home, Otey had a light stroke which caused him to receive an exceedingly hard fall. After the doctor came, he indicated that this stroke might within a few days be followed by a fatal one. This caused Otey to make preparations for his death. Little could he know that he yet had at least three years to live. The expected fatal stroke did not come, but angina pectoris did come. This condition,

aggravated by hardening of the arteries, caused Otey thereafter to be in much pain a great part of the time. He even began to think about his last rites. He requested that Judson Woodbridge, the preacher at Mulvane, preach the funeral sermon. He sent Woodbridge the following statement to be read at his last rites:

I desire there be no special praise of me. I am no more than an humble servant of the Lord. I do desire, however, that I be remembered for one thing. Here it is: I believe the church is God's greatest work to save man, and that it is sufficient, and it is his will, that we do all that he wants us to do in and through the church; and that it is displeasing and against his will that we do anything that he wants us to do, in and through any human organization or arrangement that is not authorized by command or approved example in the New Testament. If I have ever preached a sermon or written a sentence advocating or in defence of any human religious organization or arrangement I have forgotten it. Perhaps I have not always "fought" a good fight, but I sincerely believe, in His presence, that "I have kept the faith," and confidently hope He will give me a "crown of life."³⁴

The church at Winfield where Otey expected his funeral to be conducted was sympathetic with the institutional trend. Otey, therefore, wanted to make sure that even in death his position was clearly understood. In neither life nor in death did Otey intend to give any encouragement to anything that he considered to be a departure from the truth.

Otey began to recuperate from the first stroke he had. However, on February 2, 1959, he suffered another fall which likely also was caused by another light stroke. This incapacitated him for a few days. For some time now he had been suffering excruciating pain from a prostate condition. Against the advice of several, including his family, he insisted on undergoing surgery on March 17th, three days after his ninety-second birthday. From the effects of this operation Otey never

³⁴ Copy of statement supplied by Judson Woodbridge.

had strength fully to recover. As Otey reflected on his imminent dissolution, he was caused to write on "Two Men," the outward and inward man. In this article he said:

The strongest of men can not defy the creeping paralysis of age; the wisest of men can not outwit this enemy; the richest of men can not buy off from the inevitable decrepitude and the final dissolution of this earthly frame. But as the vision of these old physical eyes grows ever dimmer and dimmer, the eyes of that inward man are daily growing brighter and stronger.³⁵

Otey did not especially regret growing old. One that had known him many years wrote, "I can truthfully say that you are a person that has 'grown old gracefully.'" ³⁶ Another friend of many years wrote, "We have often said, Bro. Otey is one of the few preachers that came to South Texas, that didn't have one drop of jealousy about him."³⁷

But old age affects all men in some ways. It almost made it impossible for Otey to write any more. His handwriting was so bad all his life that it caused him to be the recipient of many "ribbings" about it. But now it became even worse! Once, about this time, when he sent an article to get in shape for the printer (the making of corrections was too burdensome for him now), I was completely unable to discern what he wrote. Apologetically, I returned the article to him. Good naturedly, he replied that he himself had been able to make out but very few phrases of the article. Then he added: "But what a pity

³⁵ W. W. Otey, "Two Men," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XI, No. 11 (July 23, 1959), p. 11.

³⁶ Mrs. Grace Kenyon in a letter to Otey, April 23, 1959.

³⁷ Steve D. Williams in a letter to Otey, April 20, 1959.

that among all you great preachers there is not an Egyptian scholar. Who would have thought that among so many men of distinction not one could be found who could decipher ancient greek characters. Well, so it is."³⁸ The thoughts he had expressed in the article were yet in his mind. So this time he typed the article, though he had to strike the typewriter keys with the end of a pencil that had been taped to his wrist. His fingers had become so stiff he could neither type with them nor sign his name.

Still Otey somehow managed to write a few articles for publication in the Gospel Guardian. His intellectual faculties continued to be remarkably clear. However, for some years now, Otey had been engaged in a work he thought to be more important than what he wrote. He had been in intimate correspondence with literally hundreds of young preachers. His correspondence load was fantastic, and this was done without the service of a secretary at any time. He must have spent hours each day at the typewriter. He felt that this close contact with many young preachers would enable him to encourage them to stand firmly for the truth. Otey wrote, "But my most important work has been the great number of letters to young men. Young men who are set for the defense of the church of the Lord are the greatest asset to the cause of truth."³⁹ But his sickness stopped this energy consuming work. He could write only few letters from now on.

Though Otey was unable to reply, he continued to receive hundreds of letters. His daughter, Verna, for a while attempted to answer his mail.

³⁸ W. W. Otey in a letter to Cecil Willis, May 22, 1959.

³⁹ W. W. Otey in a letter to Foy E. Wallace, Jr., January 9, 1959.

But after writing more than two hundred letters she gave up. A note was then published in the Guardian that Otey's mail would have to go unanswered. Still he received hundreds of encouraging and laudatory letters. Most of them expressed appreciation for his long fight for the truth. Here are a few sample sentences. "We appreciate your firm stand for truth and right throughout your long preaching career. Only eternity can measure the good you have done in the world."⁴⁰ "We are grateful to you for the work you have done in the Master's vineyard and feel a heavy debt to you for the good lessons which you have taught us through the books and articles you have written. Your faith and courage have been an inspiration to us."⁴¹

I do not know of anyone whom I have come to love and appreciate as I have you. You are a "giant" among God's people and have been for so many years. I do not know anyone who has meant so much to other preachers, as myself (I am 49) and especially the much younger men who are such great assets to the Cause of Truth. It will take eternity and God to fully reveal the tremendous influence you have wielded in the other digression and in the present apostasy.⁴²

"For many years I have been reading books and articles written by you on grand and sacred themes concerning the truth of God and His word. These have been inspirational and strengthening to me. From the depths of my heart I am grateful for the great good you have done to the cause of the Lord."⁴³ "Many, many young men, and even many, many of us who no longer classify as young men, have been greatly assisted by you and your work, and the

⁴⁰ Franklin T. Puckett in a letter to Otey, April 21, 1959.

⁴¹ Robert H. Farish in a letter to Otey, April 23, 1959.

⁴² Paul Foutz in a letter to Otey, August 5, 1959.

⁴³ Forrest D. Moyer in a letter to Otey, April 17, 1959.

cause of Christ will bear the mark of your influence for good for many years to come."⁴⁴ "But you have done your Lord's will in your time and the reward is reserved for you and 'your salvation is nearer than when you first believed.'..."⁴⁵ These and many other similar letters went far toward recompensing Otey for his years of labor and sacrifice.

Though Otey did rally considerably, he never was able completely to recover from the effects of his operation. He never regretted having it done, as he thereafter was relieved of much of his tormenting pain. For a while he was able to walk with the help of an attendant. Then some setbacks made it impossible for him to walk anymore. Once or twice a day, by means of a hydraulic lift, he would be placed in a wheel chair for an hour or two. But he never walked again.

After a stay of eighteen months in the Newton Memorial Hospital at Winfield at a cost of thousands of dollars, Otey was moved to a nursing home about a block from his daughter, Verna's. He required constant care, which his daughter was unable to give alone. At the nursing home he received this care. Verna went to visit him two or three times daily, attending to whatever needs he had. Otey felt that Verna rendered care to him that no one else would have given. He was regretful that he had become such a care to Verna, but ever thankful for the patience and love she showed in attending him. In his last public note to this date (September 19, 1961), Otey said of Verna, "You may search the world over and never find another woman who has shown such love and care for a parent!"⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Leslie Diestelkamp in a letter to Otey, May 8, 1959.

⁴⁵ Herbert E. Winkler in a letter to Otey, Not Dated.

⁴⁶ W. W. Otey, "A Personal Letter of General Interest," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XIII, No. 16 (August 24, 1961), p. 2.

In spite of the fact that he grew steadily, though slowly, weaker, Otey continued to maintain an interest in what went on around him. Preachers, young and old, frequently visited him. Many considered Otey a link with the past, and felt that they could learn much by visiting a few hours with him. Others admired him so, they considered it an honor to be able to say they had known him. These visits were the spice of life to Otey in his late years.

He continued to be interested in politics and world events. He had great difficulty reading, as he had trouble focusing his eyes upon what he read. But by closing one eye, and straining greatly with the other, he could read a little. He read the New Testament as much as his sight would permit. About the only other reading he did was regularly to read the Gospel Guardian--usually as soon as it arrived.

Surprisingly, Otey still had a desire to write an occasional article. It drained his strength so to write the article that usually he sent the uncorrected copy to Yater Tant, James W. Adams or to me for corrections before publication. He continued to have an interest in the controversy raging over the Herald of Truth or sponsoring churches. Otey urged that defenders of such arrangements be pressed to state whether the elders of the Highland church were serving as elders or as an official board when they provided oversight for the Herald of Truth. If they replied that their oversight was as individuals, they therefore constituted a governing board, exactly like that over the missionary society. If they replied that they oversaw the program as elders, then they committed themselves to an Episcopal form of church government in

which they provided oversight for the work of over a "thousand churches."⁴⁷ From this dilemma, Otey saw no way by which the Highland elders could extricate themselves.

In July Otey wrote an article entitled "Reflections In My 94th Year."⁴⁸ This was a very touching article, though similar to one he had written on his eightieth birthday. James Adams commented regarding this article, "I sincerely believe it is true of him that 'generations yet unborn will rise to call him blessed.'" An old friend from Alton, Missouri, where Otey had held a meeting almost fifty years before wrote, "You had the ability to indelibly impress your sermons upon my mind, so that half a century afterwards I vividly recall the order in which they were presented. I have heard many of our strong preachers, but I cannot recall their sermons like I can yours."⁴⁹

Yater Tant wrote a touching article, "Her Final Gift," regarding the death of Sister Roy E. Cogdill. The grief of Cogdill caused Otey to reflect upon the grief that he had experienced ever since his wife died. This reflection caused Otey to write on "God's Gift of Tears" in which he told how that for days after his wife's death, he stumbled from room to room of their humble cottage with tears streaming down his face till he was completely exhausted. Finally, he learned a lesson from this grief. He came to feel that he could understand God's purpose in his grief. God had called "Mother" home while Otey had yet been able to

⁴⁷ W. W. Otey, "The Vital Center of Error," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XII, No. 3 (May 19, 1960), p. 7.

⁴⁸ W. W. Otey, "Reflections In My 94th Year," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XII, No. 11 (July 21, 1960), p. 4.

⁴⁹ J. N. Florea in a letter to Otey, July 23, 1960.

care for her. He felt now that it was so much better that he be left to fill out a few grief-filled, lonely years "than that 'Mother' be required to do this!"⁵⁰ Even tears had taught him a lesson.

Otey came to feel that his work was done. He had no one especially depending on him now, and death would be a relief. It became clear to him that he was nearing the "Valley" and could only say "May God hasten the day!" He even prayed to die. He wrote last year, "I am anxious to see what is on the other side."⁵¹ Yet he tried hard to say "Thy will be done." He never formed an opinion as to whether he would recognize his loved ones after death, but he confidently felt that whether recognition after death was possible or not, God could make all with Him supremely happy.

At this writing (September 19, 1961) Otey remains in the nursing home near his daughter's home in Winfield, Kansas. He patiently is awaiting the Lord's call. Only a few days ago he wrote a letter to Yater Tant, editor of the Gospel Guardian. Tant printed this letter in the Guardian, entitling it, "A Personal Letter of General Interest." In this letter he said, "I have written you twice before what I thought would be my last letter; but surely this time will really be the last!" After telling how he continued to read with ever increasing difficulty his large type New Testament, he again expressed his unchanging feeling toward death.

⁵⁰ W. W. Otey, "God's Gift of Tears," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XII, No. 22 (October 6, 1960), p. 9.

⁵¹ W. W. Otey in a letter to Cecil Willis, July 23, 1960.

How I long to see that Holy City, with her wall of jasper and her streets of pure gold; her twelve gates of pearl, gates which are never shut. How I long for that river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God. And what glory it will be to hear that hundred and forty-four thousand sing that song of Moses and of the Lamb. Oh! if only the mercy of the Lord can admit one so unworthy and whose life has been so imperfect!⁵²

Behind him is a long life of steadfast devotion to the Lord, His Word and His Church. In this last article, headed by the printer "As The Sun Goes Down," Otey said:

As I near the end of my journey, and look back over the years, the one thing that gives me greater satisfaction, I think, than any other thing in my life is this: If I have ever preached one sermon, or written one paragraph, favoring the doing of what God wants us to do through any organization other than the church of the Lord, I have long since forgotten it. And unless I badly deceive myself in my memory, not one word of that kind has ever fallen from my lips or escaped my pen. If the church of our Lord is not a perfect institution for the doing of God's will, then God has failed in his greatest work.⁵³

This closing statement from his pen well summarizes at least the intentions of his long life. That there were some failures and blemishes in his life, he gladly confesses. But that he rendered long and faithful service to his Lord, even his enemies must admit.

Just when God will call this weary servant home, we venture no guess. Whenever it may be, with joy he shall be ready to meet Him whom he has attempted to serve for nearly a century.

⁵² W. W. Otey, "A Personal Letter of General Interest," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XIII, No. 16 (August 24, 1961), p. 2.

⁵³ Ibid.

CHAPTER XV

ANSWERING THE CALL

Shortly after the foregoing pages were written, Brother Otey answered the inexorable call of death. The preceding chapter was written with the intention of presenting this material before his death. However, his recent passing necessitates that this final chapter be now written and appended. With the weight of nearly a century resting heavily upon his weary shoulders, Brother Otey and everyone else knew that it could not be very long before his death.

During his last days he was bothered by frequent fevers caused by several things. When his temperature would rise, he would be irrational for a few hours or days. On October 2, 1961, his daughter, Mrs. Verna Hammer of Winfield, wrote:

Dad's condition--mentally and physically--still remains bad. ...Doesn't seem to suffer as intensely and sleeps a lot and doesn't take too much notice of external things. Voice quite weak, but heart is still strong. How he continues to live so long is a mystery even to doctors.¹

The above mentioned irrationality was caused by an attack of double pneumonia which came upon him in September. The seriousness of this attack necessitated that Brother Otey have more professional service than could be rendered to him in the nursing home. So he went back to Newton Memorial Hospital in Winfield for a two week stay, five days of which were spent in an oxygen tent. Brother Otey was virtually unconscious most of these five days. However, after two weeks the

¹ Verna Hammer in a letter to Cecil Willis, October 2, 1961.

pneumonia abated, and he returned to the nursing home.

After Otey's return to the nursing home, Mrs. Hammer continued to spend most of his waking hours with him, and personally provided most of his needs of daily care. For several days Otey showed remarkable improvement, though he continued to have difficulty remembering things. He ate well, slept well, and remarked that he felt that if his legs were any good, he thought that he could get up and walk.

On October 31, Mrs. Hammer went to the nursing home about 11 A.M., shaved him, and raised his hospital-type bed so that he might eat his lunch. In addition to eating the tray lunch brought to him, he also ate a small apple pie which his daughter had made for him. After lunch, Mrs. Hammer gave Otey his glasses and the Gospel Guardian which had just arrived. She left him reading the Guardian and at 1 P.M. went back home for a few hours.

When Mrs. Hammer returned about 4:30 P.M., Otey was having a severe chill. This chilling continued until early evening. During this time he perspired heavily and had to have his bed clothes changed twice. His only complaint was concerning a slight pain in his right side. After being given a sedative, Otey finally got to sleep, though he was breathing rapidly. Mrs. Hammer spent the night with him.

When the doctor came the next morning and examined Otey, he said that the pneumonia had returned. Mrs. Hammer left and was gone about twenty minutes to secure a prescription which the doctor had ordered.

When she returned, she turned to get a glass of water with which to give him his medicine. As she turned back toward him, he breathed just three times, and was gone! His death had come at 10:55 A.M.,

November 1, 1961.

The Winfield paper usually goes to press at noon. But when word was received of Brother Otey's death, the presses were delayed until Mrs. Hammer could phone the relatives who lived some distance away and could decide concerning the time for the funeral. At 1 P.M. the paper went to press, carrying a report of W. W. Otey's death.

The funeral service was very much as Brother Otey wanted it. He was not one afraid to talk about death. In fact, death appeared not as a bitter enemy to him, but as a dear friend with whom he longed to go home. Hence, he had thought much about his death. He already had purchased a burial plot and a grave marker. His funeral expense previously had been paid. He had detailed plans made for his funeral service. His planning was carefully observed.

On Saturday morning, November 4, 1961, relatives, friends, and brethren gathered at the Morris Funeral Home in Winfield for a brief, simple and quiet funeral service. Ted Nadeau, the local preacher at Winfield, led the opening prayer. Judson Woodbridge, the evangelist at Mulvane, Kansas and a close friend of Otey's, read a short obituary and gave a few personal remarks concerning Otey, a copy of which later was printed in the Gospel Guardian. George Blake, a friend of Otey's for nearly fifty years, and an elder in the Winfield church preached a ten minute sermon. A quartet of old time friends, G. O. Bays, Rollin Stewart, L. R. Stewart, and Harold Martin sang three selections, the pages of which were found to be turned down in a song book found by Otey's bed. Without doubt he had selected these songs for the occasion. The songs were, "What A Friend We Have In Jesus," "It Is Well With My Soul," and "In The Sweet By And By." Then, as Mrs. Hammer expressed it,

"we carried him to Highland Cemetery [in Winfield-CW] and laid him to rest beside Mother where he had wanted to be for more than five years."²

Brother Otey was not one given to mysticism or to speculations. But several months before his death he had a dream. He talked about it much during the last months of his life. In this dream, Otey was trying to climb a very steep mountain, but because of rough terrain, boulders, etc., he was constantly falling back. There was a bright glow of light coming across the top of this mountain. Somehow Otey felt that he must reach the top of this mountain to see what was on the other side. He struggled desperately with his treacherous footing, falling again and again. But each time he got up and fought harder. Finally, he reached the top of this mountain. When he looked on the other side, at the foot of the mountain he saw a very beautiful stream of sparkling clear water flowing by, and across this stream, dressed in pure white and beckoning to him to come on over, was his wife, Minnie. She was in her youth, and looked as she did when Otey first met her. But here the dream faded, and left him only a beautiful memory. He knew it was only a dream, but he liked to think upon it. For somehow he felt that what he shortly would experience would have some similarity to that which he experienced in his dream.

For years Otey's conversation had to do almost exclusively with things eternal. He spoke of the Bible, the church and life hereafter. He earnestly had prayed for a glorious fulfillment. And by means of a peaceful death, his brethren believe that he has attained this glorious fulfillment for which he so sincerely had longed.

² Verna Hammer in a letter to Cecil Willis, December 9, 1961.

With a life as long, as full, and as useful as that of W. W. Otey's, one could not conclude a report concerning him without some notice of those reports given concerning his death. There is no way to know just how many periodicals of various kinds made notice of his death. By no means can all of those clippings which we have discovered be used. In addition to the Winfield paper, newspapers in Wichita, Wellington, and Belle Plain in Kansas, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Richmond, Indiana, and Roanoke, Virginia reported his death.

But were Brother Otey here to consult, I am confident that brief notices given by faithful brethren in small bulletins and printed journals would be more greatly appreciated by him than would these newspaper reports. Though these notices might be too numerous to mention all of them, there are a few I wish to use. Following are samples of many such reports.

Our hearts were made sad recently to learn of the passing of our aged friend and brother in the Lord, W. W. Otey of Winfield, Kansas. No more stalwart soldier of the cross of Christ has lived in our generation. His was a life of complete dedication to God's truth and the Lord's church. May God bless his memory and cheer the hearts of his weeping loved ones.³

W. W. Otey is Dead: This great soldier of the cross went home Nov. 1, at the grand age of 94 years 7 months and 17 days. He spent better than 70 years preaching the gospel of Christ and defending the faith. He, almost single-handedly, dealt a mighty blow to the advancing monster of the Missionary Society. He wrote many books on difficult subjects, including one on the "Origin of Man" which is a masterpiece in its own right. He was a source of inspiration to me, though I never met him. I have a large file of inspiring letters from him in which are many valuable pieces of advice. I published the last book he wrote entitled, "THE TREE OF LIFE LOST AND REGAINED" which is in a class of its own. It is both scholarly and inspirational. Before his death he wrote a letter to a good friend he knew would speak at his funeral and enclosed the following statement:

³ James W. Adams, "W. W. Otey Passes," Gospel Visitor, Vol. XIII, No. 52 (November 23, 1961), p. 3.

"I desire there be no special praise of me. I am no more than an humble servant of the Lord. I do desire, however, that I be remembered for one thing. Here it is: I believe that the church is God's greatest work to save man, and that it is sufficient; and that we do all he wants us to do in and through the church. I believe it is displeasing and against his will to do anything he wants us to do (in the church) through any human organization or arrangement that is not authorized by command or approved example in the New Testament. If I have ever preached a sermon or written a sentence advocating or in defence of any human religious organization or arrangement, I have forgotten it...." Long live his memory!!!⁴

Bro. W. W. Otey of Winfield, Kansas passed from this life early last month. Bro. Otey lived 94 years and was actively engaged in the Lord's work until just a few months before his death. He lived during two digressions in the Lord's church. As a young man he debated bro. J. B. Briney of the Christian Church in Louisville, Ky. in 1908 on the subjects of Mechanical Music and Missionary and Benevolent Societies. As an aged man he preached and wrote during the past few years against the same steps of digression in the church today, except the Mechanical Music, that he fought in earlier life in the Christian Church. This can easily be seen by reading the Otey-Briney Debate (still in print). Bro. Otey was a faithful soldier of the cross and the church today owes much to him for his work.⁵

Word comes through the GOSPEL VISITOR, edited by Brother James W. Adams, that Bro. W. W. Otey of Winfield, Kansas, has passed from this life. Bro. Adams says: "No more stalwart soldier of the cross of Christ has lived in our generation. His was a life of complete dedication to God's truth and the Lord's church. May God bless his memory and cheer the hearts of his weeping loved ones." Bro. Otey lived 94 years and was actively engaged in the Lord's work until very near the end of his life. I never knew him in person, but he was an encouragement to me. In 1908, he debated J. B. Briney. The discussion was about instrumental music and the missionary society. Every Christian should read the Otey-Briney Debate (still in print for \$3.00). Bro. Otey saw and fought in two serious digressions. The issues are the same now; the names have changed.⁶

⁴ James P. Needham, "W. W. Otey Is Dead," Bible Truth, Vol. I, No. 9 (December, 1961), p. 3, 4.

⁵ Grover Stevens, "W. W. Otey Passes," The Bulletin, Vol. I, No. 2 (December 17, 1961), p. 3.

⁶ Ferrell Jenkins, "W. W. Otey Passes," The Defender, Vol. IV, No. 3 (December 10, 1961), p. 1.

Within the last year, four great soldiers of the cross have taken their departure from our midst to "be with Christ," C. R. Nichol, C. E. Wooldridge, M. C. Cuthbertson and W. W. Otey. Great have been their labors, unswerving their fidelity, and steadfast their devotion. Many were their battles for truth, tremendous were their sacrifices, and long will be the precious memories of their lives. Few are left of the generation of which they were such a significant part...Marvelous changes have taken place among churches of Christ since the active days of these departed worthies, not all of which have been for the better. Sad, indeed, must this fact have made them as they walked, almost alone, the last mile of the way.⁷

We regret to hear of the passing of brother W. W. Otey. He was a faithful gospel preacher and had lived to the age of 94. He lived during the "instrumental music" and "Missionary Society" battle of yesteryear and fought a great fight. He often wrote me and encouraged me in my fight against the "innovations" of this day. I shall miss him.⁸

It will come as no surprise to our readers to know that the prayers of our beloved brother Otey have been heard, and God has released his noble spirit from this mortal frame. On another page in this issue is an obituary written by brother Judson Woodbridge. Those of us who were privileged to visit brother Otey during these last two or three years of his life, years he spent as a hopeless (and largely helpless) bed-patient, will remember as long as we live his unfailing cheerfulness, his continuing interest in the faithful congregations of God's children-and the eagerness and longing anticipation in which he talked of his approaching translation. And neither we, nor our children, will ever be able to discharge the debt we all owe him for his magnificent stand for the truth of God through nearly a century of life. Because of him, and a bare handful like him, a "remnant" of faithful ones were saved from the great apostasy of the last century. For those digressive preachers who led God's people into that former apostasy, and for men of our day of like disposition and character, this stalwart soldier had neither time nor patience. He felt them to be traitors to the cause of Christ, and said so, both publicly and privately, both to those of a former generation and to their counterparts of the present. But withal he had a tenderness about him, a depth of humility, and a supreme love for the truth of God which made his life a glorious sort of crusade-and made his death a triumphant hour of rejoicing.

⁷ James W. Adams, "The Last of a Great Generation," Gospel Visitor, Vol. XIII, No. 53 (November 30, 1961), p. 2, 3.

⁸ W. R. Jones, The Messenger, Vol. III, No. 23 (November 29, 1961), p. 2.

We shall miss him; but we rejoice with him in the fulfilment of his heart's desire and prayer to God.⁹

In a preface to an article written by Otey entitled, "The Coming Battle," reprinted from the September 14, 1933 Gospel Advocate, Yater Tant also said:

With the death of brother Otey an historic era comes to a close. But he "being dead, yet speaketh" in numerous articles books, and sermons that he has left. We print here an article from his pen which originally appeared in the Gospel Advocate, September 14, 1933. It shows that even then, nearly thirty years ago, he saw and understood clearly where the fight would be pitched in the years ahead.¹⁰

W. W. Otey, venerable and stalwart, was in the final decade of almost a century of life. A greater part of this long and useful life had been devoted to preaching the gospel. We knew him only through his writings (which included a letter or so from him) and what others have said of him. Very early in our preaching life we read the Otey-Briney Debate as we prepared for a debate (which never materialized). It occurs to us that this debate, held while he was young in years, keynoted the unfolding of the later character of the mature man which included his unswerving loyalty to the Bible, his unwillingness to compromise divine truth, and the profound love he had for Christ and His church. In his latter years he did much to encourage many preachers in their stand for the truth by writing many personal letters to them.¹¹

Following a second attack of pneumonia in six weeks brother W. W. Otey of Winfield, Kansas, died last November 1. We regret this late notice but feel that many of our readers would like to know of the death of brother Otey. Brother Otey had a long illness previous to his death and often talked and wrote of his coming departure from this life. He looked forward to the rest and reward which he believed were to be his. During his life brother Otey was often in the midst of controversy, defending what he believed to be the truth, and it can be said that he was a forceful and influential Christian. Brother Otey was 94 years old.¹²

⁹ Fanning Yater Tant, "W. W. Otey Is Dead," Gospel Guardian, Vol. XIII, No. 31 (December 7, 1961), p. 4.

¹⁰ Fanning Yater Tant, Gospel Guardian, Vol. XIII, No. 33 (December 21, 1961), p. 4.

¹¹ Stanley J. Lovett, The Preceptor, Vol. XI, No. 3 (January, 1962), p. 2.

¹² Karl Diestelkamp, "W. W. Otey Dies," Truth Magazine, Vol. VI, No. 4 (January, 1962), p. 12.

The longest article written concerning his death was that which I wrote and which was printed both in the Gospel Guardian and Truth Magazine. We shall conclude our survey of articles on the occasion of his death by copying this article.

WILLIAM WESLEY OTEY-MARCH 14, 1867-NOVEMBER 1, 1961

In Genesis 25:8, these words are penned, chronicling the death of Abraham: "And Abraham...died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered to his people." These words very well express the passing of another great man, W. W. Otey, of Winfield, Kansas. It is probable that the next few months, yea even the coming years, will witness many words being penned about this stalwart soldier in the Lord's army.

His Early Life

William Wesley Otey was born March 14, 1867, in Pulaski County, Virginia, the sixth in a family of seven sons and three daughters. His parents were J. W. and Sarah A. Otey. W. W. Otey (as he was known during all his public life) was born shortly after the great conflict between the states. In his early childhood, he heard many stories of blood and battle yet so fresh on the minds of those thousands who fought in that great struggle. His father was a hard working man, being what we would call a tenant farmer. He supplemented his earnings by carpentering, as did brother W. W. Otey.

J. W. Otey moved almost every year. Thus W. W. Otey and his brothers and sisters had little opportunity for education. In fact, brother Otey's formal schooling lasted only about four or five months. Yet his life has made a tremendous impact upon the lives of thousands of members of the Lord's church through his preaching, and more especially, through his writings in religious periodicals, books and tracts.

There were few books in J. W. Otey's home. W. W. Otey could only remember a few spelling books, two readers, two arithmetics and the Bible. No newspapers came into this home. So the Bible was about the only thing there was to read. As we think about it, this might not be such a tragedy! Gradually, brother Otey learned to read. At fourteen years of age he read the Bible through. This brother Otey regarded as the greatest and most important event of his life. I think I remember brother Otey telling me that he learned to write his own name after he was married. Yet one cannot call brother Otey an uneducated man. He, like so many other great preachers of this and past generations who had little or no formal education, was certainly an educated man.

Brother Otey's parents obeyed the gospel in the 1850's. But in their moving about, they seldom had the opportunity to hear gospel preaching. Otey said he only heard three or four sermons by gospel preachers before he was married. When he was about

twenty, W. W. Otey sent word to J. T. Showalter, the father of G. H. P. Showalter, that he wanted to obey the gospel. Brother Showalter came and baptized him. Otey and a few others began meeting in a school house, and from the beginning, the chief work of teaching and making public talks devolved on him.

His Marriage

One of the most beautiful things about brother Otey's life was his tremendous devotion to his wife of more than seventy years. In his later years, brother Otey liked to tell of the first time he saw Minnie Showalter. He wrote of this first time he met her: "I turned in the direction of the girl, who was perhaps 8 or 10 feet distant. Our eyes met and held a brief moment as if by magic. If I were an artist I could paint that girl as true as if I had a living person beside me." One year after this meeting they were married. Brother Otey probably made many mistakes in his life, as we all do, but he made no mistake when he married Minnie Showalter. Brother Otey wrote me a few months ago that Minnie Showalter was the only girl "I ever even walked with." And as he told of those touching scenes, he added, "Even now I am trying to type these lines through blinding tears of which I am unashamed."

Eight children were born to brother and sister Otey, of whom seven yet live. The Oteys in 1955 had a nice celebration observing seventy years of married life. The Governor of Kansas wrote them a letter of congratulation. But on July 23, 1956, sister Otey died. The last four years of brother Otey's life were exceedingly lonely years. But he did not complain. He only longed to be absent in the flesh, and present with the Lord.

His Preaching

Brother Otey proclaimed the gospel by word and pen for over seventy years. He was never what some might call a "professional" preacher. In fact, very few of his seventy years of preaching were spent in what we would call full-time work. Most of the time he supported himself with his own hands. He had a sturdy constitution. Much of the time he farmed during the day and preached at night--and that at his own charge. When over seventy years of age, brother Otey ceased "full time preaching," having spent about ten years in Oklahoma and Texas in full time work. He came back to Kansas and bought a farm. He and sister Otey saved a little money, most of which they earned with their own hands after they were eighty years of age. They bought a modest home and moved into Winfield, Kansas, in September, 1953. Here they lived their last days in as much comfort as this modern age can provide. Yet they lived a very simple life.

The greatest single work that brother Otey ever did for the cause of Christ was to attempt to stop digression. Of course, once digression has set in or the seeds of digression have been sown, no man can prevent the harvest. But brother Otey did a wonderful job of defending the truth against innovationists.

After lengthy negotiation involving more than a year of writing letters, brother Otey forced J. B. Briney to debate him in Louisville in 1908 on the instruments of music and missionary societies. Briney was at this time the outstanding debater among the liberals in the church. Brother Otey was not too well known at this time. He was yet relatively young, only 41 years old. Briney was a seasoned debater. Otey was a beginner. This debate marked one of the first times any reputable man in the Christian Church attempted to uphold his innovations in public debate. Briney probably agreed to meet Otey in Louisville because he thought it would be impossible for brother Otey to get endorsement in Louisville. But the necessary endorsement was secured and finally the debate was conducted. Immediately it was printed, and has since been a classic on the subject. It was reprinted in 1955 by the GOSPEL GUARDIAN. Brother Otey never held many debates--only four or five. But the OTEY-BRINEY DEBATE will cause his name long to be remembered by conservative brethren.

His Writings

About seventy years ago, brother Otey began to write for religious journals. For over twenty years of this time he wrote for THE AMERICAN CHRISTIAN REVIEW or the OCTOGRAPHIC REVIEW as it was later called. However, he did not agree with everything the REVIEW advocated, and said so through the columns of that paper. Later he wrote for the CHRISTIAN LEADER, GOSPEL ADVOCATE, BIBLE BANNER, FELLOWSHIP NEWS, CHRISTIAN WORKER and wrote many articles for the FIRM FOUNDATION during the many years his cousin, G. H. P. Showalter was editor. He wrote for the GOSPEL GUARDIAN from its first issue till his death. During these many years, brother Otey wrote perhaps seven hundred articles.

This man with four months of formal education was the author of nine books, seven of which have been already published and well received. In 1908 the OTEY-BRINEY debate was published. In 1910 a BOOK OF SERMONS was printed. The 2,000 copy sermon book edition was depleted in a few months. In 1930 he wrote CREATION OR EVOLUTION. This was enlarged and reprinted in 1938 under the heading, THE ORIGIN AND DESTINY OF MAN. A later edition of this book was printed by the FIRM FOUNDATION.

In 1951 he published LIVING ISSUES in which he made a severe attack against "sponsoring churches," and church supported Bible colleges. In 1953 he published CHRIST OR MODERNISM. Then in 1955, while attending his very sick wife, he wrote a very warm and touching "family book," entitled, THE TREE OF LIFE LOST AND REGAINED. Two other manuscripts were completed and likely will sometime be offered to the public. He rewrote, enlarged and revised LIVING ISSUES, calling the new work, LIVING ISSUES II. This book is needed now! We hope it can be made available ere long. His 1910 book of

sermons with several recently written sermons, also will be reprinted whenever possible. All of brother Otey's books now in print are handled exclusively by the GOSPEL GUARDIAN.

He long was recognized as a good writer. Brother Otey possessed the ability few writers possess--he was able to state in a few, clear and concise words the big issues of his time. He very seldom was misunderstood. His language was simple, but his sentences were pithy. He took pride in the fact that he had never, to his knowledge, been quoted on two sides of the same issue. I think this consistency existed because of an unusual characteristic brother Otey had. He always stated his position on any controversial point in almost the identical words that he used the first time he spoke on that subject.

In his writings, brother Otey always shunned the speculative. He was always very reluctant to state his opinion on uncertain questions. He generally would say, "the writer or speaker does not venture an opinion on this point," or words to that effect.

His Death

Brother Otey's death came on Wednesday morning, November 1, 1961, at 11 o'clock. He had journeyed on this terrestrial ball for 94 years, 7 months and 18 days. It was refreshing to be around an old man who realized that he was an old man. In his later years, he spoke publicly only a few times. He refused to speak more because of his many years. His last public discourse was delivered shortly after his 90th birthday.

About two years ago, brother Otey suffered a light stroke. Afterward he fell twice. He was admitted to the Newton Memorial Hospital in Winfield, Kansas, where he was confined more than a year. While in the hospital he underwent a very serious operation. He felt that the end was nigh. Among some of his last articles was one on "Death" and one on "Heaven." It was consoling to see a man so calm and reposed as he prepared to enter death's doorway. He wanted to die--not because of despondency, but because he was a tired old man and because almost everything he loved and held dear was now on the other side. When one visited him, he could almost pray that God might see fit to grant this aged man his wish, and receive him home.

Shortly before his death, he wrote me: "Now I will state the one thing only with which I am satisfied in my past life: I never taught, practiced, encouraged, or tolerated anything that was not plainly set forth in the Word of God. This fact gives me more satisfaction, I am sure, than would much money." He requested only that he might not be an invalid and a burden upon others for many years. During his last days he was an ideal patient. He was rational up to the day before his death. Then his tired old body would function no more. So his spirit returned to God who gave it.

His Significance

Brother Otey was a very significant man in his generation. He was in the forefront of two valiant efforts to thwart digressive elements. He remembered the beginning of the split over the instrument and the missionary institutions. Then he lived long enough to be forced to witness the inception of division over the same kinds of institutions again. In both of these divisions, brother Otey never hesitated to speak the truth, and to point out error. He said, "If it is not right in his sight to advocate and defend the church as He gave it, then I cannot even imagine what would be right."

It is my opinion that history will assign to W. W. Otey a much more significant role than his contemporaries have given him. The influence of David Lipscomb and others far overshadowed the work of W. W. Otey in staying the hand of apostasy a generation ago. But no man in this age has been more consistently opposed to institutionalism and her threats than W. W. Otey. Perhaps some have been more directly in the line of fire. But Otey spanned two generations. He could speak from experience. To him many listened who would not have listened to one younger and less experienced.

Within a few years, the books of W. W. Otey will be rare and many will be seeking them. His warnings given many years ago will continue to ring in the ears of those of us who will tread this vale of tears for a few more years, as we see the progress and evolution of digression divide our ranks.

Brother Otey liked to read biography. But he wanted nothing written about himself that was biographical in nature while he lived. I prevailed upon brother Otey to write down a few salient facts of life. This he did, and gave this autobiographic material to me. In giving me the material he stated: "I stipulate that none of it shall be published while I am living unless by my consent." With this wish we have complied.

He recently wrote, "I anxiously await the good pleasure of the Father to call me to cease to labor and enter into rest. What would life be without this hope?" God has now granted the request of this battle-weary soldier. He is no more! But though he be dead, yet he shall speak through his writings, his preaching, his influence on our lives, and his works. Surely his works do follow him. He will be missed, but he fought long, hard and well. I know what advice he would give. He would say, "Young men, keep up the fight!" May God help us as we do so.¹³

¹³ Cecil Willis, Gospel Guardian, Vol. XIII, No. 33 (December 21, 1961), p. 1; Truth Magazine, Vol. VI, No. 3 (December, 1961), p. 23, Vol. VI, No. 4 (January, 1962), p. 6.

Whether one agrees with Otey's positions or not, it is indisputable that he was a significant man in the brotherhood. Some papers whose editors and writers differed with him on the current institutional issues made absolutely no mention of his death. This failure to inform their readers of his death made these papers more conspicuous than would they have been had they written concerning his passing. Not all the reports to be written concerning his life have as yet been written. Some have stated an intention to write further concerning him. However, we cannot wait till all these articles are written. Articles will long continue to be written about him. For I believe that the coming months, years and generations will present the occasion to speak of W. W. Otey and his work again and again.

W. W. Otey was implicated in the drama of life and the inevitable contest between truth and error for the greater part of a century. His last battle has now been waged, and his battle scarred armor courageously worn throughout a long life has been laid aside. It likely will be many years before there appears another man great enough to wear Otey's battle armor or to take his place in the ranks. But he filled his place in the ranks of God's soldiers long and well. The cause of truth can ill afford the loss of a man like W. W. Otey in these turbulent times. But often death chooses its victims from among the noblest and most useful. Such I believe to have been true when W. W. Otey answered the Master's call.

APPENDIX

A COMPENDIUM OF THE WRITINGS OF W. W. OTEY

I. Books

Otey-Briney Debate. Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1908.

Book of Sermons. Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1910.

Creation or Evolution. Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1930.

The Origin and Destiny of Man. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1938.

Living Issues. Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1951.

Christ or Modernism. Austin, Texas: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1953.

The Tree of Life Lost and Regained. Bellaire, Texas: Bible Bulwarks, 1956.

Living Issues Volume II., 1959 (Unpublished).

Book of Sermons. 1960 (Unpublished).

II. Booklets

"Second Coming of Christ--A Review by W. W. Otey of Wellington, Kansas."

"The Right Way."

"The Right to Legislate."

"Science and the Bible."

"Bible Colleges."

"Bible Colleges--No. 2."

III. Periodical Articles

American Christian Review

"Religious Journalism," December 15, 1942.

"Statement Challenged," March, 1950.

Apostolic Review

"The Located Minister-Evangelist," January 4, 1938.

Apostolic Times

"A Great Apostasy," August, 1951.

Bible Banner

"Brewer Refuses to Defend His Statement," Vol. IX, No. 6 (August, 1947),
p. 1.

"College Expediency Argument Paralleled With Digression," Vol. X, No. 5
(May, 1948), pp. 9, 10.

"A Letter to Roy Cogdill," Vol. X, No. 10 (October, 1948), p. 15.

Bible Bulwarks

"Stand Fast In the Truth," March 1, 1956.

Christian Leader

"Report," Vol. XXVII, No. 51 (December 23, 1913), p. 12.

"The Review's Remarks," Vol. XXVIII, No. 10 (March 10, 1914), p. 9.

"What Others Are Saying," Vol. XXIX, No. 12 (March 23, 1915), p. 9.

"What Others Are Saying," Vol. XXIX, No. 18 (May 4, 1915), p. 9.

"What Others Are Saying," Vol. XXIX, No. 19 (May 11, 1915), p. 9.

"The Language of Ashdod," Vol. XXIX, No. 28 (July 13, 1915), pp. 4, 5.

"What Others Are Saying," Vol. XXIX, No. 37 (September 14, 1915), p. 9.

"The Witness of the Spirit or, The Evidence of Pardon," Vol. XXXII,
No. 13 (March 26, 1918), pp. 2, 3, 6.

"A Word to The Brethren," Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6 (February 5, 1924), p. 6.

"How To Treat Opinions," Vol. XXXVIII, No. 51 (December 16, 1924), p. 1.

"Is It I?," Vol. XXXVIII, No. 53 (December 30, 1924), p. 7.

"Tulsa (Okla.) Preacher's Meeting," Vol. XXXIX, No. 7 (February 17, 1925),
p. 8.

"Our Weekly Sermon-Psalms 103, Part I," Vol. XLI, No. 6 (February 8, 1927),
p. 2.

"Psalms 103, Part II," Vol. XLI, No. 7 (February 15, 1927), p. 8.

"Psalms 103, Part III," Vol. XLI, No. 13 (March 29, 1927), p. 7.

"Psalms 103, Part IV," Vol. XLI, No. 27 (May 24, 1927), p. 2.

- "Custom Is Not Law," Vol. XLIII, No. 11 (March 13, 1928), p. 2.
- "Custom Is Not Law," Vol. XLIII, No. 35 (August 8, 1928), p. 8.
- News Report, Vol. XLIII, No. 15 (April 9, 1929), p. 12.
- "Coming to Indiana," Vol. XLIII, No. 23 (June 4, 1929), p. 13.
- "Field Notes," Vol. XLIII, No. 26 (June 25, 1929), p. 8.
- "Field Notes," Vol. XLIII, No. 27 (July 2, 1929), p. 11.
- "Field Notes," Vol. XLIII, No. 29 (July 16, 1929), p. 7.
- "Lynn, Indiana," Vol. XLIII, No. 31 (July 30, 1929), p. 29.
- "Our Times," Vol. XLIV, No. 5 (February 4, 1930), p. 9.
- "A Four Mile Gait," Vol. XLIV, No. 10 (March 11, 1930), p. 1.
- News Report, Vol. XLIV, No. 18 (May 6, 1930), p. 11.
- News Report, Vol. XLIV, No. 32 (August 26, 1930), p. 11.
- News Report, Vol. XLIV, No. 34 (September 23, 1930), p. 12.
- "Building the Church," Vol. XLIV, No. 38 (October 21, 1930), p. 8.
- "Reverse the Telescope," Vol. XLIV, No. 45 (December 9, 1930), p. 7.
- News Report, Vol. XLV, No. 5 (February 3, 1931), p. 13.
- News Report, Vol. XLV, No. 9 (March 3, 1931), p. 13.
- "M. C. Kurfees," Vol. XLV, No. 11 (March 17, 1931), p. 8.
- News Report, Vol. XLV, No. 27 (August 11, 1931), p. 11.
- "An Opportunity," Vol. XLV, No. 17 (August 28, 1931), p. 9.
- "Misapplying the Word," Vol. XLV, No. 34 (October 13, 1931), p. 1.
- "Divorce," Vol. XLVI, No. 7 (February 16, 1932), p. 3.
- "A Plain But Much Needed Statement," Vol. XLVI, No. 14 (April 5, 1932),
p. 6.
- "Mark Them," Vol. XLVI, No. 18 (May 3, 1932), p. 6.
- "Keep the Issue Clear," Vol. XLVI, No. 23 (June 14, 1932), p. 7.
- "In All Things Charity," Vol. XLVI, No. 24 (June 8, 1932), p. 8.
- "Write Me Soon," Vol. XLVI, No. 33 (November 1, 1932), p. 2.

- "Present With the Lord," Vol. XLVI, No. 34 (November 15, 1932), p. 10.
- News Report, Vol. XLVII, No. 7 (April 4, 1933), p. 13.
- News Report, Vol. XLVII, No. 19 (September 5, 1933), p. 13.
- "Revelations," Vol. XLVII, No. 24 (November 14, 1933), p. 2.
- "The True Issue," Vol. XLVIII, No. 1 (January 9, 1934), p. 1.
- "Clear Definition of Terms," Vol. XLVIII, No. 2 (January 23, 1934), p. 2.
- "Late Reports," Vol. XLVIII, No. 2 (January 23, 1934), p. 9.
- "Mission of the Church," Vol. XLVIII, No. 14 (July 10, 1934), p. 2.
- "Field Reports," Vol. XLVIII, No. 21 (October 16, 1934), p. 13.
- News Report, Vol. XLVIII, No. 25 (December 11, 1934), p. 11.
- "Brother Otey Approves," Vol. XLIX, No. 13 (June 25, 1935), p. 7.
- News Report, Vol. XLIX, No. 18 (September 3, 1935), p. 12.
- "War," Vol. XLIX, No. 21 (October 15, 1935), p. 2.
- News Report, Vol. L, No. 7 (March 31, 1936), p. 11.
- News Report, Vol. L, No. 15 (July 21, 1936), p. 11.
- News Report, Vol. LI, No. 23 (October 26, 1937), p. 10.
- News Report, Vol. LII, No. 1 (January 4, 1938), p. 11.
- "Unity," Vol. LII, No. 9 (April 26, 1938), p. 5.
- News Report, Vol. LII, No. 10 (May 10, 1938), p. 11.
- "Thou Art Inexcusable," Vol. LII, No. 16 (August 2, 1938), p. 2.
- "Tenny's Questions," Vol. LII, No. 20 (September 27, 1938), p. 6.
- News Report, Vol. LII, No. 22 (October 25, 1938), p. 10.
- "A Personal Letter From Brother Otey," Vol. LVIII, No. 7 (March 28, 1944),
p. 9.
- "Supporting Conscientious Objectors," Vol. LVIII, No. 15 (August 1, 1944),
p. 7.
- "J. N. Armstrong," Vol. LVIII, No. 18 (September 12, 1944), p. 6.

Christian Worker

- "Words Are Inadequate," Vol. XVI, No. 37 (October 30, 1930), p. 5.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 5 (March 5, 1931), p. 5.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 6 (March 12, 1931), p. 4.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 9 (April 2, 1931), p. 4.
- "The Printed Word," Vol. XVII, No. 19 (June 18, 1931), p. 2.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 25 (August 6, 1931), p. 5.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 31 (September 17, 1931), p. 5.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 41 (November 26, 1931), p. 5.
- News Report, Vol. XVII, No. 44 (December 10, 1931), p. 3.
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