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Abstract: Historical research involving the schism within the German Baptist Brethren Church in the 1880s has only been found within broad, general histories of the church. The explanations given by historians relating to the cause of the split have previously centered on individuals and the church publications between 1850 and 1883, and on contemporaries who argued among themselves about whether to adopt practices common among surrounding American religions and society. No known project has focused directly on the content within the publications as it relates to the way these brethren used the Bible and other religious and spiritual rhetoric to substantiate their arguments on either side. My research focused on Brethren periodicals printed between about 1850 and 1880. I selected four of the most prominent papers of the period: the *Gospel Visitor*, the *Christian Family Companion*, *The Vindicator*, and the *Progressive Christian*. Each of these periodicals contained arguments for or against adopting practices not previously accepted within the church. Within their pages I found that every argument, for or against a particular practice, was based on scriptural interpretation or other religious commentary used to persuade readers. [Abstract by author]

Keywords: Biblical interpretation; periodicals; Henry Holsinger; Samuel Kinsey; Old German Baptist Brethren

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INTRODUCTION

At some point during the mid-1890s, Enoch Eby reflected on and recorded his thoughts relating to the cause of a major three-way split that occurred within his church some fifteen years prior. Eby had involved himself enough in the church's affairs to have what he considered an intimate knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the schism. He speculated:

> What was the cause of this trouble? Let us see. How many [periodicals] sprang up in our beloved Brotherhood just prior to these difficulties? We answer, A half dozen at least. These caused trouble by moulding sentiment, which every paper is sure to do. It was generally admitted that our many unauthorized papers were the most prominent, if not the exclusive, factors, in bringing about the unfortunate results.[1]

Enoch Eby belonged to a group of Christians who called themselves Brethren, also referred to as the German Baptist Brethren, or more derisively as Dunkers. Eby was a leading member between the 1850s and 1880s.[2] Prior to speculating about the church-wide split, Eby had served as a moderator in the church's Annual Meeting, the yearly governing council composed of members from the church's various congregations. Because of his position, Eby believed he knew the answer to the question that puzzled him; what caused such a split?

Contemporaries like Enoch Eby and historians alike have pointed to the Brethren's religious publications that blossomed in the decades between 1850 and 1880, and the arguments found therein, as the primary reason for the schism in the 1880s.[3] Historians, however, have not gone far or deep enough in explaining the root causes of the discord.[4] They have not adequately analyzed the intentionally persuasive language in the periodicals. The debates found within the Brethren periodicals that created friction within the church confronted a variety of social and religious problems, and were substantiated by scriptural interpretation, or otherwise related religious, spiritual, and traditional rhetoric. If arguments over social adaptation caused friction, it was calculated biblical, spiritual, and traditional language that lay at the core of each argument. Thus, it was the use of this rhetoric that caused the Brethren's 1880s schism on a very fundamental level. This article intends, in a small way at least, to fill the gaps left by historians who have not used language as a lens through which to view the nineteenth-century Brethren schism.

CHURCH PERIODICALS, THE BIBLE, AND INTERPRETATION, CA. 1851-1869

In June 1866, Archy Van Dyke sat down to write a letter to the editor of the *Christian Family Companion*, Henry Holsinger. Van Dyke had been pondering the meaning of a passage he knew well in the King James Version of the Holy Bible, Romans 12:16, which begins, "Be of the same mind one toward another."[5] He wanted to share with other Brethren members his thoughts on the verse in light of something he had observed that perplexed him. He began the letter to Holsinger, and explained that the people of his church, the German Baptist Brethren, learned from their preachers that if they believed and were baptized "aright," then they would "receive the Holy Ghost," whose office it is "to lead into truth."[6]

Members of the German Baptist Brethren Church at the time of Van Dyke's letter differed greatly in opinion with one another about a number of topics relating to church doctrine and practice. In the letter, Van Dyke observed the clash of perspectives among the leading Brethren council at the previous Annual Meeting. Why, Van Dyke wondered, did even the council leaders disagree

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[1] Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine: A History of the Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Press, 1997), 232.

[2] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 232.

[3] Carl F. Bowman, *Brethren Society: The Cultural Transformation of a "Peculiar People,"* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 130.

[4] There are several significant accounts of Brethren history that dedicate large portions to the causes of the schism (for full citations see bibliography). They include, but are not limited to: Stoffer, "The Background and Development of Thought and Practice in the German Baptist Brethren"; Bowman, *Brethren Society*; Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*; Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*; Falkenstein, *History of the German Baptist Brethren*; Howe, *The History of a Church (Dunker)*; Miller, *Roots by the River*; and Ronk, *History of the Brethren Church*.

[5] Romans 12:16 KJV

[6] Archy Van Dyke, "Exhortation to Unity," *Christian Family Companion*, June 19, 1866, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives

about important issues if the Brethren had the Holy Ghost, who guided them into truth? He wrote:

> What some thought to be a great evil, others, claiming to be led by the same spirit, could see no evil in. Now the scripture says, 'be of one mind.' There appears to be something wrong here. Led by the same spirit and differ in opinion so much? I cannot reconcile this matter to my own satisfaction. Perhaps some of the brethren will be so kind as to give me some light on the subject. I see no other way than to bear with one another, until we can see eye to eye.
>
> While some think it right to pay the minister, others think it entirely wrong…. We, perhaps, want to be termed wise. To say the least, we put too high an estimate on ourselves…. I am certain, the difficulty rests with ourselves, for I believe the spirit will lead us all aright, if we are willing to be led.[7]

Archy Van Dyke and his letter provide insight into the disunity among Brethren. The various and controversial viewpoints that arose roughly at mid-century were largely about whether the church should adopt and institute changes in practice relating to different surrounding cultures and religious practices. The most conservative among the Brethren resisted change nearly wholesale. Alternatively, as will be shown, the more forward thinking, or progressive, among them advocated changes that they believed would help keep the Brethren relevant in a changing society. Some of the most conservative members believed the mere existence of papers could lead to disunity, and hoped to prevent them from creating factions within the church by trying to thwart their existence.[8] Their initial efforts, however, were in vain; the papers came anyway.

THE *GOSPEL VISITOR*

In 1851, Henry Kurtz began printing the *Gospel Visitor*.[9] It was the first Brethren periodical of the nineteenth century not specifically prohibited by the church's leadership. Neither was it officially sanctioned.[10] It received some criticism from the group of Brethren within the church who considered themselves the protectors of primitive Christianity, or the Old Orders. Kurtz defended his publication by extolling biblical precedent and spiritual promptings. He intended the *Visitor* to unite a brotherhood that was increasingly divided by both geography and ideas.[11] It was to act as a visitor to Brethren homes, or a "Visiter [*sic*] in the power and spirit of the Gospel."[12]

Kurtz began printing the *Visitor* prior to receiving approval from the Annual Meeting. He wrote in the first issue that he could not wait for their deliberation, which could last weeks or months. In the 1851 Annual Meeting, leaders decided to give the *Visitor* a one-year probation. Then in 1852 they decided they would not interfere with the *Visitor* because it was a private enterprise.[13] Some Brethren still objected to the paper, but Kurtz was not going to allow a little friction to prevent him from fulfilling what he perceived as a sacred duty, one he owed to his fellow brethren.

Kurtz's religious and educational background was atypical for a Brethren member, and his later innovation and influence originated from it.[14] Kurtz was born in 1796 in the German states, and received a sound classical education, which was unlike most Brethren with whom he later associated.[15] He left Europe for the United States at the age of twenty-one, and became a Lutheran pastor in 1819, achieving ordination some time later. The lay leadership of the Lutheran/Reformed parish in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, forced him to resign because of "factional disputes" relating to "rigorous church discipline."[16] Kurtz moved to Ohio, tried to establish his own community, and edited and published a periodical that espoused communal ideas.[17] The paper experienced only mixed suc-

[7] Van Dyke, "Exhortation to Unity."

[8] Henry Kurtz, "Address to the Reader," *Gospel Visitor*, April 1851, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/ details/brethrendigitalarchives.

[9] The original spelling of the Visitor was with an -er instead of an -or, and changed later.

[10] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 222.

[11] Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 98.

[12] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[13] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 221.

[14] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 220.

[15] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 220.

[16] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 220. Durnbaugh does not elaborate on what he means by "factional disputes," and "rigorous church discipline."

[17] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 220.

cess, and ultimately failed. Kurtz moved on and later became familiar with the Brethren in Stark County, Ohio.[18] He felt the Brethren practiced genuine Christianity, and decided to join them.

Kurtz and his involvement with printing played a significant role in the changing currents within Brethren society. He farmed like many Brethren members, but enjoyed and was interested in publishing. He purchased his own press in 1830, and issued "a modest number of books."[19] In 1851 Kurtz created the *Gospel Visitor*, which was a bit of a turning point in Brethren progress because, according to Henry Holsinger's reflection some fifty years later, "the appearance of the *Visitor* ushered in the progressive era in the Tunker Church."[20]

In July 1849, Kurtz had consulted with some of his brethren and determined that a majority of Brethren congregations were in favor of a paper, and at least three hundred people subscribed to the *Visitor* before its initial printing. "Thus," Kurtz wrote, he and the printer "felt encouraged" to press forward.[21] Kurtz admitted he never brought the subject of a Brethren paper before the Annual Meeting, but clearly felt little remorse for failing to do so.[22]

Following prayerful consideration, Kurtz determined that printing the paper was a responsibility he shouldered as a Christian who was in a position to spread the gospel, and could not "shrink" from it. One particular word of God was staring him in the face, he wrote, and would deprive him of peace unless he obeyed.[23] He had in mind James 4:17 which reads, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."[24] Kurtz, like most Brethren, used Scripture to justify his beliefs and actions, even if others, including fellow Brethren, viewed things differently. He felt compelled by a spiritual sense of responsibility and duty, and could not delay any longer.

Kurtz further justified the *Visitor*, and drew readers' attention to the "thousands of presses," both secular and religious, that were daily issuing "a multitude of publications, some good, some indifferent, and some alas! too many absolutely bad and hurtful."[25] These papers were ubiquitous, he claimed, and every family had access to them. As Brethren migrated west like many others during this period, they would inevitably come into contact with various religious sects. Therefore, if he did not print a Brethren paper, one that would "hold forth and [defend] their peculiar tenets" like nearly every other denomination was doing, then the "popular errors and the most ingenious counterfeits of truth" would make their way to Brethren cabins where these errors and counterfeit truths could mislead and fool their children.[26]

Kurtz believed, like all Brethren, that they alone held and taught the gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity and entirety, and wanted to prevent the world's evil tendencies from infiltrating their homes. The *Visitor* would glorify God and His truth "as it is in Christ Jesus," and provide a bulwark against evil.[27] Kurtz's intentions were pure, and he clearly hoped the *Visitor* would not only inform Brethren of the gospel of Jesus Christ, but persuade them to believe that a paper like his was a necessary tool to help them along their path to salvation. His paper would be a source of truth and righteousness, and preserve unity within the church.

Communication at this time was lacking between Brethren congregations, which threatened unity within the church. Noted Brethren historian Donald Durnbaugh states that as the Brethren spread throughout the country in the nineteenth century, it became increasingly difficult to preserve unity within the Brethren because of their distance from other Brethren, and from contact with divergent religious views. The instigation of District Meetings and Yearly, or Annual Meeting was meant to mitigate the problem, but did not eliminate it. Henry Kurtz believed that a periodical, particularly his own, could solve the problem of disunity altogether.[28] The *Visitor*'s front page indicates that the monthly publication was "de-

[18] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 220-1.

[19] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 221.

[20] Holsinger, Henry R., *History of the Tunkers and the Brethren Church* (1901; repr., North Manchester, IN: L.W. Shultz, 1962), 470.

[21] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[22] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[23] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[24] James 4:17 KJV

[25] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[26] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[27] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[28] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 219.

voted to the exhibition of gospel-principles [and] gospel-practice in their primitive purity [and] simplicity, in order to promote Christian union, brotherly love [and] universal charity."[29] Kurtz's use of the word "primitive" is important because, as will be shown, people on all sides of the coming debates claimed to be the bastion of primitive Christianity. Practicing primitive Christianity, as taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles as found in the New Testament, was central to Brethren teaching.

Not all Brethren believed publication was a righteous tool to spread the Gospel of Christ. Old Orders questioned whether preaching must be done by word of mouth alone. Kurtz responded to critics of his paper by reminding them that "if the first preachers of the Gospel had not preached by writing too, we would have no written or printed Gospel at all."[30] In other words, they would have no Bible, the very foundation of their theology, and source of primitive Christianity they sought to emulate. Kurtz defended his position further, "seeing then, that we have apostolic example… we trust no more need be said even about printing."[31] He argued that if Christ's Apostles wrote what they preached, Brethren, as followers of Christ themselves, could do the same.

The *Visitor,* as seen by Kurtz and his subscribers, provided a channel for spiritual growth and contained teachings from the Bible, which validated the paper. To critics of the paper, it was a seedbed of discord. As America expanded its borders, and as treasure hunters and other religious and non-religious peoples moved west to fill the expanse, Brethren followed suit, though not on a scale quite as grand. They needed something to tie them to their brothers in the east. The *Visitor,* Kurtz thought, could do just that. Henry Holsinger sought to accomplish the same thing in the *Christian Family Companion.*

THE *CHRISTIAN FAMILY COMPANION*

The *Christian Family Companion,* edited by Henry Ritz Holsinger, added extensively to the friction among and between the Brethren. Holsinger officially began printing the *Christian Family Companion* in January 1865 (two specimen papers appeared previously in 1864 in order to build an audience). The *Companion* was both an informative and persuasive paper. Holsinger hoped not only to share the Christian gospel of salvation, but also, like Henry Kurtz, promote and facilitate unity among a factious brotherhood. The *Companion* became a point of controversy, however, between Holsinger and Brethren leadership, significantly more so than the *Visitor* because of the more controversial topics found therein. It provides insight on Holsinger's beliefs, values, and progression of thought during a crucial time for the Brethren.

Holsinger, though his proposals went against tradition and caused discord, did not envision or intend disunion or separation from the body of the church, and often takes much of the blame for problems caused by progressivism in Brethren accounts.[32] He simply wanted to improve the church by adopting practices that would allow it to be more relevant in a changing society. Nevertheless, the *Christian Family Companion* became increasingly more divisive to the brotherhood than the *Visitor* had been because of Holsinger's more progressive views relating to church practices.

Holsinger was born in Morrison's Cove, Pennsylvania, on May 26, 1833. Both his father and paternal grandfather were preachers in the church. His ancestry goes back to Alexander Mack, Jr., the man credited for starting the Brethren movement in Europe in 1708. Elder George Brumbaugh baptized him and he formally became a member of the Brethren in the spring of 1855. He married Susannah Shoop on June 1, 1864, and they later had two daughters. Church members elected him to the ministry on October 28, 1866, and he was ordained an elder on October 21, 1880.[33]

Prior to his work on the *Companion,* Holsinger attempted to establish himself as a political contributor through a paper called the *Tyrone Herald* (Pennsylvania) in the spring of 1863. Holsinger intended the *Herald* to be "in the interests of the new Republican party."[34] The paper distinguished

[29] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[30] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[31] Kurtz, "Address to the Reader."

[32] Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 98-99. Henry Holsinger is often portrayed as the personification of the Brethren schism. Bowman posits that Holsinger was too abrasive in his approach, and was too passionate in his beliefs.

[33] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 7-8.

[34] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 472.

Holsinger because of the Brethren's non-political alignment, but his own account does not mention any reaction from the church. According to him the paper was quite successful in its first eighteen months. He believed it could have continued to do well had he been willing to pursue the enterprise, but, he wrote, "politics was distasteful to my religious inclinations; besides, I had a preference to direct a religious paper."[35] He therefore gave up the *Herald* in order to publish a paper more in line with his religious taste.

Holsinger began publishing a paper that reflected his religious "inclinations" and values. He had been in a place to get a feel for Brethren thought because he had access to the discarded correspondence that came through the *Gospel Visitor* office, where he had been working with Henry Kurtz as an apprentice over a decade earlier. He apparently went through Henry Kurtz's trash and found several letters or submissions from readers that Kurtz had not included in the *Visitor*. It is likely that Kurtz simply did not have the space to include every submission, thus discarding the letters not selected. Writing of the unused submissions, Holsinger wrote that "they may not have been very dignified," but they were "interesting and spiritual."[36] Holsinger clearly felt inclined to give voice to those who had been rejected by Kurtz through his own paper. He wanted all to have a voice. Some members may not have been dignified in their writing, but were spiritual and should be heard nonetheless.

The middle district of Pennsylvania granted Holsinger permission to print his own paper for the Brethren some time during the spring of 1864. By the time Holsinger sent out the first official paper on January 1, 1865, four hundred eighty-four persons, likely all Brethren, subscribed to the *Christian Family Companion*.[37] Holsinger noted decades later that its publication was "one of the first tangible fruits" of the progressive era among Brethren.[38] He had confidence that the very content of the paper would be all that was needed to attract readers.

Holsinger expounded on his beliefs in the *Companion* early in the first issue. He emphatically declared that "without the shadow of a doubt, that the Church of the Brethren is now the only religious organization in the Western World, which teaches the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, as it is revealed in the New Testament," and that the church's "sole object is the glory of God and the salvation of the soul."[39] He believed in the teachings of the church, and looked forward to a time when no one could say they had not heard of it. He did not believe that the press was the most effective means of spreading truth, missionary work was, but willingly admitted that it was the best medium at the time given a lack of missionary efforts within the church. Spreading what he believed was truth motivated him to create the paper.[40]

Holsinger hoped and expected the *Companion* would be useful to church members in many ways. First, he hoped the paper would provide the brethren a weekly journal that was free "from all vanity, fiction, and falsehood," while at the same time providing "all the information in regard to the 'signs of the times,' that may be necessary to their spiritual edification or physical welfare."[41] This way it would prevent families from having to come in contact with political journals, which, he believed, had already done so much to disturb the peace and harmony of the church. Ironically he had tried his own hand at one of those political papers. The *Companion*, Holsinger offered as justification, would provide a warning against evil.[42] The image of fighting evil fits in perfectly with other religious rhetoric used to justify opinion.

Second, the *Companion* would also provide a place for discussion of all important subjects. Members could submit their opinions, even if their ideas were not exactly in line with church teachings. Holsinger knew that some members, including himself, harbored unpopular thoughts. Those members needed a place to share ideas free of consequence so they could resolve issues in order for unity to prevail. If grievances could be aired, he thought, compromise could be achieved. Detractors believed that airing discordant views would foster further division. Holsinger clearly wanted cohesion and unity of thought among his

[35] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 472.

[36] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 472.

[37] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 472.

[38] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 470.

[39] Henry Holsinger, "Introductory."

[40] Holsinger, "Introductory."

[41] Holsinger, "Introductory."

[42] Holsinger, "Introductory."

brethren, and sought to do so through more democratic means.[43]

Third, the *Companion* would provide "wholesome instruction and kindly admonition" from himself and others. It would provide learning to "the youthful mind," and those who are "hungering after truth."[44] It would guide individuals in their pursuit of salvation.

While Holsinger largely used the *Companion* for discussion about a variety of religious and spiritual topics, he occasionally inserted non-religious matters. On April 18, 1865, Holsinger printed, in a small section near the back of the paper he titled "WORLDLY MATTERS," an excerpt from his own diary from April 15. He wrote, "Abraham Lincoln died. How the news shocked me! And now, while the slow tolling of the bells is sounding in my ears, how painfully solemn my thoughts."[45] Holsinger claimed Lincoln was possibly the greatest man in the world. He provided no reasoning for his thoughts on Lincoln, but he had been an advocate of the Republican Party earlier in his printing career. The Brethren did not and could not fully escape the reality of the world around them no matter how hard some of them tried.

A PAID AND SUPPORTED MINISTRY

One of the largest points of controversy among the Brethren between 1850 and 1880 was whether the congregations should pay or support their ministers financially, which were two very separate issues to them (supporting a minister generally meant that the members of his congregation would provide him with food and possibly funds to enable his travels as opposed to a paid salary by the church). The *Christian Family Companion* and its contributors added to this discussion while founding their arguments on Scripture and tradition.

D.C. Moomaw from Cloverdale, Virginia, submitted a letter to the *Companion* to express his opposition to a supported ministry, which he argued was something Brethren had not previously practiced. Holsinger, who championed the idea of a supported ministry, chose to print the letter despite its call to oppose the practice with "power" and "vehemence."[46] He did this, in part at least, to illustrate the impartiality he earlier claimed he would maintain. Moomaw called on readers to reflect on the traditions of the early church leaders who had denounced the idea entirely.[47] Moomaw feared the change would bring evil to the way Brethren ministers spread the gospel. He feared that the wisdom and learning of the world would taint the purity and simplicity of Christ's gospel, and that "the sophistry and logic of a crooked and perverse generation" would be associated with the "truths of revelation."[48]

Moomaw further appealed to his readers by including Scripture in his denunciation of a supported ministry. If his spiritual and religious petition to the readers had not been forceful enough, he would turn to something more substantial, something the readers could not refute: specific verses in the Bible. He quoted Christ's exhortation to two men sent by John, called the Baptist, to inquire of Jesus whether He was the one who should come according to prophecy. Jesus instructed them to return and report to John what they had both heard and seen: "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."[49] Moomaw included the last line of the passage in order to illustrate an important lesson. If the poor received the gospel by preaching, no preacher, including Jesus himself, should require or expect money in return because the poor have none to give.[50] Unfortunately, it is impossible to know how readers received Moomaw's rhetoric because of the absence of diaries and journals, but contributors could draw on nothing more substantial than Christ's own words to convey their message.

Silas Thomas from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, agreed with Moomaw. In his submission, he

[43] Holsinger, "Introductory." Holsinger was likely referring to teachings found in 2 Corinthians 13:11, quoting the Apostle Paul; Philippians 2:2, also Paul; 1 Peter 3:8, quoting the Apostle Peter; or maybe all three (KJV).

[44] Holsinger, "Introductory."

[45] Holsinger, "Editors Diary," *Christian Family Companion*, April 18, 1865, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives.

[46] D. C. Moomaw, "A Supported Ministry," *Christian Family Companion*, Jan 30, 1866, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives.

[47] Moomaw, "A Supported Ministry."

[48] Moomaw, "A Supported Ministry."

[49] Matthew 11:1-5 KJV

[50] Moomaw, "A Supported Ministry."

employed similar methods to persuade the *Companion*'s readers that there was no place for a supported ministry within their brotherhood. Thomas recounted briefly the story of the Brethren who, shortly after the church's founding in Schwarzenau, Germany, in 1708, fled to America in order to experience a more secure and stable religious future. After their arrival, their dedicated and faithful ministers went forth proclaiming "the word of truth and salvation to the people, 'without money and without price.'"[51] He quoted Isaiah 55:1 in order to convey the ease with which men and women of any financial status could partake of the waters of salvation. Here, Thomas conjured tradition, something that was also significant and powerful among the Brethren. He claimed that a paid ministry would go against the practice of their forefathers, who were followers of Christ and His apostles.[52] If the Brethren chose to pay their ministers, they would be breaking from tradition and not following Christ.

Thomas also solicited the familiar image among Brethren of avoiding the world to instill the severity of the implications of instituting a paid ministry. He quoted Paul in 2 Corinthians, wherein the apostle told the people to "come out from among [unbelievers], and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."[53] The unbelieving world that paid its ministers was unclean, and association with it would preclude their salvation. Thomas perceived an unmistakable difference between the Brethren and the world, which also included "fashionable and popular religion of the day."[54] He was afraid that submitting to instituting a paid ministry would blur the line between Brethren and the world, which was unacceptable in most members' eyes. "Everything of this kind," he opined, "should be looked upon with distrust…."[55]

In contrast to Moomaw and Thomas, Henry Holsinger advocated for a formally educated and paid ministry. The fact that Holsinger willingly published these letters seems to indicate his desire to give voice to all sides of the question, not to simply promote a single position. Holsinger dedicated himself to promoting unity, and the only way to accomplish that, in his mind, was to allow members to share with one another their difference of opinion, and come to a decided and happy compromise through democratic means. To Old Order Brethren, compromise went against the declared gospel of Christ found in the Bible. Christ did not determine doctrine based on compromise, He dictated it.

John Zug of Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania, wrote to the *Companion* and called for some sort of compromise relating to a supported ministry. He did not necessarily promote a paid ministry as a general rule, but held no qualms with members of a minister's own congregation helping a minister who stood in need of their help. Zug's letter consumes an entire page (three columns) of the *Companion*, and includes more than a dozen scriptural references to validate his position. Central to Zug's argument were Christ's words found in Luke 22:36, which reads in part, "but now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip."[56] Ministers who had means sufficient for travel and time away from their farms should do so, but if they were in need of purse or scrip, according to Zug, members of his home church should provide them for him to fulfil his ministerial duties. Each minister's own congregation knew well their circumstances, and could therefore determine his individual needs.[57] Zug also referred to Acts 2:45, which tells of a group of believers who sold all their possessions and gave to every man as he needed.[58] If the Brethren did provide support for some ministers, Zug argued, they should not publish it to the world because it might set a dangerous precedent.[59] He promoted congregations providing for those ministers who stood in need in order to preach, but did not feel it was a custom the Brethren should adopt church wide.

[51] Silas Thomas, "A Paid Ministry," *Christian Family Companion*, June 5, 1866, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives.

[52] Thomas, "A Paid Ministry."

[53] 2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV

[54] Thomas, "A Paid Ministry."

[55] Thomas, "A Paid Ministry."

[56] Luke 22:36 KJV

[57] John Zug, "On Supporting the Ministry," *Christian Family Companion*, June 19, 1866, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives.

[58] Acts 2:45 KJV. The full story of these baptized believers can be found in verses 41 through 47.

[59] Zug, "On Supporting the Ministry."

J. W. Beer from Shelbyville, Illinois, wrote something similar to Zug, and clarified that a paid ministry was different from a supported one. He did not include scriptural reference, but articulated the differences for clarification. Beer opposed emphatically preaching for salary, but was aware that ministers sometimes needed support, much like Zug recognized. "When I say that ministers of the gospel should be supported by the church," Beer submitted, "I mean they should receive their temporal subsistence—their food and raiment, for their services."[60] E. Umbaugh from Pierceton, Indiana, responded to Beer in the *Companion* four weeks later, and directly refuted Beer's distinction. Umbaugh declared that supporting a minister was only "a sly way" of advocating a paid ministry.[61]

Each contributor justified his stance in his own way with scriptural, religious, or traditional references in nearly every instance. Sometimes their arguments relied on a different verse from the ones quoted by other contributors, but occasionally two parties argued about the meaning of the very same verse. E. Umbaugh wrote several pieces about not supporting a ministry in any way. Holsinger published one such article in the *Companion* in September, 1867. In the article, Umbaugh contended that those who advocated for a supported ministry did so because they wanted to follow the example of other churches whose ministers were in error, and preached for the love of money. "Here then we see that money is really the root of all evil," Umbaugh argued.[62] In the *Companion* two weeks later, John Wise from Oakland, Pennsylvania, directly refuted Umbaugh's argument by showing that Umbaugh's case was flawed because he quoted the verse incorrectly. Umbaugh's argument, therefore, had no foundation according to Wise. "Our young brother," Wise proclaimed, "like many others, has taken a wrong view of his subject."[63] He continued, "The brother says, 'money is really the root of all evil.' The [Apostle] says, 'The *love* of money is the root of all evil.'"[64] Who loved money more, Wise asked, the minister who received and used his money for the spreading of the gospel, or the member who selfishly withheld his money from those ministers, thus stifling the advancement of truth and righteousness?[65] The answer, Wise figured, would be obvious to his readers.

All the above examples show that different interpretations of Scripture—sometimes different views of the same passage—and other religious or traditional rhetoric were central to arguments found in the *Gospel Visitor* and the *Christian Family Companion*. Also, Wise's example shows that some people either knowingly manipulated the exact words and phrases found in the Bible to fit their agenda, or were personally unfamiliar with the text and based their arguments solely on what they remembered (sometimes incorrectly) from previously heard sermons.

Archy Van Dyke, whose story appears above, understood well the problems that arose when each person interpreted the Bible in their own way. Up to 1870, Brethren editors and contributors alike advocated in their papers changes that went against traditional Brethren views. They cited and interpreted the Bible, conjured religious or spiritual images and examples, and called attention to Brethren tradition in order to substantiate their papers and the progressive views found therein.

Up to 1870, no periodical existed that directly refuted the progressive ideas largely found in the *Companion*. That changed when Samuel Kinsey began publishing the Old Order Brethren periodical in 1870, the *Vindicator*. Kinsey's paper went in the opposite direction of Kurtz's and Holsinger's papers. Kinsey also advanced in his paper his convictions and grounded them in the same manner. He cited the Bible and used other religious language to persuade his readers of the validity of his arguments.

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[60] J. W. Beer, "Ministerial Support," *Christian Family Companion*, July 31, 1866, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives. Interestingly, the day of the month as printed on the front page of this volume is actually "32", not "31."

[61] E. Umbaugh, "Ministerial Support," *Christian Family Companion*, August 28, 1866, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives. The editor did not include Umbaugh's full name.

[62] Umbaugh, "A Supported Ministry," *Christian Family Companion*, September 17, 1867, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives. Scripture found in 1 Timothy 6:10 KJV.

[63] John Wise, "A Supported Ministry," *Christian Family Companion*, October 1, 1867, accessed September 29, 2017, https://archive.org/details/brethrendigitalarchives.

[64] Wise, "A Supported Ministry."

[65] Wise, "A Supported Ministry."

ESCALATION, 1870-1883

In September 1875, Samuel Kinsey, the first editor of the periodical he aptly named the *Vindicator*, wrote a very brief article directed toward the paper's readers who intended to submit their writings for publication. He wrote, "A brother thinks that brethren, in writing, should mix in the Scriptures pretty freely, so as to give force and weight to their subjects. It is so; it adds much to the strength and force of that which we wish to impress if we can put in a scriptural 'prop' or 'brace' occasionally."[66] The Bible played a central role in Kinsey's life, as in the lives of other Brethren. He knew that its words, the very words of God, could and would validate any righteous notion or argument.

Samuel Kinsey's very concise article is telling in at least one significant way. It reveals that contemporaries understood well the power of persuasion when they reinforced their beliefs, convictions, and arguments with citations from the Bible. This means that the argument presented in this work is not merely a vision that comes from the clarity of hindsight. Editors Henry Kurtz, Henry Holsinger, Samuel Kinsey, and all others who contributed their writings to the various Brethren publications, knew that they could influence their readers by supplementing their ideas with Scripture because doing so gave "force and weight to their subjects." The biggest problem with this practice was that not all members used the Bible in the same way. These men used its words to support their own ideals. This does not necessarily suggest they intentionally manipulated the readers. It simply means these men had convictions, and were able to support them with the most powerful sources, the Bible and its teachings, and other religious sentiments.

Marcus Miller, a member of the Old German Baptists, and author of *Roots by the River: The History, Doctrine, and Practice of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church in Miami County, Ohio,* adequately describes the three tumultuous decades before the first split in 1881, and the few years following, as a time of "high emotion."[67] Miller is also one Brethren historian who recognized that the schism in the church in the 1880s came in part because of differing opinions about various social topics, from differing interpretations of the Bible, and sometimes, as has been shown here, a combination of both.[68]

THE *VINDICATOR*

When the year 1870 dawned, a new era relating to printing began among the Brethren. Until 1870, the Old Order Brethren had not represented themselves, nor did they argue against the progressive school of thought within the church, through print media. The progressive elements within the church had a voice through the *Gospel Visitor,* and the *Christian Family Companion* prior to the *Progressive Christian.* Until 1870, the Old Orders had no voice.

The Old Orders were quite appalled by the slow but sure move away from tradition found in recent papers, like the push to pay Brethren preachers, and finally determined to fight fire with fire by defending their position through a periodical of their own. They called it *The Vindicator of the Ancient Order, and Self-Denying Principles of the Church, As Taught by the Saviour and Held Forth by the Fathers of Our Fraternity,* or simply *Vindicator* for short. It was a lengthy name, no doubt, but articulated well to the reader its purpose. It came in direct response to the ideas and concepts found in the *Visitor* and *Companion,* and, ironically, broke with their stance that periodicals were divisive. They clearly felt compelled to accept one progressive aspect in order to shore up all other traditional practices.

1870 saw the first issue of the *Vindicator* from Dayton, Ohio. Samuel Kinsey began the volume this way: "DEAR BRETHREN: Please allow us to approach you with this little Paper which we thought proper to call Vindicator *of the ancient order, and self-denying principles of the Church, &c.*" Kinsey added that the church had been in a state of drift over several previous years, and felt compelled, much like previously mentioned editors, to publish a paper "for the use and benefit of

[66] Samuel Kinsey, "'Mix It In' – Scripture in Articles," *Vindicator*, September 1875.

[67] Miller, Marcus, *Roots by the River: The History, Doctrine, and Practice of the Old German Baptist Brethren Church in Miami County, Ohio* (Brookville, OH: The Brethren Heritage Center, 2011), 66.

[68] Miller, *Roots by the River*, 66.

the church."[69] His language indicates that, even having consulted "our old experienced fathers," they were reluctant to publish the paper because they had previously been against a church publication.[70] Kinsey wrote that he was duty-bound to produce the paper, regardless of feeling unworthy and unequal to the task.[71] Previous editors also felt this sense of duty. All previous editors felt they had the antidote to the disease of division within the church, and Kinsey felt he could combat the disease of progressivism. Kinsey and the others at the *Vindicator* had a daunting task to perform, which was to defend the tenets of "PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION."[72]

Kinsey acknowledged that some Brethren may consider yet another paper useless and unnecessary because of those already issued by Brethren, but, he argued, his object was "to keep us in the '*wilderness,'* if you can gather the idea…." Here Kinsey referred specifically to the twelfth chapter in the Book of Revelation. This chapter tells of a woman who fled into the wilderness, "where she hath a place prepared of God," and where she could be fed "a thousand two hundred and threescore days."[73] He stated that if the brethren understood the concept of *wilderness* in that chapter, they would approve of the paper. Kinsey did not explain his thought process, but likely meant that the paper would provide shelter and food in the religious and spiritual sense, and keep adherents free from the evils of the world. The *Vindicator* would act as a fountain of truth for those who thirst after righteousness.

Kinsey summed up well the purpose and object of the paper in just a few simple paragraphs. He wrote that it would fight

> against the popular inventions, as well as the modern improvements, continually attempted to be made upon the simple doctrine taught by the Savior. Our object is to labor against all such innovations.
>
> - To contend for the order of the brethren as it has been established.
>
> - To furnish the many scattered brethren and churches with all necessary information as far as possible, and desired - with regard to church-government.
>
> - To labor against pride (that very prevalent and abominable evil) in all its various shapes and forms….[74]

He and the Old Orders believed they were *the* bastion of light and hope.

Kinsey admonished other like-minded members to always labor in the church, and to not forget their families, neighbors and their families, nor their "brethren and sisters by nature [everywhere]. There is much room yet for the enlargement of the borders of our ZION."[75] Here, Kinsey likely drew on passages from Isaiah chapters 52 through 54, wherein Zion in the last days will "Enlarge the place of thy tent [and] lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes" that the Gentiles may be inherited, or adopted into the kingdom.[76]

Kinsey and his paper supported the church and its authority. His justification for his paper was right in line with Kurtz and Holsinger, but he failed to incorporate dissenting views like Holsinger. Kinsey also hoped and longed for a day that the church would be free from controversy, but argued if there were disputes they should be settled in the church's district and annual meetings, not through the uncontrollable media. He further explained that another of the *Vindicator*'s objectives was "to UNITE upon the ancient principles of our body."[77] Here he drew on the idea of ancient principles, no doubt the ones espoused by Christ during His mortal ministry. Interesting and noteworthy is that the words *primitive* and *ancient* had also been used by the very people Kinsey and others associated with the *Vindicator* labored against. They all seemed to want the same thing, yet could not agree on how to achieve it.

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[69] Samuel Kinsey, "Our Prospectus," *Vindicator*, March 1870.

[70] Kinsey, "Our Prospectus."

[71] Kinsey, "Our Prospectus."

[72] Kinsey, "Our Prospectus."

[73] Revelation 12:6 KJV

[74] Kinsey, "Our Prospectus."

[75] Kinsey, "Our Prospectus."

[76] Isaiah 54:2-3 KJV

[77] Kinsey, "Our Prospectus."

PRIDE AND DRESS

As stated above, Samuel Kinsey and the *Vindicator* hoped to combat pride within the church. Pride, as they claimed, had many faces. One such face was the manner of dress among the Brethren. As fashions changed within their surrounding society, some Brethren thought it acceptable to adopt small changes themselves while others, like the Old Orders, sought to prevent such vanity. Kinsey called pride a "loathsome and contagious disease," and believed he had a remedy for it.[78]

Kinsey brought to the fore the topic of pride particularly because, as he attended a funeral, he noticed children whose parents had, in his eyes at least, dressed them foolishly. "Why those short dresses?" he asked his readers. Why the lace and other displays of fashion? Little children, he believed, truly personified Christianity, and yet his brethren were teaching them to sin by way of pride.[79] What upset Kinsey the most was that this vanity came from those who professed to have forsaken the world by turning their backs to it, and from those who claimed to be born again. Pride was a sin, he believed, and anything that resembled it ought to be forsaken.

Pride and its avoidance were critical to Brethren thinking. The word *pride* appears forty-nine times in the King James Version of the Holy Bible.[80] It is inseparably connected with haughtiness, contention, wickedness, foolishness, condemnation, destruction, and evil.[81] There should be little doubt why the Brethren aimed to combat it. Pride, not the Brethren, belonged to the world. "We are aware that pride has many avenues in which it branches out into various forms besides dress," Kinsey wrote, "but, for the present, we will leave it at this."[82]

Just one year later, in April, 1871, Kinsey answered a query from one of his paper's readers, Joel Wagoner, who hoped the answer to his question would appear in the next paper, about the proper "cut of the coat."[83] Wagoner wrote that some of his brethren claimed that the way they dressed did not matter. Those who claimed this, he added, said that as long as their hearts were in the right place, nothing else mattered. "Give all the grounds you can from the word of God [in your answer]," Wagoner implored Kinsey in the end.[84] These last words further indicate the importance of the Bible in the lives of the Brethren, and their dedication and willingness to follow its teachings. Wagoner did not necessarily want Kinsey's opinion; he wanted exhortation from the Bible.

Kinsey included his answer to Wagoner in a later issue, but answered in a way that likely did not fully satisfy Wagoner. "We have no scripture describing the shape and cut of the coat for the Christian," the answer began. "Neither is it necessary to have it. There is enough recorded to show that our clothing should be plain and that we should *hear the church.*"[85] But what records did the author have in mind? If the Bible is silent, how were they to interpret the answer?

The answer to Wagoner's question, likely written by Kinsey, claimed that those brethren who were meek and self-denying should "adorn themselves in 'modest apparel,'" likely using a verse from 1 Timothy, which was written by the Apostle Paul to Timothy.[86] Paul advised women to dress modestly, and to avoid vanity in regards to hair and jewelry.[87] The author of the answer in the *Vindicator* referred again to pride. The meek brother should know that "pride of life" and the "lust of the eye" had no place in the church.[88] Both phrases come from 1 John 2:16, which explains that these things are not of God, but of the world.[89] In his same answer directed to Wagoner, Kinsey provided further insight into the existing debates over dress, which centered on unity within the church and among their brethren.

Brethren historian Carl Bowman articulates well these dilemmas that the Brethren faced during the mid-nineteenth century. Among the four major

[78] Samuel Kinsey, "Pride," *Vindicator*, March 1870.

[79] Kinsey, "Pride."

[80] This does not include any derivative of the word, like *proud*.

[81] See: Proverbs 13:10, 16:18; Mark 7:22; 1 Timothy 3:6; 1 John 2:16 KJV

[82] Kinsey, "Pride."

[83] Kinsey, "Pride."

[84] Kinsey, "Pride."

[85] Kinsey, "Pride."

[86] Kinsey, "Pride."

[87] 1 Timothy 2:9 KJV

[88] Kinsey, "Pride." The phrases "pride of life," and "lust of the eye" are found in 1 John 2:16 KJV.

[89] 1 John 2:16 KJV

categories he presents is the dilemma of unity. One way the Brethren remained unified was their plain, non-fashionable clothing. The Brethren became increasingly divided over the issue of plain dress and vanity. "Of the many boundaries that were drawn," Bowman posits, "none was more conspicuous or controversial than Dunker dress."[90] Bowman adds that while the Brethren had dressed plainly from the beginning, the church and governing body at the Annual Meeting did not specify any standards regarding clothing until the second half of the century.[91] There had been no reason to do so until then.

Kinsey drew on the idea of retaining unity among the Brethren, and, as in nearly every point of debate found within the Brethren periodicals, validated his views through the use of Scripture. The church must have order, he strongly contended. "Paul could joy in the '*order'* and '*steadfastness'* of the Colossian brethren," he wrote. He further quoted Paul at length from 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Therein, Paul exhorted the Corinthians to avoid divisions, and to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement."[92] Kinsey did not stop there. He drew on additional scriptural references to drive his point home.

Avoiding fashionable clothing kept Brethren unspotted from the world, Kinsey repeatedly argued. Only by remaining unspotted could the outside world see the Brethren as a "'city on the hill which cannot be hid.' And it is only then that we let our 'light so shine before men,' and do thus manifest to all around us that we are a *distinct* and *separate* people…."[93] Even though the Bible remained silent on an exact cut of clothing, it clearly indicated, according to Kinsey, a plain, simple dress that would set them apart from the world, prevent them from the damnation of pride and vanity, and create unity among an increasingly divided brotherhood.

Finally, on the question of plain dress as described and prescribed in the *Vindicator,* the writers and editor turned to the parable of the Ten Virgins found in Matthew chapter 25.[94] To understand Kinsey's argument, one must understand the parable. In Matthew, Jesus explained to His followers the kingdom of heaven by relating a parable of ten virgins who waited for a bridegroom. Half of the virgins in the story were wise and filled their lamps with oil in order to have enough to burn while waiting because they knew not when he would come. The other half were foolish because they took "no oil with them."[95] The ten virgins awoke when the bridegroom came at midnight. The five wise virgins trimmed their lamps and followed him to the marriage, but the five foolish had no oil, for it had all "gone out."[96] The text relates that while the foolish five were away looking for oil, the door to the marriage ceremony shut with the wise virgins inside. When they returned, they asked the Lord to open the door. He said to them: "Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."[97] Kinsey knew the parable well, and believed using it would illustrate his ideas.

"Is it true of us that our religion is chiefly on the outside?" Kinsey asked. "Pity if it be so. Poor Christian thou; yea, 'foolish virgin' thou who hast no 'oil in thy vessel,'" he chastised.[98] Those whom he called foolish were those who needed to fill their vessels, meaning their hearts and souls, with a religion that went much deeper than a plain costume worn on the outside of the body. Their religion should be founded on principle-based living, not material culture so readily available and easily attainable.

According to Kinsey, to be Christian meant to emulate and honor Christ. Kinsey wrote that "thy heart must be filled with God's love and spirit; and when the heart is thus filled, it will manifest itself in thy outward appearance and doings. God should be wholly honored, and to this end His love should be predominant in us as to induce us to dedicate the entire man, to Him and His service."[99] Again, he drew heavily on spiritual themes in order to appeal to his honor-seeking brethren. Kinsey

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[90] Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 114.

[91] Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 114.

[92] 1 Corinthians 1:10 KJV

[93] Kinsey, "Pride." For Kinsey's reference to "A City on a hill," see Matthew 5:14 KJV.

[94] The parable consists of the first thirteen verses in Matthew 25 KJV. Kinsey did not include the entire parable; he knew all his readers understood the reference clearly.

[95] Matthew 25:3 KJV

[96] Matthew 25:8 KJV

[97] Matthew 25:12-13 KJV

[98] Samuel Kinsey, "A Suggestion - The Reason for Uniform Plainness in Dress," *Vindicator*, 1871.

[99] Kinsey, "A Suggestion."

knew well that the Bible's words were central to the lives of his fellow Brethren. He knew that the most effective way to reach the hearts and minds of his readers was to cite the Bible, draw on its teachings, and invoke the image of Christ to express his convictions.

A LEARNED AND SUPPORTED MINISTRY

The *Vindicator*'s editors and contributors were very much against the church accepting a formally educated, supported, or paid ministry. It came too close to mimicking popular religion that was moving toward professional clergy, which challenged the lay minister and was therefore not a true display of a Christ-centered religion or life. The true Christian minister, they believed, should give freely of his time and himself in the cause of Christ. On what did they lay the foundation of such a belief? The Bible.

The mid-nineteenth century saw the rise of a new type of minister. He was one who could appeal to and retain in his congregation educated and socially prominent people. Sydney Ahlstrom explains that it was a time when "science seemed to undermine the Christian message and when many people doubted the relevance of the church in an industrial-commercial environment."[100] The average clergyman had to adapt his messages to address changing moral and religious attitudes, and scientific discoveries and theories, particularly as presented by Charles Darwin.[101] Educated and oratorically gifted ministers rose in prominence, and the public and their churches were willing to pay for their skills. The Brethren had to confront this change in the clergy, and decide whether they would pay their own ministers.

Nathan Haywood from Eaton, Ohio, wrote several pieces for the *Vindicator* in order to warn readers of the evils that were associated with a learned and paid ministry. He denounced the papal clergy and their unholy claim to the "divine right to expound God's word."[102] He stated that the clergy unabashedly asserted that to comprehend and expound upon God's word, one must be learned. This, Haywood posited, was a way to subjugate man, and came "at the expense of the supremacy of the Scriptures…."[103]

Relying on the clergy, Haywood believed, prevented the majority of common believers from gaining access to the word of God, which was not in harmony with Christ's teachings. Conversely, the papal clergy claimed that *not* relying on the clergy made salvation unattainable. If a learned ministry was required to expound upon Scripture, then surely the text was not sufficient by itself. With vitriolic language against the "Holy Mother Church," Haywood posited that the clergy was really a disguise created to deceive the people.[104]

Haywood further attacked the Catholic Church. He denounced the clergy for taking advantage of the unlearned and ignorant masses who thought that in exchange for their gold, silver, and riches, they would receive the "bread of life."[105] Christ, Haywood counter-argued, was solely responsible for saving men's souls, not the clergy.

Silas Thomas from Philadelphia strongly opposed a paid clergy, and wrote to the *Vindicator* in July, 1880, to express his sentiments. He proclaimed that an elective and unpaid ministry found credence in Matthew 10:8, which reads in part: "freely ye have received, freely give."[106] This verse contains the words of Jesus to His twelve Apostles whom He called, and "gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease."[107] Christ commanded them to go among the Gentiles, who were the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," and preach to them that "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."[108] Like so many previously mentioned authors, Thomas called on the very words of Christ in order to support his own argument, even if he loosely interpreted the verse to fit his purpose. Little else invoked enough power, or pierced the readers' hearts as easily as the words of Christ.

In an 1880 piece for the *Vindicator*, Nathan Haywood presented a complicated argument

[100] Ahlstrom, Sydney E., *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 738.

[101] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, 763-64.

[102] Nathan Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry," *Vindicator*, July 1880.

[103] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."

[104] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."

[105] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."

[106] Thomas, "A Passage in History." See also Matthew 10:8 KJV.

[107] Matthew 10:1 KJV

[108] Matthew 10:5-7 KJV

against a learned ministry. He recounted the various language translations of the Bible through the ages, among them Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Dutch, German, and English, and asked his readers whether the English version of the Bible was correct. We believe such is the case, he answered, because "we know" that it was translated by some of the most educated men in England, "and at a time when sectarian influence was but little felt."[109] He also argued that the Bible had withstood the test of time, meaning three hundred years of contention and "violent strifes" among various sects, yet "none have invalidated or called in question the general correctness of the present version."[110] "After all this immense labor and diligent research by these truly learned men," he continued, "the conclusion they arrived at is this: That a more correct translation can not be expected or made, that is our present English version of the Holy Scriptures."[111] The last statement belied his true intentions.

Haywood's appeal to the authority of one English translation created an awkward tension in his argument. In the article, following his recitation of educated men translating the Bible, he *denounced* a learned ministry. He acknowledged that without these educated men with their lingual understanding they would not have the sacred text, and yet he claimed that in no way did that suggest a learned ministry was justified. "For the Scriptures being once *correctly* translated, needs it no more forever!" he argued.[112]

Haywood further claimed the Bible provided no basis for the argument of a learned ministry, and that believing such destroyed the "purity of the gospel," and opposed "the plain letter of revelation."[113] He finally argued that a learned ministry would cause people to neglect the sacred text "as a rule of faith and practice."[114] In other words, a learned ministry would preclude the Holy Spirit from instructing or providing proper interpretation as pointed out by the example of Archy Van Dyke above. While Haywood did not use exact verses to validate his position, he claimed the Bible did not validate a learned ministry. Without scriptural backing the argument for a learned ministry held no weight with Haywood.

The *Vindicator* was an Old Order voice that adopted an atypical approach—the use of print media—in order to preserve what they believed was the tradition of the early Schwarzenau Brethren. This means they fought fire with fire, or used progressivism to fight progressivism. To them, the end justified the means. The *Vindicator*'s editors and contributors appealed to readers' minds by directly quoting Scripture, and using other spiritual and traditional references. While the progressive forces they fought against materialized in previous periodicals, none was as forceful and deliberate in its progressivism as what came after the *Vindicator*, Holsinger's *Progressive Christian.*

THE *PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN*

In 1878-9, Henry Holsinger started printing his own paper again, and called it the *Progressive Christian*. While he occasionally informed his readers of what was happening in the world around them, Holsinger centered the vast majority of his paper on religious and church topics. Holsinger had ventured into politics, and found it was not to his liking. He stayed close to his religious roots in the pages of the *Progressive Christian.*

The *Progressive Christian* was the most forward-looking of all Brethren papers. It acted as a sounding board for Brethren members who wanted to adapt, even if only in small ways, to the changes in surrounding society and religious culture, including adopting the practice of paying Brethren preachers. Holsinger, like Brethren editors before him, found endorsement for his progressive ideas in the Holy Bible.

Holsinger had given up the *Christian Family Companion* in 1873, following continual warfare between himself and the leading elders of the church because of his seemingly tactless approach to reform some of the church's practices. "The burden appeared to have become too heavy to bear up the load," he wrote in his own account of Brethren history.[115] He related that at the 1873 Annual Meeting, at least two full days "were devoted to the opposition of measures and methods

[109] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."
[110] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."
[111] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."
[112] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."
[113] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."
[114] Haywood, "The Evils of a Learned and Paid Ministry."
[115] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 478.

inaugurated and advocated by myself."[116] These measures to expel Holsinger did not get far, and "the matter was amicably disposed of, and I was sent out a free man."[117] Nevertheless he elected to hand over the reins of the *Companion* to Elder James Quinter.

Holsinger later lamented the decision to turn over the paper. The censuring he endured at that Annual Meeting and the loss of the paper left an impression on his mind and heart thereafter. The problem, Holsinger thought, was that "the church was now practically without a free rostrum or a progressive organ."[118] Clearly this bothered him. He had committed himself to the cause of helping the church progress in order to remain relevant in an ever-changing industrial and scientific society. Now without a way to advocate reform the future seemed bleak. How long could he remain quiet, and not print his progressive and often harshly critical views?

Holsinger's patience lasted a full five years before he could no longer bear that there was no "progressive organ" in the church. In the fall of 1878, he and Elder Joseph W. Beer began publishing the *Progressive Christian* from Berlin, Pennsylvania. After the first six months both men were uncertain of the paper's future for at least two reasons. First, six Brethren papers were already in circulation among the Brethren (three of which have been discussed here). Second, the Annual Meeting delegates of 1879 denounced the *Progressive Christian* for including "slanderous articles against the general order of the brethren," particularly relating to the manner of dress among the Brethren.[119] The delegates also argued that Holsinger and his paper sowed discord.[120] The paper seemed doomed to fail due to overwhelming opposition from the Annual Meeting and more conservative members, particularly the Old Orders.

Holsinger blamed the tumultuous state of affairs on the church's preachers. They had neglected the "weightier matters of the law of God," he claimed.[121] He adamantly contested that the preachers did not "advocate with sufficient force and frequency the peculiar doctrines of the Bible."[122] He continued:

> I also opposed all sinful extremes in dress and assumed that there is a happy medium, which was the position occupied by the progressive portion of the church, and that the principles of our holy religion require meekness, cleanliness, plainness, and modesty, and that any garment which comes with these restrictions is sustained by the gospel, and is acceptable to God, and may not be rejected. The ancient customs of the church should be respected, but ought not to be compared to the teachings of God's Word.[123]

Holsinger, like Kinsey, advocated plainness, but argued against the extreme conservative dress. It merely needed to be clean and modest to have God's approval. He called on ancient customs instead of quoting Scripture. Despite the opposition he faced, Holsinger held firm that what he advocated was not as extreme as his detractors claimed. His paper, while progressive, called for a sort of common sense, or a mind willing to think outside the box for just long enough to realize he was not calling for anything unnatural. In fact, progressivism was very much a natural concept to Holsinger.

On the front page of the very first issue, W. J. H. Bauman from Nora Springs, Iowa, submitted a short but persuasive article titled, "Man's Progressive Nature." No doubt the publishers included it in order to lay a firm foundation for everything that would follow in later issues. Bauman explained what he meant when using the word *progression*. It means to advance, he wrote. Progression is a "fixed principle in the human mind," meaning it cannot be changed or removed.[124] The principle is indispensable to knowledge, he added. "To learn means to prog-

[116] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 478.

[117] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 479; Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 304-05. Holsinger met with heavy opposition again in 1879 during the first year of the Progressive Christian. The Annual Meeting declared Holsinger had ridiculed "some of the peculiar practices of the church, and admitting into the paper inflammatory and schismatic articles[,] some even from expelled members."

[118] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 479-80.

[119] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 484.

[120] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 484

[121] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 486.

[122] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 486.

[123] Holsinger, *History of the Tunkers*, 486.

[124] W. J. H. Bauman, "Man's Progressive Nature," *Progressive Christian*, January 3, 1879.

ress. Christians by virtue of their profession are learners in the school of Christ; hence to profess [Christianity] implies to favor progression."[125] Bauman used simple, powerful rhetoric to show that those who are not progressive cannot possibly be Christian as they claimed to be.

Bauman pressed further the point of man's progressive nature, and attempted to make a solid argument lest the entire theory of progression, and therefore the paper, collapse. He turned to language that would most strongly convince his readers of the virtue of his claim that progress was natural. "Paul says: 'I press (progress) toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' John writes to the 'little children,' to the 'young men,' and to ['fathers'] in Christ, which implies progression."[126] Bauman quoted Philippians 3:14 and likely assumed the reader knew the preceding verses wherein Paul exhorted the Philippians to look forward to righteousness, perfection, and resurrection, not backward. If Paul, one of the greatest teachers aside from Christ, advocated progression, and taught his followers to look forward rather than backward, then true followers of Christ must do the same in order to gain "the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."[127] Bauman, however, was not the only one who felt the need to firmly proclaim the validity and efficacy of progressive values.

James A. Ridenour from Clifton Mills, West Virginia, also provided an article for the very first issue of the *Progressive Christian*. He claimed that without the principle of progression "nothing can be accomplished. Progression signifies advancement; pressing forward; an unwillingness to rest satisfied with present attainments, and a zealous effort to attain higher, holier and safer ground."[128] Ridenour not only backed up what Bauman suggested, he elaborated and expanded upon similar themes.

Ridenour used Scripture more so than Bauman to prove his point. He professed that every Christian should seek more zeal, love, humility, self-denial, piety, and "more of the Divine nature."[129] Ridenour drew heavily from Paul's words to the Romans and Corinthians to also show that conversion to the gospel and salvation were progressive by nature. The gospel, he shared, is a seed planted in the heart of good and honest seekers of truth. When the seed quickens it renews the heart and renovates the person. As that person follows the word of God, or the Bible, the seed in their heart is "watered by the dews of divine grace," until they are born again to become "'new creatures in Christ,' having received the 'renewing of the Holy Ghost.'" These followers, however, "are only ['babes in Christ,' desiring to be fed upon the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby; and that thus growing, or *progressing*, they finally become strong men and women in the Lord Jesus Christ."[130] The very nature of man and Christ's gospel were progressive.

Ridenour fleshed out his argument further. What he called minor matters of speculation and mere opinion were what the sisters' head-covering should consist of; how men should cut and comb their hair and wear their beard; and how they should cut their coats, vests, and pants. "When the attempt is made to enforce such matters as these, for which there is not a shadow of Gospel authority, we may generally expect trouble and retrogression instead of peace and progression."[131] He was absolutely correct. The arguments among the Brethren that he presented and more, all of which were either based in scriptural, religious, or traditional teachings, caused friction and disunity among the Brethren when in reality they all hoped for cohesion and unity. Disunity was retrogression to Ridenour.

Brother Howard Miller from Elk Lick, Pennsylvania, offered his opinion about paying Brethren preachers in the *Progressive Christian* in the February 7, 1879 issue, and used Scripture to validate his words. He prefaced his remarks that related to ministerial support, and acknowledged that the Brethren, as a rule, did not pay its preachers. He wrote that the "church has no well organized system of supporting her workers, and upon the defects of the system we propose writing."[132] He believed that both pros and cons about such

[125] Bauman, "Man's Progressive Nature."

[126] Bauman, "Man's Progressive Nature."

[127] Philippians 3:14 KJV

[128] James A. Ridenour, "Progression," *Progressive Christian*, Friday, January 3, 1879, vol. 1 no. 1.

[129] Ridenour, "Progression."

[130] Ridenour, "Progression."

[131] Ridenour, "Progression."

[132] Ridenour, "Progression."

a system existed, but felt it necessary to expound upon the arguments relating to a paid ministry for those readers who had not been well acquainted with them.[133]

Miller offered that he saw "no danger" with the church paying a salary to its preachers, and roundly proclaimed his advocacy for it by way of the Bible.[134] He drew from Luke chapter 10, wherein Jesus called and appointed seventy of His followers to go and preach two by two. The first sixteen verses of the chapter contain Jesus's instructions and exhortations to the seventy. Jesus told them to speak and leave peace in the houses they visited, and "if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it."[135] If they remained in the same house, Jesus continued, they should eat and drink what the host offered, "for the labourer is worthy of his hire."[136] "It is wrong," Miller adamantly decreed, "openly, meanly wrong, all around, to not pay *any* man for work done. 'The laborer is worthy of his hire.'"[137] He did not, however, address the fact that Jesus's very same instructions to the seventy contain the direction to "Carry neither purse, nor scrip," which the adversaries of a paid ministry frequently used to argue against the practice.[138]

In the very same issue of the *Progressive Christian* appeared another article about a supported ministry. Though the article does not credit an author, it may have come from either Henry Holsinger, or J. W. Beer, who co-edited the paper. The author responded with some sarcasm to his "dear old brother Silas Thomas," who persisted in "pelting away at the Educated and Hireling Ministry, through the 'Vindicator.'"[139] The author quoted Thomas who had lamented that the only voice of reason, meaning one that upheld traditional opposition to an educated and paid ministry, was the *Vindicator*. "There is reason for this change of sentiment and conduct among us, dear brother," the writer offered. The Brethren had improved and learned better, he argued. He continued, scathingly yet pointedly:

> Thomas can establish his gratuitous unprepared ministry, by quoting isolated and irrelevant passages of scripture…. We thank God that time is bringing us farther away from all such errors, and that our brethren are betaking themselves to PREACHING THE WORD and endeavoring to convert sinners instead of combatting the opinions of the other men, and indulging in a senseless harangue upon subjects which they do not understand. The 'Vindicator' and his venerable correspondent might take a profitable hint from these remarks.[140]

Few passages in the previously-analyzed papers drive home the point as well as this one. These editors of and contributors to the papers on both sides of any and all arguments knew well the power of Scripture, and used it to further their cause, or to undermine the cause of the other.

The ideas presented in both the *Vindicator* and the *Progressive Christian* increased the tensions among the Brethren in the 1870s. The publishers of both papers understood well the power of persuasion when they used the Bible to certify their respective positions. While the arguments presented in each paper caused friction, each argument was founded firmly on scriptural, religious, and traditional grounds. One notable difference between the two is that Holsinger often published views contrary to his own, while Kinsey did not.

When all was said and done, unity had not been achieved through airing grievances or through attacking one another. In 1881, the Old Orders split from the main body because they felt the church was moving in a direction that was anything but traditional. They would not tolerate a number of practices, including Sunday Schools, a paid ministry, and adhered to a strict uniformity of plain dress for men and women.[141] Roughly two years later in 1883, the progressive branch under Holsinger's leadership also broke from the main body because it was not progressive enough. The large majority—roughly 85 per cent—joined neither group because they believed each was too

[133] Ridenour, "Progression."

[134] Howard Miller, "Paying the Preacher," *Progressive Christian*, February 7, 1879.

[135] Luke 10:5-6 KJV

[136] Luke 10:7 KJV

[137] Miller, "Paying the Preacher."

[138] Luke 10:4 KJV

[139] Unknown author, "Supported Ministry," *Progressive Christian*, February 7, 1879.

[140] Unknown author, "Supported Ministry."

[141] Durnbaugh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 298-99.

extreme in its own way, though many members in this group leaned slightly one way or the other.[142]

CONCLUSION

Brethren printers in the mid-nineteenth century took to printing in order to spread the Word of God that the early Brethren saints had passed down through many generations, the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified, and shared with the world the beliefs and practices of the Brethren church and people.[143] The Brethren community was a city on a hill that could not be hid, they believed, and they endeavored to shout it to the world from the rooftops, so to speak, but more literally through their periodicals.

In the early years of the period presented here, Old Orders viewed the very existence of periodicals as too worldly, and believed they did not belong in a church that founded much of their practice in avoiding the world, a principle that found traction in the Bible. As additional Brethren papers appeared, the amount of schismatic material increased apace. These progressive and schismatic ideas that related to the way the Brethren should or should not interact with the world, whether to adopt societal and cultural practices common in America, the paying of preachers, and the manner of dress among members, created factions within the church. But the publishers' use of language from the Bible, and other religious and traditional rhetoric, lay at the heart of each argument. Therefore, on a fundamental level, the use of this language is what sowed discord and ultimately division. This is not to say that it explains the schism in its entirety, but it does get closer to the root cause of the catastrophic event.

Archy Van Dyke saw the arguments and the discord for what they were. He recognized that the fighting among his brethren was caused at least in part by differing interpretations of the Bible, the very thing that should have brought them together. In an effort to unite the Brethren, all publishers highlighted here sowed the seeds of dissent by airing their grievances through print media, and the results were far from what they all originally intended.

[142] Bowman, *Brethren Society*, 126-31.

[143] The use of the phrase "Christ and Him crucified" comes from Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 2:2 KJV.

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