

THE QUESTION  
OF MILITARY  
SERVICE

# THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

Restoration Movement Background

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## Restoration Movement Background

### A Vision of the Kingdom

#### **Isaiah 2:4**

He will judge between the nations  
and will settle disputes for many peoples.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks.  
Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
nor will they train for war anymore.

# THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

## Restoration Movement Background

**Stone & Campbell  
rooted in the  
American  
experience:**



1. Edenic quality of America
2. American democracy
3. Millennial expectation
4. Freedom from “Old World” traditions enforced by clerics and creeds
5. The assurance of returning to a primitive faith.

C. Leonard Allen, and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1988), 90-94.

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## Restoration Movement Background

The Stone-Campbell Movement wanted to restore primitive Christianity through simplicity and the Bible only (i.e., no creeds).

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### The Divisive Question of Slavery:

- **1839** – southern Catholics ignored papal mandate condemning the slave trade
- **1844** – Methodists divided north-south
- **1857** – “New School” Presbyterians divided north-south
- **1861** – “Old School” Presbyterians divided north-south
- **[1846]** – Baptists divided north-south but claimed it was not because of slavery

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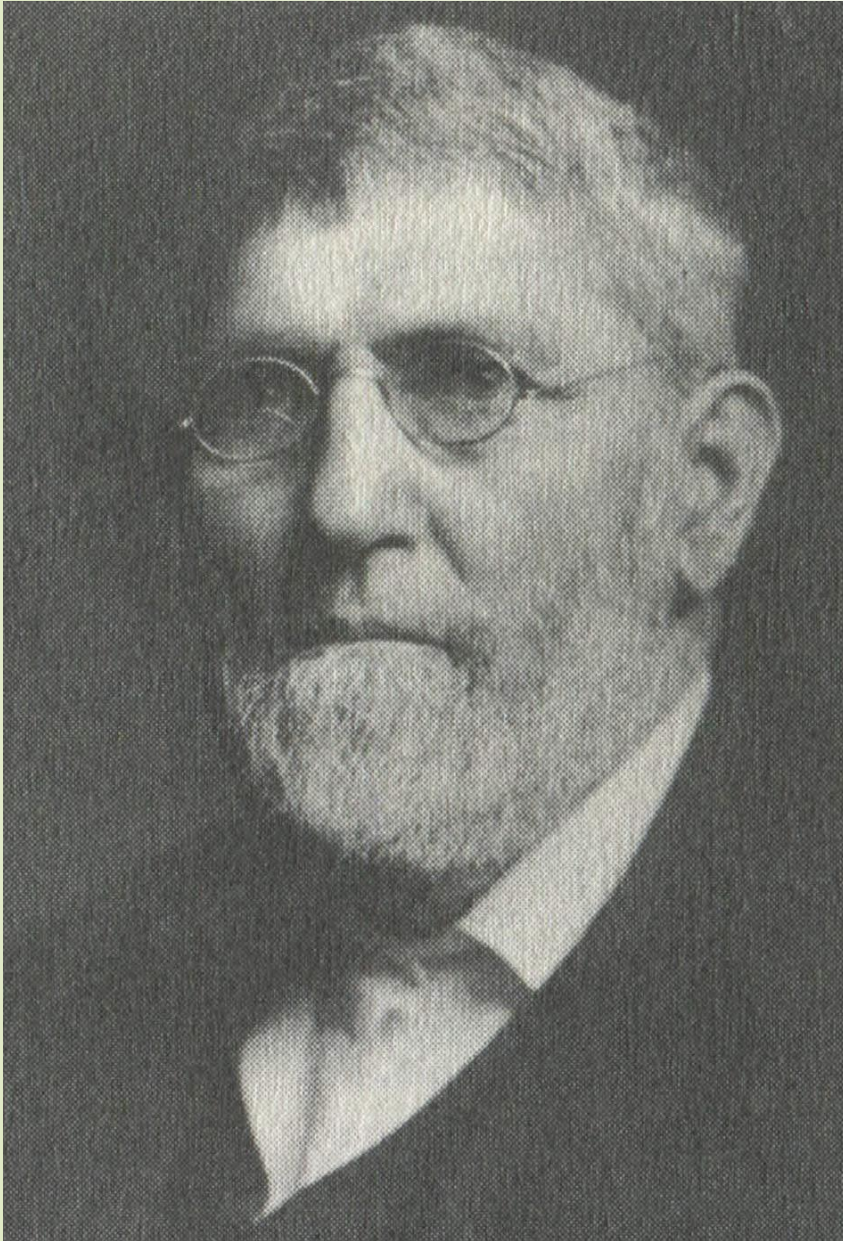
“... members of the churches of the Stone-Campbell Movement were just as much a part of the heated discussions as anyone. Their attitudes about blacks and slavery reflected the same spectrum as the rest of America.”

Gary Holloway, and Douglas A. Foster, *Renewing God's People: A Concise History of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 2001), 85-86

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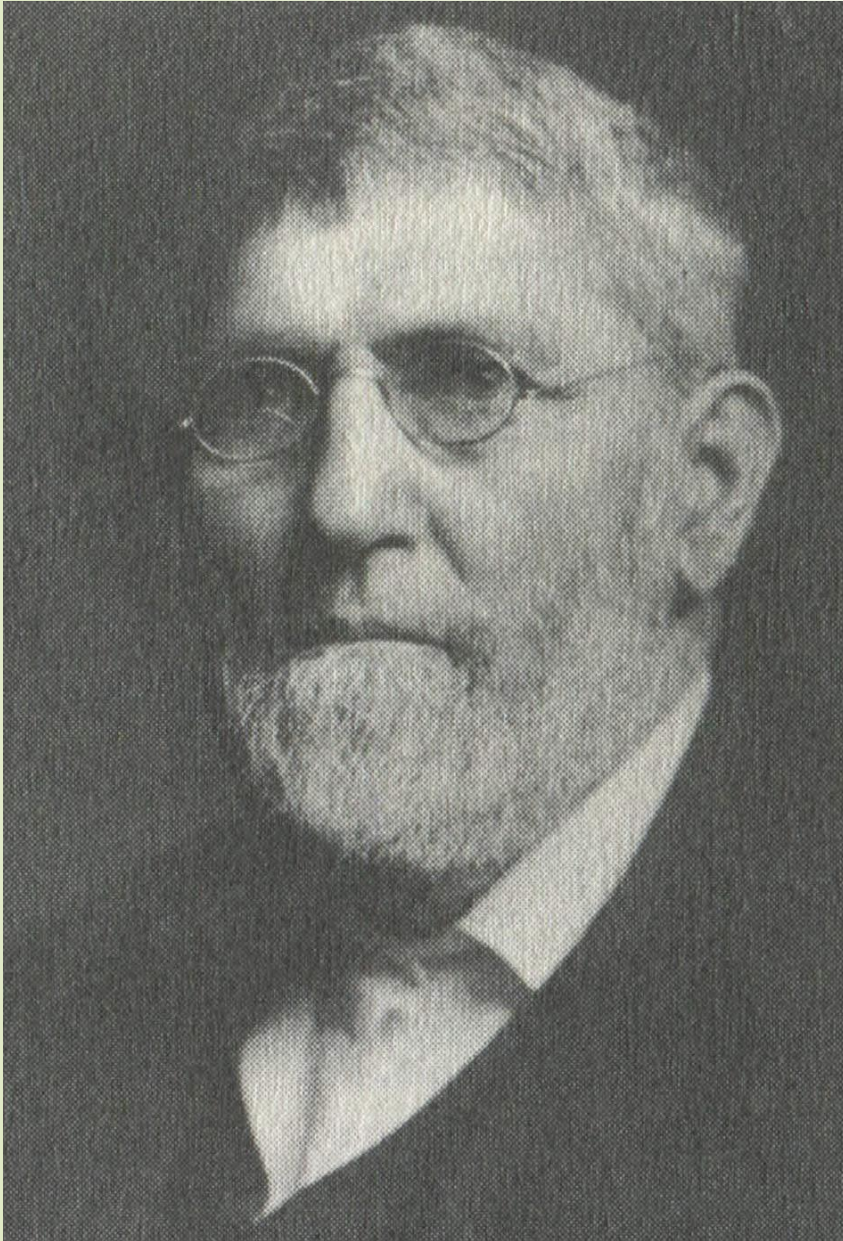
## Restoration Movement Background

- Well-known leaders opposed slavery although some not in favor of immediate abolition due to the social implications
- Most church members held pacifist views and most leaders advised members to stay out of the Civil War.
- Some southern leaders went as far to officially request “conscientious objector” status for their members.
- David Lipscomb, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*, emerged as the strongest voice against the use of violence – even when used to free the slaves.
- In 1866 a new journal, *The Christian Standard*, was founded in the North in reaction to the already existing one that had chosen a neutral stance.



## David Lipscomb (1831-1917)

- The war deeply impacted Lipscomb and he became convinced the Christian should not be involved in earthly politics in any way--not even voting.
- Christians were to:
  - Follow the "Sermon on the Mount" ethics.
  - Live as "resident aliens" waiting for the millennial kingdom.
  - Abstain from accumulating too much wealth.



## David Lipscomb (1831-1917)

- Interestingly, although Lipscomb's positions seemed "conservative" to those in the North, another group in Texas was forming that considered him to be liberal.
- The 'Texas tradition' was represented by another new journal – Austin McGary's *Firm Foundation* started in 1884.

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## Restoration Movement Background

### The Retreat of Pacifism

The problem was not scriptural argument (or silence), but American nationalism.

- US government propaganda in WW I used religious terms – God vs. devil.
- The *Firm Foundation* openly supported war effort while the *Gospel Advocate* faced threats of closure and forced to agree to stop promoting pacifism.
- After the attack on Pearl Harbor pacifism had all but faded from the conversation.

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The Call to Love Our Enemies

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## The Call to Love Our Enemies

### **Romans 12:17-21**

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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**The Call to Love Our Enemies**

**God's Servants for Justice and Punishment**

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## God's Servants for Justice and Punishment

The Old Testament provides a detailed description of what God expected in righteous leadership and administration:

- Judges and officials were to act justly without partiality and never accept bribes (Deut 16:18-20).
- Business and commerce were to be conducted with fairness and honesty (Deut 25:15).
- The king's responsibility was to guarantee the well-being of the people by providing justice for the afflicted, removing the oppressor and bringing prosperity to everyone (Ps 72:1-4).
- Understanding the king to be God's earthly representative, Solomon prayed for godly attributes with which to reign in order "to maintain justice and righteousness" (2 Chr 9:8).

# THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

## God's Servants for Justice and Punishment

### Romans 13:1-7

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is **God's servant** to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

# THE QUESTION OF MILITARY SERVICE

## God's Servants for Justice and Punishment

### Romans 13:1-7

Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

**This is also why you pay taxes,** for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

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**Christian Service and the Governing Authorities**

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## Christian Service and the Governing Authorities

### New Testament Pairings and Instructions Regarding Societal Roles

1. Husbands & Wives
2. Parents & Children
3. Masters & Slaves

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4. Government [no instructions] & Citizens
5. Church Leadership & Church Community

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**Unjust Punishment and the Call to Testify**

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## Unjust Punishment and the Call to Testify

### **2 Corinthians 6:3-7**

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; ... in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left ...

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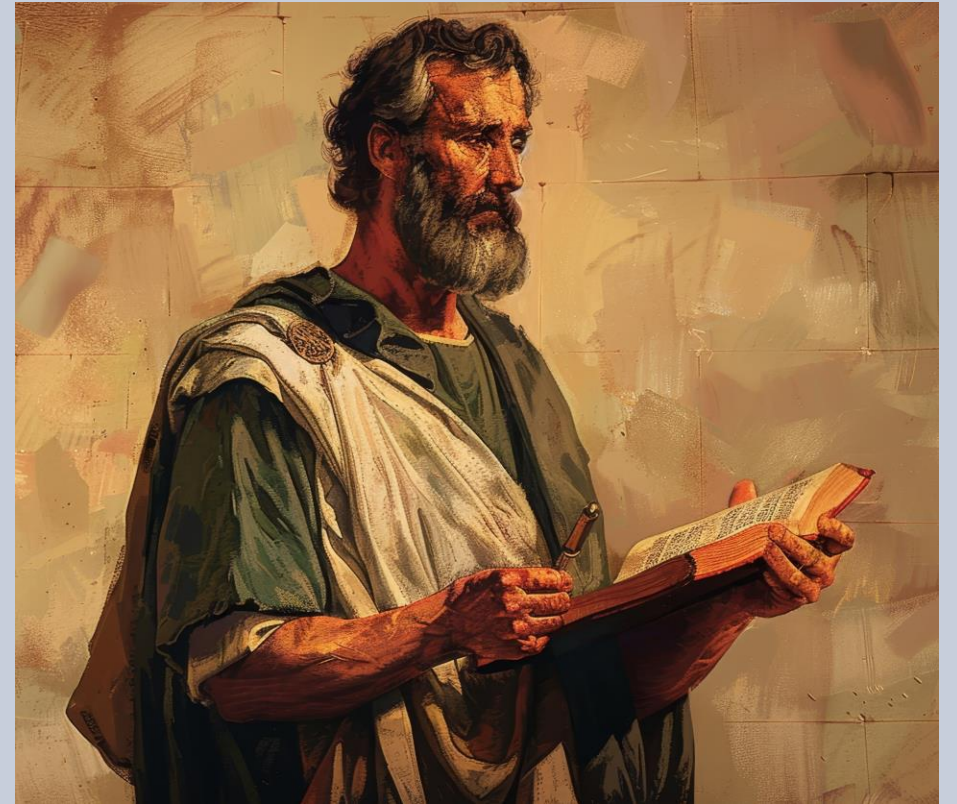
## Unjust Punishment and the Call to Testify

### **2 Corinthians 11:23-27**

Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, ... I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked."

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**You Are the Light of the World**

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## You Are the Light of the World

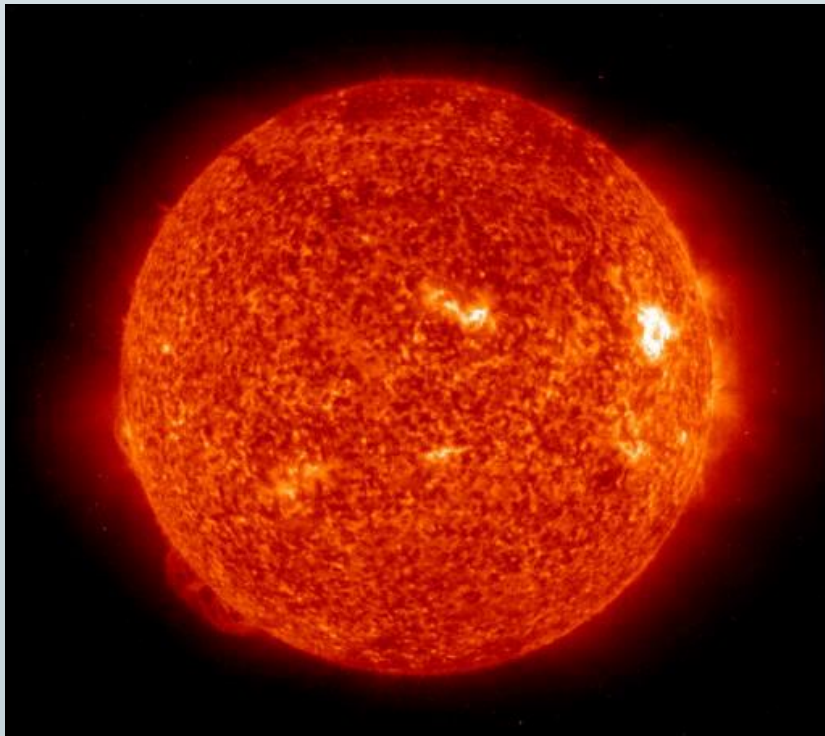
### **Matthew 5:14-16**

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

# TWO GREAT LIGHTS (IN THE OLD TESTAMENT)

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Sun



Moon



# TWO GREAT LIGHTS (IN THE NEW TESTAMENT)

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Jesus



Church



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