

The *Imago Dei* Doctrine and Its Influence upon the Stone-Campbell Leaders' View of Slavery

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The debate over slavery raged within churches and denominations from the founding of our nation. One of the central aspects of this debate was a focus on the significance of man being created in the image of God. The Methodist church denounced slavery in 1784 and called on church members to free slaves. They later retracted the call under pressure from proslavery members. The Virginia Baptists called slavery a “violent deprivation of the rights of nature.” In 1818, the Presbyterian General Assembly called slavery “a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature.”¹ Yet, the confession of the *imago dei* doctrine certainly did not always lead to the conclusion that American slavery was sinful and should be abolished. As Thomas Kidd goes on to note “there was too much economic and political pressure to look the other way” which prevented leading Christian groups from going beyond mere rhetoric.² The Stone-Campbell restoration movement was also struggling over this contentious issue. Early restoration leaders shaped the movement’s views toward theological anthropology with two rules “1) teachings must always be based on Scriptures, and 2) conclusions must never sound Calvinists or Roman Catholic.”³ The Restoration movement has “understood human beings to be God’s creatures, made in God’s image, male and female, owing worship and obedience to Him.” Human beings are “sinful” but “have great dignity, rationality, and freedom.”⁴ This background sets forth the inquisition of this research. How did restoration leaders allow the *imago dei*

¹ Thomas Kidd, *America’s Religious History: Faith, Politics, and the Shaping of a Nation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019), 131.

² Ibid. 131

³ Ron Highfield, “Theological Anthropology in the Restoration Movement: Past and Present,” *Leaven* 8, no. 3 (2000): 139

⁴ Ibid. 139

doctrine to influence their conclusions about the nature of slaves as well as their provision, education, and evangelism? Were their conclusions and applications different from contemporary Calvinists and leading voices of their day? To appropriately answer these questions, this paper will survey several restoration leaders' conclusions regarding slavery in comparison with several contemporary Calvinists' views of slavery and offer some reflections and analysis on these findings.

Restoration Leaders Conclusions Regarding Slavery

Alexander Campbell

Alexander Campbell was the preeminent leader of the restoration movement.⁵ Campbell wrote in his book *The Christian System*, "Man was made an image of God, though not the exact image—the active power of man is in his spirit."⁶ In the Campbell-Rice debate, Campbell maintained, "Adam was a natural man; we, as his mere offspring, are preternatural men, and under Christ we hope to rise to be supernatural men." While Campbell rejected Calvinism's original sin, election, and probation, he advocated an inherited "depravity" or what he called the "sin of our nature."⁷

Campbell wrote in 1838, that the father and the master has the "temporal and the eternal destiny of human beings" which God has "put into his hands a piece of clay which may

⁵ The narrow focus of this paper will not allow a thorough exploration of Campbell and slavery. For fuller inquiries the reader should consult the following: Douglas A. Foster, *A Life of Alexander Campbell* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans' Pub. Co, 2020) 273-297.; Joseph Baumstarck, "Alexander Campbell: A Neglected Antebellum Cultural and Religious Figure (2020 Stone Campbell Conference); Douglas A. Foster, "Alexander Campbell's Hermeneutical Rules and the Enslavement of Black People," *Stone-Campbell Journal* (25 Fall 2022) 163-172; Jess O. Hale Jr. "The Long Shadow of Slavery: American Public Morality and the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement," *Stone-Campbell Journal* (8, Spring 2005), 3-16. Robert Fife *Alexander Campbell and the Christian Church in The Slavery Controversy* Dissertation, University of Indiana, 1960.

⁶ Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System*, 2nd Edition, 1839. Web accessed: 8-24-2023; p. 24

⁷ Highfield, 140

be molded into a vessel of honor for the Master's use."⁸ He viewed fathers and masters as "highly distinguished as to be entrusted with the education, moral discipline, and, consequently the future fortunes of those born in his house."⁹ He laments the fact that the "education of servants . . . seems scarcely to have once entered into the minds of even the best class of Christians."¹⁰ He calls the actions of over working a slave while not meeting their moral and religious education "unchristian."¹¹ He specifically called for masters to impart a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and saw no justifiable reason for depriving servants of such knowledge and instruction. "Justice must impel all Christian masters so far to educate their servants to enable them to be the Lord's freeman."¹² Campbell's desires and instructions ran contrary to the predominant view of slaveholders in the antebellum south. While slaves longed to read the Bible, many masters did not want their slaves educated, and feared them learning to read the Bible as it would make them unruly.¹³

In 1845, Campbell wrote that "every man is by nature possessed of certain inalienable rights and immunities"¹⁴ Campbell believed Christ to be "'no respecter of person,' and as he was both the master and slave, we may be assured that he is as jealous for the rights of the slave as he is the rights of the master, and that he will as promptly and as fully avenge all aggressions upon the rights of the slave as he will all aggressions upon the rights of the master."¹⁵ He expects the Lord to punish the master who withholds the wife of a slave or the moral

⁸ Alexander Campbell, "Morality of Christians," *Millennial Harbinger* 2, No. 3 (1838): 97.

⁹ Ibid. 98.

¹⁰ Ibid. 99.

¹¹ Ibid. 99.

¹² Ibid. 100.

¹³ Thomas Kidd, *America's Religious History*, 114.

¹⁴ Alexander Campbell "Our Position on American Slavery," *Millennial Harbinger* 2, No. 2 (1845): 49.

¹⁵ Ibid. 235.

instruction due him as Christ died for the slave as well.¹⁶ Campbell believed slaves had “souls as well as bodies.”¹⁷ He remarked that they “have powers of reason; they have conscience, moral instincts, moral feelings, and are susceptible of spiritual enjoyments, of immortality, and eternal life.”¹⁸ Masters should recognize their rights as husbands, wives, and parents. They are due moral and religious training which are “inalienable rights and privileges.” “These cannot be withholden by Christian masters without the forfeiture of Christian character and Christian privilege, no matter what code of laws such injustice be perpetrated.”¹⁹ Campbell emphasized this concept that slaves were made in the likeness of their Creator and had immortal souls throughout his writings.²⁰ He taught that churches should do more to send the gospel to slaves and care about their burdened state.²¹ He advocated throughout the need for moral and religious training of slaves.²²

While it seems that his views of the *imago dei* lead him to advocate for virtuous treatment, education, and evangelism of slaves it did not lead him to abolition or equality of races. He repeated throughout his writings his belief that the “New Testament sanctions the relation of master and slave, when such relation is providentially existing in any community.”²³ He taught the sinfulness of “man-stealing.”²⁴ He himself freed all slaves that came into his

¹⁶ Ibid. 235.

¹⁷ Ibid. 237.

¹⁸ Ibid. 237.

¹⁹ Ibid. 237.

²⁰ Alexander Campbell, “Treatment and Duties of Servants.” *Millennial Harbinger*, Vol. 2, No. 10 (Oct. 1852) 669.

²¹ N.L. Rice, “The American Gibeonites,” *Millennial Harbinger* 4, No. 7 (1857) 161-164

²² Alexander Campbell “Our Position,” 261

²³ Ibid. 237.

²⁴ Ibid. 237.

possession.²⁵ Campbell opposed slavery as a “great evil,” yet his “principles of biblical interpretation and intense desire to avoid splits in his Christian unity movement prevented him from condemning slavery on biblical grounds and thus endorsing abolition.”²⁶ He advocated for colonization as a solution to the problem. Douglas Foster states, “his critique of slavery was that it was a detriment to the advancement of white America. . . He assumed, along with virtually all whites, the myth of white supremacy.”²⁷ Campbell wrote in the same series of articles often noted above in 1845 regarding his position on American Slavery:

Much as I may sympathize with the black man, I love the white man more. As a political economist, and as a philanthropist, I have many reasons for preferring the prospects and conditions of the Free to the Slave states; but especially as a Christian, I sympathize more with the owners of slaves, their heirs, and successors, than the slaves which they possess and bequeath.²⁸

Jess O’ Hale Jr critiqued Campbell’s position saying he “never got beyond the texts that established the practice of slavery to work with the broad biblical principles that would have subjected slavery to God’s judgment.”²⁹ He primarily sought a neutral position with slavery as to maintain the unity of his movement and thus was a “political ecumenist.”³⁰

Thomas Campbell

Thomas Campbell, the father of Alexander, held much of the same views as his son on the topic. He wrote an article in 1845 laying out his views on the subject. In the midst of his

²⁵ Joseph Baumstarck, “Alexander Campbell: A Neglected Antebellum Cultural and Religious Figure,” 2020 Stone-Campbell Conference

²⁶ Jess O. Hale Jr, “The Long Shadow of Slavery: American Public Morality and the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement,” *Stone-Campbell Journal* 8 (Spring 2005) 6

²⁷ Douglas Foster, “Alexander Campbell’s Hermeneutical Rules and the Enslavement of Black People,” *Stone-Campbell Journal*, 25 (Fall 2022) 167.

²⁸ Alexander Campbell, “Our Position on American Slavery—No. V,” *Millennial Harbinger* (May 1845) 234.

²⁹ Jess O. Hale Jr. “The Long Shadow of Slavery,” 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 7

biblical interpretations seeking to establish the Bible's sanctioning of slavery, he writes about the nature and rights of slaves. He says all men are not "'born free and equal' consequently, are not the subjects of equal rights." But he quickly goes on to state that the Bible teaches that "all possess natural rights, of which they cannot be deprived upon any pretense, without a manifest violation of the express laws of God." He goes on to enumerate certain "natural rights" which includes "religious privileges."³¹ He goes on to warn that God may destroy American slavery because of it being distinguished by "inhuman and antichristian adjuncts, by any unnatural, immoral, and irreligious usages."³² He instructs Christian masters to remember the Apostle's injunctions and "they should so do both with respect to the souls and bodies of their servants as they would desire to be done to them in like circumstances."³³

Barton W. Stone

Barton W. Stone is recognized for his leading role in starting and propelling the restoration movement. He wrote in his publication *The Christian Messenger*, "After the most careful examination, we are convinced that slavery is unjust in itself, and cannot be justified by any laws or circumstances; that it wars against Christianity, and is condemned by our Declaration of Independence."³⁴ He saw "slavery as a sin of which all the people of this country are more or less guilty, and ought immediately to repent and to reform."³⁵ He advocated for a colonization policy as an effective remedy. He based his opposition to slavery upon his beliefs about the *imago dei*. As Jess O. Hale Jr. stated about Stone's writings, he "does not oppose

³¹ Thomas Campbell, "Views of Slavery" *Millennial Harbinger* 3, No. 2 (1845) 6

³² *Ibid.* 8.

³³ *Ibid.* 8

³⁴ Barton W. Stone, "Address to the People of the United States on Slavery," *The Christian Messenger*, IX, No. 6 (June 1835) 124.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 125.

slavery on the basis of exegesis of numerous specific texts, but rather asserts that slavery violates self-evident and inalienable rights of every human being to freedom and that slavery offends broad biblical principles like the universal brotherhood of human beings as children of God and equal justice.”³⁶ Newell Williams summarized Stone’s antislavery pilgrimage:

Examination of Stone’s antislavery pilgrimage indicates an abiding opposition to slavery over a period of more than forty years; discloses Stone’s consistent respect for the African as a human being; and shows that the driving force of all his anti-slavery activities, no matter how wrongheaded his support of the colonization scheme, was not ‘negrophobia’ or the welfare of Whites, but rather justice for the African slave.³⁷

Walter Scott

Walter Scott was a leading evangelist and writer within the Stone-Campbell restoration movement. Scott was born in 1796 and died in 1861. William Baxter, a biographer of Scott, said he found slavery, which was the great question of the day, a question of “unbounded extent, interest and perplexity.”³⁸ He was inclined to the views of the colonizationists, rather than the abolitionists. He wrote, “The manumission of our slave population can be accomplished now only by a means which heaven alone knows—I know it not.” He went on to add, “I am no friend to slavery, I deprecate its commencement, I deplore its continuance, and tremble for its issue; but I am silent because I think to speak would be folly.”³⁹ He blamed the problem upon the government and saw “slavery is radically a political evil, not a religious evil.” He said, “I will not defend slavery in any State; it is a political evil, and to defend it would be like defending evil of

³⁶ Jess O. Hale Jr., “The Long Shadow,” 9.

³⁷ D. Newell Williams, “Pursuit of Justice: The Antislavery Pilgrimage of Barton W. Stone,” *Encounter* 61.4 (2000) 2.

³⁸ William Baxter, *The Life of Elder Walter Scott* (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1874) 359.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 360

any other kind. The fact is, the government must be made to act in this affair if we would cure it, and all attempts to remove the disease by any other means is so much time lost.”⁴⁰

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin, a fourth generation descendent of the famous American statesmen by the same name, lived between 1812 and 1878. He was a significant voice in the restoration movement conducting many meetings and debates. He was strongly Armenian and debated Calvinists in his ministry. In one debate, he stated, man’s “highest and noblest attribute” is being created in the “image of God.” He believed that “man was created in the image of God, and God loved him.”⁴¹ His periodical was called *The American Christian Review* published in Cincinnati. In 1856, he wrote an article addressing the nation’s crisis with slavery and the concern of division within the restoration movement over the issue. The article was entitled appropriately, “Where is the Safe Ground?”. In the article he states, “The Lord and his apostles lived, preached, practiced, and established Christianity in countries where slavery existed. They spoke of it and acted in reference to it; the course they pursued in reference to slavery, to master and servant, is the safe, the only safe, the infallibly safe course for every man of God.”⁴² He then will further argue that Christ never made any attacks on slavery and the positions of master and servant were sanctioned by the church. He said, “Both masters and slaves entered by the same door into the primitive church and were members of it.” He was focused on unity of brethren. He would later refuse to take up arms during the Civil War for either side, arguing he loved his

⁴⁰ Ibid. 361

⁴¹ Benjamin Franklin, A Debate on Total Hereditary Depravity, Between Rev. Joel Hume and Benjamin Franklin, Nov. 14 – Nov. 17, 1853; Mount Vernon Ind.; Published by Larkin Dusouchet and Co, 1854.

⁴² Benjamin Franklin, “Where is the Safe Ground?” *The American Christian Review* 1.2 (1856) 37

brethren and would not fight against them. Franklin saw “our duty, as the disciples of Christ, is to convert all men, both bond and free, master and servant, as far as in our power.”⁴³

Contemporary Comparisons Regarding Slavery

James Henley Thornwell

J. H. Thornwell was an American Presbyterian preacher, slaveowner, and religious writer from the U.S. state of South Carolina. Thornwell was Calvinist in his beliefs and decidedly pro-slavery. His sermon “The Rights and Duties of Masters” was preached at the dedication of a church building erected in Charleston for the benefit and instruction of slaves. In the sermon he argues for the biblical sanctioning of American slavery and pictures the South as a model to the world. Yet he strongly holds to the image of God within slaves. He states:

It is a publick testimony to our faith, that the Negro is of one blood with ourselves—that he has sinned as we have, and that he has an equal interest with us in the great redemption. Science, falsely so called, may attempt to exclude him from the brotherhood of humanity. Men may be seeking eminence and distinction by arguments which link them with the brute; but the instinctive impulses of our nature, combined with the plainest declarations of the word of God, lead us to recognize in his form and lineaments—in his moral, religious and intellectual nature—the same humanity in which we glory as the image of God. We are not ashamed to call him our brother.⁴⁴

He will later add in the same sermon that slaves are “fully stamped with the image of God.”⁴⁵ He argued that the character of both master and slave will be judged by God and both should carry out their duty because “God looketh at the heart.”⁴⁶

John A. Broadus and James P. Boyce

⁴³ Ibid. 38.

⁴⁴ James Henley Thornwell, “The Rights and Duties of Masters: A Sermon Preached at the Dedication of a church erected in Charleston, S.C., for the benefit and instruction of the coloured population” Pres. Of Walker and James, 1850 – Public Domain – <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/yale.39002004692761>, 11

⁴⁵ Ibid. 36

⁴⁶ Ibid. 37

John A. Broadus served as the second President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Their website writes of him, “as a preacher, professor, and leader, Broadus looms large in Southern’s history and in the history of the SBC.” He was a highly respected scholar and author of significant texts including his landmark work on homiletics, *The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.⁴⁷ Broadus professed and taught Calvinism. He believed Adam and Eve were made in the image of God.⁴⁸ In the last decade, his ties to slavery have come under scrutiny by the public and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. SBTS reported in 2018, that during the Civil War, of which Broadus served the Confederacy as a Chaplain, Broadus “drafted and presented resolutions pledging Southern Baptist support for the Confederacy.”⁴⁹ “After the emancipation of slaves, Broadus advocated for the relocation of SBTS to a more desirable location than Greenville, South Carolina, which one of his co-founders describes as an ‘incubus and plague’ simply because of the mere presence of freed slaves. Broadus was agreeable saying he preferred to reestablish the seminary “in a white man’s country.” He is quoted as stating the following in a sermon contributed to the Courier-Journal in 1893:

We must not forget that the Negroes differ widely among themselves, having come from different races in Africa, and having had very different relations to the white people while held in slavery, many of them greatly superior to others in character, but the great mass of them belong to a very low grade of humanity. We have to deal with them as best we can, while a large number of other white people stand off at a distance and scold us. Not a few of our fellow-citizens at the north feel and act very nobly about the

⁴⁷ The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, “John A. Broadus: 1889-1895”
<https://archives.sbts.edu/the-history-of-the-sbts/our-presidents/john-a-broadus-1889-1895/>

⁴⁸ John A. Broadus, “The Catechism of Bible Teaching” 1892;
<https://www.reformedreader.org/cc/cbt1892.htm>

⁴⁹ Will Hall, “Greeear ‘drops’ gavel for racist links, but silent about slave owners ties to seminary”
BaptistMessage.com; June 19, 2020; <https://www.baptistmessage.com/j-d-greeear-drops-gavel-for-racist-links-but-silent-about-slave-owners-ties-to-seminary/>

matter, but the number is sadly great who do nothing and seem to care nothing but to find fault.⁵⁰

An SBTS report found that “he and many others in the administration and on the faculty believed God predestined Africans to captivity and thus it would be going against God’s will, His providence, to oppose slavery.”⁵¹ Broadus did feel it was wrong to prohibit slaves to marry and to attend religious services.

Connected with Broadus was James P. Boyce, a fellow faculty member at SBTS. Boyce was the first President of SBTS. He had studied under Charles Hodge at Princeton and was a strong proponent of Calvinism. Boyce wrote to his brother-in-law H.A. Tupper describing why he thought emancipation was coming to America.

I believe I see in all this the end of slavery. I believe we are cutting its throat, curtailing its domain. And I have been, and am, an ultra pro-slavery man. Yet I bow to what God will do. I feel that our sins as to this institution have cursed us, - that the Negroes have not been cared for in their marital and religious relations as they should be; and I fear God is going to sweep it away, after having left it thus long to show us how great we might be, were we to act as we ought in this matter.⁵²

Charles Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon who lived between 1834 and 1892 was the most recognized preacher during the 19th century. Spurgeon who served in London, England often voiced his sentiments, “I believe slavery to be a crime of crimes, a soul-destroying sin, and an iniquity which cries aloud for vengeance.”⁵³ Nathan Lewis notes that Spurgeon despised slavery because he believed the

⁵⁰ Ken Pulliam, “Evangelicals Attempt to Defend Slavery in 18th and 19th Century America – Part Four,” May 29, 2010; http://formerfundy.blogspot.com/2010/05/evangelicals-attempt-to-defend-slavery_29.html

⁵¹ Will Hall, “Greear”

⁵² Ken Pullum, “Evangelicals Attempt”

⁵³ Nathan Rose, “Spurgeon and the Slavery Controversy of 1860: A Critical Analysis of the Anthropology of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, as it relates specifically to his Stance on Slavery,” *Midwestern Journal of Theology* 16:1 (2017) 20

“Bible taught him that every person, regardless of his or her race or class, was a human being made in the image of God, and was worthy of honor and respect.”⁵⁴ Spurgeon’s opposition to slavery, which created controversy for him and a boycott of his sermon books in America, caused him significant stress and cost him a great sum of money. He never relented or changed on his abolitionist position despite the hardships it caused. Spurgeon’s position was derived from his anthropology. He “believed all humans belonged to one race and that every human is made in the image of God.”⁵⁵ Spurgeon wrote, “In Holy Scripture all partakers of flesh and blood are regarded as of one family. By the fact of common descent from Adam, all men are of one race, seeing that “God had made of one blood all nations that dwell upon the face of the earth.”⁵⁶ Spurgeon did not see skin color as excluding one from belonging to the human race. He saw every death as tragic and the treating of humans with malice and cruelty as sinful. He believed slavery regarded fellow human beings in an inhumane way. He was a Calvinist in his theology. He believed strongly in the image of God and saw slaves as image bearers of God. He wanted slaves to hear the gospel and believed his preaching was well suitable for them. He once remarked, “if it is suitable for blacks I should think it would be very suitable for whites; for there is only a little difference of skin, and I do not preach to people’s skins, but to their hearts.”⁵⁷

George Whitefield

George Whitefield was one of the founders of Methodism and major figure of the “Great Awakening.” Whitefield was “instrumental in advocating for the legalization of slavery in

⁵⁴ Ibid. 21

⁵⁵ Ibid. 29

⁵⁶ Ibid. 30

⁵⁷ Ibid. 34

Georgia.”⁵⁸ He started an orphanage in Georgia and desired slave labor for the orphanage. At the time slavery was outlawed in Georgia and he lobbied for this to be changed. He was able to achieve this result and on his death in 1770 he bequeathed 50 slaves to the Countess of Huntingdon.⁵⁹ Whitefield believed slaves were made in the image of God and that Christ died for them on the cross. He had written to whites, “Think you, your children are in anyway better by nature [than black children]? No! In no wise! Blacks are just as much, and no more, conceived and born in sin as white men are, and both, I am persuaded, are naturally as capable of the same improvement.”⁶⁰

Political Contemporaries

It seems that a few quotes from political figures during this time period will offer further comparisons with restoration movement leaders. For example, Alexander Stephens who was the vice-president of the Confederacy, declared that the independent South’s “cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man . . . It is the first government ever instituted upon the principles in strict conformity to nature, and the ordination of Providence, in furnishing the materials of human society . . . It is, indeed, in conformity with the ordinance of the Creator.”⁶¹ Clearly, Stephens ties his support of slavery to his view of the nature of negro slaves and sees this as ordained by God.

The issue of equality of the “negro” was a part of the landmark Lincoln-Douglas debate. Douglas accused Lincoln of wanting to emancipate slaves and “make them the social and

⁵⁸ “George Whitefield”

www.pennandslaveryproject.org/exhibits/show/campus/earlycampus/georgewhitefield

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ “George Whitefield,” www.lexloiz.wordpress.com/2010/03/26/george-whitefield-and-african-american-christianity-2/

⁶¹ Thomas Kidd, *America’s Religious History*, 142-143

political equals of white people.”⁶² Douglas stated, “I do not regard the negro as my equal, and positively deny that he is my brother or any kin to me whatever.” Lincoln would respond by clarifying he was not for “molesting slavery in the South” nor for “Negro equality.” Lincoln argued there was a “physical difference” between the races and that would “probably” prevent them from living together in perfect equality. Lincoln went on, “Negros were not his equal or the equal of Douglas in moral and intellectual endowment. But they were equal to Lincoln, Douglas, and ‘every living man’ in their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, which included the right to the fruits of their labor.”⁶³ Lincoln’s general George Brinton McClellan, who proved to be a thorn in the side to Lincoln’s war aims, was an ardent Calvinist and had a conviction that he was the nation’s “preordained . . . deliverer.” He was a supporter of slavery and did not believe the war should be fought with the aim of emancipation. He has been historically shown to have “Negrophobia.”⁶⁴

Reflection and Analysis

It seems that three general areas of observations can be made from this survey and research. The primary, and most obvious one, I would argue is that there is no consistent application of the *imago dei* doctrine upon slavery by religious leaders. The question of whether restoration leaders were significantly different in their conclusions is assuredly answered as “no.” Belief in slaves being made in the image of God did not lead to the same conclusions within the restoration movement or outside of it. In truth, it seems that as in many other

⁶² Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, (New York: Harper& Row Pub., 1977), 153

⁶³ Ibid. 154

⁶⁴ Richard Carwardine, *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopp, 2003) 187-188

religious convictions, common agreement upon a doctrine, often does not lead to the same application. We have seen that within the restoration movement there were differences in conclusions and certainly outside the movement with contemporaries there were differences. This research demonstrates that there are no significant differences in Armenian and Calvinists. Michael McKenzie, a counselor who works with ministers who suffered from burnout and moral failure, observed in his book *Don't Blow Up Your Ministry* that one may think that theological beliefs contribute to the burnout. He stated they work with strong Calvinists and ardent Armenians and every shade in-between but has observed no correlation. Instead, he stated, this significant conclusion, "A person's personal brokenness will influence the broken way they do ministry more than anything else."⁶⁵ It seems like this observation made almost two centuries later regarding a completely different subject accurately explains why they came to such different and often wrong conclusions. They were writing from their broken and limited views related to race, prejudice, and white supremacy.

A secondary reflection is to observe that the *imago dei* doctrine did significantly influence restoration leaders' conclusions. While it did not lead to a consistent conclusion regarding the slavery issue, it did lead to consensus and ardent instruction regarding other issues. Alexander Campbell, Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, and Benjamin Franklin all called forth in various degrees for virtuous treatment of slaves, the education of slaves, and respect for the sanctity of the family unit. These conclusions, especially Campbell's repeatedly taking up the pen on the issue of the master's duties to educate slaves morally and religiously were most certainly influenced by their view of the *imago dei*. Also, their consistent belief in slaves having

⁶⁵ Michael McKenzie *Don't Blow Up Your Ministry*, (Westmont, Illinois: IVPress, 2021) Audiobook, ch. 7

souls and the need of the church to evangelize them is clearly an outworking of their belief of their nature. Thus, I would argue that the doctrine was very influential in pointing them to these conclusions.

This secondary reflection prompts a question to be explored. Why did their beliefs on the *imago dei* lead to counter-cultural conclusions about the treatment, education, evangelizing, and familial rights of slaves? Why did it not consistently lead to abolition or emancipation? Why did it not lead to equality and a complete stripping away of their own white supremacy beliefs? It seems the answer to this question for restoration leaders centers around two issues: 1) their hermeneutic, 2) their influence by culture at large. Douglas Foster demonstrated that Alexander Campbell's reading Scripture as a "legal document" showed to him that "God sanctioned and regulated slavery and never condemned it."⁶⁶ The restoration movement with its hermeneutic which desires to follow the Bible only and respects the authority of Scripture lead to their conclusions that slavery should not be a divisive issue. One could argue as Foster does that Campbell did not see slavery as an issue of godly justice.⁶⁷ However, it seems that Campbell and other restoration leaders simply were trying to closely follow Biblical authority and examples in all things. His conclusions on instructing masters virtuous and stewardship behavior, advocating for educating slaves, valuing their marriages, and for mutual fellowship within the church were all clearly supported in Scripture, while he could not find clear justification for advocating for emancipation or abolition. Secondly, as the other comparison quotes demonstrate these restoration leaders were a product of their time. In many

⁶⁶ Douglas Foster, "Alexander Campbell's," 169

⁶⁷ Ibid. 169

ways, their views were calling Christians to counter-cultural actions and challenging their churches to evangelize and fellowship slaves. Ultimately, it seems their inability to rise above their culture's normative and assumed beliefs skewed their lenses and prohibited them from fully drawing out proper and complete conclusions related to the *imago dei* within every human. Their white supremacy indoctrinated culture and the many legal and political beliefs of the day significantly influenced their conclusions.

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