

An Introduction to Walter Scott

Walter Scott was born in Moffatt, Scotland on October 31, 1796. He arrived in America in 1818. In the early 1820s Scott met Alexander Campbell and discovered that they had a great many similar ideas about the Christian life. They agreed that divisions between denominations were not a good thing and that all one need to do to become a Christian was to believe in Jesus Christ.

Along with Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott receives credit for founding the Christian movement (sometimes called the Stone-Campbell Movement) that resulted in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Christian Churches and the Church of Christ.

Scott was an evangelist who was driven by his desire to convert unchurched people to belief in Jesus Christ. He did not believe, as was popular at the time, that people had to be convinced of their sins before they could enter a faith experience. He believed that people had to first know about God's love. He preached to whomever would listen and it mattered not where-in school buildings, churches, town halls, a clearing in the woods. He was sometimes referred to as the "preacher on horseback" as he rode through the early American countryside proclaiming the gospel.

Walter Scott would address himself to the school children who were returning home from school in such a way that he soon had quite a circle of them gathered around him. He then said to them: "Children, hold up your left hands." They all did so, anticipating some sport. "Now," said he, "beginning with your thumb repeat what I say to you: Faith, repentance, baptism, forgiveness of sins, gifts of the Holy Spirit." He then said, "Children, now run home-don't forget what is on your fingers and tell your parents that a man will preach the gospel tonight at the school house, as you have it on the five fingers of your hands." Away went the children in great glee, repeating as they went, "Faith, repentance, baptism, forgiveness of sins, gifts of the Holy Spirit" and soon the story was rehearsed in nearly every house of the village and neighborhood.