

THE GUIDELINE

Psalm 31:3

Editor: The following article will help motivate those who believe they can not accomplish God's work because they are few in number. It shows what can happen if a person is willing to let the Bible guide them and put aside the creeds of men. It also strikes another blow to those who affix A. Campbell or B. Stone as founders of the church of Christ. The article in its entirety can be found in Biographical Sketches of Gospel Preachers by H. Leo Boles, or you can find it on this website: www.therestorationmovement.com.

WADE BARRETT 1800-1870

The subject of this sketch illustrates how much good can be done by one faithful energetic servant of the Lord in one community. Many have been perplexed over the problem of doing the greatest good. How can it be done? Can one do the greatest good by evangelizing from Maine to California or from the Lakes to the Gulf, or can one do the greatest good by locating in a community and living one's life there and not go beyond the boundaries of his own locality? We are to see that at least one man has built up dozens of churches within his own county.

Wade Barrett was born on February 29, 1800, in North Carolina. His father emigrated to Tennessee in 1818 and settled in Giles County. He died soon after moving to Tennessee. Young Wade Barrett was the oldest of several children, and on him fell the heavy burden of providing for the family. Never did a son or brother discharge his duty more faithfully than did Wade Barrett. In 1824 he married a Miss Jones in Giles County. She was a woman worthy and well qualified to assist and cheer her husband while he preached the glad tidings of salvation to perishing sinners.

Wade Barrett's parents were members of the Baptist Church, and while quite a youth he united with that church. Soon after uniting with the Baptist Church he began to take an active part in the public exercises of that church. His education was very limited. He did not have advantages of obtaining even the best education that could be given in that country at that time. However, he inherited a very strong intellect and large powers of heart and soul. He had good judgment and withal a well developed mind and body. His rugged native ability enabled him to push forward and make a success where many others with better advantages have failed.

He was reared on the farm. When he became a man, he was not only a good farmer, but was also a good blacksmith and sawmill manager. His farm was on Elk Ridge, near old Lynnville, Tenn., about two and one half miles east of that town. His neighbors learned to look to him for help because of his largeness of heart and sound judgment in counseling them in the common affairs of life.

By nature he was pious and gave much attention to the subject of religion as it was taught in that section during his day. The only churches in his country were the Methodist Church and the Baptist Church. As he had turned his attention to public speaking, he gave much thought to the study of the New Testament. He worshiped with the Robertson Fork Baptist Church, in Giles County. There was no preacher among the Baptists in that section who could preach the tenets of the Baptist Church better than

could Wade Barrett. He did not study the “Confession of Faith” of the Baptist Church to learn what his church could do, but had gathered from conversation with Baptists and from what he had heard them preach the principles of the Baptist Church; but as he now studied the New Testament and preached what he found contained therein, he soon found himself at variance in some points with Baptist doctrine generally. The church to which he belonged, as did all others of like faith, belonged to the Baptist Association. Wade Barrett, by his superior intelligence and self gained education, led the Robertson Fork Baptist Church closer to the New Testament teaching than were the sister Baptist churches of the association, Wade Barrett preached for other Baptist churches near him.

The writer now has before him the minutes of the Robertson Fork Church. The minutes of this church begin in January, 1820, and give in detail the minutes to the close of the year 1867. These minutes show the gradual steps taken from the confusion and error of the Baptist Church at that place and in neighboring communities to the full light of freedom and truth in Christ Jesus. During this time Wade Barrett was the principal leader in all of its activities. In 1830 the association of Baptist churches to which Robertson Fork belonged pronounced the Robertson Fork Church, together with two others namely, Liberty and Hobb Creek Church out of harmony with the teachings of the Baptist faith. Wade Barrett had been preaching for all three of these congregations. This was before he had heard anything about Alexander Campbell or Barton W. Stone. Wade Barrett had taught these Baptist churches what he found revealed in the New Testament. These minutes record that the church at Robertson Fork meetinghouse, Giles County, Tenn., stated that “ the disciples of Jesus Christ, called the church of God at that place . . . a number of brethren from other churches being present. . . . with one consent do set apart James P. Deans, one

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of our members of good standing among us, to exercise fully his gift in teaching the word of the Lord and attending to all things in the house of the Lord as his word directs. . . . the Friday before the fourth Lord’s day in May, 1832, and recorded among us on our church book.” This shows that the Robertson Fork Baptist Church ceased to call itself a “Baptist Church” in May, 1832, and that it called itself the “church of God” in that same year.†

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