



CONGREGATIONAL HISTORY

Gallatin Church of Christ

Daniel Gordon

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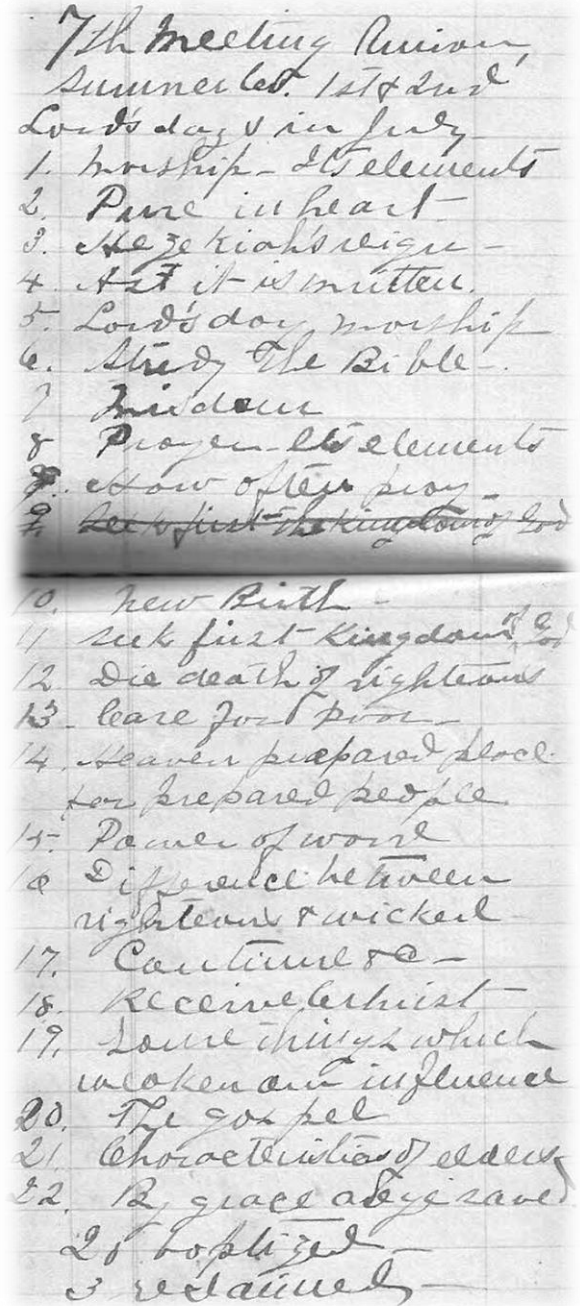
Brother Elam: A Meeting and a Gift

During our Green Street (now Boyers Street) church building era (1870-1914), several preachers served our congregation. One of these, Edwin Alexander Elam, alternated regularly in preaching for both our church and for Old Union. There is evidence that he worked some with Gallatin and Old Union in the 1880s. For example, he conducted a meeting with Old Union in 1887. To the right is a copy of a record Elam kept of that meeting. It says:

"7th meeting Union, Sumner Co. 1st & 2nd Lord's day in July.

1. Worship – Its elements
2. Pure in heart
3. Hezekiah's reign
4. As it is written
5. Lord's day worship
6. Study the Bible
7. Wisdom(?)
8. Prayer – Its elements
9. How often pray
10. New birth
11. Seek first kingdom of God
12. Die death of righteous
13. Care for poor
14. Heaven prepared place for prepared people
15. Power of word
16. Difference between righteous and wicked
17. Continue &c(?)
18. Receive Christ
19. Some things which weaken our influence
20. The gospel
21. Characteristics of elders
22. By grace are ye saved.

"20 baptized
"3 reclaimed."



Elam kept record of many such meetings, as they were a common part of evangelism during that time. This meeting was held in 1887. I do not yet know where Elam lived at this time. Nor is it clear to me how well he knew the people of the Gallatin and Union churches then. I do know that Elam alternated preaching for Gallatin and Union from 1893 until 1897. In 1894, in gratitude for his service, the two congregations presented him with a Bible. A “J. W. Smith” gave a speech for the presentation, a typed copy of which was given to me by Elam’s granddaughter, Jane Elam Hundley, who currently resides in the Elam home in Lebanon.

Smith’s presentation speech reads as follows (with missing parts in brackets):

“Brother Elam:

“To me has been allotted the pleasant duty of expressing our feelings on this occasion. I say pleasant, for truly the duty is one I have coveted, since it is but the conveying to you of a message of love from both the Union and Gallatin congregations which you have served so faithfully and well for years past.

“You know we love you, and we know that this gift was not necessary in order that you should understand this; but loving you so much, we desire to place with you a substantial remembrance of the fact, and to this [...] have met here to-day.

“God has been from the beginning of time [...] me[?] []s possible, manifesting his love toward [...] of men. He so loved the world as to give his o[nly be-]gotten Son to die, that they might live eternally [with] him; and second only to this great gift he gave u[s the] Bible, his revealed will to man, and if God could [convey?] to us his infinite love by this message, we [...] is exceedingly appropriate that we convey [...] through the same channel or in the sam[e ...]

“Therefore, representing the Uni[on and Gallatin] congregations, and desiring to manifest [...] present you with this Bible, and in [...] to hope that receiving it w[...] much pleasure as presenting does to us, and that your life of usefulness may be long, and that you may in the future as in the past continue to sound forth ‘The Word’ in all its purity.

“J. W. Smith.

“Gallatin, Tenn.....1894.”

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Jane Elam Hundley received a copy of this presentation speech from Terry Gardner, an elder from Indianapolis who, I believe, made a presentation on E. A. Elam at Lipscomb University’s Summer Celebration this summer.¹ Being aware of my research, she kindly mailed me a copy of the speech. Months ago, Jane welcomed me to her home—her grandfather’s home. Her hospitality was warm, and it was thrilling to peruse the records of a man who preached for our church in the 1890s, doing so in a building of ours that isn’t even standing any more. It’s great to know that his work is not forgotten²—nor is our (and Old Union’s) gift to him. His granddaughter provides an exciting, living link with our own past.



¹ I am aware of another man (Joe Hopper) who has conducted some research on Brother Elam. Jane Elam Hundley has offered to put me in touch with that research, too. Many thanks for her many kindnesses.

² You might also be interested to know that there is an “Elam Hall” dormitory for girls at Lipscomb University.