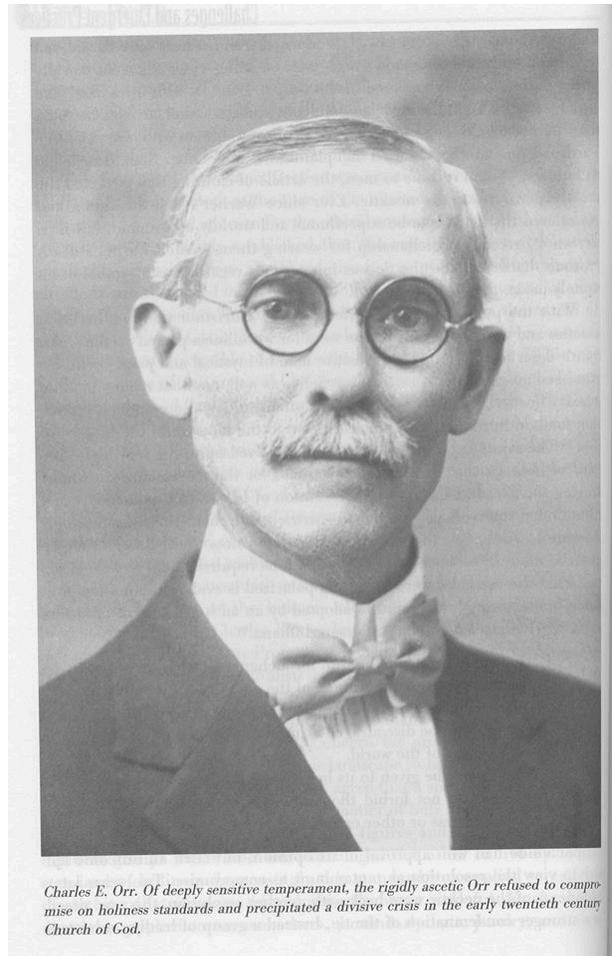


Biography of Rev. Charles Ebert Orr, Church of God

Charles Ebert Orr was an unusual man of God, a prolific writer, yet considering that his first book was not published until 1897 at the age of thirty-six, his output was outstanding; please see a list of his works at the end of this bio. In addition to his own writing, Brother Orr began working at the Gospel Trumpet, a Church of God publication in 1902, exactly how long he worked is not explained, but the position he held would have been one of three: Contributing Editor, Managing Editor or Office Manager.ⁱ Orr's trail in service to Christ took him from east coast to west coast, South America, the West Indies, Jamaica, Scotland, pastoring, evangelizing, often teaching a Sunday School class, preaching then in the main service, and leading those that were interested in being a Christian in study, referred to as a inquirers class. While at home in the Church of God, he would also pastor a Baptist Church in Oklahoma.

The primary focus of Charles E. Orr in ministry was holiness, even the titles of most of his books, reference a righteous lifestyle. It is not surprising that his teaching "precipitated a divisive crisis in the early twentieth century Church of God."ⁱⁱ With this said, the Tagline of the Gospel Trumpet, when Orr began working there in 1902 was: "Sanctification - Oneness in Christ."ⁱⁱⁱ The atmosphere with which Rev. Orr started with the Church of God was one of holiness, he just did not change as some others wished to do. Some ten years later Charles would address this schism and speak of being unified rather than being separated.^{iv}

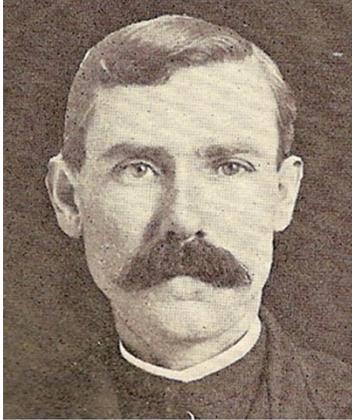
I believe a Christian man should be given the opportunity to explain himself or describe himself, the reader affording his historical statements weight as we judge his fruit, thereby giving us an understanding of who he was. I can find no better idea of who Charles Orr was than by these his words: "I have my heart and soul in the work of God."^v Regardless of what we think of Orr now we need to remember that we are looking backward, from an obscured vantage point. With that said, I don't believe that anyone can question Rev. Orr's sincerity, or his love for Jesus Christ.



Beyond his desire for holiness, Charles had a heart for youth, desiring to uplift them above the moral station that the world was providing. He was a man ahead of his time racially speaking, in that he preached to anyone, any color, anywhere, including mixed-racial Churches. Truly, C. E. Orr, was a man not confined to his beginning situation, nor slowed by adversity. His ministerial outreach was in small towns, never holding a large pastorate, yet he did the work of God, whether troubles arose from within or without, through deaths survived, and heartache much, Rev. Orr persevered.

Charles Orr was born on May 5th, 1861, in Williamsburg (spelled Williamsburgh until 1893), Ohio, which is about thirty miles east and slightly south of Cincinnati, and about eight miles east of Batavia, which is the Claremont County Seat. Williamsburg is situated on the banks of the Little Miami River, the quaint village at the time of Charles' birth was nearing six-hundred folk, his parents were Lorenzo Orr (born 1822) and Rachel Riggs Orr (born 1825), who had married on August 11, 1844.

Charles Ebert Orr had brown eyes, a light complexion, a slender face with a prominent chin, accompanied with a medium sized nose and mouth, these features complimented by a high forehead. He would grow to five-foot eleven inches and was gray haired by the time he reached the age of fifty-two. Charles was the younger brother of Thomas (1851), Alfred (1854), Addie (she was born in 1856) Etta (1859) and he had a younger sister, Olive (1865) and they would lose their father early, Lorenzo dying in 1880, which left Thomas, Alfred and Charles to take care of the family farm.



Charles E. Orr
1861-1933

Although Charles Orr was a minister, yet often he considered his trade as a farmer, he as so many preachers could not rely upon a salary from a Church or even offerings when evangelizing. Charles Orr married Minnie M. Rucker (born July 24, 1864) on June 17, 1886. Minnie and Charles would have five children, Ethel, born in 1887, then born in 1891 Charles H., Lena was born in 1892, Victor in 1895, and Berti or Birdie in 1901. Minnie passed away on August 3, 1911. Almost to the day, on August 29, 1912, Rev. Orr married for the second time, to Miss Madora (Dora) Conover of Coalfax, Washington, in Cayuga, Indiana; Rev. S. P. Strang officiated, and Rev. Orr's daughter Lena was in attendance.^{vi}

Mr. and Mrs. Orr resided in Anderson, Indiana (1914) but Reverend Orr's ministerial duties had him moving frequently, with Churches in Anderson, Indiana, although this was short-lived, (1912)^{vii} Federalsburg, Maryland, Denton, Maryland (1903-1911)^{viii}, Denton being at the east side of the Choptank River, south of Shore Highway 404, while Federalsburg, is twenty-five miles south of Denton, on the banks of Marshyhope Creek. Eventually (1917), Charles took a pastorate in Everett, Washington (Church of God), some twenty-eight miles north of Seattle. Dora died there in 1919, and Charles moved back to Anderson with his children.

Of course, during these pastoral years, Orr evangelized, we know for sure that he was active as early as the Summer of 1894, Charles was in revival in Mooresville, Indiana, worshiping with a Church that believed in a literal understanding of the Bible and in a holiness lifestyle which clearly fit his comprehension of what Christianity entailed, along with the fact that the Church's congregants were bi-racial. In the Autumn of 1896, he preached a revival at a new Church in East Auburn, Indiana, staying at least three weeks, seeing many saved during the campaign.

Continuing with a sampling of other revivals that were held by Rev. Orr were: Baltimore, 1905; Indianapolis, Indiana, 1907.^{ix} Orr was at the first assembly meeting of the Church of God in Jamaica in the winter of 1908, C. E. Orr preached; but this stay was but part of a South American tour which Rev. Orr had been invited to, including other stops in the West Indies, and in South America proper.^x In June of 1913, Brother Orr was preaching in Anderson, Indiana, at the annual Church of God Camp-Meeting, where he talked regarding unity.^{xi} In July of 1913 Orr sailed from to New York to England, with his wife Dora, and did not return until January of 1914. By what is mentioned in a Church of God camp-meeting book, he had been residing in Aberdeen, Scotland.^{xii} What works he was involved in may be lost in time.

Yet, Oklahoma was calling, and he made his final move to that state, no later than early 1924; the specific date this writer has been unable to obtain. We know for sure he was pastoring at the Richmond Hill Baptist Church in Stillwell (near 200 miles east of Oklahoma City) from early 1924 through early 1928; Rev. Orr may also have filled in at the Wheeler's Mount Baptist Church. While in Stillwell, Charles became involved with the board of education for the North St. Catherine District in 1932, for the purpose of the uplift of young people, a Social Organizational Scheme.^{xiii} Orr's move to Guthrie (about 30 miles north of OK City) would have been sometime after the events recorded above. Rev. Charles Ebert Orr died on September 22, 1933, and his body was buried at the Summit View Cemetery in Guthrie, OK.

Rev. Charles Ebert Orr, wrote more than fifteen books, most of which may be found in digital form, with several titles reprinted and a few of those first editions might be available. Rev. Orr was a talented teacher, no doubt a gifted communicator and a dedicated man of God, and I without reserve refer to him as a Trailblazer of the Church.

Rev. Steve Williams

April 15, 2020

On June 16, 1913, Sunday morning, Orr preached in Aberdeen, Scotland,

History of the Pequot War, 1897 The Helman Taylor Company

How to Live a Holy Life, 1900 Gospel Trumpet Company

Christian Conduct, 1903 Gospel Trumpet Company

The Gospel Day, 1904 Gospel Trumpet Company

Food for Lambs, 1904 Gospel Trumpet Company

The Hidden Life, 1908 Gospel Trumpet Company

Odors from Golden Vials, 1912 Gospel Trumpet Company

A Religious Controversary, 1918, Faith Publishing House

The Rule of a Saintly Life, 1930 Faith Publishing House

The following titles were most probably published by Faith Publishing House, but no dates of publication are available; obviously, most of these would have been published prior to his passing.

The Instruction of Youth

Heavenly Life for Earthly Living

Helps to Holy Living

Gospel Manna, with Lotte L. Jarvis) Lotte was a missionary to India, and also wrote: A True Story in Allegory.

The More Abundant Life

A Neighborhood Awakening

A Fallen Church

(All sources not attributed are from original documents, such as Census, Birth, Marriage and Death records. All other sources I have referenced.)

ⁱ <http://omeka.anderson.edu/exhibits/show/periodicals/chog-periodicals/gospel-trumpet>

ⁱⁱ Please see photo supplied by the Church of God, Anderson, Indiana Historical Society, and the following quote from The Gospel Trumpet, Lawton Church of God, Lawton, Oklahoma: "This book must be read with the knowledge of who Charles Orr was. Brother Orr was controversial; his views were ascetic, or what we would call legalistic today. While many of the things he espoused were held by the early Church of God movement, when the Brethren began to re-think things that were questionable, Bro. Orr held fast. While he wasn't necessarily the cause of division, he was involved in one of the first major divisions within the Church of God fellowship" This is found on the description of The Gospel Day by C. E. Orr at the following:

https://www.lcoggt.org/cog_literature.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://omeka.anderson.edu/exhibits/show/periodicals/chog-periodicals/gospel-trumpet>

^{iv} Camp-Meeting Sermons (Church of God, Anderson, IN) 1913, pages 424-425

^v Camp-Meeting Sermons (Church of God, Anderson, IN) 1913, page 425

^{vi} Cayuga Harold, Cayuga, Indiana, September 6, 1912

^{vii} The Call Leader, Elwood, Indiana, November 18, 1912; Alexandria Times-Tribune, Alexandria, Indiana, December, 11, 1912

^{viii} Denton Journal, Denton, Maryland, July 25, 1903; November 21, 1903. Maryland Independent, Port Tobacco, Maryland, September 8, 1911

^{ix} New Albany Evening Tribune, New Albany, Indiana, August 25, 1894; Denton Journal, Denton, Maryland, December 23, 1905; Indianapolis News, Indianapolis, Indiana, June 10, 1907;

<https://www.countylinechurch.org/our-story/>

^x http://churchofgodinjamaica.org/who_we_are; Denton Journal, Denton, Maryland, March 14, 1908

^{xi} Camp-Meeting Sermons (Church of God, Anderson, IN) 1913, pages 424-425

^{xii} Camp-Meeting Sermons (Church of God, Anderson, IN) 1913, pages 424

^{xiii} The Adair County Gleaner, Stillwell, Oklahoma, March 8, 1924; June 21, 1924; October 25, 1924; February 13, 1925; January 6, 1928; July 23, 1932; July 27, 1932