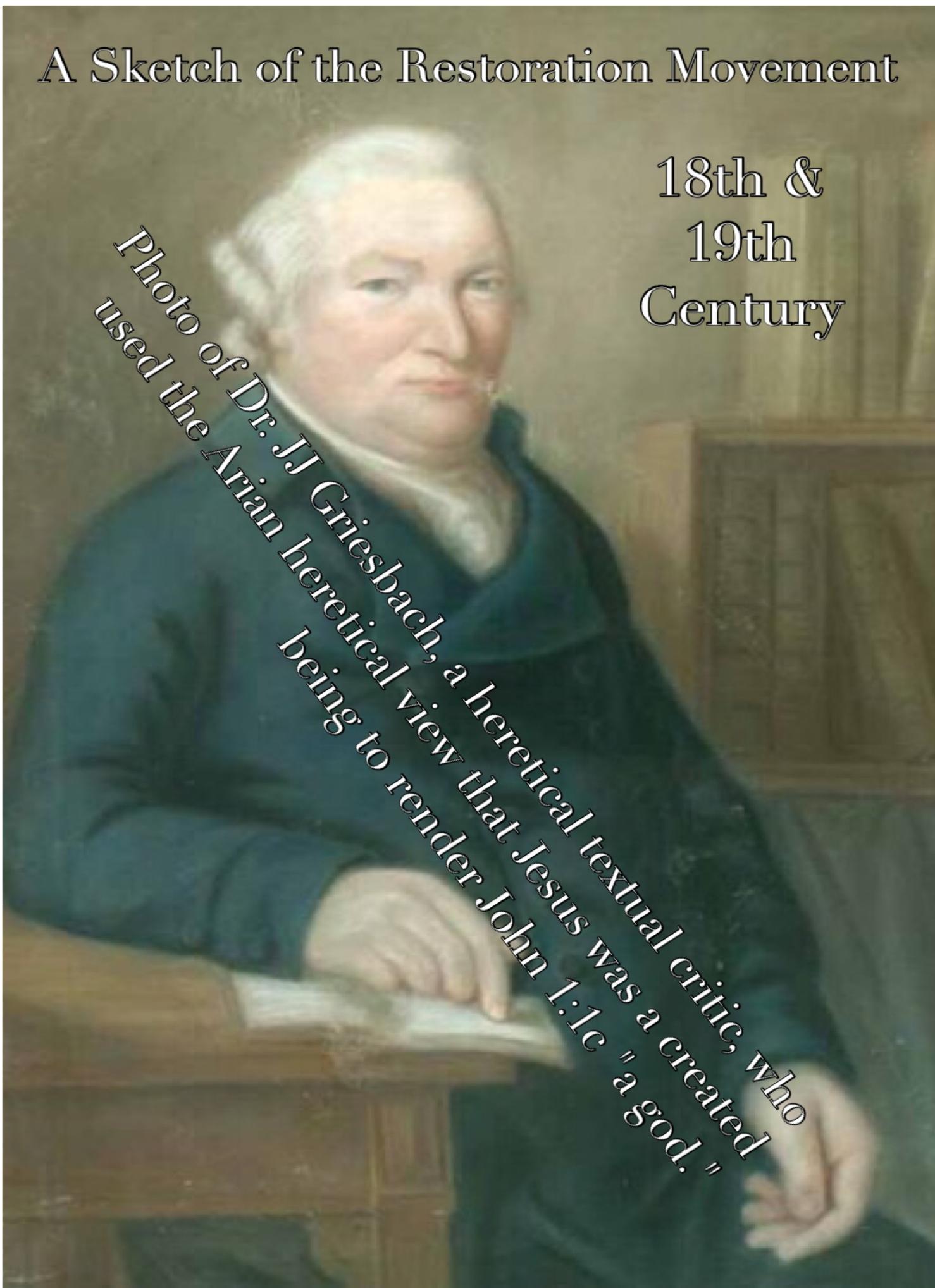


# A Sketch of the Restoration Movement

18th &  
19th  
Century

Photo of Dr. JJ Griesbach, a heretical textual critic, who used the Arian heretical view that Jesus was a created being to render John 1:1c "a god."

A portrait of Dr. JJ Griesbach, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark blue coat and a white cravat. He is seated at a wooden desk, looking slightly to the right of the viewer. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

All the religious leaders of this movement had some claim of clairvoyance which gave them the recognition of anointed ones.

The restoration movement of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries had its connection with those who separated themselves from mainstream denominations.

As a result many new sects were established. These new religious leaders were free thinkers. They developed their new ideas into doctrines that were established without observing the rules of Biblical interpretation. None of these restorationists were bound by the rules which are used to “rightly divide the word of truth,” known as hermeneutics. In fact, not many fundamental Bible or Baptist church leaders are skillful users of these principles currently. Someone who would have studied and is lettered as an apologist would most likely be the person with this expertise nowadays.

Two heresies of the third and fourth centuries have been an influence throughout most periods of church history. They became especially contagious during the last three centuries, and some minor variations of these heresies continue to plague the postmodern church with its “christianisms.” For example: Unitarianism (which is really a heresy that denies the Trinity) is defined on the Internet as a Christian belief, and Mormons are being recognized more and more as just another “Christian faith.”

1. Sabellianism or Modalism — Sabellius (ca. A.D. 215) taught that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit were one being who simply changed masks in different appearances. One branch of this heresy is known as Oneness Pentecostals.

2. Arianism- Arius (ca. A.D. 250-336). Christ was more than a man but less than God is what he taught. Jehovah’s Witnesses and Unitarians are extensions of this heresy.

1774

Unitarianism became a popular movement in the late 18th century in London. It started with a small group of Italians and then quickly spread over parts of Europe and also in New England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

1774-1775

Johann Jakob Griesbach (4 January 1745 – 24 March 1812) — German textual critic, produces a Greek Interlinear Text rendering John 1:1c *a god* and lead the way in

supporting Arianism and Unitarianism. Benjamin Wilson used his work to produce the Emphatic Diaglott which the Watchtower used to produce their New World Translation.

1804

Presbyterian Church background — Thomas and Alexander Campbell - Their doctrinal changes developed into the Church of Christ.

1820

Methodist Church background — Joseph Smith. Folk religion and Freemasonry were the greater part of his influence than the Methodist church doctrine. Modern day Mormonism.

1830

Church of Ireland (Anglican) background — John Nelson Darby: Founder of the Plymouth Brethren, a movement which focused on prophecy concerning the return of Christ. He also introduced the doctrine of dispensationalism.

1840

Baptist background — William Miller, Hiram Edson's vision, Joseph Bates' 48 page tract on the Sabbath in 1846, Ellen G White: This movement produced the modern day Seventh-day Adventist.

1850's

Charles Darwin in November of 1859, a 447-page first edition of *The Origin of Species* was published. He was a naturalist who opened the door for a long line of atheists (1534) and he was the key figure who gave the world an alternative to God's six literal days of creation.

1860's

The Civil War (1861-1865) dealing with the issues of states' rights and slavery. It was a time of religious turmoil, the denial of human rights, lawlessness, and in the latter years, a great spiritual revival during the time of Spurgeon and Moody.

1870's

Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Adventist — Charles Taze Russell founded the Watchtower movement in 1879. He became a follower of George Storrs (Calvinists who converted to Methodist, then Adventism) who afterwards became a follower of "Deacon" Henry Grew, an ex-Baptist pastor from Philadelphia who wrote a track in 1837 outlining his doctrinal position on the afterlife that became known as conditionalism.

1869-1875

Russell's Doctrine Develops

Dr. Joseph A. Seiss, Lutheran pastor in Philadelphia and editor of the *Prophetic Times* (1863-1881), the foremost journal in the United States during the second half of the 19th century, declared that Christ was resurrected in the spirit and not the flesh.

During Russell's reading of the Emphatic Diaglott he noticed that "coming" was translated "presence." At that point Russell concluded, in his interpretation, that Christ's presence at the Advent would be invisible.

Conditionalism — A teaching that the dead are unconscious or asleep until the resurrection.

1879

Protestant Congregationalist background — Mary Baker Eddy: Her dad had beliefs that were radical. He believed in slavery and welcomed the death of Abraham Lincoln. She founded the Church of Christian Science, and was acclaimed as a theologian and teacher.

1888

Benjamin Wilson — One of the founders of the Church of God Faith of Abraham who also produced the translation known as the Emphatic Diaglott which was used by Russell because of its rendering of John 1:1c "a god." Groups with similar beliefs are present today which call themselves "Biblical Unitarians," and Christadelphians.

1892-1986

Seventh-day Adventist background — Herbert W Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God in 1933. He also was the founder of Ambassador College and later University in 1947.

Armstrongism is a term, usually considered derisive, used to refer to the teachings and doctrines of Herbert W. Armstrong while leader of the Worldwide Church of God

(WCG), and is professed by him and his followers to be the restored true Gospel of the Bible.

## CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

These radical changes shaped the religious leaders of the restoration movement. The restorationists were men who produced manuscripts based on their own conclusions rather than contextual evidence. One could create a “Bible” without a manuscript or without the ability to translate in any of the three languages of Scripture.

Rationalism, in Western philosophy, is the view that regards reason as the chief source and test of knowledge. Holding that reality itself has an inherently logical structure. The rationalist asserts that a class of truths exists that the intellect can grasp directly. How did it affect society? It became a substitute for faith.

Once reformation leaders put the Word of God in the hands of the common people, the Catholic church began to lose its authority. Church traditions and dogma were recognized as replacements for biblical truth. The problem that this new era of free thinkers encountered was the lack of the rules that govern all who pick up a Bible and begin to tell others what God is saying. This discipline of biblical studies is called hermeneutics. The three main rules are the context rule, the harmony rule, and grammar rule. Any interpretation of the Bible can be tested by these rules and proven either to be right or wrong, true or false.

Since the beginning of the Watchtower movement, their teachings and doctrines have been in a constant state of flux, which accounts for over 3000 changes in the four major revisions of the New World Translation. The 2006 revision was made without any announcement to the readers. The brackets were removed and the center column references were changed in such a way as to add support to their teaching that Jesus is a created being rather than the Eternal Son of God.

The Watchtower argues, based on Romans 1:20, that all rational men should be able to recognize that there is a Creator. Shouldn't then all rational men be able to recognize the triune nature of God, because of His revelation of Himself in Scripture and His creation of man in His own image and likeness? He created man as a triune being with a spirit, soul, and body.

Gen 1:26

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our *likeness* ...

Rom 1:20

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

1 Thess 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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