

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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The Plea To Restore

About 150 years ago, four separate religious movements began, independent of each other, but with very similar aims and concepts. The earliest were in North Carolina and Vermont. Then in the early 1800's in Kentucky, a group of denominational preachers broke ties with their creed to start a return to New Testament Christianity. A few years later in Virginia (now West Virginia) another movement was begun. The latter two movements merged in 1832 in a spirit of unity and undenominational Christianity that was truly historic and significant in its impact on religious thought in the decades ahead.

The leaders of these movements, perplexed by religious division and dogma, and realizing that God did not intend that his followers be splintered into different warring bodies, were not trying to establish a new sect of denomination. Neither were they trying to reform a major religious group. Rather, they planned to "restore" the church that Christ built by "cutting away" all the doctrines and creeds that had been developed by man since new testament days. By returning to the Word of God for authority in all matters pertaining to religion, they worked to restore the church as Christ built it. The divine pattern found in the New Testament regarding worship, church government, salvation, etc., was followed as they, step by step, left the man-made doctrines to be "Christians only".

The restoration plea swept across the Midwest, often against bitter opposition, and was amazingly successful. Entire congregations of denominations sometimes were converted to be New Testament churches in name and practice. The most successful methods used by the pioneer preachers were apparently debates, protracted meetings and the publication of religious papers and journals. The preachers were well versed in the Word of God and used it fearlessly to combat error. Apparently the conditions were right for a "spiritual revolution", which resulted in a return to "old paths" by hundreds of

thousands of persons during this period.

In Studying the success of the movement, one is impressed that many religious leaders were converted and were instrumental in leading their congregations to the truth. It is true that others bitterly opposed it as long as they lived.

Some of the ourstanding leaders of the church today believe that conditions are "right" for another "giant step" toward undenominational Christianity by religionists of this day. The truths presented the last 150 years in this country are being partially accepted by religionists, unaware that we have been teaching this for so long. The truth is that the plea for a true ecumenical movement based upon the authority of the scriptures is just as appealing and valid today as it ever was. The present ecumenical movement underway in the denominational world is not on this basis.

The question for us is, "How can we better discuss this with those in our communities, especially religious leaders? What methods could we use today that would better reach those who are searching for the truth, especially those sincere religious leaders who could be so influential in bringing others to the truth?" Apparently we need to use different methods today.

—Leo Rainey

ARE WE BEING DESTROYED FOR THE LACK OF KNOWLEDGE?

by Charles McLendon

Hundreds of years before Christ came in the flesh, God beheld the indifference and the ignorance of his people. He said in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." These things happened to them by way of example and were written for our learning, I Cor. 10-11 and Rom. 15:4. Yet we will not heed the warning. We can see by reading the Old Testament where Moses failed by not doing what God told him to do. We see the sin of David by having Uriah sent to the most dangerous place of battle that he might be killed, so David could have his wife. We can see the sin of Lot's wife in that she looked back when God had told her not to. Now we should be stronger than these, because we know what hap-

pened to them and we should profit by their mistakes. These people knew what they did was wrong, even as many of us do. But there are others who do not because of ignorance.

This ignorance of the will of God did not excuse any of those in the past neither will any of us be excused by it. God said, "Because thou hast rejected knowledge I will also reject thee." Ignorance condemns rather than excusing man. For Christ said, "if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the same ditch." Matt. 15:14. Peter said in Acts 3:17 that the Jews had crucified the Son of God because of ignorance. However, he did not excuse them because they were ignorant, but commanded repentance. If ignorance will save a man, why have preachers? Why do we preach the Gospel at all? Why not let everyone go to heaven on ignorance? Ignorance has never saved anyone. For if it had God would have left us an example. Christians are doing just as badly when they sin because of ignorance, as they are when they know to do his will and do not. They are not excused but stand condemned. Yea, they stand doubly condemned; once for ignorance, because they have failed to study God's word, because of laziness and indifference to Bible study, And twice for refusing to do the will of God, of which they are ignorant.

Our minds grow dull from lack of use. In the Church of my Lord we have men and women who have been members of the Lord's Church for years who are still babies in Christ. They sit in their pews, Sunday after Sunday, while someone endeavors to teach them the primary lessons of Christianity. They will not exercise themselves in the things of God, as little children develop themselves by kicking and moving about. But rather they continue thinking about the things of this world, and never come to a complete knowledge of the truth. As James said in Jas. 3:10 "These things ought not so to be."

In our families we would become concerned about a child that forever remained a baby, to be fed from a bottle, that could not walk or speak. We would try to get some help for such a one. Yet in the Church we look upon the very same situ-

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ation in the spiritual family, with the idea, It's all right. WHY? Because we are down right ignorant. The Church is filled with babies in long trousers and short dresses, and slack wearers who must have their bottles warmed by their minister. And he must not give them too much of the milk of the word lest they become overworked. Surely, if God in heaven were to speak directly to us today he would say, "Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee."

The Individual And His Religion

OBLIGATION TO GOD—God created man in His own Image, then sent His Son to the earth to die for those who wish to be saved. Christ is the author of salvation to those who OBEY Him, and those who will not obey Him, have no claim on His death, blood, or plan of salvation. The appeal is ALWAYS to the individual! Therefore God, having loved man so much and having shown this love in so many ways; especially through offering man an opportunity to redeem the birthright lost through sin. Man's obligation then is to study His plan of salvation, taking no other plan, as the doctrines of men are VAIN, then submit, by faith, to God in ALL things! Only in this way can man be blessed and show his appreciation for the sacrifice of love on the cross. This is the responsibility of the INDIVIDUAL, on which the Lord's church must depend.

THE INDIVIDUAL TRIES TO LOSE HIMSELF IN THE CROWD—One of the first things a child learns, is to justify his actions by the fact (?) that "every one is doing it"; feeling that this supplies moral, or religious merit. Not realizing that numbers do not determine spiritual acceptability, but WHAT GOD COMMANDS! Often the child will desire to associate with the church which has the MOST members thus seeking PUBLIC approval. Safety in numbers is the motto of far too many people today. We are sold on the nationally advertised product, so the majority must be right. Yet the majority has ALWAYS been wrong in the sight of God! The majority has ALWAYS rebelled against God! We should be sure that GOD IS WITH US, not just the crowd! We will be judged by the word of GOD, not by how many people accepted the practice! DOES GOD APPROVE, should be our ONLY concern! But so many seem to be-

lieve that the individual can be lost in the crowd, when the Bible teaches that EACH must be judged according to his own works. What is your conception of what constitutes RIGHT, or WRONG; is it GOD or the crowd? SOME DAY IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

CHOOSING A CHURCH IS THE INDIVIDUAL'S RESPONSIBILITY: BUT HE NEEDS A STANDARD. Choosing a church is a choice that each person will be called on to make some day. By what standard should one choose a church? What are the most important considerations when choosing a church? Should the majority in the town determine where one worships? The personality of the preacher? The amount of money in the congregation? Is it good for business? Do the best(?) people go there? Is it popular with those in the world? Are the "broad minded" about sin and religion in general? Do the other churches speak well of this church and "fellowship" it? Does it furnish entertainment for the whole family? Have a good ball team? Modern kitchen? Good cook? Serve regular meals? Good baby sitter? Have a live "social" program? Is it close to home? Air conditioned? Accepts "pew-warmers"? All "modes" of baptism? Accepts me whether I obey God or not? Believes a little sin, such as drinking, dancing and gambling is healthy? In "fellowship" with ALL other religions? NONE OF THESE SHOULD CAUSE A MAN TO SEEK A CHURCH! WHEN A PERSON OBEYS GOD, GOD WILL ADD HIM TO THE LORD'S CHURCH! THEREFORE OUR CHOICE SHOULD BE THE LORD'S CHOICE, THE CHURCH FOR WHICH HE DIED! HAD YOU RATHER BE IN THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE OR THE CHURCH OF THE LORD'S CHOICE? BETTER GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT WHILE THE CHOICE IS STILL YOURS!

THE INDIVIDUAL MUST WORK IN IN THE CHURCH AFTER HE CHOOSES THE RIGHT CHURCH—Many members of the Lord's church act as if they can be saved on the merit of the entire congregation. Just run with the crowd here, then be received into heaven on the merits of others. Feel no responsibility to teach others, to study the Bible, to attend services, support the church, or to help in any way! Just let George do it all. What a fine work a congregation could do if ALL the members were truly CONVERTED TO CHRIST! Each doing ALL the good he can in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of trying to see how little he can do and still be a "church member". IT IS WHAT THE LORD COMMANDS AND NOT WHAT MAN THINKS,

THAT WILL SAVE, WHAT IS YOUR STANDARD?

—Glynn Purdy

Who Loved Her Best

A little boy with ruffled head
Leaned in the doorway worn and gray.
"I love you, Mother," he kindly said,
Then turned and ran aside to play.

His mother, tired with labors long
Continued working till at last,
His sister with a smile and song,
Slipped gently in, and wandered past.

"I love you, Mother," she whispered low,
Then turned aside to leave her there,
With eyes that could not see her woe
And heart that could not feel her care.

Then last of all there came that way
Her other brother, kind and true.
He had no words of love to say,
No noble speech of praise to do.

But quickly took his Mother's broom,
So she might sit and rest awhile,
And cleaned and tidied up the room
And rocked the baby with a smile.

Though not a word of love was said,
How do you think their mother guessed.
That night when all were safe in bed
The one who really loved her best?

ADDRESSING MACHINE PURCHASED BY PAPER

Fulton County Gospel News recently purchased a high speed addressing machine to speed up mailing of this paper. Since the paper does not pay any salaries the burden of addressing has fallen on the preacher at Mammoth Spring. The mailing of eighteen hundred papers has become very time consuming.

The new machine will reduce the time of mailing by one half, but cost nearly seven hundred dollars.

It is necessary for us to ask our readers and friends for an extra contribution during the coming months to cover our payments and to continue to meet printing costs.

Forgiveness Of Sins

Without controversy sin is the greatest curse to mankind and he desires forgiveness for these transgressions. It is universal to all men and thus all men ought to be interested in obtaining forgiveness of his sins. The forgiveness of man's sins takes place in the mind of God and Deity alone can forgive sins.

Sin made its entry into the world through Adam and Eve as we learn from Gen. 3 chapter. Since that time all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Paul in his letter to the Romans in Ch. 3 and verse 28 so declares this to be true. In the same chapter verses 9, 10, he states there is none righteous. If man continues on through this life in sin without obtaining forgiveness then he must pay then he must pay the wages of sin which Paul again in Rom. 6:23 points out is death—that eternal separation from God with all His blessings for those who love Him. Through the Prophets Isa. and Jer. God speaks of His plan to make forgiveness of sins possible. See Isa. 53:5-11 and Jer. 31:31 ff. Jesus His only begotten Son was the means by which God planned to make forgiveness of sins available to all men. In Matt. 1:21 the angel announced this fact and in John 3:16 it is so stated by our beloved apostle John. Paul in further comment upon this matter in Rom. 5:6-9 declares Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That is we like all other men would be sinners and therefore in need of forgiveness of sins. The writer of the Hebrew letter in 9:14 states Christ offered himself without spot. That is He offered a spotless life on the cross that we might have the benefit of the same, since he was a propitiation for our sins. This means we by appropriating His spotless life through obedience to Him (Heb. 5:8-9) can have this same spotless life to offer the Lord in judgement instead of this poor, miserable life we know all too well in this lifetime.

By His own blood He obtained redemption for us. Heb. 9:12. The blood He shed is the same God has accepted as a sacrifice for us. But friend of mine the only way we can receive this benefit is by doing exactly what He commands to the very best of our ability. Man will never obtain the remission of sins by doing something other or by offering something he thinks just as good as the Lord commands. There MUST be an abiding faith in Christ as the Son of God with every effort to do His Will - Matt. 7:21 - if man is to have for-

giveness of his sins. Make no mistake about this friends, the Bible is too plain on this matter. Forgiveness of sins was peculiar to the gospel dispensation. It was not provided for fully under the Law of Moses and was to have its beginning as a subject matter to be preached in Jerusalem.

Forgiveness of sins is conditional. Surely salvation is a gift of God. Man does not earn or deserve the forgiveness of sins, it is a conditional gift provided by God through Christ, and only through Christ, that we can have the forgiveness of our sins. See Eph. 2:8,9. Since it is conditional, we must accept this gift by meeting the conditions. If we do not meet the conditions we have no basis for hope that our sins will be forgiven. The Lord invites all men to come to Him. Matt. 11:28-30. Whosoever will, let him come. Rev. 22:17. Thus if man doesn't answer this invitation and continues to reject the Lord's sacrifice, his sins will continue with him and he must pay the wages of sin at the judgement.

There is some sacrifice on our part to have the forgiveness of our sin. In Lk. 9:23 we learn we are to deny ourselves—take up our cross and follow the Christ. This is a great deal for man to deny himself. We by nature are somewhat selfish and are inclined to think of ourselves first. We want to do what we want to do. This is where we are to deny self, that which we want to do, and do rather what the Lord wants us to do, and that in the way He wants it done if we are to have remission of sins. The gospel MUST be obeyed. 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 1 Peter 4:17,18. No alternative to this. The gospel demands faith on our part. Mk. 16:16; repentance Acts 2:38; Lk. 13:3. a confession of Christ before men as the Son of God Rom 10:9, 10 Matt. 10:31,33.

and as a penitent person before God we are baptized (buried - Col. 2:12; Rom. 6:3,4) in the likeness of Christ's burial and resurrection Rom. 6:3-8. Examples of this is for our benefit in Acts. 2:38; 22:16.

Let me plead with you while you have time and opportunity to comply with the Lord's Will that you might have remission of sins and eternal life.

---ALTON NEWSLETTER

THE FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name, be SURE to include the Zip Code Number, It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we

are grateful. If you care to know of its financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

EDITORS : Clovis Ragsdale and James E. Henley

A LESSON LEARNED

Burdens seemed too heavy to bear. Nowhere could I go but to the Lord. I know. I had tried every other place. Turning to Him in prayer, Paul's words brought to mind: "I am crucified for Christ, not I liveth, but CHRIST liveth in me!" It finally dawned on me: No more what is pleasing to me? What would I benefit? or would it make ME happy? I am dead. I live no more. This body is Christ's.

Suddenly understanding this more fully, prayer was more fervent. The clay began to yield to the Master Potter's hands. A lump of soft workable clay yielding itself to the Potter, begins to take shape and become useful to the maker. When the clay is formed into the type vessel the Maker has chosen, it must be tried with heat before it can be strong, firm and of permanent use. If not tried by heat, the clay remains soft and unable to stand any pressure on it. Pressures would cause its collapse into a useless distorted mess. When this self is crucified, it is clay placing itself into the Maker's hands.

What happens if the clay never submits itself to the Potter? There is no way of knowing the use that could have been made by the Potter. The clay will remain just a lump of clay. What happens if the clay turns itself over to the Potter, but does not yield completely and resists what the Potter is trying to do? To be of use at all, the Potter sometimes has to add other elements to make it yielding. The appearance of the original vessel is altered and takes longer to form than when the clay yields. When the clay is willing, the Master can and does with gentle pressure and time produce the greatest masterpiece—a beautiful life.

If "I" am in the clay, the clay is resisting the Potter. If CHRIST liveth in the clay the Master Potter can make a useful vessel. The heat of trials applied after the clay is formed only help the vessel become strong and able to stand the pressures of its life. That lump molded by the Master's hand, tried by heat, is a useful vessel and becomes more valuable with each year.

(May God help us yield as His son to sincerely pray: "Not my will but THINE be done". He knows so much better than we, what is best.)

The Faith That Avails Blessings

Everyone agrees that faith is necessary to one's salvation. Certainly this cannot be denied as we view the word of God. We read in Heb. 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God MUST believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." In Acts 16, we have an account of Paul and Silas being beaten and cast into prison. The keeper of the prison was later moved to raise the question "What must I do to be saved?" In reply, Paul and Silas said, "BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Verses 30-31). Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Jno. 8:24 These are but a few of the many scriptures showing the importance of faith.

Since we all agree that we are saved by faith, it is now most important that we acquaint ourselves with the faith that saves or the faith that avails blessings. By looking to the word of God once again for guidance, we can readily see that an active or working faith is the only faith that can and will assure us of God's spiritual blessings. It is stated in Gal. 5:6 "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which WORKETH by love." Our faith in God and his word must be of such nature that we will move and respond without argument, to his commandments. Fearing God and keeping his Commandments is the whole duty of man (Ecc. 12:13).

When we respond to a command of God, we, in no way, merit our salvation. In responding, we are merely accepting God's grace in the way it has been extended—by means of his holy word. If we are saved apart from obedience, then why is it that God gave us a book with commands in it to be obeyed? It is foolish indeed, to believe that faith alone is sufficient to save a man. Christ said in John 8:31 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In Jno 17:17 he said, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." Therefore, if we wish to be sanctified, we must, by faith, obey the word of truth. No where in the entire Bible can one find a single hint that man is saved by faith alone. One can only find the opposite. For instance, James said in Jas. 2:24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and NOT by faith only." Yes, the Bible says "Believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," but this is all it says. It doesn't say "believe only." Man is the author of this, not God. King Agrippa believed that Christ was his saviour but he wasn't saved. He was just "almost persuaded" to be a child of God. He did not possess the faith that God required—the faith that would move him to obey his saviour. It is good to believe that Christ is our saviour, but it is not good to believe this and then find ourselves rebelling against him by failing to obey his commandments. In fact, this is very disrespectful. We read in Heb. 5:9 "And being made perfect, he (Christ) became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY him." Our Lord said, "If you love me, KEEP my commandments." Jno. 14:15. Do you love your saviour? Then show him you do by acting upon his word and possessing that great faith, the faith that avails you blessings.

---Mikey Farris

IF WORSHIP HAS CEASED TO BE MEANINGFUL TO YOU, TRY THIS

1. During the week take a little time to pray for the worship services
2. If you have any grudges, hatred toward your fellow man, or other sinful attitudes, correct them.
3. Upon entering the place of worship, begin meditating on your need for God in your life and those great blessings He has bestowed already.
4. When the song service starts, join in heartily and sing with the spirit and understanding.
5. If it is the Lord's Day, then give special care to thinking about the Lord's Supper, its purpose and meaning; also when the offering is taken, meditate on this as a part of your expression of worship to our great Father. In connection with your giving, express thanks to God for having prospered you to this degree.
6. While listening carefully to the sermon, keep searching for ways to apply it in your own heart and life first, and then to others in the most helpful way.
7. When the service is over, express your Christian friendliness, first to visitors and strangers, then to other members before becoming "Incommunicado" with your own special group of friends.
8. Leave the services determined to walk a dedicated life with Christ throughout the week.

---A.L.Tabor ---

NEWS:

There will be a gospel meeting at Mountain Grove, Missouri, April 21 through the 27th. Brother Boyd Morgan will be

the speaker.

The Curry St. Church of Christ in West Plains, Missouri will host a Teacher work shop, April 28, 29, 30 and May 1st. All Bible class teachers and those interested in becoming a Bible class teacher are urged to attend. More details next Month.

There was a one day door knocking campaign in West Plains, Missouri, March 1st, by students of Harding College, in conjunction with the Curry St. Church of Christ, West Plains, Missouri.

There will be a gospel meeting at the Curry St. Church of Christ in West Plains, Missouri March 31 through April 6th, Bob Eubanks will be the speaker. Also a week long door knocking campaign at the same time, by students of Harding College and members of Curry St.

The Mammoth Spring Church of Christ will host a Lecture program March 24 through the 29th. Planned speakers are: Monday night, L.N.Moody; Tuesday night, Charles Wilson; Wednesday night, Boyd Morgan; Thursday night, Harlin Hurd; Friday night, Dean Fugett; and Saturday night, Don Reeves.

Contributions For February

Agnos Church of Christ	\$5.00
Robert Hix	2.00
W.C.Woody	5.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00
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