

# Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

"...Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body." - Ephesians 5:23

Volume 28

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

May, 1994

No. 5

## Fruit From Satan's Orchard

by Ted J. Clarke

### Introduction

Some time ago, while in discussion with a brother in Christ who favors most of the unscriptural "changes" now working their way through a large part of the church, he said, "We'll just have to judge them by their fruits. A lot of Christians agree with what is happening." The implication of his statement is that since these changes are seemingly popular, the fruit of such must be good fruit. Is it?

The problem is as old as man. Satan convinced Eve that the forbidden fruit of Eden was worth trying and she fell victim to his deceit and persuasive false teaching (Genesis 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9). After she ate, she persuaded Adam that she and Satan had a better plan for life than God's, so he ate (vv. 6-13). The consequences have been disastrous for all mankind (Genesis 3:13-24; Romans 3:23; 5:12). **The fruit produced by following Satan's way instead of God's way can never be good fruit!**

### The Most Popular Fruit In Hell

One lesson taught by the biblical flood of Genesis 6-9 is ignored by most people. What is popular is not always right. Although God's way was not popular with the world (Genesis 6:5-7), His way was the only means of salvation. The popular way led to death. Noah knew that and saved himself and his family (Genesis 6:9-22; Hebrews 11:7). God later told Israel, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil," because He knew that mankind had a desire to follow the popular route though it was often wrong (Exodus 23:2). Still later in her history, Israel insisted on "[an earthly] king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:1-5, 7). God forewarned them of all the sorrows such kings would bring their nation, but they insisted on being "like all the nations" (vv. 8-22). Read the books of Kings and Chronicles to see how Israel suffered from desiring the fruit of what was popular.

Satan offers us tempting and tantalizing fruit from his orchard, but the end result of eating is spiritual death. The popular fruit of Jesus' day was also from the groves of hell. He stated in Matthew 7:13-14 that most people love the fruit which lines the popular wide gate and broad way which leads to destruction. Some believing Jews would not confess their faith in Christ out of fear of losing the praise of their fellowman (John 5:44; 12:42-43). All such persons then and now will be eternally lost (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9).

**The most popular fruit in hell is anything that has led man away from following God's way!** Satan's fruit is like the "lips of a strange woman [which] drop as a honeycomb... but in the end she is bitter as wormwood" (Proverbs 5:4, NKJV). What seems so desirous and right is a trick of the Devil (Proverbs 14:12; 3:5-6). He polishes his fruit and shows you the shine, never letting you see the worms and rottenness. He is the great liar and deceiver (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9). If truth and its fruit depended on what was popular in religion, in Utah good fruit would be Mormonism, in New York it would be Catholicism, in India it would be Hinduism or Buddhism, and so on. Such would be (and is) total religious confusion. God could not be the author of this mess (1 Corinthians 14:33). Can good fruit come from such practices? No! The reason why follows.

### Good Fruit From Good Trees

Following His warning to the people about false teachers, Jesus said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:15-20). Whether you, myself, or anyone is a good tree or a bad tree can be seen from the fruit we bear, not from our success or the popularity of what we teach. Noah preached 120 years but made no converts except for his family (Genesis 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5). Jesus was the greatest Teacher who ever lived in His life and message. Yet, He converted only a few while on earth. The false teachers

of our day may be making many converts to their gospels, but God's word is still being largely rejected (Galatians 1:6-10; 1 Corinthians 1:18-29).

Jesus believed that mankind has sense enough to judge on matters in the natural world. He noted that men do not go to thorns to find grapes nor try to gather figs from thistles. Why then do we not judge spiritual fruit properly? The appearances and claims of people are no proof of their true character. Toothy smiles and candy sweet talk do not qualify as proper standards by which to judge the fruit of someone's ways. Appearances can be deceiving and claims are nothing unless validated. Satan and his agents are great at presenting deceiving appearances and talking big (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). However, what one teaches and how one lives is proper fruit for inspection. In his commentary on Matthew 7:16-20, William Hendriksen writes,

"[John] Calvin may well be right when he says that among the fruits 'the manner of teaching holds the first place.' By diligently comparing with Scripture the teachings of a man who presents himself as a prophet [or a teacher or preacher -TJC], it will generally not be too difficult to detect whether he is a servant of God or of the devil." (Page 374)

Far too many judge a man's fruit by whether or not he is "friendly and nice," rather than whether or not his teaching is in harmony with the Bible. One should be "nice," but an outgoing friendly personality is no proof of soundness in teaching the Bible.

### False Teachers Bear Bad (Corrupt) Fruit

A person or group of people may appear to be extremely kind and charitable, even showing a type of love that is sacrificial, **without being approved by God!** The same people may appear to be moral in their conduct, yet bear bad fruit, because they do not teach and practice the will of God in other essential areas of their lives. One may teach the truth and yet not live up to that truth (Romans 2:21ff; 1 John 2:3-6). This is hypocrisy. One may also live morally

(Continued on page 2)

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

USPO Publication No. 211780

... 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 we must have a complete address, including number and street name, or R.R. or HCR number, plus box number, or a P.O. Box number and the ZIP CODE. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. Financial information will be furnished upon request. Mail all address corrections or manuscripts to:

**FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS**

P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Ted J. Clarke ..... EDITOR  
Phone ..... (501) 625-3217

(Continued from page 1)

upright, as Paul claimed he did, and not be teaching the truth of God's word (Philippians 3:5-6; Acts 23:1; 26:9; 1 Timothy 1:13-14). This is being a false teacher. Either way one is bearing bad fruit. Christ was equally hard on hypocrites and false teachers (Matthew 7:15-29; 23:1-39).

Being religious is no guarantee that someone is teaching the truth. Saul of Tarsus was religiously following Judaism when he was persecuting Christ and the church (Acts 26:4-15). He was religiously wrong! However, it is not just those who oppose Christianity who are religiously wrong. Please note that the people of Matthew 7:21-23 were religious, calling Christ "Lord" and even engaging in religious activity in the name of Jesus. Yet, Jesus said that they were religiously wrong and not approved by Him. **Why?** They were not "doing the will of [the] Father which is in heaven." In Romans 10:1-3 Paul illustrated this point using the Jews as examples. They had a zeal toward God, but not according to proper knowledge. Being ignorant of God's way, although His will was revealed, they promoted their own way. They were feasting on fruit from Satan's orchard. Many false teachers know that they are not teaching God's word and do so intentionally (Matthew 15:6-9, 15). Brethren and friends, do not let yourselves close your eyes to God's truth and fall into the ditch of destruction.

Abide in Jesus and let His words abide in you. Only then can you bear

the fruit (much fruit) that glorifies and pleases God (John 15:1-8). Be filled with the Spirit of God as His word dwells in you richly and you will produce the fruit which the Spirit prompts (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16; Galatians 5:22-23). When you plant God's seed (His word), you will have no doubt that your fruit will be good (Luke 8:11, 15). When you feed on God's word you know that you will be "nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" (1 Timothy 4:6). **Do not feed on fruit from Satan's orchard, nor plant fruit that will grow there!**

**Conclusion**

No matter how popular a man may be; no matter how successful a man or congregation may appear to be; no matter how many works are done for the supposed "good" of others; **if a man or a church does not uphold the truth of God's word in all essential areas, his fruit (or its fruit) is ultimately bad and does not glorify God!** If we teach error, fail to teach the whole counsel of God, or allow error to be taught unopposed, we are eating fruit from Satan's orchard and planting trees for him which will bear bad fruit in our lives and in the lives of those whom we influence. **False teachers and their supporters** will have an eternity to eat the bitter harvest of deadly fruit from their works, no matter how successful they were in this life. Will you be one who sits at Satan's table in eternity, gorging yourself on the bad fruits from the garden of hell? You can avoid such a fate! Saul of Tarsus changed when confronted with the truth (Acts 26:19-20). So can false teachers and those who support them!

Brethren, elders, deacons, teachers, and preachers -

- [1] **Honor** all of the Scriptures as inspired of God and profitable for your life (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3).
- [2] **Teach** the whole counsel of God, not just what is popular (Acts 20:20,27).
- [3] **Live** the whole counsel of God, not just the easier commandments (Acts 20:32; Colossians 3:16; 2 Timothy 4:6-8).
- [4] **Keep the pattern** revealed in God's word and do not add to it or take from it (2 Timothy 1:13; 2:2; Romans 6:17; Revelation 22:18-19).
- [5] **Defend** the faith once and for all delivered and never be ashamed of Christ and His word (Jude 3; Philippians 1:17; 1 Peter 3:15; Mark 8:38).
- [6] **Judge** righteous judgment by the

Scriptures, not allowing appearance or popularity to make you partial or prejudiced (John 7:24; 12:48-50; Isaiah 8:20).

- [7] **Continue to study the Scriptures** until your dying day, always seeking God's truth, living it and telling it to others (Proverbs 23:23; Hebrews 5:12-14; Colossians 1:10; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Timothy 4:15-16; 2 Timothy 4:6, 13, 21).

Just as we cannot gather grapes from thorns, we cannot bear good fruit by teaching falsely or fellowshiping those who do so. Such are to be "marked and avoided," not coddled and promoted (Romans 16:17-18). We cannot receive them into our homes or **God's house**, or in any way support false teaching without becoming partakers with them in bearing bad fruit (2 John 9-11).

Fruit like Sunkist oranges are stamped with the company brand because they are proud of their product. **Let all of our fruit be stamped with the approval of God's word!** Only then can it be "good fruit."

**THE BEAUTY OF GRACE**

by Owen D. Olbricht

In the Greek language *charis*, translated grace, means charm and beauty which expresses itself in good will, kindness, and favor. Grace is the beauty of God expressed toward man.

This grace can be turned into lasciviousness (Jude 4) and misused as an excuse to sin (Rom. 6:1,2). One can do despite to the spirit of grace by willfully continuing in sin (Heb. 10:26-29). Those who so live should be concerned about God's fiery indignation, vengeance, and judgment (Heb. 10:27, 31).

Jesus is recorded to have used the word grace four times (Luke 6:32,33,34; 17:9). These usages express thanks and credit. The teaching of Jesus contradicts the modern day definition of grace attributed to Paul which considers grace as unconditional and permissive.

Jesus stated that one's righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom (Matt. 5:19). A right eye should be plucked out that causes one to stumble (Matt. 5:29). Those who do the will of the Father will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21). He will come and give to every man according to his works (Matt. 16:27). The

parable of the ten virgins teaches responsibility in wise use of one's resources as also does the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:1-30). He said that the measure one gives is the measure he will get (Mark 4:24) and that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16).

In the book of John, Jesus taught one is to labor for eternal life (6:27), serve Him (12:26), keep His commandments (14:21-24; 15:14), and bear fruit or be cut off (John 15:2-6).

Jesus did not teach that we are to earn salvation, but neither did He teach that through the grace of God salvation is unconditionally given.

Paul taught man cannot so work as to earn salvation, which means that salvation is ours because of the grace of God (Rom. 4:4,5). However, along with Jesus he taught that God will recompense every man according to his works (Rom. 2:6) and that by doing God's will one will receive eternal life (Rom. 2:7-11).

He also stated that one will die if he lives according to the flesh but will live if he walks by the Spirit (Rom. 8:5-13). What matters is keeping the commandments of God and being a new creature (1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6). Jesus will recompense according to what one does in his body (2 Cor. 5:10) and one will reap what he sows resulting in either corruption or eternal life (Gal. 6:7,8). Christians are to work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). Vengeance will be taken on those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Paul did not teach unconditional grace and neither did the other writers of the New Testament. Peter taught that Christians should fear because God will judge them by their works (1 Pet. 1:17) and that entry into the kingdom will be abundantly assured for those who develop the Christians virtue (2 Pet. 1:5-11). John stated that one knows he is in Jesus if he keeps His word (1 John 2:4,5) and that the one who does the will of God will abide forever (1 John 2:17).

The book of Hebrews teaches that Jesus is the source of salvation to those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9), that without holiness one cannot see God, and that one should be concerned about failing in the grace of God (Heb. 12:14,15).

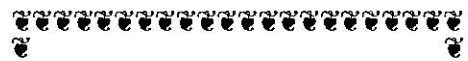
Perhaps the conflict that seemingly arises between Paul's teaching of justification not based on the works of man and the responsibility of man to do the

work required of God is solved by the illustration of Israel's faith that moved God to tear down the walls of Jericho (Heb. 11:30). The walls were not torn down by the work of man. God tore them down. From the perspective of what caused them to fall, one could say that it was not of works, i.e., human works. From the perspective of what God required man to do, one could say that they fell because of the faith and work of man. They fell totally by the power of God but not before man did the work required of God.

Salvation is given to man on the same basis. The work of producing salvation is totally the work of Jesus. The requirements before man can receive salvation is dependent on the response of man. God does not require man to earn salvation, but rather gives salvation to those who trust and obey. Man cannot forgive his own sin. Only the blood of Jesus can do that.

Grace is not God's way of encouraging sin, but is rather God's way of making salvation possible for sinful man, i.e., His way of providing forgiveness to those who are trying to do His will. It is not unconditional favor for those who do not seek to please Him.

525 Pincus Ave.  
Northfield, N.J. 08225



**CONTRIBUTIONS**

**CHURCHES**

Church of Christ, Elizabeth, Ar. ....	\$15.00
Clarkridge Church of Christ .....	50.00
Clarkridge, Ar.	
Welcome Hill Church of Christ .....	10.00
Mammoth Spring, Ar.	
Pilot Church of Christ .....	40.00
Mammoth Spring, Ar.	
Church of Christ, Moody, Mo. ....	25.00
Jeff Church of Christ, Thayer, Mo. ....	25.00
Viola Church of Christ, Viola, Ar. ....	15.00
Moko Church of Christ, Salem, Ar. ....	25.00
Sitka Church of Christ .....	25.00
Williford, Ar.	
W-160 Church of Christ .....	50.00
West Plains, Mo.	
Dellhalf Church of Christ, Myrtle, Mo. ....	25.00
Agnos Church of Christ, Agnos, Ar. ....	40.00
Church of Christ, Garfield, Ar. ....	35.00

**INDIVIDUALS**

Glenn & Jennifer Litteken .....	20.00
O'Fallon, Mo.	
Ms. Violet Fisher, Newport, Ar. ....	10.00
Martha Lawrence, Ash Flat, Ar. ....	10.00
Anonymous .....	5.00
Rita Foster, Viola, Ar. ....	5.00
Dwain Brown, Booneville, Ms. ....	25.00

**JESUS IS LORD!**

by Tony Boyd

The first gospel sermon preached after Jesus ascended to heaven concludes with the words: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, who ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ"* (Acts 2:36). The word Christ is the transliteration of the Greek word *christos*, which is a translation of the Hebrew word normally translated Messiah. This refers to the long term anticipation by the Jews of the promised Messiah, God's anointed one that was also to be the Saviour. This concept was not that difficult for Peter's Jewish audience to comprehend, but the idea of the lordship of Jesus was.

In New Testament usage, the word lord carries with it the much greater concept of master, ruler, even king. When Peter joined these two very important views of Jesus, his listeners were forced into a terrible confrontation with their sins, and thus with the consequences of their action in causing the death of the Lord and Messiah. They responded with the simple question: What shall we do? Any reader of the passage can see the answer they were given: *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 2:38). They were immersed into Jesus for the remission of sins, thus acknowledging the lordship of Jesus.

*"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18). Jesus explains that he was given the position of lord, having all authority. Paul describes this elevation in *Philippians 2:9-11*. The fact that Jesus is Lord has never been subject to doubt or question. The question or area of doubt is whether we will confess that lordship now, in this life, or later before his judgment throne.

The simplicity of God's truth is that the same actions which afford us salvation and remission of sins are the same actions that we must use to submit to his lordship. The first converts were immersed as an acknowledgment of that lordship, and thus were given the remission of sins. The act of confession of faith is an essential part of that process. *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine*

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

*heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Note the words "confess the Lord Jesus."*

In order to be a Christian, and live a life pleasing to God, we must live a life that is in total submission to the will of our Lord, Jesus the Christ. Jesus is Lord! Is He your lord?

HCR 81, Box 75  
Salem, MO 65560

## IT HURTS MORE THAN YOU THINK

Members are mistaken when they say, "It doesn't hurt anything for me to stay away from the meeting of the church." It hurts far more than you realize.

**IT HURTS YOU.** It hurts your standing with God when you disobey his commands (Hebrews 10:25). It hurts you because you sin, and sin always hurts.

**IT HURTS GOD.** He is grieved when you disobey (Genesis 6:6). He smiles with pleasure only when we obey His will.

**IT HURTS THE CHURCH.** Your voice in singing, your participation in prayers, your fellowship in the Lord's Supper, and the contribution you would have made to the Lord's work are all missing. The church is composed of its various members. In 1 Corinthians 12:18-26, Paul provided that the body cannot properly function while some of its members are missing.

**IT HURTS YOUR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.** Just as one cannot maintain health and strength without partaking of food, the inner man grows weaker when we deliberately miss a spiritual meal.

**IT HURTS YOUR INFLUENCE.** When you stay away from the meetings of the church, you set a bad example. Your neighbors, friends, and family who are not members will know that your religion means little to you. Your bad example may also influence younger and weaker members to stay away.

**IT HURTS A LOT MORE THAN YOU THINK!**

*You put a great deal of pressure on your dignity when you stand on it.*



## BOOK BLURBS Recommended Reading

With this issue of **Fulton County Gospel News** we begin an occasional column of book reviews and recommendations for reading. We do not accept advertising in **FCGN**, but we do feel a need to make good literature known to our readers. Our circulation presently runs over 8,000. We live in critical times and the Lord's church is being attacked on every side by modernism, liberalism, and agents for "change" of about every kind. We will make brethren aware of sound and solid literature which can be used to fight off the enemies of truth and which provides positive instruction to build up the body of Christ.

We do not sell books nor make money from this endeavor. If you wish to order a book reviewed, please write to the address given in the comments on that book. (Editor).

## WORSHIP: HEAVEN'S IMPERATIVE, OR MAN'S INNOVATIONS?

by Curtis A. Cates

This is an excellent study of the need for man to worship, with God as the object of such worship. Worship is defined, the characteristics of true worship and worshippers are given and book, chapter, and verse support from the Scriptures is on every page. The question of whether or not all of life is worship is covered in some detail. In the latter half of the book the author deals with present day departures from true worship such as: the divided assembly; so called "special music" of singing groups, choruses, choirs, and solos; participating in worship with mechanical instruments of music; theatrical performances in place of worship; women in leadership roles in worship; etc. Endnotes document the unauthorized practices going on in some churches among us. The author has added questions for each chapter, making it suitable for senior high and adult classes. The book costs \$3.50, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. Order from Cates Publications, 5512 Cottonwood, Memphis, Tn. 38115. (Reviewed by the Editor)



## GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

"YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE"  
MOVING? CHANGING TO 911?  
Be sure to send us  
your change of address



POSTMASTER  
Mail all address changes to:  
CHURCH OF CHRIST  
P. O. BOX 251  
MAMMOTH SPRING, AR, 72554

Second Class Postage  
Paid At  
Mammoth Spring, AR  
72554  
Publication # 211790