

## FRUITS OF APOSTASY

Throughout history there have been those who have turned from the truth and followed the doctrines of men. When such departures take place there is usually a great deal of discussion and debate concerning various practices accepted by those who depart. In the last century these practices included the church supported missionary societies and the use of instrumental music in worship. In more recent years the discussions and debates have been on such items as the work of the church, church support of human institutions and sponsoring church arrangements. It is always sad when such departures take place and at the time of the departure it seems as though those divided have much in common. However, as time goes by the differences become greater and greater. Why is this?

I think the answer is obvious. The division does not take place over the various practices mentioned. These are but the fruit of the real problem. The real cause of division is attitudes toward the authority of the word of God. When men develop a "liberal" attitude toward the authority of God's word they will accept and condone practices unauthorized in the word of God and rejected by those who abide in His word (John 8:31,32; 2 John 9). As time goes by this attitude leads them to accept more and more practices not found in the word of God and eventually any resemblance to those from whom they departed is gone.

This was impressed upon my mind recently as I read an article in a publication I receive from some who still identify themselves as members of the church of Christ but have a very denominational view of the church. In fact, the writer of the article under consideration says, "I am a seventh generation Church of Christ Christian on my father's side and a fourth generation Church of Christ Christian on my mother's side." Such terminology clearly reveals the lack of Bible knowledge on the part of the writer and the existence of denominational thinking and concepts. There is no such thing in the Bible as a "Church of Christ Christian." Those who obeyed the gospel of Christ were Christians (Acts 11:26) and were added to the number of the saved, the body or church of Christ (Acts 2:47, Ephesians 5:23), but they are never identified as "Church of Christ Christians."

With such denominational concepts we should not be surprised to find such a one accepting denominational beliefs and practices. This the writer surely does. Later in the article under consideration the writer, under the heading of "What Saves Us?," says, "Christ's death on the cross saves us, and the Holy Spirit leads us to that great salvation by leading us through the process of rebirth. This process is symbolized by baptism. I know with all my heart that it is not baptism that saves us." This is the argument denominational preachers have made for years and it is just as wrong now as it has been through the years.

Yes, the Holy Spirit leads us to that great salvation, but He does so by having revealed the mind of God to the holy apostles and prophets and they wrote that which was revealed to them that we may understand the will of the Lord (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:3-6; 5:17). Mark, guided by the Holy Spirit, records the words of Jesus as he declared "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned*" (Mark 16:16). The same Holy Spirit guided Peter in telling those on the day of Pentecost ". . . *Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). When someone rejects the Holy Spirit's teaching on baptism then they will certainly consider questions on the use of the church building or church cooperation of no significance.

Before the latest division over church supported institutions, etc. there was a division over the doctrine of premillennialism and some groups who accepted this false doctrine still identified themselves as "churches of Christ". I attended one of these groups back in the late 1950's and even then these groups openly fellowshiped denominational groups and had "joint Easter Sunrise services" with the Presbyterians. If you were to attend one of these groups today you would find little or nothing that would resemble sound doctrine. The same thing is happening among those who accepted the church support of human institutions. Some among them are calling for fellowship with those who use instrumental music in worship. Others among them don't want this but they are

unwilling to turn away from the thinking and attitude that led to such, i.e., a failure to respect the authority of God's word in all things. These brethren need to recognize the age old truth, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. You can't sow the seeds of apostasy without reaping the fruit.

✍ James Hahn