

Missions in America

(among the Baptist family)

Three Articles by Elder Claude McKee

Introduction of Missions in America

Article 1 - As printed in The Christian Baptist, November 1995

Below is an excerpt from Hassell's History of the Church of God. It is concerning a query which was introduced in the Kehukee association, in the year of 1803 by Elder Martin Ross. This was only eleven years since the ideal of Missions was introduced among the Baptist family by Andrew Fuller and William Carey in England. There are some very striking similarities between that turn from God and what is rapidly developing among the old Baptist at the present time.

The modern missionary movement among the Baptist in America started in large part because of the zeal of certain men to spread the Gospel. It is my opinion that at the infancy of this movement the Gospel was still being preached by those that later came to support the mission movement and its false doctrine. There developed different views on the use of the Gospel. Some followed the lead of Andrew Fuller and taught falsely that the 'Gospel' and 'the Minister' were the means by which God saved sinners. Thus the terms 'means' and 'anti-means' were used to label each side of the issue. It was only natural that benevolent societies were started in order to support and maintain the spread of this erroneous Gospel.

Many that shared the common desire of God's ministers to see growth and acceptance of the truth, were deceived into complacency. They were taken by the sleight and cunning craftiness of men and supported the early stages of the movement. Finally after about 27 years of struggling and scattering of God's sheep, some of God's people took a stand against the unscriptural formation of mission and benevolent societies to spread the Gospel.

We can now, by hindsight, see the result of that split in 1827/32. To see the places each faction now occupies should be a sobering lesson to every Primitive Baptist. The primitive Baptist have in most part stayed in the old paths. Those that split off have grown to a multitude of people which worship the creature more than the creator. Their doctrine and practice is such as the Scribes and Pharisees to whom Christ said. "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in VAIN do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

I have heard it said several times in recent years that after the 1830 split, the Primitive Baptist went to far to one side of the road into the ditch and the other party went to far on the other side of the road into the ditch. A more accurate description of where each faction now stands is that; the primitive

Baptist have in most part stayed in the old paths, the Absoluters are in the ditch on one side of the road, the progressives are in the ditch on the other side of the road and the large host of Baptist which split off in 1830 are not anywhere near the road. To believe, that the Primitive Baptist are in the ditch and we need to come back to the center would in effect make us more Progressive than old line Primitive Baptist.

Excerpt from Hassell's History (pages 721/722)

Query

"Is not the Kehukee Association, with all her numerous and respectable friends, called on in Providence, in some way, to step forward in support of that missionary spirit which the great God is so wonderfully reviving amongst the different denominations of good men in various parts of the world?"

Simply to state this query is sufficient to show a settled purpose to depart from original ground, previously occupied by Baptists, and to exhibit the state and standing of the Association or church in a different light from that previously discovered in her history.

When was it known before that the Association had "numerous and respectable friends?" When had she before discovered "different denominations of good men in various parts of the world?" When had she found it necessary before this time " to step forward in support of any work which the God of Heaven was already carrying on ? If God almighty was reviving a missionary spirit among different denominations of good men in various parts of the world, without the aid of men-made missionary societies, then wherefore the necessity for their creation to enable Him to carry it on ? We see None. A very few quotations will show the antagonism of their "query" to the true condition of God's church and people.

"Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God"(Matt. 29. 17)

"There is none that doeth good, no not one" (Romans 3.12)"

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 25. 18.19)

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"(James 4.4)

"He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33.9)

"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning,

and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 46.9,10)

The idea of "respectability" and to "be like other people" and to "help the Almighty carry on His own work" has always been damaging to the people of God, whenever entertained by them in any age of the world. It was so under the Old dispensation, and has been so under the new. It was so in Andrew Fuller's day, and was so in Martin Ross's day. The Lord's people have always been a poor and afflicted people. They have always been few in number-- the persecuted among men in all ages--everywhere spoken against and cordially hated for their Master's and His truth's sake. A woe has befallen them whenever they have wrangled among themselves to see who should be the greatest, or to see how near they could be conformed to the religions of the world and still retain their identity as the peculiar people of God.

End of Excerpt.

The brother further states on page 722: "The scheme was plausible to many; it was new and beautiful to some; it was well dressed up; it was urged by good words and fair speeches, calculated to mislead the minds of the inexperienced. Those who supported it were represented by the orators of the occasion to be warm-hearted, noble Christians; while those who opposed it were denominated cold-hearted or lukewarm Christians ,who cared but little for the salvation of their fellow-creatures.

And thus the new project for a season prevailed, against the warnings and opposition of a few faithful soldiers of Christ, who were ready to mark them who caused divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which they had learned, and avoid them (Romans 16: 17); but who were unable at the time to make a sufficient stand against this new thing."

We don't need to know history to see that the modern missionary movement was a departure from the scriptures. The scriptures themselves are sufficient to help us reject any movement we face that is a departure from them. But Baptist history is interesting and can be beneficial . If you read the History of the Kehukee Assoc.(1765-1803), by Elder's Burkett and Read, you will see the seeds of the modern missionary movement being planted.

Means and Anti-Means

(Use of the Gospel in relationship to eternal life)

by Elder Claude McKee

Article 2 - as printed in The Christian Baptist, January 1996

The use of the Gospel must be properly understood and applied if we are to stay in the old paths. If misapplied ,as history shows, it can lead to splits such as occurred in the 1800's. The terms means and anti-means were used to describe the different sides. A good explanation of the different views entertained concerning the use of the gospel during the struggle of the early

1800's is given in the excerpt below. The last view given in the excerpt is what I believe to be scriptural and the view the Old line Primitive Baptist have always maintained .

Excerpt

(The autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson) Page 326

For several years preceding the division in the Whitewater Association, a difference of opinion was known to exist among the ministry and membership of the association on certain points of doctrine. And as time advanced the differences developed themselves more and more .The point which the difference was based, was, "the use and effect of the preached gospel," One party held the view that the preaching of the gospel was a means of the conversion of sinners;and that it might be effectual to that end, it was necessary that societies and boards of missions should be formed to raise funds and employ and send out men to convert and Christianize the heather.

Another party believed that in the conversion of sinners God used the preached word as a means or medium through which His Spirit operated to that end, but that missionary boards and societies were institutions of men, and had not the sanction of God, and therefore should not be sanctioned by the church and that as the church received all her authority from Christ , as her King, she could not sanction and support institutions of men, as Christian institutions, without a sacrifice of her loyalty to Christ. Neither could the church admit that the institutions of men were adequate to the conversions of sinners of the prosperity of the cause of truth , without impeaching the wisdom of Him who hath declare that He has in the Scriptures thoroughly furnished the man of God unto all good works.

The other party in the association held the same views as the second on the subject of missions and kindred societies instituted by men, but differed from both the other parties on the use and effect of the preached gospel. They denied that the preaching of the gospel had any power to convert the dead sinner, or to give him life,and declared that man in nature was dead in trespasses and sins, and that as no means could be used to give eternal life to those who are dead in sins, that God effects that work of Himself, by His holy Spirit, without means or instruments, and that the gospel is a proclamation of good tidings, of great joy to the soul that is prepared with a hearing ear and an understanding heart to receive it. To those who thus believe it is the power of God unto salvation, and it saves them from the false doctrines of men, and feeds and makes them strong in the truth.

end of excerpt

In the above excerpt the first two parties held the erroneous view that the Gospel was used to give life. If that view were true we must conclude that being born again rest entirely with the will and obedience of man. Salvation would depend on the minister's will to preach the Gospel and the sinner's willingness to accept it. According to John 1:13 that cannot be true. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,nor of the will of man, but of God."

If God used the preached word (Gospel) in the conversion of dead sinners then the minister through his obedience and faithfulness in preaching would share some of God's glory and power. There would be some people in heaven because of the work of the minister. The minister in that scheme would deserve some praise! That is a self-righteous and unholy doctrine. Those that propagate such false teaching are like those spoken of in Romans 1:25 "who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.Amen

Recently it has been said that 'Gospel Regeneration' is once again being taught among the Primitive Baptist. I hope and pray that none of the old Baptist are accepting it. I have not heard it myself . I have heard what I believe to be a move in that direction; misapplying the use of the Gospel in relationship to enlightening the world. This misapplication has slowly crept in and has gained acceptance to the point that some among the old Baptist are poised to once again begin a 'work of man' , to Spread the Gospel to the world .

The spread of the Gospel

(use of the Gospel in relationship to enlightenment)

by Elder Claude McKee

Article 3 - as printed in The Christian Baptist, February 1996

True old Baptist have always been believers in biblical missions, But never adopted the benevolent societies nor any scheme devised for assisting in them. In the 1800's they were accused of being against ' the spread of the gospel'. They were falsely accused of fighting against the Spirit of God in opposing the new schemes brought forth.

The brethren that meet at Black Rock Maryland in 1832, defended themselves against the false charges that they were opposed to the spread of the Gospel or biblical missions by stating:

Excerpt

(page 30 of the "Black Rock Address & Kehukee Declaration")

"We will now call your attention to the subject of missions. Previous to stating our objections to the mission plans, we will meet some of the false charges brought against us relative to this subject, by a simple and unequivocal declaration, that we do regard as of the first importance the command given of Christ , primarily to His apostles, and through them to his ministers in every age, to "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and do feel an earnest desire to be found acting in obedience thereunto, as the providence of God directs our way, and opens a door of utterance for us. We also believe it to be the duty of individuals and churches to contribute according to their abilities, for the support , not only of their pastors, but also of those who go preaching the gospel of Christ among the destitute. But we at the same time contend, that we have no right to depart from the order which the Master himself has seen fit to lay down, relative to

the ministration of the word. We therefore cannot fellowship the plans for spreading the gospel, generally adopted at this day, under the name of Missions; because we consider those plans throughout a subversion of the order marked out in the new testament."

It is clear that those brethren were not against ministers going and preaching the word but believed it should be by the providence and opening up of doors by God only, not man made schemes.

Today's emerging movement is very similar to the 1800 movement. It just has not grow enough to see all of its attributes. Terms such as evangelize, outreach ministry, and radio ministry are being used today to promote the spread of the Gospel by man. The emphasis is on an out reach ministry to the world and promoting the old Baptist to the world. If this be true and I believe it is, then that is enough for me to be skeptical in light of the scriptures: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" or "the world knoweth you not because it knew me not." Following the Lead of the Holy Spirit into new areas is much different than us trying to aquatint the world with the Old Baptist. Some will say, well do you not think the Lord can use Radio or other means to feed or reach his people in other lands. I concede that he can. But when radio programs are edited and produced, When credit cards or used, promotional letters read, and solicitations made. BEWARE.

The use of the Gospel in relationship to enlightening the hearers is not as straight forward as one may think. If it were a matter of intellect ,we could simple study the scriptures or be instructed by a teacher (bible study) and all come to the same conclusions. But common reasoning would tell you that something is wrong with that because many have been trained in colleges by the brilliant minds but never come to the knowledge of the truth. Well you might say, its because they have not been reached by an old Baptist preacher The scriptures will not support that either. Many that heard Christ preach never seen the truth, the same was true with Paul. Even the disciples ,who the Lord taught during his earthly ministry, didn't have clear understanding of the scriptures. After Christ had arisen, the scriptures state that he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures (Luke 24:44,45). You can preach all you want to but will never be able to make one see or know Christ as He is; unless God is in the matter.

I believe the following four statements along with comments and scripture supporting them , correctly state the use of the Gospel in relationship to enlightenment and propagation.

1. The Gospel is the good news. It is directed to the burdened sinner. It is not an invitation but a proclamation . It is not food to the self righteous child of God. It only effects those that are burdened with their sins. Those of God's children that do not have seeing eyes and an understanding heart to realize where their salvation comes from, but believe that they are sufficient in themselves to hear and accept the Gospel for their eternal life do not rejoice in the true Gospel; they reject it and it is not good news to them.

Scripture Proof: Luke 4:18 *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised".*

Matt 6:6 *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled".*

Matthew 9:13 *"But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance".*

2. True Gospel believers in Christ Jesus are believers because of the Work of God, not because of Man's efforts. A true Gospel believer is one that believes with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ. This is not just an intellectual belief but it is a spiritual understanding that Jesus is the Savior of his people, requiring no action on the part of man, this believe is only revealed by God. Some people say they believe in Grace and that Christ is their savior but they still are not true Gospel believers. They show this by saying they accepted Christ and that man must be obedient in some way, etc. This group of God's children can be taught to embrace many sovereign grace principles but no man can make any of God's children true gospel believers. This is the work of God. This is clearly illustrated in the bible by Paul's experience. Ananias was sent by God to Saul and was instructed to lay his hands on him that he might receive his sight. I have heard several preach that this is an example of the Gospel minister giving Saul Gospel light and understanding; after God had given life to Saul. But Paul disputes this theory in Gal. 1:11,12 "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Scripture Proof: John 6:29 *"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent".*
John 6:45 *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*

1 Peter 1:21 *"Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*
Gal 1:11,12 *"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ..*

Matthew 11:25-27 *"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no*

man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him".

3. True Preaching saves only believers, it is not an invitation to save them that will believe it.

Preaching is not intended to save non-believers but saves them whose heart the Lord has opened. Preaching delivers (saves) them from desert places, it puts them on the mountain top, it instructs them in church practices and how to conduct their daily lives. By it they grow in grace and knowledge of the truth and it saves them from error and idolatry. Thus the Gospel is the power of God unto the saved believer.

Scripture Proof: 1 Cor. 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe". (not will believe)

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek". (not will believe)

Acts 16:14 "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul".

4. The preaching of the Gospel and it's propagation is dependent upon the power and spirit of God, not on man.

The Gospel should be preached in every place directed by the holy spirit and when the lead of the Spirit is followed there will be a hearing ear, prepared by God, to receive it. The gospel is the Power of God unto salvation and therefore is dependent upon the power and spirit of God to direct its propagation to whomever the Spirit pleases. It is not dependent upon man or any means of men such as: money or the lack thereof, extended or special meetings, popularity of men to draw a crowd (which is respect of persons). All such things are contrived to help the Lord in adding to the church. But the Lord is the only one that truly adds to the Church such as should be saved. Any one entering or bringing in other than through the door (Christ) is a thief and robber. The Church of Christ is a place of refuge, a place of comfort, a place for enlightened obedient children (true believers) , a place for them to worship him in spirit and in truth; the scriptures indicating that the true church is a remnant of the saved children of Israel.

Scripture Proof: Matthew 28:18-20 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Amen.

Acts 13:4 "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus".

Acts 16:6-10 "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them".

Claude Mckee