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Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK.

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What Must I Do to Become a Christian

HEAR— "If any man have an ear, let him hear." Rev. 13:9 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10:17.

BELIEVE — Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24 "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." Heb. 11:6

REPENT — "I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Lk. 13:3 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts 17:30

CONFESS — "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:9

BE BAPTIZED — "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mk. 16:16 "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

"THEN THEY THAT GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD WERE BAPTIZED: AND THE SAME DAY THERE WERE ADDED UNTO THEM ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS." Acts 2:41.

"What good is a high standard of living with a low standard of life?"

Opportunities or Obstacles

Perhaps you have heard the story of the two shoe salesmen who were sent to Africa. One wired back, "The case is hopeless; nobody wears shoes." The other wired, "Unlimited opportunities; everybody is barefooted." Point of view is tremendously important in shaping our attitude toward anything.

One of the biggest problems is to train ourselves to see opportunities instead of obstacles. When the average church member is admonished to do personal work in his community, instead of seeing the great possibilities, he usually excuses himself on the ground that his familiarity with the people presents a great obstacle to his encouraging them in spiritual matters. This has become a crutch that far too many of us lean on to excuse our lack of consecration to God and our lack of love for the souls of our friends. There is something basically wrong with a friendship that forbids mutual spiritual interest. How can friends who love and respect each other, refuse to share an interest in this most vital topic that points to eternity as well as the present? Is it reasonable that friends can discuss every topic under the sun except the religion of Jesus Christ and still remain close friends? Surely we need to amend our thinking. If we just refuse to do personal work for Christ, let us say so and quit excusing ourselves on the grounds that personal friendship is a great hindrance to influencing people for Christ. Let us begin to see the opportunities for winning souls to Christ instead of the obstacles!

— W. L. Fry

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Meeting Schedule

BROTHER W. A. BRADFIELD will be preaching in a series of Gospel meetings at Salem, Arkansas July 31 to August 7. Time of the services will be 7:30 p.m. Brother Bradfield is a well known gospel preacher and teacher. He has been teaching at Freed-Hardeman College, and the public relations man for that school, for a number of years. You will be benefited by hearing him.

BROTHER WAYMON MILLER will be in a series of meetings at Mammoth Spring July 25 to August 3. Brother Miller is from Tulsa, Oklahoma. He is from a family of preachers and faithful Christian people. Recently he guided a tour of the Holy Land. We are looking forward to having him with us.

"Remember that everyone who got where he is had to start where he was."

"Isn't it more important to know where your children are tonight, than where your ancestors were when the Mayflower sailed?"

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EDITORS:
CLOVIS RAGSDALE
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"Living Under Grace"

There seems to be many problems in the church today because brethren cannot find a specific set of laws on just how everything is to be done. The Lord made clear what he wants us to do, but sometimes the how is not so clearly stated. It is sad but true, that contentions and divisions exist because there is no specific laws telling exactly how a given thing is to be done. No doubt, such contentions and divisions are the causes for many weak and struggling brethren falling away.

Are we guilty of closing our eyes to the subject of grace, and to the liberty wherein Christ has made us free? In Romans 6:14 Paul wrote, "For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace". What does Paul mean by saying, "ye are not under the law but under grace"? Does he mean that we have no law to direct us? From Acts 1:2 we learn that after Jesus went back to the Father, he gave commandments through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles. Commandments suggests law, therefore, we do have a law by which

we are to live. What then does it mean to live under grace?

Grace activates obedience, not from the standpoint of law, but from the standpoint of love. Surely the Lord doesn't want us to obey him just because there is a law that commands a given thing to be done. Preachers are guilty of causing members of the Lord's body to obey the Lord from a sense of duty. Let us consider a few such things.

Why do we partake of the Lord's supper? Many would answer because Jesus command us to do it, but did he? Is the statement, "do this in remembrance of me" a command to be obeyed? Surely Jesus wants us to do this showing our remembrance of him, but not because it is a duty. To those who love the Lord, there is no law that compells them to do this. Jesus does not want us to be compelled by law to sit at his table and commune with him. Those truly born again, desire to do this, because they desire to do what Jesus wants them to. To make this feast a law is to destroy it's real spiritual significance.

Why do we give? Many would also say this is a command to be obeyed. If this were a law the Lord would have been more specific about it. The Lord isn't after our money, he only wants us, and when he gets us then there will be no problem about the support of the church. In Acts 4:34 we learn where as many as were possessors of land or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things to the apostles. Why did they do this, because it was commanded? Grace activated them to do this. To Ananias in Acts 5:4 Pete said, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?" He was not compelled to give the price of his land, nor even a part of it. Why did those of Macedonia give even though they were in poverty? Was it because Paul had commanded them to? In 2 Cor. 8:4 Paul said they prayed them with much intreaty to take the gift, in other words they begged them to take it, and the reason is stated in verse 5, they first gave themselves to the Lord. The Lord Doesn't

Fear and Love - -

Perhaps the two most powerful emotions of life are fear and love. People will do more from fear than from anything else except love. In any contest between love and fear, love always wins.

I once read a story about the internationally famous French actress, Sarah Bernhardt, who was considered one of the greatest actresses of another generation. When she was a child she was involved in an accident which made her pathologically afraid of fire. Yet one evening on returning to her apartment, she was shocked to find the place surrounded by firemen and police. Smoke filled

(Continued on page 3)

want a gift offered grudgingly or of necessity, but a gift offered gladly and cheerfully. Law would cause many to give grudgingly because law suggests necessity.

Why do we help the widows, orphans and the needy? Do you do this because you fear if you don't do it you will be lost? This is not law, but it is something the Lord wants us to do, and those who love the Lord will also love to help the needy. James tells us that it is true religion, Paul tells us in Gal. 6:2 that it fulfills the law of Christ, but what law? In Gal. 5:14 "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself". When God's love dwells in our hearts it motivates us to respond with compassion to the needy.

To those who live under grace, there is no sense of a law to compel them to do what Jesus wants them to, no law except love. Far too many brethren are trying to bind laws upon the church which Christ does not want, laws about keeping and observing the Lord's supper, laws about how much to give and what can be done with the gift, laws about how to help the needy, and who the needy are we can help, all such laws are foreign to the teachings of Jesus and his apostles.

Harold Turner

many windows and guards blocked the entrance to the building. Frantically she began to ask if anyone had brought her baby out of the apartment. No one had. Tearing away from police and firemen, she rushed into the building and raced up the stairs. Fortunately she was able to reach her apartment and rescue the baby.

It was not until she was safely on the street again, and helping hands had taken the unharmed baby from her arms, that Sarah Bernhardt remembered how much she was afraid of fire and fainted.

The Bible tells us that "perfect love casts out fear." Love is the strongest of the two emotions. When we are moved to act out of fear it is a good sign that not enough love is present.

Love will take away the fear of the future. What the future holds no one knows. That it points into dark valleys we can easily see if we are governed by fear. But what we forget is that there is a light stronger than any darkness. Since God is light we need not walk in darkness. David said the word of God was a lamp for his feet and a light for his pathway. Surely the future, if there be a future, cannot hold more darkness than saints have witnessed in the past. They were able to cast a light around them regardless of where they were forced to walk. If God be for us who can be against us? Surely we do not entertain any fears concerning the power of God nor of the fact that he loves us. If our love for God is strong enough it will cast out fear.

Love will cast out fear of failure. This does not mean that love will guarantee success in every undertaking. It does mean that God will not hold us responsible for what we are unable to do. God does not demand that we succeed in every undertaking. He only asks that we do our best. If we fail because we have not given our best we have reason to fear, but here again we see a lack of love. No one really fails when he gives his best to God because what we sometimes call failure is success to our Father. The outcome is his responsibility. Our task is to do our best in his

service and God will count our efforts as being successful.

Love will cast our fear of want. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" was the language of David. Jesus put it another way. He said that God clothes the lily, feeds the sparrow, but loves us more than he loves lily or sparrow. Therefore he said we should not fear what shall be on the morrow. He said we should not be anxious concerning things. His conclusion was "Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added."

No one ever walked on the earth who had more fear than did Jesus. He had few friends but many enemies. Even his friends did not understand him. In his most trying hour he had to tread the wine press alone. But he walked in the world without fear because he walked with a heart filled with love.

Yes, love is stronger than fear. Fear hath torment. Then we should be busy learning of love.

—Cleon Lyles

No Middle Ground

- CLOVIS RAGSDALE

It is a fact that the Ostrich, an African bird of great size, will hide its head in the sand when it comes face to face with danger. Many are slain because they refuse to take pains to protect themselves.

A parallel can be seen in the lives of some people, who believe in God, yet pass up all opportunities to become a Christian and die outside of Christ. Many believe that if one will live a good moral life it is not necessary to become a Christian and attend church. They create a middle ground, they claim to be neither saints nor sinners. They argue their case with the assertion that God is too good to send one to hell if he is a good moral person and that the church is not really necessary. Besides, they are better than many church members anyway.

This attitude is a product of human reasoning. The Bible contradicts this thinking in verse after

verse. First, Isaiah said in the long ago, "for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Many cannot put himself on a par with God. He does so when he invents for himself a way to gain Heaven without complying with the way outlined in the Bible.

Christ said in Matt. 7:21, "not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

It is God's will that all men believe, John 8:24. That all men repent, Acts 17:30. That all men confess, Matt. 10:32, and that men be baptized, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38. Further, it is God's will that men be faithful Christians until death, Rev. 2:10. God, who cannot lie, has promised to save those who comply with the above mentioned. To save others would make God a respecter of persons. Acts 10:14 states that God is no respecter of persons.

In 2 Thes. 1:8 it is stated that Christ is going to come back and take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel. If we are to escape the vengeance of the Lord, then we must obey the gospel. We cannot obey the gospel without believing, repenting, confessing, and being baptized. In Acts 2:47, the people who did this were added to the church.

If the church is not necessary for salvation, then Christ died unnecessarily. God made the blunder of the ages by sending his son to earth to die the death of the cross. Surely no one would believe this.

A close study of the Bible reveals that it teaches man has only two choices in the spiritual realm. To serve Satan or to serve Christ. If we expect to go to heaven then we must serve Christ. To serve him we must become a Christian. This is a Bible truth that man cannot escape. If we refuse to face this fact then we are like the Ostrich.

The Organization of the Church

Jesus Christ did not leave it up to man to decide what type of organization his church would have. There is a very good reason for this. Man is not capable of directing his own steps Jer. 10:23. Thus in the New Testament he has Given the organization that the church is to have. We can be pleasing to God only by following his teaching in this respect.

I would like to say in the beginning of this study, that there are three ways the church can exist. Two of these are pleasing to God, one is not.

1. The first is, **SCRIPTUALLY UNORGANIZED**. This simply means that there are no men in the church who have the qualifications which one must have to serve as an elder or deacon. The church can exist in this state and be pleasing to God only so long as there are no men qualified. However, every congregation should strive to have qualified men in a reasonable length of time after it is established.

2. The second is, **SCRIPTUALLY ORGANIZED**. By this I mean, there are men who meet the qualifications listed in the Bible. (Cf. I Tim. 3, Titus, 1) The Bible teaches, that men who are qualified should be appointed to serve as elders and deacons in the local congregation.

3. The third way is, **UNSCRIPTUALLY ORGANIZED**. There are far too many congregations which claim to be following the Lord that have types of organization which God never authorized in His word. I mean that there are men doing the work of elders who are not qualified. Most of the time these men are on some kind of committee which has originated in the mind of man. I am not opposed to committees which function under the oversight of the elders, but the Bible nowhere teaches that committees are to function in the place of elders.

Here is the organization that the Lord intended his church to

have. Jesus Christ is the head of all congregations Eph. 1: 22-23. Then each church is to have elders to guide her in her work. Acts: 14:23. The deacons are appointed to assist the elders in any way they can to carry out the Lord's work. They will relieve the elders of many small matters that they may attend to more important thing in the work of the Lord. As the teachers and all members cooperate with the elders, working together in unity and love for one another, the church will grow and be a strong influence in the community.

James Knight
Pineville, La.

EASY DOES IT . . .

Serving Christ does not always demand the difficult and the complicated. Sometimes the best service is simple, near at hand, and so obvious as to be easily overlooked.

It is not what you would do if you had a million dollars but what are you doing with the dollar and a quarter in your pocket. It is not the amount of reading and study you would do if you were not so busy, but the channeling of the available leisure minutes into Bible reading until they accumulate into hours. It is not the great missionary work you would do if you were on the other side of the world, but what word you speak to the man on the other side of the street. It is not what we earn that makes us rich,

As riches are really known,
But how honest we are as we lay our hand,

On what we call our own.
It is not what we keep that gives us peace,

In an age when peace is rare,
But how truthful we are as we lay aside

Our own and the Master's share.

Ain't It the Truth ?

Isn't it strange that some women want to dress like a man; smoke like a furnace; swear like a sailor; drink like a sponge; and

occasionally wear little more clothes than a monkey; but still expect to be treated like a lady? There isn't anything any more precious in God's sight than a virtuous woman. Men might enjoy running around with the type of "lady" described above but they want to marry a real lady.

The Sin of Ingratitude

One of the most common sins among us today is the sin of ingratitude, or failing to show appreciation or give thanks.

This illustration shows men are often ungrateful to God. A certain man was asked to supper in the home of a farmer friend. As they sat down to eat the farmer offered his thanks to God for the food. The visitors commented, "Don't you know that's gone out of custom? It's not popular to do that among intellectuals."

I will admit that some on my farm don't give thanks," replied the farmer.

"Who?" asked the visitor.

"My pigs", replied the farmer.

Has it gone out of style to give thanks to God for His bountiful blessings? Should we consider it merely a "custom" to be used at one's own discretion? Of course not. The Bible commands us to give thanks to God for our blessing such as this. (I Tim. 4:3).

But there is another facet to this sin of ingratitude. The practice of "common courtesy" has lost much of its meaning. Being thankful and expressing that thanks to others is always in order. A man traveling by train wanted to make friends with a boy. He bought him a big red apple. "Now what do you say to the man" asked the mother. Without hesitation he thrust it back at the man demanding, **PEEL IT!**

Do we teach our children to be grateful to God and man

—William E. Jones

"We hear that some animals are almost human, and vice versa."