

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 12

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

December 1971

Number 12

"Love" Is Not Enough

FANNING YATER TANT, Editor, GOSPEL GUARDIAN

"What the world needs most is love — sweet love." So go the words of one of the current banalities referred to as popular music. Popular, yes; music, no. But when it comes to the matter of religion, man's relationship to an infinite Creator, the hackneyed words are halfway right. Half-way, mind you; not all the way. For human love, however sweet and rewarding, can never solve our problems. It can solve some of them, but never all of them. For love of mankind for his fellow-creatures is only one side of the coin. That "love" is not enough; indeed, it is secondary and inferior to the greater and more encompassing love. Meaning man's love for God.

If for one another could give the total answer, then surely life would be much simpler and easier for all of us. But it is possible for two people to love one another with a total and consuming fervor, and be completely indifferent, or even antagonistic toward God. Both history and literature are filled with examples of man and women who lived, but whose lives ended in bitter frustration and misery. They loved — but they did not love God. Abouhen Adhem wanted to be recorded as "one who loved his fellow men," and Abou's creator wanted to equate that with "love of God." Not so. We cannot love God without loving our fellows, but we most certainly can love mankind without loving God.

All of which has deep significance for those of us who believe ourselves to be children of God. That differences exist among us is obvious. Ignoring them will not remove them; neither will loving one another remove them. Of course, there are some differences that love can resolve, but that's not what we are talking about. Those differences may all be removed completely, and still we may be poles apart.

There is a kind of love, however, which DOES solve our problems — the love we have for God. "For this is the love of God," wrote John, "that we keep his commandments." (I John 5:3.) The man who says he loves God, but does not keep God's commandments has deceived himself. He does not love God; he may have exalted his own opinions and judgments and prejudices to the point

that he is confused as to what are God's commandments. But if that be the case his lack of humility has blinded him. This is probably what has happened in the recent tragic division within the body of Christ. Brethren were so CERTAIN they were right that they gave little time or thought to a careful, diligent, and prayerful study as to just what the will of God was.

Surely the time is long overdue when brethren should sit down together as brethren, lay their differences out for full and frank discussion — not to prove who is right or who is wrong, but to ascertain what can be done by all of them to find and follow exactly the will of God! They may love another and not follow this course; but it is indisputable truth that they cannot love God and refuse to make any effort toward reconciliation. When a man loves God he is automatically and without fanfare or ado in fellowship with every other person on the earth who loves God; when a man does not love God, he is out of fellowship with every person who does love him.

This really is a very simple sort of editorial. It is summed up in the words of Christ to a certain lawyer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." (Luke 10:27.) For too many years it has pretty clearly been demonstrated that the words of Christ, spoken first by Isaiah to ancient Israel, "This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me," could be applied with deadly accuracy to a great number of "Church of Christ people" in the twentieth century. When strife and alienation and bitterness exist, when fellowship is broken, when congregations are divided, SOMEBODY does not love God!

There are two fundamental concepts which, if tenaciously held to, will forever make impossible any division among God's people over a matter of doctrine. They are (1) the absolute authority of God's word, and (2) the fact that God's word is clear enough for men to understand his will. Those two bed-rock principles being accepted totally and

(Continued on Page 2)

How They Did It

By Glynn Purdy

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER

Due to the fact that Paul was the first preacher mentioned in the New Testament to have gone into Macedonia of Europe, we believe that the jailer knew nothing of Christ. We are to hear the Gospel, believe it, repent, confess Christ and then be baptized to become a Christian. So when this jailer asked, "Sirs what must I do to be saved"?, Acts 16:30, it was necessary to begin at the beginning! Faith comes by HEARING the word of God, Rom. 10:17, so in order for him to have faith, they "spoke unto him the word of the Lord", Verse 32. He believed this word, Verse 34. He repented, did the works of repentance, Verse 33. Then he was baptized, Verse 34, which is for the "remission of sins" Acts 2:38.

THOSE IN ACTS 2

In the second chapter of Acts there were "Jews and proselytes out of every nation under heaven", Verses 5-10. These had come together to keep the feast of Pentecost which was authorized under the law of Moses. These had crucified Christ, therefore did not believe him to be the Son of God. The apostles preached to them that they did believe, and believing, asked, "Men and Brethren what shall we do"?, Verse 37. These BELIEVING Jews were told to, "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 Spirit," Acts 2:38. Jesus said that this would be preached, beginning at Jerusalem, Luke 24:46-47. The Holy Spirit instructed the apostles to preach this, Acts 2:4. Those who were baptized were added to the church, Acts 2:47.

SAUL, OR PAUL

Saul thought that he ought to do many things, that he later learned were contrary to the commands of Jesus, Acts 26:9-11. Though he had a clear conscience, he still was wrong, Acts 23:1. Jesus appeared to him that he might be an apostle and believe in him, Acts 9:3-6. One had to see Christ to be an apostle, Acts 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 15:8. Saul was told to go into Damascus and THERE it would be TOLD him what "thou must DO", Acts 9:6. While he waited for these instructions, what he MUST DO, he spent the time in PRAYING and FASTING (three days),

(Continued on Page 4)

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.

CONTRIBUTIONS:

Elizabeth Church of Christ	\$ 5.00
May Shepherd	1.00
Ring Church of Christ	5.00
Lura Young	2.00
Felix Davis	2.00
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Viola Church of Christ	5.00
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"LOVE" IS NOT ENOUGH (Cont.)

without reservation, what happens when a difference between brethren arises (no matter what the difference: human evangelistic arrangements, benevolent institutions, instrumental music in the worship, or what-not)? Sincere brethren go immediately "to the law and to the testimony," to learn, understand, and fully comprehend exactly what the Bible teaches—they believe the Bible CAN be understood on every matter affecting our eternal salvation. Having determined Bible teaching, they accept it as final. This has to do with the authority of the Bible.

That one or the other of those two concepts (maybe both) have been abandoned in fact (while adhered to in theory) by many thousands of Christians today is too patent to need comment. Let us hope that men of good will may yet find a way out of the debacle. Maybe an occasional edition of "ACTION" such as this one can make a contribution in that direction. At least it ought to help a little bit to encourage more "love of the brethren" and that is one step toward the ultimate necessity for unity—love of God.

—Reprint from ACTION

Answering Some of Your Questions

By Glynn Purdy

IS IT OK TO DRINK COFFEE WITH THOSE WHO ARE NOT CHRISTIAN?

The Christian MUST associate with those who are NOT Christian, in order to convert them. Jesus was condemned by the Pharisees for His association with "sinners" and He responded that "the sick" (sinners) "need the physician." Matt. 9:10-12. Jesus was the great "Physician", but he must contact those whom He "healed". Of course the Christian is not to "partake of the sins of the world, I Cor. 15:33, and he is not to be "unequally yoked" with them, 2 Cor. 6:14. But as the "light of the world" and the "salt" to save, he MUST come in contact with the "unbelievers" in order to "show" and "teach" them of Jesus. So, YES INDEED, it is not only "right" but one must take every opportunity to associate with those of the world, not be led by the world, but to lead the world to Christ. The Christian is not to be "like" the world, but to make the world "like" Christ, Romans 12:2.

SHOULD A PERSON FAST TODAY?

There are many examples of people fasting in the Bible, for various reasons, mostly as an indication of repentance and humility to find grace with God. Today, many people, in time of great sorrow or need, fast and pray and even lose their appetite, or forget to eat. This is an INDIVIDUAL matter, but there is NO PLACE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHERE WE ARE COMMANDED TO FAST TODAY. So if a person wants to fast for any reason, or no reason, this is up to him, but God has bound this on no man today and no man should bind such upon another. He has no authority from God to do so!

IS IT ALL RIGHT TO CUT THE GRASS ON SUNDAY, AFTER WORSHIP SERVICE?

This should receive a simple NO answer, but the Bible does not teach that one cannot cut his grass on Sunday. But Sunday is the "LORD'S DAY", Rev. 1:10. This is the day Christ was raised from the dead, the day the church was established, the day Christians are to worship God, eat the Lord's supper, contribute to support the Gospel, to study God's work, to sing and to pray! The Lord gave us SIX days for ourselves and took ONE for himself. Then if the day is the LORD'S DAY, we should dedicate the day to HIS work and NOT OUR OWN. Those who love the Lord and want to go to heaven, will have no trouble with this matter after proper consideration!

(Continued on Page 3)

GOD IS POWER

The long winter months are so bleak and barren! During this season, all nature seems to be dead. But God, by his power and providence, causes the spring to return. Though the winter months are dark and cold, we have learned to trust Divine power to bring us again and again the warmth and beauty of the springtime. The spring of the year is a growing season, which assures us of a harvest when we shall feast on the fruit of the land. At this lovely time, life bursts forth out of death, and plenty out of want. God, by his marvelous power, brings all these good things to pass.

The Lord Jesus, while upon the earth, had a lot to say about the power and providence of our heavenly Father. When he sat on the mountain he said: "Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matt. 6: 25, 26.)

The seasons of the year—the spring, the summer, the autumn and the winter—return at regular intervals every year. This has been true throughout the centuries. This is another reminder that God rules and regulates the universe.

BAPTISM

Men say that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. What does the Bible say? Will you believe man, or your Bible?

If one is saved before baptism, he is saved before his sins are forgiven. Read Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21.

If saved before baptism, he is saved before being born again. Read John 3:3-6.

If saved before baptism, he is saved before the Lord promised to save him. Read Mark 16:16.

If saved before baptism, he is saved before fulfilling all righteousness. Read Matthew 3:15-19.

Baptism is in water. Read Acts. 10:47; 8:26-40; Ephesians 5:23-26.

Much water is required. Read John 3:23.

How much water is required? Enough to BURY the person. Read Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:2-6.

Christ's Practice of Prayer

The earthly ministry of our Lord was begun in prayer (Luke 3:21), continued in prayer, and ended in prayer. (Luke 23:34). The heavenly ministry of our Lord was begun in prayer (John 14:16), and is now continued in prayer. (Heb. 7:25.)

"Lord, teach us to pray." (Luke 11:1.)

Prayer is more important than rest, for "in the morning a great while before day he rose up and went out into a desert place and there prayed." (Mark 1:35.)

Prayer is more important than sleep, for "he went out into the mountain to pray and he continued all night in prayer to God." (Luke 6:12.)

Prayer was more important in securing workers than either money or machinery, for he said, "Pray ye the Lord of harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matt. 9:38.)

Prayer is as important as his other ministries, for "he ever liveth to make intercessions for us." (Heb. 7:25.)

—Unknown.

Answering Some of Your Questions (Cont.)

MORE ON THE 430 YEARS THE ISRAELITES SPENT IN EGYPT.

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM, TO THE GIVING OF THE LAW OF MOSES, THERE IS ONLY 430 YEARS! From the best authorities, Abraham was born in 1996 B.C. was called at age 75 (1921 B. C.), and 430 years later (1491) the law of MOSES was given. So we can count from NO OTHER DATE! The King James speaks of the covenant being "confirmed" which leads some to think that the 430 years should begin from the time God "confirmed" the covenant with Jacob, but there is NOT this much time to account for here. The New English Bible makes this plain. "A testament, or covenant, had been validated (instead of "confirmed", with Abraham of course GVP) by God; it can not be invalidated, and its promises rendered ineffective, by a law made four hundred thirty years later," Gal. 3:17. If you will notice in Gen. 12:1, that God is "confirming" a covenant that he "had" made with Abraham BEFORE this is repeated in Gen. 12:1. It states that God "had said unto Abram" (past tense) and it is here CONFIRMED. So from this "confirming", when Abram was 75 years of age, we MUST begin our 430 year count which I did in the article which appeared in the REVEALER. If you have it, read it again!

Why Didn't the Lunar Module Sink?

Uniformitarianists were predicting that when the lunar module landed on the moon it would sink into miles of dust. Why did evolutionists think there was so much dust on the moon? Because 14,300,000 tons of meteoritic dust settles on the earth each year. (Henry M. Morris and John C. Whitcomb, Jr., The Genesis Flood, page 379) If the earth were five billion years old there would be layer of meteoritic dust fifty-four feet thick on the entire surface of the earth. Since there is no such layer of meteoritic dust on the earth, uniformitarianists say that this layer of dust cannot be detected because it is assimilated by the plants and dissolved by the seas of the earth.

But since there are no plants and no seas on the moon, they were sure that the fifty-four foot layer of meteoritic dust would be found on the moon. But it wasn't there. The lunar module sank in only about two inches of dust and hit solid rock.

This proves that meteoritic dust has not been falling on the moon for a period of time even nearly approaching five billion years. The thin layer of dust on the moon indicates that it is much younger than evolutionist say. (Otis Gatewood, Gospel Advocate, Sept. 10, 1970)

The above article indicates to us that the earth is not as old as evolutionists tells us that it took for evolutionary process to develop men. The Genesis account of creation is more believable than the theories men invent to deny it!

What Does a Preacher Do?

The preacher teaches, though he must solicit his own classes. He heals, though without pills or knife. He is sometimes a lawyer, often a social worker, something of an editor, a bit of a philosopher and entertainer; a salesman, a decorative piece for public functions, and he is supposed to be a scholar. He visits the sick, marries people, buries the dead, labors to console those who sorrow and to admonish those who sin, and tries to stay sweet when chided for not doing his duty. He plans programs, appoints committees when he can get them; spends considerable time in keeping people out of each other's hair; between times he prepares sermons and preaches on Sunday to those who don't happen to have any other engagement.

Then on Monday he smiles when some jovial chap roars, "What a job . . . one day a week!"

—Anonymous

What Shall I Do?

I helped kill the church! I stayed away. Had I stayed away from my home, I had killed it; had I neglected my business, I had no business. My lack of interest in the church made other people uninterested; they stayed away because I stayed away. I helped kill the church; I did not attend.

I helped kill the church! I starved it. I was a poor provider. Time was when I contributed a little to it and helped its program along; but when I quit attending I quit giving. I helped kill the church; I starved it.

I helped kill the church! I quit praying for it. At some time or another I quit praying, and quit praying for the church. By slow degrees something was dying within me. I could have added something to the life of the church if I had prayed for it. But I helped kill the church. I quit praying for it.

"I Can't See Any Harm in It"

Every Christian must make many moral decisions. Some of us, like children, expect all control and discipline to be exerted from the outside, and would like for someone to do all our thinking for us. The Christian is most stable when he has the maturity to apply principles taught in Scripture to his own problems. Consider these guide lines for determining when a practice is right or wrong:

1. The Personal Test: Will doing this make me a better or worse Christian?
2. The Social Test: Will doing it influence others to be better or worse Christian?
3. The Practical Test: Will the results of my doing it be desirable?
4. The Universal Test: If everyone should do this, would it improve or degrade society?
5. The Scriptural Test: Does the Bible endorse it, or is it expressly forbidden by the Word of God?
6. The Stewardship Test: Will my doing this constitute a waste of the talents God has given me?
7. The Missionary Test: Would I have the proper influence over others whom I should bring to Christ?
8. The Character Test: What will be the influence on my moral and spiritual stamina?
9. The Family Test: Will it bring discredit and dishonor to my family, will it embarrass them?
10. The Publicity Test: Would I be willing for friends, fellow-Christians, the elders and the preacher to know about it?
11. The Common Sense Test: Does it

Isn't It So?

Abraham Lincoln said: "I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives; and I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him. Now change that a little. I like to see a man proud of the church where he lives; and I like to see a man live so the congregation will be proud of him.

How is it with you? Are you proud of this congregation? Are you striving to make it something of which we can be proud? Are you proud of its accomplishments? Its attendance? Its giving? Its attitude? Its love and concern for one another? Then, too, are you the type of member that the congregation can be truly proud of? Are you making a real, genuine effort to be worth something to the Cause of Christ at this place? REMEMBER, WE CAN BE VALUABLE OR VALUELESS!!

—Selected

HOW THEY DID IT (Cont.)

Acts 9:9, 11. This is ALL he knew to do. So he had BELIEVED and REPENTED, we know by his deeds. So when the preacher, Ananias, whom God sent to tell him what he MUST DO, arrived, knowing that he believed and had repented, he told him this, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," Acts 22:16. He still had his sins, even after believing, repenting, fasting and praying, for they STILL needed to be "washed away" in baptism, for Jesus said that "He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved," Mark 16:16. Baptism is ONE of the things which "SAVES" us, 1 Pet. 3:21.

THE EPHESIANS

These men had been taught the "baptism of John", Acts 18:25. But John's baptism was no good after the baptism of Christ became valid after Christ's death. So when Paul learned that they had been taught, believed and had repented, ASKED about their baptism. When he learned that they had been baptized according to the baptism of John the baptizer, he properly explained John's baptism and baptized them according to the baptism of Christ. John's baptism was ONLY for the law of Moses, or until Christ died when his will came agree with just plain, everyday, ordinary, common sense?

12. The Financial Test: Will it rob me of my financial ability to do a good part in advancing the church?

13. The Fairness Test: Is it honest, and is it practicing the golden rule? Paul summed up these admonitions when he wrote, "Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good, Abstain from all appearance of evil." (1 Thess. 5:21-22.)

—Selected

Travis Street Messenger

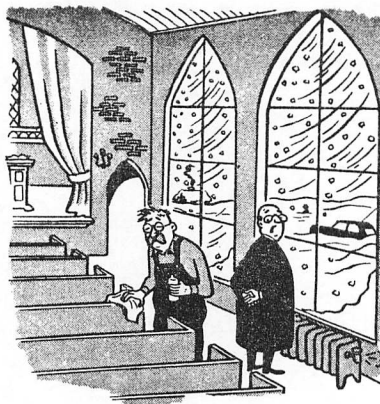
Claude Gardner relates the following story — a story worthy of your serious consideration. Read it carefully and apply it diligently:

On Sunday morning, December 10, 1967, sister Nora Ashton suffered a heart attack and died at the Bible study period of the Lobelville, Tennessee, Church of Christ. The services began at 10:00 a.m., and during the second song, sister Ashton toppled in the pew and died immediately. This was a most unusual experience for the congregation and one that made a lasting impact.

Her example in death may well mean that she accomplished more than she did the rest of her life. Below are some possible alternatives she could have thought of on Sunday morning:

1. It is a rainy, bad day and I will not go.
 2. I do not have a ride. (She walked to church in the rain)
 3. I am advanced in age. (She was 73 years of age)
 4. I do not believe that I am able to go. (She had been under treatment for heart condition)
 5. I believe that I will stay at home and rest and relax. Many people do follow such a course.
 6. I can wait to go at the eleven o'clock service and not go to Bible class.
- She chose to go to Bible study and learn more of the will of God (Eph. 5:17). She "preached" a great sermon on church attendance (Heb. 10:25). If one must die, no better place could be found than to pass away in the church building. It is much better to die giving praise to God and exalting Christ and the Bible than it would be to die indulging oneself in any of the foregoing excuses.

TELL IT LIKE IT IS



"Looks as though you're it, Quincy. Like to hear a sermon?"

Lord's Supper

Observed Annually, Semi-Annually, Quarterly? When?

At the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus stated that the Supper was to be observed in His Father's Kingdom (Matt. 26:26-29). We know that the Kingdom and Church are synonymous terms. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). In Matt. 16:19 we read, "... and will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom." Thus, the Lord's Supper is to be observed in the kingdom or church (Lk. 22:30) and since Christians make up the church or kingdom, the Lord's Supper is to be observed by Christians only. Today this is not a disputed fact among religionists, but is commonly accepted.

The disputed question is: "How frequently do we observe the Lord's Supper?" By letting the Bible be our only guide, I think intelligent people can see the Lord's intention of its observance.

I Cor. 11:20, "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together..." Heb. 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling..." These verses point out a customary event of assembling by the disciples. Question—How often was this assembling? Answer—"Upon the first day of every week" (I Cor. 16:2 RSV, NASB, TEV). What was the purpose of their assembling on Sunday? Acts 20:7 points out the purpose, "Upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread," ("to break bread" is an infinitive of purpose). "To break bread" is parallel to the Lord's Supper. For us to observe the Lord's Supper in the 20th century like our counterparts of the 1st century, we scripturally observe it each first day of the week. Mike Wilson, 5th and Pine Church of Christ, Rector, Ark., 72461.