

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

Established 1953

July 2004

Vol. 38 / No. 7



CLOVIS M. RAGSDALE 1918 - 2004

On June 24, 2004 we laid to rest the earthly remains of Brother Clovis Ragsdale. His spirit had been carried to Paradise by the angels on June 22nd. Brother Ragsdale began preaching in 1953 and preached in every church of Christ in Fulton County Arkansas and many others in Arkansas and Missouri. It was that same year that Boyd

Morgan, Clovis Ragsdale and a few others organized the **Fulton County Gospel News**. Through the years Clovis served the paper as editor or co-editor more years than any other man did. We have published some of his articles during the years I have edited the paper, but the elders at Mammoth Spring and I agreed we should publish a memorial issue of selections he has written.

If Boyd Morgan were alive today to author a second volume on **Arkansas Angels**, I truly believe that Clovis M. Ragsdale would be one of the featured gospel preachers. Clovis was so well respected in this area that he conducted over 500 funerals. He also continued to do preaching in the area when asked, as long as his health permitted. Brother Ragsdale's fine and faithful family is a testimony to the faith he lived and imparted to others. Through his writings "*he being dead yet speaketh*," and unknown numbers will continue to be influenced and blessed by his work (1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 14:13). He will be missed but not forgotten for generations to come. [Ted J. Clarke]

WILL GOODNESS ALONE SAVE?

By Clovis Ragsdale

The living of a good moral life is so compatible with godliness in a person's life that many come to the conclusion that by living this kind of life their goodness will justify them in the sight of God. This kind of thinking is not in harmony with the word of God. It well might be called the philosophy of Satan. Yet, we do not want to give the idea that moral purity is not necessary, for it is impossible to live the Christian life without keeping one's life clean and above reproach. What we do want to teach is that God requires this and more in order to save our souls.

In the tenth chapter of Acts we are introduced to a man who was called, "*A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always*" (verse 2). Yet it was necessary for this man to send for a gospel preacher to learn what he must do, verses 5-6 of chapter ten. This doesn't sound like a good moral life is all that we need in order to go to heaven. After Peter was finally convinced that he should go to one of the Gentile nation, we learn how that the gift of the Holy Ghost was received by the Gentiles, and how

that they too were commanded to be baptized, verses 47-48.

When we speak of what saves, I cannot think of any one thing on the part of man which could save his soul, save the term "*obedience to God's will*." However, obedience is a term which describes a series of things which man must do in order to receive salvation. Faith or belief alone, will not save. In James 2:19 we learn that even the devils believe in God and that they tremble, but this does not save them. No one could find where repentance by itself would save a person; neither confession or baptism in themselves would save or be of any benefit if they were alone and to the exclusion of the other acts of obedience.

Sometimes the members of the Church of Christ are accused of teaching that baptism alone saves. This is a false accusation! The Bible plainly teaches that faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism by a burial in water constitute obedience. Because so many today are teaching that baptism is not necessary to salvation, we are forced to emphasize this command. If men would take what the Bible teaches, then it would not be necessary to speak so often on the subject.

After one has scripturally obeyed, then a good life is a part of his duty and he will be rewarded for such, provided he accepts his duties as a follower of Christ by assembling

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

USPS Publication #211780

... is a Periodical publication issued monthly by the Church of Christ at Third and Bethel (P.O. Box 251), Mammoth Spring, AR 72554-0251. **POSTMASTER: Please mail all changes of address to the above address.**

FCGN is mailed 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 **NINE DIGIT ZIP CODE**. This paper is supported by voluntary 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. CLARKEEDITOR
Phone(870) 625-3217
E-Mailcocfgn@centurytel.net

continued from page 1

with the saints upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7, Hebrews 10:25), by praying (1 Cor. 14:15), by singing (Eph. 5:19), by giving of means as God has directed (1 Cor. 16: 1-3), by studying the word of God (2 Tim. 2:15), by partaking of the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner (1 Cor. 11:23-26), and by living steadfastly unto death (1 Cor. 15:58).

All who believe that they can live good enough lives, and that outside of the Lord's body, the church, need to study more closely and to re-examine their position by the light of God's revealed word. Then they need to follow that word as they live in this life, to be sure of heaven in the end. (FCGN - Dec., 1960)

"A whisperer separateth chief friends." – Prov. 16:28

"A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. – Prov. 11:13

REPENT OR PERISH

By Clovis Ragsdale

Christ said in Luke 13:3, *"I tell you Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* Peter said to the Jews assembled on the day of Pentecost, in answer to their question of what shall we do, *"repent and be baptized"* (Acts 2:38). In the eleventh chapter of Acts, in the account of the conversion of Cornelius, the statement was made that *"God hath also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life"* (verse 18). Some years later Paul said to the people of Athens, *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"* (Acts, 17:30).

The above statements show the importance of repentance. When Paul said that God "now commands all men everywhere," he covered a lot of time and territory. This teaches that in the Christian age, the time from the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) until the end of time, repentance would be absolutely necessary for one to be a Christian and be saved.

What is repentance? Some say that it is godly sorrow or a feeling of remorse for having failed to do what was right. It is true that godly sorrow is a part of repentance, but repentance means more than this. When one repents he changes his way of life. Godly sorrow leads to repentance (2 Cor 7:9-10). When a sinner repents he changes his way of life, to the extent that he no longer partakes of sinful practices. He no longer serves Satan. He changes his citizenship from the Kingdom of Satan to that of the Kingdom of Christ. The decision to change has to be made in the heart of the individual. No one can repent for another. He may encourage another to repent. Paul said in Philippians 2:12, to work out our own salvation with fear and

trembling. The individual has to arrive at the stage of repentance through an attitude of mind which leads him to desire to change his ways to conform with the commands of God. When he reaches this attitude it is easy to confess Christ as the Son of God and to submit to the rite of baptism. He becomes a part of the saved that are added to the church or family of God that is spoken of in Acts 2:47. If one is never able to reach a state of repentance he will perish or be lost. The Lord himself is the author of this conclusion, as our opening statement records.

So far we have written of repentance as it applies to the ailen sinner. Repentance is also necessary in the life of the Christian. No man can live above sin in the respect that after we are pardoned from ailen or past sins, we never commit another sin. John, in writing to Christians, stated in 1 John 1:10 that we lie to say that we have not sinned. He tells what we can do about our mistakes in chapter one, verses 7-9 (cf. 1 John 2:1-2).

We are to ask forgiveness through Christ. A good illustration of this is found in the eighth chapter of Acts. Simon, a sorcerer who had become a Christian, seeing the apostles laying hands on people to impart to them the Holy Ghost, offered money for this gift. Peter told him that he had sinned and for him to repent and pray God to forgive him of his wickedness (verses 14-24). Whenever a child of God sins today he must first repent and then ask for forgiveness. Thus, we see that repentance is a part of our lives as long as we live. To be successful in going to Heaven we must develop and maintain a repentant heart as long as we live upon this earth. (FCGN - June 1964)

CHARITY

By Clovis Ragsdale

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing” (I Cor. 13:1-2). We see from these two verses that charity is to be the greatest characteristic of a Christian. Many people today have a distorted idea of the meaning of the word charity. It means to many “providing the necessities of life for someone who is in need of help.” The true meaning of the word as it is used in the King James Version of the New Testament means love, a love that suffereth long, that envieth not, and a love that endureth all things (verses 4-8a).

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest

of these is charity.” (I Cor. 13:13). From this verse we can grasp the greatness of love as love is placed above faith. We realize why, when we consider how useless is faith, if faith is void of love. One cannot be a Christian without love. *“He that loveth not, knoweth no God, for God is love”* (I John 4:8). Some people are born with the tendency to love all with whom they come in contact. They are unselfish and think of others before themselves. Many people are not so fortunate and they have to spend a lifetime cultivating and acquiring the tendency to love.

Christians have constantly before them the greatest example of love the world will ever know. No sweeter words are to be found in all the Holy Scriptures than John 3:16. *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”* All that we

might do in our entire lifetime becomes pale and insignificant when compared with the great love God has shown for all mankind. There is no greater way of showing love for our fellow man than teaching him how to care for his soul, so that he may someday live with God in that great forevermore. Christians who fail to do this are failing to show the necessary love for God and for their fellowmen. Love is the trademark of a Christian. Love is the church’s most effective weapon. It is the most powerful force in the universe. The great love shown by Christians of the first century enabled them to carry the gospel to all the then known world. When we obtain the degree of love they possessed (and only then) shall we be able to place the gospel before all people of the earth. (FCGN Jan. 1961)

OPPORTUNITY TO DO GOOD

By Clovis Ragsdale

In his letter to the churches in Galatia, Paul stated, *“And let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith,”* (Gal. 6:9-10).

Opportunities to do good often present themselves daily. Paul admonished that we not grow weary in well doing. This suggests the frequency of doing good. Yet, this is not to suggest that benevolence is without limitations. Opportunity not only

means to come into contact with a need, but also the ability to meet that need when contacted.

Many congregations find that opportunities to do good are far more numerous than the ability to supply the needs. Sometimes the case may be that of a stranger passing through our community, who has need of car and food expense for his continued journey. The fact that some people drive from town to town contacting every religious group in each town, and in fact make their living in such a manner, makes it necessary for us to use care in

ministering, without question, to all such cases. Some such individuals have been questioned and found to be lying about their past and present relationship to the church. This is not to imply that we are not to aid people in their problems who are not members of the church. However, since the ability to meet the many needs that are presented to us is limited, we must give priority to the needs of our brethren - *“Do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”* This does not rule out our helping a person of the world, but it does

continued from page 3

lessen our obligation toward the non-Christian people.

A growing problem in the allocation of funds for good works is facing the leaders in the church today. Inflation and recession are putting a heavy drain on the church treasury. Care and priority must be given to aid the work which is believed to accomplish the most good.

The preaching of the gospel to all the world must not be overlooked in the growing demands made on the home-front. Our efforts to assist in the mission fields are being strained by economic conditions, both in our own country and abroad. Support for homeless children is an increasing problem. Since we are only able to meet a limited portion of these problems, the exercise of judgment to wisely choose the work that can be properly dealt with is most demanding.

The membership of the Lord's people should be prepared to make greater sacrifices in the days ahead. Most of us are probably "in debt" to the Lord for what we have not given in the prosperous times of recent years. Now would be a good time to repay by giving "till it hurts" - which few have really ever done.

The statement of Jesus, "the harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2), is still true in our time. As opportunities to do good multiply, the ability to assist faces a greater challenge. The challenge to meet these conditions may well be the

greatest test the church will face in this century. May God grant us the faith, the love, and the courage to rise up and fulfill this ever increasing challenge. (FCGN - Jan. 1975)

MAY CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

CHURCH OF CHRIST (BAKERSFIELD, MO)	\$50.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (GEPP, AR)	100.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (VIOLA, AR)	25.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (MOODY, MO)	50.00
PILOT CHURCH OF CHRIST (MAMMOTH SPRING, AR)	40.00
DELLHALF CHURCH OF CHRIST (MYRTLE, MO)	30.00
JEFF CHURCH OF CHRIST (THAYER, MO)	25.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (AGNOS, AR)	50.00
MOKO CHURCH OF CHRIST (SALEM, AR)	50.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (ELIZABETH, AR)	25.00
OAK GROVE CHURCH OF CHRIST (WALNUT RIDGE, AR)	25.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (BAKERSFIELD, MO)	50.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (CAMP, AR)	25.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (THAYER, MO)	100.00
GOSPEL HILL CHURCH OF CHRIST (POTTERSVILLE, MO)	100.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (TIPTONVILLE, TN)	25.00
BYRON CHURCH OF CHRIST (SALEM, AR)	25.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (POUGHKEEPSIE, AR)	50.00
CHURCH OF CHRIST (CLARKRIDGE, AR)	75.00

INDIVIDUALS

NELLIE CREWS (MOBILE, AL)	200.00
CARROLL & LORENE SMITH (OSCEOLA, AR)	25.00
GARY & ANN WILSON (HOT SPRINGS, AR)	35.00
WILLENE & LUCILE FRANKLIN (FRANKLIN, AR)	20.00
HAZEL STOKES (WEST PLAINS, MO)	10.00
BENNIE & DOROTHY THORNTON (HAMPTON, VA)	20.00

June and July contributions for FCGN will be in the August issue.

MOVING? CHANGING TO 911?
Be sure to send us your change of address.



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).

ADDRESS
SERVICE
REQUESTED

CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 251
MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554

Periodical Postage
Paid At
Mammoth Spring, AR
72554-9998
Publication #211780