

# FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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## WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

Clovis Ragsdale

Many people upon hearing of the church of Christ ask the question which we shall use as the title for this article. The answer to this question is so simple and plain that many fail to grasp an understanding of what the church is because of the simplicity of the explanation that can be given in answering this important question. When God made man and then man sinned and fell from his original position, it was necessary for man to be reconciled to God. It was not in mans power to bring about a way of reconciliation. God alone could devise the way for man to come back to him. He took what seemed like a long time to us to bring about a plan of salvation for the redemption of man. First the Patarical age, then the age of the law of Moses, and finally the sending of Jesus Christ to this world to die upon the cross, shedding his blood as an atonement for the sins of man. After Christ arose from the grave, he instructed the disciples to tarry in Jerusalem till they be indued with power from on high, or the Holy Ghost. When the Holy Ghost fell on Peter and the other apostles on the day of Pentecost, a new covenant was ushered in, new commandments were given for man to obey. Sinners were told to believe on Christ, repent of their sins, confess the name of Christ before men, and be baptized by a burial in water. People who complied with these commands were added to the church. Acts 2:47. What church were they added to? In Matt. 16:18 Christ stated that I will build my church. If Christ was to build a church does anyone think that God would allow any other to take its place. In Eph. 1:22, Paul spoke of Christ as being head over all things to the church. In Acts 20:28 we are told that this

Brother Blackwell preached in Melbourne, Florida the second Sunday in November.

Due to an oversight, a contribution of one dollar by Brother Roby Blue of Wheeling was not acknowledged in the last issue.

## NOTICE OF A CHANGE OF POLICY

We ask our readers and friends not to contribute any more funds to the support of the Fulton County Gospel News. We would like to express our appreciation to all who have supported this paper in the past. The churches at Moten, Welcome Hill, Union Hill, and Mammoth Spring will support the paper until further notice. Also no more names will be accepted for the mailing list.

church was purchased with blood. Whose blood was shed? Certainly all will agree that Christ was the one who shed his blood. In fact it is often called the church of God as all things point back to God the Father. Many other terms are used to describe the church. The Flock of God, the church of the first born and others. Romans 16:16 refers to congregations as churches of Christ.

In the study of the New Testament we learn that people who are obedient believers were called christians. These people had a close bond of kinship with one another, which manifested itself in various ways, like meeting together in worship on the first day of the week to remember the death of their saviour in the partaking of the Lords Supper. Acts 20:7 praying for one another. Helping those who were in need. Teaching one another by song and in the studying together the word of God. Their Continued on last page

## THE CHURCH AT STURKIE

Charlie Cavin

Longer than any one can remember, there has been a number of members of the Lords church living in this community. It seems that they were ignorant of the importance of assembling regularly to worship according to the New Testament pattern. On the second Sunday in March of 1922 we began meeting in the Liberty Hill School house, and continued until about ten years ago, when a new meeting house was built on the road near Sturkie.

During the thirties we had a big loss by migration of members. The average attendance on Lords day is about sixty. For the past ten years there has been a mid week Bible class. The interest is not as good now as in the past.

Many of the ablest preachers in the brotherhood have held meetings at Sturkie during the past thirty years.

For the last five years we have had all day services on Thanksgiving day. We think it is a very propitable way to keep the day. A different preacher speaks each year. Brother Morgan, Billingsley, Gould, Stewart, Flannigan, and this year, brother Blackwell have preached here on this day.

Brother Clovis Ragsdale preaches the second Sunday in each month. This congregation has always been ready to help the needy, contributing reguarly to Southern Christian Home. Also Brother Hillard story receives support in his work in Italy.

Peace among brethren has always prevailed from the beginning.

Brother J. C. Atkins of Moten passed away Nov. 15. He helped to establish the congregation at Moten and served the church as an elder for many years. His loss will be deeply felt by this small congregation.

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Clovis Ragsdale

HEAVEN

Marion Farley ..... Dallas 17, Texas

Many songs have been written about this wonderful place, where the heavenly Host dwells.

Some of its glories are described in the one entitled, "Above the bright blue," which will be a basis for these remarks.

The first verse is as follows, "There's a beautiful place called heaven, it is hidden above the bright blue, where the good, who from earthies are riven, live and love an eternity through."

Surely the writer of this fine song, must have been inspired to pen these wonderful thoughts by a careful study of the 21st and 22nd chapter of Revelation, containing an account of the New Jerusalem as revealed to the apostle of 'love', John.

He tells us he saw it coming down out of heaven, "adorned as a bride for her husband," that it had twelve gates, each one being of one pearl, that the city was made of pure gold, as it were transparent glass, and only those which are written in the Lambs book of life will be allowed to enter through the gates into the city, where they will be called the sons of God, have crowns of gold, and reign forever and ever.

And now for the second verse, "This land of sweet rest awaits us, some day it will break on our view, tis promised by Christ our Redeemer, to his followers faithful and true," John heard a great voice from heaven saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neith-

er shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

In many places in the scripture, heaven is spoken of as a place of beauty and rest, where the faithful children of God shall enjoy an endless eternity with God, his Son, the Holy Spirit, and the heavenly Host, along with the re-deemed of all ages, but nowhere is it brighter than here.

Words of mortal man are in no wise sufficient to describe the home of the soul, I know this is true, because the apostle Paul said, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," Jesus said he was going away to prepare, "a place for them that love him," and some day would return to take them there, what a wonderful Father, and loving Savior we must have!

The last verse, "We know not when he shall call us, whether soon, the glad summons shall be, but we know when we pass o'er the river, the glory of Jesus we'll see," The world is filled with many highly intelligent men, but not a single one of them can accurately predict the day of his death, yet we know we must all die, inspired men in both the Old and New Testament made the prediction, and we see it occurring daily

The greatest of apostles, Paul, looked on it as a time to be desired, hear him as he says, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain—For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." (Phil. 1)

On more than one occasion he had seen Christ, and talked with him, on others he had been assured of Divine help in carrying the gospel to a dying world, which must have been very consoling in these times of great persecution.

When he saw that the end of his earthly sojourn was rapidly approaching, knowing he had been a good 'soldier' for his King, he made this enviable statement, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not me only, but

unto all them also that love his appearing."

Heaven was his goal, he knew it was too glorious to miss, and that Hell was too dreadful to spend Eternity in, according, he lived a life of devotion and service to his Captain, and looked forward with a burning desire to being ushered into his presence.

This statement is often made, "Heaven is a prepared place, for a prepared people, and Hell is a prepared place for an unprepared people, a truer one to, "make his calling and election sure," by being a Christian, and a Christian only, by following His teachings, and His teachings only, and some day, "Heaven will break on our view."

SALVATION

Many things have been stated in God's word as conditions of salvation that before one is saved from alien sins these conditions have to be complied with in order to be freed from sin. I want to call your attention to these conditions that have been given by our Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Hence it is an impossibility according to the word of God for one to be saved from sin without meeting each and everyone of these conditions given by the Christ. We cannot take any one of the commands that has been given and contend that we are saved by it alone. Thus faith is a command given that one must believe before salvation is obtained. Jesus said for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. Jno. 8:24. But who believes that faith only is required by the Son of God? If that is all Christ requires of one to be saved from sin then why command other things? If faith only saves then the devil will be saved, for they believed and trembled. Jam. 2:19. Who believes that devils will be saved? If faith only saves then devils will be saved for James said that they believed. Yes, you know that almost every day you will hear some preacher tell you all you have to do to become a child of God is just believe. If one is saved at the point of faith as some contend then, the believer cannot be given the power to become he already is. For instance, could I be given the right of power to

become the son of my mother? When I am already her son? That is an impossibility for me to become what I already am. Therefore if one is a child of God at the point of faith, then the believer could not be given the power and right to become what he already is. Yet the Son of God said in Jno. 1:12, but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name. If one believes with all of his heart that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and is trying to complete the command that has been given, nothing will be able to prevent that one from complying to the command. There is no argument over faith, all will agree that we must believe in order to be saved, Heb. 11:6. But the difference arises at what point is one saved. As you will note it cannot be the moment faith has been produced is one saved. But the faith that saves is a working faith, one that takes Christ at his word and is willing to do what has been commanded. Paul said though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing, 1 Cor. 13:2. And James said for as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. Jam. 2:26.

There are those who tell us that salvation is by faith only, and no work what act is to be performed by the one who believes. Yet Paul said if he had all faith and no more it profited him nothing. And James said if it didn't work it was a dead faith.

I and all of my brethren believe and teach that salvation is by faith, but we do not believe and teach that one is saved at the point one believes or by it only. But every act that is to be done must be done by faith. Even faith itself is termed a work by our Lord Jesus Christ. When the people wanted to know, what shall we do, that we might work the work of God, that ye might believe on him whom he hath sent. Jno. 6:28-29. In answer to the people when they wanted to do the work of God, Christ told them plainly that faith in him was a work. This work had to be done by some one other than God. God or Christ neither could do their believing. But something they themselves had to do. So it is with people today,

there is something for them to do, I cannot believe for you neither can you for me.

Won't you think my dear friends of your souls well being? Some day we shall stand before our master to give account of ourselves to him. How sad will it be when the book shall be opened and find you haven't done what he has told you to do. It will be too late then to do anything about it. Now is the time to make ready for that day.

Arthur C. Blackwell

## CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Though these churches are all free and independent of any general hierarchy, each local congregation having elders to oversee its affairs and deacons to assist them, yet they are united in a common faith and voluntarily cooperate in sending missionaries and in doing benevolent work under the direction of local churches. Membership depends on only (1) faith in and confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God; (2) repentance from sin; (3) baptism by immersion. Their worship consists of the five acts specifically authorized by the New Testament: (1) reading and preaching the Bible; (2) observing the Lord's Supper as a memorial; (3) contributing money to the Lord's work; (4) praying; (5) singing (a capella) psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

In faith and practice they date back to the founding of the church of the New Testament on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection. They call for a complete return to the New Testament, and seek to restore in their worship, organization, and life the pattern of New Testament Christianity. Rejecting all party names, creeds and organizations in their abhorrence of divisional denominationalism in Christendom, they plead for unity of all believers on the basis of the Bible alone.

The very nature of this fellowship of free Christians makes it impossible to trace without interruption specific groups back to the day of Pentecost. It is known that during the 17th century there were churches of Christ in England. Late in the 18th century a restoration movement swept over the

United States and resulted in a rapid growth of such churches. In at least six different sections of the new nation men independently began to preach a return to the Bible, urging their hearers to become Christians only, and not to affiliate with any sect. In 1860 these churches counted 192,323 members; by 1875 there were some 400,000 members. In the last quarter of the 19th century there came a division. The tide of liberalism, later known as modernism, began to sweep many leaders away from a fundamental faith in the New Testament as an all-sufficient guide in matters of faith and practice. The simplicity of both the organization and the worship of many churches was changed by the institution of an over all missionary society to control the mission work of the brotherhood and by the introduction of mechanical instruments of music into the worship. These innovations were followed by open membership, modernistic theology, clericalism, and ecclesiasticism. The fundamental difference developed in the attitude toward the Bible as divine authority. A majority of the churches digressed from the original position and formed the denomination of the Disciples of Christ (q. v.) By 1906 this division was complete and was recognized by the Bureau of the Census.

Since then the churches of Christ have increased rapidly. Missionaries are supported in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Italy, England, Australia, South Africa, Mexico, China, Japan, the Phillipine Islands, Hawaii, Cuba and Alaska. There are 44 churches in Great Britian, 75 in Canada, ten in Germany, one in Switzerland, two in Belgium, eight in Italy, one in France, six in Australia, 12 in South Africa, and ten in India. In the United States there are churches in every state of the union. As of 1950 there were 11,760 churches with a membership totaling 814,200.

As of 1950, there were in the United States, 16 colleges and high schools controlled and supported by members of the church as individuals, 15 homes for the aged and for orphans and 45 periodicals published by individual members (Encyclopedia Americana, Volume 6, page 662.)

CHURCH—continued from front page

constant efforts to teach the sinner the way of salvation is emphasized many times. These people in the New Testament times were called the church. Would not people today who practice the identical same things as those people did, be the church that God would recognize today. Remember that God gave the plan to mankind.

There are hundreds of churches in the world today, while God gave the plan for only one. Christ prayed that we all be one, Paul declared in Gal. 1:8-9 that no other Gospel was to be preached. How do we account for so many churches today? Man has changed Gods plan and other doctrines have been taught to people, and people have followed these teachings of men. The church of Christ refuses to accept anything that it is not written in the Bible. I give as example, the use of a mechanical instrument in the song service. No where in all of the New Testament can there be found where one was used in worship, while the command to sing is stated. 1 Cor. 14:15; Ehp. 5:19; Col. 3:16,17. By not using the instrument we can be absolutely safe, to use it would be taking a chance of being in open rebellion to Gods plan that he gave. On this and many other issues the church differs from all the other churches in the world today. Why take a chance with loosing your soul by trusting in man made institutions, when it is possible to worship God in the way he established? Speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent is the way thats right and cannot be wrong.

### AN OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY CHEST

Many of this country's finest men gave their lives in battle that this country might be preserved against dictatorial methods and American freedom might live. It is regretful that some overzealous workers for money raising organizations have disregarded the American way of freedom.

Many people are threatened with losing their jobs if they fail to give to an organization that others think they

should support. Promotions are jeopardized and workers intimidated and embarrassed if they refuse to "Give a day's pay: it's the American way." The American way is freedom—freedom to give, or not to give.

Who in his right mind could ask a Jew to give to a religious organization opposed to Judaism? Who in the name of consistency could ask a Protestant to financially assist a Catholic organization inasmuch as the very word Protestant means "in protest to Catholicism"? Why should a Catholic give to aid groups opposed to her, and relegates all Catholics to hell? The Community Chest blatantly asks Jews to help the Chest they deny; the Protestant to help those they protest against; and the Catholics to protest against themselves. Three religious organizations diametrically opposed to each other. Yet Community Chest zealots dictate and demand workers to give a day's pay!

Remove every organization from the Community Chest list that has any connection with any religious group and then all could give to it. The American way of freedom must be maintained! Americans must be free to give or refuse to give without fear of retribution. The business concerns that pressure to obtain a "100% gave" report and those that automatically deduct a day's pay without the worker's consent are dictatorial and un-American. —Selected

### THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE

Somewhere during the years of Babylonian captivity the synagogue made its appearance. The law of Moses did not command it; nothing like it is to be found in the detailed instruction of the five books of Moses.

Yet somewhere in the law the Jews found authority for the synagogue? Where? In the commands of that law to **teach**. They understood full well the obligation to teach their own children at home, but they had the synagogue as well, to supplement the teaching done in the home by parents. No Jew ever had the idea that the synagogue was a sinful institution, just because he was told to teach his own children at home. Instead, he took advantage of the instruction offered there so his children

might be schooled in the law of God.

When Jesus, God's Son, was growing up in Nazareth, he was taught in the synagogue. When he entered on His personal ministry, He both preached and taught in the synagogues. He had knowledge of the arrangements made there for class teaching. In all His ministry, He never spoke one word critical of these arrangements. Thus, both by refraining from criticism of, and participating in, these teaching arrangements, Jesus put the stamp of His approval on the class method of teaching. He saw nothing wrong in it.

In this Jesus left us an example. Are you willing to be guided and governed by his example? Do you oppose the class method of teaching? Then you oppose something of which Jesus approved. Think it over. —Jas. B. Scott

### PRAYER

Lord, make me a conqueror.

Give me **FAITH** to believe I can conquer.

Give me **STRENGTH** to keep carrying on.

Give me **INSPIRATION** that I may work more zealously.

Give me **COURAGE** to defy great numbers.

Give me **POWER** to fearlessly combat the powers of unrighteousness.

Give me **VISION** to see new fields to conquer.

Give me **COMPASSION** to lead in the harvesting of these fields.

Give me **LOVE** to love Christ and righteousness.

Give me **HATE** to hate sin and unrighteousness.

Give me **HUMILITY** to glory not in my victories.

Give me **ASSURANCE** that I am more than conqueror through Christ Jesus.

Give me **HAPPINESS** in the realization that my fight has not been in vain.

In His name. Amen.

'Tis an old maxim in the schools,  
That flattery's the food of fools;

Yet now and then your men of wit  
Will condescend to take a bit.

"Cheerfulness and contentment are great beautifiers, and are famous preservers of youthful looks.