

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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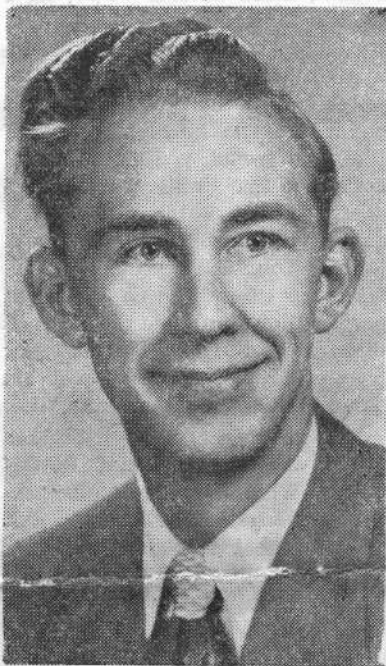
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Mammoth Spring, Arkansas

September, 1956



By Arthur C. Blackwell

I count it a great privilege to have the opportunity to work with the fine congregation here in Mammoth Spring. I also believe the elders to be among the best that is to be found. I also count it a great privilege to work with Bro. Clovis Ragsdale as editor of the Fulton County Gospel News. God being my helper, I will try with every ounce of my being to make the paper as profitable in the future as it has been in the past.

I want to commend Bro. Boyd Morgan for the fine job that he has done in editing the Fulton County Gospel News. He has consented to contribute articles for the paper. I know that all will be looking forward to reading the many good things he will have to say through the pages of this paper.

Jesus in giving the great commission said, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is

baptized shall be saved. Mk. 16: 16., but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Jesus the Christ did not commission them to preach their think so's, but preach the gospel that he had commissioned them to preach.

That gospel he commanded them to preach the things that concerned him and the things he (Christ) wanted men to do in becoming obedient to him.

Before one can render obedience to Christ, he first has to know of the things Christ would have him to do. Paul said and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard. Rom. 10:14. So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17. Thus, we find in Acts 18: 8 and Crispus and the chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized.

The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. For the time has come that the Lord will not overlook one in his ignorance. Acts 17:30. We must repent or perish. Luke 13:3. He has likewise commanded that one must confess him before men. Matt. 8:32. The man that fails to confess Christ before men will be denied by Christ before God the Father.

Every blessing that Almighty God has offered to man is in Christ. Outside of Christ there is no blessings that is spiritual blessings. So the only way that these blessings can be obtained is to be in Christ. Hence, the only way that one can get in Christ and that is to be baptized into Christ. For as many of you that has been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Gal. 3:27.

Are you willing my friends to submit to the gospel of God's dear

Son? By hearing Him in all things he would have you to do. Will you not believe Him with all of your heart. Repent of your sins, confess him before men, and be buried with him in baptism for the remission of your sins. By doing this God will add you to the church which is the body of Christ where all the blessings are.

Jesse Lewis, Evangelist
223 West Wyoming
Philadelphia 40, Penn.

Dear Brethren:

As I write this a policeman walks up and down in front of my house. He has been placed there to protect me. Two others are sitting across the street in a car. An automobile just drove by and some one yelled that they would be back with a shotgun. Both Catholic and Protestant friends have called me telling me where three different gangs are now gathered, waiting until the police leave, so they can do me bodily harm.

Yesterday, as I was handing out tracts, a policeman lead a mob of people up to my car. He hit me and allowed a woman to slap me. Today about twenty-five Roman Catholics came to my door, jumped all over my car and dared me to come outside.

They have put about four pounds of sugar in my gasoline tank. Over the telephone, they have called my wife and two teen-aged daughters and me about every foul name ever invented. Over the telephone, they clicked a forty-five saying the next tract I handed out I was going to get a bullet right between my eyes. Now, some of these are teen-agers, but many of them are adults. I am thoroughly convinced that the priests are right behind the whole thing.

Are you wondering what caused all this? Last night my wife and

See LAST page

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Editors—

Arthur C. Blackwell
Clovis Ragsdale

EDITORIAL

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Bro. Arthur Blackwell to the staff of Fulton County Gospel News. He will serve as editor in place of Bro. Morgan who has moved to Corning. Bro. Blackwell comes to Mammoth Spring from Rockford, Illinois, where he was minister of a congregation. He has also labored with churches in the state of Oregon. He has held meetings in Arkansas and Missouri and has engaged in seven debates during the ten years that he has been preaching the gospel. A native of Pocahontas, Arkansas, Bro. Blackwell is married and has a thirteen year old son.

He will inherit a lions share of the responsibility for the carrying on of the paper. The purpose of the paper in the beginning was to build up and enlarge the borders of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. This is to be done by setting forth Bible truths in short condensed articles. It is the aim of the editors to keep the paper free from the opinions of men which plague the religious world so much in our present day.

We would like to have more articles from brethren in Fulton County. Remember, you do not have to be a preacher to write an article. All we ask is that it be as brief as possible. This because the paper is small in space. We reserve the right to correct mistakes of grammar and rearrange sentences so as to make the article more easily understood. This should encourage those who may have held back because of lack of experience in writing to go ahead and send us an article.

Almost every issue of the paper

will have at least one article on what I do to become a child of God. Other articles on how to live a faithful Christian life and articles on increasing zeal will be written for the benefit of Christians. News of congregational activities and general news items are welcomed. We ask our readers to pass the paper on to friends and neighbors when they have finished reading the paper. Anyone interested in getting the paper who may not now be receiving it may have their name placed on the mailing list by sending their name and address to Fulton County Gospel News, Mammoth Spring, Ark. Subscription is free.

—Clovis Ragsdale

Review of Tract:

"SPIRITUAL BIRTH"

By L. P. England
Myrtle, Mo.

We want to point out the flaws and false doctrine contained in this tract. It teaches some truth; it has some very fine passages of scripture. Let it be understood that the reviewer does not disagree with the scripture herein used. He simply disagrees with the conclusion the author has drawn. He is not, therefore, arraying himself against scripture. Neither shall he array scripture against scripture. It will be his purpose to show by the scripture that the author is essentially wrong in his application of what few scripture he used. With this in mind let us examine the tract.

I quote: "Say, preacher, let's get in behind something that we can back up. Away with this Spiritual birth of natural water." I accept this as a challenge. It is true the author did not challenge me personally, but he addresses his tract to preachers. I am a gospel preacher, therefore he included me in his challenge. Certainly all should want to get behind that which they can back up. But let us use the Bible to back up the things which we think, do, and say. Now the author has not done

this. He has failed miserably to prove his proposition. He did not prove, neither can he prove that natural water is not to be used in the Spiritual birth. I propose to show that he did not prove it.

Next he says: "The Bible don't teach any such doctrine. John 3: 5 don't mean natural water, no a thousand times no." Let's read Jno. 3:5: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Well, my friend, you certainly did not prove that "water" in Jno. 3:5 doesn't mean water. Now, why didn't you prove that statement? Surely you don't expect us to take your word for it do you? But perhaps you think you did prove it throughout the course of your tract. No you didn't; and I am going to show that you didn't.

Now if the Lord did not mean water, what did he mean? Butter-milk? What is there in the context (the whole third chapter) that indicates that it was some other kind of water other than natural? I have just as much right to affirm that "Spirit" in Jno. 3:5 is not the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, as you have to say that "water" does not mean water. If you say that "water" does not mean water, then I can say that "Spirit" does not mean Spirit. Will you accept this? Why, no you won't; neither will I accept your mere assumption that "water" does not mean natural water.

Next our author refers to Jno. 7:37-39 to substantiate his theory. Let's read that passage. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified)."

Before we go further let me suggest a principle that will greatly help us in our study of this question. Here it is: Never inter-

pret a passage, or even a word figuratively, unless there is something in the context to indicate that it should thus be interpreted. Always understand a word in its natural meaning unless the context forbids a natural understanding of it.

With this in mind may I ask: What is in the context of Jno. 3 to permit us to interpret water figuratively? Is there anything? No, emphatically!

But what is in the context of Jno. 7 that will permit us to interpret water figuratively? Our answer is in verse 39. Here Jesus plainly says that water means the Spirit. But in Jno. 3:5 Jesus declares that one must be born of "water AND of the Spirit." Two elements here; not one as in Jno. 7:38-39. Jesus did not tell us that "water" meant here. He did not interpret it for us as in Jno. 7.

Again we quote our author: "The Lord declares that He is the living water Himself. Read John 7:37-39." Now did the Lord declare Himself to be the living water? Is that what Jno. 7:37-39 says? Our author is confused. The Lord did not say that he was the living water. Why, no. The Lord has the water to give to those who will come to him. There is a distinction between the Lord and the water. No, the Lord is not the water. But what is? The Holy Spirit is according to v. 39. Now friends, who are you going to believe? The Lord or the author of this tract? You cannot believe both because the author contradicts Jesus. The author says that the Lord is the living water, but Jesus said that the Holy Spirit is. See the contradiction?

You take all three positions on the very first page of your tract. We are not going to let you have all three. Why don't you accept the fact that Jesus interpreted water to mean Spirit in Jno. 7:37-39. But he did not interpret "water" in Jno. 3:5 to mean any thing other than its ordinary meaning.

Looking again at the tract we read: "Jesus told the woman at the well if she asked drink of Him,

He would give her living water." As we notice this, first let us look at the context of Jno. 4 to which our author here refers. Let us apply our rule of interpretation: Never interpret a passage, or word figuratively, unless there is something in the context to indicate that it should thus be interpreted.

With this in mind let us view Jno. 4. Verse 7 says: "There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink." How do we understand "water" as used here? Why of course, in its ordinary meaning. But down in verses 13 and 14 the record declares: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; But the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." One can plainly see that Jesus is using literal "water" in contrast to "living water". Thus you see that our principle works well here. But I challenge any man to show from the context of Jno. 3 that "water" should be understood in a figurative sense.

Our friend has thus far taken three positions on what "water" in Jno. 3 means.

His Positions

- 1st. Jesus is the water.
- 2nd. Holy Spirit is the water.
- 3rd. Jehovah God is the water.

In view of these three positions let us read the text. "Except a man be born of Jesus and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Now I admit in a sense one is born of Jesus. Paul declares that God has given children to Christ. "I will put my trust in him, and again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Heb. 2:13).

Why place such an absurd interpretation on the passage? Why not just admit that when Jesus said water in that passage he meant water.

Now for position No. II. If Jesus meant that "water" meant Spirit then we have him saying:

"Except a man be born of Spirit and of Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Such language is ridiculously absurd. Jesus was not guilty of saying this. Our author said that in his interpretation of Jno. 3:5. The writer spoke of some one of being ignorant. What does such an interpretation as this suggest? No, Jesus did not say one had to be born of "spirit and of Spirit." Why not be content with what Jesus said. He said "water" and "Spirit". Not "Spirit" and Spirit". Two elements not one.

Position No. III. would have our text to read like this: "Except a man be born of God and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." I also admit that one is born of God. I could come as close to proving that he was talking about buttermilk as my friend could prove that he was talking about God, Christ or the Holy Spirit. I boldly affirm that there is no proof in all the Bible that even remotely teaches that "water" in Jno. 3:5 is ANYTHING OTHER THAN JUST PLAIN WATER.

Our author of this little tract has not proved that "water" is not water. All he has done is asserted and perverted the scripture which he has used.

More later.
Don Flanagan,
Thayer, Mo.

NEWS

A very good singing was held at Viola the first Sunday in September. Remember the singing to be held there again the first Sunday in October.

Bro. Leroy Miller is preaching at Salem on Sunday and Sunday nights. He lives in Little Rock and is driving back and forth to meet the appointments at Salem.

The church at Mammoth Spring completed 20 years in its present location this month. During this time the church has enjoyed steady growth and at present numbers almost twice the original number who attended 20 years ago.

DON'T COME TO CHURCH

Marion Farley, Dallas 17, Texas

Don't come to church, if you come only to see and be seen.

Jesus gave a stinging rebuke to some in his day who were interested mainly in worldly recognition, and he termed them hypocrites. (Matt.) They were giving liberally of their money in the presence of men to be praised for it.

In His sermon on the mount he said, "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."

Paraphrasing, "don't make a show of your giving as the hypocrites do in the synagague and on the streets, blowing a trumpet to attract attention concerning their generosity, that they might have the glory of men, for when you do this in this way, you have received all the reward you will get, for this was your goal, and the Lord is not obligated to give you a reward, because you were not doing it for him anyway."

On the other hand, he admonished them to give secretly, and promised "and thy Father that seeth in secret himself, shall reward you openly."

Surely these were the same kind of folks he spoke of in (Matt. 5) who were Scribes and Pharisees, expounders of the law of Moses to the people, they were told to do whatsoever they were bidden but to do not after their works, "But all their works they do to be seen of men." (Matt. 23:5).

This is conclusive proof it is wrong to do any service to God, to be seen of men, or in order to receive glory or praises from men.

The apostle's advice in (I Tim. 2) in regard to dressing up to be seen, was for women not to use costly clothing, wear gold and pearls, and braid the hair for a show, but he suggests they adorn themselves with 'good works' which are of much more value to these 'professing godliness.'

Don't come to church, if it is to gain popularity and be with the

big crowd.

Some are guilty of this very thing, when they are able to improve their financial status by 'joining' a church where the more socially prominent attend in greater numbers, caring little whether their teaching and practice conforms to the New Testament pattern, being not nearly so much concerned with this as the gain it might bring.

Again we point out to these the warning our Saviour gave in (Matt. 7:13), in regard to the danger in following the 'big crowd', "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be which go in threath: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and FEW there be that find it."

Don't come to church with preconceived ideas, especially about how you want to be saved, to illustrate, one of the most popular of these is heard often, "I want to be saved like the thief on the cross". If Jesus wanted to save him this way, it was his privilege to do so, since he was one of the Godhead, besides it was before he expired on the cross, and we are under an entirely different covenant today, and could not consistently ask to be saved like people were before it's inauguration.

I can't see why any of these had not just as soon be saved like the Eunuch in (Acts 8), who was baptized of Phillip, or like the apostle Paul, being baptized of Ananias, or those on the day of Pentecost, who were baptized of Peter and the other apostles.

Many today think it foolish to contend that it is necessary to be baptized to be saved, but Paul says in (I Cor. 1:27), "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PAPER

Mrs. Elmer Stark, Mammoth Spring, \$1; church at Viola, \$5; A friend of the paper, \$1; Frank Kincaid, Rockford, Ill., \$1; G. T. Hensley, Mt. Home, Ark., \$1.

Continued from FRONT page

I and two other Christian men went to a Roman Catholic Church carnival. Dice games were running wide open with the money right out on the table. Whiskey, wine and beer was at many different stands. You could win these by playing the dice or buying a chance ticket. They were also selling chances on wagons, cars, etc. We did not feel that we could be Christians and not say anything about such things. So I went home and printed and handed out eight-hundred tracts on exactly what I saw down there and I informed them that I did not for a minute think that this was a good example of Christianity. Those tracts set off the fireworks.

Listen brethren, Roman Catholics are as wise as serpents and their system is the most wicked one known to history. They just simply do not miss a trick. One man called saying he was an attorney and that he was going to carry me into court if I did not write an apology in forty-eight hours. A lady called saying she was a reporter from the Daily News and wanted to print my story. Actually she was just trying to find out if I planned another move. Catholics were really sweating as many of their own group joined my side and believe me, I am not so cool myself. Like Bob Hope, Brave men run in my family.

Now, of course, I know that many of my brethren will think I was just unwise and perhaps a little fanatical or I would have been more careful and I would not have stirred up so much trouble. But just remember Stephen and Paul, as well as Christ. They occasionally stirred up trouble. And if you think you can cross Roman Catholicism without a few threats, you have a lot to learn. They always fight back. They believe in their system enough to die for it!

Brethren, one out of every four people in the United States lives within four-hundred miles of Philadelphia. Yet, the church is unknown here and religious freedom and freedom of the press is unknown.