

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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THE GREATEST INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD

Acts 20:28

Orbie Robbins — Elizabeth, Ark.

While there are some great institutions in the world, and they fill their place, there is none greater than the church of the Lord. No other institution can be offered as a substitute for the church or fill its mission and purpose in the world. The church is in the world but is not of the world. John 17:16.

All worldly institutions have been founded by men and Jesus said every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. Mt. 15:13. In Psalm 127:1 David said, Except the Lord build the house they that build labor in vain.

The church is the greatest institution in the world because of the following reasons:

1. It is of divine origin. Jesus said upon this rock I will build my church. Mt. 16:18.

2. It cost so much. Paul said feed the church of the Lord which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28.

3. Salvation is in it. Peter said there is salvation in none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12.

4. Saved are in it. The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Acts 2:47. Therefore the church includes all of the saved and excludes all of the unsaved.

5. It is the body of Christ.

He is the head of the body, the church. Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22-23.

From these truths we learn that His body is the church and the church is His body. Paul stated in Eph. 4:4 there is one body. Therefore there is one church.

6. It is the bride of Christ.

As the husband is the head of the wife even so Christ is the head of the church and the Saviour of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives

even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it. Eph. 5:23-25.

7. It wears the name of Christ. "The churches of Christ salute you." Rom. 16:16. "The church of the first born." Heb. 12:23.

8. It is a kingdom that will stand forever. "In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall stand forever." Dan. 2:44. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:28-29.

9. The Lord will present it unto himself.

That He might present it unto himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish. Eph. 5:27.

10. It will receive a home in glory.

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:1-3.

We should respect the church as the greatest institution; by not joining worldly religious organizations; by living holy lives in the church. Rom. 12:1-2; Heb. 12:14; by spreading its glories so others may know the truth of the gospel, obey it and be saved. Eph. 3:10-11; Eph. 3:21 and by supporting it liberally so it can grow. 1 Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:7.

BETWEEN DEATH AND JUDGMENT

—Boyd E. Morgan

A question prompts this article. The question is from Bro. R. L. Clinton of the Heart church. He says, "What becomes of the soul of man or where does the soul of man go after death until the judgment? Now, I don't know the answer to this question. There may be none. Or it might be something we are not

to know till the judgment. Anyway, if you know any Bible truth or fact about it, I would be glad you would give it in the little paper——."

Those who believe in God and His promises will find times when their minds will go forward to a time when mortal life shall have ceased and only spiritual life shall continue. Knowing there will be a general resurrector when we may expect to stand before our Saviour and be judged, and knowing that either our eternal destiny will be heaven or hell, we desire to know something about where the dead are between death and the resurrection. It is only natural to wonder. We have attended too many sad and solemn burials to wonder about the body. It is a matter of knowledge to us that it returns to the dust from whence it came. It remains that we wonder only about the spirit (soul).

The soul does not die. It merely departs. "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died)". Genesis 35:18. Then at death, mortal life only ends and the soul departs. Where does it go? "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccl. 12. This settles the issue. The spirit goes to God. But does it go to heaven which is the dwelling place of God or to a place prepared of God where it is retained until the time when the mortal body shall be raised immortal and the spirit returned to it? The latter seems to be the most conclusive since the soul does not enter either heaven or hell until after the judgment. When Peter alluded to David on Pentecost he said, "For David is not yet ascended into the heavens." Acts 2:34. David, though dead for hundreds of years had not gone to heaven, yet his spirit had gone to God. When our Saviour died, He said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost." Luke 23:46. Three days later shortly after His resurrection Jesus said to

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FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS
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Sponsored By:

Welcome Hill Church of Christ
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Editors: Clovis Ragsdale and
Boyd E. Morgan

Bro. Charlie Cavin of Sturkie writes us that one was baptized at Sturkie during November by Bro. Clovis Ragsdale.

EDITORIAL

This issue, December, 1955, marks the last issue of three continuous years of service that Fulton County Gospel News has given to the brethren. It has been our purpose to cause brethren to cooperate in the work of spreading the borders of his kingdom and to provide a medium of bringing the pure and ancient gospel to the unsaved in such a manner as to provide careful study which brings conviction. Radio preaching is one wonderful medium, but a radio sermon is heard, enjoyed, and retained only to the extent that it is remembered. The printed page furnished opportunity to read, digest, and read again; to retain such information as we may care to preserve that even though memory fails, it may be recalled; and to retain knowledge we may want to pass on to others. This we have provided. It has further been our aim to encourage brethren to work in their Master's vineyard. In all these points, we believe we have succeeded.

Because a thing is free, does not mean it does not cost somebody something. Fulton County Gospel News is the only publication of a religious nature that we know of that offers free subscription. No request either in our county or elsewhere has been denied. We have wanted all who will receive the paper graciously to have it. At present, we are printing 1300 copies each month.

At present this work is supported by Welcome Hill, Moten, and Union Hill congregations together with free-will offerings from many people. We have succeeded in carrying on this work even though we made a hard and fast rule that no advertising would be carried for profit and no advertising would be carried for the personal profit of any individual. All advertising is and has been for

the general good of the church, and is free.

A meeting will be held the first Monday night (at 7 p. m. at Welcome Hill the sponsoring church) of the new year to lay plans and to determine the continuation of the paper. You are invited to attend.

Since this work began we have seen the cause strengthened and established in this vicinity. Congregations in four years have been established at Union Hill, Viola, Alton and Camp. The paper has played some part in these accomplishments. Three church buildings were built to strengthen the cause in these places.

Now, are we tired? Are there no new fields of endeavor? Churches can cooperate and accomplish anything in this vicinity we desire to do. Do you know of some work we can unite on? Do you have an idea that you have never expressed? What shall we do now? Many opportunities lie before us. It's merely a matter of what the brotherhood wants. A Christian School, a cooperative vacation Bible school, a bus system, a mission meeting or meetings, the cause established in a new field, enlarged distribution of gospel literature, more radio work. New and better equipped buildings, a located evangelist for work in weak or mission places in the county, correspondence Bible courses. You name it, if it's right and good and we want it, we can have it.

May we continue to work and may God continue to bless our efforts. Let's have more pulling and pushing with less kicking on our part.

—Boyd E. Morgan

WHY I AM NOT A CAMPBELLITE

By G. B. Shelburne, Jr.

Early in the nineteenth century there arose on this continent a mighty religious movement whose purpose and effort was not to originate a new sect; but rather, by getting back to the apostolic order in all things, to free men from ecclesiastical bondage and from the confusion of sectarianism. Alexander Campbell came to occupy a leading position in this movement, and since his day those who have labored for the restoration of the church of the Lord, rather than for the building up of a sect have been stigmatized on every hand as Campbellites.

We bear no personal ill-will against

those who, contrary to our teachings and to our wishes, persist in referring to us, as Campbellites. Although we know that the term is used by some in derision, we should like to be charitable and believe that the majority who call us Campbellites, do so through honest misunderstanding or through lack of information. Therefore, I shall endeavor to explain why the members of the churches of Christ repudiate the name "Campbellite."

Some Important Historical Facts

As a means of approach to the consideration of the scriptures bearing upon this subject, I shall first call to your attention some important historical facts.

First, although I accept some of the doctrines taught by Mr. Campbell, I am not a Campbellite, because his doctrines did not originate with him. The cardinal point of his teaching were taught and held by many before his day. Martin Luther and Calvin taught in the early part of the sixteenth century the right of private study and investigation of the scriptures. Zwingli taught Campbell's principle of "speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent" by contending that anything not authorized by the Scriptures should be excluded from religious work and worship. Walter W. Scott, a Scotch Presbyterian, was the first man to teach baptism for the remission of sins in this country. James O'Kelly of North Carolina, a Methodist preacher, urged acceptance of the principles of congregational independence and the Bible alone as authority, without human creeds, as early as 1793. In 1800 Abner Jones of Vermont and Elias Smith of New Hampshire, Baptist preachers, were pleading for the extinction of party names. Before Alexander Campbell reached the height of his career, Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell agreed on many of the outstanding points of his teaching. Barton W. Stone and Thomas Campbell were originally Presbyterians. I have cited these historical facts merely for the purpose of showing that the movement to get back to the Bible was not started by Alexander Campbell, but that it had begun to take form through the efforts of various religious leaders of different faiths before Campbell became

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definitely associated with it. But the plea that was made by these men for a restoration of the primitive order has its foundation in the New Testament, as one may see by a careful reading of that volume. Therefore, my acceptance of this plea makes me neither a follower of Campbell, nor of those good men who were teachers of these principles before him.

In the second place, from the standpoint of historical fact, I would like to state that I do not accept everything that Alexander Campbell taught. A careful examination of his works reveals that he held some positions that are at variance with the word of God. If I were a Campbellite—that is, if I accepted his works, rather than the Holy Scriptures only as the standard of religious authority, I would accept without hesitation everything that he taught. But this I do not.

The Teachings of the Scriptures

With these historical facts in mind let us now consider the subject in hand from a purely scriptural viewpoint. I am not a Campbellite, because:

1. To be a Campbellite would be to manifest an attitude of carnality, rather than an attitude of scriptural-ity. It would run directly counter to Paul's admonition to the Corinthians: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? . . . For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" (See I Cor. 1:10-13; 3:3-4.) Certainly we have a picture here that fits the case. There were Paulites, Apollosites and Cephasites in the congrega-

tion at Corinth. If it was not right for the early disciples to follow such eminent men as the apostles, Peter and Paul, we surely would not do right today to follow Alexander Campbell. Mr. Campbell was not crucified for me. I was not baptized in his name; and to follow him would be to become carnal and walk as men!

2. I am not a Campbellite, because I cannot wear a human name. The name "Campbellite" is not a divinely-given name. The early disciples were called Christians (Acts 11:26) and they carefully abstained from all human prefixes or suffixes. We are taught in Eph. 3:15 that God's family both in heaven and on earth wears the name of Christ, and in Acts 4:12 it is declared that there is salvation in no other name. The apostle Peter said, "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

3. I am not a Campbellite, because the Bible teaches that Christ, and not Mr. Campbell, is the head of the church. Paul says in Col. 1:18 "He is the head of the body, the church." And again, in Eph. 1:22-23 the apostle says that God has "put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." These and similar passages teach beyond a doubt that the church has no earthly founder or head. I refer, of course, to that institution about which we read in the New Testament. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who "was delivered for our offenses and raised for our justification," is now seated at the right hand of God as "Lord of lords and King of kings." He is the head of the church, and I dare not regard any man as such.

4. I am not a Campbellite, because I have not embraced Campbellism, but the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul teaches in Eph. 4:5 that there is "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." This one faith is not Campbellism, but is "the faith once delivered to the saints" mentioned in June 3. It is the divine system of teaching given through Christ. It is the gospel of Christ, which Paul preached and which he called "the faith which once he destroyed." There is no other gospel. Paul said: "But

though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, yet him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8.) The gospel which Paul preached surely is not Campbellism or the teachings of any other man, and to embrace any gospel other than that which Paul preached is to invite the anathema of heaven.

5. I am not a Campbellite, because I was not converted to Mr. Campbell, but the Lord. The psalmist wrote: "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." (Ps. 51:13.) Notice that it is the will of the Lord that sinners be converted unto him, and not to any fine church buildings, to preachers, or to a high social standing.

6. I am not a Campbellite, because it is wrong to glory in a man, rather than in the Lord. Paul said: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal. 6:14) The God of heavens' demands glory in all things through Jesus Christ. (See I Pet. 4:11.) Paul said, a man should not read in I Cor. 10:31: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." To take the glory that belongs to God only and transfer it to a man would be treason against high heaven.

Now, my friends, I would like to suggest some questions for our earnest consideration. If, because of the scriptural reasons just enumerated, it would be wrong for me to be a Campbellite, would it not be wrong for anyone else to be one for the same reasons? If it would be wrong to follow Mr. Campbell for the reasons just named, would it not be wrong to follow any other man or group of men for the same reasons? And if it would be wrong for me to follow men for these reasons, why would it not be wrong for anyone else to do so?

Perhaps you have never thought seriously on this matter before. You may belong to some religious body

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between Death — from page 1
 Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not ascended to my Father." Then to be in the hand of God, in His keeping, does not necessarily mean to be in heaven and while the spirit of Jesus was not in heaven it was in the hand of God. Declaring the prophecy of David fulfilled concerning the resurrection of Christ, Peter said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (hades-Revised) neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Acts 2:27. The soul of Jesus between His death and resurrection was in Hades, the unseen world, so far as you and I are concerned. To use Jesus' own expression he said to the thief, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:43. Since they were not in the tomb together the saying then alluded to the spirits. Our Saviour then spent three days in Paradise, an intermediate state of the dead before going to the Father.

We may add further observation from the divine writing by observing that God provides a separation of the righteous and the unrighteous. In this life, God separates the saved from the unsaved by adding the saved to the church. Acts 2:47. After judgment He will again separate though all shall be raised together. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28-29. It is reasonable to surmise then that God would not put evil and righteous spirits together between death and the judgment. But of this I am not certain. No rest is promised the wicked. Rest is only promised to the righteous as in Rev. 14:13. Peter did say of the sinful angels, "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." II Pet. 2:4. It is not reasonable to assume that God cast them into the hell of fire, will draw out, judge them and cast them back, of what benefit then the judgment? This hell is Hadean, too. It is the 'tartarus,' the abyss place or dungeon. It is the 'chains' of darkness awaiting judgment and not 'Gehenna' hell. Whether there is a difference between these spirits and the spirits of mortals I cannot conclusively say. It

seems there is a place reserved for the righteous and a place reserved for the wicked between death and the resurrection. Except to warn others, I am not so much concerned about the tartarean and Gehenna hell. I have absolutely no intention of going to either and warn all others to fear God and keep His commandments that at death they may rest from their labors and at the resurrection be raised unto the resurrection of life.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SPEECH

Col. 4:6 — I Pet. 3:15

Marion Farley — Dallas 17, Texas

Let us consider the above scriptures which read as follows: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

A valuation could not be placed on the right kind of words we use when spoken at the right time.

The apostle Paul wanted the Christians at Colosse to season their conversation with salt. That is, let it be such that it would be uplifting to the hearer and having a saving influence on those who were honestly seeking the truth. They were expected to withstand the enemies of Christ.

We should not have the attitude of some, who "don't care what others think about what they do or say," contending that it's "none of their business." Paul was careful to instruct the Colossian brethren to watch their speech, knowing the salvation of many unbelievers depended almost altogether on how they used their words among them.

Solomon in the long ago so beautifully illustrated the right use of words like this: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11). Since he had been given an "understanding heart" by Jehovah, he was able to give us this beautiful description of a single word when spoken at the right time.

It seems to be the delight of some to use words that sting and burn, while there are others who sugar coat theirs, but neither of these are seasoned with salt. A Christian is

to never needlessly hurt or offend his fellowman. Certainly sin is to be "rebuked sharply," but it necessarily follows that we need to make a careful study of the Word of God, that we might know how we "ought to answer EVERY man." If we are not sure we know, it is better to defer the answer until we have had time to investigate.

In the quotation from I Peter we are taught that the Christian must be always able to give an answer to every man concerning the "hope" that we have. This answer is to be scriptural, must be based on what we can find in the Bible itself, and not on some "experience". — Yet Peter says it is to be done "with meekness and fear." Our answer should always be kindly given, still firmness must be exercised. Peter in his first gospel sermon, told the people in unmistakable terms what they would have to do to have their sins forgiven, he made use of words to convict and convert them, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort saying, save yourselves from this untoward (crooked) generation." Acts 2:40.

We should be willing to explain patiently, and in detail the terms of salvation. There are still countless numbers who do not know the simple story of the cross. It is true that time and effort are seemingly wasted in many instances, but if you could cause one soul to be saved in your whole lifetime, would it not be the greatest blessing of all?

Then try letting "your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

Why I Am Not — page 100
 of human origin, and you may wear the name of some man, or some other human title. You may subscribe to a human creed, rather than to the Bible alone. If such be true, or if you have never professed religion in any way, I beg you to study the New Testament carefully. There you will learn that to be truly converted to Christ one must believe in him, repent of his sins, confess Christ, and be baptized for remissions of sins. If you will do these things from the heart, the Lord will add you to his church, and you may begin that new life in Christ which leads to eternal glory.

— Taken from the Gospel Digest