

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid At Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 14

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

February 1980

Number 26

## Teach Us To Number Our Days

By Joe Sponaugle

How time flies! Don't we hear this expression often? It seems that the older we get the faster time goes by. We grow up, get married, have children, and then the first thing we know our children are also grown, and we become grandparents. Where does time go?

David wrote, "So teach us to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom." (Ps. 90:12). Whether we realize it or not our time is limited. So we need to use it wisely. It seems that so many people throw away their lives and waste wonderful opportunities. A wasted life or opportunity cannot be recalled.

Again David wrote, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." (Ps. 90:10.) Seventy years is still the average life span, though some live to be eighty or ninety. When we are young we think we have forever. When we become middle age we begin to wonder and when we are elderly we begin to wonder where it all went.

James says, "Come now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into this city and spend a year there and trade and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. What is your life? For ye are a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For what ye ought to say, "If the Lord will, we shall both live and do this or that." (James 4:13-15.) The biggest mistake one can make in life is to leave God out of his plans and life. If we include God in our lives, he will teach us to number our days and make them count for good. Then when it comes time for us to fly away we can look back over a life well spent in his service. When we have reached the end of the road we will hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." (Matt. 25:21.)

Are we numbering our days? Or are we living as if we had forever? Have you con-

sidered Christ and his salvation, or are you living just for yourself? How old are you? How much longer will you live on this earth? It is still true - "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this is the judgment." (Heb. 9:27.) Paul tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). What will your wages be when you fly away? Will it be death, eternal separation from God, or will it be eternal life in Christ Jesus? Felix told Paul, "Go thy way for this time and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me." (Acts 24:25.) He failed to number his days, for there is no indication in the word of God that Felix ever had a convenient season. Many are like Felix today, they plan to obey the gospel when they have a convenient season. But how time passes, and we so soon will fly away. To die lost is to be lost forever. It is too late then.

David writes, "Jehovah, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, what it is; let me know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." (Ps. 39:4-5.) God, in his word, tells us what our end shall be, depending upon whether we are saved or lost. What will your end be? Yes, we are truly frail. Even when we are the strongest we are so frail. David said, "But truly as Jehovah liveth and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." (1 Sam. 20:3.) How much longer will you live? Is it possible that you are just a step away from flying away?

The wise person takes up his or her cross and follows Christ. The wise person spends his days serving the Lord. They make every day count for Christ. As Paul said, "Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil, Wherefore be ye not foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is? (Eph. 5:15-17.) Do you understand what the will of the Lord is? Have you accepted Christ as your Lord and Saviour by obeying the gospel? If you are a Christian, are you faithful? Are you numbering your days?

## The Merciful

By Terry Frizzell

In Matt. 5:7 Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy." Mercy is related to the idea of forgiveness of offences.

In what we commonly call the Sermon of the Mount, Christ gives us an example prayer, in which he taught us to pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." (Matt. 6:12). He then continued to say, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Christ, in teaching this, is not saying that we should overlook the sins that are in the world, but rather that we should view them as God looks at them. This means that when one transgresses against us we should be willing to forgive him as God is willing to forgive us our trespasses against him.

When God forgives men of sin, the sin is never again charged to their account. We could say that when God forgives, he forgets. This should be our attitude, but, too often it isn't. We want to bury the hatchet with the handle showing so it will be easy to bring it up at our convenience. This attitude is wrong and entirely contrary to the teachings of Christ. When we forgive, even if we as humans cannot forget easily, we should never again charge the sin to the person who committed it.

Christ teaches in a parable about a servant who owed his king ten thousand talents. When the king demanded payment the servant fell at his feet and asked the king to have patience. The king was moved by compassion and forgave him the debt. However this same servant had a fellow servant who owed him a hundred pence. When payment was demanded, he said, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." (Matt. 18:29-30). Is this the way we are? willing to accept the forgiveness of God for our transgressions, but not willing to forgive those who transgress against us. Too often it is!

(Continued on Page 2)

**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: Erwin Cowen  
and Harold Turner

Publication No. 211780

# World Evangelism In Our Time

By Clovis Ragsdale

The restoration of the New Testament church took place mostly during the nineteenth century, in the United States. A hundred and fifty years later we can still claim a slow and steady growth in this effort. Today we are able to offer a way of worship and service identical to that of the first century.

The restoration work was sometimes hindered by divisions within the ranks, and the growth of the church slowed down during the first hundred years of this movement. During this time much emphasis was placed on the doctrine as taught in the New Testament. Many sermons were preached on the subject of baptism, using Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38, along with many other similar passages designed to show and teach the necessity of one being baptized in order to become a Christian. A stress was also made upon the unity of God's people in the one body of Christ (John 17:21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 12:5). Too an emphasis was placed upon the importance of the Christian assembling each Lord's day for the Lord's Supper and other acts of worship. It seems that less attention was given to Mark 16:15 and other passages which taught the need to preach the gospel to all the world. We were busy establishing the church at home, and rightly so, for we were few in number and with hardly any church buildings in which to worship.

By the end of World War II, the church had become well established in the southern part of the United States. Brethren who had served in the armed forces saw the need for preaching the gospel in other parts of the world, including much of the United States. During the last forty years, the church has been established in every state of our nation. Yet, a recent survey indicates that about ninety percent of the members of the church of Christ are found mostly in six of the southern states.

In recent years more emphasis has been placed on reaching out to the other parts of the world. A better understanding of the Scriptures has convinced many that the gospel is for all mankind, and not just for those fortunate enough to live in the southern part of the United States.

We now have excellent ways of reaching the people of the world. One of the best ways to reach the areas where the earth's population is greatest, is by radio. Some of these areas do not have TV as we have. The World Radio program, based in Monroe, La. and the International Gospel Hour, based in Texarkana, Arkansas are the two most prominent radio programs we have. One of the most widely reaching TV and radio programs designed to preach

to all areas of our nation is the Herald of Truth. There are also two short wave radio stations being built to reach every area of the globe. Too, Bible Correspondence courses are being used effectively on a world wide bases.

Of course, the oldest and best method for reaching the lost is personal contact. We have five hundred or more missionaries in the foreign fields. This is a substantial increase over what we had fifty years ago, and hopefully this number will continue to increase greatly in the near future.

One of the accomplishments we have been able to carry out in the area of mission work is the training of native preachers in the foreign areas. These men have been more effective than a foreigner doing the preaching. While benevolent work may have helped in some areas, it has not been too effective in causing people to listen. They were more interested in the "loaves and fishes" than in Christ.

There are things that make the efforts more difficult. Two major problems we face is the rapid increase in population in the world, and the many conflicting doctrines being advanced in religion. The efforts in western Europe have been very difficult, the people are hard to reach. More promising areas are Africa, Southeast Asia, South and Central America.

The words of Jesus in Luke 10:2 are still true today, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few." We too need to "pray the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into the harvest."

The church that Jesus built was able in a century to spread the gospel over the whole world. Can we afford to do less? We must not wait until tomorrow. The need is urgent. We must get with it. A church that doesn't preach to gospel away from home will die at home.

"Of all the things you wear, your expression is the most important."

"An optimist is the fellow who takes the cold water thrown on his proposition, heats it with enthusiasm, makes steam, and pushes ahead."

"We have come from somewhere and are going somewhere. The great architect of the universe never built a stairway that leads to nowhere."

"The richest man is not the one who still has the first dollar he ever earned, but it is the man who still has his first friend."

"Temper is what gets most of us into trouble. Pride is what keeps us there."

## The Merciful (Cont.)

"For they shall obtain mercy" is not just a statement made by Christ to fill space. It is a promise that every child of God who forgives others will be forgiven. It is a sure thing that we, as humans, cannot live perfectly without God. In this light, if we expect God to continue to forgive us, we must continue to forgive our fellowman.

Each one should look at his life. Is there someone you know that has sinned against you? Have you forgiven them of what ever sin they have committed? We should think hard and think true because the way that we have forgiven them may well depend on where we spend eternity.

"And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matt. 18:34-45.)

## Contributions

### Churches of Christ:

Agnos	5.00
Big Pond	12.00
Elizabeth	5.00
Dellhalf	5.00
Gamaliel	5.00
Garfield	15.00
Jeff	5.00
Viola	5.00
Williford	10.00

### Individuals:

Alive Gundel	12.00
Joseph T. & Edith Robinson	25.00
A friend	2.00
Clyde & Delphia Smith	15.00

# The Body Of Christ

By Harold Turner

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:27.)

Within the New Testament there are numerous terms used to describe the Christian's relationship with the Lord. Each of these terms helps us to have a better understanding of our relationship and responsibility to Christ. One of the most frequently used expressions describing this relationship is, "The body of Christ." This expression pictures Christians as the individual members of a body. In 1 Cor. 12:12 Paul wrote, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." Paul then continued to show the importance of every member in the body. Every member of a body does not have the same function, but each one has its purpose, whether it be the eye, hand, foot, ear, etc. Paul shows that even those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

Whenever the church is pictured as the body of Christ, Christ is always pictured as its head. In Eph. 1:22, 23 Paul shows that God put all things under the rule of Christ, "and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." And in Col. 1:18 he said, "And he is the head of the body, the church...that in all things he might have the preeminence." Being the head over all things to the church body indicates that Christ has absolute authority over the church. There are no members in our physical body that have the role of authority. This role is for the head, and every member of the body must respond to the authority of its head. Christ is the only head of his body, the church. He has not delegated any person, or group of persons, the role as head.

Jesus did, however, select the apostles through whom his will and authority could be delegated to others. He promised the apostles that after he returned to heaven, he would send the Holy Spirit to teach them all things, and guide them into all truth (Jn. 14:26; 16:13). In Acts 1:2 we learn that after Jesus returned to heaven, "He through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen." These men were not secondary heads of the church, but rather were the ambassadors through whom Christ revealed his will. These men were guided into all truth by the Spirit as they delivered the gospel message. Acts 2:4 states that they spoke "as the Spirit gave them utterance." After preaching the gospel message throughout the world, the apostles were then guided in writing the message, which would be the Christian's constant guide. In 1 Cor. 14:37 Paul said,

"The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." This written message contains the complete will of Christ for the church. It is through this written word that the head controls and guides each member of the body.

A body or church that is guided by some other system of authority, is obviously not the body or church of Christ. In Matt. 15:9 Jesus stated that worship expressed by the doctrines and commandments of men is vain. Christ has not authorized men to design a system of by-laws or doctrines for the church. His doctrine, the gospel, is all sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). In Gal. 1:8, 9 Paul warned, "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Another important thing for us to understand about the church as the body of Christ, is that members cannot live apart from the body. In John 15:4 Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." Once we have become a member in the body of Christ, we must continue to be a faithful, working part of his body. In John 15:7 Jesus stated that we must abide in him and his word must abide in us. His word is not only our guide, but is also spiritual food for the soul (1 Peter 2:2, Heb. 5:12-14).

Apart from the body of Christ we are lost. Christ is the Saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23). He adds such as should be saved to the church (Acts 2:47). It is in the one body of Christ that we are reconciled unto God (Eph. 2:16). This being true, it is most important that we understand how to become a member of His body. Upon hearing the gospel, one must believe with all his heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This belief must be such that it causes the individual to repent of his sins, and to confess before others his faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Luke 13:3). In Rom. 6:3 and Gal. 3:27 the Bible states that we are "Baptized into Christ." And 1 Cor. 12:13 states that we are "Baptized into one body." In Acts 2:37-47 the people were exhorted to "Save themselves," and "They that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Since there is but one body (1 Cor. 12:20), we must do as these did in order to be added to the same body. And as members of the body of Christ, we must be faithful unto death to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

# A Tribute To Dad

By Wayne Price

So many faithful gospel preachers have died these past few months: Wallace Gooch, Foy Wallace, Jr., and now my own father, Clarence A. Price - born Oct. 21, 1912, and died Jan. 19, 1980.

Dad began his preaching career in 1930, thus for half a century he has proclaimed the unsearchable riches found in God's word. This was done without addition or subtraction, eschewing both the tendencies of binding opinions, and the liberal tendencies of many of his contemporaries.

His parents preceded him in death, but only by about three or four years. All of his brothers and sisters are faithful Christians (as were two brothers who had passed away earlier). Dad was the only preacher of the group.

A proud moment in Dad's life occurred about one year ago when all three of his sons, along with Dad himself, were preaching from four different pulpits at the same hour on a given Lord's day morning.

Serving others was his life's work! "...not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2:4) well describes his role in life. A more selfless person cannot be found. In fact, the very day he suffered his first stroke, he had been in the local hospital, visiting the ill there, not realizing that he soon would join them.

He has known many joys in this great work of preaching the gospel. Many shall walk through heaven's portals because of his concern for their souls - concern that moved him to teach him to teach them about Christ (Acts 8:12, 35). In addition to the many joys that accompany the preaching of the truth, he has also known what it was to be "in perils among false bretheren." (II Cor. 11:26). Yet he was not to be deterred from his life's work, for his attitude was the same as Paul's: "...woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16).

How does one say "good-by" to his own father? Tears have fallen even during the writing of these words, yet not from a sorrow, as others have, who have no hope! He sleeps "in Jesus" and the promise is that God will raise up such (1 Thess. 4:13-14). Like David, we cannot bring him back, but we can go to where he is (II Sam. 13:23).

Gone is the familiar handclasp, the "hello, son", and his "pat on the shoulder." Dad was a preacher, songleader, counselor, a good husband, a loving father, but above all, he was a faithful Christian.

Dad has now laid his ensign down, but it will be lifted again by those who follow him, even as he followed the Christ (I Cor. 11:1). So Dad, we bid you "goodby" with full assurance that though it is saying "goodnight" here, it will be a "good morning" over there! See you there!

# THE EVIDENCE OF PARDON

By Harold Turner

"And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me." (Jeremiah 33:8.)

The word "pardon" is not commonly used in the New Testament, but its meaning is frequently used. The above passage shows pardon and cleanse to be the same. To pardon, according to Webster as well as the Bible, means "to release a person from further punishment for a crime; to cancel or not exact penalty for an offence; to forgive." Because of sin the whole world has become guilty before God, therefore every person has need of pardon.

In I Tim. 2:4 Paul shows that God would have "all men to be saved," thus showing that God's desire is to pardon every person. Certainly we have no greater need than to be forgiven of our sinful offences and crimes against God. But what are God's conditions of pardon, and how can we know we have received his pardon? The Bible assures us that we can know these things. Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) John also wrote, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life..." (1 John 5:13.)

There have been many things suggested as a proof or evidence that God has pardoned one's sin. One offers as evidence of pardon that he has had a vision, another states that he has had a dream, another has seen a light, and another has experienced a feeling unlike anything he has ever known before, and still another states that he has heard a still small voice speaking to him, and on and on suggestions are given as proof or evidence that they have been pardoned of their sins. Do such experiences prove that God has pardoned us? Does the Bible teach that we are to have such experiences in being saved?

Since our eternal destiny is to be affected by whether or not we have been pardoned, we need to be sure about this matter. We need to weigh every possible evidence in the light of God's word. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The only assurance we can have of our salvation is by the word of God.

Since this matter is so serious and important, let's just assume for a moment that Satan is real, and that he actually wants to destroy the souls of men from the eternal presence of God. Is it possible that he might cause people to see things, or feel things, and hear things that are not true? Is it possible that Satan might work to cause a person to feel that he was saved when he was not saved? Satan is real, and he does any and everything he can to cause men to fail. He is not some powerless force in our world, but mighty and destructive. Notice what Paul wrote in II Thess. 2:9,10, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Satan will work signs and wonders to cause men to reject the truth for their salvation. All marvelous appearing things are not necessarily of God. In Rev. 13:14 the devil "deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do." These passages should stress to us that we cannot depend on what we see or feel for our salvation, but rather we must depend upon the truth.

Saul of Tarsus has a vision when he was going to Damascus to persecute Christians. He saw Jesus and talked with him, but Saul was not saved at this point. He still had his sins when Ananias came to him three days later. Cornelius had a vision in which an angel talked with him, but he was not saved by this vision nor the angel. He was instructed to send for Peter who would tell him words whereby he and all his house could be saved (Acts 11:14). So because one has had some experience of seeing, hearing, or feeling something, does not mean that he has been saved. The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16).

God promises pardon upon the conditions of our obeying the gospel. In Rom. 6:17, 18 Paul said, "But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Notice they were made free when they obeyed. Peter also shows this, saying, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying truth..." (I Peter 1:23.)

How can we know if we have obeyed the truth, or if maybe we have just obeyed some interpretation of men? Begin with

the great commission of Jesus, and study each example of conversion following it. In his final words to the apostles Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Satan would have us interpret this to say something other than what it says. God does not permit us to make our interpretations of what he tells us, he requires our belief and obedience. Search through the book of Acts, and notice that each example of conversion follows these instructions of Jesus. We can have the assurance of our salvation, or the evidence of God's pardon, only when we have obeyed all that he requires of us. Forgiveness takes place in the mind of God, not in our heart. Forgiveness is not something we feel. However, we can and will have a wonderful feeling of assurance when we have obeyed the will of God. The evidence is in the gospel.

"God never misses an opportunity...if the door is open He will come in."

"Ability is nearly always accompanied by humility."

Marmoth Springs, Arkansas  
Route 3  
Clot's Ragsdale