

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, Ark.

Volume 11

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

October 1970

Number 10

Guest Editorial

My Dearest Son,

You looked so handsome in your new sport coat tonight as you told us goodbye before leaving for that special date with Sharon. I said the usual, "Have a good time. Be careful. We love you," but again I found myself wanting to say more. My hopes and dreams for you often run too deep for words. This note which I leave on your pillow may sound like trite advice and worn-out phrases, but I hope you'll find in it some guidelines to follow up your reading and your recent talk on dating and sex.

You belong to God — body, mind and soul. You were made in His image and are to glorify God in your body. Knowing His love and that He has a plan for your life will give you a sense of your own worth and a respect for your own body that is basic to attitudes toward sex.

Christ is with you. I am so thankful for your personal loyalty to Christ as your Lord and Savior. His teaching on self-denial and purity in life and the sanctity of marriage are still true standards for the good life. Depend upon His power as your greatest ally to withstand temptation in this sex-saturated culture. God's solemn warning against sexual intercourse outside of marriage still stands: "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals... shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Cor. 6:9-10)

God planned sex and He endorses it. It is a beautiful and meaningful, a thrilling and satisfying part of marriage. Pornography is so damaging because it makes sex dirty and sordid when God meant it to be good.

Remember the choice is yours. You have the freedom to choose to be chaste. No outer restraints, rules, laws will suffice, but only your free choice.

When friends say, "Everybody's doing it", remember that everyone may be talking about it, but statistics still show that chastity is the norm. Don't succumb to social pressure. You will often find that those who are plunging into promiscuity to express their freedom are really expressing their own insecurity and anxiety and their own selfishness.

True love takes responsibility. A boy who says, "If you love me, you would,"

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Not Either/or, But Both

"Serving Christ is what matters... the preachers shouldn't use the black whip and preach on attendance, contribution and visiting... a Christian isn't necessarily one who shows up at every service and works harder than anyone else... power through Jesus is the only theme that can revolutionize your life... let Christ guide you and the fruit of His life will be clearly seen."

All right! I'll buy the whole package!! It's Biblical. Jesus is to dwell in us. He is our personal Savior who saves us; and He can revolutionize our lives. But... what then?

Is the peace of God a principle which causes one to war against plain commands of "not forsaking the assembly" (Hebrews 10:25)? Does the personal Savior "personally authorize a freedom from the following of specific commands in Christianity—which He himself made binding" (John 14:15)? Does "power through Jesus" give us the ability to detach ourselves from the guidance of the bishops (Hebrews 13:17)? Will "serving Christ" free Christians from giving collectively to carry on God's work (I Corinthians 16:1, 2)? Has Jesus revolutionized so much that it is no longer a sin to go on a picnic instead of assembling with the saints (Hebrews 10:25, 26)?

The issue is not the "man" or the "plan". It's not the "legalism" or "liberalism." It is not "the spirit working through the word" or "the spirit dwelling in the heart." The decision is not "worship in spirit" or "worship in truth." It's not an "either/or". It's both!

A "go-to-services-but-leave-Christ-out-on-Monday" won't work. Likewise, a "love-Jesus-but-I-couldn't-care-less-about-church won't work, either!

The issue about what you really believe is this—what next? So you believe following commands is the way of showing Christ in your life. Do you love Him? Is He real? Is He more than a book? Then show it with the warmth of Christ's love!

So you think Jesus is better felt than told? So you feel His power "guides" your life?! Let's see you prove it through your fruits! The fruit may come from Jesus' power and not from you—so what!

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The Line Is Busy

Someone once wrote, "Keep the telephone of your mind forever transmitting thoughts of love, purity, joy and health; then when disease, sorrow, lust or hate try to call you up, they will always get the busy signal. After a while they will forget your number."

Paul wrote, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." — Philemon 4:8.

It is unnecessary to prove that the mind controls every movement of the body. School children soon learn this truth. Paul knew that if the Lord's people kept their minds busy thinking of things that are right, they would never do wrong. There is no such thing as doing without thinking. When you hear someone say, "I said that before I thought," you can just mark it down that it is not true. One who does not think unkind things will not speak unkindly. One who does not allow the mind to entertain evil will not be doing evil. I do not know of anything that we are more careless about than our thinking. This carelessness is the basis for all our evil. Why anyone should ever think he can allow unholy thoughts to stay in his mind without ever being guilty of unholy actions, is more than I can see. Surely we have not been reasonable about this matter. Because the mind is beyond the view of the eyes of others does not mean that it can harbor evil thoughts and be safe.

In the first place, the mind is not beyond the vision of God. He knows what is in the heart. In the second place, evil has no intention of staying in the mind without some outward expression. The devil knows what he is doing when he persuades us to allow evil thoughts to stay in the mind. He knows that they will find some way of expression. Hence, we should "gird up the loins of our minds."

It is unfortunate that many of us have not realized that evil thoughts can be so far removed from our minds that they will not return. Yet it is easy to see. Most any habit is a matter of mind. We have

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The 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: Clovis Ragsdale
and James E. Henley.

Not Either/Or, But Both - (Cont.)

The fruit still ought to be in evidence (Matthew 7:20)! Jesus' "fruit" never calls for less outward dedication! Where does Christian liberty free us from being as decided as Paul was, who, though an apostle, worked under elders (Acts 20:28), assembled with the saints (Acts 20:7), and believed it was a sin not to do so (Hebrews 10:26)?!!

There hasn't been, nor could there ever be, enough said about Christ and His power to live in us. Yet, in our zeal to "tell it like it is", let's tell it all. To preach a "revolution from cold facts" is part of it, but it is not all. If Christ is to guide our lives and if He is to "become our Lord in complete surrender," we are not liberated from church attendance, giving or work. Instead, we, in response to Jesus, become more obligated by the love principle to be more diligent than a legalist ever could be.

Who works longer and more faithfully—a nurse paid to take care of a little boy because it is her job, or the mother who cares for her child because she loves him? Love and freedom always create more dedication and responsibility.

Christianity is a faith that works through love. To fail to emphasize both, whether liberal or conservative, is to fail to truly be a Christian.

—The Exhorter, Valdosta, Ga.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Fulton Gospel News is owned and managed by the Mammoth Spring Church of Christ, Mammoth Spring, Arkansas.

Editors, James E. Henley and Clovis Ragsdale; published monthly at Mammoth Spring, Arkansas.

Circulation 2,100 copies as of Oct. 1, 1970.

PONDER THESE "IFs"

IF one can be saved without faith, why did Paul say it was impossible to please God without it? —Hebrews 11:6

IF faith comes in answer to prayer, why are we told that faith comes by hearing the Word of God? —Romans 10:17 and John 20:30, 31.

IF "faith only" is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, why did James say we are not justified by faith only? —James 2:24.

IF a man can be saved by faith alone, why did Peter command baptism for (unto) the remission of sins to both Jew and Gentile? —Acts 2:38, 10:48, and 15:9.

IF God will save man regardless of the kind of faith he has, why did Paul say there is only "one faith"? —Ephesians 4:5.

IF those who believe on His name "have power to become sons of God" are they already sons? —John 1:12.

IF one can be saved without obedience, why did Paul say that Christ is to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel? —II Thessalonians 1:18.

IF one can be saved without obedience, why did Paul say Christ is

The Line Is Busy - (Cont.)

had experiences with habits. Once we made up our minds to get rid of some habit, we have watched it drift farther and farther from our thinking. Soon we go for days without thinking of it, then months, and finally it seldom if ever returns. A person can even forget the evil that others have done to him in this manner. Thoughts that are now allowed to remain in the mind, and that are not entertained, will depart. We also fail to realize that evil thoughts, chased out of the mind, must be replaced by good thoughts. The mind does not remain empty. As long as we live and are conscious, we will think. And even when we are not conscious a certain amount of thinking goes on. There is no such thing, then, as getting rid of an evil thought and leaving the mind blank. In fact the only way we can crowd out the evil is by moving the good in. Enough good moved in will get rid of the evil. Evil thinking will try to return, but if the good is strong enough to shut the door, evil will go away.

This is not vain thinking or writing. These are facts, and Paul meant for us to understand them when he said concerning things that are right, "Think on these things."

—Cleon Lyles

'author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him'? —Hebrews 5:9. Why does the Bible say "He that OBEYETH not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him"? John 3:36 (RV).

IF the Lord will save man without baptism, why did He command it in order to be saved? —Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 22:16. Why did Paul place "newness of life" after baptism and not before? —Romans 6:4. Why did Paul say we are children of God by faith "for" (Greek "gar" — to introduce a reason) as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ? —Galatians 3:26, 27.

IF the Lord promised salvation without baptism, why did Peter say, "baptism doth also now save us? —I Peter 3:21.

IF God promised man that he can be saved outside the church, which is the body of Christ, the family of God, why did He send Christ to die for it? —Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-27.

IF salvation is somewhere else, why is Jesus said to be the Savior of the body, the church? —Ephesians 5:23.

IF the church has nothing to do with our salvation, why does the Lord add to the church daily such as should be saved? —Acts 2:47.

IF we can successfully glorify God apart from Christ's church, why did God choose the church as the vessel of His glory? —Ephesians 3:20, 21.

IF the kingdom of God (the church) is yet to be built, why did Paul and John say they were "in" it? —Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:19. Why did Jesus say it would come in the lifetime of His apostles? —Mark 9:1.

IF Christ is coming back to earth to set up His kingdom, why did Paul make it so plain that Christ is coming to give it to the Father? —I Corinthians 15:24.

IF men have the right to make laws for the church, why did Christ say that He had ALL authority? —Matthew 28:18 (RV).

IF man can be saved by obeying the doctrines and commandments of men, why did Christ say it was vain to follow them? —Mark 7:7.

IF we ought to fellowship false teachers, why did John say we should keep them out of our houses? —II John 9-11.

IF denominations are right in God's sight, why did Jesus pray that His disciples would be "all one" as He and the Father were one? —John 17:15-21.

IF man can be saved without being faithful, then why did Jesus say, "Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."? —Revelation 2:10.

—Adapted

Tearing Down Old Walls

Cleon Lyles

In every area of life we recognize the importance of keeping the lines of communication open. When we fail to do this we are headed for misunderstandings, wrong conclusions, and many times division. This is as true in the Lord's work as it is in everything else.

We believe that we need to tear down many walls that often exist among brethren and keep us from being one with each other. So long as walls are allowed to exist between us we will never completely understand and appreciate each other. Certainly no one should be responsible for building walls that separate.

There are walls between preachers and elders. Some preachers cannot completely relax around their elders because they are afraid some misunderstanding would develop. It is easy for us to set our own pattern for people to follow and condemn them when they do not measure up to it. Many things that need to be discussed are seldom mentioned. When they are mentioned no complete understanding develops. For example the preacher's salary, which we hope to discuss later, is something that is very seldom discussed in any manner which would teach what needs to be taught about it. It is not uncommon to find a large audience, composed of elders, deacons, preachers and other members of the church, in which there is not one who has ever heard any teaching about this subject. Since it would be wrong to condemn brethren for something of which they have no knowledge, we cannot rightfully condemn people and yet in our actions we often do. If we could get rid of whatever it is that keeps us from discussing this matter preachers would be staying with churches longer, churches would experience greater growth, and thousands of dollars could be saved that we spend each year in moving preachers. We need to talk about things that we do not understand and help others to know what we do understand. A preacher should be able to talk with his elders about anything, at any time, and in any way he thinks wise and while doing so believe that he is talking to his best friends. People who will do everything to help him and nothing to harm him. Also elders should be able to discuss anything with the preacher they think should be discussed while believing they are talking to one of their best friends. Unless we are able to be one with each other we cannot properly serve one another. After all the work in which we are engaged is more important than anything in the world. We

cannot afford to do anything that would do harm to the Lord's work and we cannot afford to do less than our best to help it.

There are often walls between elders and the church they serve. It is not uncommon at all to find people in the church who do not understand the work of an elder and have no idea at all about how they should conduct themselves toward them. This being true we need not be surprised to find people who have no respect at all for elders or the position they occupy. One who feels this way will hesitate to approach an elder about anything unless it is something he wants to criticize. Naturally the elders will have to make the move necessary to tearing this wall down. They must be able to convince people that they are doing the Lord's work and that their business is helping people, never hurting people. If people are to know them they must desire to be known. And if people are to feel free to come to them they must let people know that their welfare is uppermost in their hearts. They must be able to become one with the people whose welfare is their business. Also by their actions they must make it clear that they serve all the church over which they are watching and not just a portion of the church.

Walls that exist between deacons and elders should also be torn down. Many times the deacons are so separated from the elders that they are of little value to the church. This extreme can lead to as much harm as the opposite in which the deacons are allowed to take the oversight that belongs to the elders. It is not necessary for an elder to think of everything in order to prove his ability as a leader. But it does become his responsibility to decide in all matters. Among the deacons we can often find great thinkers, who are as dedicated to the Lord's work as anyone can be, and who can be of great value to the elders in the work which is their responsibility. If a deacon is made to feel that he is so far beneath the elder that he cannot approach him he will be of no value to the church. On the other hand if an elder is so afraid his leadership will be questioned that he feels it necessary to approve of everything that is presented by others he may lose his ability to lead without even knowing it is lost. So lines of communication must be kept open. Walls must be torn down.

Then there are walls that exist between members that need to be torn down. The only institution in all the

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CONTRIBUTIONS:

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The Christian's Mental Health

By Max Leach, Prof. of Psychology
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True Christianity does not bring inner confusion, but instead brings peace. True Christianity does not promote a disturbed mind, but promotes a sound mind.

The Christian has the greatest threat to his mental health, fear, removed. He no longer has to fear death, for through Christ, he conquers death. He no longer has to fear the inhumanity of his fellow man, for he can say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can man do to me?"

He does not have to fear tomorrow, nor any succession of tomorrows, for he knows that God through Christ has promised to aid him. If he seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, he knows that all the necessities of life shall be added unto him. He knows that he is God's child and that God, being a loving and kind, tender and compassionate Father is interested and concerned in all his doings.

He knows that he has a Father that will not give him a serpent when he needs a fish, now will He give him a stone when he needs bread. He is certain that his Father knows even each sparrow in its fall, the very number of the hairs upon his head, and thus knows his every need, even before he asks.

The true Christian has good mental health because he knows that God is love; that God and love are the greatest forces that exist. God works for him in his own mysterious way, and love works for him in easily demonstrable ways. Where the threat of hydrogen bombs and planes and guns will not work, love will work. Love destroys one's enemies in the right way, and these enemies, that have become brothers, now work for the total good of the true Christian.

The human being needs to love and be loved more than he needs food and water. And in giving and receiving, he is made complete, whole. The Christian does this, in God's appointed way. He is serene, happy. God and Christ are on his side, and no real harm can ever touch him.

Guest Editorial (Cont.)

could be answered: "if you truly loved me you wouldn't ask."

Learn the art of waiting. The mark of the mature man is that he is able to postpone present desires for future good. Take the long look. Think what it will be like to see your beautiful bride coming down the aisle and to know that you have kept yourself pure and clean for her and she for you.

Since you have determined in your own mind to wait for sexual intercourse until marriage, plan ahead for activities that will help you, for sex is a powerful force. Remember that it never harms one to consciously deny himself a desire. Control is the key.

Guilt and regret can rear their ugly heads to mar a marriage or a dating relationship. The boy or girl who has been promiscuous before marriage is more likely to be jealous and suspicious after marriage. To fully trust and to be fully trusted are treasures of great price. Moral integrity has no substitutes.

I'm glad you are dating such lovely girls, Tom. Dating will help you know yourself and know what you want in a wife. But take time for marriage. In five or ten years you will not be the same person you are today. You want to pick a wife for the man you will become, not one to match your immaturity now.

And God bless you, son. And may you some day know that inexpressible joy that you father and I have known. Such happiness is truly a bit of heaven on earth.

I Love You,

Mother
—Helen M. Young

Church News

The Church of Christ in Salem, Arkansas, will host a Lectureship November the 9th through the 13th. Brother Art Smith, minister for this good congregation, invites all to attend.

Tearing Down Old Walls - (Cont.)

world that makes people equal is the body of Christ. This equality is not based on the fact that all men have the same ability but that all men are doing their best. When each, according to his ability, does what he can in serving the Lord he becomes equal with all the rest. He has no right to feel superior because he has more ability than others or inferior because he has less. The Lord judges according to ability.

By tearing these and other walls down we can become one with each other, then we will be able to properly serve one another and find the happiness God intended for all of us.

Truth Invites Investigation, But Never Fears It

"And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free", said Jesus, in John 8:32. Should you and I ever be free from our past sins, and have hope of eternal life, it will only be, when and if, we obey the truth, which means that we must know and accept the truth! "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth", John 17:17. So this leaves us NO CHOICE but to know the truth if we wish to be saved, and God's word (the Bible) is this truth. THEREFORE TO BE SAVED, ONE MUST OBEY THE BIBLE, AND FIRST MUST KNOW IT! If I know the truth and am obeying it, then I have the hope of eternal life. If not, I am lost! My soul being worth more than the whole world, then surely it is worth saving. Then to know and obey the truth should be the most important thing in the world to me!

Now suppose I only think I know the truth and someone tells me I should check with God's word to be sure, should I become angry, because someone is interested in me? Is this the proper attitude toward God and a friend? Is this gratitude? If I have the truth, the Bible will only confirm it, and I am taught to make my "calling and election sure", 2 Pet. 1:10. Should I not appreciate someone being interested enough in my soul to want me to be sure I am saved?

THE TRUTH DOES NOT FEAR INVESTIGATION! A person who is sure he has the truth will not become angry when asked, "To give an answer to every man that ask a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear", 1 Pet. 3:15. The true physician will invite investigation, the quack fears it! The true follower of Christ invites investigation, the quack fears it! If I have the truth and know it, it does not make me angry for someone to tell me that I do not have the truth, or for someone to teach a different doctrine than the one I teach! When a person thinks you do not have the truth, then if you do have it, you should be willing to study with him. It is not any time to angry when you hear error and souls are at stake. Defend your doctrine; if it is truth it will shine brighter, if error you should know it now while you can change!

EVERY TIME WITHOUT EXCEPTION, a person becomes angry when asked to defend his religious practice, it means that he knows that the darkness of error, cannot stand before the light of truth! A person who has committed no crime does not become angry when asked to prove he was not near the crime. He is not afraid if he

knows that he is innocent! Truth will prevail and he knows it!

The people of Berea, in the days of the apostles were not afraid of checking to be sure they had the whole truth. They were not angry to hear Paul preach something different, but searched the Scriptures to know who was right, and when they learned they were wrong, they changed, Acts 17:11. They were not sure, but they wanted to be sure, so they searched the truth! They wanted truth and they found truth! They were in error, but when the truth revealed the error, they were too honest to hide behind anger, but came out of error and followed the truth!

SOME ARE IN ERROR TODAY AND KNOW IT, BUT WILL NOT ACCEPT TRUTH! So these become angry when they hear the truth; knowing it will show up their error! Stephen found some of these in Acts 7. "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you", Verse 51. "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth", Verse 54. Here it is from the Bible. In error and knew it, but would neither listen, nor change! So when the truth was presented they became angry, because it showed up their error. Their error could not stand against the truth, so they stopped their ears and killed the preacher! They will be judged by the truth! It was true then and it is true today. Someone will say, "I am satisfied with my religion and do not wish to study". Which means he knows he is in error. Yes, only known error fears investigation; truth invites it! Where do you stand?

DEBATE, NOV. 2-5

Dear Bro. Henley,

I would appreciate it if you would put as a news item in the FCGN that I will meet Mr. P.D. Ballard (Baptist) in a debate Nov. 2-5. The first two nights will be on baptism, the last two on apostasy. The debate will be held in the Big Spring Baptist meeting house, 2 miles north of Twin Bridges, Mo., on Highway 181, 1/2 mile east on country road.

Brotherly,
Cliff Stewart

72531 Arkansas, Little Rock
for Junor