

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid At Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 20

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

March, 1986

No. 3

## EDITOR CHANGE

For about the past five years, brother Mike Pace has served as editor of this paper. Brother Pace has since moved to work with the church in Harrison, Arkansas. We wish Mike the best in all his efforts for the Kingdom. We also want to thank him for the fine job he did while serving as editor of this paper.

As of this issue, Charles Coats will be the new editor of the Fulton County Gospel News. My endeavor will be to have timely articles in this publication that will help all its readers to be better Christians.

Future issues of this publication will cover such topics as The Home; The Church; The Holy Spirit; Why I Left (a particular denomination); Elders; Love; Creation/Evolution; and, The Plan of Salvation. Many people have been contacted to write specific articles on these themes. However, I would appreciate anyone submitting an article for consideration. If you are interested in writing an article, please follow these guidelines:

(1) All scripture quotations must be from the King James Version or the American Standard Version of the Bible.

(2) Maximum length of articles is five (5) typed and double-spaced pages.

(3) Always include your name and address with your article.

The Fulton County Gospel News has been published almost continually since January 1953, and has always endeavored to be Bible-centered. I feel it has been successful in keeping this goal. From the comments I have heard, the paper

has been well received by its readers.

Although the Fulton County Gospel News will be edited by me, it is under the oversight of the elders of the Mammoth Spring Church of Christ. It is supported by the local congregation, many sister congregations in the area, and by interested individuals. For all who help support this paper, whether financially or by prayer, we are eternally grateful.  
Brother Charles Coats

## Contend For The Faith

By Charles Coats

"Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you concerning our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3)

Jude voices great concern that these brethren to whom he is writing contend for the faith. As can be seen in this passage, he was of a mind to write them concerning their salvation. However, the urgency of the moment necessitated that Jude change his plans. Verse 4 tells us why — false teachers had crept in.

Moulton in the *Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* tells us that the word used here for 'contend' means to "contend strenuously in defense of." Obviously, Jude is exhorting these brethren to do more than sit at home and say "Things are bad." He is expecting them to do something about it. Brethren, we need to realize that God expects his followers to stand up and fight against the devil.

Paul said he was "set for the defense of the gospel" (Phil. 1:16). Timothy was told to "Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 2:3). Christians are told to "resist the devil" (James 4:7). How long will it be before all of us who profess to be Christians realize that we are at war (II Cor. 10:4), our adversary is the devil (I Peter 5:8), and it is everyone's battle (II Timothy 2:2; Mark 16:15).

It may be that we need to "take off our blinders" in order to more clearly identify the enemy. We need to realize that we have an enemy in the world itself as the sins of the world creep into the church. We must resist these things in order to help keep the church pure (I Peter 2:11, 12; Ephesians 5:27). These things would include drugs, alcoholic beverages, smoking or chewing, dancing, filthy books or movies or television shows, etc.

We also need to understand that we have an enemy in the denominational world. There is enough scripture used by them to make them sound good. But, we must always be aware of the fact that they are on the other side of the battle, and thus, are against Christ (Matt. 12:30). We need to be very careful that we do not become like them or fellowship them in any way (Eph. 5:11).

We must also be on the alert for those of our own number who would lead us astray. These are probably the most dangerous of our enemies simply because we tend to overlook them (or excuse them) until it is too late. Those who would teach false doctrine from among our own ranks is what Jude has in mind and what Peter was concerned with in II Peter 2. Paul also warned the brethren at Ephesus to be on guard for false teachers arising from within

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 the financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request. Mail all address corrections to:

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS  
P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

EDITOR . . . . . Charles Coats  
Publication No. 211780

# SHALL YOUR BRETHREN GO TO WAR, AND SHALL YE SIT HERE?

By Joseph A. Ruiz

The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying . . . the country which the Lord smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle: Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan. And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, **SHALL YOUR BRETHREN GO TO WAR, AND SHALL YE SIT HERE?** (Numbers 32:2-6)

when their forefathers had in like fashion discouraged the children of Israel from entering the promised land that God's anger was kindled against them, "and He made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil . . . was consumed" (verse 13). Moses then brings it home and says that because of their discouragement to the people then God will "yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people" (verse 15). When faced with such they said, "We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: but we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel . . ." (verse 17). "And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war . . . this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure, your sin will find you out" (verses 20-23).

### Background

The children of Israel had now conquered and subdued the nations east of the Jordan River and were now occupying the land of Moab. The children of Reuben and Gad, inasmuch as they were cattlemen, were quick to notice that the land was "a place for cattle." They had two requests of Moses, Eleazar and the princes of the congregation: (1) let the land on this side of the Jordan be our inheritance, and (2) bring us not over to the other side of the Jordan. Moses immediately asked them a very logical and penetrating question produced by such a request - **Do you expect to sit here idle while your brethren go to war?** The descendants of Abraham had been promised this land (Gen. 12:3) centuries earlier, and the fulfillment had finally come. They were ready to cross over the Jordan River and begin conquering and dividing the land that God Himself had promised them. And lo and behold comes this request - "**Bring us not over Jordan.**" Talk about **DISCOURAGING!** Moses asked, "Wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" (verse 7). Moses further reminds them that centuries earlier

The present day application of this account is obvious. Though it is made plain through God's Word that we are to be soldiers, fighting in the Lord's army (Eph. 6:10-19; Phil. 1:17, 27; Jude 3, 4), and that the battle will not slow, but will actually become greater (II Tim. 3: 12, 13). there are still those "children of Reuben and Gad" who say, "Bring us not over Jordan." Such need to contemplate the question posed by Moses, "**Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?**" Such need to contemplate the consequences of such actions, and "be sure, your sin will find you out."

### CAUSES THAT KEEP BRETHREN FROM GOING TO WAR

Some are not aware that we are in battle. In view of the plain Bible teaching of this, and the multitude of publications, lectureships and the like to keep us informed, it is indeed difficult to understand how some elderships, preachers and other

### CONTEND FOR THE FAITH

continued from page 1

(Acts 20:28-30). We need to come to this conclusion — **IF A PERSON IS WRONG, HE IS WRONG REGARDLESS OF WHO HE IS!** We need to serve God and not man (Matthew 4:10).

Yes, we need to identify our enemies and then take a stand for Christ. We need to fight the devil on every ground. We must "contend for the faith" or forevermore be barred from the throne of God — "So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).

---

*"Talk to the Lord about sinners, then talk to the sinners about the Lord."*

---

*"Arguments thrive where facts are scarce."*

---

*"No time is wasted that is used in getting ready for a good work."*

---

*"An atheist belittles the Christ, but prefers to live among Christ-ians."*

---

*"Being at peace with the devil is no evidence of a peaceable disposition. The man who is at peace with the devil is at war with God."*

---

individuals still seek to plead ignorance of the enemy compassed about us. Perhaps one reason for which some are not aware of we are in a war is because they cannot discern the manner and methods employed by false teachers. We need to be reminded that a false teacher is not always easily recognized. They are wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15) . . . they come in privily and sneak up on you (II Peter 2:1) . . . they are like their father the devil, walking about like a roaring lion seeking whom they may devour (John 8:24; I Peter 5:8). NOTE! A lion stalking his prey roars with his head facing the ground, not in the air, so that his prey will be confounded and distracted as to his exact location. Enemies of the cross work in the same fashion in order to distract and confuse brethren of what their main objective is - TO RESTRUCTURE THE CHURCH. Consequently, many say, "I didn't know we were in a war!"

**Some refuse to go to battle because of a lack of concern for the truth.** These display an attitude of indifference. This type of individual feels that if the problem is not right where he worships or preaches, he need not go to battle in another city, state and certainly not in another country! To the church at Laodicia the Lord Said, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou were cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm . . . I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15, 16). To all of our brethren who have this "could care less," "unconcerned" attitude, to you the Lord literally says, "You make me sick to my stomach." And such should be no wonder, considering the narrow and unloving attitude that allows one to "sit here" while "your brethren go to war".

**Some refuse to go to battle because they are not convicted.** Many within our ranks have either not been converted to the truth or have departed from it. The lack of conviction in the Lord's church is so prevalent today that many are willing to make concessions and compromise to almost every precious truth in God's Word. The recent "unity meetings" between members

of the Lord's church and the Independent Christian church are examples of the lack of conviction which prevails. And it goes without saying to the faithful missionaries in South East Asia, that the Annual Asian Missionary Workshop has in recent years been so infested with the "unity in diversity" spirit that the sweet fellowship and encouragement that once existed among workers of different mission fields is now a thing of the past.

**Some refuse to go to war because of the "professionalism" that abounds among us preachers.** We do not refer to it as the "clergy-laity" system, but boy do we have it! Whenever we start overemphasizing educational attainment and go to labeling our preaching brethren "Doctor So and So" . . . whenever we hear statements in reference to the preacher such as "That's what we hired him for" . . . whenever preachers begin comparing salaries, travel expenses, insurance, vacation, etc. . . . IT IS LATER THAN WE THINK! Such preachers feel no responsibility to go to battle, for after all he is just a "hireling"; while those members where such men preach feel no obligation because "it's not their job."

**Some refuse to go to war because of fear and cowardice.** How many preachers sit back to "test the wind" to see which way prominent brethren are going before they take a stand on any issue? (If they will even take a stand then!) How many elders are so filled with cowardice that they will not even correct false teaching from the very pulpits they are to oversee? How many members are afraid to speak out against unscriptural teaching and practices even within the congregations they attend? How we lack brethren today with the courage of Paul, who will stand their ground as did he, and fight the Lord's battles "even though all men forsake" us (II Tim. 4:16).

#### GOD'S CONDEMNATION ON THOSE WHO FAIL TO GO TO WAR

But if ye do not do so, behold you have sinned against the

Lord: and be sure your sins will find you out. (Num. 32:22)

On another occasion in Judges 4 the Israelites had been engaged in war with the Canaanites. They had won the battle and in chapter 5 we have their "victory song." Verse 23 states, "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty?" Those of us who refuse to do battle in the army of God, to the extent that we are able to do it, stand cursed by God Almighty. Ask yourself brother or sister . . . ask yourself preaching brother . . . ask yourself elder: (1) How many battles have I fought? (2) How many times have I said, "I don't want to get involved."? (3) How many times have I said, "I know I ought to do this . . . speak up . . . BUT . . ."? (4) Am I a soldier of the cross? (5) Therefore, where do I stand in the eyes of God?

#### THE SOLUTION

**We must train our people.** The strength that the church had in the past, has at present, and will have in the future, has been due to the fact of KNOWLEDGE AND FAITHFULNESS TO THE WORD OF GOD. Years ago we had men among us with little formal education, but they knew the book from cover to cover. They would take the Bible in their hand with a determination in their heart to follow it all the way back to Jerusalem, and when they preached, the foundations of error crumbled. The denominations would not even engage in further debate. Today, even weeping I tell you, we look for men who can be "good mixers", who can promote anything but the truth and organize anything but a sermon. Brethren, we must get back to the book (II Timothy 2:2)!

**We must fight like we want to win the battle.** Some might ask, "Isn't that what we've been doing?" Not at all. In many instances that could be cited, our hands have been tied behind our backs by being asked (and agreeing) not to disturb any college, nor to question or

## SHALL YOUR BRETHREN GO TO WAR, AND SHALL YE SIT HERE?

continued from page 3

expose "Brother So and So" because he is so well liked, etc. Consequently we are asked to fight a war without interrupting nor disturbing the teachings and practices of many colleges, churches, and individuals. Brethren if we are going to fight at all, let's fight like we want to win!

**Those who write and preach the truth are going to have to quit associating with those who do not.** We are going to have to stop appearing on lectureships and/or have men on our programs that have been known to be "wishy washy" on issues threatening the church, or even blatantly teaching falsely. We are going to have to quit fellowshiping them and thus by our actions crying "peace, peace, where there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14). J. W. McGarvey, after years of preaching meetings in congregations that used the mechanical instruments of music, regrettably learned that you cannot successfully combat error by fellowshiping and going along with it (cf. II John 9-11; Eph. 5:11). Brethren, in many instances, drawing the line has been long overdue! "SHALL YOUR BRETHREN GO TO WAR, AND SHALL YE SIT HERE?"

(This article reprinted from "Ye Shall Know The Truth", Independence, MO, edited by Jack H. Williams)

## PLEASE LET US KNOW

It costs us 30 cents for every paper that is returned to us. Please let us know as soon as possible what your new address will be. Thank you for your cooperation.

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Although we know we run the risk of leaving someone out, we would like to thank these people for contributing to the Fulton County Gospel News: Elizabeth Church of Christ, Geraldine Bolinger, Robert and Elaine Brecheen, Agnos Church of Christ, Garfield Church of Christ and Jeff Church of Christ. If we left you out, we are sorry, but thank you also.

## How To Become A Christian

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Let us notice God's answer. First, you must have faith in the "author and finisher of our faith"; Jesus Christ (Heb. 12:2). This faith comes by the hearing of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6). With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, you must repent of your sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). In repentance, one turns from sin, **STOPS** serving Satan and **STARTS** serving the Lord (Matt. 3:8; Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19). With this new attitude,

you are ready to confess your faith in Christ. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10). Now, you are ready for the final step in becoming a Christian — baptism into Christ. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Please read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that your past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added you to His church and you are a Christian (Acts 2:47; 11:26).

For further study, contact a member of the church of Christ in your area.

Mail all address changes to:  
**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 P. O. BOX 251  
 MAMMOTH SPRING, AR 72554