

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid At Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 19

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

March, 1985

No. 3

## COUNTING THE COST

By Art Smith

Making up one's mind may be one of the most difficult things an individual will ever do. This is particularly true when it comes to making a decision regarding Christ.

The Lord illustrated the difficulty of decision-making in his story of the man who would build a tower, (Luke 14:28-30). Jesus pointed out that "*counting the cost*" is necessary before actually "paying the cost."

Far too many church members are miserable because they failed to think ahead. They did not count the cost of discipleship and did not contemplate the sacrificing that would be necessary to follow Jesus. Their decision was not a firm "come what may" decision. Rather it was a conditional decision. If conditions remained favorable, then the original plan would be followed. If conditions became unfavorable or even inconvenient, then the original plan would be scrapped and the individual would "renege" on his promise to follow Christ.

Too frequently Christians find that faithful church attendance, active participation in congregational programs, giving of their means, personal evangelism and other activities conflict with their lifestyles, and so full dedication to the Lord does not occur. The problem is that total commitment did not take place when these church members first

decided to be church members. They simply failed to count the cost.

A re-assessment of one's commitment to the Lord and His church needs to be done by each child of God. Proper action based on a sincere scrutiny of each individual Christian's relationship to God could precipitate a revolutionary change among the Lord's people.

## "I Change Not"

By Dalton Key

Like it or not, the world is changing. Yesterday's rule has become today's exception; today's fad will soon be tomorrow's history. Nothing seems to stay the same.

Heraclitus, an Ephesian philosopher who lived more than five centuries before our Lord's flesh, based his ideas upon the world's state of flux. His classic illustration was that no one can step twice into the same river. Just as the river continues to flow, to move onward, so life is forever changing.

This type of reasoning is good, but only up to a point. Still waters do become stagnant and life does thrive on change. In many respects we do need to keep both our eyes and our minds open and try to keep in step with the times. But still, we must not forget that some things do not change. We must realize that all change is not for the better.

Our God does not change. "*For I am the Lord, I change not.*" (Malachi 3:6). God is "*from ever-*

*lasting to everlasting*"; (Psalms 90:2) The relentless passage of the centuries has not disturbed the changeless Father. His fundamental nature of judgment, truth and mercy is both eternal and unalterable. The same God who cared for Moses and Jacob, Peter and Paul, cares for us. Thus we may with confidence and assurance lean on his "*everlasting arms*"; (Deuteronomy 33:27).

Neither does God's standard of right and wrong change. The world's morals and ethics are in a constant state of revision. What was taboo in the "Victorian Era" is now accepted in our more modern "Age of Enlightenment." For many, sin has become a relic of the past. We are advised to "do our own thing" while "grabbing for gusto," all the while "looking out for number one!" The only real wrong, we are told, is to "feel wrong."

And yet the eternal word of God, which is "*true from the beginning*" and "*endures forever*" (Psalms 119:160). emphatically states, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" (Proverbs 14:12). The principles within God's book are timeless. We must never become guilty of changing the Bible to agree with modern thought and practice; rather we must alter modern thought and practice to agree with the eternal word.

Some things have always been wrong, are wrong now, and will always be wrong. And the passing of time will do nothing to change a thing inherently wrong into a thing inherently right. The world may

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 . . . . . Mike Pace  
Publication No. 211780

**"I CHANGE NOT"**

continued from page 1

unite as one man and vote to make a wrong thing right, but such will not change the truth, for truth is as eternal and unalterable as is the God behind it. "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." (Rom. 3:4).

Look again at the sins listed in the latter part of Romans' first chapter. Reread the sins of the then-unconverted Corinthians in I Corinthians 6. Review the horrid "works of the flesh" listed in Galatians 5. Such things were wrong in the days of Noah, they were wrong in the days of Lot, they were wrong in the days of Paul, and they are no less sinful today. Dressing up sin and boldly, attractively promoting it on larger-than-life-sized billboards or over the six o'clock news makes it no less sinful. Wrong is still wrong and all the time in eternity won't make it right.

Hiding behind the guise of respectability, we've become more or less complacent towards the world's sinful state. We are no longer startled or embarrassed by gross immorality which takes place almost nightly within our own living rooms by means of video magic. Filthy words which used to make us blush are now taken for granted. And the saddest part is that many of these changes are changing us - and not for the better.

A change in fashion is one thing; a change in philosophy is something altogether different. Our modern, secular society is running full throttle toward complete and utter destruction. Sin is still a reproach to any people (Proverbs 14: 34). The way of transgressors is still hard. (Proverbs 13:15). The wages of sin is still death. (Romans 6:23). We had best think twice, and think twice again, before joining ranks with modern Sodom. The first Sodom fell and so shall modern Sodom. We must not for the sake of modernity surrender to Satan's vile offensive.

Remember: some things change, truth does not. May we commit our selves in life and in death, if need be, to our God which changeth not. Men may scorn his ways as ancient and archaic, but to us they are time-tested and true.

**ORIGINAL SIN**

By Johnny Ramsey

There have been those who teach that we are born in sin and thus cannot help the propensity toward evil-doing. We shall carefully examine this erroneous matter in just a moment but first let us document such false doctrine as to its source. John Wesley, founder of Methodism went on record in *Original Sin* page 340 as teaching: "We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse ere we know what it is." In *Wesley's Sermons*, Volume II, page 266 we quote: "In Adam all died. The natural consequence of this is that every one descended from him comes into this world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin, entirely void of the image of God, and of all righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Every man now bears the image of the devil in sensual appetites and desires."

In the book, *What Lutherans Believe* by W. E. Schramm, on page 65 we read: "Ever since the fall of Adam all men who are naturally begotten are conceived and born in sin." This naturally comports with the *Augsburg Confession of Faith*, Article Two: "All men are born with sin. This vice of origin brings eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost."

Dr. W. A. Jarrell, noted Baptist, in *Gospel in Water*, stated: "That man is totally depraved is evident from his being a child of the Devil, fathered by the Devil and of the same moral nature." The Catholic position is made quite clear by B.L. Conway in *The Question Box*, page 253: "Baptism is a sacrament which cleanses from original sin."

All of these quotations crumble in the light of Ecclesiastes 7:29 and 12:7. God made man upright and God gave the spirit of man. How could a perfect Creator be the author of sin? The word *sin* comes from the Greek word "Hamartia," which means "to miss the mark." The Bible variously defines sin as: (1) A failure to do the things that are right (James 4:17). (2) A transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). (3) All unrighteousness (I John 5:17). (4) A violation of one's personal relationship with God (Romans 14:23). From this scriptural definition of sin we realize that the doctrine that teaches "infants are born in sin" is totally false. At least six out of ten religions teach that a baby is born in sin. This doctrine is known variously as: original sin, total depravity or the Adamic sin. The Bible does not teach such a doctrine, but millions blindly believe it. This is why an unscriptural practice - infant baptism - exists. Men started with a false assumption and added a practice unknown to the Holy Word. If we can prove that infants are born pure, sinless and safe before God, then the rite of sprinkling babies will certainly be proved false. The

two ideas go together. If a baby is ushered into life in sin, then something must be done to remit that sin or the infant is lost. John Calvin said: "There are some infants in hell not a span long." Why did he think so? Because he taught that babies enter this world as sinners and if they die prior to being sprinkled they will be lost! Here are some scriptures that forever prove we are not ushered into life as sinners:

(1) "*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created till iniquity was found in thee.*" (Ezek. 28:15).

(2) "*The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*" (Ez. 18:20).

(3) We are "*the offspring of God*" and He is "*the Father of spirits*" (Acts 17:29 and Hebrews 12:9). How then could we be born in sin?

(4) "*Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God*" (Matt. 18:3). Little children evidently are not sinners or Jesus would not tell us to be like them.

The Bible teaches that sin is committed and not inherited!

## Paul, The Master Preacher

By Wendell Winkler

Next to the Lord, the greatest and most effective preacher who ever lived was the apostle Paul. He evangelized three continents and penned two-thirds of the New Testament's epistles, sacred documents which have revolutionized the world. I Thessalonians 2:1-12 gives us one of the clearest, most helpful inspirational insights to Paul, the peerless preacher, to be found anywhere in his inspired writings. In this brief but most enlightening text, we may observe:

**The Preacher's Manner.** "*But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children . . . As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged everyone of you, as a father doth his children.*" (vv. 7,11). Hence we can see that Paul's manner was that of an affectionate mother and a caring father. Such must be the manner of all gospel preachers today. Such obtaining, what devotion, care, interest, gentleness, tenderness and real commitment will follow.

**The Preacher's Motives.** "*For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile . . . For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ*" (vv. 3,5,6). Paul's desire was to please Christ, not man. On Monday morning, the Lord's preacher, as he reminisces back over the previous day's activities, is not concerned with, "Wonder how that lesson went over with the brethren," or "Wonder what they thought of that," or "Wonder how they react to that lesson," or "Wonder if that gave satisfaction." Rather, his chief concern is, "Did that sermon please the Lord? Can I confidently look up and see assuredly the smiling approval of the Father?" Brethren, it is the Master and not men that we are to please. Now, if in pleasing God first, men are also made happy, well and good. But never, oh never, at the sacrifice of truth or the compromise of principle are we to gain the flighty favor of man to the forfeiting of divine approbation. Remember, too, that Paul said, "*For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ*" (Gal. 1:10).

**The Preacher's Message.** "*We were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention . . . but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak . . . because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God*" (vv. 2, 4,9). Yes, the gospel of God was the exclusive message of the apostle Paul. He said in I Corinthians 9:16, "*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*" The curse of heaven rested upon Paul (1) if he failed to preach, and (2) if he preached anything other than the gospel. He said in Galatians 1:9, "*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*" And, why would he want to preach anything else other than the gospel since it, and it alone, is the (single and exclusive) power of God to save (Rom. 1:16)? With the gospel of God being the preacher's singular message, let us henceforth have no book reviews, personal testimonies and philosophical speculations. Brethren, the world is filled with those who are regurgitating upon having been fed this type of diet by denominational preachers. They are wanting the gospel. Let us give it to them.

**The Preacher's Methods.** "*As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged everyone of you, as a father doth his children*" (v. 11). In this passage we can see that in doing his work the preacher is to use the methods of: 1. exhortation; 2. comforting; and 3. charging. This text reminds us of Paul's charge to a young preacher, Timothy, when he said, "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*"

continued on page 4

## PAUL, THE MASTER PREACHER

continued from page 3

(II Tim. 4:2). There are times when a preacher needs to exhort, encourage and commend. There are other times when he needs to comfort, strengthen and console. Then there are times when he needs to charge, reprove and rebuke. With knowledge gleaned from a study of the word (II Tim. 2:15). and wisdom having been gained in answer to prayer (James 1:5). he will know when to do what.

**The Preacher's Mode.** *"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe"* (v. 10). Notice those three adverbs of behavior: holily, justly and unblameably. Truly, his mode of living was most exemplary. The preacher's life is the life of his preaching. The messenger is his message. Unquestionably, others must see in us a personification of that which we advocate. We must be living epistles. We must practice what we preach. Preachers of the word must never have the concept of do as I say, not as I do. Rather, like Christ, we must begin both to do and teach (Acts 1:1). Otherwise, men will not hear what we say from seeing what we are.

**The Preacher's Motivation.** *"But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak"* (v. 4). The gospel is a sacred trust! How sobering this thought really is. Consequently, the gospel being a trust, we must give an account to God for the same-how we have studied it, how we have lived it, how we have preached it. A constant consciousness of this fact will make a considerable difference in how the preacher goes about his work.

## How To Become A Christian

The most important question ever asked is: *"What must I do to be saved?"* (Acts 16:30). Then the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we 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. (Rom. 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, we must repent of sins. *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."* (Acts 17:30). In repentance, we turn from sin, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord. (Matthew 3:8;

Luke 13:3). With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, *"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."* (Rom. 10:9-10). Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Gal. 3:27). Read Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26).

### BECOME A CHRISTIAN

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