

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

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MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK.

OCTOBER - 1967

What Must I Do to Become a Christian?

HEAR— "If any man have an ear, let him hear." Rev. 13:9 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom 10:17

BELIEVE — Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24 "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

REPENT — "I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Lk. 13:3 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." Acts 17:30

CONFESS — "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32 "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." Rom. 10:9

BE BAPTIZED — "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mk. 16:16 "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38

"THEN THEY THAT GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD WERE BAPTIZED: AND THE SAME DAY THERE WERE ADDED UNTO THEM ABOUT THREE THOUSAND SOULS." Acts 2:41

Announcement of Debates to be Conducted

Brother Guy N. Woods will meet in debate Albert Garner (Baptist) November 13-16 at the meeting house of the Cleveland Avenue church of Christ, 4214 Cleveland Ave., Montgomery, Ala. They will discuss baptism, apostasy and instrumental music in Christian worship. For information concerning reservations for out-of-town visitors, write A. B. Porterfield, 4214 Cleveland Avenue, Montgomery, Ala.

Alan Highers will meet in debate with Eural Bingham at Corinth, Mississippi on November 20, 21, 23, 24. The proposition on the first two nights will concern churches contributing to homes such as Childhaven and the last two nights it will concern whether or not Christians are obligated in benevolence to saints only or to others also.

Richard England and Robert Rogers will meet in public debate on December 26-29. The propositions are as follows:

No. 1. The Scriptures teach that Christians are to "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." Robert Rogers affirms.

No. 2. The Scriptures teach that Christians must observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week. Richard England affirms.

No. 3. The Scriptures teach that at the second coming of Christ the final judgment of all people, both good and evil, will take place and then the saints will go to heaven for eternal rest. Richard England affirms.

No. 4. The Scriptures teach that Christ, at His coming, will take up the power of government, and rule the nations with a rod of iron, and the true saints of God will reign with Him on the earth. Robert Rogers affirms.

The first two nights of this discussion will be in the court house in West Plains, Missouri, and the last two will be in the building of the church of Christ, Third and Bethel, Mammoth Spring, Ark. The sessions will begin at 7:30 each evening.

SENTENCE SERMONS - -

Sin may afford some pleasure, but it doesn't afford it very long.

If God were as unmerciful to us as we are to each other, heaven wouldn't have to be very large to hold all the saved.

One who neglects his duty to spite somebody; spites himself.

It is difficult to see good in the fellow who can't see any good in others.

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EDITORS:

**RICHARD ENGLAND
BILL GRADY**

Does the Spirit Witness WITH Your Spirit?

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together", ROM. 8:16, 17. The Spirit here refers to the Holy Spirit, which Jesus said would guide the apostles "into all truth", John 16:13. In other words the Holy Spirit guided the apostles while they wrote the New Testament. Paul taught that the gospel he preached was not received from man, "but by revelation of Jesus Christ", Gal. 1:12. This Holy Spirit did not come to guide the apostles until Jesus went "away" (to heaven,) John 16:7.

Then the SPIRIT (Holy Spirit) must "bear witness" WITH my spirit whether I am God's child or not. As the time of God speaking directly to man is past, the only way the "Spirit" may speak to me is through the New Testament. IF I am God's child, then, and only then, and not until then, do I become "an heir of God and joint heir of Christ". I may not know how to become God's child, but

unless I learn how the "Spirit" teaches me to so become a child, I cannot be an "heir" (blessings in this world and a home in heaven after death), then I may read how I may become a child in the New Testament. After receiving this knowledge, then my "spirit" (mind or heart) tells me whether I have met the qualifications of sonship, or whether I have obeyed the Holy Spirit or not. If I have done what the Holy Spirit teaches me to do (through the New Testament) to become God's child then my "spirit" can bear witness WITH the Holy Spirit that I AM God's child.

But when I read what the "Spirit" teaches me to do to become a child, and I REFUSE to obey the "Spirit" (through the New Testament), then my "spirit" tells me that I AM NOT God's child and my "spirit" bears record contrary to the "Spirit" which Jesus sent to "Guide the apostles into all truth". My knowledge of God's word further teaches that I AM NOT an "heir of God, for I must be a "child" in order to be an heir.

Now may we consult "the Spirit of truth" as to how I may become God's child and an "heir" of God. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ". Gal. 3:26, 27, From Jesus we learn that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned". Mary 16:16. The "Spirit" in Gal. 3:26, 27 teaches that we are "children" by faith through baptism. Faith leads us to obey the commands of Jesus to be baptized, for we are promised a reward if we do (to be saved and be an heir of God). Now when the "Spirit" teaches that he that "believeth and is baptized shall be saved" and that the same act on my part will make me a "child" and "heir" of God, then if and when I do this, the Holy Spirit can "bear witness with my "spirit" that I am God's child. But if I refuse to obey the "spirit" then I have NO PROMISE and NO HOPE to be an "heir" with Christ.

For one to "think", or "feel" that he is God's child when the Holy Spirit, through the New Testament, teaches that he has not done what God told him to do to become a "child", is for one to be living in this world without the PROMISE of God. We may never expect God to do something which He has not promised to do, but on the contrary in this case, He has promised those who do not obey, ONLY that they may expect to be "damned". We MUST examine ourselves to determine whether we are moving toward the promise of salvation, or damnation. The only way to KNOW is to check our "spirit" with the "Holy Spirit". Does the "Spirit" through the New Testament teach that you are God's child? G. V. PURDY,

San Augustine, Texas

BEHIND THIS BACK . .

Our character is rotting and,
Our heart is turning black
When we allow our tongue to talk
Behind somebody's back.

Our tongue is spitting poison in
Some unsuspecting ear
As we condemn our victim with
The words he cannot hear.

Those words that are completely
false

Or gross exaggeration
The lowest and most cruel form
Of oral defamation.

And every mind that we convince
Or influence a bit
Is one more great injustice and
A sin that we commit.

We demonstrate our meanness and
In decency we lack
When we degrade ourselves to talk
Behind somebody's back.

HUMILITY . .

For praise too dearly loved, or
warmly sought,
Enfeebles all eternal strength of
thought,
And the weak soul within itself un-
blest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's
breast.
- Goldsmith.

Church Organization

To insure against complete apostasy, God ordained congregational autonomy. With this type of organization, no deadly dangerous ecclesiasticism can hold sway over the great brotherhood. Local congregations must be respected! God is the author of local autonomy, therefore, let us study His pattern and follow it.

Before the mystery was unfolded, God emptied Himself of His sacrificial gift, Jesus Christ. Christ gave Himself for the church buying it with His own blood. Acts 20:28. Therefore, He is the head of His body, the church. Col. 1:18. Completing His work on earth, He took His place at the right hand of God by virtue of His resurrection from the dead, Rom. 1:4, with all authority. Matt. 28:18. His first administrative act was to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles that they might give the world the truth whereby we could be saved. Also, this truth is to guide the church until all enemies be conquered. 1 Cor. 15:24. The Holy Spirit came on the day of pentecost to the apostles enabling them to speak this truth without error. Thus, God fulfilled His promise and gave the world a COMFORTER through His Word. With these Spirit filled words, we are "furnished unto all good works" and "all things that pertain unto life and godliness". 2 Tim. 3:17; 2 Pet. 1:3. So, the Holy Spirit MOVED the apostles to speak all truth including the organization for the church. To be organized, qualifications were given for men to meet and these are found in 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1-4. By example, we find the apostles appointing a plurality of elders in every church. Acts 14:23. In Acts 20:28, we find the elders were to take the oversight of the local congregation wherein they were members. Having met the qualifications, they became Holy Spirit elders when elected to that work by the membership of that congrega-

tion. Of course, if they lose these qualifications, they cease to be Holy Spirit elders. One could not be "born" of the Word if he would not be obedient to the Word! Therefore, by the same procedure by which one would qualify, he could likewise be disqualified.

Six names are applied to this office in the New Testament. Elders and Presbyters, indicating experience; Shepherds and Pastors, denoting feeders of the flock; Bishops and Overseers, authorizing oversight. Study these words thoroughly and you will have the best commentary relative to this great work. 1 Tim. 3:1.

The Holy Spirit further instructed that these men would need some helpers. We find in Acts 6 an example of this teaching. Also, when Paul wrote the letter to the church at Philippi, he addressed all the saints with the bishops and deacons. Phil. 1:1. The qualifications for deacons are found in 1 Tim. 3:8-13. The word deacon means servant and this well defines his work.

In Heb. 13:7, 17, we find the relationship which is to exist between the elders and the members. If the elders have responsibility then the members have accountability. Since this is God's way, then proper feeding and discipline can be executed for the building up of the body of Christ. As God has tempered the physical body together just right, so He has set the members into His spiritual body, the church, just right. 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12. With the marriage of Christ to His Bride, the church, the mystery being revealed, Christ make known the way we are to become His children. Thus, God gave us His word as a pattern to follow and sent His Holy Spirit to convince the world that His Word is the only guide, yea even unto judgment. John 12:48. One cannot separate God, Christ, Holy Spirit and the Word.

In the due process of time, if men are studying this Word, they will appoint elders and deacons. The charge given these men by the Holy Spirit is great! No organization can rise above its leadership. The elders must give an account.

Heb. 13:17. This should strike godly terror in the heart of every elder. Likewise, each member must respect the authority vested in the eldership and never become guilty as Miriam and Korah. With the proper respect for the office and each other, the church will always be at peace. Someone must get out of his place, before the church has trouble! Thus, with all the members working together, they will be a LIGHT to the world and God will be glorified. Then, when the chief Shepherd shall appear, a crown of glory will await the faithful with a crown never to fade away. 1 Pet. 5:4.

With the simple organization of elders, deacons, teachers, preachers, and members, the church can accomplish her work. Each member sustains a different responsibility to the Word according to his talent. Because this is the organization for the church, every congregation should strive to become so organized. Caution. Do not organize simply for the sake of being organized. It is better to be scriptural and be unorganized than to be unscripturally organized. There is much wisdom in the organizational set up of the church because God is the author and therefore, we should give the upmost attention of this teaching as in all things. With a desire to do the Lord's will, let each member study the Word to see where he fits in God's great family that He will be his heavenly Father.

The similarity of the organization of the church is beyond description. The religious world is seeking unity today as never before, seemingly. Sad indeed it is that they stumble over God's platform for unity. Eph. 4:4-6. Before any lasting progress is made all men must recognize the New Testament as sole authority. Each congregation must be governed by the Word. Any desire to rule outside the local church becomes deadly and a perversion of the Word. How badly then the need for churches of Christ to practise this organization in Spirit and in Truth. Let us show the way both by letter and spirit that this is God's Word con-

(Continued on page 4)

cerning the organization of His body.

There is no picture painted by any artist which portrays such beauty as congregations of the Lord's people working together in independent churches all governed by the infallible Word given us by the Holy Spirit! - BILL GRADY

Squeal and Stomp

My heart goes out to all parents and teenagers because of the worldly pressures that are being placed on youth. Recently I read about a father who went with his son to hear the English entertainment group called "The Beatles." Later the father described the night in the following words. "It was a night to remember. Some 17,000 teenagers thronged the stadium. I tried to analyze what was happening as I listened and watched the performers — the squealing effectively drowned the music of the band. I watched the unrestrained excitement, the girls throwing 'jelly babies' at the young men, exclaiming 'Mine touched him, Mine touched him.' "

As the father and son drove home that night the father asked his son "What is so great about all this?" A teenage girl was asked, "Why do you stomp and squeal?" She said, "You get things out of your system when you stomp and squeal."

Brethren, whether we like it or not, we are living in a stomping and squealing world. May God help us to stand up and fight the dance, drink, and the growing emotional desires that are brought on by this stomping and squealing.

No living person knows how many boys and girls that mark the beginning of their downfall at one of these squealing and stomping parties.

In today's world nearly all the signpost have been torn down that pertain to the moral questions. Recently a teenager said, "I want to do what is right, but how do you know what is right to do?" May God give the church strong elders,

preachers, and teachers "for such a time as this" so that our teenagers will know right from wrong.

Teenagers, may I say to you that there are some things you cannot get rid of by squealing and stomping. You cannot get rid of GUILT, SHAME, JEALOUSY, BITTERNESS, HATE, and FEAR. All of these things lies deeper than a few minutes of squeal and stomp. You need convictions. You need self respect. You need faith. You need a pure life. You need God. You need Christ. You need the church.

Teenagers, there is a better life for you than what this world can offer. It is the life that is suggested by the beautiful hymn, "My God and I," and the hymn "Just A Closer Walk with Thee."

In the Biblical words we simply say to all teenagers, "Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (II Timothy 2:22.)

By - PAT H. CASEY,
Millington, Tenn.

Something Old, Something New

- CLOVIS RAGSDALE

The shortage of preachers has been causing a great deal of concern among the brotherhood during the past several years. With many new congregations springing up and several of the established churches becoming able to support full time preachers, the available supply of preachers were not sufficient. We believe this problem will be solved in part by the establishment of "Schools Of Preaching" in various parts of the country.

These schools teach only Bible and related subjects such as Greek, speech, and history. One or two years of study prepares a man to start preaching. By dispensing with the arts and sciences, a man can save time and expense. Several hundred men are now attending

these schools and in a short time we think the church will begin to reap the benefits of this new effort to ease the preacher shortage.

Schools of this nature are not something new. In this area some can still remember the State Line Bible School which turned out a number of excellent gospel preachers some fifty years ago. Some of the ablest gospel preachers known to the brotherhood came from schools of this nature.

Another advantage of these schools will be to produce men who are sound in the faith. This cannot be said of some of the young men who are appearing in the pulpits today. They have degrees from highly accredited schools, oftentimes from a sectarian operated institution. They have a tendency to become liberal in attitude toward some of the established truths of the Bible. This type of preaching is troubling the church in some places today. We would not want to be misunderstood in saying that all of the highly educated are in this class. The majority are not. We only wish to point out that a small trend seems to be developing in this direction. It must not be allowed to gather momentum. The Restoration movement cannot afford another division. Schools of preaching, run by sound teachers, and overseen by qualified elders, can be a great help to the church.

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