

# Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 1

MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK. 72554

AUGUST, 1969

## The Sin Against The Holy Spirit

Clovis Ragsdale

What is the sin against the holy spirit is one of the most asked questions concerning Bible matters. Along with this question goes one related to it: Can we commit that sin today?

A close study of Matt. 12:22-32 will answer the first part of this question. The Pharisees said Christ performed his miracles by the power of devils. Christ said he did so by the power of the spirit. In denying the power of the Spirit they sinned against the Holy Spirit. Christ said this sin was not to be forgiven in that age, the age of the law of Moses, or in the age to come, the Christian dispensation. One may sin against Christ and man and be forgiven if he repent, but there is no forgiveness for the sin against the Holy Spirit.

Christ promised that he would send the Comforter or the Holy Spirit, John 16:13. The Spirit would guide us in all truth. We are indebted to the Holy Spirit for the word of God which makes known unto us the will of God. When we, today, refuse to accept and do what this will commands, are we not sinning against the Holy Spirit who gave us this will? If we never accept and obey the Gospel we know that we will be eternally lost. Christians who do accept the gospel and then turn back into the world have quenched the Spirit. They are mentioned in Hebrews 6:4-6. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

A person who obeys the gospel and lives as the Bible directs all his life need not worry about committing this sin.

The Holy Spirit gives the final law of pardon, or the last plan for the salvation of man. To refuse to submit to the laws and teaching of the Spirit throughout our lifetime will surely bring eternal condemnation.

To blaspheme the Holy Ghost is to speak reproachfully against the Spirit and its teachings, or authority.

## The Preachers Obligations And Influence

There is no one in a congregation who exercises more influence than the preacher, not even an elder. This influence can be good or bad, willingly or unwillingly, but never the less there is great influence. The preacher often gets his influence and authority mixed up and often feels that it is his authority which is getting the job done rather than his influence. This is when his influence becomes harmful instead of good. The preacher is to conduct himself in such a manner as to show that he **FIRST** has come under the influence of his **OWN** teaching, granting of course that **ALL** teaching is true to God's word. As Jesus, during his mission on earth, the preacher should **FIRST** practice Christianity himself, **THEN** teach others to do like-wise. He must remember at all times that he may have as good a knowledge of the Bible as any member of the congregation, but his judgment is **NOT** better than the entire congregation. This often happens when the preacher is trying to "put over" one of his projects and the church believes for some reason it is not best and then the preacher "bucks" the church on matters of opinion or judgment. He **MUST** remember his teaching and influence are the **ONLY** tools God gave a preacher to accomplish the Lord's

work.

**OBLIGATION TO GOD FIRST!** A preacher's obligation is **FIRST** to God, to be true to his word and **STAND** on the revealed word of God **AGAINST ALL MEN**. When it comes to matters of faith the preacher has but one choice and **ONE** obligation, that is to **STAND FAST**, regardless of who, or how many are against him. Be sure he is **WITH GOD**, then be unmoveable! Through teaching, admonish others to also stand with God, but if they refuse he still **MUST** be true to the **BIBLE**. If a man is not prepared to do this he should **NEVER** accept the responsibility to represent himself as the servant of God. He will find times when he is lonely, as only a few will stand with him, but **STAND** he must!

**OBLIGATION TO CONGREGATION!** When a preacher moves his family to a city to work with a congregation of the Lord's people he is taking on one of the most solemn obligations it is possible to accept. In order to discharge this responsibility he must be a man of courage, conviction, deep and unwavering faith, confidence, integrity, ability, humility, honesty, self discipline, love of God, love of the truth, love of people and love of lost souls, willing to work and capable of planning and of utilizing his time to the greatest advantage, sensitive and alert to take advantage of every opportunity for good, yet "thick skinned" to unjust criticism. He must become a **PART** of the congregation, not an outsider who is looking for support for his family for a year or two. He should neither feel superior nor inferior to any person in the congregation: should never "play" one member against the other, but **LOVE** them all and be willing to do as much for one member as another, the need being equal. He **MUST KNOW** the word of God and **BE SURE** he is a safe teacher. This does not mean a know-it-all, who refuses

Continued

to be "crossed" and there is no question nor appeal when he speaks. Those with that attitude are UNFIT to teach any one! But it DOES mean many hours of honest study and research. HE MUST BE QUALIFIED AND USE IT IN HUMILITY AND LOVE! AN HONEST DAYS WORK, EVERY DAY, SHOULD BE HIS MOTTO, AND LIVE BY IT!

**OBLIGATION TO SELF!** The preacher's obligation to himself is also important. He has an obligation to present himself as intellectual, spiritually dedicated, mentally alert, physically sound and morally pure. His ideals and standards should be those revealed for a Christian in the Bible. He must be SOLD on his product! He must be honorable in all business dealings and his word MUST be his BOND! He must at all times live so as to be an asset to Christianity! IN OTHER WORDS HE MUST BE, AND LIVE, IN SUCH MANNER AS ALL MAY KNOW THE "PRODUCT" CARRIES AN HONEST LABEL! HE CAN DO NO LESS AND BE WORTHY OF THE NAME "GOSPEL PREACHER".

## The Merciful

Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

It is comforting to know that the Bible assures us that our God is filled with mercy. Paul said, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." He also said that it was by God's mercy that we are saved. "Not by works righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

All of us stand in need of the mercy of God, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The life of Jesus is a demonstration of the mercy and kindness of God toward all men. All classes of humanity found in Jesus a kind of sympathetic friend. If we are truly disciples of Jesus we will also be merciful. Let us consider some of the characteristics we will possess if we are merciful.

1. The merciful are kind in their judgments of others. Jesus warned against fault finding. He asked, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is

in thine own eye?" Many times we would not be as harsh in our denunciations of others if we only understood their hearts.

Sometimes individuals who pride themselves on their "tolerance" can be most intolerant toward those whom they think are intolerant. Christians will show kindness toward all men, even though they may not always agree with them. Christians should especially be careful not to accuse their brethren of evil motives. Remember, only God knows the hearts of all of us.

2. The merciful will help the distressed and unfortunate of the world. Pure religion, according to the Bible, is more than going to church and teaching the right doctrine, as important as those things are. James declares, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." If we have failed to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and minister to the needy, Jesus teaches that we will be lost. Paul gave instructions to the churches in Galatia, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household faith."

3. The merciful will be forgiving of others. Christ taught us to love our enemies and to pray for them. Paul taught that we are not to recompense "evil for evil" but that we are to help our enemies. Peter taught that we should follow in the steps of Jesus, who "when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Someone has said, "The best way to get rid of an enemy is to make him your friend." We may not always succeed in getting him to become a friend, but we can be forgiving of our enemies, and we must be if we expect to receive forgiveness of God. Remember that God is merciful to those who are merciful.

---George H. Stephenson.

---

**"WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL PROCEDURE FOR A CHRISTIAN WHO HAS BEEN OFFENDED BY ANOTHER CHRISTIAN?"**

by Glynn Purdy

**FIRST, HAVE YOU REALLY BEEN OFFENDED?**

Too many times some member of the church becomes "offended", either when no offense is intended, or no offense transpired. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye", Matt. 7:1-5. Then FIRST, I should ask myself, "Am I really offended," or am I just offended in my own mind, or by judging the other person's MOTIVES? Was the word, or deed, offensive? Or does it depend on WHAT WAS MEANT by interpretation on the word, or deed, to become offended? Was I offended at the time, or did I become offended after talking to some one else about the matter? Most offenses (?) would never get past this stage if all these questions were answered honestly. So many times we have to leave the motives to our judgment before we become offended.

### DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BETHREN, HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO GOD

Even under the law of Moses, when God required his people to offer sacrifices, He thought it very important. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee: Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift", Matt. 5:23-24. In other words, when two of God's children, under the law of Moses, were estranged, God thought it so important, that He (God) would WAIT for the gift, until the two were reconciled! The reason, God would not accept a sacrifice under such conditions. The same is true today. No man can come and worship God in an acceptable manner who has "aught" against a brother. THIS IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TODAY THAN UNDER THE LAW OF MOSES, Heb. 10:25-29.

## UNLESS WE FORGIVE OTHERS, GOD WILL NOT FORGIVE US

“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 heavenly Father forgive your trespasses”, Matt. 5:14-15. As long as I hold “aught” against another, God will hold aught against me. I have to FIRST forgive those who offend me, before God will forgive my offenses against Him. So I MUST forgive in self defense! Those who do not forgive, can not be forgiven by God. This is too plain to need further comment. If we could only realize that our sins are retained before God, as long as we retain trespasses against our brother, truly we would be swift to forgive and slow to be offended.

Regardless of what we DO, or do NOT do, for our fellow man, THIS VERY SAME THING, WE EITHER DO, OR DO NOT, TO CHRIST! This really does make a great difference does it not? Read Matt. 25:31-46. Many there be at the judgment, who just LOVE Christ to death they thought, and did many MIGHTY works in the name of religion, yet they were not honest in their obligations to their fellow man. Too late, they learn that the ONLY way one can serve God, or Christ, is to labor in behalf of God’s creatures here on earth. To do good to Christ, do good to your fellow man. To neglect Christ, neglect your fellow man. It does make a difference when we understand this!

### FROM THE WORDS OF JESUS CONCERNING THE DAYS OF THE CHURCH

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican”, Matt. 18:15-17. Yes there is no doubt that Jesus was speaking of problems in His church. So this is Scriptural and safe to follow.

### A PERSON IS OFFENDED; WHAT SHOULD HE DO FIRST?

If one offends me, I AM TO GO TO

**HIM ALONE, AND TELL HIM HIS FAULT! HE MAY NOT KNOW THAT HE OFFENDED ME! SO WHY MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT?** If he “hears” me (listens and apologizes, makes things right with me), I HAVE GAINED A BROTHER AND THE MATTER IS SETTLED BEFORE GOD AND BETWEEN US! I have NO RIGHT to gossip to others about it or TELL one or two witnesses! Again, the MATTER IS SETTLED ONCE AND FOR ALL, BEFORE GOD AND MAN! Unless I, the offended, want to become the offender, I must stop there. I sin when I go beyond that which is written!

IF THE OFFENDER WILL NOT “HEAR” ME, I MUST TAKE ONE OR TWO WITH ME, and telling him his fault between the two of us, I must go again, not give up. He did not say TELL one or two witnesses, he said TAKE them with me. If the offender “hears” now, the brother is GAINED and the MATTER IS CLOSED! I HAVE NO RIGHT TO TAKE IT TO THE CHURCH, OR CONTINUE TO GOSSIP ABOUT IT TO OTHERS. If I do, I sin by -- -- going beyond what is written. I, as well as the offender, am BOUND by God’s word. Because you offend me, this does not give license to declare open season on you and to try to assassinate your character and become perennially offended. In the name of justice and to have my wounds healed, I can not continue to perpetuate the matter. I MUST close it, here and NOW!

### STEP NUMBER THREE

Now if you offend me and I go to you alone, and you will not hear me; I then according to the Scriptures, take one or two people with me and you still refuse to hear, I MUST take it to the church. Then if you “hear” the church and make matters right, I have gained a brother and I must STOP it here. To take one step further is to sin and go beyond that which is written. I am still BOUND by God’s word! The matter is CLOSED, God is satisfied, all sins are forgiven and I too must be satisfied. Too many are like Jonah, they are AFRAID that God will forgive and spoil the wounded pride! Jonah was not happy that he had “gained” the great City of Nineveh but on the contrary, he was angry that God had spared it!

### LAST

If the offender will not hear the church

the church is to withdraw from him and have no fellowship with him. Please note! The effort is to TRY to SAVE (gain) the offender if he CAN be gained. At what ever stage he is GAINED, THE MATTER IS CLOSED AND IS NOT TO BE CARRIED ANY FURTHER AND NO MORE PUBLICITY IS GIVEN AT ANY POINT THAN IS NECESSARY! The one or two witnesses can NOT scripturally go if the matter is already SETTLED. THE CHURCH CAN NOT RECEIVE A MATTER THAT HAS BEEN SETTLED BETWEEN THE TWO ALONE, OR WITH THE ONE OR TWO WITNESSES! LET US “HEAR” GOD! HOW MUCH TROUBLE AND HEART ACHE COULD BE SAVED IF THE LORD’S WAY BECAME OUR WAY! IF THE WITNESSES AND THE CHURCH WOULD INVESTIGATE WHETHER THE CASE IS ALREADY CLOSED BEFORE GOD, BEFORE BRINGING IT TO “TRIAL”!

---

## Wasted Effort

A recent news report tells us that where a certain highway bridge is under construction it was discovered after the bridge was half complete that it was far out of line; that when completed the finished portion would miss the intended position by seven feet. It will be necessary to do at least half of the work over again and the money and effort spent this far are mostly wasted. The error was explained by the fact that different engineers had drawn up the blueprints and they did not match.

Suppose these engineers had turned the matter aside with the claim that both were seeking to reach the same place but were going different ways. This would have been comparable to what we sometimes practice in religion. People claim that we are all going to the same place but going different ways. How do they know there are different ways? Jesus said, “I am the way” and if there are any others the New Testament does not mention them.

In the case of the bridge, the farther construction had gone before the error was discovered, the more work had to be

Continued



**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

**WASTED EFFORT**

Continued

destroyed and money and effort lost but something could be saved at any time the error was discovered before the work was complete. The person who has been trying to go to heaven by some other way than that set forth in God's word will lose his effort up to the time he discovers his error. But he can turn back when he finds he is wrong if he will. After his life is gone and he has built his hope of salvation upon the wrong blue print then everything will be lost and nothing will remain for him.

**News**

We would like to have a report from all congregations of the Church of Christ, through the area each month in regard to the work that is being done, and its results. We will be happy to run notices for you of Gospel meetings, work shops, Lectureships, V.B.S. or other special works of the church.

-----The Editors.

The Church of Christ at Thayer reports a successful meeting with Bro. Charles Coil of Florence, Alabama preaching. The meeting was the week of June 23 - 29. There were six baptized into Christ and twelve who were restored or who re-dedicated their lives to the Master. Attendance was good all week.

Thayer congregation supports successful mission effort in Iowa

Bro. Don Reeves, supported by the Thayer congregation, returned with encouraging reports from a work with the church in Osceola, Iowa. The church is small, but struggling to firmly establish the cause of Christ in this northern community of about 3500. There are 33 members of the church, and the average attendance ranges from 38 to 45. Bro. Reeves and Bro. David Howell from Fort Worth, Texas spent the week of July 14-20 in Osceola with gratifying results. Attendance during the meeting grew from 55 on the first night to a record 97 on Saturday evening. There were ten baptisms and one restoration, which means that the church grew by one-third during the week. Thanks be to God for the power of the Gospel! Bro Reeves was asked to return to Iowa for another meeting later in the fall at Leon, a small community twenty miles south of Osceola.

Bro. Gary Martin, who formerly lived in North Little Rock, Arkansas, has moved to Hardy, Ark. He will work full time with the Downtown Church of Christ.

Ronald Adams of Salem, Arkansas preaches each Sunday and Sunday night at Welcome Hill.

Two were baptized in June at Mtn. Grove, Missouri. Bro. Clovis Ragsdale preaches each Sunday and Sunday evening for the congregation which meets at 411 West First St. He may be heard each Sunday evening at one on radio station KLRA.

Bro. Carter Crews of Doniphan, Missouri now preaches regularly at Jeff.

Bro. James Henley reports that the Church of Christ in Mammoth Spring, Arkansas continues to grow with three baptized in the past few weeks.

Bro. Jimmie Gibbs, who formerly lived in Hoxie, Arkansas, has moved to Salem, Arkansas to work full time with the Church of Christ there. Bro. Gibbs and his wife, Alene, have two daughters. Bro. Gibbs reports that the meeting with Bro. G.W. Allison of Searcy, Arkansas resulted in one response to the gospel. Two have been baptized since the meeting.

**CONTRIBUTIONS:**

Lexie Goettings  
A friend

\$5.00  
1.00

Ring Church of Christ	5.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	5.00
Agnos Church of Christ	5.00
Mrs. Leonard Maynard	3.00
Mrs. Tommie Billingsley	2.00
Hatfield Church of Christ	5.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00

**THE UNUSED REMEDY**

The person who has been bitten by a poisonous snake wouldn't think of not using the doctor's remedy for the problem. One bitten by a rabid dog will undergo the painful remedy, for fear of much greater complications.

Man is a funny creature. He will go to great lengths to find the remedy for his many problems. The more urgent the matter the more effort expended in the search. Perhaps this is one of the basic reasons why man doesn't look for the remedy for sin. We need in some way to make people realize the vitally important need for finding this remedy now, while there is still time. The man bitten by a rabid dog knows that time is vital. He can't afford to waste much of it, if he is to be saved.

The sinner is just as surely doomed, if he doesn't get the remedy, as is the one bitten by a rabid dog, if he doesn't take shots. We sometimes close our eyes to problems that lie in the future. They are not as urgent as more immediate things. However, just as surely as night follows day the sinner is doomed, if he continues in his present course.

The remedy for the sinner is Christ. The Lord is willing to forgive (blot-out) past sins through obedience to His will. The Bible teaches sinners to believe (faith), repent, confess, and be baptized. This is a simple remedy, and it cannot be misunderstood, if we will just study the Bible. If the sinner would stop for just a moment and realize that he doesn't have the certainty of even just one more hour of life, then he might realize the need for quick action in accepting the Lord's remedy for sin.

Mammoth Spring Arkansas 72554      Second Class Postage Paid