

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID

VOL. 7 - NO. 9

MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK.

SEPTEMBER - 1965

Is It a Matter of Opinion ?

By - CLOVIS RAGSDALE

Some weeks ago there appeared a number of letters on the editorial page of a prominent Arkansas daily newspaper concerning the need and the mode of Bible Baptism. The letters were from individuals over the state who freely expressed their opinions on the subject. A good many of the writers based their opposition to the need for baptism on the grounds of human reasoning mixed with some plain wresting of the scriptures.

Does man have a right to his own opinion where God has spoken? The answer is a resounding no. When God speaks man must obey or be guilty of rebellion. Rebellion is sinful in every example the Bible gives, from Eve's failure to heed the command not to eat of the tree of knowledge, through the three covenants through which God has dealt with mankind. Has God spoke concerning the need for baptism? Not once but many times the Bible gives the command, for those in the Christian dispensation, to be baptized. Matt. 28: 19, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:47, 48. The necessity for being baptized in order to become a christian is taught by example in Matt. 3:13-17, Acts 8:38, Acts 16:15, 33, and other places. It is taught by necessary inference in Romans 6: 3-6, Gal. 3:27, 1 Peter 3:21, and also on other occasions. Man's opinion would seem to be pretty small when placed alongside these plain scriptural teachings.

Many will say that the above scriptures do not teach the necessity of baptism. To attempt to explain away plain teachings of the Bible is a very dangerous thing

to do. Peter speaks of those who would wrest the scriptures in 2 Peter 3:16. He speaks of people doing this to their own destruction.

Where God has spoken, man is not entitled to an opinion. When he insists on his opinion he usurps the authority of God, putting himself on a par with God. Surely no one would want to be guilty of this.

Three Kinds of Christians

In every church, there are three kinds of people. First, there is the helper. He is the one who takes a keen interest in the whole church. He feels he is a part of it, and takes pride in it. Every now and then he suggests some improvement. Often he does more than he is expected to do. When he is given a job to do, he does not enlarge on the difficulties or the responsibility of it. He just pitches in and does his job.

Secondly, there is the person with whom Christianity is a habit. He is a good worker. He takes an interest, more or less, in his own Christian life, but seldom concerns himself about the whole church, he has learned to do one thing, and does it reasonably well. He hates to be shifted from one job to another. His work is all a matter of habit. He lacks drive. He is a good man, but he has nailed himself down to a routine, and sees anything outside that routine as a nuisance rather than an opportunity.

The third type is the man who is a hindrance. He is the one who does not like to work in the kingdom. He almost feels a grievance against anyone who gives him a chance to do something for the cause of Christ. He never has a

Acknowledge Contributions

Orbie Robbins, Elizabeth, Ark.	\$ 1.00
George Huett, Elizabeth, Ark.	1.00
Velma Proffitt, Helena, Okla.	2.00
R. R. Hicks, Mammoth Spring, Ark.	2.00
Mrs. Effie Martin, Oxford, Ark.	2.00
Agnos Church of Christ	5.00
Salem Church of Christ	5.00
Wheeling Church of Christ	5.00
Morrison Church of Christ	5.00
English Bluff Church of Christ	5.00

Mammoth Spring Meeting to Start September 30th

Brother Allen Highers of Memphis, Tennessee will conduct a gospel meeting at Mammoth Spring church of Christ. The meeting will begin Monday evening, September 20 and will end Saturday evening September 25. Services will begin at 7:30 p.m.

We are never any bigger than the things that bother us.

... good word for anyone or anything. He is strong on objecting, great on refusing, marvelous on criticizing, but weak on doing. He is against everything that spells an effort. He never takes correction in good spirit; instead he leaves the church building with a growl. He is a hindrance.

Three types of Christians — a helper, a habit, or a hindrance. How do you classify yourself? How do others classify you? Above all, how does the Lord classify you?

Fulton County Gospel News

PUBLISHED MONTHLY
FREE SUBSCRIPTION

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID
MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK.

SUPPORTED BY:

CHURCHES OF CHRIST
IN THIS AREA

EDITORS:

CLOVIS RAGSDALE
RICHARD ENGLAND

By What Shall We Measure Our Religious Activities?

Walter Buchanan

The use of standards or measurements is a very common part of one's everyday life. You may drive two miles to the store, use one tenth gallon of gasoline, and purchase a pound of bacon or a yard of fabric. But, suppose that every person should determine for himself how many inches should be in a foot, how many feet in a yard, how many ounces in a pound how many feet in a mile, etc. This would result only in chaos. This points out the need for all to accept a common standard to be used in these areas.

A common standard or authority is as greatly needed to measure man's religious practices. All need to use the same standard, or chaos will result the same as in the areas mentioned above. Thus, the question is, What standard shall we use? To whom shall we go for authority in religion? Let us consider a few possibilities.

Shall we go to Moses and the Old Testament? The Old Testament is true and was inspired by the same Holy Spirit which directed the writing of the New Testament. (II Peter 1:21). However, it

was written primarily for people who lived before the coming of Christ. When Jesus went to the Mount of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John, Peter made this suggestion, "Let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee (Christ), and one for Moses, and one for Elias." God manifested his disapproval of this idea by speaking from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17: 1-5). We can easily see, therefore, that God is not pleased when men in this age use the writings of Moses to measure their religious practices.

Shall we use the writings of men as our standard of authority in religion? Jesus said, "But in vain do they worship men, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." (Matthew 15:9) Jeremiah declares, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own way." (Jeremiah 10:23). The person is in for a disappointment who expects the doctrines of men to direct him to heaven.

Shall we simply depend upon the majority of the people, and allow the actions of the majority to serve as our standard? Again, one is likely to be disappointed, because the majority is not always right. In fact, Jesus said, speaking of the two gates and the two ways, that far more are traveling the broad way that leads to destruction than are traveling the narrow way that leads to life. (Matthew 7:13, 14). Thus, we must reject the majority as a safe standard by which to measure our religious practices.

By now, one may be getting the idea that there is no standard which he may follow and be perfectly safe. But, before turning away in despair, let us note that Peter asked the very question we're considering, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" (John 6:68). In the same verse, Peter answers his own question, "Thou (Christ) hast the words of eternal life." One may live by the gospel of Christ with the full assurance that he's following a safe guide. The gospel is spoken of by James as the "per-

fect law of liberty"; when something is perfect, it can't be improved upon.

Friend, what is the standard by which you measure your religious activity?

Vacation is the Key

May your conscience never let you rest until you have done your best to bring your friends and neighbors to Christ. The Christian is the one who cares. He cares for his fellowman. He is concerned so much that he prays for him, loves him, and seeks to share Christ with him. He realized that Christianity is not primarily institutional, but personal and individual. When the early church in Jerusalem was scattered abroad they went everywhere preaching the word. First century Christianity was characterized by individual zeal. The early believers were so excited about the good news of God's salvation in Christ they could not be silenced by persecution.

Yet today, there are tens of thousands of members of the church who have never won a single person to Christ. They go week after week, month after month, year after year, in complete indifference to Christ. It has been said that the gates of heaven open not to one alone. We must bring others with us. We are saved to save. We are caught by the gospel to catch men alive for Christ!

Via Neosha Bulletin

This is Christianity . .

"If being devoid of love, you make war upon me and try to work me ruin, I shall neither defend myself nor try to injure you. I am for peace, and no words of bitterness shall ever fall from my lips or pen, even in self-defense."

T. B. Larimore (via Sword of Peace)

Think twice before you speak, especially if you intend to say what you think.

How to Understand the Bible

By Ted Cline

The Holy Bible is not a single book, but a library of 66 books — 39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament. These sixty-six books were written over a period of about 1600 years (1500 B.C. to 100 A.D.) by some forty different men. These men wrote, not in their own wisdom, but as the Spirit of God directed them. The Bible is therefore "the book of God" — the inspired word of God which reveals God's complete and perfect will to men. (See 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 and 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

One cannot study the Bible with very much meaning without first learning how to "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15), so let's briefly review the THREE MAJOR PERIODS OF BIBLE HISTORY....

1. The Patriarchal Age, from Adam to Moses, during which time God spoke directly to the patriarchs (fathers) who were the heads of the households. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were some of the most important leaders during this age. The first two Books of the Bible, Genesis and Exodus, tell about the things which happened during this period. The Patriarchal Age lasted about 2,500 years.

2. The Mosaical Age — from Moses to Christ — during which time Moses, the judges, the kings, and the Prophets were the mouthpiece of God through whom the people heard the laws of God. This age began with the "children of Israel" (the Jewish nation) being brought up out of Egypt, across the Red Sea to Mt. Sinai where God gave them the Ten Commandments written on tables of stone. See Exodus 20. Saul, Davids and Solomon were outstanding characters during this age. Prophets of God such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel all pointed to the coming of a "Messiah" or saviour who, in the New Testament, is

called Jesus the Christ. They promised that He would set up a spiritual kingdom over which He would reign as Lord and King.

3. The Christian Age — the present age — in which Jesus Christ is now Law-giver. It's also called "the new testament age," the "grace and truth" age, and "the gospel dispensation." The Old Law went out of effect when Christ died on the Cross (Colossians 2:14). This made possible the beginning of a new law or new system which is called the "new testament" (Hebrews 9:15-17). Just as the children of Israel back under the Old Law looked to Moses and the Prophets, even so must we today look to Jesus Christ who is God's Law-giver for the present age. See Hebrews 1:1, 2; Acts 3:22, 23; Matthew 17:1-8).

This does not mean that the Old Testament was destroyed, and neither does it mean that God's people today no longer need to read or study the Old Testament. It simply means that the law of Moses is no longer binding or in force. It is now inspired history — still a part of God's holy word, but now history. Here are some passages which show that the Cross marked the end of the "old order" and the beginning of a "new order" under a new covenant: Colossians 2:14; Second Corinthians 3:7-12; Galatians 3:19-27; Hebrews 7:19; Hebrews 8:1-7; Hebrews 10:1-10. Please turn and read each of these.

The Old Testament gives us the history necessary to bring us up to the time when Jesus Christ came into the world. It also gives many wonderful examples — both of obedience and disobedience — from which we can learn many great lessons. The apostle Paul says, "the things which were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4). He further points out that they are "examples for us" (see I Corinthians 10:1-12).

HOW TO STUDY THE NEW TESTAMENT

The person who knows little or nothing about the Bible should first study the New Testament be-

cause he will likely find it a little easier to be understood (not as many hard names and not as much history details). Here is how the New Testament breaks down into its various parts:

1. The First Four Books, the "Gospels." They Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books tell about the birth and life of Christ. They also tell of the death on the Cross, his burial, resurrection, and return back to heaven. They were written mainly for the purpose of causing men to believe that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:30, 31).

2. The Book of Acts — A history of the beginning and growth of the early Church of Christ. Called "Acts" simply because it tells some of the acts (or deeds) of some of the apostles of Christ who preached the Gospel and planted congregations of the Lord's Church in most every place they preached and performed miracles.

3. The Epistles (book of Romans thru book of Jude, total of 21). These are simply "letters" to the early Christians telling them how to live the Christian life and carry on the work and worship of the church in a manner acceptable unto God. For example: Romans is a letter to the church at Rome, First and Second Corinthians are letters to the church at Corinth, and so on. Paul wrote 14 of these 21 letters or epistles.

4. Revelation, the final book of the Bible, in highly figurative and symbolic language predicting some of the persecutions which Christian people were to suffer before the end of the world. A book of prophecy and hard to be understood.

We Need More "Postage Stamp" Christians

Go wherever you are sent.
Don't mind a licking.
Stick to the end.
Bear an image.
Carry a message.
Always ready to serve.
—Selected

The Conversion of the Eunuch

ORBIE ROBBINS,
- Elizabeth, Arkansas

In Acts 8:26-40 we have the account of the conversion of the Eunuch. May we point out that there were five agents that featured in leading up to this man's conversion and the completion of it? 1. Angel. 2. Preacher. 3. Spirit. 4. Christ. 5. God. Let us study what each agent did. We are informed that agent number one, the angel, spoke to agent number two, the preacher, Philip, and said arise and go toward the south into the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza which is desert. Philip arose and went. The miraculous age was in effect and God was confirming his word with miraculous occurrences and manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Heb. 2:1-4. The angel's part was to tell preacher where to go. Why didn't vessel did. In every case of committed into earthen vessels, and the angel being a heavenly vessel did not have heaven's authority to preach, but Philip, and earthen vessel did. In every case of conversion on record the gospel was preached by man.

The man who needed Phillip's services was a business man and a religious man. Inasmuch, as he had traveled a great distance to worship, he was an honest man. we see a man can be religious but wrong and need converting. He was reading the scripture in Isa. 53.

Now agent number three intervened. The Spirit, instead of operating separate and apart from the word as some preach, spoke to agent number two (the preacher). Why? The gospel had been committed to men. Mark 16: 15-16. The Spirit had not the authority of heaven to operate separate and apart from the word.

Philip joined himself to the chariot and began at the scripture the Eunuch was reading and preached unto him Jesus. They came to a certain water and the Eunuch desired to know what hindered him to be baptized. The answer was

different to practices today. Philip did not say, I'd like to, but we'll have to go before the church, and you relate your experience of grace and we'll vote on you and if unanimous, I'll baptize you. Philip was not creed bound. He answered, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. The Eunuch said I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The result was simple. The preacher and the Eunuch went down into the water and there he baptized him. Then the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Jesus Christ is agent number four and already made the supreme sacrifice upon the cross making it possible for the Eunuch to be saved. God as agent number five pardoned his sins when his obedience was completed. Heb. 5: 8-9.

Did you obey the same gospel conditions as the Eunuch did? Mark 16:16. Would it not be infallibly safe to duplicate his obedience. The record tells us he believed and was baptized and he went on his way rejoicing.

I Wonder if She was a Church Member

A traveler one night found himself obliged to remain in a small town because of a washout on the railroad caused by a heavy rain which was still falling. He entered a cafe, took a seat and said to the waitress, "This certainly looks like the flood, doesn't it?" "The what?" she asked. "The flood. Surely you've read about the flood and the ark landing on Mt. Ararat?" "Mister," she replied grimly, "I haven't seen a paper in three days." —via Highland Park Reminder

The bigger a man's head gets, the easier it is to find someone else to fill his shoes.

It is good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it's good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things that money cannot buy.

Debtors

Robert Henly

In many ways, we are all debtors to someone for something. All living persons are debtors to those who have gone on before us, leaving us a heritage of knowledge and a way of life. Such a debt we can only pay by our own life and accomplishments that shall leave to those who follow after us a still better way of life and a greater knowledge. We are also debtors to those who have bestowed upon us their love and have made possible hours and days of joy, peace and contentment. Such a debt can be paid only by our unswerving love and devotion to them.

Financially, we are, at least a great portion of us, fully aware of the significance of a debt: it must be paid in full to sustain our credit rating. Although we may be forced to sacrifice many things the debt must be satisfied. This type of debtor will possibly keep the debt awake in his heart more than those who owe a debt of love, yet who will say which is the greater debt?

David, in Psalms 116:12 realized a great debt that he owned when he said, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" A question we may also ask of ourselves. Our own debt to the Lord and the brethren is so very great. (1 John 3:16) Again in Acts 17:28 we read "In Him we live and move and have our being". As our money is not our own when there are debts outstanding, so we are not our own in relation to our debt to the Lord. "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods". I Cor. 6:20. This debt is not owed by just Christians, He died for all.

In our material lives as well as spiritual lives we pay our debts or face bankruptcy or foreclosure. How shall we stand in the eyes of God and man when the books are finally closed?

The Bible is the most sold and the least read of all books.