

The Berea Baptist Banner

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4

The Mission of Christ

By Milburn R. Cockrell
(1941 - 2002)

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

The mission of Christ into the world was associated with astonishing wonders and inexplicable mysteries. Never in any respect was there anything like it. Conquerors have visited countries, but their footsteps have been marked with blood, war and death. Travelers have explored distant lands, but their object

◇ (Continued on page 21)



The Sovereignty of God and the Free Grace of God

By E. G. Cook
(1898 - 1986)

Sometime ago, I read an editorial titled "The Sovereignty of God and His Free Grace." It reminded me so much of my beliefs on this subject in times past. I do not recall any time in my life when I denied God's sovereignty and election. I would always say, sure—I believe in God's sovereignty and in election. But for many years I would always

◇ (Continued on page 2)



An Habitation of God

By Paul Stepp
of Indore, West Virginia

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph 2:22).

What does it mean to be "an habitation of God through the Spirit"? Who are the ones in whom the Spirit has taken up a dwelling? What is the reason for this special relationship? It is a fascinating concept, to consider that right now, on the face of the earth, there are men and women walking about, living their lives,

◇ (Continued on page 8)



The Propagation of the Gospel

By Alexander Carson
(1776-1844)

"...Occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13).

A mere glance at the employments and labours of men, with the slightest knowledge of the human constitution, must convince every impartial observer that mankind are not now in the situation in which they were at



first placed by their Creator. Every other animal has a mode of life and employment entirely suitable to its nature; and though it may share in the common misery, all the attributes of its nature have their full scope.

◇ (Continued on page 10)

Ye Must Be Born Again!

By Rosco Brong
(1908 - 1985)

A Divinely Appointed Necessity---Only Those Who Are Born Again Can Go to Heaven.

"Except anyone be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except anyone be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3,



5---corrected translation). "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).

Mention of the new birth may sound somewhat old-fashioned and may even be impolite in some religious circles today, but the

◇ (Continued on page 6)

A small cloud may hide the sun.

A little shortcoming, or an unnoticed transgression, may deprive us of joyous communion with God.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellowship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

Sovereignty of God

(Continued from page 1) ♦

end up with man being the boss and doing the electing just as in this editorial.

In the first part of this editorial it says the doctrine of divine sovereignty is taught in the Scriptures. He quotes Psalms 103:9 to substantiate The statement, and then, just as I did for so long, it goes to great length to prove that this verse does not really mean what it says. I am sure the writer had no desire nor any intention whatever to prove any Scripture untrue. But, until the Holy Spirit of God opens the eyes of a saint as to this precious doctrine he, like the writer of the editorial, and I did for so long, can only end up with man running the show. I call this doctrine precious because it is so precious to a blood-bought saint of God when he can really and truly see that **"all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he (God) doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou"** (Dan. 4:35)? It is so comforting to know that our destiny is in the mighty hands of a sovereign God from the eternity of the past throughout the eternity of the future.

I make no profession of being smart. I know full well that what I do not know about the precious Bible would fill a library full of books. But I should like to express some of the precious truths God has so graciously revealed unto me.

The editorial tells us that Jesus was rejected by people for whom He offered salvation. It gives us John 1:11-13 to back up its statement, but if you notice

it stopped with verse 12. I once had to do the same thing because verse 13 just would not fit in with my theology. If you look closely you will see verse 13 puts our salvation wholly, completely, and altogether in the hands of God, and leaves out the will of the flesh and the will of man altogether. No wonder the writer had to stop with verse 12. Maybe it is because of my lack of Bible knowledge, but I do not see our Lord offering salvation to anyone here in verse 11. Our Authorized Version says, **"He came unto his own, and his own received him not,"** but I believe that if you study this verse closely in the original you will see that He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not, or did not welcome Him. We see here the fulfillment of Psalms 69:8 where He says, **"I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children."** He came back to the home in which He had been reared, but His own half brothers, James, Joses, Simon and Jude refused to welcome Him. **"For neither did his brethren (brothers in the original) believe in him"** (John 7:5).

The editorial goes on to ask "were the 'sheep' only the 'elect'? If so, why did not the sheep accept Him?" Here again may be due to my lack of knowledge, but I have no idea where he could have possibly come up with the idea that the sheep did not accept Him. It certainly did not from John 10:27, for there the Lord of glory says, **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."** Our Lord told those old religious Pharisees that the reason they did not believe on Him was that they were not of His sheep (John 10:26). In other words He is telling them that if

♦ (Continued on page 3)

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Sovereignty of God

(Continued from page 2) ◊

they were His sheep they would believe on Him. The editorial says the “Hardshells” teach the sheep only are the elect. You know, I find it possible to go along in perfect harmony with the Hardshells, and many other groups to a point. In II Thessalonians 2:13 the “Hardshells” and I can walk hand in hand as we read, **“God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.”** We are in perfect harmony to that point, but there they must stop or else wreck their whole theology. Read and believe the rest of the verse which says, **“Through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”** The holiness people and I are in strict accord in saying that God demands sinless perfection. Most certainly He will never settle for anything less than sinless perfection. There they stop, but I dare not stop for I know that I am not, and that I never will be sinless in this life. Therefore, I must flee to Him who is sinless, even to Jesus Christ the righteous.

The editorial goes next to Acts 7:51 to show us that people do resist the Holy Spirit. To be sure, the religionists in Old Testament times, and the religionists to whom Stephen was talking had resisted, and were still resisting the Holy Spirit. And the religionists are still resisting the Holy Spirit today. In His parable beginning with Matthew 21:30 our Lord shows these people how they did the resisting before His day, and how they were to do it in His day. They had beaten, stoned and killed the prophets. Now they were planning to kill the Heir and this they did on Calvary’s cross. They were resisting in the same sense we would resist an invading army. Should Russia send an

army against us we would resist it because we do not like their way of life. That is exactly the reason these religionists resist the Holy Spirit. They do not like the “way of life” the Holy Spirit sets forth. In all fairness to the Scriptures, dear reader, do you see anything connected with Acts 7:51 that would in any way indicate that the Holy Spirit was making any personal appeal to those old Pharisees. Is that why they are resisting Him?

We have a clear cut illustration of all this in the case of Saul of Tarsus. As he walked along that road on that memorable day, he hated the very ground our Lord had walked upon. He hated the very ground His saints were walking on. His burning desire, his great ambition was to utterly destroy our Lord’s people from off the face of the earth. He was resisting the Holy Spirit to the extent of his ability. Not only had he been one of those who heard the gospel at the mouth of Stephen, he was just as guilty of Stephen’s death as if he had actually cast the stones. In Acts 9:1 we see him **“breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord.”** This word **“breathing”** is from the Greek word EMPNEO which literally means “breathing on.” It seems that his hatred for the Lord’s people was so intense that he was literally breathing this hatred in and out of his nostrils rather than the air around him. But please note what took place when it became a personal matter with him. Let me say here that true Christianity is not a religion as is Shintoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and the rest of the isms, it is a revelation of Jesus Christ. So when Christ was revealed to this Christ-hating and saint-hating Saul of Tarsus we hear him as he says in his great

amazement **“Who art thou, Lord”** (Acts 9:5)? But when it was revealed to him who Christ was he forgot his great hatred for our Lord and for His people and said, **“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do”** (Acts 9:6)? Who would dare say that Saul of Tarsus was seeking salvation? Who would dare doubt that it is God who chose the person and the time in this case? He was not saved against his will, but he sure had to be given the will, or the desire for it (Phil. 2:13).

It is amazing to see what we come up with when we start reading between the lines in the Scriptures. The writer of this editorial came up with the idea that those who **“draw back”** in Hebrews 10:39 are under the convicting power of the Spirit. Just what lines he read between I am unable to see. Did John not see these same people in I John 2:19? He does not say they are struggling with the Holy Spirit. He says, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us.”** The devil’s crowd will always slip in among the saints, but when the going gets rough they **“draw back,”** or “go out from us.” I can see absolutely nothing to even intimate any conviction of the Holy Spirit on the part of those who **“draw back.”**

Then when this editorial comes to Matthew 11:20, you get the idea it really enjoys reading between the lines. It seems that sometimes we make repentance synonymous with salvation. Repentance is not salvation by any stretch of the imagination. The word “repentance” comes from METANOEO which means “to change the mind.” A man may start out drinking, fully believing that it is nobody’s business but his. After a time he may sober up enough to notice that his wife

and children are ragged, hungry and friendless. As a result, he may change his mind about it being no one else’s business. When he changes his mind about the matter, he has really repented, but his changing his mind about his drinking does not save him by any means. I have a hard time seeing any personal salvation involved in the salvation of the city of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonah. Jonah told those people that in forty days the city would be destroyed. The king told his people to turn from their evil ways. They did, and the city was spared. But our new birth is not brought about by our turning from our evil ways.

The editorial then asks, “If God has beforehand determined who shall be saved and when, why would a preacher ask his congregation to “make a decision for Christ?” The only reason I can see for a preacher to ask for such a decision under any condition is that he may add more and more names to the church roll. Decisions are the product of the human mind. No working of the Holy Spirit is essential to these decisions which are filling Baptist churches to overflowing with unsaved members. When a church has begged for decisions for a time she finds that she must bring the things of the world into the church in order to keep her unsaved members happy and their pocketbooks open. The result is that the Lord of glory is crowded out of His own church by these unsaved church members and their worldly interests such as banquets, social, athletic programs, substitutes for Bible teaching such as literature, ect. We hear our Lord as He says, **“Behold I stand at the door and knock”** (Rev. 3:20). You can have all your decisions with all their

◊ (Continued on page 4)

Sovereignty of God

(Continued from page 3) ◊

results for **“With the heart man believeth unto righteousness”** (Rom. 10:10), and that only after sanctification of the Spirit has taken place (II Thess. 2:13).

When we come to II Corinthians 5:14-15 in this editorial we see further evidence of reading between the lines. It says this text affirms that Christ died for “every person.” I am ready to admit that on the surface his logic sounds good, but if we are to teach our fellow saints God’s precious Word, we must go deeper than the surface. I am, by no means, boasting of my ability to go deep in the Scriptures. I am just stating a hard, cold fact. May we go to Revelation 19:17-18 for a little word study. We need to really study basic words in Scripture before we start giving them a definition. If we do not do that we find ourselves way out on a limb. I have been there and it is not very comfortable place to be. In verse 17 of Revelation 19 John sees an angel standing in the sun inviting all the fowls to the great supper of God. Then in verse 18 the angel says, **“That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of “all men,” both free and bond, both small and great”** (emph. EGC). This great supper takes place after the battle of Armageddon when the bodies of this great army of two hundred million men (Rev. 9:16) have been crushed on the mountains of Israel (Ezek. 39:4) by the hundred pound hailstones (Rev. 16:21) and their blood has run to the horse bridles for 176 miles (Rev. 14:20). Now please note that the angel invites the

fowls here to eat the flesh of **“all men.”** Then go to Ezekiel 39:12 where you see that it will take the Jews seven months to bury what is left of the huge army after the fowls of the air and the beasts of the fields are through with it. It is self-evident that the **“all men”** in Revelation 19:18 did not include the Jews. Then in Zechariah 14:16 we see those who were left among the nations. Many other Scriptures show clearly that the fowls were not to eat the flesh of every man. On the surface we have a contradiction which forces us to go deeper into the study of this little word **“all.”** It comes from the Greek word PAS which has many different shades of meaning. In some cases it does mean everyone. In others it means every kind, or every variety. In still other cases it means the whole of one object, or the whole of one group. So it is certainly grammatically correct to say that He died for the whole group of His chosen ones. For **“He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will”** (Eph. 1:4-5). I believe every word of that.

Now let us go back to the editorial’s first point of discussion where it says, “there were those who were bought by the sovereign Lord who denied Him and who were destroyed. He gives us II Peter 2:1 to back up this statement. It is really amazing sometimes to see what a weakling we unintentionally try to make of our precious Lord. A Baptist church here in our city had a missionary to Mexico as their guest speaker, or should I say their guest slide projector operator?

When one of the men of that church was called upon to pray, he rose to his feet and begged God to bless what the Lord was “trying to do” in Mexico. This was an insult to Him who does as He wills **“in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth”** (Daniel 4:35). We have dethroned God and enthroned man to such an extent that many of us are left with a very puny weakling for a God. And He does not like it. My Lord has never tried to use finite creatures only.

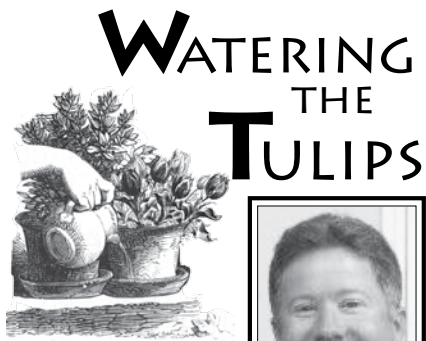
But now let us get back to the editorial’s Scripture reference, II Peter 2:1. Here we read, **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”** First, who were the people whom the false prophets and false teachers were, and are among? Certainly everyone who will say they are among our Lord’s people. It is the saints these false teachers want to lead astray. Others are already astray. So let us keep that in mind as we study this Scripture. In translating from one language to another, sentence structure is often hard, for the translator does the very best he can possibly do, but the expression can still be misleading if we are not very careful. To illustrate, let us look at an expression on II Corinthians 5:21, **“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.”**

Now if we follow the editorial’s line of reasoning in II Peter 2:1 here in II Corinthians 5:21 we will find ourselves saying it is the **“us”** who knew no sin. But since that is such an obvious error we know we must let the word **“him”** be the antecedent of the

phrase **“who know no sin”** for He is the only one who knew no sin. Now if we follow this same procedure in II Peter 2:1 we will have no difficulty in seeing that these false teachers are denying the Lord that bought His people. Most certainly they are denying the Lord that bought us. They deny His virgin birth, they deny His substitutionary suffering, His blood atonement, His bodily resurrection and ascension, His mediatorial work and His bodily return to this earth. If the Lord of glory bought these instruments of hell, did He not make a very poor investment? I am greatly indebted to my former pastor, Brother E. D. Strickland for his invaluable assistance on this particular Scripture.

The editorial goes on to say, “The blood atonement is sufficient for all of Adam’s fallen race” and gives I John. 2:2 to substantiate his statement. I hope no one will get the idea that I question the sufficiency of the blood atonement. It is sufficient for anything and everything that He our Lord wanted it to be sufficient for. Some of these millionaires in our country could supplement my social security if they chose to do so. Certainly their funds are sufficient, but that is not what they made their money for. For a long time I hung my theology on this verse along with John. 3:16. On the surface they seem to be impregnable. In fact, John. 3:16 is usually the last stronghold of those who are unable to see God’s sovereignty and election. Let us examine I John. 2:2 and see what it was that I jumped over for so long. We read, **“He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.”** Just what does it mean to be **“the propitiation for**

◊ (Continued on page 5)



By Todd Bryant
of
Northport, Alabama



Melchizedek

“The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek” (Ps. 110:4).

The Old Testament has exactly four verses that pertain to Melchizedek. Only here in Psalms do we read of this “order” of priest. Yet, in these few verses, we find a wonderful picture of the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus over the priesthood under the old covenant.

The Jews seemed to have the idea that the Levitical priesthood was a permanent establishment despite the clear declaration by the Psalmist that the Messiah would be a priest from a different order. Certainly, the writer of Hebrews knew this. He spends the entire 7th chapter explaining the superiority of the order of Melchizedek over the Aaronic order and how this related to Jesus.

It seems the writer reminds his Jewish readers immediately that Melchizedek was both king and priest (Heb. 7:1). This point alone makes this order superior to that of Aaron. Aaron was never a king. In fact, the priesthood was subject to the king (at least in a civil sense). Even the name of this Melchizedek, when translated, means “**King of righteousness**” (Heb. 7:2). He was king of Salem,

which means “peace.” So, this “**priest of the most high God**” was both king of righteousness and king of peace. These are two qualities that the Aaronic priesthood never had. Never once did the old covenant bring righteousness or peace. Certainly, it pointed forth to it. But it was not until Jesus came that these were made a reality.

The writer of Hebrews continues to show the superiority of this order to that of the old covenant by reminding his Jewish readers that Abraham paid tithes to this man and was even blessed by him. “**And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better**” (Heb. 7:7). If Melchizedek was superior to Abraham, then he was superior to Abraham’s entire posterity.

Perhaps the most critical point relative to our understanding of this subject is that the Levitical priests were unable to perfect their work (Heb. 7:11). Though the Levitical priesthood was established by God so that men could approach Him, it was never made possible under the old system. The presence of God was blocked off by a veil in the Tabernacle (and later the Temple). Only the priest was allowed to go behind the veil and then only once a year. He was not allowed to take anybody with him – not his family members or even his best friend. As long as the old system was in place, complete fellowship with God was cut off. So the old priesthood was “set aside because of its weakness and uselessness” (Heb. 7:18). It was replaced (by design) by a priest from the order of Melchizedek – Jesus. This was always God’s purpose as our text verse clearly shows.

Dear reader, Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6). He alone stands between men and God.

Only in Jesus is the veil removed and access to God opened up (Mark 15:38). Do you know Him? Is He alone your confidence and hope?



Sovereignty of God

(Continued from page 4) ◊

our sins?” The word propitiation is from the Greek word HILASMOS and W. E. Vine says it signifies a means whereby sin is covered and remitted. Not only does this propitiation mean that our sins are covered, it means that our sins “are covered,” it means they are remitted. This word “remit” is from APHIEM which means “to send away.” So our sins are covered and sent away. Please note that the same thing is done for the sins of the whole world here in this verse as is done for our sins. That means that the sins of this particular “**whole world**” are covered and sent away. Now if the whole world here in this verse means all of Adam’s fallen race as this editorial claims, then old Satan and his angels will have to make the best of it in Hell by themselves, or else there will be people in Hell whose sins were covered and sent away.

Maybe a little word study on the word “**world**” would throw some light on this bewildering subject. The word comes from KOSMOS which has a primary meaning of order, arrangement, ornament, or adornment. So in the original Greek the word has several different meanings. But, that we may refrain from being dogmatic about this word meaning all of Adam’s race in these two references, let us get our own English dictionary and check on the meaning of the word. After all, is that not where we always go for word meaning? Even

the children’s school dictionary will give you something like a dozen different meanings of this word. The large, two volume New Century Dictionary gives some nineteen different shades of meaning. It means any indefinitely great expanse, such as a world of water. Then it means a particular class of mankind with common interests. It is therefore not only permissible but also grammatically correct to say the “elect world.” In the same way we can say the “non-elect world” because they are all interested in the things of this world, therefore they are a particular class of mankind with common interests. We are told that “**No prophecy, is of any private interpretation**” (II Pet. 1:20). So if we study John 3:16 in the light of Ephesians 1:4, John 1:13, Psalms 5:5, Hosea 9:15 and Romans 9:11-13 we will have a real hard time seeing other than the elect world in it.

Now that we have seen the many varied meanings of the world in both the Greek and English dictionaries, let us look at its usage in our Bible. In Luke 2:1, “**There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.**” Could this world include the American Indians, the Japanese and the Chinese? Certainly not. In the first place he did not know all these people existed, and if he had known it, he had no authority to tax them. So it could only mean the Roman Empire. In John 4:42, “**This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.**” While the word world can be correctly spelled only one way, it has many meanings. And while the word saviour has two correct spellings, it has only one meaning. It means “one who saves,” and that is it. Now when this verse says “**The Saviour**

◊ (Continued on page 6)

Sovereignty of God

(Continued from page 5) ◊

of the world," does it mean that He is the One who saves all the millions who were already in Hell at the time and all the millions who are still going there? In John 17:9, **"I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me."** Certainly the world here does not include those whom the Father had given Him. II Peter 2:5 we see **"the world of the ungodly"** which certainly did not include Noah and his family. And then I John 5:19, **"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."** Please note, this **"whole world"** did not include the "we." Many others could be given, but these should prove to any open mind that the word "world" has many different meanings. In the light of all this, how could you expect a court of justice to agree with you that the world in John 3:16 and I John 2:2 means all of Adam's race? Are we not all guilty too many times of trying to fence God in? I am sure that if we had been living in the time of Jacob and Esau, we would have been prone to tell God that it would be wrong for Him to hate Esau. We would, no doubt, have told Him that He should love poor old Esau just as much as He did that scheming and conniving Jacob. When will we ever get around to seeing that God's thoughts and ways are not ours (Isa. 55:8)?

I have come to the point that I no longer desire to see everybody saved. I want to hear my Lord say to that host of workers for salvation in Matthew 7:23, **"Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."** I want the second beast of Revelation 13 to call down fire from Heaven and deceive those whose names are not written in the book of Lamb's Book of Life.

I want some of the tribulation saints to be beheaded because of their faithfulness to their Lord. I want to see the beast and the false prophet cast into Hell alive. No doubt many of you are calling me an old reprobate by now. If you are, I plead guilty. I am just an old reprobate sinner saved by the marvelous grace of God. I have just one reason for desiring to see all these terrible things done, and that is that God's precious Word says they will be done. I want to see His Word stand forever (Isa. 40:8). If His Word fail, your salvation and mine would not be worth a two-cent piece with a hole in it. If the post-millennial Baptist could succeed in winning everyone to Christ they would wreck the universe. God's Word would have to be broken for them to succeed, and we learn from Hebrews 1:3 that He upholds **"all things by the word of his power,"** or the power of His Word. So, if His Word could be broken, the whole universe would go into oblivion.

If, as this editorial states, salvation is offered to everyone, what is to hinder the beast and the false prophet from accepting it? If they accept it, what kind of predicament would that leave our Lord in? Revelation 19:20? For many years I got around the question by saying God knows who will be saved and who would not. I still believe that He knows all that, and more. In fact, I believe it today, not only because of His omniscience, but because He knows that no man can come to Christ until He draws him to Christ (John 6:44). I once thought He gave everybody a little yank or a gentle tug. But I have come to see that this word **"draw"** in John 6:44 literally means to drag. The word comes from HELKO which means to draw, drag something

to a specific point, or place. It is clearly illustrated in John 21. In verse 11 this word is used. Here we see Peter as he draws the net of fish to the place he wanted them. Then in verse 6 we see the same word used. In a negative sense. Here these disciples could pull and tug at this net but they could not draw (HELKO) it to the place they wanted it. In verse 8 the disciples are drawing, or rather dragging the net, but not to a definite place. So a different word (SURO) is used. Therefore, if we are to give the word HELKO its correct meaning in John 6:44, we must say that the Father draws those whom He gives to Christ where He wants them.

Quite recently I heard an evangelist in his desperation tell the lost in the congregation that God has done all He can do, now its up to you. If he had said I have done all I can do, now its up to the Lord, I am sure the Lord would have been better pleased with him. Let us all resolve that in our thinking, and in our teaching, we will put God back on His throne where He belongs. If He could save Saul of Tarsus and E. G. Cook, He can save anybody He



Ye Must Be Born

(Continued from page 1) ◊

Word of our Lord will still stand when the present Heaven and earth shall have passed away. If we really believe that Jesus Christ is God's anointed Savior and Lord of His people, then we must acknowledge His right to lay down the conditions of admittance to His kingdom, and He says, **"Ye must be born again."**

"He Does Not Say---"

Please note well that Jesus does not say that in order to see and in order to enter the kingdom of

God you must be baptized.

He does not say that you must join a church---any church.

He does not say that you must call yourself by His name---or any name.

He does not say that you must do "many wonderful works"---or any works at all.

He does not say that you must "pray through"---whatever people pray through.

He does not say that you must sigh a card or a pledge.

He does not say that you must "live a good life."

He does not say that you must "hold out faithful to the end."

He does not say that you must take the Lord's Supper, often miscalled the Eucharist or Sacrament.

He does not say that you must "do the best you can."

Even though any or all of these things may be desirable or useful, still Jesus does NOT say that you must do any of them before you can see or enter His kingdom.

He DOES say, **"Ye must be born again."**

Why the "Must?"

If you would enter God's kingdom on earth and go to Heaven when you die, you must be born again because Jesus says so.

You must be born again because you are a sinner, and sin separates from God.

You must be born again because if you are not born again you are spiritually dead, and this death means separation from God (Eph. 2:1-12).

You must be born again because God cannot endure the sight of you as a sinner: you must have His own righteous character to stand before Him (Hab. 1:13).

You must be born again because only the **"pure in heart"** shall

◊ (Continued on page 7)

Ye Must Be Born

(Continued from page 6) ◊

see God in a true spiritual sense (Matt. 5:8).

You must be born again because **“they that are in the flesh cannot please God”** (Rom. 8:8).

You must be born again because there shall in no wise enter into the new Jerusalem **“any thing that defileth”** (Rev. 21:27).

Source of New Birth

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13).

It is surely no accident that the word quite properly translated **“again”** in John 3:3 could also be rendered **“from above.”**

The new birth is not a product of good breeding, of self-determination, or of religious rites. Only God is able to create life; only God can impart new life to us.

Agent of New Birth

Specifically, it is God the Holy Spirit Who begets us and brings us forth in this new birth. **“Except anyone be born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”**

We have here no reference whatever to baptism, any more than in John 4:10-15 or John 7:37-39. We had as well try to get eternal life by drinking a cup of so-called **“holy water”** as to get life by being baptized. One such notion is as good---or bad---as the other.

The word **“water”** is used here in a figurative sense (see John 7:39) with special reference to the Spirit's revelation of divine truth in the written Word. So we read: **“Of his own will begat he us with**

the word of truth” (James 1:18).

Manner of New Birth

Nicodemus wanted to know: **“How can these things be”** (John 3:9)?

It is natural for man to meddle in someone else's business instead of minding his own. It is easier for us to excite idle curiosity than to stir to right action.

Really, the **“how”** of the new birth is not our business; it is God's. It is enough for us to know what Jesus told Nicodemus:

“ . . . God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

Means of New Birth

The simple truth is that **“it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save THEM THAT BELIEVE”** (I Cor. 1:21) (emph. RB). The context here plainly shows that the salvation referred to is radical: it is not the mere carrying forward of the salvation of persons already saved, but the salvation that sets them apart from the world that **“knew not God.”**

Heretics who imagine that God has some elect among rational human beings who are going to Heaven because they were elected but without ever hearing and believing the gospel---such heretics are twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:16).

Paul expressed the attitude of the true believer in the sovereignty of God when he wrote:

“I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (II Tim. 2:10).

Evidences of New Birth

While we may not and need not understand the process whereby our God begets a new life within

us, we can, and ought to know whether we have experienced this new birth. So John wrote his first epistle **“that ye may know that ye have eternal life”** (I John 5:13).

Either we believe God or we do not. **“He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life”** (I John 5:10-12).

How About You?

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (I John 5:1). Have you been born of God? If not, give heed to the preaching of His Word, look believably, trustingly, to the Savior therein revealed, and you will find yourself a partaker of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4), a possessor of eternal life (John 3:36).

Hear again a promise and explanation from God's own Word:

“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:13-17).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).

BORN TO OVERCOME

All True Believers in Christ Are
Born of God and
Overcome the World
“Whosoever believeth that

Jesus is the Christ is born of God. . . Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith” (I John 5:1-4).

That every true believer in Jesus Christ is a born-again child of God and that every born-again child of God overcomes the world---this is what our text affirms, though it be denied by some 90 percent of professed Christianity today. In more literal translation we read: **“Everyone believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born from God. . . Everything that has been born from God overcomes the world. . .”**



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A Word to Young Pastors

By Jordan Tew
Grand Prairie, Texas

My heart is heavy with concern over our generation of pastors and ministers. We are at a critical point in the history of both Christianity and our denomination. What we do over the next few years and decades will have a profound impact on the future, should the Lord tarry that long.

Let me begin by stating I am 26 years old (although I am 76 at heart). I understand what my fellow young pastors or ministers are going through and the feelings they have in regards to ministry and reaching people with the

◊ (Continued on page 8)

Gleanings

(Continued from page 7) ◊

Gospel. I understand there can be frustration, at times, with church traditions, practices that seem antiquated and ineffective, going to meeting upon meeting with very few people under the age of 65 present, and serving in a culture which values historic, Baptist doctrinal positions. I know there seems to be a dividing line between the “old school” Baptist and the “new school” Baptist people. Brothers, this should not be.

As a young pastor, please let us state that we desperately need to learn from older pastors and ministers. Friends, we do not know all that we need to know. There is much value in learning from men who have been pastoring longer than you have been alive. There is much to be said about the men who planted your churches - about how they thrived and were sustained to this very day. There is much safety in clinging to the old doctrines, as they have stood the test of time and existed before the latest author got his book deal or recorded his video-based teaching series.

Please understand me. I am not saying that all new things or technology are bad. I am not saying we should not try to reach a younger generation with the Gospel, nor am I saying that you should not help your churches move forward.

However, I am saying there is infinite value in respecting and learning from our elders, as they have set a godly example before us in their teaching and love for the Lord. I am saying we must be humble and be willing to learn from them. I am saying that it is important to know that doctrine still matters, and it may be a good

idea to study and make your people aware of that doctrine once and again.

We live in a time when young pastors are flooded with a plethora of church trends, buzzwords, methods, systems and programs. However, I often step back and make note of how Christ had no need for such things. I am reminded how He modeled preaching and discipleship and missions to us. We must recapture an appreciation for the old ways, a respect for the old people, and a love of the old doctrines.

Fellow young pastors, we should not seek to be a 21st Century church. In case you have not noticed, the 21st Century church is not faring so well. We must always seek to be a First Century church. This cannot happen if we refuse to learn from, or respect our elders. We have so much to learn. May God bless us with willing, humble, teachable hearts. (From *Baptist Progress* via *Northern Landmark Missionary Baptist*)



A Habitation of

(Continued from page 1) ◊

and they have God dwelling in them! And, I suppose that this has been true in every generation and in every time since the time of Adam. There are always those people who live their lives amongst mankind - doing the things that human beings do - and yet they have the presence of God within them. Of course, this is accomplished through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God. If the Holy Spirit inhabits any man, this is the same as God inhabiting that man.

I want us to consider the concept of the Holy Spirit dwelling with mankind. I am not talking about some sort of impersonal

relationship. I am not talking about the fact that the Holy Spirit exists as God over this Creation, and He is omnipresent, and so must be everywhere at once and at all times. It is true that God is everywhere, and there is no place and no time where He is absent, or where He has no control or presence (See Psalms 139:7-12). However, what we are talking about - what Paul is referring to in our text verse - is the presence of the Holy Spirit, in a special way and in a personal way, in the lives of the people of God.

I think the Scriptures make it plain to us that the Holy Spirit comes to us from Heaven, and that He is very real and very present in the lives of each of those who are saved. In fact, the Holy Spirit is responsible for the regeneration of the dead spirit of each of those who are saved by God's grace. This is often referred to as being “born again” (See John 3:5-8). I believe that once the Holy Spirit quickens us and makes us alive, He will always be with us, and will never leave us again (See Hebrews 13:5-6). In this sense, I believe that God has taken up abode within us, and that we are now become “an habitation of God.”

In this sermon I want us to consider how that, 1) the Holy Spirit dwells with each of the saints, 2) how the Holy Spirit dwells with each of the churches of Christ, 3) and how there is a certain glory that is evident, in the presence of the Holy Spirit of God, as He brings God to mankind.

A PERSONAL HABITATION

The Scriptures are clear in teaching that the Holy Spirit will take up a dwelling in the life of each of those who are saved. In fact, as we have already noticed, this special relationship begins at the time of our spiritual birth. We

read the words of Jesus Christ, “**He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him**” (John 6:56). This special relationship with the Holy Spirit will continue until we are brought into Heaven, into the presence of Jesus Christ.

As proof of the fact that the Holy Spirit lives within those who are saved, consider what Paul told the Corinthians, “**Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are**” (I Cor. 3:16-17). The bodies of those who are saved, no longer serve only as a dwelling place for the soul and the mind of man. Now, those bodies are also the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit of God! If you are saved, your body has become “**the temple of God.**” Now, the “**Spirit of God dwelleth in you.**” This is a marvelous thought, but also a challenging reminder of our need to be faithful unto God, and of our need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. These thoughts are encouraging and comforting; but, these thoughts about the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, are also an admonition and a warning to those who are “**an habitation of God.**”

In fact, the knowledge of God's presence within us, should serve as an exhortation to holiness in our lives. Paul reminded the Corinthians of this when he said to them, “**Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But**

◊ (Continued on page 9)

A Habitation of

(Continued from page 8) ◊

he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6:15-20). What your body does, it should do as "an habitation of God." Where your body goes, it should go as "an habitation of God." God goes with us, and He is within us. Essentially, ownership of this body and this spirit has passed from man to God. This is not some sort of hostile takeover which God has orchestrated in our lives. Rather, you and I are willing and compliant in the salvation of our souls, and in the habitation of God within us. Our will and our desire is made conformable to Him, and we are completely complicit in the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit – though the fleshly nature will rebel against Him.

In the end, I believe that the evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit will be found in the way in which we live our lives as the children and saints of God. If the Holy Spirit is within you, others will be able to tell. **"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead**

dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 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. 8:9-17). He will lead us and guide us. He will be our strength and our help. He has all knowledge and power. We ought to avail ourselves of the presence and the power and the wisdom of God – Who has taken up abode within us!

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is not just a benefit (and the basis) in our relationship with God. It is also true that the presence of the Holy Spirit within us gives us also many benefits in our relationships with men. If the Holy Spirit is within you and within me, we will have a special relationship in this life with those others who are saved by God's grace – we will be brothers and sisters in Christ! **"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that**

he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (I John 3:23-24). A kindred spirit exists between the saints of God. We have a common salvation – a salvation that is shared with each of those who are saved. We share a Saviour with other saints. We serve the same Father that other children of God will serve. We are indwelt by the same Spirit that inhabits each of those who are called out by God. This bond between us is stronger than blood! The relationships that we have with even our own families after the flesh, is not as strong as the relationship that will exist between chosen children of God! This bond that exists between us that are saved is based upon the presence of the Holy Spirit within each of us, and this bond is not limited to mortality and the flesh which we inhabit; but, this relationship and this bond that exists between the children of God will extend even into Heaven and Eternity.

A CHURCH HABITATION

Not only does the Holy Spirit take up a dwelling in the hearts and minds of those who are saved by God's grace; but, the Scriptures also teach us that the Holy Spirit will find a habitation in the midst of each of the churches of Jesus Christ. I believe that this means that each of the churches that has ever existed since the time of Christ, has had the Holy Spirit in them and within them: He has always been a part of their existence, for as long as those churches have been in existence. **"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared**

unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-4). Since the time of this day of Pentecost which is referred to in the second chapter of the book of Acts, the Holy Spirit has dwelt within the churches of Jesus Christ. This is not just a one-time example of the unity of God with the church of Jesus Christ. Instead, the events of Pentecost serve as a reminder of just how dear the church is to God, and how the church has been empowered with the authority of God Himself.

Further, this empowering through the Spirit is something that is perpetuated in the churches of Jesus Christ, as churches are established out of this first church in Jerusalem. The church is the Body of Christ. Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Christ are intimately involved in the formation and the service of each of the churches of Jesus Christ. **"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle... The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches"** (Rev. 1:12-13, 20). The Lord, even now, walks amongst and in His churches. Each of the existing churches since the time of the first church in Jerusalem, has had the power and the authority and even the presence of the Holy

◊ (Continued on page 10)

A Habitation of

(Continued from page 9) ◊

Spirit. This is the mark of their authenticity. This is the proof of their Heavenly beginning. This is the evidence of the continuing authority and the continuing blessings of God being bestowed upon them.

If you are a member of one of the true churches of Jesus Christ today, then the Holy Spirit is within your church. He brings Jesus Christ to you. **“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones”** (Eph. 5:30). As a church, Jesus Christ is a part of your existence, and without Him, you would cease to be a church. We read in Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians, **“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”** (II Cor 6:14-18). I am sure this passage has, as its first application, the individual saint of God, and the admonition that we ought not be overly involved with the world; we ought not have fellowship or communion with the sinful elements of this world; and a reminder that we

ought to be separate from the sins and sinners of this world. However, it seems to me that this passage could also be applied to the churches of Jesus Christ, and there seems to be some intent in that regard, since the Apostle Paul refers to the **“people”** of God in this passage, and how these shall be God’s people, He will **“dwell in them, and walk in them.”** This is important for every church to remember – we are **“an habitation of God.”** As an institution, as the body of Christ, we represent God to the world.

THE GLORY OF GOD’S PRESENCE

The very concept of God dwelling with man, is a glorious concept. And yet, the Scriptures teach us that God is with us – both as individual saints, and as churches of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ once told His disciples of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the importance and necessity of His coming. **“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the**

Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you” (John 16:7-15).

The presence of the Holy Spirit will be evident in the lives of the people and the churches of God. And, perhaps we might even say that the love that we have for one another will be the hall-mark of our relationship with God. **“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him”** (I John 4:11-16). As we love and serve one another, Jesus Christ will be exalted and glorified.

And, as we serve the Lord in His church, Jesus Christ will be glorified. We read about the importance and the glory of the Old Testament tabernacle in Exodus chapter 40, **“Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys: But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day**

that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys” (Exod. 40:34-38). If this Old Testament tabernacle was so glorious, how much more glorious ought the church of Jesus Christ be? If the Old Testament saints were careful and even eager to serve in the tabernacle worship of God, how much more ought we to be willing, eager, and happy to serve in the church of Jesus Christ? The glory of the Old Testament tabernacle, cannot compare to the glory of the church of Jesus Christ – which glory will endure through the eternal ages. (See Ephesians 3:21). Should not we be willing to serve in such a capacity even today? Should not we be content to worship in that place wherein the Holy Spirit of God has taken up His abode? Even now, we can fellowship with saints who are indwelt by God through the Holy Spirit, in a place and institution (the church) wherein the Holy Spirit has come to dwell. This, to me, is the ultimate glory and privilege that has been given to any man.



The Propagation

(Continued from page 1) ◊

Its work is as high as its rank in creation; and no principle of its constitution remains without its proper exercise. Not so with man. He has a soul possessing powers capable of the most astonishing exertions, and of making endless progress in knowledge; yet, he is found in a state of the utmost degradation, with employments little above those of the brutes. The man of science and the

◊ (Continued on page 11)

The Propagation

(Continued from page 10) ◊

savage have every principle of human nature in common. What a difference in their attainments and in their employments!

Nor is this unsuitableness of the employment of man to his high mental dignity exclusively to be found in savage life. It is to be found in the most advanced state of civilized society. In all countries, and in all ages, the great body of men are almost constantly employed either in manual labour, or in toilsome business. Indeed we need not to look solely to the great masses of society for proof that man is doomed to toil. It is a law from which there is no exemption. Every man has the proof in himself. From the sovereign to the meanest subject, all, all labour under the same curse. The very honours of royalty are a load, which vanity itself cannot sustain without weariness.

The highest aim of the legislator is to provide reward for labour; and his object is fully accomplished when all hands are employed, and labour is adequately remunerated. The millennium of the statesman, as well as of the chartist is, "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work:" when men have work and wages he sees nothing amiss in the lot of human nature. But the eye of the Christian should penetrate men deeply. In the incessant and universal toils of mankind he should perceive the curse of God against the first sin. From the cradle to the grave it is work, work, work.

The man of God is not exempt from the labours and toils of life. God feeds His people as well as He feeds the fowls of heaven; He clothes them as well as He does the lilies of the valley; but He neither feeds them as He

does the fowls, nor clothes them as He does the lilies. He feeds and clothes them by means; and they must toil and spin, and sow and reap, and gather into barns. But blessed be God, the curse is in some measure turned into a blessing. All the labours which we are called to perform, and all the sufferings which we are called on to endure, are to be performed and endured to the glory of God. When the poor man toils to earn a scanty subsistence, and trudges home at night with a weary body, he can console himself with the reflection; if he has faith in Christ, that he is labouring in the Lord's service. His work is not merely to man: it is to God.

The words which I have chosen as the subject of discourse, remind us that Jesus confers certain talents on His servants; and that He requires the diligent use of these talents. The injunction extends to every talent, and to every department of life. But I shall confine my observations to that which is the more immediate object of this meeting--the employment of our talents in the propagation of the gospel presenting some encouragements--to the vigorous prosecution of the work.

1. My first observation on the subject is, that *the gospel being destined to pervade the earth, Christians are the appointed means to convey it to its destination.*

It may not be without profit that we turn our attention for a moment to the wisdom of God in appointing His people as the means of propagating His gospel. To human wisdom these means appear inadequate; and in despair of success from these means, Christians, following their own wisdom, are prone to look for others more effectual. In all ages and countries the people

of Christ generally are poor and despised. How is it possible, then, that the gospel can be effectually propagated and supported by them? Did Christ place this burden on the shoulders of His people, because He was destitute of other resources? Is He poor, that He requires the labours and the earnings of His poor people; in order to the extending of His empire? If He possesses all power in Heaven and on earth, could He not propagate His gospel without burdening His own servants, who generally have little to spare? Could He not lay His taxes on His enemies? Yes; our great Lord commands all the resources of the universe; and could execute His will by a greater variety of means than we can conceive; or He could communicate the knowledge of salvation altogether without means. He could reveal to the heirs of salvation the truth which interests them in the blessings of His death immediately with His Spirit, without any instrumentality at all. Atonement for sin through the blood of Christ was necessary, that grace might reign through righteousness; and that all the attributes of God might harmonize in the salvation of the guilty. But sinners might have been made acquainted with that salvation, and sanctified by faith in it, without any external revelation, either spoken or written. The Spirit of God could speak to the hearts of men in every part of the earth, as well without instrumentality as with it. Why then has not Jesus chosen this plan? To human wisdom it has many advantages; yet, when divine wisdom has not chosen it, whatever may be its appearance to us, it is not the best plan. One thing is obvious in this procedure by means--it is analogous to God's way of working in other things.

Jehovah manifests Himself in the works of creation and providence; yet He lies hidden by His way of working. In like manner, He reveals Himself in His Word; yet, while the light shines in darkness the darkness perceives it not.

But if instrumentality is to be used, an instrumentality might have been found more convenient for man, and apparently more effectual than that of Christians. Christ could have sent the gospel through the world by the ministry of angels. How admirably, in the estimation of human wisdom, would the means be suited to the end! Christian missionaries need food and raiment while they are engaged in preaching the gospel; they must be carried to their stations by expensive conveyances; and they are subject to the violence of the enemies of their Lord. The angels needed no earthly supplies; they could convey the news of salvation to every quarter of the globe without expense, without loss of time, and without danger. Human missionaries must, with a great expense of labour and time, make themselves acquainted with the languages of all the nations they address. The angels could, in this, have no difficulty. Why, then, was not this plan chosen? It has innumerable advantages in the estimation of human wisdom. Yet, as it was not chosen, it cannot be the best plan. So far from employing only the ministration of angels in the propagation of the gospel, when on one occasion divine wisdom sent an angel to Cornelius, he was commissioned not to preach the gospel, but to charge the centurion to send for Peter; to "tell him words whereby he should be saved." It is not difficult to see, in fact, the wisdom of not employing this

◊ (Continued on page 14)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. A “solemn assembly” is spoken of in the Old Testament. Why is it never mentioned in the New Testament?

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Most of the occasions calling for a “solemn assembly” in the Old Testament were associated with various feasts that Israel was required to observe. There was to be a “solemn assembly” when the Feast of Tabernacles was observed (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35; Neh. 8:18), and when the Passover was observed (Deut. 16:8). There was a special “solemn assembly” called for when the Temple was dedicated by King Solomon (II Chron. 7:9). When Jehu set out to purge Israel from Baal worshippers he called for a “solemn assembly” of all the idolators and proceeded to slay them (II Kings 10:20-28). The Prophet Joel also called for a “solemn assembly” for the purpose of fasting and repentance (Joel 1:14; 2:15). In each of these instances the “solemn assembly” marked a special gathering for a specific purpose.

As to why the term is never used in the New Testament, I am not completely sure. Interestingly enough the word solemn never occurs in the New Testament. No doubt each time the local New Testament church assembles for public worship and instruction it is a solemn gathering that is marked by spiritual feasting. This would also be true on the special occasions they observe the

ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Certainly the ordination of elders and the official act of sending them out to do mission work by the Lord's churches would be an occasion of a solemn assembly that is even marked by prayer and fasting in the New Testament (Acts 13:1-3). The term may not be used, but the action certainly is implied in the New Testament.

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It is the gathering and sanctifying of the community of Israel for a solemn occasion.

The New Testament, I believe, does mention the assembly many times. The word “solemn” means to be very serious or formal in manner, behavior, or expression. I have been in a few of the Lord's assemblies, and find them to be just as the definition. I have seen many and have fasted while in our assembly, also, I have rejoiced with the members over special events, and have been sorrowful over sin, or calamities. Our assembly meets together to remember the resurrection of our Savior, and should be done so in a manner of seriousness, and joy, while all other things are set aside with restraint and our focus upon our worship.

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“Solemn assembly” as found in the Old Testament is primarily the Hebrew word “atsarah” (found 11 times), which means an “assembly.” The root etymology of *atsarah* has the thought of restraining, many times in relation to fasting/prayer. Hence the proper translation in the King James Version of “solemn assembly.” It was not a frivolous or light-hearted assembly, but a serious and sober meeting with their sovereign God and King. Selah! Think about it!

Obviously, the Hebrew word is not used in the Greek New Testament, so we have to look for the parallel word and institution to compare the two. The Greek word *ekklesia* means a “called-out assembly,” and is typically translated as “church” when it refers to the “solemn assembly” in the New Testament. The word is found 118 times and is the word that Christ used to describe His church in Matthew 16:18, “**And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church (ekklesia); and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**” The three times in Acts where *ekklesia* is not referring to the Lord's churches, but to the “called-out multitude” of Ephesian citizens, it is properly (again) translated as “assembly.” “**Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly (ekklesia) was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together**” (Acts 19:32). “**But if ye inquire any thing concerning other**

matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly (*ekklesia*)” (Acts 19:39). “**And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly (ekklesia)**” (Acts 19:41). Much like Jeremiah 9:2, “**Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly (atsarah) of treacherous men.**” The KJV translators leave off the “solemn” where it refers NOT to God's people, but to worldly congregations.

When Christ instituted HIS *ekklesia* (church), it was formed into a living organism and in the New Testament it is referred unto, as thus- alive, personable and active. While we will not deny that the “meeting of the church” is to be considered a “solemn assembly,” the usage of the word “ekklesia” technically refers to the “body assembled,” rather than the occasion of the assemblage. That is why whenever the “assembly” is referred to in the New Testament, it is not called the “solemn assembly of Corinth” or the “solemn churches of Galatia.” Although every meeting of the body of Christ in all locations will tend to be “solemn congregational assemblies,” the references will rarely use such adjectives, because the Bible portrays the Baptist churches as agents of God's purposes (The PEOPLE, not the occasion!). Selah! Think about it!

“**But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church (ekklesia) of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth**” (I Tim. 3:15). This is probably the most telling verse in the Bible concerning the Lord's church (*ekklesia*/solemn assembly). It

◊ (Continued on page 18)

The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

2. What is the purpose of the word **“Amen”** at the end of many Bible verses?

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The word **“Amen”** is defined as firm, or faithful. This verse refers to God being faithful, or the God of **“Amen.”** **“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he”** (Deut. 32:4).

“Amen” being used at the end of a verse is an emphasis for the reader that what was read is truth, or yea verily. **“For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”** (II Cor. 1:20). God's promises are sure, and are true.

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The purpose of the word **“Amen”** is very simple. It means that the writer of the Scripture is agreeing with, or that he concurs with what the Word of God says. It is an **“Assent”** which means a formal expression of agreement, or acceptance, or a formal statement to express solemn ratification or agreement.

Basically it means the same

as saying **“So Be It, or So It Is!”** When you are in a church service and you hear one or more of the men say **“Amen,”** they are saying, **“That is Right,”** or **“I Agree.”** Not that God needs our approval but when I say **“Amen”** it is usually something I just heard that stirred my very soul, and of course I agree.

I would like to quote something from W. E. Vine. He says, **“Once in the N.T. ‘Amen’ is a title of Christ, Rev. 3:14, because through Him the purposes of God are established, 2 Cor. 1:20.”**

I hope that helps you, dear questioner. A serious study of the word **“Amen”** will reveal other meanings. But for confusion's sake I have chosen not to elaborate on them, but it makes for a good study for those who are curious. God Bless!

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“Amen” is used 22 times in the Old Testament and 51 times in the New Testament. It is a term in both Testaments used to confirm a statement or a prayer, thus affirming the faithfulness, truth, or trustworthiness of the subject matter.

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (pp. 55-56) offers some valuable insight into the use of the word

“Amen.” Some I thought were especially enlightening:

“Amen is transliterated from Hebrew into both Greek and English...There are cases where the people used it to express their assent to a law, and their willingness to submit to the penalty attached to the breach of it. It is also used to express acquiescence to another's prayer, where it is defined as 'let God say so too' or in another's thanksgiving, whether by an individual or by the congregation.”

“Thus ‘Amen’ said by God equals ‘it is and shall be so, and by men, so shall it be.”

“Once in the N.T. ‘Amen’ is a title of Christ, Rev. 3:14, because through Him the purposes of God are established, II Cor. 1:20.”

“The early Christian churches followed the example of Israel in associating themselves audibly with the prayers and thanksgivings offered on their behalf, I Cor. 14:16, where the article ‘the’ points to a common practice. Moreover this custom conforms to the pattern of things in the Heavens, see Rev. 5:14, etc.”

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The Bible defines its words in context in many places, but clearly here in Jeremiah 28:6, **“Even the prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the LORD do so: the LORD perform thy words...”** **“Amen”** is a transliteration of the Hebrew word **“amen”** and it basically means to be faithful, reliable or established—**AMEN!** **“But bring your youngest brother unto me;**

so shall your words be verified (amen), and ye shall not die. And they did so” (Gen. 42:20). It can also have a sense of believing or trusting someone—**AMEN!** **“So the people of Nineveh believed (amen) God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them”** (Jonah 3:5). So, if you say something that I believe to be true, particularly about my God and His Holy Word, a most proper rejoinder would be **“Amen.”** **“...Then answered I, and said, So be it (amen), O LORD”** (Jer. 11:5). Selah! Think about it!

I always remember what a long-time member of Big Creek Baptist Church told me the first year I came to pastor. Sister Oline said that if I was preaching on something and she might be thinking it was true, she knew for sure it was when Brother Pete Chadwick boomed out one of his **“Amens.”** Truly said! Amen! This is indeed the Biblical usage of the word, Amen, as the Apostle Paul verifies in I Corinthians 14:15-16, **“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?”** It requires an understanding and belief to say **“Amen,”** at the end of the prayer, song, or sermon. Selah! Think about it!

“Amen” is used 138 times in the Old Testament and is transliterated **“amen”** only 22 of those times. The remainder of the time, it is translated contextually in the literal sense of the word as

◇ (Continued on page 19)

The Propagation

(Continued from page 11) ♦

instrumentality. Had the angels been the heralds of the gospel, its efficacy would have been ascribed to the instruments, and not to the power of God. While the angels have a certain employment about the gospel, the propagation of it is confided on those who are higher than the angels by being one with the Son of God.

Another possible means of propagating the gospel, which more than any other has always been the favourite of human wisdom, is the employment of the powers of this world. If our Lord Jesus Christ rules over the world, He surely could employ its rulers in the propagation of His gospel. How admirably does the plan appear, to carnal wisdom, suited to the end! This will not only prevent persecution, but it will open to the gospel every country under Heaven. Will Christ burden His people while He can avail Himself of the revenues of kingdoms? Will He take the mite from the poor widow while all the treasures of the earth are His? Yet Jesus has not adopted this plan. While civil government is His institution, and while He employs the rulers of the world invariably for His own purposes, He as enjoined on His disciples to propagate His gospel, and support His kingdom. Instead of choosing to be introduced to the world, and to have His kingdom raised and maintained by the kingdoms of this world, He chose to make His way through the enmity and most malignant opposition of the rulers of this world for several hundred years. Instead of preventing persecution, it is after His wisdom that persecution should exist. The propagation of the gospel is a miracle of providence. Jesus has

left it on the waters like the ark of bulrushes which carried Moses, yet it has not yet sunk, and it will never sink. In this way the power is seen to be not of men, but of God. And while Christ is head over all things for the good of His church; while He makes everything serve His purpose with respect to it, there is a wisdom and a propriety in raising, extending, and maintaining it, through the means of His own subjects. His kingdom is not of this world, and the management of it could not consistently be given to the kingdoms of this world, which, in general, are hostile to it. Sometimes people talk foolishly, as if to employ the means which God has appointed to effect an end is to take the thing out of the hands of God. But, surely, to employ means that God has not appointed, neglecting the means which He has appointed, is to take the thing out of the hands of God.

Fellow Christians, then, I call your attention to your duty, and to your honourable service. God has not thought proper to convey the knowledge of salvation to men by His Spirit, without the use of means---He has not employed the ministry of angels, but that of men---He has not appointed to this high service the rulers of this world; but He has committed it to the zeal and devotedness of His disciples. Will you not show yourselves worthy of such a trust? Will you not manifest by your alacrity in this service, that you feel the honour conferred on you by your Lord? Think not of it merely as a duty, but also as a privilege. Jesus calls not on you from His poverty, but to prove your faithfulness, and His own almighty power. If He has given you all that you possess, will you grudge for His cause a portion of the worldly good things which He

has bestowed on you? If He has bought you with His blood, has He not a right to your property and your lives? How many thousands have been spent in doing honour to her majesty in her late visit to Scotland! That expenditure was useful to her only as it manifested the dutiful affection of her subjects. The money lavished on decorations that could last but for a day, were considered important as a manifestation of allegiance and of love. She could have borne the expense of all herself, without feeling it as a burden; yet she received the tokens of affection at the expense of all who offered them. A trifle expended for her gratification in this way, would give her more pleasure than presents expended out of her own treasures. How highly, then, are you honoured, my fellow Christians, when Jesus Christ gives you an opportunity to manifest your allegiance to Him, by contributing of your substance to the extension and support of His gospel. How greatly was He pleased with the woman who showed her affection to Him by anointing Him with a box of precious ointment. **“Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it**

for my burial. Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her” (Matt. 26:6-13).

2. My second observation is, that *the duty of exertion to propagate the gospel extends to all Christians without exception.* Every Christian is a soldier; and every Christian soldier must fight to put his Lord in possession of His rightful dominions. More is required of some than of others; but something is required of every one. And the passage from which I have selected the foundation of this discourse shows us that the Lord requires of His people in proportion to the talents which He confers on them. The great body of Christians may not be able to address public assemblies, but there is not one of them who may not tell his neighbour the way to Heaven. Cannot the simplest man make known to others the ground on which he rests his own hope of salvation? If he knows the truth so as to be saved by it, he may declare it to others so as to save them. What can make it improper for an uneducated man to speak to his companions on the one thing needful? Can he speak to them on matters of worldly business, and can he not speak to them on the truth that saves the soul? Can he teach the mysteries of his trade, and can he not teach the way in which God's justice and mercy harmonize in the justification of the ungodly by faith in Christ Jesus.

Uneducated Christians, even the poorest, have in private life more favourable opportunities of communicating the gospel to their associates, than the most learned and the most elevated in rank.

♦ (Continued on page 15)

The Propagation

(Continued from page 14) ♦

The manners of the world make it difficult, if not impossible, to introduce the gospel into certain circles. When the rich wish to preach the gospel, they must, in general, go to the poor. They seldom have access to the ear of their own circle. Even the highest Christian nobility will find their efforts impeded by innumerable obstacles in the forms of life in the upper ranks. When God designed that Caesar, and the mighty men of Rome, should hear the gospel of Paul, He sent him as a prisoner to stand for his life before the emperor. Had Paul gone to Rome as a preacher, though he had been a Demosthenes, he might never have gained a hearing from Caesar. Priests and princes would have represented him merely as a fanatic, and the ear of majesty might never have heard the gospel from his lips. In proportion to a man's elevation in rank is he shut out from the gospel, and in this respect the poor have the highest privileges. They hear and are saved, while the rich and the mighty perish without hearing it, though it may sound every where around them. How is this manifested and confirmed by town missionaries. The word of life can be sent into the hovels of vice, while the lordly palace, which has perhaps more need of it, must be passed by. The poor are always accessible, and the poorest Christian may have, every day, opportunities of declaring the truth, from which the highest Christian may be excluded. If the people about him are wicked, still he may find means to gain their ear about the value of the soul, and the redemption that is in Christ. The poorest and weakest member of a church may have access to innumerable persons

from whom the pastor is entirely shut out; and will be heard when the pastor would give intolerable offence.

That deadly heresy which confines the preaching of the gospel to office conveyed by a certain succession, is an infernal machine for destroying the souls of men. It is one of the great artifices of Satan to spike the cannon on the gospel batteries. What can more effectually serve the kingdom of darkness than a conviction that it is a sin to proclaim the kingdom of light? But it is unscriptural as it is irrational. The Scriptures know nothing of such a succession. It is the invention of the man of sin, calculated to extinguish the light, and promote the empire of darkness. And whatever may be the mode of conveying office, the preaching of the gospel, either publicly or privately, is not confined to office. Every Christian has a right to preach the gospel, and according to his abilities and his opportunities it is his duty to preach it. This vile dogma of Oxford is self-evidently false. If the gospel is true, can there be any danger of sin in proclaiming its truths? If the gospel is salvation, and if God wills the salvation of men, can it be sinful to tell them of that which saves from Hell? What would you think of a senator who should rise up in the British senate house, declaring that no watchmen ought to be employed in the city of London, but those who have a regular succession from the watchmen who lived at the foundation of the city, and that, though the city were fired at innumerable points, no man had a right to cry "Fire, fire," but the legal watchmen! It is only in religion that the effusions of folly and absurdity are dignified as wisdom.

Nothing can be more clearly

established from the history of the Acts of the Apostles, than that Christians, without exception, were employed in disseminating the gospel. Here the Spirit of inspiration refutes by anticipation that anti-Christian heresy that confines the preaching of the gospel to office. Every Christian may not be able to make a long public discourse. Learned and talented men may not be able to do this at a moment. But to preach the gospel is no more than a declaration of the good news of salvation to the guiltiest of men, through faith in the atonement of Christ. He who knows how God can be just, yet the justifier of the ungodly, can preach the gospel at a moment's warning. Illiterate Christians are not to affect eloquence, nor to stalk in the pomp of the schools. This, indeed, would be ridiculous. But what Christian is there who may not in private speak the great things of God in his own manner? And though his language may be homely, it is suitable to those addressed, and, even if addressed to the most elevated in rank, may be blessed to the salvation of the soul. No man expects the graces of oratory from those who have no pretensions to them. It is only when illiterate men affect fine speaking that they become harlequins. . .

Of the importance of the pastoral office I have the strongest convictions. It cannot be too highly valued when viewed in the light of Scripture. It is an ordinance of God, without which, when it is attainable, a church cannot prosper. To dissenters, perhaps, there is as much need to inculcate a sense of its importance, as it is to others to prove that it is overvalued. If some deify their teachers, and swallow everything that is poured out of the pulpit,

that is no reason why others should not highly respect them, and value their teaching, as far as it accords with the Word of God. But it does not impair the importance of the pastoral office to assert that the preaching of the gospel belongs to all Christians as far as they are qualified, and that the interest of Christ's kingdom requires that this be done as extensively as possible. As Moses said to Joshua when he was jealous for the honour of his master, "**Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets**" (Num. 11:29); so should we all say, "Would God that all the Lord's people were preachers of the gospel." Had all the people of Israel been prophets, it would not have affected the office of Moses, nor in the smallest degree have impaired his dignity. If all Christians were employed in preaching the gospel, it would not render it unnecessary to have pastors in the churches, nor impair their true dignity. The true dignity of bishops consists in their qualifications---not on the forms of their appointment. All the authorities on earth could not make a man a bishop who does not possess the qualifications required in Scripture.

Now, dear brethren, if this is true, it is a point of vast importance for the prosperity of the cause of Christ. Let it, then, be reduced to practice. What a wonderful assistance it would be to pastors, if every member of the churches were through the week to avail himself of every opportunity of sowing the seed of the Word! If every one felt himself bound to do something personally to convert sinners, how many more might be expected to be added to the churches! How widely are the members of a church scattered through the week, and with what

♦ (Continued on page 16)

The Propagation

(Continued from page 15) ♦

a number of persons have they intercourse! If everyone, then, were deeply impressed with the duty of bringing in recruits for the army of Christ, is it not likely that there would be great success? I beseech you, then, dear brethren, as you love your master and the souls of men, arise to action. Soldiers of Christ, will you decline to use the weapons of the gospel? They will be mighty by the power of the mighty God.

3. My third observation is, that *the duty of assisting in spreading the gospel must be viewed with reference to the different talents conferred on the people of God.* All may, in one way or other, do something; and if they avail themselves of their opportunities, the meanest of them may do much. But our present object requires that I should particularly refer to contributions for enabling the spreading of the gospel in foreign and distant countries. The present times are very unpropitious for raising money. The resources even of the wealthy are affected by the state of trade, while many of the poor of the churches may be in straits. But instead of being a reason to stand back, or to curtail, this ought to excite all who are able, to make double exertion. Let the rich curtail other expenses, and deny themselves rather than the cause of Christ. Let not their economy single out the gospel as a sacrifice. Let it have a fair dividend on the assets of the bankrupt. And the Apostle Paul, by the example of one of the churches, shows us that even deep poverty may abound to the riches of liberality. . . The poorest may do something; and if every one does something the aggregate will be a large sum. Would not the poorest member

of the body of Christ desire to do something for the increase of the body? Who is it that would not wish a partnership in the firm? Jesus has no need of the widow's mite; yet He accepts it with the highest approbation.

If the poor may do something, those in better circumstances may do much. . . When Christians act upon the principle that nothing is to be done for the cause of God, till there is something of superabundance in their circumstances, they will never do much, and oftener they will do nothing at all. Let every one consider that even the man who works with his own hands, is to appropriate a share in the profits of his work for the kingdom of Christ. . .

But is this a grievance? Is it not the highest privilege? Who gave you what you possess? Who can make it a blessing to you? How ought you to exult if God has opened your hearts to honour Him with your substance! Jesus said to a certain rich man, **“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house”** (Luke 19:5). This day His providence says to every Christian in this assembly, “I require a share of the good things which I have bestowed on you.” Remember, He does not ask as one who needs. He asks as your liege Lord. He asks to prove your allegiance, and manifest your love to Him and the souls of whom He suffered. Is it not more blessed to give, than to receive? How many men squander on folly, and in abominable vices! How many spend on the mere vanities of life! How many are ruined by gambling and debauchery! These are the fools. They are fools for both worlds. But is he a fool whose heart inclines him to make a noble gift to the cause of

the Redeemer, for the spreading of that gospel that brings glory to God and salvation to man? This is the wise man. His treasure is not dissipated; it is laid up in Heaven, where moth cannot corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through and steal.

In addressing the Baptists of England, there is no need of rebuke with respect to liberality. On the contrary, not to praise, would be as injurious to the gospel as it would be unjust to the many instances of noble-minded liberality. The body, in general, are doing well: many of them have done nobly. Let them hear this praise from their brethren, as they will have their reward from their Lord. Let the example be imitated; and let those who have done well, not be weary in well-doing. If any wealthy Christians among you have hitherto kept back, let them now come forward, and press to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Let every resource be put in requisition. Your views of the kingdom of Christ and His ordinances, exclude you in a great measure from the co-operation of the great bulk of Christians. You must support this war yourselves, or allow the troops to leave the field in dishonour. Show, then, that as God has hitherto enabled you to do the work, you are still willing to carry it on, as He may assist you. Can there be a greater honour than that your Master has assigned you this work?

When a door is opened for the gospel, the wealth of the people of God may be employed to great profit. Happily, on the present occasion, there is no need of doubt or speculation on this subject. Since Jesus was on earth, there has not been a time in which a wider door was opened for the gospel than is now opened. Press forward, then, ye Christians, and

embark in this good cause.

4. Another observation is, that *a church, in its meetings for its own edification, ought to have constantly in view the conversion of sinners.* It is necessary that churches be taught all things that Jesus has commanded. All the doctrines and laws, and ceremonies of the house of God are to have due attention in their proper places. But it ought never to be forgotten, in any meeting of the saints, that the gospel, in one way or other, should be exhibited for the salvation of those who have not yet believed. Without this, how can sinners be brought to the knowledge of the truth? How can we be clear of their blood, if we allow them to depart without showing them the way of the remission of sin? Today I may be discoursing of some duty or ordinance of Christ. Let me, then, keep to my subject. But if in some part of the sermon I cannot find an opening to tell sinners the way to Heaven, I am but a bungling workman. Why is a church called the pillar of the truth, if it is not a finger-board, constantly pointing to Heaven? Refuge, refuge, ought to be so plainly inscribed on it, that he that runs may read. . .

If a church of Christ is thoroughly alive and active, the gospel will sound out from it even among those who have never been present at its meetings. Many will be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and die in the faith of the Lord Jesus, who will never be united with the church on earth. We ought to be careful, then, that while we are not ashamed of any part of the will of God, nor backward to teach it on proper occasions, the truth that saves the soul be the chief object of our zeal. The most scriptural order will not profit, without a

♦ (Continued on page 17)

The Propagation

(Continued from page 16) ♦

clear and pure gospel. Let us aim to be more distinguished for our profound views of truth, than for zeal for our own peculiarities, however scriptural they may be. Our finger should ever point to the new and living way into the presence of God, through the blood of His dear Son. This is the only thing that can ever make true converts. In this way the churches that sprinkle any country, will gradually approximate, like different fires in a forest, till at last they will meet in one universal flame. **“From you,”** says Paul to the Thessalonians, **“sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to Godward is spread abroad”** (I Thess. 1:8). Every church is a missionary of the most effectual kind, if it is truly a candlestick to hold up the light to the world. . .

5. A fifth observation on this subject is this--*we ought not to think it enough to labour zealously ourselves individually, we should endeavour to communicate the same spirit of zeal to all our brethren with whom we come in contact.* Some people have a happy talent for setting all around them to work, and of diffusing a spirit of zeal among the people of God. You cannot be in their company without catching some of their fire. This is a most important talent, and should be diligently cultivated where it is possessed. Constant reflections on the miserable state of the world without the knowledge of Christ, will always in some degree communicate it, and every opportunity of employing it ought to be improved. In this way we may have a share in the glory of the labours and success

of others. Brethren, then, in your intercourse with each other, let it be your aim to excite one another's zeal. We are all prone to sleep, and we have need of being constantly kept awake by mutual encouragement. . .

Let the pastors of the churches especially, then, avail themselves of their peculiar advantages in this respect. Let their souls burn with zeal, and the same spirit will be communicated to the brethren. One of the most important duties of a general is to keep up the order of the soldiers. Devotedness and zeal in an army, is of much more importance than numbers. If a minister of Christ, by his address to the church over which he labours, succeeds in kindling the zeal of the brethren, how much might be effected before the end of the day on which he addresses them? Onward, then, onward, fellow-soldiers; fight, and press forward others to the fight.

6. My sixth observation is, that *should a Christian be so unhappily situated as to stand alone in any place, he must not fear to encounter the enemy.* One man may engage with a host without the charge of rashness. There is never any propriety in saying, “I am but an individual, what good can I do?” You may do much good. Were you the only Christian in a kingdom, you might fight the battles of the Lord with success. This is an amazing peculiarity in the Christian warfare. What is the duty of the soldiers of Christ, might be imprudence and recklessness in the soldiers of a temporal kingdom. When a body of troops are so outnumbered that there is no rational hope of success, their duty, not only to themselves, but to their country, and to their sovereign, calls on them to surrender. But there is no surrender in the Christian

warfare. A single Christian must stand against the world. He may die, but he will conquer. Faith in the God of Israel stirred up Jonathan, with his armour-bearer, to attack all the hosts of the Philistines. If this was not faith, it was madness. It was not madness, but faith; for the God of Israel gave him victory and immortal glory. **“There is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few”** (I Sam. 14:6).

Christian soldiers, here is scope for the prodigality of heroism. Here is encouragement for the brave souls which burn with zeal to do exploits in the cause of the Lord Jesus. Have you not read of the deeds of the mighty men of David? Have you not been fired with emulation of their heroism? Is there no man among you who will dare to lift up his spear against eight hundred men? Where is the race of heroes? Are the soldiers of the Son of David dwindled down into a race of little men? Not so, not so, my fellow-soldiers; we have men who have lifted up their spears against thousands. . .

If you stand alone in a court or in a coal-pit, in a senate or in a workshop, aim at the conversion of all about you. If you make but one convert, that one will make others, and there is no end to the increase. . .

7. Another observation on the subject is, that *an ardent spirit of prayer is essential to the prosperity of the churches, and the success of their missions.*

It is God Who at first shone out of darkness, shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When the Lord intends to do great things for His people, He usually pours out on them a spirit of prayer to ask great things from Him.

How much Paul valued the

prayers of the saints, is seen from his letters to the churches. He entreats the brethren to pray for him, and the success of the gospel in his hands. **“Finally, brethren,”** says Paul to the Thessalonians, **“pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you”** (II Thess. 3:1). Paul was equally distinguished for praying for the brethren. **“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”** (Col. 1:9-10). Should not, then, constant prayer be made by the churches for the success of their missions, and for the opening of the world to the gospel of God?

8. I would call your attention to another observation, which is, that *it is God Who opens a door for the gospel in any place; and when God opens a door, it should be entered.* Paul tells us, that a door was opened to him of the Lord at Troas; and that a great and effectual door was opened to him at Ephesus, which induced him to remain there for some time. Now, as God has opened many doors to you, is it not your duty to enter and occupy? Is not this a call from your great Lord to advance and mount the breach which he has opened in the enemy's walls? Could any command be given in more intelligible language? Press forward, then, ye devoted men, who have given yourselves to the Lord, to make His name known among the heathen. Fear not to enter the door that the Captain of Salvation hath opened to you.

♦ (Continued on page 18)

The Propagation

(Continued from page 17) ♦

Come forward, ye redeemed of the Lord, and enable the soldiers of the cross to take the field. When your sovereign has so clearly intimated His pleasure, would it not be a breach of your allegiance to decline acting? Should one of her majesty's generals decline entering a besieged city, when it was proved penetrable, would he not be condemned by a court-martial? His life and his honour would be the forfeit of his treason. Is less to be expected from the soldier of the cross? Enter, then, my fellow-soldiers; enter the breach that God has made before your eyes in the walls of the enemy.

9. The last observation which I shall submit to your consideration on this subject is, that *they who preach the gospel, especially to ignorant heathens, should do it not only in all godly sincerity, but in all plainness and simplicity.* I am convinced that nothing more powerfully mars the effect of the gospel, even where it is preached in truth, than an affection of eloquence and of deep research. Theological writings have for some time appeared to aim at an abstruse, metaphysical, and technical phraseology, as if the object were to conceal rather than illustrate. It is still worse if this style is brought into the pulpit. A book may be read a second time, but if an audience does not catch the meaning as it flies, it is lost for ever. On philosophical subjects, let us speak as philosophers; but in speaking on the great things of God, let our aim be to be understood. Let us use the utmost plainness. If we are not understood, we cannot be useful. It is by entering the understanding that the gospel succeeds. Every

effort, then, ought to be made, that the most ignorant may apprehend the meaning. How awful is it to occupy our mind about the glitter of words, in speaking to ignorant sinners about the way of escaping the wrath to come through the redemption of Christ Jesus? It is loathsome in the sight of God; it is contemptible in the estimation of every sensible man. Who would think of dazzling expressions in directing perishing mariners to a way of escape from a shipwreck. The language that is likely to be most intelligible is always to be preferred; and that language would be suggested by the occasion to a heart that feels. Even in point of eloquence, the most essential quality in style is perspicuity. Nothing can be eloquent that is not intelligible to those addressed. The man who makes his audience understand him most easily, is always the best speaker; and it is not necessary to be either quaint or vulgar, in order to be interesting even to the lowest of the people. . . . Look at the discourses of Jesus. Was ever language so perspicuous? Was ever eloquence so insinuating and commanding? His figurative language was taken from the most common objects; but it was never mean. It never wanted dignity. He affected no oddity or extravagance of manner or diction; yet He always commanded attention. It was impossible not to listen to Him. Innumerable multitudes pressed to hear Him; and while His enemies gnashed on Him with their teeth, they could not keep themselves from hearing Him.

I would, then, earnestly entreat my younger brethren, who have an eye to the ministry, to attend to this observation. . . He who cannot make himself understood by his audience--he

who cannot command it, is not gifted for public usefulness. More is to be expected from the most unpolished speaker, when he is urged on by a burning zeal for the salvation of sinners, than from the most brilliant diction, when its object appears to be to captivate the imagination.

This obstacle to the success of the gospel was anticipated by the spirit of inspiration, and Paul reprehends it with the most indignant zeal. **"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect"** (I Cor. 1:17). Here we see that even the cross of Christ, or the true gospel, will be made unsuccessful by an affectation of human eloquence. It is worthy of consideration how much of the want of success in the preaching of the gospel, by the servants of Christ, is owing to this wisdom of words. If Paul's gospel is presented to the world in a dress in which Paul would not exhibit it, lest it should thereby become ineffectual, is it to be wondered that the cause should still produce the dreaded effect? **"And I, brethren,"** says the same apostle to the same people, **"when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God"** (I Cor. 2:1-5).



Forum #1

(Continued from page 12) ♦

is always best to let the Bible define its own terminology, and here it does that exactly. How is Timothy to behave himself in the solemn assembly? It is the house of God, the *eklesia* (church) of the living God. Here is the pillar and ground of the truth. Surely a sober and crucially important institution. Nine times, at least, in the fourteenth chapter of I Corinthians the solemnity of the church is revealed. **"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. ... Let all things be done decently and in order"** (I Cor. 14:34-40).

Actually 155 times in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *mowed* is translated "congregation," while twice it is translated "(solemn) assembly." This *mowed* is probably more comparable to the *eklesia* of the New Testament. **"And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation (mowed), and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God"** (Ex. 29:44-45). Strong's defines it in part: *mowed* – technically the congregation; by extension, the place of meeting. Sound familiar? It is the people, again, is it not?

"... Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he

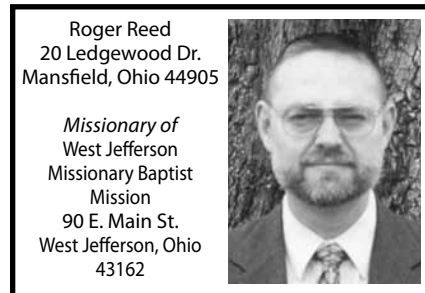
♦ (Continued on page 19)

Forum #1

(Continued from page 18) ◊

might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). Loved? Holy? Cleansed? Without blemish? Not the building, but the solemn assembly! Selah! Think about it!

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"Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein" (Lev. 23:36).

The above Scripture is the first and one of 10 verses in the Old Testament that the phrase "solemn assembly" is used. One of the verses found in Lamentations separates the two words, but I believe the meaning is still the same. "And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly: the LORD hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest" (Lam. 2:6).

Gill says the meaning of the phrase is as follows; "of all the people, when they were gathered together before the Lord." Remember this was a law, one

of many, that "the LORD spake unto Moses" (Lev. 23:1). Then we read in the last chapter and last verse of Leviticus, "These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai" (Lev. 27:34).

So, it was a law in the Old Testament and was punishable by death if not obeyed. "Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 31:15). "Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" (Ex. 35:2). That an "solemn assembly" was "holy" and "the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD" it would (in my opinion) stand to reason the disobeying would mean death.

Now, under this dispensation (the church age) we are not under any such law. However, we are commanded to meet on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:2). Also, read John 20:19 and Acts 20:7. I will not take the time to discuss this here for many dispute that it is a commandment, but history itself will prove that we are to be in the house of the Lord on the first day of the week (Sunday). "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).

Today we are to serve God with a godly fear and show him reverence, especially in the house of the Lord. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence

and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:28-29). "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). God Bless!

ROGER REED



Forum #2

(Continued from page 13) ◊

"being found faithful or reliable, etc..." "Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known (amen) that which shall surely be" (Hosea 5:9). When the word is transliterated, it is usually the Bible characters plainly saying the word, "Amen," either to validate their own statement, or the proclamation of someone else, even God. "And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with their faces to the ground" (Neh. 8:6).

The Hebrew word "amen" is found transliterated in the Greek text grammars and occurs some 152 times. The Apostle Paul concludes every book with this affirmation of truth and thusly 24 of the 27 New Testament books are concluded. This accounts for almost half of the times the Hebrew "amen" is transliterated (24 of 51).

What I found interesting in this study is that the word "verily" is translated from "amen." What this literally means, is that when Jesus Christ uses this word "amen/verily" some 69 times in the Gospels to start off one of His doctrinal assertions, He is breaking the traditional use of the word. Whereas the prophets of old would commence their preaching with a "thus saith the

LORD" and would wait for the verifying "amen," Jesus Christ asserts His deity, by foregoing a prelude of "thus saith the LORD" and inserting instead "Verily (Amen), Verily (Amen) I say unto you." Not repeating what has been divined and revealed by God, but Emmanuel Himself is proclaiming the Holy Word and thus the AMEN PRECEDES THE STATEMENT. "Verily, GOD says unto you..." Selah! Think about it! Even to the point of taking the word "Amen" as a name of God/Deity in Revelation 3:14, "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

"Amen" is a singular benediction to the glory of God throughout the Bible, teaching that the essence of God's nature is omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternal, inevitability, immutable holiness. "...the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. ...Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. ...For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen. ...To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen" (Rom. 1:25, 9:5, 11:36, 16:27). Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



THE BIBLE AND THE NEWSPAPER

Readers of the BBB are urged to submit religious news items which they may read in their local paper or some other publication. In sending these please give the name of the publication as well as the date it was printed. We will not be able to print all which are submitted, but we welcome any item you may feel we should read.

Send them to The Berea Baptist Banner, PO Box 39, Mantachie, MS 38855-0039.

BOY AND GIRL LOCKER ROOMS GOING EXTINCT IN STATES ON U.S. COASTS

(WNS)--At the end of 2015, two human rights commissions over 2,800 miles apart enacted new rules that could be precedent-setting for the gender battle across the nation, including giving people the right to use whichever locker rooms and bathrooms they choose. The New York City Commission on Human Rights issued guidelines Dec. 21 to clarify what "constitutes gender identity and gender-expression discrimination" under the city's 2002 Human Rights Law. The new policy addresses discrimination in the areas of employment, public accommodation, and housing. The guidelines offer several definitions that categorize people according to their self-defined sexual identity, including transgender, gender non-conforming, and intersex. Instead of male or female, the identity of "cisgender" is offered as "an adjective denoting or relating to a person whose self-identity conforms with the gender that corresponds to their biological sex, i.e., someone who is not transgender." Meanwhile, as of Dec. 26, a new rule created by the Washington State Human Rights Commission requires buildings open to the public to allow transgender people to use restrooms and locker rooms of the gender with which they identify.

WELBY: ANGLICANS DISCIPLINED EPISCOPAL CHURCH OVER PROCESS,

NOT THEOLOGY

(WNS)--Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby defended the Anglican Communion's actions against The Episcopal Church in a news conference on Jan. 15, highlighting violations of institutional protocol instead of a lapse in scriptural fidelity as the point of contention between the communion and the U.S. province that last year changed its canon on marriage to accommodate same-sex unions. The eight-point statement released Jan. 14 lists "consequences"—not sanctions—for the Episcopalians, Welby said. And similar consequences could befall any province that chooses to act without "respecting the process." But the action seemed to come as a surprise to Episcopal leaders, who for more than a decade have ignored doctrinal mandates about human sexuality and marriage without any reprisals from the communion. Conservative and liberal elements of the communion appeared to disagree as to whose rules were violated.

PRO-LIFE LAWS IN 2016 WILL FOCUS ON UNBORN CHILD'S SUFFERING

(WNS)--In 2015, the fight against abortion began with a setback when a highly publicized 20-week abortion ban failed to pass in the U.S. House of Representatives despite its Republican majority. But the pro-life movement regrouped and accomplished legislative victories on the state and federal level, making last year one of the most life-affirming

since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973. The National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) and Americans United for Life (AUL) celebrated the 2015 victories in two recent reports that also outlined legislative priorities for 2016. Pro-lifers hope last year's momentum will carry through to November and help sweep a pro-life president into the White House. According to AUL's 2015 legislative session report, 48 states introduced about 315 measures related to abortion, a 17 percent increase over 2014. And state lawmakers enacted 30 of those measures, which included 20-week abortion bans, abortion facility regulations, chemical abortion regulations, and admitting privilege requirements.

APPEALS COURT WEIGHS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' PRAYERS

(WNS)--The elected members of the Rowan County, N.C., Board of Commissioners have been regularly praying in Jesus' name at meetings since at least 2007. But some county residents are not happy about that. On Jan. 27, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in a case challenging the constitutionality of the Rowan County Commissioners' Christian prayers. If the county loses, it could mean that commissioners will have to stop leading prayers during their meetings and instead invite community members to offer prayers. The case arose after a few county residents complained about the Christian prayers they had heard while attending board meetings, which are open to the public. According to a legal complaint from three residents, all of the board members had offered at least one "sectarian" prayer in recent years, often invoking the name of Jesus. Prayers sometimes referred to "Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords" or "Jesus, the one and only way to

salvation," and were never offered to any non-Christian deity.

TOP GENERALS: WOMEN SHOULD REGISTER FOR THE DRAFT

(WNS)--The top generals of both the Army and the Marine Corps testified on Feb. 2 that women should be required to register with Selective Service now that the Pentagon has lifted all exemptions for women from direct ground combat positions. In response to a question from Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., Marine Corps commandant Gen. Robert Neller and Army chief of staff Gen. Mark Milley both agreed that any eligible and qualified American should register for the draft, according to The Washington Post.

TEN COMMANDMENTS REMOVED FROM COURTHOUSE

(Itawamba Times)--Mississippi's Itawamba County officials released a statement confirming they will remove the Ten Commandments display currently hanging in the county courthouse.

"The Supervisors of Itawamba County have been notified that the present display of the Ten Commandments by itself is a violation of U.S. Supreme Court ruling," the statement reads. "After consulting with legal counsel, the present display of the Ten Commandments will be replaced with the national motto the United States of America, 'In God We Trust,' adopted by Congress July 30, 1956." The framed display hanged near the east side entrance to the courthouse. The county received a letter from Wisconsin-based non-profit group Freedom From Religion Foundation threatening litigation should the religious display not be removed from the public courthouse.

◊ (Continued on page 21)

Bible & the Newspaper

(Continued from page 20) ♦

Cases of religious displays like the Ten Commandments being removed from government buildings are becoming increasingly common. One of the most notable cases was 2005's McCreary County v. American Civil Liberties Union, in which the U.S. Supreme Court and the United States Court of Appeals ordered the Ten Commandments display featured in the McCreary County courthouse in Whitley City, Kentucky, be taken down, deeming the display to be unconstitutional unless the Ten Commandments are somehow integrated into an otherwise historically significant display.

INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS IRISH PASTOR ACQUITTED OF ANTI-MUSLIM HATE SPEECH

(WNS)--A court in Belfast, Ireland, has acquitted an evangelical preacher accused of hate speech in 2014 for calling Islam "satanic." Dismissing the case against pastor James McConnell of Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle Church on Jan. 5, District Judge Liam McNally said courts must be "careful not to criminalize speech which, however contemptible, is no more than offensive. It is not the task of criminal law to censor offensive utterances." After the decision, the 78-year-old pastor who faced the possibility of six months imprisonment told UTV he had been "ready" to go to jail for his criticism of Islam. "I did not mean to hurt them. And when I preached that in here, you've got to realize this place was packed, and you're preaching this—I never thought of the Muslim community," McConnell told UTV. "I was preaching against Islam. But if I'd thought that I had done so much hurt I'd have curbed my words." But he clarified that he

would not change his doctrine: "I would still say Islam is evil."

SUPPORT SWELLS FOR CHRISTIAN FAMILY IN NORWAY AFTER AUTHORITIES SEIZE CHILDREN

(WNS)--When Marius and Ruth Bodnariu sent their daughters off to school on Nov. 16, 2015, they had no idea they would not come home. And they certainly never imagined their three sons would also be gone before the next sundown—all five children seized by the Norwegian government because of their parents' Christian beliefs. Tens of thousands of citizens across the globe have joined in protesting the Norwegian Child Welfare Agency's seizure of the children after a school principal reported their parents for "indoctrinating" their children.

FORMER SOVIET REPUBLICS ARE CENTRAL ASIA'S PERSECUTION HOTSPOT

(WNS)--Worsening persecution in the Middle East and Africa commanded headlines in 2015, but Christians in many other countries also saw a deterioration of religious freedom or increased hostility last year. In the cluster of former Soviet states including Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan, Christians faced more scrutiny from authorities and greater community persecution. Open Doors International listed all but one of those countries, Kyrgystan, on its 2016 World Watch List of the 50 places where it is most difficult to be a Christian. Government paranoia about religious groups is the engine of persecution in the region, said Wade Kusack, director for the religious freedom department of Mission Eurasia.

BRITAIN'S ANTI-EXTREMISM

PLANS INCLUDE INSPECTING SUNDAY SCHOOLS

(WNS)--Christian groups in the United Kingdom are recoiling at a government proposal to inspect youth groups, Sunday schools, and scout troops for "undesirable teaching" as part of a greater attempt to combat Islamic State (ISIS). With at least 700 people from the U.K. having joined ISIS, some of whom have returned to British soil, concerns about combatting terrorist indoctrination are real. But groups such as the Christian Institute say oversight of Christian churches by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) goes too far. "The idea of having an Ofsted inspector sitting in on your church youth group or Sunday school to see if you are an extremist is, I have to say, highly offensive," the institute's president Colin Hart wrote. "Ofsted is hardly equipped to judge the intensely complex and sensitive issues of private religious instruction. ... It is, most definitely, not the role of government to attempt such a task."



Mission of Christ

(Continued from page 1) ♦

was to discover the wonders of nature. But Jesus Christ came into the world to submit to shame and endure death for guilty rebels. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Our Lord had just saved Zacchaeus and announced He was going home with him. The enemies of Christ had just murmured, "Saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner" (Luke 19:7). My text is a part of Christ's reply to the uncharitable remarks of His critics. They were ignorant of the great purpose for which He came into the world. He had come to

save sinners. He was not ashamed to visit the home of Zacchaeus and to receive him as one of His disciples. By saving Zacchaeus He was doing what He came into the world to do.

I wish to call attention to five truths in my text. They are as follows:

HIS POSITION TO MAN

The position of Christ to man can be seen in the words: "The Son of man. . ." As the Son of God He is the offspring of all that God the Father is in Himself. As the Son of man He is the offspring of humanity. Divinity and humanity are both represented in Jesus, Who is called the Christ.

We know from Scripture that Jesus Christ expressly called Himself "the Son of man." He personally used this title of Himself on 32 occasions in Matthew's Gospel, always preceded by the definite article. By use of this title He identified Himself with the sons of men. Although His sinless nature and life were unique among the sons of men, He was a son of man in that He was bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He was the Son of Adam, the son of Abraham, and the son of David. He was the Son of man more than He was the Son of Mary. By using this title some 80 times in the Gospels He identified Himself as the Messiah of the Old Testament who was called "the Son of man" in Daniel 7:13.

The title "Son of man" speaks of the incarnation of the Son of God. As the Mediator it behooved Him to assume the nature of man. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood,

♦ (Continued on page 22)

Mission of Christ

(Continued from page 21) ◊

he also himself likewise took part of the same. . . (Heb. 2:14).

In order to be man's Savior Jesus Christ had to become a man. To save sinners in the flesh He had to be made **"in the likeness of sinful flesh"** (Rom. 8:3). He that was **"in the form of God"** had to take **"the form of a servant"** (Phil. 2:6-7). To qualify as our kinsman Redeemer Jesus Christ found it necessary to have interest in both parties. **"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"** (I Tim. 2:5). He was God with God, and man with man.

The Redeemer had to become the Son of man to suffer and die for man. God could not suffer and die. If the Redeemer was to die He must assume a reasonable soul and a true body that He might offer himself a sacrifice for sin. **" . . . Christ. . . hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor"** (Eph. 5:2). The Mediator had to assume the same nature that had sinned and was condemned. Romans 8:3 tells us: **"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."**

HIS POVERTY ON BEHALF OF MAN

My text sets forth Christ's poverty on behalf of man in the words: **" . . . is come. . ."** This implies Christ's pre-existence and that He was at some other place before He came. So let us ask three questions: First, where did He come from? He came from the Third Heaven, the royal palace of Jehovah. Christ declared: **"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down**

from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). In John 8:42 He said: **" . . . I proceeded forth and came from God. . ."** Christ left the throne of the Father and the glory of the celestial state to become the Son of man. Having left the bosom of the Father to be manifested in the flesh, He did not lose His Divine personality, for He **"is the Lord from heaven"** (I Cor. 15:47). Truly, **"He that cometh from heaven is above all"** (John 3:31).

Christ had been with the Father and the Holy Spirit from eternity passed. He was Jehovah's fellow. He had been **"as one brought up with him"** and **"was daily his delight"** (Prov. 8:30). He was loved by the Father and had a glory with the Father before the foundation of the world (John 17:5,24). By Christ all things had been created. He was the first-begotten of the Father, the firstborn of every creature, the heir of all things, the righteous Lord. This glorious person came from the Heaven of heavens to this sin-cursed earth.

Second, where did the Christ of God come to? He came to this planet which was inhabited by Adam's fallen race. He came to a world blasted, blighted and benighted by sin and Satan. He came to a world in a state of revolt, misery and death. What condescension! What sovereign grace! How He humbled Himself. He left the bosom of the Father for the bosom of a woman. He made His footstool His dwelling place. He came to live among the sinners of earth for 33 years.

Third, in what manner did He come? He did not come in all His glory. He did not visit with regal pomp, nor with a train of celestial attendants. He did not come to dwell in stately palaces among the highest of earth. A

poor village in Palestine was His birthplace and a stable His first residence. His mother was a poor virgin. Christ Himself well said: **"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"** (Matt. 20:28).

HIS PICTURE OF MAN

The picture of the Lord's people while in a state of nature is seen in the words **"that which was lost,"** or "the lost thing." Here the whole number of the elect is spoken of as a body. By the fall the world had become a lost world. The word **"lost"** means all that man had lost---the garden of Eden, the way to the tree of life, the visible fellowship of God, the moral likeness of God, etc. It also speaks of man himself as a lost one. Man as a spirit is lost to Heaven and to God as long as he is enslaved by the power of sin.

The elect were not irrevocably lost. Some emblems will assist us here. First, the elect were lost like a poor sheep. A sheep is lost when it strays on a dark and distant mountain, exposed to the beasts of prey. Separated from the sheepfold he is subject to the elements of nature such as cold and storm. Such was the case of the elect: **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. . ."** (Isa. 53:6). Like a lost sheep, we would have never returned on our own; we should have wandered on in an endless maze lost for eternity.

Second, God's people were lost as a city is lost when it has revolted to the rebels. A rebel has renounced his government and bares to resist it by force. Man is a rebel against God. **"We were enemies"** (Rom. 5:10). We **"were sometime alienated and enemies in our mind by wicked works"** (Col. 1:21). As rebels we had trodden under foot the Son

of God, had trampled His holy laws, had counted the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing, and had done despite to the Spirit of grace. We deserved the wrath of the great King as we were lost to His moral rule in the world.

Third, the elect were lost as a traveler is lost when he has missed the way in the wilderness. The traveler does not know where he is, or where he is going, when he is lost. In describing the ruin of man Paul wrote: **"They are all gone out of the way. . . And the way of peace have they not known"** (Rom. 3:12,17). Hebrews 5:2 speaks of **"them that are out of the way."** Sinners were out of the way and thus are lost to God.

Fourth, man is lost as a mariner. His vessel has been smashed against the hidden rocks. He has escaped to a barren and rocky shore. He is lost, for he cannot long survive as he is unable to cross the trackless deep. Such is the state of man. He is in the barren and desolate rock of the world without the Water of Life and the Bread of Life. Without these he is hopelessly lost.

Fifth, he is lost like a prisoner is lost when the sentence of death has been passed upon him. He, in the eyes of the law, is a dead man. He has committed some capital offense. He has been tried, convicted, and condemned to pay with his life. This is the plight of the sinner. Sin has made him **"guilty before God"** (Rom 3:19) and unbelief has caused him to be **"condemned already"** (John 3:18).

Jesus Christ, as the great Shepherd, came to seek the lost sheep out and to bring him back to the fold. He came as the great King to give peace and pardon to the rebels in the City of Destruction. He came as the Seeker to find

◊ (Continued on page 23)

Mission of Christ

(Continued from page 22) ♦

the lost traveler and to show him the way to Heaven. He came to visit the desolate mariner on the rock, to give him the life-boat of salvation, and to guide him to the shore of immortality. He came as the great Physician to heal the sinner of all his soul's diseases by giving him the balm of Divine grace. He came as the Judge of all the earth to the condemned prisoner to open the prison doors and grant a free pardon.

HIS PATIENCE TOWARD MAN

In the text I see Christ's patience toward man. **"He came to seek. . ."** Sinners had lost their way utterly, their way from the home of God, from the path of holiness, from the fountain of joy. They were wandering, blind and miserable, in forbidden ways. They were stumbling on the dark mountains of error and sin. Jesus Christ came to seek out these erring ones, to lead them back again, to restore them their heritage in God. In Ezekiel 34:16 the Lord said: **"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick. . ."**

In his famous hymn, E. E. Hasty of the nineteenth century so well wrote:

*Jesus, my Saviour, to Bethlehem came,
Laid in a manger to sorrow and shame;
Oh, it was wonderful, blest be His name,
Seeking for me, for me.*

No one who knows the Scripture can deny that man is responsible to seek the Lord. In Isaiah 55:6 this command is found: **"Seek ye the LORD while he may be found. . ."** In the New Testament Christ delivered this command: **"But seek ye first**

the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Men need to go out of themselves to seek elsewhere for eternal life and everlasting happiness. To seek God is to respect and adorn His sovereign majesty, to search the Scriptures, to obey His holy commandments, to approach Him in prayer. Before any of this can be done man must seek God by repentance and place

♦ (Continued on page 24)

The Short Pews



Brief
Articles
by Curtis
Pugh

FRUSTRATING THE GRACE OF GOD

Our title comes from Galatians 2:21: **"I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."** Scholars tell us that the Greek word translated "frustrate" means to make void, or worthless. The Holy Spirit is saying that those who think to earn righteousness by good works trash the grace of God. It is a mistake to think righteousness comes by keeping God's law.

In Romans 10:2-4 Paul wrote about his people the Jews saying: **"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one**

that believeth." The Jewish people were much in love with Moses' law – the Law of God that was given to that nation alone - even though they could not keep it. Paul warned young Timothy of certain dangerous men who were promoting law-keeping. He said that such men desired **"...to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully"** (I Tim. 1:7-8). Notice two things: (1) there is a lawful or right use of the law and (2) there is an unlawful or wrong use of God's Old Testament law. The lawful use of the law is this: it condemns us and shows us what totally depraved sinners we are – sinners in need of a Savior. **"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin"** (Rom. 3:19-20). The law shows us our awful sin nature and our acts of sin as well. The wrong use of the law is trying to keep it in order to be righteous in God's eyes. By trying to keep it, Paul said that nobody shall ever be justified or viewed as righteous in God's eyes! Why? Because, **"... Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"** as we quoted above.

Being declared righteous in God's eyes is by faith in the finished work of Christ. **"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (Rom. 5:1). Have you experienced godly sorrow over

your sinful condition – the sorrow that worketh repentance toward God? Have you faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ? It is the kind of faith called **"the faith of God's elect"** (Titus 1:1) that brings righteousness in God's eyes. **"Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"** (Rom. 3:28).



BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report

1-1-2016 to 1-31-2016

Beginning Balance \$2,693.83

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL 60.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV 313.45
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL 50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL 25.00
Eldon Joslin, Birmingham, AL 300.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY 100.00
Faith B. C. Lynn, AR 12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME 20.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
Grace B. C., Holden, MO 250.00
Grace B. C., Winston-Salem, NC 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Marion, IL 50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK 35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV 100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC 50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY 30.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH 100.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN 50.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL 100.00
Portland B. C., Plumersville, AR 50.00
Providence S. G. B. C., Tupelo, MS 200.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS 25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Northport, AL 100.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX 30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA 25.00
Subscriptions 70.00
Anonymous 1,210.00
Sub Total \$3,805.95
TOTAL \$6,499.78

EXPENDITURES:

Printing 490.00
Postage 741.30
Wages 2,300.00
FICA 175.90
Supplies 203.54
Bank Charge 13.00
Refund check in wrong account 225.00
Total Expenditures \$4,148.74
ENDING BALANCE \$2,351.04

BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report

1-1-2016 to 1-31-2016

Beginning Balance \$7,505.96

RECEIPTS:

Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS 450.00
Calvary B. C., Everson, WA 100.00
Grace B. C., Corbin, KY 100.00
..... 650.00
TOTAL 8,155.96

EXPENDITURES:

Radio Time 603.98
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 603.98
..... 7,551.98
Interest +.06
ENDING BALANCE \$7,552.04

Mission of Christ

(Continued from page 23) ♦

confidence in Him. This is where the problem is. Man does not desire to repent and believe the gospel. He will not seek God with his whole heart until regenerated by the Holy Spirit.

On this point the Scripture is plain: **“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God”** (Rom. 3:11). There is none acquainted with His character, that endeavours to know and do His will. They all neglect and forget Him. This disposition not to seek God is full proof of total depravity.

Adam, sinning, turned his back and fled from a holy God. Since that day no human being has ever sought a righteous God. Conscious of his inward depravity and guilt, he is filled with terrors of conscience at any thought of God. Ever since Eden, God has had to take the place of the seeker, persuader, convicter and final perfecter of man's salvation. His sovereign grace goes ahead of, and brings into being, all human response to the gospel of Christ. Christ had to seek man because man would have never sought God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ left Heaven's glory to come to earth to seek His lost sheep. He patiently seeks them out because He loves them (Jer. 31:3). He patiently seeks out each lost sheep because of His covenant. He patiently seeks His lost sheep because He died to save them. He patiently seeks those who were not worth seeking, those who sought Him not as Zacchaeus. He will seek each lost sheep until He finds it, and He will not cease in His work until He brings every one of them home to God (Luke 15:4-7).

HIS PURPOSE WITH MAN

Our Savior's purpose with man is seen in the words **“to save that which was lost.”** The same ones that Christ seeks, He also saves. He seeks them out for the expressed purpose of saving them. His great design is to save, for there is no salvation in any other (Acts 4:12). He uses every means at His disposal to effect the salvation of sinners.

Men desperately need salvation, yet they spend their time upon trifles with no consideration for the safety of their own souls. They admire and make provision for this vile body while their souls are dropping into Hell. This is like painting the door when the house is on fire. Men need to forsake their sins and to come in tears for their sins to Christ for peace and pardon. Upon coming to Him in this manner, they will discover that He came to seek and to save poor sinners like they are. Please remember that He said: **“For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost”** (Matt. 18:11).

CONCLUSION

1. Christ came forth into human history on a seeking and saving mission. His was a seeking and saving life and ministry. He is the great heavenly Seeker and Savior. While on earth He sought out and saved sinners. He still has this same seeking and saving attitude in Heaven which He formerly had on earth. Many are the places

He has sought and found His lost ones---one on a cross, one by the well, one in a boat, one in a sycamore tree!

2. The Lord from Heaven seeks and saves only those who have been brought by the Holy Spirit to see they are lost. Man is lost in respect to separation and distance from God. He is lost in regard to future hopes. It is a wonderful time for you if the Holy Spirit has brought you to see that you are lost. If this is your case, then know for a fact that the Son of man is come to seek and save you. He is bent on doing this. It is His errand and mission. No matter how lost you are He is determined to seek and save you. Thank God that He came to seek you instead of leaving you to seek Him!

3. There are but three classes of persons in the world. First, those who have found Christ precious to their souls and serve Him. John told Peter: **“We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ”** (John 1:41). Second, those who, not having found Him, are seeking Him. These are earnestly seeking Him with their whole heart because the Lord has already given them a new heart. Third, those who neither have found Him, nor seek Him. Such incorrigible wanderers will be lost for ever.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Windsor Baptist Church of Windsor, IL is seeking a qualified candidate for pastor. They are small in number but rich in truth. Candidate should meet the qualification in I Timothy 3. For more information please contact Brother John Gregory at (217) 728-9966 or Email windsorbaptist.grace@gmail.com.

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

NOTICE!

A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine

by Thomas Paul Simmons

We continue to have many requests for Bro. Simmons book. We are looking at the possibility of reprinting this book. If you would be interested in copies of this book please contact us. If there is enough interest we will reprint it.

The Church That Jesus Built

&

What Is To Be Will Be

by Roy Mason

Lord willing we plan to reprint a small number of these two books by Bro. Mason this year.

ARTICLE INDEX

An Habitation of God by Paul Stepp	p. 1
The Bible and the Newspaper	p. 20
Forum	pp. 12-13
Gleanings	p. 7
The Mission of Christ by Milburn Cockrell	p. 1
The Propagation of the Gospel by Alexander Carson	p. 1
The Short Pews	p. 23
The Sovereignty of God and the Free Grace of God by E. G. Cook	p. 1
Watering the Tulips by Todd Bryant	p. 5
Ye Must Be Born Again! by Rosco Brong	p. 1